

# EDMONTON'S INFILL ROADMAP PROJECT SUMMARY

2017



# EVOLVING INFILL

## BALANCING CITY GROWTH UP, IN AND OUT

Keeping our city and neighbourhoods thriving now and into the future. Providing diverse housing options for our residents. Using our resources wisely.

This is what residential infill in Edmonton is all about. People, homes and our evolving communities.

Since August 2014, Edmonton's Infill Roadmap has provided a shared path to support better residential infill in Edmonton's mature and established neighbourhoods. Two years later, it's time to reflect on what we've accomplished and the changes that have been made.

## EDMONTON'S INFILL ROADMAP

### A RECAP

Edmonton's Infill Roadmap was presented to the Executive Committee of City Council on August 19, 2014. It was a two year work plan that consisted of 23 action items that Administration committed to starting before August 2016. These actions were designed to support change in our mature and established neighbourhoods. They are key in the development of more new housing units and the proactive management of growth.

The Infill Roadmap was the product of an eight month public engagement process that we called Evolving Infill. We heard from more than 1,000 residents and industry representatives through a variety of avenues, including in-person events, online forums, workshops and discussion guides.

### What is residential infill?

Residential infill means new housing in central, mature and established neighbourhoods. It includes new secondary suites, garage suites, duplexes, detached houses, semi-detached and row houses, apartments and other residential mixed-use buildings.

### What is an established neighbourhood?

Established neighbourhoods are neighbourhoods that are primarily residential, mostly planned and developed before 1995, and generally located within the Anthony Henday.



# THE ROADMAP

## WHERE DID WE START?

Edmonton is growing rapidly. Between 2014 and 2016, the population increased by 2.5 percent. Over the next ten years, we forecast that our city will grow by an additional 170,000 people. Whether born here or relocated here, all Edmontonians need a place to call home.

Our Municipal Development Plan, *The Way We Grow*, contains a number of policies designed to encourage sustainable city growth, a diversity of housing types and well-designed and connected communities. Supporting more and better residential infill is a deliberate strategy that will help us achieve these goals.

Our core, established and mature neighbourhoods have a key role to play in Edmonton's future. Infill means renewal and regeneration for our older communities, ensuring that they continue to be as vibrant and desirable as they are today. Infill development will also help ensure that we make the best use of our existing infrastructure, and support the local businesses and amenities that make life in our city great.

## WHERE HAVE WE TRAVELLED?

When the Infill Roadmap was introduced in 2014, we set the ambitious but attainable goal of initiating all 23 actions, including eight priority actions, within two years.

A mid-point progress report was published in September 2015. At that time, Administration had initiated two thirds of the actions and completed almost half. Eight actions were in progress and four were in the planning stages.

Now, at the two year mark, we have initiated all 23 actions. Fifteen are complete while work continues on the remaining eight.

Some actions required multiple steps to fulfil their objectives. A good example is Action 16, to *support more row housing in the Small Scale Infill Development Zone (RF3)*. This action is dependent upon the results of Action 17, *the Mature Neighbourhood Overlay review*.

