

Location Criteria for Multi-Residential Infill – Update

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2015 June Council directed Administration to expand the multi-residential infill location criteria so that it would apply to more land use districts and to clarify the criteria by explaining each criterion in plain language and providing supporting illustrations. In addition, Council directed Administration to develop guidelines, policy and regulatory tools to guide the building and site design of multi-residential developments. Administration was directed to report back to the SPC on Planning and Urban Development by 2016 Q2 with an update and a framework for the remaining project work.

For part one of the Council direction, this report provides enhanced location criteria with expanded descriptions and illustrations (Attachment 1). For part two, the report proposes that the development of guidelines, policy and regulatory tools for multi-residential and ground oriented infill be incorporated into the Developed Areas Guidebook project currently underway. The policies of the Developed Areas Guidebook are being developed to support community planning for the Green Line and Main Streets projects and are anticipated to be delivered to the Calgary Planning Commission (CPC) in Q4 of 2016. Administration will provide an update in the report to CPC that describes the policies in the Guidebook that address multi-residential infill. Additional guideline and regulatory tools that may be required to implement this policy will be outlined at that time. This will ensure that there is a coordinated approach to policies and guidelines related to multi-residential infill development.

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the SPC on Planning & Urban Development recommend that Council:

1. Direct Administration to use the amended location criteria contained in Attachment 1 when evaluating and reporting on applicable land use amendment applications in the Developed Areas, including any associated policy amendments; and
2. Direct Administration to incorporate the guideline, policy and regulatory tools to guide the building and site design of multi-residential and ground-oriented infill into the Developed Areas Guidebook and with ongoing work on city-wide design guidelines and provide an update on this work in the report to the Calgary Planning Commission on the Developed Areas Guidebook.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE SPC ON PLANNING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, DATED 2016 JUNE 08:

That the Administration Recommendations contained in Report PUD2016-0405 be approved.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

On 2015 June 29, Council adopted the following recommendations with respect to the Multi-Residential Infill Guidelines Follow-up report (PUD2015-0364):

1. Direct Administration to expand and improve the Location Criteria for R-CG and Multi-Residential Infill to provide criteria explained in plain language and supported by illustration and other visual aids;

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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.

On 2014 March 31, Council approved the recommendations contained in Report PUD2014-0156, which directed Administration to:

1. Use the proposed location criteria when evaluating and reporting on applicable land use amendment applications in the Developed Areas, including any associated policy amendments; and
2. Consult with stakeholders and report back to the Committee on the effectiveness and usefulness of the location criteria no later than 2015 June.

On 2014 January 13, Council adopted a Motion Arising, moved by Councillor Woolley and seconded by Councillor Pootmans, that directed 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.

BACKGROUND

The Municipal Development Plan (MDP) encourages most future growth in the developed areas to be concentrated in activity centres, near transit hubs and on main streets. Modest growth is supported outside of these areas within the established and inner city communities. This growth is typically managed through local area planning processes, which determine appropriate densities and development forms based on the local context. The current Location Criteria for Multi-Residential Infill, adopted in 2014, (Attachment 2) help guide the evaluation of redesignation applications and associated policy amendments in low density areas. The Location Criteria are typically applied in the absence of a local area plan or where the local area plan predates the MDP.

The Location Criteria are intended to provide general parameters to identify locations that may be appropriate for multi-residential infill. Administration's engagement with stakeholders regarding the existing Location Criteria indicated concerns regarding the scope and effectiveness of the criteria. A summary of this feedback is provided in Attachment 3. In response to this feedback Council directed Administration to expand the existing Location Criteria to:

- include more land use districts, including the R-CG District; and
- explain the criteria in plain language and using illustrations.

In addition, Council directed Administration to develop guidelines, policy and regulatory tools to provide direction for building and site design of multi-residential infill developments and to explore non-residential uses that are appropriate to include with multi-residential development.

INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

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To determine how best to improve the Location Criteria and consider guidelines, policy and regulatory options, Administration has:

- reviewed a number of recent policy and guideline documents adopted in other cities throughout North America, including Portland, Toronto, and Edmonton;
- researched the general benefits and challenges associated with multi-residential infill; and
- considered the feedback provided by users of the existing Location Criteria, including Administration, Council, Calgary Planning Commission, community associations and industry.

Location Criteria

The updated Location Criteria for Multi-Residential Infill provided in Attachment 1 take into account stakeholder feedback itemized in the monitoring report from 2015 June (Attachment 3) and research into best practices in a number of other cities. The Location Criteria have been updated to:

- use plainer language;
- provide illustrations;
- provide references to relevant Municipal Development Plan policy; and
- apply to land use amendment applications for multi-residential and ground-oriented infill generally, including redesignations to the R-CG District.

This responds to the first part of Council's direction to expand and improve the adopted Location Criteria for Multi-Residential Infill.

Application to multi-residential land use districts and the R-CG District

Based on analysis of the current location criteria, and in response to the feedback received from stakeholders, Administration recommends that the Location Criteria is better suited to identify locations appropriate for multi-residential intensification generally and should not be specific to particular land use districts. The Location Criteria is most applicable to land use districts that are intended to be adjacent to low density residential development, including the M-CG, M-C1 and M-C2 districts already specified in the criteria. The R-CG District is also included as it provides a variety of opportunities to add housing choice in communities with mostly single and semi-detached housing using a variety of low density, ground-oriented housing forms, such as rowhouses and cottage housing clusters.

