



Legislation Text

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Bylaw 33/2020 Zero Lot Line for Single Family Dwellings Text Amendment (1st Reading)

Presented by: Barb Dupuis, Planner, Planning & Development

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That Bylaw 33/2020, being amendment 181 to the Land Use Bylaw, be read a first time.
2. That the Public Hearing on Bylaw 33/2020 be scheduled for November 30, 2020.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report discusses proposed amendments to the Residential (RX) and Residential Lane (RXL) Districts to accommodate zero lot-line (ZLL) single family dwellings.

ALIGNMENT TO PRIORITIES IN COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN

Zero lot-line single family dwellings supports strategic priority #5, enhanced housing options.

City of St. Albert Council Strategic Plan 2018 - 2021

Strategic Priority #5: Housing: Enhance housing options.

Facilitate an increase in the variety of housing types in St. Albert to respond to market demands and accommodate the diverse needs of residents.

Corporate Business Plan 2018 - 2021

Administration Activity 5.1

Modify Land Use Bylaw to encourage diversity in residential built forms

Administration Activity 5.3

Work with regional partners to explore the creation of additional housing options to address issues of affordability and accessibility.

ALIGNMENT TO LEVELS OF SERVICE DELIVERY

N/A.

ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL DIRECTION OR MANDATORY STATUTORY PROVISION

On June 9, 2020 the Community Growth & Infrastructure Standing Committee passed the following motions:

AR-20-126

Bylaw 21/2020, being amendment 170 to the Land Use Bylaw, be brought forward to the first Council meeting in December, 2020.

That Administration continue to investigate new housing products, and prepare, where determined to diversify residential built form and improve housing affordability, regulations to present back to the Community Growth and Infrastructure Committee by the end of Q2 2021.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

A single-family dwelling developed with a zero lot-line is where one side of the dwelling is placed on a side property line with no side yard setback. The other side-yard setback is usually 1.5 m (4.9 ft). This produces homes that are closer together than traditional single-family development. An easement is needed with the neighbouring lot to ensure the side of the dwelling placed on the property line can be maintained and accessed without trespassing when required. Additional measures for fire protection are also required. Single-detached zero lot-line residential product is found within Land Use Bylaws across the region. Single-detached zero lot-line residential zoning regulations are found in Beaumont, Edmonton, Fort Saskatchewan, City of Leduc, Morinville, Spruce Grove, Stony Plain, and Strathcona County. Industry has informed administration that this is becoming one of the most popular products in the Edmonton region.

Side Yard Reduction

Currently, the land use bylaw requires a 1.25 meter side yard setback on each side of a single-detached dwelling, for a minimum spacing of 2.5 meters between each home. Permitting zero lot-line will allow for spacing of 1.5 meters on each side of a dwelling. This represents a reduction of 1.0 meter between the homes.

The Easement

The easement requires that the 1.5 meter space between homes be preserved free and clear with no trees, shrubs, air conditioning units, or building protrusions. The easement is registered on the title of the properties, and is intended to stay in place even if the land ownership changes.

Changes to the Land Use Bylaw

The zero lot-line changes will only affect the Residential (RX) and Residential Lane (RXL) Districts. This will keep the proposed zero lot-line dwellings to newer neighbourhoods. Currently, the only areas that have RX and RXL zoning are Jensen Lakes, Riverside, and potentially North Ridge Phase II.

The changes will permit both front garage (in RX) and rear garage (in RXL) zero lot-line product. In the RX District, the front garage zero lot-line product may only be placed on the one side of a road. The other side can be a public park, or lane-oriented land uses. This will allow unfettered parking on one side of the street.

The Process

Administration's proposed regulations require that an applicant indicate which lots will be developed with a zero lot-line on the tentative plan of subdivision at the application stage. The easement documents will also be requested and reviewed at this time. Then, Administration will follow the typical subdivision process and refer out the application as standard (30 days, within a 100-meter radius of the subject lands) for neighbouring landowners.

