What We Heard Report
Urban Living Precinct Workshops

City Centre Area Redevelopment Plan Urban Living Precinct Workshops

August 2019
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1.0 Introduction

The City Centre Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP) Bylaw C-1074-19, was brought to public hearing at City Council on May 27, 2019. On the basis of input received at that hearing, City Council directed that more consultation with local residents should occur to better understand their concerns and how they may be considered in the proposed Plan.

In response to Council’s request, City Administration and the Planning Consulting Team developed a Community Workshop event to hear and receive input from area residents as to their concerns regarding the proposed ARP’s Urban Living Precinct.

There were two identical workshops advertised and held on June 26th and 27th 2019, from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm, at the Pioneer Centre, located at 301 Jespersen Avenue, Spruce Grove.

A summary of Workshop Attendance is supplied in Appendix A.

2.0 Workshop Methodology

The two workshops had a primary focus to obtain a local understanding from residents of the “Urban Living” precinct as defined in the proposed City Centre ARP. Of particular interest was the ARP’s implications on residents regarding proposed changes to single family dwelling use and adding new density in to the City Centre area.

The workshop were structured around three stations, with visual displays and facilitators, which provided attendees an opportunity to voice their opinions, perspectives, and ideas. The themes of the three stations were focused on policy, density, and idea sharing discussions.

1) **Policy** – This station provided the background policy used for informing the Area Redevelopment Plan’s development from the Spruce Grove Municipal Development Plan, Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan, and the Land Use Bylaw. The goal was to “inform” the local residents of the role of these approved documents in the ARP process.

2) **Density** – This station provided detailed tables outlining scales of density by housing type and use. A series of panels provided representative photos of housing types and densities to “inform” the local residents about what was being envisioned for the ARP’s Urban Living Precinct.

3) **Idea Sharing** – This station provided an open, interactive forum for local residents to express their primary concerns as well as to highlight and discuss some of their ideas or solutions for area redevelopment.

At the various stations, staff from the City and the Planning Consulting Team were made available to help facilitate conversations and gather feedback. Workshop materials including comment forms and presentation boards are included in Appendix B.
3.0 What We Heard

3.1 Overview

The following is a summary of the input received from residents at the workshops on the proposed City Centre ARP’s Urban Living Precinct that took place in June of 2019.

This report is intended to give voice to city and area residents to ensure that the ARP development process is made aware of their concerns. The description of what we heard is not meant to be a verbatim listing of all minute issues raised, and as such the input has been grouped into themes.

The comment themes below highlight some of the considerations that the planning team will be considering when developing the ARP’s policy for redeveloping the City Centre. The verbal comments of attendees were recorded by the facilitators in notes and on flip charts, on sticky notes placed on aerial photos, and on a forms that asked density questions as well as for their general comments.

A summary of recorded comments are provided in Appendix C.

3.2 Common Themes

At the workshops, despite each station having a specific topic area, the nature of the workshop lent itself to people providing comments where they felt most comfortable interacting or in the area specific to their particular interest. Despite the location of input locations there were common themes that emerged and were discussed at the various stations:

Theme 1: City Centre Revitalization Impacts on Existing Residents

General support exists for the overall City Centre redevelopment, but there is some concern about the change’s impacts on existing residents.

There is a sense that this redevelopment effort will ‘push’ people out of this area prematurely, and that people should not be ‘forced’ to move if they don’t want to or are not ready to go. There are some area residents, primarily located in the existing R1 Districted lands, who do not want redevelopment to have any impact on their ability to remain in their existing single-detached dwelling. To these residents the question of why single family dwellings cannot be part of future permitted uses in the City Centre that co-exists within a range of multi-unit housing formats was paramount.

Theme 2: Increased Residential Density Location and Height

The City Centre ARP is proposing to increase residential density to provide a transition between mixed use types, provide for housing diversity, and to achieve the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan’s aspirational density target or 100 dwelling units per net residential hectare.

Many attendees were not opposed to adding density in the greater City Centre, but are sensitive to how much density is added and where it is located as it may impact existing residents. Attendees most commonly indicated that higher density levels would be most appropriate along Calahoo Road, Church Road and King Street, and that less density – and a more diverse mix of residential formats - be allowed in the interior of the “Urban Living” precinct, which is bounded by Church Road, Mohr Avenue, Queen Street, and Main Street. These concerned residents do not oppose density located adjacent to this interior area, but were most sensitive to adjacent density that would exceeds five storeys in height.
Workshop attendees also expressed that they did not feel the new density must be in the form of apartments, and that it should range from single detached dwellings up to and including apartments. Furthermore, the workshop attendees indicated a preference for buildings that would not exceed seven storeys throughout the extended City Centre area.

