

# Evolving Infill

## Recommendation

That the July 3, 2018, Urban Form and Corporate Strategic Development report CR\_5636, be received for information.

## Executive Summary

This report summarizes the results of the Evolving Infill project. Evolving Infill set out to deliver a two year work plan to continue to advance infill in Edmonton. Infill supports the Corporate Outcome of “Edmonton is attractive and compact”. The work plan included a transparent, robust, and iterative engagement process, which was supported by technical reports, evidence, and analysis. The final product, Infill Roadmap 2018, (Attachment 1) contains 25 action items for Administration to undertake that will help to welcome more people and new homes into Edmonton’s older neighbourhoods.

## Report

### Background

Infill continues to be a key part of how Edmonton responds to change and prepares for future growth. All major cities experience infill as a dynamic and normal part of renewal. Infill is a critical way for municipalities to manage population growth, provide a diversity of housing choice, mitigate environmental impacts, maximize infrastructure investments and fiscal sustainability, bolster economic growth, and revitalize neighbourhoods. Since approval of *The Way We Grow* in 2010, Administration has responded to its policy direction by undertaking efforts that enable and encourage more infill development.

Administration initiated the first major effort in 2013 as the Evolving Infill project, which embarked on a city-wide conversation and public engagement process to understand how the City could make infill easier and better for everyone involved. The result was a two year work plan for Administration with 23 actions that would help enable more infill. The work plan was called *Edmonton’s Infill Roadmap*.

The focus of *Edmonton’s Infill Roadmap* was primarily low scale housing, and by 2016 incremental changes could be seen in Edmonton neighbourhoods. At the same time, Administration responded to the natural consequences of increased infill by

undertaking an additional 30 actions to help improve construction practices, and communications to mitigate the impacts. By the summer of 2016, Administration had initiated all of the actions in *Edmonton's Infill Roadmap* and began to proactively consider the next evolution of actions.

### **Development of the Infill Roadmap 2018**

The public conversation shifted between 2013 and 2016, and while there were still diverse and conflicting perspectives on infill, the City's communications efforts appeared to be helping residents and stakeholders have conversations about the needs, outcomes, and challenges associated with infill. Evolving Infill was rebooted and a project team was assembled in the summer of 2016. The project team considered the scope and aims of this second Evolving Infill project and carried forward the key lessons learned from the first time around, namely:

- for implementation to be successful, a coordinated and integrated approach is required
- a commitment to responsiveness and adaptability is important to ensure that the unforeseen spin-off effects of implementation can be managed
- proactive communication is essential to establish reasonable expectations among stakeholders, and so that they can anticipate change and be able to make decisions using appropriate and relevant information

Building off of these lessons, the work that had been done, and the work that was in progress, the Evolving Infill project team identified the following objectives:

- mature the public conversation on infill
- produce another action plan for Administration to enable and encourage infill, with a more strategic focus on medium and high scale opportunities
- ensure that the data and results of the project are carried forward through to implementation in an integrated and coordinated fashion

After hiring project consultants, the project team set out to design and execute a robust and thorough public engagement plan, recognizing that achieving the objectives of the project depended heavily on the ability to successfully communicate, interact, and build relationships with residents and key stakeholder groups. The depth and extent of the engagement process is one of the most significant highlights of Evolving Infill. Full details of the public engagement process and results can be found in the *What We Heard* report in Attachment 2.

Following the lead of the experienced project consultants, the project team used a model of city systems that recognizes four distinct but integral perspectives of city life: citizens, public institutions, business community and community organizations. There

were four distinct periods of engagement held over the course of 20 months beginning in fall 2016. Over 1000 people from all four integral city perspectives participated in more than 50 in-person engagement events and meetings. Participants included developers and builders, community league members, housing providers, non profit organizations, realtors, investors, and lenders, children, seniors, multicultural groups, and Indigenous businesses. More than 2,300 respondents completed the two online surveys that were offered during the project. Included in this compilation were eight workshops held with an internal Working Group over two different periods to help develop, refine, and commit to the final draft list of actions. The Working Group was considered the key member from the public institutions perspective.

From the start, the project team and consultants maintained a transparent connection between development of the actions and the ongoing engagement. This connection helped to build trust and credibility with the wide diversity of stakeholders and participants involved. Diverse and innovative tactics and methods were used to allow participants to dive deeply into the challenges and opportunities associated with growth and infill development. Engagement processes allowed people to hear and understand different perspectives, reflect on previous input, respectfully debate the issues with one another, and consider the range of potential opportunities and challenges of managing growth through infill, prior to providing their feedback and suggestions.

Using an iterative approach, while closely tracking the development and changes to the draft actions along the way, the project team consistently applied detailed analyses to the evolution of the actions. The project team discussed all draft actions numerous times, with attention to how they measure up against the engagement feedback, including the infill outcomes identified by engagement participants, and the findings from the Municipal Tools Review (Attachment 3), Market Housing and Affordability Study (Attachment 4), and Edmonton's Urban Neighbourhood Evolution (Attachment 5). Furthermore, draft actions were tested with the internal Working Group for their practical application and feasibility of implementation.

