



# COMMUNITY INFILL PANEL

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

MAY 11, 2016

## MEETING INTRODUCTION

On the evening of Wednesday, March 9, 2016, the Community Infill Panel held its third meeting at the Commonwealth Community Recreation Centre. The group convened to discuss their ideas and opinions about the existing Mature Neighbourhood Overlay regulations. This feedback will be used to help inform

the MNO Review project currently underway. The next Community Infill Panel Meeting will be held on **Wednesday, September 13, 2016**. The highlights of the Panel's second meeting have been recorded below.

## GENERAL PARKING DISCUSSION

The Panel discussed the topic of parking in Edmonton, led by James Veltkamp, a Planner on the Zoning Bylaw team. Currently, there are three parking projects which are looking at main streets, religious assemblies and parking in mature, residential areas. The group was tasked with discussing the broad topic of off-street parking in Edmonton. The Panel's experiences and opinions are recorded below:

### What has been your experience with off-street parking?

- Would it matter how parking rates are calculated?
- Increase the TOD parking reduction area from 400m to 800m. People can walk further
- If it is a Secondary Suite, there is likely only one vehicle and people can park on the street if it is a corner lot
- Many families have 2 or more cars
- There should be a parking maximum
- What are we losing if we give up parking spaces?
- People use their garages for storage
- Look at parking reductions for main street areas as well
- People park in residential areas when visiting main streets
- Certain neighbourhoods (e.g. University, Garneau, McCauley) have parking problems, look at parking permits
- Terwillegar Towne has rear lanes, future garage suites can lead to congestion. Garages are well used in Terwillegar Towne
- The shape of the lot (narrow) reduces parking opportunities.
- Look at front access vs. rear lane streets and associated parking congestion effects
- Not unusual to have a 4 car family in Parkallen. Two cars for the parents, two for the kids
- Encouraging families to stay in neighbourhood but lack of parking may cause problems
- Do people have many cars because they are easy to park? Limited parking availability may limit car ownership
- Vancouver has lots of permit parking, car shares are popular because they can park in permit holder spaces
- Carshare is only a small part of the solution
- Is having a 2 stall requirement unfair? People rent out their stalls
- Don't let the automobile dictate neighbourhood planning

# GARAGE AND GARDEN SUITES DISCUSSION

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The Panel discussed the topic of garage and garden suites in Edmonton, led by Jeff Booth, a Planner on the Zoning Bylaw team. The group was tasked with discussing the topic of garage and garden suites in Edmonton. The Panel's experiences and opinions are recorded below:

## **Parking**

- If you think you can rent out the garage or garden suite without a parking stall, you don't need the requirement
- Has the City looked at the demographic that rents out garage and garden suites?

## **Size**

- Should there be a maximum floor area?
- Why is the requirement for 18% at grade?
- When the maximum is smaller than the first storey, it makes for awkward construction and stairs are forced to be located on the outside of the suite
- People like tiny houses these days
- 2 bedroom garage suites feel really tight and stairs create an awkward design
- Owners like to park inside their garage and may not want to have tenants parking in their garage due to their storage of personal belongings inside the garage
- It costs more to build stairs outside vs. inside the suite
- Encourage the construction of garage and garden suites by not including stairs in the floor area calculations
- Owner gains storage space under the stairs if the suite stairs are located inside the garage
- It would be nice to remove your required parking stall and convert it to additional living space
- Outside stairs present a safety concern, especially in winter months
- Building to the maximum size presents unlivable conditions for a 2-bedroom Garage suite

## **Should size be governed by Site Coverage**

- Are there additional drainage tools (ie. Greywater systems etc.) which could increase the site coverage requirement?
- You can't let a 900 square foot house dictate the design of a garage suite

## **Discretionary Use**

- Participant would not advocate for more community notification of garage and garden suites
- What does discretionary use status really protect from?
- Could these development criteria for garage and garden suites be covered under Development Officer discretion?
- It comes down to predictability in the approval process. Suites are a large investment prior to getting approved
- The City should have a clear message of which lots can be built on
- Look at Vancouver's Laneway Housing Guidelines, a great resource
- Guidelines make garage and garden suites clearer and more accessible but may create cookie-cutter suites

- Is there any required amenity area for Garage suites? Not at present.
- Garage and garden suites should have a yard/landscaping to feel like a residence
- Calgary does not allow front setback for Amenity Area. Many Secondary Suites were refused because of that amenity area requirement. If garage/garden suites required Amenity Area, could result in more refusals
- Is there an incentive to provide amenity area? Perhaps reduce parking stall amount to increase building footprint
- Do we regulate where garage and garden suite entrances are located? Not at present.
- What are the notification requirements for Class A garage and Garden Suites? There are none for garages, but there is for a Garden Suite.