Impact of Zero Lot-Line Homes

Rear-drive zero lot-line product allows for an unfettered boulevard with ample space for street parking, boulevard trees, and street furniture. Though the width between the dwellings is less than a conventional lot, the visual impact is still of an appealing, pedestrian friendly streetscape. See Figure 1. In addition to providing visual aesthetics, boulevards are an important built form feature, as they enable the City to expand the tree canopy, which reduces the impact of greenhouse gas emissions. Administration has reviewed the regulations and recommends the implementation of zero-lot line product for rear-drive product.

Figure 1: Zero Lot Line Homes with Rear Detached Garage



Administration has the following concerns with front driveway zero lot-line product:

1. Reduction of on-street parking by decreasing the width of the lots, thereby decreasing the space

- between driveways;
2. Reduction of opportunity for boulevard trees;
 3. Reduced opportunity to expand the tree canopy and decrease greenhouse gas emissions;
 4. Reduction of opportunity for needed street utilities (e.g. power boxes, hydrants, garbage and recycling storage), and
 5. Reduction of opportunity for snow storage on a lot. There could be a scenario where snow is cleared to a neighbouring lot when a driveway is on a property line.

Figure 2: Zero Lot Line Homes with Front Attached Garages and Boulevard



Figure 3: Zero Lot Line Homes with Front Attached Garages, No Boulevard



Administration has attempted to mitigate the concerns by requiring that front-drive zero lot-line homes only be placed across from laned product or the Public Park District. This measure is to ensure at least one side of the street has an opportunity to provide an uninterrupted boulevard.

STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS OR ENGAGEMENT

An online workshop was held on March 27, 2020 via Zoom with members of the Urban Development Institute (UDI) of St. Albert. Opportunities and concerns of zero lot line were presented by the City, and followed up with a discussion session between all parties.

Additional feedback was given by the Chair of UDI St. Albert at the Committee meeting on June 9, 2020 regarding zero lot-line products. There was a strong preference by industry that zero lot-line development of single-detached dwellings be implemented in St. Albert.

A meeting was held with City Administration, Strata Development, and Select Engineering Consultants on July 16, 2020. The meeting was held specifically to discuss a proposed zero lot-line pilot project in North Ridge. A second meeting was held on August 13, 2020 to discuss the option of modifying the Residential (RX) and Residential Lane (RXL) Districts to permit the zero lot-line development of single-detached dwellings.

On September 17, 2020, a second online workshop was held with the Urban Development Institute of St. Albert, focusing on proposed changes to the land use bylaw such as the potential addition of the Residential Front Back (RFB) District, and modification to Residential (RX) and Residential Lane (RXL) to accommodate zero lot line single-detached dwellings. The meeting was held to ensure

each developer had an opportunity to give City Administration feedback on the proposal. Feedback on this proposal included the request that the lot widths in the RX District needed to be slightly narrower, so that a more precise 24-foot building width with less “wobble room” could be achieved. Administration has amended the lot width in response. Additional requests for smaller lot product were discussed, however this would entail changes to other regulations within the bylaw. At this time, no additional changes are incorporated to the lot widths based upon the UDI session.

Other feedback was provided regarding Land Use Bylaw changes, outside of the scope of the zero lot-line product, regarding the lot width distribution. Land Use Bylaw 9/2005, Section 8.23, requires that lands governed by an Area Structure Plan adopted after February 2018 are only allowed 0% - 25% of the lots to be under 10 m in width. The request was to allow a larger proportion of smaller lots, or remove the provision entirely. No action has been taken on this request at this time.

IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

Financial:

None at this time.

Legal / Risk:

None at this time.

Program or Service:

None at this time.

Organizational:

None at this time.

ALTERNATIVES AND IMPLICATIONS CONSIDERED

If Council does not wish to support the recommendation, the following alternatives could be considered:

1. Council may choose to direct Administration to proceed with implementation of the rear-drive zero lot-line product, and remove regulations enabling front-drive zero lot-line product.
2. Council may choose to direct Administration that no further work be completed on zero lot-line development for single-detached dwellings.

Report Date: November 2, 2020

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Committee/Department: Planning & Development

Deputy Chief Administrative Officer: Kerry Hilts

Chief Administrative Officer: Kevin Scoble