**Theme 3: Impacts of Non-Conforming Use Status on Single Detached Dwellings**

It was heard in the workshops that the present day single detached dwellings along Jespersen Avenue, Mohr Avenue, and Macpherson Avenue are desired to remain in the ARP area. Furthermore, if these dwellings would become non-conforming developments, for meeting the ARP’s density targets immediately after redistricting, that would be undesirable to some.

Many attendees indicated that by becoming non-conforming uses/developments they would lose the freedom and ability to make renovations or add accessory buildings beyond that allowed under provincial regulations as non-conforming. Some attendees expressed that they do not have confidence in “discretionary” type decisions as they see this process leaning more to a “no” than a “yes” outcome respecting their intended developments.

**Theme 4: Timing**

Attendees expressed that they understand that the area is part of a transition, but they do not wish to have this quickly forced upon them if it could occur more naturally over time. There is a belief that density will be increasing over the next 10 years, and they know their property may be adjacent or near higher densities over time. It is seen that in an area the size of “Urban Living” precinct, redevelopment is going to take a long time. Why is there an urgency to force changes when a slow transition to higher density is most likely and could it not be prioritized in better areas along Calahoo Road, Church Road, or King Street.

Residents also noted that there are homes that have been improved over the past few years and not all the homes are in disrepair contrary to the prevailing view. Residents of the ARP wish to retain the choice and freedom to redevelop, maintain, expand or renovate their homes without becoming non-conforming. Those residents that attended the workshops often indicated that they have no intentions of moving in the next 10 years, and they may wish to consider improvements that go beyond basic maintenance. They feel that they should not be restricted in making upgrading decisions. The issue is the ability of the current single family homeowners to make investments in their home or property as they see fit and not being limited by non-conforming conditions.

**Theme 5: Negative Impacts on Land Values**

It was heard that area landowners see their home as their major investment and/or retirement security, and they want to make sure it retains its value despite the ARP changes.

Concern exists that the ARP makes their single detached house obsolete and non-conforming. This devalues it as it limits their market to only an investor whose predominant motive is to assemble land to make redevelopment more feasible. This would eliminate those other people who would choose to buy their single family dwelling with the intention of renovating and/or living in proximity of the City Centre where there is character in the homes.

There is also concern that any insurance value of the house where it suffered a catastrophic fire would not enable them to rebuild their house.
4.0 Conclusion

The City of Spruce Grove and the City Centre Area Redevelopment Planning Team thanks all attendees for their comments from the Urban Living Precinct workshops. This report and the detailed comment submissions will be shared with Council, and these will continue to be considered by the Planning Team for recommendations that may be made to the Area Redevelopment Plan.

It is the intention of the Planning Team to discuss this report and potential recommendations for changes to the currently proposed City Centre ARP for discussion prior to proceeding to a new public hearing on Bylaw C-1074-19 as early as the fall of 2019.
Appendices

Appendix A: Attendance at the Workshops

Appendix B: Workshop Materials and Presentation Panels

Appendix C: Summary of Received Comments

Appendix D - External Material Circulated at Workshop
Appendix A: Workshop Attendance
In advance of the workshops a total of 448 letter invitations were sent out all residents in the Urban Living Precinct area advising them of the event’s date, time and location. In addition, a community side advertisement was placed in the Spruce Grove Examiner and on the City of Spruce Grove’s website.

At the first evening workshop there were attendees from 22 separate addresses, and on the second workshop attendees from 16 separate addresses were recorded for a total count of 38 separate addresses. Of this total there were 10 addresses from outside of the City Centre ARP’s Urban Living Precinct boundary area (both Spruce Grove and Edmonton residents) and one was a commercial business owner that attended both evenings. So when this is taken into account the actual Urban Living Precinct addresses with attendees totals 26 separate addresses over the span of two evening sessions.

At each workshop, attendees were asked to sign in, and each attendee or attendees living at same address were asked to place a colour coded dot to place over their home or business in the City Centre ARP area. To further separate the two days of attendees a different colour dot was provided for residents of the ARP area for Day 1 and Day 2. Since the event was open to any resident, a separate colour dot was also provided for those residents who attended, but my not live in the ARP area.

