

MULTI-RESIDENTIAL INFILL GUIDELINES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Calgary's inner city communities continue to see significant redevelopment pressure. To help bridge the gap between Municipal Development Plan (MDP) policies and land use amendment applications for multi-residential development within inner city communities, Administration is proposing location criteria for certain types of applications. This will provide planning guidance and formalized consistency in the review of multi-residential land use amendment applications.

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION(S)

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.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SPC ON PLANNING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, DATED 2014 MARCH 18:

That the Administration Recommendations contained in Report PUD2014-0156 be approved.

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:

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.

BACKGROUND

Demand for inner city redevelopment in Calgary is high. With a large and vibrant downtown area and an expanding primary transit network, demand for infill development, in a variety of forms, has continued to increase for inner city neighbourhoods.

The Municipal Development Plan (MDP) provides high-level guidance and support for intensification of inner city communities (Sections 2.2 and 3.5). Land Use Bylaw 1P2007 identifies eleven multi-residential Districts which are appropriate in the Developed and Developing Areas. These Districts include contextual rules to address typical and common development issues (such as sensitivity and context) that arise when locating multi-residential development adjacent to, or near, low density residential development. These contextual rules

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ensure that certain features, such as the front setback and building height, are sensitive to existing development on neighbouring properties. These rules were developed with detailed public and stakeholder consultation and continue to be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. The Districts also include “purpose statements” that guide how and where to apply these Districts.

More detailed location criteria for certain multi-residential development is needed to bridge the high level MDP policies and the site-specific development rules in the Land Use Bylaw. The criteria would provide more guidance for developers looking for future development sites and more certainty for communities with respect to where future infill development may be appropriate.

This Motion Arising is a result of a land use amendment application and associated area redevelopment plan (ARP) amendment (CPC2013-066/LOC2012-0090) in the community of Killarney. Following extensive discussion of the application at Council, Administration was directed to develop guidelines to aid in the evaluation of typical multi-residential development.

As the guidelines are for low density residential areas, Administration focused its review on the three lowest intensity multi-residential districts for the Developed Areas: Multi-residential–Contextual Grade-Oriented (M-CG) District, Multi-residential–Contextual Low Profile (M-C1) District and Multi-residential–Contextual Medium Profile (M-C2) District. All three Districts are intended to accommodate multi-residential development in close proximity, or adjacent to, low density residential development.

INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

Administration reviewed the planning rationale used to evaluate recent land use amendment applications that proposed an amendment from low density residential to multi-residential. Since the adoption of the MDP in 2009, there have been 54 such applications presented to Council. Of these, 60% were split equally between the M-CG District and the M-C1 District designations (15 of each). There were six applications for the M-C2 District and 10 applications for a Direct Control (DC) District based on one of the three Districts. Of the 54 applications, six were abandoned at Council with the remainder approved.

Administration also undertook a high-level review of municipalities across North America for similar types of location criteria. Many municipalities offer site-specific design criteria but few offer formal location criteria for multi-residential development.

The City of Edmonton is one of the few municipalities that include both design and location criteria in their Residential Infill Guidelines. The intent in Edmonton is to focus new development at neighbourhood edges, block ends or across from neighbourhood parks and schools. For example Edmonton currently limits semi-detached and duplex dwellings to corner lots. Medium scale infill is directed to neighbourhood edges, shopping centre sites, transit corridors and large, comprehensively planned sites. While a fairly recent document (2009), the City of Edmonton is currently reviewing its infill guidelines in response to changing demands.

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Based on the research, Administration proposes using a set of Council-approved location criteria to review and evaluate land use amendment applications for M-CG, M-C1, and M-C2 (and Direct Control Districts based on these Districts), as these Districts are intended to be used in close proximity, or adjacent to, low density residential development in the Developed Areas. Administration does not recommend developing any further site or development design guidelines as Land Use Bylaw 1P2007 already includes appropriate rules to evaluate contextual infill development through the development permit process. Adding another layer of guidelines would add greater complexity to the development permit review process.

The proposed location criteria will provide guidance when considering land use amendment applications and associated policy amendments. While each application will continue to be reviewed on its individual merits, the criteria will provide a general assessment of appropriateness, based on how an individual application responds to each of the criteria. In general, the more criteria an individual application meets, the more appropriate the site would be for infill development.

Preferred locations (in no particular order) include sites that:

- Are on a corner parcel
- Are adjacent to neighbourhood amenities, such as open space or recreation facilities
- Are near transit
- Are on a collector or higher standard roadway
- Are near a Major Activity Centre or Community Activity Centre
- Are near a Neighbourhood Corridor or Urban Corridor
- Could serve as a physical transition between low density residential and other uses

Other factors to consider are if the subject site:

- Has an unusual size or shape
- Has unique topographical conditions
- Has a heritage resource component
- Has specific local area plan policies that provide contextual guidance
- Any other unique or unforeseen circumstance

A more detailed summary of the criteria is presented in the Attachment.

Administration anticipates that regular use and referencing of these criteria will provide guidance and consistency in the review of land use amendment applications and associated policy amendments, by bridging the gap between MDP policies and applications. In addition they will aid in implementing MDP targets by directing infill development to appropriate locations within neighbourhoods, providing greater clarity for Calgary's inner city communities.

At this time Administration proposes to report on how an application addresses the criteria. The criteria are not intended to be used formally as a decision making scorecard (i.e., if the site meets all the criteria it is recommended for approval), but rather as an aid to Administration, Calgary Planning Commission, and Council to more consistently evaluate such applications.

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Administration recommends that Council adopt these criteria immediately and direct Administration to use them for a period of one year. Relevant stakeholders will be advised of the criteria and how they will be used in the application process. Administration is prepared to report back to Council on effectiveness and impact of the criteria after one year of implementation. Council can then consider if there is a need to more formally integrate these criteria into statutory policy or if they should be revised, expanded upon or abandoned.

Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication

Given the timelines for reporting back to Council, Administration did not conduct formal stakeholder engagement in preparing this report. Given how the criteria are proposed to be used, Administration does not feel formal stakeholder engagement is necessary at this time. The engagement can occur as feedback is gathered on effectiveness and impact during the course of the one year period. Administration does not have the resources available in 2014 to conduct any further research or engagement on this issue without impacts to the proposed 2014 Corporate Land Use Planning Work Program.

Strategic Alignment

This report has been reviewed for alignment with the Municipal Development Plan (MDP). It supports the moderate intensification of developed residential areas in a form and nature that respects the scale and character of the neighbourhood (Policy 3.5.1.a and 3.5.2.b).

Social, Environmental, Economic (External)

A wider range of housing types provides options for affordable housing choices within communities. In addition, the location criteria will aid in implementing MDP targets by directing infill development to appropriate locations within neighbourhoods and provide guidance for Calgary's inner city communities and the development industry.

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 proposed location criteria were developed following a review of applications approved since 2009. Had these criteria been in place since that time, Administration's assessment and ultimate recommendation on each individual application to Calgary Planning Commission would have remained the same. There are no identified risks associated with adopting the criteria and using them for information over a one year period.

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REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):

Location criteria will help provide planning guidance and consistency in the review of M-CG, M-C1 and M-C2 (and DC Districts based on one of these three Districts) land use amendment applications and associated policy amendments, by bridging the gap between MDP policies and land use amendment applications. In addition they will aid in implementing the MDP by directing development to appropriate locations within neighbourhoods, providing greater clarity and certainty for Calgary's inner city communities.

ATTACHMENT

Proposed Location Criteria for Multi-Residential Infill Development