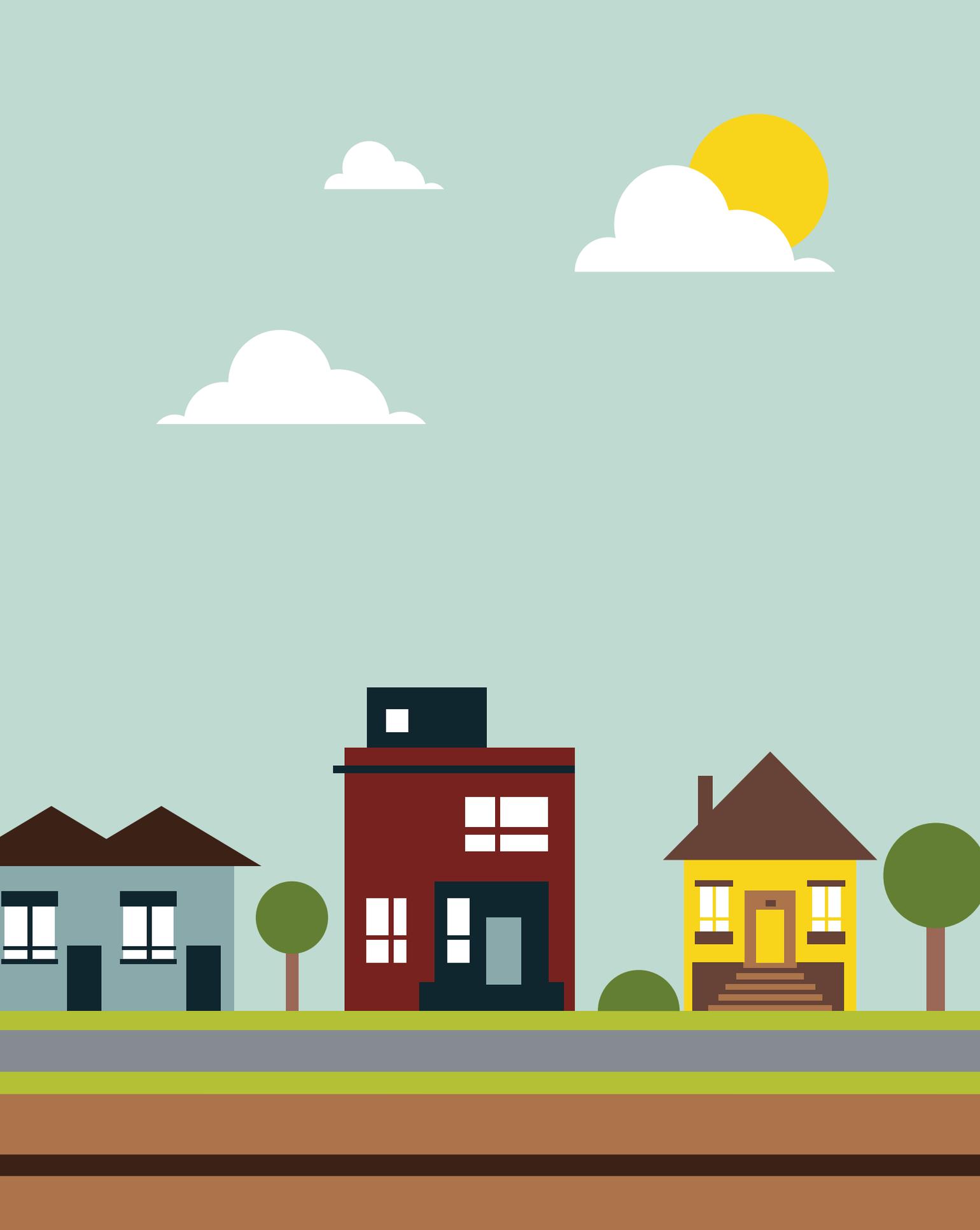
Another example is Action 23, more clear and effective notification and consultation. Although Administration has undertaken numerous initiatives to improve how we communicate and engage with Edmontonians on infill issues, we know there's more that we can do. The outcome of this action may also be influenced by the ongoing Council Initiative for Public Engagement.

Work on all the remaining actions will continue.



# THE ACTIONS







# COMMUNICATION

## ENCOURAGING FREQUENT AND OPEN DISCUSSIONS

**PRIORITY ACTION**



**COMPLETE ACTION**



**ACTION IN PROGRESS**

**1**

**Develop and implement an infill communications strategy to share information clearly and widely with a diverse audience, and to enhance and simplify communication between the City, builders and residents.**

For the past two years, our communications and marketing strategy has kept our messaging simple, clear and concise. It's been an important tool in reminding us to always speak plainly about the infill work that we do.

**2**

**Create a hub on the City's website to share clear, comprehensible information on everything infill.**

In May 2016, we launched the Residential Infill website at [cityofedmontoninfill.ca](http://cityofedmontoninfill.ca). It was a complete overhaul of our previous online presence with updated information, resources and branding. The site has become the hub for infill-related information in the city.