The workshops clearly revealed strong attendance from residents in the central and older single family area within the Urban Living precinct of the ARP, particularly in the area bounded by Mohr Ave to the north, Church Rd to the south, Queen St to the west and Main St to the east. The visual depiction of the attendees is shown in Figure 1: Workshop Attendees.

**FIGURE 1: Workshop Attendees – Origin by Workshop Day and Type (Resident or Business)**
Appendix B:  Workshop Materials and Presentation Panels
City of Spruce Grove – City Centre Area Redevelopment Plan

Urban Living Workshop – Comments

This sheet is provided for you to provide your comment regarding the information, ideas, and proposals presented for the Urban Living Precinct as defined in the Proposed City Centre Area Redevelopment Plan.

Please leave your completed form at this meetings greeting station, or send it no later than July 10, 2019 to:

Comments Spruce Grove City Centre ARP
c/o Mark Puczko, Manager of Planning
City of Spruce Grove
Mail: 315 Jespersen Avenue, Spruce Grove, AB, T7X
Fax: 780-962-1062
Email: mpuczko@sprucegrove.org

Please provide your name, address, telephone number and email address (if applicable)

Name: 
Address: 
Tel: 
Email: 

Comments:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Density Questions

Do you agree with how new density evolving/occurring in the City Centre?

- Yes
- No
- Comments

Do you think the ARP’s proposed density solutions are an appropriate solution?

- Yes
- No
- Comments

What types of housing formats do you think ‘fit’ a redeveloped City Centre area?

- Single Family Dwelling
- Semi Detached Dwelling
- Townhouse
- Stacked Townhouse
- Low-Rise Apartment (e.g. 4-5 storeys)
- Mid-Rise Apartment (i.e. King Street Apartment)

Do you have suggestions about the types of housing forms the City should be thinking of in the City Centre?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Spruce Grove Municipal Development Plan

5.3 City Centre

Objective

5.3.1 Develop the City Centre as a mixed use hub of activity with a distinct identity.

Policies

5.3.1.1 Develop the City Centre (Figure 2: Future Land Use) as one of the primary community-level gathering places and as a distinct urban experience that is mixed use, pedestrian-friendly, and offers a diverse and eclectic range of services.

5.3.1.2 Prepare an Area Redevelopment Plan for the City Centre which uses the concept plan included in Figure 2: Future Land Use as a starting point and includes:

- small-scale service-oriented businesses located primarily at the local population with a mixed-use regional downtown base;
- pedestrian orientation;
- the use of streets as public spaces;
- civic and open space uses;
- mixed-use and open space uses;
- higher density/residential development.

5.3.1.3 Pursue strategies to develop McDougall Avenue between King Street and Colborne Road as a pedestrian-oriented service and shopping area.

5.3.1.4 Promote a pedestrian-friendly streetscape by:

- encouraging zero-footprint developments;
- limiting building scale and height;
- diversifying setback requirements for different types of buildings;
- targeting buildings and window displays towards the street;
- applying architectural, lighting, bay, and signage standards with pedestrian use in mind;
- encouraging street dining;
- extending the collection of "walk in tax" in conjunction with parking requirements for appropriate development and development of public parking areas;
- providing clear cues and interfaces between streets and open spaces;
- accommodating two or three people walking side by side on sidewalks; and
- implementing traffic calming measures.

5.3.1.5 Encourage infill development, where feasible, to promote more intense and innovative development.

5.3.1.6 Incorporate a traffic analysis of the City Centre in the Transportation Master Plan to look at circulation and road network capacity for private vehicles, transit, pedestrians, and cyclists and traffic calming strategies.

5.3.1.7 Develop a parking strategy and renew parking standards for the City Centre to identify existing and future needs and capacity, public areas, and options including the feasibility of an at-grade off-street parking facility.
Types of Density Scale & Form

Housing Density Scale

- Dwelling Units per Net Development
- Dwelling Units per Net Acre

- Multi-Storey Walk-Up
- Multi-Plex
- Rowhouse
- Duplex
- Single Family

- Low, Medium, High Density
- Surface Parking

Neighbourhoods Lab - Design Centre for Sustainability at UBC
Types of Density Scale & Form
Types of Density Scale & Form
Multi-Unit Housing Density Imagery

3 STOREY

ROWHOUSING / TERRACED / TOWNHOMES
Multi-Unit Housing Density Imagery

4 STOREY

5 STOREY

6 STOREY
(wood-frame & concrete)

7+ STOREYS
Appendix C: Summary of Received Comments
Recorded Summary of Comments Heard