The resulting 20 new actions that appear in the *Infill Roadmap 2018* (Attachment 1) offer a complete work plan for Administration that will help to continue advancing the infill agenda. In particular, some of the actions have been identified as “big moves” - work that will help to make significant progress on the City's infill outcomes. These “big moves” cover challenging topics, such as:

- Identifying the infrastructure investments needed in older neighbourhoods to support infill, taking into consideration the capacity and levels of service for stormwater, sewer, water, electrical and transportation infrastructure
- Identifying and sharing the optimal medium and high scale infill development locations, based on evidence and neighbourhood level indicators

- Improving opportunities for residents to participate more effectively in the planning and development process
- Reducing barriers to infill, such as parking requirements and other zoning barriers
- Improving housing affordability in older neighbourhoods
- Developing an equitable, transparent, and predictable system to share the costs of required infrastructure upgrades and renewal for infill projects (see June 19, 2018 Executive Committee report CR\_5192 on fire hydrant charges as an example).

### **Implementation**

Taking into account lessons learned from the first Evolving Infill and to ensure continuity, the same project team will implement the *Infill Roadmap 2018*. Efforts have also been made to close out and transition any remaining items from the 2014 *Edmonton's Infill Roadmap*. Details of that work are enclosed in Attachment 6.

There is already work underway that is identified as five “in progress” actions that relate directly to the *Infill Roadmap 2018*, and the project team will ensure that this work is aligned and integrated with all forthcoming infill actions. For example, cross referenced report CR\_5172 presents the development of a prototype tool that will be useful for a number of infill actions going forward. As well, report CR\_4231 on the Missing Middle Housing Review is scheduled for presentation in July and is identified as one of the “big moves” in the *Infill Roadmap 2018*.

Once implementation begins, Administration will undertake a detailed scoping exercise for each new action according to the sequence indicated in the timeline diagram in the *Infill Roadmap 2018*. While some initial work has been done with the Working Group to get a sense of how to initiate each action and what they will entail, detailed scoping work is necessary to identify exactly what resources, time, and steps will be required to complete all of the actions successfully. Nevertheless, Administration and EPCOR have committed to initiating all of the actions within two years using existing resources.

As implementation of the Infill Roadmap 2018 progresses, the project team will carry forward all of the valuable information and feedback received to date through robust engagement. This will ensure accountability to the process and will make the best use of the feedback that was related to implementation. In addition, the project team will continue to record and monitor the measures and targets identified for Evolving Infill (see the Corporate Outcomes and Performance Measurement section below for more details). Infill data and metrics will be available publicly online via the Open City Catalogue and the Citizen Dashboard. Also available online are annual Mature Neighbourhood Reinvestment Reports, annual Infill Snapshots, and monthly building permit activities.

## **Next steps**

Administration will continue to adapt the rules and processes needed to facilitate more and better infill. As this work is underway, broader conversations will emerge as part of the City Plan and Zoning Bylaw Renewal Projects about how we continue to welcome more people and new homes into our older neighbourhoods as a part of a city-wide growth plan and subsequent regulatory review. Administration will ensure that the outputs of the Infill Roadmap 2018 are aligned with the needs of bigger and more complex projects like these. For example, a number of the “big moves” will provide foundational information to understand where to focus growth, such as infrastructure capacity measures and the evidence needed to identify the optimal medium and high scale development locations. Going forward, infill will play an increasing role in how Edmonton responds to growth. The integrated, strategic and cost effective work of *Infill Roadmap 2018* supports a housing and neighbourhood evolution that will create the kinds of urban places that Edmonton needs to be a globally competitive metropolitan centre.

## **Budget/Financial**

All of the actions of the *Infill Roadmap 2018* will be initiated using existing resources. Additional budget and financial implications, if any, will be known once the detailed scoping work for each action has been completed. As such, decisions to bring forward budget requests will be made at that time.

## **Public Engagement**

Evolving Infill undertook a transparent and robust public engagement process that spanned approximately 20 months, with four distinct periods of engagement, approximately 3,300 participants, 50 in-person events, and two online surveys.

Administration used the results of the public engagement in a number of ways. The feedback and data collected helped to define the parameters around which the infill actions were developed, in particular the issues and concerns that people had, and desired outcomes. The feedback also supported an iterative process whereby Administration made decisions and modifications to proposed infill actions informed by what people said, how they felt, and solutions that they had offered. The transparency of the process will allow all participants to see how their feedback was used and to connect to the final Infill Roadmap 2018 in a personal and relevant way.

Complete details of the public engagement process and results can be found in the *What We Heard* report enclosed in Attachment 2.

## Corporate Outcomes and Performance Management

Corporate Outcome(s): Edmonton is attractive and compact			
Outcome(s)	Measure(s)	Result(s)	Target(s)
City achieves residential densification.	New residential units in core and mature neighbourhoods (as a percentage of total new residential units city-wide)	19.2% (2017) Mature Neighbourhood Reinvestment Report	25% Based on the targets in <i>The Way We Grow</i> and in the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan
Neighbourhoods have a range of housing choices	Residential Housing Diversity Index	0.68 (2017) Growth Monitoring Report	TBD (2018)

### Attachments

1. Infill Roadmap 2018
2. What We Heard
3. Municipal Tools Review
4. Market Housing and Affordability Study
5. Edmonton's Urban Neighbourhood Evolution
6. Outstanding Actions From Edmonton's Infill Roadmap 2014

### Others Reviewing this Report

- R. Kits/ S. Padbury, Acting Deputy City Managers, Financial and Corporate Services
- M. Sturgeon, Acting Deputy City Manager, Communications and Engagement
- G. Cebryk, Deputy City Manager, City Operations
- R. G. Klassen, Deputy City Manager, Regional and Economic Development
- A. Laughlin, Deputy City Manager, Integrated Infrastructure Services
- K. Block, Acting Deputy City Manager, Citizen Services