**3**

**Offer a publicly accessible online tool that helps residents and builders visualize what could be built on a lot in an established neighbourhood.**

Maps have been produced showing the potential for the subdivision of single detached lots (RF1) that are 50 feet or wider. The planning phase of building a comprehensive online visualization tool continues.

4

**Require visible and easy-to-understand signs about approved development permits to be posted on a building site in order to let everyone know what will be built and who to contact for more information.**

These signs have been a great success in communicating the future of an infill site to nearby households. As of April 2016, a Development Permit Notification Sign must be posted on all infill construction sites. The sign tells neighbours about the upcoming project and provides contact information for the builder.

5

**Create a “Good Neighbour Construction Guide” that contains information for builders and residents about rules and good practices for infill construction, and identifies who to contact with questions or concerns.**

Released to the public in March 2015, the *Good Neighbour Guide*, available on the Residential Infill website ([cityofedmontoninfill.ca](http://cityofedmontoninfill.ca)), encourages better relations between neighbours by explaining the bylaws that govern infill issues. An updated version of this guide that focuses on construction practices was released as the *Residential Infill Construction Guide* in the summer of 2016, and a second publication, titled *Neighbours of Infill*, is being worked on to give neighbours information on construction expectations and how best to work with builders in their neighbourhood.





# COLLABORATION

## WORKING TOGETHER ON INFILL IN EDMONTON

**PRIORITY ACTION**



**COMPLETE ACTION**



**ACTION IN PROGRESS**

**6**

**Pilot an “Infill Action Insight Group” made up of citizens and builders whose role would be to offer diverse perspectives to City Administration as we work to advance infill.**

The Infill Action Insight Group consists of 13 members selected from a pool of 70 applicants. While the group has been renamed the Community Infill Panel, these 13 community leaders and city builders have been meeting bi-monthly since January 2016 to provide feedback on infill-related issues. Minutes from Panel meetings are available online.

**7**

**Provide tools and resources for residents and groups that are aimed at supporting their involvement in and ownership of infill conversations and activities.**

Over the last two years, a number of tools and resources have been created to enhance the understanding of infill in our city. These include:

- The *Infill Action Conversation Toolkit*
- *RF1 (Single Detached Residential Zone) and Garage & Garden Suite Zoning Changes* handout
- *What is Zoning?* booklet
- *How to Respond to a Land Development Application* booklet
- *Mature Neighbourhood Overlay Regulations* illustrations booklet
- Mature Neighbourhood Overlay educational video series



## 8

### **Support and work with partners to create programs and events aimed at fostering ongoing conversations about infill, showcasing best practices, encouraging innovation in design, building relationships and exchanging information.**

There have been some impressive programs and events held in the last two years:

- The **Infill Tour and Workshop**, held January 24 and 27, 2015, was a collaboration between the City of Edmonton, City Region Studies Centre, Infill Development in Edmonton Association and Stantec. Participants were offered a guided tour of a few of Edmonton's mature neighbourhoods and had the opportunity to work with experts to explore the links between infill of the past, present and future.
- The **2015 Urban Design Awards**, used to recognize individuals, organizations, firms and projects that have contributed to urban design and the quality of life in Edmonton, added an **infill category**.
- We sent City of Edmonton experts to the **2016 Home and Garden Show**. Armed with tools and resources, these infill champions answered questions about construction, neighbourhood impacts and key issues like drainage.
- The **2016 Edmonton Infill Design Competition** was the first of its kind and garnered international submissions. The design competition encouraged conversations about infill and allowed the development community to explore what's possible for infill design. The competition demonstrated that infill can augment, rather than detract, from the character of Edmonton's established neighbourhoods.



## 9

### **Develop an infill-focused module or course for the City's Planning Academy program to share information with interested Edmontonians in an interactive setting.**

Planning Academy offers a series of courses designed to provide a better understanding of the planning and development process in Edmonton. There are currently three core courses and four electives, each of which run between three and six hours. More than 150 citizens have already completed the Academy's new Infill course since launching in February 2015. Our next step is to make these courses available online.