The full range of responses were noted, but rather than sort these comments by station, we have provided these by a range of topics comprising the following:

**Redevelopment, Renovations & Non-Conformity**
- Want opportunity to add or renovate accessory buildings and house.
- Non-conforming is our issue.
- Want ability to do more than basic maintenance on “our property”.
- Non-conforming is too restrictive and limits future ability to sell if someone wants to make changes to the house.
- Non-conforming would scare people away and make it only sellable to investors, who will pay less.
- It’s not all old houses and people have invested in their improvement.
- Not planning on moving.
- Don’t want to live in Edmonton (City).
- Like the peaceful environment.
- Mohr Ave, Jespersen Ave and McPherson Ave is the heritage area.
- Why can’t Mohr Ave, McPherson Ave and Jespersen Ave be designated a heritage area with its own style?
- Younger families ARE moving in the City Centre area.
- Existing residents should not be pushed out of their homes.
- Why can’t single family dwellings (low density uses) be part of future permitted uses in the residential areas?
- Existing single family residents should be given the flexibility to make improvements to their lots as the redevelopment may take a long time to get to their area and they may want to do some additions or garages.
- Our house was rebuilt in 2004
- Feel like we are losing control of our home.
- Instead of rezoning all single family homes, making them non-conforming, you should have it as a transition (single to medium density and medium to higher density).
- I believe you can achieve more density without hurting those that live in the area.
- I believe residents in the area are greatly impacted in a negative manner. I understand the push for a revitalized downtown…I don’t agree with residents getting screwed just to populate with more people.
- Why don’t we make it all work instead of ruining homeowners investments?

**Density & Infill**
- Multi-storey density north of Mohr Ave along Calahoo Rd.
- 4 to 7-storey density along Calahoo between Mohr Ave and Jespersen Ave.
- Need density between Church Rd and Jespersen Ave along Calahoo.
- 4-plex housing ideal between Church Rd and Jespersen Ave along Calahoo.
- 4 to 6 storey density along McLeod Ave between Queen St and Calahoo Rd.
- Support mixed-use along McLeod Ave between Queen Street and King Street.
- 4-storey density along Church Rd.
- Maximum 5-storey density on parcel behind Windsor Estates along Calahoo Rd.
• 4-storey density on parcel behind Queen Street Professional Centre along Calahoo Rd.
• 3-storey density on south side of Jesperson Ave along Calahoo Rd.
• Maximum 3-storey density on either side of McLeod Ave between Calahoo Rd and Queen Street.
• Townhomes should be prioritized along the south side of Church Rd west of Queen Street.
• Dislike 7+ storey – not higher than 5-storey – don’t want to like Downtown Edmonton.
• Best location for density is west of Windsor Estates.
• Why not higher density in Broxton Area?
• Infill only between north of Church Rd between Queen Street and Main Street, but smaller setbacks and allowing duplexes, semi-detached and 2-storey density.
• Senior – extended care in Windsor Estates.
• Don’t force density on us.
• No zero lot lines.
• No infill.
• Densify along Calahoo in available lands.
• What is the ARP saying about uses along Church Rd that are multi-family but may not be achieving the new density required...are these to become non-conforming buildings?
• Density in new developments outside of the City Centre should be bumped up.
• Let density come organically, not forced by zoning bylaw.
• Don’t take away our existing choice.
• 10 years from now density should be 30 upnha.
• Provide a mix of single family and townhome/rowhousing.
• Not against density, but not at the expense of our single family freedom to redevelop as we see fit.
• Should have a cap on height.
• All types of housing are a fit in the area, including single family as exists.
• Should have seniors residences within walking distance to the core.

**Timing**

• Timing for existing residents.
• We recognize that this a natural transition.
• A gap in timing between ability to sell as a home versus investors ability to wait 5 to 10 years.
• Slowly transition to higher density

**Economics & Zoning**

• What is the market value effect?
• Put new arena downtown.
• Architectural Guidelines.
• In R2 – height should be consistent.
• Both sides of Church Rd from Calahoo to King should be zoned R-2.
• Values won’t go up in the near term.
• Can there be a sunset clause for current single family homes.
• We are open to density, but not at the expense of our home and ability to sell.
• Concern is reselling.
• Can Jesperson Ave, Mohr Ave, McPherson Ave be put on as future consideration or delayed?
• Fire Insurance = no rebuild.
• If zoning changes went through, would insurance company insure us?
• Can we defer the Bylaw for changing of R1 to R2.
• Discretionary means “NO”!
• This is our retirement and it is limiting for our value.
• Anti-stranding to avoid sandwiched development.
• Can “special considerations” be applied to non-conforming homes.
• Developers and business owners have been involved, but not residents

