

**Planning & Development Services Report to
Infrastructure and Planning Committee
2025 May 14**

**ISC: UNRESTRICTED
IP2025-0325**

**Land Use Bylaw Amendments to Exempt Rowhouses from Development Permits
in Developing Communities**

PURPOSE

This report proposes amendments to Land Use Bylaw 1P2007 (the “Bylaw”) that removes the requirement for a permitted use development permit for a rowhouse building in developing communities. These amendments will reduce the application timelines for permitted use rowhouses leading to faster delivery of housing.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION

Council approved the Rezoning for Housing report, Calgary’s Housing Strategy 2024-2030 – Land Use Amendment Citywide (LOC2024-0017) and Land Use Bylaw Amendments (CPC2024-0213), on 2024 May 14. At that time, Council directed Administration to bring forward amendments to the Land Use Bylaw that exempt freehold townhouse and rowhouse developments that meet the requirements of the Bylaw within developing communities from the need to obtain a development permit. Council passed the following updated motion (EC2024-0692):

“Direct Administration, in alignment with Home is Here recommendation 4.B.2, speed up approval processes as appropriate, in order to continue to support the construction of more housing, to bring forward amendments to Land Use Bylaw 1P2007 that exempts free hold/fee simple townhouse and rowhouse developments, that meet the requirements of land use bylaw 1P2007, within newly developing greenfield communities from the need to obtain a development permit, with an update to Council by end of 2024 Q3.”

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Infrastructure and Planning Committee:

1. Forward this Report to the 2025 June 10 Public Hearing Meeting of Council; and
2. Recommend that Council give three readings to the proposed amendments to the Land Use Bylaw 1P2007 (Attachment 2).

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER/GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS

General Manager Debra Hamilton Concurs with the recommendations of this report. This change will streamline housing approval processes and address the growing demand for diverse housing options in developing communities.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Removing the requirement for a development permit for a rowhouse that aligns with the Bylaw in developing communities reduces timelines for applicants.
- The proposed amendments streamline the planning process enabling the creation of more housing.

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- The proposed amendments allow all types of low-density residential development in developing communities to follow the same approval process which encourages a wider range of housing options.
- The conditions typically placed on these development permits will be addressed through the proposed exemption rules (Attachment 2) and the building permit process.

DISCUSSION

When Rezoning for Housing was approved by Council, a motion was carried, directing Administration to amend the Bylaw to speed up the approval process for rowhouses in developing communities by removing the requirement for a development permit. This report responds to Council's direction by proposing amendments to the Land Use Bylaw to allow rowhouses in developing communities to proceed directly to the building permit stage when they meet all of the rules within the Bylaw.

This will result in an average time savings for applicants of three month. Currently, the building and development processes for constructing single and semi-detached buildings are faster which leads to fewer rowhouses being built in developing communities. Exempting rowhouse buildings from development permits will bring the building and development processes in alignment with single and semi-detached buildings, making rowhouses more attractive to build.

In developing communities, low density residential development is a permitted use. This means that proposed developments that conform to the rules of the Bylaw must be approved. Currently, single and semi-detached homes do not require a development permit and only require a building permit. Rowhouse buildings are also a permitted use but currently require a development permit. The development permit process allows the City to review and condition planning, utility and transportation considerations. The proposed Bylaw amendments and changes to the building permit process address the considerations that would typically be part of the development permit review.

Land Use Bylaw Amendments

The proposed amendments will exempt rowhouses in developing communities from requiring a development permit aligning the process with single and semi-detached dwellings. These amendments were developed through a collaborative process with representation from across Planning & Development Services and in coordination with Building Industry and Land Development (BILD) Calgary.

To be exempt from a development permit a rowhouse must meet the following criteria:

- Align to all rules in the Bylaw.
- Be a permitted use in the developing area.
- Maximum of one Dwelling Unit per parcel and parcel is not a bare land unit.
- Where there is a rear lane, all parking must be accessed from the lane.
- Be subject to an active development agreement.
- Have each lot drain directly to the street and lane or provide a swale and overland drainage easement.

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This change only applies to the Residential – Low Density Mixed Housing (R-G) (R-Gm) District and the Residential – Low Density Multiple Dwelling (R-2M) District. There are no changes proposed through this report for the Residential - Grade-Oriented Infill District, (R-CG) district. There are no changes to the ability to appeal by communities as proposed through this report as this change would only apply to permitted uses with no relaxations in the developing areas.

Lot Drainage

The proposed Bylaw amendments address drainage considerations that would typically have been addressed at the development permit stage, requiring builders and developers to provide the appropriate drainage solutions during either the subdivision or building permit stage. Rowhouses are connected homes with one or no side yards, potentially making it difficult for water to drain from the middle units. Sites are ideally graded to drain directly to the street and/or rear lane. A swale is needed when a rear garage prevents drainage to the lane and water would be trapped between the rowhouse and garage. The overland drainage easement and swale allows the water to drain, passing through multiple properties prior to draining to the street or lane.

Implementation

If approved, an effective date of 2025 September 15 is recommended to allow for revisions to building permit application forms, changes to the application intake software, system updates, and staff training.

EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public engagement was undertaken | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dialogue with interested parties was undertaken |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public/interested parties were informed | <input type="checkbox"/> Public communication or engagement was not required |

External engagement was focused on collaborating with the building industry to understand how the proposed change would affect their business processes. Through a series of meetings with BILD Calgary, the proposed amendments were refined, and the resulting application process was developed to ensure a successful implementation of the change.

BILD Calgary provided a letter (Attachment 4) in support of the proposed amendments, noting the opportunity to streamline approvals, reduce construction timelines, and lower the costs associated with bringing rowhouses to market.

IMPLICATIONS

Social

The proposed amendments align with *Home is Here - The City of Calgary's Housing Strategy 2024-2030* and specifically supports outcome 1c: “amend and streamline planning policy and process to allow for diverse housing” by making it faster and more affordable to create more homes.

Environmental

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The proposed bylaw amendments support the *Calgary Climate Strategy – Pathways to 2050* by making it easier to construct rowhouse buildings, a built form that provides more housing in less area and reduces the loss of agricultural land. More compact communities can better support transit and potentially reduce greenhouse gas emissions in new communities.

Economic

Removing the requirement for a development permit for a rowhouse has significant economic benefits. The proposed amendments will result in time savings for the development and building industry which will have an impact on the affordability of future rowhouse developments.

Service and Financial Implications

No anticipated financial impact

No anticipated financial impact. Approval of the proposed amendments supports efficient use of staff resourcing, allowing staff to focus on more complex applications. The Housing Accelerator Fund is supporting this project and covering the implementation costs.

RISK

If the proposed Bylaw amendments are not approved rowhouse developments will continue to not be aligned with single and semi-detached buildings, and could result in fewer rowhouses being built. These changes represent ongoing efforts to improve efficiencies in the planning process, provide value through file review and create increasingly streamlined planning approvals.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Background and Previous Council Direction
2. Proposed Amendments to Land Use Bylaw 1P2007
3. Summary of Land Use Bylaw Amendments
4. BILD Support Letter
5. Presentation

Department Circulation

General Manager/Director	Department	Approve/Consult/Inform
Deb Hamilton	Planning and Development Services	Approve
Teresa Goldstein	Community Planning	Approve
Kathy Davies Murphy	City and Regional Planning	Inform

Author: Arysha Lalach, City and Regional Planning & Matthew Atkinson, Community Planning