

MULTI-RESIDENTIAL INFILL GUIDELINES FOLLOW-UP

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The multi residential infill location criteria provide planning direction and consistency in the review and evaluation of multi-residential land use amendment applications for specific land use districts in the inner city. They focus on determining whether a location is appropriate for redesignation to a multi-residential land use district.

Stakeholders consulted revealed that the location criteria were helpful in improving communication with all interested parties. However, there are concerns that the provisions of the criteria do not encompass enough details, require clearer definitions of some of the terms used and should include visual aids to bolster their usefulness in the evaluation and decision-making processes.

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the SPC on Planning and Urban Development recommends Council:

1. Direct Administration to expand and improve the Location Criteria for Multi-Residential Infill to provide criteria explained in plain language and supported by illustrations and other visual aids.
2. Direct Administration to supplement these location criteria with guidelines, policy and regulatory tools to address site and building design and explore appropriate uses for multi-residential infill developments.
3. Direct Administration to report back to Council through the SPC on Planning and Urban Development with the resulting documentation no later than 2017 June.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE SPC ON PLANNING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, DATED 2015 JUNE 10:

That Council:

1. Direct Administration to expand and improve the Location Criteria for **RCG and Multi-Residential Infill** to provide criteria explained in plain language and supported by illustrations and other visual aids;
2. Direct Administration to supplement these location criteria with guidelines, policy and regulatory tools to address site and building design and explore appropriate uses for multi-residential infill developments; and
3. Direct Administration to report back to Council through the SPC on Planning and Urban Development with **an update and framework no later than Q2 2016.**

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

At the 2014 January 13 Combined Public Hearing of Council Meeting, Council adopted a Motion Arising, moved by Councillor Woolley and seconded by Councillor Pootmans, that with respect to Report CPC2013-066:

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That Council direct Administration to develop an outline of new and existing citywide guidelines for the evaluation of typical residential infill developments in low density areas generally in the inner city, excluding single detached, duplex dwellings, and secondary suites, and return to Council through the SPC on Planning and Urban Development no later than 2014 March.

Proceeding from this directive, Administration prepared location criteria and presented them in a report to the SPC on Planning and Urban Development on 2014 March 18 (PUD2014-0156). The location criteria proposed in the report are provided in Attachment 1, and were endorsed by the Committee along with Administration's recommendations as follows:

That the SPC on Planning and Urban Development recommends that Council:

1. Direct Administration to use the proposed location criteria contained in the Attachment when evaluating and reporting on applicable land use amendment applications in the Developed Areas, including any associated policy amendments; and
2. Direct Administration to report back to the SPC on Planning and Urban Development on the effectiveness and usefulness of the location criteria no later than 2015 June. The reporting shall include consultation with members of Council, Calgary Planning Commission, community associations, and the development industry.

The recommendations were adopted by Council at its meeting of 2014 March 31.

BACKGROUND

The intent of the Location Criteria for Multi-Residential Infill is to support and align with policy set out in section 3.5.2 - Inner City Areas - of the Municipal Development Plan (MDP). Created to assist in closing the gap between the MDP and Calgary Land Use Bylaw 1P2007, the foreword to the list of criteria states, in part:

"These criteria are not meant to be applied in an absolute sense to determine whether or not a site should be recommended for approval.....The [list] represents a proposed checklist [of] preferred conditions....to be used in the review and evaluation of land use amendment applications for the following districts:

Multi-residential - Contextual Grade - oriented (M-CG) District
Multi-residential - Contextual Low Profile (M-C1) District
Multi-residential - Contextual Medium Profile (M-C2) District"

The purpose of this report is to inform Council of how effective, how useful and how satisfactory the location criteria have been to date for the five main stakeholder groups using them.

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INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

Since the adoption of the location criteria in 2014 March, there have been twenty eight submissions to which the criteria have been applied. The number of specific types and their status are detailed in the following table.

APPLICATION STATUS	M-CG	M-C1	M-C2	Total
Approved	5	2	2	9
Under Review	3	4	2	9
Pending Decision	3	1		4
Pending Issues Resolution	2	1	1	4
Hold - Stop	1			1
Abandoned	1			1
Total Applications Received	15	8	5	28

Five groups of primary stakeholders were engaged in the review of the Location Criteria for Multi-Residential Infill. Their comments, observations and recommendations are provided in Attachment 2 and are summarized as follows:

Group 1 – Administration

Discussions with Administration revealed that the guidelines are useful as prompts and reminders when engaging with applicants and the community. Most of the planners advised that the location criteria were of use in pre-application meetings. The successful application of the location criteria is dependent on education for all members of the staff. Planners reported that wider promotion of the location criteria to developers, builders, community associations and the public would improve their application.

Group 2 – Council Members

Four members of Council were consulted, two who had had multi unit applications in their wards and the other two had not, but had an interest in the subject.

These Councillors stated they already understood the principles behind the location criteria and felt they were of limited use to them and their staff. However, all Councillors felt they were highly useful as tools for communicating The City's goals regarding multi-residential infill in the inner city. There were suggestions to reference off street parking, enhancing the usability of the document and expanding the applicable districts.