## 10

### **Identify and support a range of pilot projects that explore creative and new forms of infill in order to provide learning opportunities for everyone.**

The City is in the process of identifying potential pilot projects that will allow everyone, from citizens to builders, to see the opportunities made possible by new forms of infill.



# KNOWLEDGE

## UNDERSTANDING OUR NEIGHBOURHOODS

**PRIORITY ACTION**



**COMPLETE ACTION**



**ACTION IN PROGRESS**

**11**

**Undertake a project within the City's Administration to build a high level snapshot of neighbourhood indicators and planned investments in groups of established neighbourhoods in order to better inform planning decisions, infrastructure investment and service delivery.**

Information was gathered from various City teams and shared with all work areas to improve decision making about growth and changes in our established neighbourhoods. This information will be shared publicly in 2017.

**12**

**Develop an infill-specific information resource to provide residents and builders with easy access to information related to how the City plans for, assesses and responds to drainage needs in established areas, and what people can do to address issues or concerns on their own lots.**

The *Infill and Drainage Guide* launched in early 2015 and is currently available on [cityofedmontoninfill.ca](http://cityofedmontoninfill.ca). The document answers common questions regarding the effect of infill on the city's drainage system and directs residents and builders to additional resources where they can learn more. A second version of this guide is planned for 2017.



# 13

## **Include potential infill growth scenarios in neighbourhood sewer modeling assessments where possible, in order to better understand the possible cumulative effects of new housing on drainage infrastructure.**

Edmonton's Sewer Upgrading Strategy now accounts for the impact that infill will have on the City. The strategy is also designed to address capacity issues in the minor systems throughout Edmonton.





# RULES

## CHANGING OUR RULES TO SUPPORT OUR GROWTH

**PRIORITY ACTION**



**COMPLETE ACTION**



**ACTION IN PROGRESS**

**14**

**Create more opportunities for garage and garden suites in established neighbourhoods by amending the Zoning Bylaw's location criteria and site regulations for these types of housing.**

This priority item was addressed in April 2015, when Council approved Bylaw 17116 that reduced barriers for developing Garden and Garage Suites. These changes were determined after a high level analysis of the challenges homeowners faced. In addition, a "How To" guide for developing secondary, garage and garden suites will be released in 2017.

**15**

**Change the RFI (Single Detached) zone to allow the subdivision of properties into narrower lots that are half the average width of the other lots on the block (but not less than 25ft wide).**

This priority item was accomplished in April 2015, when City Council approved Bylaw 17116 that reduced the required width for single detached housing in RF1 Zoned lots from 39.3 feet to 25 feet. This change allowed for a greater number of opportunities for low density infill redevelopment.



16

**Create more opportunities for row housing in the RF3 (Small Scale Infill Development) zone by removing location restrictions and changing the site regulations that currently limit this form of infill on RF3 lots.**

This work is ongoing and is dependent on the results of the revision of the Mature Neighbourhood Overlay, outlined in Action 17.

17

**Revise the Mature Neighbourhood Overlay of the Zoning Bylaw in order to make it a more effective tool to support infill in our mature neighbourhoods, reduce the need for variances and Class B development permits and improve the approvals process.**

The Mature Neighbourhood Overlay (MNO) has undergone significant work since 2014. Now, after consulting with more than 7,000 citizens, representatives from community leagues and the development industry, the draft regulations of the updated MNO will be discussed at the February 1, 2017, Urban Planning Committee of City Council.

18

**Develop zoning regulations that will proactively support residential infill through transit oriented development in existing and future high frequency transit areas.**

While Transit Oriented Development Guidelines were approved by Council in February 2012, there are numerous infill-specific opportunities that can be realized. We're currently still in the process of scoping this project, but opportunities to integrate this work with other initiatives are also being considered.





