



ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

Zoning Bylaw Comprehensive Review Project *Proposed Amendments to Neighbourhood-Level Infill Regulations*

Description

As part of the Comprehensive Review of the Zoning Bylaw Project (Project), a review of neighbourhood level infill regulations was undertaken to address feedback and concerns raised by stakeholders during the information-gathering phase of the Project.

Using What We Learn

Stakeholders offered valuable feedback which is included in this report. Feedback provided by stakeholders helped to frame discussion and influenced the proposed amendments.

Scope of the Review

At its January 12, 2021 meeting, the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services received an [information report](#) on the review and engagement plan for neighbourhood level infill regulations in Bylaw 8770, Zoning Bylaw, 2009 (Zoning Bylaw). The report also included detailed information regarding the current regulations. The report outlined the regulations which were identified for review by stakeholders and Administration specific to neighbourhood level infill including:

- 1) the Established Neighbourhood Map and whether neighbourhoods, or neighbourhood areas are in the appropriate category;
- 2) the maximum sidewall area regulation, with specific consideration to corner sites. In particular, the sidewall area calculation is confusing and difficult to calculate. Further, builders provided input that some residents would prefer larger homes than the current regulations allow;
- 3) the minimum front yard setback, specifically with consideration to historic front yard setbacks that are less than the current required setback and the possibility of accommodating a lesser setback for new dwellings to match the existing permitted setbacks on the block;
- 4) the location and prohibition of front driveways and driveway crossings;
- 5) the retention of existing trees on private property when a new dwelling is built;
- 6) Including other structures, such as verandas or covered entries, to encroach into a front yard, as front porches are currently;
- 7) the regulation for maximum height-from-grade of the bottom of a front entrance. In particular, the 1.0m height is difficult to meet due to construction concerns; and

- 8) review of the 60% rule to determine if it has been effective. The minimum site width for new development sites for one-unit dwellings is required to be at least 60% of the average site width for one-unit dwelling sites fronting the block face and the opposite block face. This regulation ensures that new sites are compatible with the immediate area in terms of width.

Location of driveway crossings and retention of existing trees were not considered as part of this review as they are topics that will be reviewed by other departments/divisions through their respective workplans.

What We Did

Who we had conversations with	How we gathered input
Internal City Stakeholders (Planning and Development, Community Standards, Building Standards, Solicitors, Communications and Engagement Departments)	Relevant internal Departments were contacted for review and comment for proposed amendments. No comments were received that would preclude these amendments from proceeding.
Focus Group (Industry and General Public)	<p>A focus group consisting of five community members and five industry representatives with experience with infill development was convened over five meetings to discuss the areas of review of the project, gather input and to discuss engagement with stakeholders and the general public on these topics throughout 2021. Community members were selected via an open community call. Industry representatives with experience with infill development were selected to participate, and included representatives selected by the Saskatoon and Regional Homebuilders Association (SHRBA). The proposed recommendations were presented to the focus group on December 20, 2021. Further information on the revised recommendation for door height was shared in March 2022.</p> <p>Members of the focus group provided feedback throughout the process and assisted staff in fully understanding the design impacts of proposed changes.</p>
Representatives from Municipal Planning Commission, Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee, and Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Committee	Representatives from these three committees were invited to attend a workshop on June 22, 2021, and was attended by eight members. The workshops provided participants an overview of topics under review and provided participants the ability to provide feedback to be considered as proposed amendments were being developed. The proposed recommendations were presented on January 11, 2022.

Who we had conversations with	How we gathered input
Saskatoon & Region Home Builders' Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A survey was provided to the membership on the proposed topics for review in the spring of 2021. A total of 13 responses between industry members and realtors were received. • A workshop open to interested members was held on July 13, 2021. Three members participated including the Chief Executive Officer of Saskatoon & Region Home Builders' Association. The workshops provided participants an overview of topics under review and provided participants the ability to provide feedback to be considered as proposed amendments were being developed. • Regular updates were provided to members as part of their e-newsletter. Proposed amendments were shared as part of their e-newsletter on January 12, 2022.
The North Saskatoon Business Association (NSBA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A presentation to interested North Saskatoon Business Association members on the scope of the neighbourhood level infill review was held on September 15, 2021. Eight attendees participated. • Proposed amendments were shared with members by their weekly newsletters on January 18 and 25, 2022.
Saskatchewan Realtors Association (SRA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A survey was provided to the membership on the proposed topics for review in the spring of 2021, followed by the results of that survey. • The proposed amendments were shared with the SRA on January 11, 2022.
Affordable Housing Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual meetings were held in August and September 2021 with Camponi, Cress, and Central Urban Metis Federation Inc (CUMFI), to outline the scope of review and gather feedback. • The proposed amendments were provided to each group the week of January 3, 2022.
Industry Professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual meetings were held on an ad-hoc basis with builders, developers and design professionals based on feedback from the Focus Group, enquiries, or past input on infill regulations. Virtual meetings were held throughout the consultation process in 2021-2022. Proposed recommendations were shared in January 2022, and further information on the revised recommendation for door height was shared in March 2022.

