



Residential Infill Working Group

RIWG's ANALYSIS OF CITY PROPOSED CHANGES & DRAFT SOLUTIONS

The City is proposing changes to infill development, that will be presented in two reports to Urban Planning Committee on **February 10, 2026**.

The City invites your feedback, [LINK](#), by **January 29** to their proposals on:

- Motion 1 – RS Zone Amendments
- Motion 2 – Mid-block Redevelopment Amendments to District Policy & Zoning

RIWG has consulted with residents, community groups, planners, industry and developers on these proposed changes to determine whether they improve planning outcomes. Consistently, people have indicated that massing and building volume are core issues not addressed by these motions.

In responding to Motion 1 & Motion 2, please consider RIWG's option to add building volume controls to address impacts of massing to the discussion.

Motion 1 – RS Zone Amendments

City Administration proposes RS Zone Changes:

- **To reduce the maximum number of dwellings** on interior sites from 8 to 6, and to increase the minimum site area per dwelling on interior, mid-block sites from 75 m² to 90 m² and on corner sites from 75 m² to 80 m².
- **To reduce the impact of height on adjacent properties in the RS Zone** by reducing maximum height from 10.5 m to 9.5 m, limiting sidewall height to 9 m, or by limiting the 3rd storey building length to 75% of the second story. Based on Administration's analysis, they are not recommending these proposed changes.

RIWG Response to Administration's proposed RS Amendments:

- **RIWG analysis: Proposed changes to number of dwellings or minor changes to the Minimum Site Area per Dwelling does not reduce building volume** or address the negative impacts of massing on adjacent property.
- **RIWG analysis: Reduction in height alone will not control building volume** or meaningfully reduce the negative impacts on neighbouring property. Combined with the previous

reduction to building length, the proposed changes to height will not effectively resolve the key problem. A reduction in height from 10.5 m to 9.5 m is supported only if other measures are also taken to reduce building volume.

What is the problem that needs to be solved?

The problem is increased building volume and massing (See illustrations in [RIWG Solutions Presentation, 2026 01 17](#), Slides 2 to 7)

The RS Zone introduced more intensive housing types with building volumes 3 to 4 times (and in some cases up to 8 times) greater than adjacent original development on adjacent properties.

This has resulted in out of scale buildings compared to existing buildings in the surrounding neighbourhoods, particularly mid-block.

Increased massing creates other negative impacts - lack of building alignment along the block, increased overlook and loss of privacy, increased shadowing and reduced sun access for solar panels, gardens, landscaping and people; reduced green space and room for trees and outdoor amenity areas, reduced air flow, increased heat buildup and reliance on air conditioning and increased numbers of sleeping units and occupants of these buildings.

RIWG Solutions:

- 1) **Introduce a maximum Floor to site Area Ratio (FAR)** which would control the total allowed building volume on the site. The maximum FAR should keep the total building volume on a site to be no more than double the building volume of typical original developments. (See illustrations in [RIWG Solutions Presentation, 2026 01 17](#), Slides 8 to 11)

- RIWG agrees. FAR offers a versatile planning tool to achieve the constructive change desired not only by residents and communities in Redeveloping areas, but for City Administration and Council as well.

Mayor Andrew Knack has indicated infill should be proportional to the site and that a fixed number of units is less effective than basing regulations on the size of the lot and the physical form of the building.

- 2) **Split the FAR (building volume) between two development boxes** (in areas with rear lanes that typically have two buildings on the lot) - a front development box for the main principal dwelling and secondary suites and a rear development box for garages with or without backyard housing. (See illustrations in [RIWG Solutions Presentation, 2026 01 17](#), Slide 11 & 12)

These two development boxes will improve the alignment of buildings with neighbouring buildings on the block. Better alignment of buildings reduces the negative impacts of massing, shadowing, blocking of views, and blocking of airflow which increases the heat island effect. It also provides an open space between the front and rear development boxes for outdoor amenity and green space and room for trees.

These measures will create new small scale housing developments that are a good fit for neighbourhoods, and reduce negative impacts on neighbours, while still allowing a variety of housing types, contribution toward increasing density and more room for trees..

City Administration proposed changes - Trees on private property

- **Recommends against the introduction of tree protection measures** based on their review of previous reports, which suggest it is not possible to both maintain and retain private tree canopy while also increasing the city's density targets.

RIWG Response to Administration's Position on Trees

- **RIWG disagrees.** It is possible to protect trees and have density - which many cities in Canada with private tree protections have proven. While Administration has indicated proposed changes will be brought to the Urban Planning Committee and Council at a Public Hearing later in 2026, immediate changes are needed to address the significant private tree canopy loss being experienced now related to development. (See illustrations in [RIWG Solutions Presentation, 2026 01 17](#), Slide 13 & 14)

RIWG solutions: To provide immediate solutions that resolve the net loss of tree canopy related to infill development and ensure the economic, social and environmental benefits of trees are maintained.

- 1) **Introduce private tree protections and tree removal permits related to development** projects to reduce the significant loss of tree canopy related to infill redevelopment..
- 2) **Begin developing a Private Tree Bylaw** to preserve and protect tree canopy on all private lots.
- 3) **Amend the Landscaping Regulations to incentivize planting more trees** to contribute to a future 30% tree canopy that includes protected mature trees and new trees at maturity.