# PROCESS

## IMPROVING AND CLARIFYING OUR PROCESSES

**PRIORITY ACTION**



**COMPLETE ACTION**



**ACTION IN PROGRESS**

19

**Revise the content and format of notification letters for infill related development permit and rezoning applications in order to clarify the purpose of these letters, and to provide relevant and easy to understand information about what is being proposed, allowed or varied.**

Our notification letters for approved development permits were reworded for clarity and have been in use since October 2015.



20

**Pilot a team of City staff focused on approvals and permitting for small scale infill (up to row housing), along with related communication and engagement activities, to improve infill processes and build internal expertise.**

Three teams have been established as a result of this action. Since launching in 2015, the **Residential Infill Development Approvals** team, consisting of six planners and one principal planner, has reviewed thousands of applications. The **Infill Liaison** team launched in August 2016 and is comprised of two principal planners. The team's role is to advance the City's infill conversations through outreach and education, coordinate internal infill work, analyze infill issues and complaints, serve as a point of contact for infill questions and support ongoing policy development. Finally, the **Infill Compliance** team is comprised of a Community Standards Peace Officer and a Development Compliance Officer working together to inspect and monitor active infill sites.

21

**Test new approaches to the City's development approvals process in order to steward creative residential infill projects or showcase new-to-Edmonton forms of infill.**

Pre-application meetings are now available for all small-scale residential infill development proposals. These free, 25-minute meetings are offered twice monthly and give builders the opportunity to speak with a city planner before submitting their development permit application. The meetings help builders navigate the development permit process, find solutions to make their project a success and be aware of building practices that are respectful to the neighbours.

22

**Pursue changes to processes to help reduce costs, expedite approvals and support affordability.**

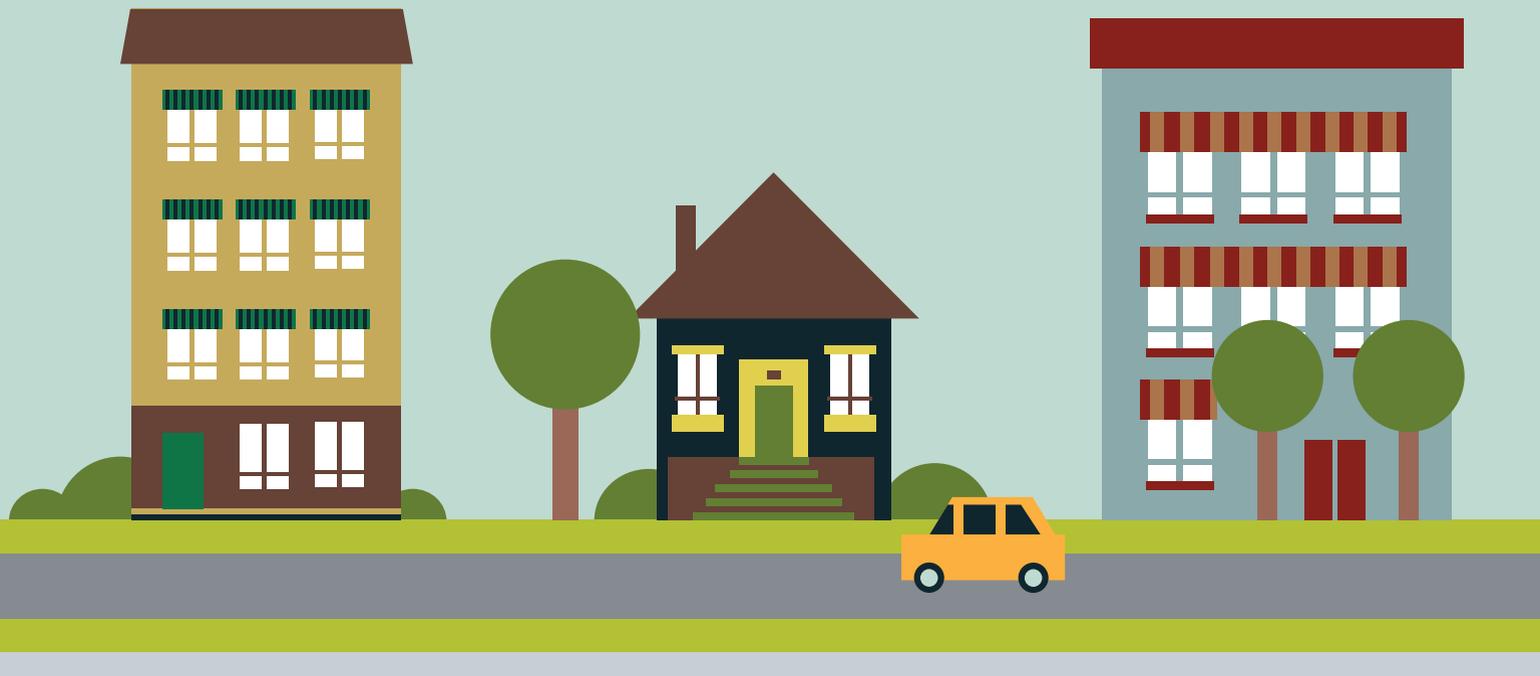
We're currently working on process improvements to accelerate the approval times for all development permits. Work is also being done to move application permits online to make it easier for everyone to access.