Group 3 – Calgary Planning Commission

Members of the CPC were invited to attend drop-in meetings to comment on the location criteria. There was concern the guide would become the rule and that community members would use the checklist to add up the checks and refuse an application.

Group 4 – Community Associations

The Federation of Calgary Communities (FCC) believed the criteria "could make outcomes more predictable by providing additional rationale for decisions". The criteria were also beneficial in providing a link between the land use bylaw and the MDP, but felt "a more explicit link to specific MDP/CTP policies that each condition supports would be helpful". Also noted

Approval(s): Stanley, Rollin concurs with this report. Authors: Makale, Nicholas; Robertson, David
City Clerk's (C. Smillie)

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was that visual examples/illustrations would be useful as an indicator of the “perfect” site for multi-residential re-designation, though these criteria should be applied carefully so as not to be considered rules rather than guidelines.

Group 5 – Development Industry

Both the Urban Development Institute (UDI) and the Canadian Home Builders Association (CHBA) provided feedback with an online feedback form. The project team also had the opportunity to interview a developer/builder who had recently used the location criteria.

With little experience using the guide UDI stated that their re-designation applications already address many of the elements listed in the criteria and felt the practical application could be improved if the criteria was linked to proportional increases to density and parcel area. It would also be useful if consideration could be given to approving contextual multi-residential districts anywhere within the developed areas.

Feedback from the CHBA stated that, while the location criteria are a helpful tool, they do little to reduce the time it takes for a land use amendment application to proceed. Most applicants know of and work to achieve the MDP objectives, but find community issues and concerns can impede their efforts to make changes to reach those objectives. Further, the criteria might improve consistency regarding the way the land use amendments are evaluated; however, certainty of approval is not guaranteed.

The one developer/builder interviewed had used the location criteria approximately a dozen times. He noted the criteria fell in line with some of those his firm was already using to find inner city multi-residential infill sites. The location criteria were considered to be useful in bridging the gap between existing older Area Structure Plans or Area Redevelopment Plans (ASPs/ARPs). Of most use to his business would be an increase in the number of land use districts covered by the location criteria and the inclusion of some innovative direction regarding parking provisions.

Summary of Common Stakeholder Observations and Comments

Throughout the course of the stakeholder consultations, some concepts surfaced that were common to all or most of the groups interviewed:

- Subject Matter - the location criteria should be expanded to cover more development factors and districts
- Language - the language should be clearer and easier to understand
- Presentation - visual aids should be used to make the criteria clearer and depict examples of the results being sought

Examples of Multi-Residential Guidelines from other municipalities are provided in Attachment 3. These illustrate examples of a more comprehensive set of guidelines, policy and regulatory tools that address site and building design for multi-residential infill development.

Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication

Stakeholders from Council, the CPC, the FCC, and the development industry (UDI/CHBA) were contacted for input regarding the usefulness and effectiveness of the location criteria. In addition, administrative staff tasked with assessing and processing land use amendment

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applications for multi-unit residential developments provided observations and comments on the matter.

Strategic Alignment

As initially presented, the Location Criteria for Multi-Residential Infill are intended to encourage the achievement of the MDP policies in sections 3.5.2 of the Plan by steering potential multi-residential infill redevelopment to sites on specifically designated inner city locations. Investigation of this objective through consultation with the stakeholders concluded location criteria with more specific direction, explanation, description and visual depiction are necessary to fully achieve this goal.

Social, Environmental, Economic (External)

Social

Infill redevelopment with multi-residential buildings helps to provide housing choice, which allows people in all stages of life and a range of income levels to find housing in a community. This creates more complete and inclusive communities.

Environmental

Infill development helps to protect the environment by restoring population to existing neighbourhoods where proximity to jobs and services can support multiple modes of travel and reduce trip length. Also, it would potentially make better use of existing land and infrastructure.

Economic (External)

The location criteria attempt to provide more certainty for private business decisions about land acquisition and development. Infill development also supports local businesses by adding population to existing neighbourhoods.

Financial Capacity

Current and Future Operating Budget:

No operating budget implications are identified.

Current and Future Capital Budget:

No capital budget implications are identified.

Risk Assessment

The Risk Assessment in report PUD2014-0156 stated that “there are no identified risks associated with adopting the criteria and using them for information over a one year period.”

Approximately one year since the adoption of these criteria, it is clear that the current list of location criteria does not provide a comprehensive enough direction and may be too vague to adequately assist in the implementation of MDP policies and expectations for multi-residential infill development in the inner city area. Continuing to use the current location criteria will result in outcomes that do not live up to their full potential for multi-residential infill redevelopment in the inner city.

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REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):

Currently, the location criteria checklist provides a starting point for the provision of consistently applied planning guidance in the review of land use amendments for multi-residential infill development on specifically designated inner city sites. The follow-up investigation revealed that expansion of the criteria and a better explanation of the rationale regarding their selection would be appropriate.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Location Criteria for Multi-Residential Infill Development (as adopted 2014 March)
2. Record of Stakeholder Comments
3. Examples of Multi-Residential Infill Guidelines from other Municipalities