Who we had conversations with	How we gathered input
Community Associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Associations were provided regular updates throughout the review. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A summary document on the topic was provided to Community Associations in June 2021, with an invitation to review the Engage Page and to contact the Project Team. ○ Invitations to participate in the general survey in the September 2021 were provided. • Two workshops were held on the evenings of October 14 and October 20, 2021, open to interested community association members. The workshops provided participants an overview of topics under review and provided participants the ability to provide feedback to be considered as proposed amendments were being developed. Twelve representatives from Nutana, Pleasant Hill, Caswell Hill, Varsity View, City Park, Buena Vista, Queen Elisabeth, Exhibition, and Haultain attended. • Proposed amendments were provided to Community Associations on the week of January 17, 2022. • A virtual meeting was held on February 17, 2022, hosted by the Nutana Community Association and attended by approximately 20 residents from various community associations. Administration provided a presentation and answered questions on the proposed amendments. • Further information on the revised recommendation for door height was shared with the host of the February 17, 2022 virtual meeting to share and provide to attendees in March 2022.
General Public	<p>Using two approaches for soliciting input (Insightrix and the Community Advisory Panel), a survey was undertaken in September-October 2021 to ask residents from established neighbourhoods their perspectives on neighbourhood-level infill.</p> <p>Information was provided on the Neighbourhood-Level Infill Engage Page starting in May 2021. Visitors to the website were able to provide a comment on the Engage Page. Contact information for the Project Team was also included on the Engage Page. Promotion of the information on the website was as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The North Saskatoon Business Association and the Saskatoon & Region Home Builders' Association were advised of the information on the Engage Page in January 2022. • Information about the Engage Page was shared with Community Associations via the Community Consultants in January 2022. • An e-newsletter was used to promote the information on January 18, 2022. There are 581 subscribers to the e-newsletter. • Twitter and Facebook were used to promote the information in January 13 and February 26 2022. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The total post engagement was 1812 (likes or link clicks); ○ 154,115 total impressions; ○ 46,460 total reach. • An update to the Engage Page was made in March 2022 to include information on the revised recommendation for door height in March 2022.

Who we had conversations with	How we gathered input
Teams Live Event	<p>A Teams Live event was held on February 17, 2022. The Teams Live event had 48 attendees. The event recording, presentation slides and a Frequently Asked Questions document was posted on the Engage Page following the event. The Teams Live event was promoted as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The North Saskatoon Business Association and the Saskatoon & Region home Builders' Association shared information about the event in their newsletters the week of February 8, 2022; • Community Associations via the Community Consultants the week of February 8, 2022; • An e-newsletter was used to promote the information on February 7 and February 15, 2022; and • Twitter and Facebook were used to promote the information in February 2022.

What We Heard – Survey Results

Two surveys were conducted:

- Residents: (via Inshgtrix and the Community Advisory Panel). A survey was undertaken in Fall 2021, to ask residents their perspective on the regulations for neighbourhood-level infill review. Only established neighbourhood residents were surveyed through the Inshgtrix survey, whereas Community Advisory Panel members may reside in neighbourhoods other than the established neighbourhoods. Complete survey results can be found [here](#).
- Industry: A survey for industry professionals was advertised through the Saskatoon & Region home Builders Association and Saskatchewan Realtors Association to gain industry perspective on the regulations. The industry survey was completed by a total of 13 individuals. Similar questions to the survey for residents were asked along with some additional technical questions specific for industry representatives.

As part of the survey, respondents were asked if they have any other general comments about neighbourhood level infill. The results from this question are not included in this report but can be found with the complete survey results.

We organized what we heard in the survey into the summary below.

Note: The language below is not verbatim from comments provided by stakeholders.

Established Neighbourhoods Map	Survey respondents were asked if there were any neighbourhoods within the established neighbourhoods map that they thought should be in the other category (either 1 or 2). Over 50% of Inshgtrix and Community Advisory Panel respondents responded with either “Not sure” or “No”. A variety of neighbourhoods were selected by those that did select a neighbourhood to be represented in another category.
Porches / Verandas / Other Structures	Survey respondents were asked if they supported porches, verandas or other structures attached to the front of homes in Category 1 neighbourhoods. Over 80% of respondents in both surveys said that they did.