23

**Re-examine infill-related notification and consultation processes and approaches in order to inform potential changes that can improve their effectiveness and transparency.**

We're in the process of reviewing our public engagement practices within the City Planning and Development Services branches so that we can improve the way we engage with all forms of development, including infill. The Council Initiative for Public Engagement, a city-wide initiative that began in 2014, will also improve how we engage about infill in Edmonton.

# THE DETOURS





Realizing the Infill Roadmap would spur supplementary actions, we committed to support additional infill opportunities that were a result of these action items.

To date, we've completed, are working on or have plans for **many supplementary actions**. Each of these "**detours**" go above and beyond the initial 23 action items identified in the Infill Roadmap, and are designed to encourage better infill projects.

These detours have been instrumental in promoting better infill practices and, as a result, better relationships between neighbours, builders and the City. The majority of this work has been undertaken without an organized budget or team. Instead, it's the product of our dedicated staff, who have gone over and above their regular duties to complete these improvements for our city.

These detours demonstrate the continuation of a meaningful infill conversation as well as the depth of the commitment that Administration has to support great infill in our mature and established neighbourhoods.



---

Each of the detour items was designed as a solution to a problem or concern we observed in the infill environment.

We discovered...



### People love the trees and shrubbery in mature neighbourhoods.

RESPONSE

---

- Added landscaping requirements for low density residential development and created incentives for preserving existing trees and shrubs  
BYLAW 17672, JUNE 2016
- Produced an educational brochure titled *Protecting Your Trees During Construction*  
SEPTEMBER 2016
- Created the *Landscaping: Residential Requirements and Incentives* brochure  
SEPTEMBER 2016
- Proposed a Tree Protection Plan for Boulevard Trees  
PROPOSED



### Infill homes required new privacy regulations that work for neighbours.

RESPONSE

---

- Increased privacy screening regulations  
BYLAW 17727, AUGUST 2016
- Updated window placement and alignment requirements  
BYLAW 17727, AUGUST 2016



## New construction practices were needed with neighbours living in close quarters.

### RESPONSE

- Amended the Community Standards Bylaw to restrict construction noise, increase fines for noncompliance and add detail to existing construction nuisance regulations  
BYLAW 17678, JUNE 28, 2016
- Amended the Traffic Bylaw to increase fines for construction-related offences such as materials stored on sidewalks and roadways  
BYLAW 17679, JUNE 28, 2016
- Increased Zoning Bylaw 12800 Penalties for Offences  
BYLAW 17554, APRIL 2016
- Wrote a *Worksite Code of Conduct* that includes guidelines for contractors and subcontractors  
MAY 2016
- Developed a Construction Site Management Acknowledgement Form that outlines best practices for builders when working on infill projects  
JUNE 2016
- Created a construction postcard that is now included in Development Permit mail-outs, on the website and handed out by Enforcement Officers during inspections  
MARCH 2016
- Started work on a document outlining when and how construction fencing needs to be set up  
COMING SOON
- Started work on a series of videos to highlight construction issues and best practices  
COMING SOON