**Mobility, Parking & Safety**
- Support Pedestrian friendly downtown (safety).
- Increased socialization, sidewalk cafes, event, adult, senior and child friendly areas.
- Consideration for pedestrian safety if increasing density – increase sidewalks to make pedestrian friendly.
- Roads and lanes need to be rebuilt – some roads have black dirt under them.
- Increase number of traffic lights with crosswalk control.
- Stop Light at Calahoo Rd and Church Rd.
- Don’t support closure of Queen Street at Highway 16A, but should be reconfigured.
- Mail boxes at McPherson Ave and Queen St need to be relocated.
- Vision blocked at Main Street and First Ave.
- Sign blocks vision at King St at City Hall.
- Parking concerns for Jespersen Ave, McPherson Ave.
- Parking – 2 stalls per dwelling should be provided.
- Provide adequate parking.

**Commercial**
- There are some existing commercial businesses in the Urban Living area. What is the ARP’s direction going forward?
- Are small businesses going to be pushed out due to higher taxes/rent?
Record of Facilitator Noting of Comments Received at Workshop Stations
Density Questions

Do you agree with how new density evolving/occurring in the City Centre?

- Yes
- No
- Comments

I believe the residents in the area are greatly impacted in a negative manner. I understand the push for a revitalized downtown but how this affects the people is awful. I don't agree with residents getting screwed just to populate with more people.

Do you think the ARP’s proposed density solutions are an appropriate solution?

- Yes
- No
- Comments

I believe you can achieve more density without hurting those that live in the area.

What types of housing formats do you think ‘fit’ a redeveloped City Centre area?

- Single Family Dwelling
- Semi Detached Dwelling
- Townhouse
- Stacked Townhouse
- Low-Rise Apartment (e.g. 4-5 storeys)
- Mid-Rise Apartment (i.e. King Street Apartment)

Do you have suggestions about the types of housing forms the City should be thinking of in the City Centre?

Instead of rezoning all the single family homes, making them all non-conforming, you should have it as a transition (single - medium density/ high density).
Density Questions

Do you agree with how new density evolving/occurring in the City Centre?

- Yes
- No
- Comments

To bring not every notice

New / more local answers

Seems very open to interpretation

Do you think the ARP’s proposed density solutions are an appropriate solution?

- Yes
- No
- Comments

Pick different area.

What types of housing formats do you think ‘fit’ a redeveloped City Centre area?

- Single Family Dwelling
- Semi Detached Dwelling
- Townhouse
  - Stacked Townhouse
  - Low-Rise Apartment (e.g. 4-5 storeys)
  - Mid-Rise Apartment (i.e. King Street Apartment)

Do you have suggestions about the types of housing forms the City should be thinking of in the City Centre?

Slowly very slowly transitioning to

Higher density
Density Questions

Do you agree with how new density evolving/occurring in the City Centre?

- Yes
- No
- Comments

Comments: not at expense of existing homeowners

Do you think the ARP’s proposed density solutions are an appropriate solution?

- Yes
- No
- Comments

Comments: at above

What types of housing formats do you think ‘fit’ a redeveloped City Centre area?

- Single Family Dwelling
- Semi Detached Dwelling
- Townhouse
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- Low-Rise Apartment (e.g. 4-5 storeys)
- Mid-Rise Apartment (i.e. King Street Apartment)

Do you have suggestions about the types of housing forms the City should be thinking of in the City Centre?

all kinds including single family

as exists
Density Questions

Do you agree with how new density evolving/occuring in the City Centre?

- Yes
- No
- Comments

Do you think the ARP’s proposed density solutions are an appropriate solution?

- Yes
- No
- Comments

What types of housing formats do you think ‘fit’ a redeveloped City Centre area?

- Single Family Dwelling
- Semi Detached Dwelling
- Townhouse
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- Mid-Rise Apartment (i.e. King Street Apartment)

Do you have suggestions about the types of housing forms the City should be thinking of in the City Centre?

Suggest residence within walking distance to CORE
Appendix D - External Material Circulated at Workshop
Our Sponsors

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CREATIVE COLOR

FACTSnet Spruce Grove is a group committed to creating connections and promoting communication within the Spruce Grove Community.