Motion 2 – District Policy & RSM Changes

City Administration proposed changes to District Policy:

- To rescind District Policy 2.52 the Land Use Policies (2.5.2.5, 2.5.2.6 and 2.5.2.7) and replacing them with a new District Policy applied to Urban Mix areas in District Plans.

New amended policy will support rezonings to allow low rise buildings up to 4 storeys and a more detailed and nuanced planning analysis when considering rezonings of:

- Sites that are both within 400 m of a mass transit station and along an arterial road, including on mid-block sites, or on
- Any corner sites along any arterial road.

RIWG Response to Administration's proposed District Policy changes

- RIWG supports District Policy that provides clear boundaries to Nodes and Corridors.
- RIWG does not support the specific criteria proposed for in the new proposed District Policy because this restricts the radius from TOD zones and this would also support random rezonings to increase scale on any corner along any arterial road. This does not follow sound planning principles

RIWG solutions:

- 1) **Amend District Policy to define clearer boundaries** to create predictability for industry and provide greater certainty for residents and communities. This will also reduce rezonings and the accompanying burden of Public Hearings for all stakeholders.
- 2) **Develop criteria for new District Policy that adopts established Transit Oriented Development practices to determine density in these areas.** These follows sound planning principles regarding increasing scale around Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Areas to determine an appropriate radius from mass transit stations based on community considerations and context, rather than an arbitrary metric of 400 m, or supporting rezonings on any corner sites along any arterial road outside nodes and corridors.
- 3) **Prioritize review of District Plans in the 4 or 5 high-redevelopment pressure areas**, rather than all 15 District Plans at once to make the task more manageable.

- 4) **Develop Local Area Plans** for these areas which would provide guidance on where upzoning should be supported. Start working on Plans in the core areas which could benefit the most, including priority growth areas, Transit Oriented Development Areas, and areas with extensive vacant land.

City Administration proposed changes to the RSM Medium Scale Zone

- Amend the name and use of the current RSM Small to Medium Scale Transition Zone by dropping “Transition” from the name and limiting its use to site within nodes and corridors.

RIWG Response to Administration’s proposed RSM Zone changes

- RIWG supports limiting redevelopment in the RSM Zone to within nodes and corridors to accommodate Small to Medium Scale infill and reduce rezonings.

RIWG Solutions:

- 1) **Encourage density with the right buildings at the right scale in the right place.** This is supported by Administration’s proposed changes.
- 2) **Ensure more intensive small to medium scale infill is located in the RSM Small to Medium Scale Zone.**
- 3) **Redefine small scale intensity** and housing types within RS Zone and RSM Zones.

RIWG Summary of Recommended Solutions

(See [RIWG Solutions Presentation](#), Slides 15 to 17)

RS Zone Amendments: Introduce a volumetric measure to control building volume in the RS Zone, that limits the scale of infill on mid-block or corner sites to an appropriate small scale FAR. The Zoning Bylaw uses FAR (Floor to Area Ratio) to manage allowable FAR in the RM Medium and RL Large Scale Zones and in small scale zones in other jurisdictions. FAR influences other site and building regulations such as height, building length and setbacks to control overall building volume.

Controlling RS Zone Scale increases predictability for everyone about what can be built. Ensuring the right infill scale is built in the right location or zone will increase acceptance of infill. This also supports local infill builders who specialize in building infill that contributes toward more appropriate small scale housing.

Controlling building volume considers neighbourhood context and mitigates massing and related negative impacts imposed on adjacent property as a result of a long, tall development wall that protrudes well beyond or above neighbouring buildings. FAR is a more effective solution than minor changes to building height, length or setbacks alone.

Providing two development boxes also reduces massing impacts and better aligns infill buildings with other buildings and green space on the block. This provides room on the site to preserve more mature tree canopy and plant larger trees to contribute future tree canopy.

RIWG supports tree protection measures applied first to development, followed by a broader Private Tree Protection Bylaw and amended landscaping regulations to reduce the significant net loss of private tree canopy related to infill redevelopment as verified by local research. Improved Landscaping regulations are necessary to improve compliance and new trees planted to contribute toward future private tree canopy of 30%, climate resilience and providing significant economic, social and health and ecosystem benefits.

RIWG supports the intent of District Policy amendments - to clearly define node and corridor boundaries and identify where rezonings will be supported. However criteria must be based on established planning practice, consideration of neighbourhood context with multistakeholder engagement and Local Area Planning incorporated into District Plans to guide where to incentivize greater density within nodes and corridors, in Transit Oriented Development Areas, Priority Growth Areas to provide appropriate, diverse housing types and scale. RIWG also supports greater intensity on vacant serviced public land.

RIWG encourages a transparent and considerate development permit application system, with one development permit per lot, not multiple or split development and then home improvement permits. It is important to improve on Bylaw definitions and methodology to consistently measure the site and buildings proposed in applications to ensure accurate review and compliance with Zoning Bylaw Regulations. It is also important to notify neighbours of development under review.

Questions, comments or concerns?

Are you interested in an online meeting with RIWG?

Email RIWG.Edmonton@gmail.com