## Infill projects weren't always developed to the specs laid out in the project's initial drawings.

### RESPONSE

- Are creating a Development Completion Inspection to ensure the final form of the building matches the Development Permit approved at the beginning  
COMING SOON
- Will begin completing site survey updates with geodetic elevations of the building foundation to ensure buildings aren't built too tall  
COMING SOON



## Communication and understanding between infill homeowners, their new neighbours and the project builders improves the construction process for everyone.

### RESPONSE

---

- Started work on an online Neighbour Construction Checklist built specifically for neighbours of infill; the checklist will provide responses to issues that typically come up when there's construction next door  
COMING SOON
- Created a Neighbourhood Handout for builders to give to neighbours of their upcoming projects; the handout will include rough timelines, information about the project and contact information  
COMING SOON
- Began filming videos that share the stories of the people who live in infill homes across Edmonton  
COMING SOON



## Easy access to information helped residents when an infill project comes to their street.

### RESPONSE

---

- Began a comprehensive review of the 311 scripts that address infill related questions  
ONGOING
- Improved our tracking process for infill-related complaints in the City databases  
ONGOING



## Extra planning was required to support the nuances of building in established neighbourhoods.

### RESPONSE

- Now require Lot Grading Plans for all infill development **BYLAW 17277, OCTOBER 2015**
  - Drainage requirements were not as strict when established neighbourhoods were built. When homes were being built to current codes in these old neighbourhoods, water was being pushed from the new property to neighbouring properties. Our updated lot grading plans ensure water is responsibly directed toward the front and back of the lot, and not towards neighbours
- Started work on a Temporary Construction Use Permit **COMING SOON**
  - This permit will ensure builders are more responsible when using the road right of way to access the site, temporarily storing materials and protecting public property



## Infill issues affect many City departments and shared learning helps us provide better service.

### RESPONSE

- Prepared presentations for City Administration to build awareness and encourage collective action on infill construction issues  
**MAY-SEPTEMBER 2016**
- Proposed a Referral Process Review to explore the creation of memorandums of understanding that would ensure reported complaints go to the appropriate City group  
**PROPOSED**



# LESSONS LEARNED

Implementing the actions in Edmonton's Infill Roadmap has taught us a few things about how we build a city together. This has been a learning process for us as a City, for our communities and for our developers, but we've taken these lessons to heart.

Here are a few of them:

---

**Infill is a complex issue that takes a lot of coordination between many groups for it to be successful. At the City, we've been adapting to this complexity and we will continue to evolve and grow as our work continues.**

---

**It's very important we stay connected to the day-to-day lives of the people living in our mature and established communities. This became clear as we began dealing with issues that stemmed from infill construction.**

---

**Infill in Edmonton is evolving. Therefore, our approach to infill must evolve as well. We have to be very adaptable in how we address our action items and what we consider priorities.**

---

**Understanding is essential, and proactive communication is our best tool in getting there. We're working on creating an even more thorough communication and marketing plan to help all Edmontonians better understand the points of view and the benefits of infill in our city.**

---





## WHAT'S NEXT?

The first Infill Roadmap set us on this path and we'll continue to work on completing all 23 actions, and supplementary actions, as we look ahead to what else can be done.

One of the key lessons we learned through Evolving Infill and implementing Edmonton's Infill Roadmap is that we cannot do it alone – *we need everyone's help.*

That's why our next step will be re-engaging with the public to help us identify what's going well, and where we could improve to make new development easier to talk about, build and live beside.

Infill will be a critical part of Edmonton's growth strategy over the coming decades and we look forward to taking our next steps together.





[cityofedmontoninfill.ca](http://cityofedmontoninfill.ca)