All of the ground-oriented and multi-residential infill districts include rules that are intended to manage the transition from higher density and larger scale developments to adjacent lower scale, low density forms. The scale of development allowed and the transition requirements in some of the lower intensity districts, such as R-CG or M-CG, provide tools that allow multi-residential and ground-oriented forms to fit in neighbourhood locations that may not be listed in the Location Criteria, such as larger mid-block parcels.

Guidelines, policy and regulatory tools

Council's direction to develop guidelines, policy and regulatory tools to address multi-residential building and site design and explore uses for multi-residential developments is consistent with the scope of work for a number of other ongoing planning projects in the developed areas. Rather than develop a set of tools that guide and regulate multi-residential infill independently of

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these projects, Administration is taking a more integrated approach. Working with the MDP and Urban Design teams, and in collaboration with Green Line, Main Streets and the 2016 City/Industry Work Plan, Administration will consider policy tools in the Developed Areas Guidebook to address multi-residential infill development. The Developed Areas Guidebook is anticipated to be delivered to the Calgary Planning Commission (CPC) in Q4 2016. In the report to CPC, Administration will propose the policies that address the design and location of multi-residential infill development and outline additional guidelines and regulatory tools that may be necessary to implement this policy direction.

The Developed Areas Guidebook will be used to implement ongoing community planning processes in Green Line station areas and on Main Streets and should streamline future community planning processes. Incorporating planning tools specific to multi-residential and ground-oriented infill with general developed areas policy in the Developed Areas Guidebook and with city-wide urban design guidelines will limit the number of documents that apply to multi-residential infill resulting in a more straightforward application process. This approach responds to Council direction to provide a framework for developing guidelines, policy and regulatory tools to address site and building design and explore appropriate uses within multi-residential infill developments.

Summary

The Location Criteria for Multi-Residential Infill describes, in general terms, where multi-residential and ground oriented infill is more likely to fit in existing neighbourhoods. The improvements add more detail regarding the intent of each criterion, provide supporting illustrations and reference relevant MDP policy. Together these enhancements should help develop a better understanding among stakeholders of how land use decisions supporting multi-residential and ground-oriented developments are evaluated. This common understanding is intended to result in more focused discussion on individual applications and more predictable outcomes. The next step is to work towards policy tools and a design framework for a range of neighbourhood development forms, including multi-residential and ground-oriented infill, to support and implement community planning processes in Green Line station areas and on Main Streets.

Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication

An integrated approach to engagement is ongoing that coordinates community planning, city-wide policy, urban design and land use bylaw engagement into a single process focused on the priority Green Line and Main Streets projects. This engagement will help to establish and test new policy and regulatory tools for multi-residential infill development in the Developed Areas Guidebook and through the community planning process. The attached Location Criteria has been updated based on feedback received from stakeholders that was collected for the monitoring report presented in 2015 June (Attachment 3).

Strategic Alignment

The location criteria are intended to encourage the alignment of land use amendment proposals with the MDP's guiding principles. The approach to explore guidelines, policy and regulation for multi-residential infill with related planning projects facilitates a strategic and integrated approach to community planning in the developed areas.

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Social, Environmental, Economic (External)

Social

The strategic placement of multi-residential development within the inner city will assist in providing a variety of housing choices and a range of housing opportunities regarding housing type, built form, tenure, unit size and affordability. This can help to maintain or boost community populations and, as a result, maintain or attract amenities and services.

Environmental

Supporting multi-residential infill helps build more compact neighbourhoods in the developed areas maximizing the potential of existing infrastructure and providing an urban form more supportive of transportation options, including walking, transit and cycling. This form of growth also retains valuable ecological areas and agricultural lands by balancing growth between developed and greenfield locations.

Economic (External)

Multi-residential infill helps create more compact communities that make more efficient use of existing public investment and municipal infrastructure and support local facilities, amenities and services.

Financial Capacity

Current and Future Operating Budget:

No operating budget implications are identified. The work contemplated in this report is largely already underway within the scope of ongoing projects that are resourced and funded.

Current and Future Capital Budget:

No capital budget implications are identified.

Risk Assessment

The stakeholder feedback received in the monitoring report (Attachment 3) indicates that the Location Criteria for Multi-Residential Infill approved in 2014 have increased the understanding of the process, but resulted in limited certainty regarding land use decisions. Council has directed Administration to develop guidelines that expand on the existing location criteria and include design guidance. If the multi-residential guidelines more precisely define the location and design criteria for multi-residential there is a risk that the criteria may become overly restrictive. This could have the result of preventing multi-residential infill development instead of facilitating appropriate infill in a variety of locations and forms. Conversely, retaining the criteria “as is” risks deterring multi-residential infill because of uncertainty about what will be approved. This uncertainty tends to limit development investment and results in lack of community support for infill proposals.

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REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):

The Location Criteria for Multi-Residential Infill in Attachment 1 responds to Council's direction to expand and improve the Location Criteria originally adopted in 2014 March. The remaining guidelines, policy and regulatory tools for multi-residential infill are best developed and implemented in coordination with the Developed Areas Guidebook and other ongoing planning projects for the developed areas. Providing an update on this work with the report for the Developed Areas Guidebook will clarify how these tools apply within the broader policy direction for the developed areas.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Location Criteria for Multi-Residential Infill
2. Location Criteria for Multi-Residential Infill (as adopted 2014 March)
3. Record of Specific Stakeholder Comments