## AMENITY AREA DISCUSSION

The Panel discussed the topic of amenity area in Edmonton, led by Christopher Wilcott, a Planner on the Zoning Bylaw team. The group was tasked with discussing the topic of amenity area in Edmonton. The Panel's experiences and opinions are recorded below:

- How many variances are granted in relation to minimum Amenity Area requirements?
- Is Amenity Area specified for landscaping? Not at present.
- Prefers percentages instead of a fixed area amount for amenity space

**Currently, the City does not allow Private Amenity Area to include the front yard, although people can use their front yard for a variety of recreational purposes. It is proposed that Private Amenity area for certain dwelling types in certain circumstances, be allowed in front yards and above-grade. What do you think of this proposed change?**

- People should be able to use the front setback as Amenity Area
- North/South facing orientation plays into amenity area for front setback regarding access to sunlight
- There is an arbitrary placement of the required Amenity Area when the regulations state it cannot be placed in the front setback
- It's hard to explain Amenity Area because it's a no-brainer. It's nearly impossible to build on a lot without providing amenity area

**This project is considering requirements for Common Amenity Area, which is recreation space that is shared by all residents of a multi-unit housing development. It has been estimated that 2.5 square meters of Common Amenity Area adds about a \$7000 cost to each unit and results in higher maintenance fees. We would welcome your thoughts on this topic**

- **Should the City require Common Amenity Area?**
- **If so, should it be required indoors, outdoors, both, or at the discretion of the property developer?**
- **How should we balance amenity space with overall cost and housing affordability?**

- People don't want to pay more for common amenity area
- Adds value to property but people don't tend to use common amenity areas, it's seen as rotating private space (eg. not using the building's sauna when someone else is in it)
- Don't need amenity area in rental high-rise apartments
- Incentivize adding amenity area by providing semi-private amenity area instead of private areas
- Common area takes away from rentable unit space
- Guest suites in condos are a good idea
- Look at height bonusing for the inclusion of amenity area
- Hendrix condo in Oliver has a private park as their amenity area
- Maintenance of amenity areas is a big concern for property managers
- There are safety concerns associated with having semi-private spaces as amenity areas (loitering etc.)
- If the building is located close to a park, less amenity space should be required
- Activating amenity space is not about the design but there must be a need for the space
- Pools and hot tubs are generally being shut down due to lack of use by residents

**Since we last consulted with EFCL on the Amenity Area amendments, we removed the 33% reduction in Private Amenity Area when a development is within 100 metres (2/3 block) of a public park. What do you think of this proposed change?**

- Proximity to local amenities should dictate the amenity area requirements
- Developers should pay into a community fund for provision of amenity area when a park proximity reduction is permitted

## OPEN INFILL DISCUSSION

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- Panel members are hoping they can provide solutions, the City should provide them with content they can use
- Wants to know what feedback has come from other groups in terms of what community character is and means
- Some communities are divided, residents with larger lots are against lot subdivision
- Certain subsections of a community is opposed to infill. They voice their concerns to their Community League which does not have an issue with it.
- Panel member spends time guiding their community into more constructive outlets for voicing opposition with infill
- There is still fear and resentment towards infill due to poor construction practices
- Infill is everywhere in the city, both enjoyed and feared
- People want to maintain an estate look for their lots
- People will become more comfortable with infill as more infill homes are constructed
- Many communities are currently having discussions about infill
- Keep up the positive work that the City is doing
- Use plain language in communications
- The infill tour was helpful as it challenged many people's perspectives on infill
- Show skinny open houses to people who oppose infill
- Old housing stock must be replaced

- People may fear that they're being priced out of the market
- Fear of property values going down with skinny houses in the neighbourhood
- Low income housing options are disappearing in north Glenora
- One panel member joined the CIP because they were interested in hearing people's views towards infill
- Hears a lack of knowledge about what happens when there is no infill in a neighbourhood regarding service provision, school closures etc
- Have a good neighbour policy agreement for developers who build infill
- Construction acknowledgement form and ticketing are good measures
- Educate about the cost of sprawl as a way to incentive infill development
- Continue advocacy towards infill
- People who are involved in the infill conversation will look at the available resources. Do we have resources that can be handed out to communities?
- Infill: breathing life into older neighbourhoods
- Build more traditional character homes
- Some people want smaller homes and lot subdivision
- It's based on cost, if it's affordable to build larger homes, people will build them
- Transit must be improved in infill areas. Education options are also important when choosing areas to live

## CONTACT WITH CITY ADMINISTRATION

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Any new ideas between meetings, questions or concerns can be directed to Christopher Wilcott. Contact methods include:

Email: [christopher.wilcott@edmonton.ca](mailto:christopher.wilcott@edmonton.ca)

Phone: **780-442-7579**

Additionally, scanned copies of notes for inclusion in upcoming meetings can be emailed

**The next meeting will be held on September 14, 2016 at 5:30pm. The duration of the meeting will be 2-3 hours maximum and dinner will be provided.**

### MEETING DATES

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**Wednesday, March 9, 2016**

**Wednesday, May 11, 2016**

**Wednesday, July 13, 2016**

**Wednesday, September 14, 2016**

**Wednesday, November 9, 2016**

For more information on Edmonton Infill, please visit:  
[www.cityofedmontoninfill.ca](http://www.cityofedmontoninfill.ca)