Front Door Height	Over 60% of respondents in both surveys were supportive of either removing the regulation entirely or allowing an additional height or flexibility for door placement.
Front Yard Setbacks	<p>Survey respondents were asked about front yard setbacks as they apply to areas where the historic setbacks of existing homes may be closer to the street than what is currently permitted by the Zoning Bylaw:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 50% of Inshtrix respondents and 60% of respondents to the Community Advisory Panel were supportive of permitting the new homes to align with the existing homes closer to the street without the use of an appeal process. • 24% of both survey respondents preferred maintaining the current appeal process to permit a closer setback.
Lot Width (60% Rule)	<p>In Category 2 neighbourhoods, there are restrictions that limit how wide a lot can be so it doesn't vary too much from other lots on the same block. If someone were to subdivide a lot to build two new infill houses, the width of the subdivided lots cannot be too narrow in comparison to the other lots on the block. Right now, the width of each individual lot cannot be less than 60% of the average width of the other lots on that block.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 46% of Inshtrix respondents and 48% of Community Advisory Panel respondents preferred maintaining the existing regulation for managing site width.
Massing – Corner Sites	<p>Survey respondents were asked about whether homes on corner sites should be treated differently.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 40% of respondents to both surveys agreed that corner sites should be treated differently; with the example given that they could be allowed to be larger. • Over 30% of the Inshtrix respondents, and over 40% of the Community Advisory Panel respondents disagreed, responding that they should be treated the same.
Change over time	<p>To gauge the impact of the implementation of the current regulations on neighbourhood-level infill, respondents were asked if they had noticed a difference in new infill homes over the past 5 years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 40% of both survey respondents responded that they had. However, over 40% of both survey respondents also responded that they either had not, or that they weren't sure.

What We Heard

We organized what we heard into themes and summaries below.

Note: The language below is not verbatim from comments provided by stakeholders.

Theme	Summarized Comments	Response
Concerns about architectural design of new infills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New dwellings in the neighbourhood lack the character of the existing houses, or do not fit in with the neighbourhood character. • New dwellings are modern looking and I do not like the look of them. • New dwellings are not attractive. 	<p>The Zoning Bylaw does not regulate the style of a dwelling so much as the general setbacks, height, and mass. <i>The Planning and Development Act, 2007</i>, does not provide for the authority to govern style or colour except in Architectural Control Districts.</p>

Theme	Summarized Comments	Response
Lack of green space for new infills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New infills do not provide for enough green space. • New infills are large which results in shading concerns. 	Regulations regarding massing are included in the Zoning Bylaw. These regulations were reviewed as part of this work.
Density	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern about new dwellings adding too much density with the number of residents and cars on the street. • The regulations do not provide for sufficient density to lead to a more sustainable community. 	The City has long range growth targets of having 50% of new development occurring in infill areas. Of this, 10% is anticipated to be part of neighbourhood-level infill – that is one- and two-unit dwellings.
Tenancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns about new infill homes having renters that reduce the amount of available parking on the street • Concerns regarding increased number of renters. 	The Zoning Bylaw does not regulate the tenancy (rent vs. own) of a property.
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased number of infills increase the number of cars parked on the street. • Front driveway parking 	There are no required parking spaces for a one- or two-unit dwelling. With the development of a secondary suite, a total of two parking spaces on-site are required.
Front Door Height	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern that the proposed height for the front door (proposed 1.6 metres) will be incongruous with the character of the area. • No additional front door height be considered. 	Upon receipt of concerns about the proposed height of the front door, further discussion was had with industry professionals, resulting in a more moderate change to 1.3 metres rather to 1.6 metres. An increase in permitted height of front door is intended to alleviate construction concerns related to access and egress for secondary suites, shallow utility lines, and stair construction.
Massing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern that the proposed amendments will allow for larger infill dwellings to be built. • City should not be regulating the size of homes. • Amendments to the allowable sidewall area are positive and will provide for better infills 	Massing and impact of new infill homes are regulated primarily through the sidewall area regulation. To balance the feedback we have received, we have proposed amendments that allow for additional sidewall area where there is lesser impact on adjacent properties, such as on corner sites and further from side property lines.

What Went Well

- Working with industry and targeted stakeholders with experience specific to neighbourhood level infill development provided insight into their perspectives and challenges on the current regulations.
- Trying different engagement tactics such as a focus group, workshops, and a Teams Live event to gain feedback.
- Working to make our engagement report more accessible.

What We Can Do Better

- Engaging virtually, because of COVID-19, made it difficult to follow best practices for inclusive, accessible engagement.
- The Team Live format in particular had limitations for presenters and participants. Participants were anonymous and locations could not be verified; as well those with limited technical ability may not have been comfortable participating. The format also has limited ability to provide real-time dialogue.
- Provide more clarity about the proposed amendments through various techniques (e.g., images) on the Engage Page. Additional information was added to the Engage Page because of questions received from the Public after the proposed amendments were originally shared. As a result, some public members may not have seen the revised Engage Page information.

What's Next

- Neighbourhood Level Infill related communications information such as online brochures and the City's website will be updated with the relevant changes.
- Additional amendments to the Zoning Bylaw will be brought forward in future amendment packages or through separate topic-specific reports.