What We Heard Report
Mill Woods Town Centre
LDA23-0363

Public Engagement Feedback Summary

Project Address: 2331 - 66 Street NW

Project Description: The City is reviewing an application to rezone 2331 - 66 Street NW from the existing Direct Development Control Provision (DC1.18109) to a new Direct Control Zone (DC). This proposed DC zone is comparable to the current zoning, but proposes changes to the development regulations for Area 'D' to allow for the construction of two residential towers. Key changes include:

- An increase in maximum height to 75.0 metres (approximately 22 storeys) from the current 60 metres (approximately 18 storeys);
- Increases to maximum setbacks to allow for the building to be located further away from the street, the Mill Woods LRT Station, and the Mill Woods Transit Centre;
- Opportunities to develop ground level uses facing west and east as residential (currently limited to commercial).

Engagement Format: Online Engagement Webpage - Engaged Edmonton: https://engaged.edmonton.ca/millwoodstowncentre

Engagement Dates: February 5, 2024 - February 25, 2024

Number Of Visitors:

- Engaged: 94
- Informed: 590
- Aware: 1290

See "Web Page Visitor Definitions" at the end of this report for explanations of the above categories.

TYPE OF ENGAGEMENT	DATE	RESPONSES/ RECIPIENTS
Advance Notice from the City	January 22, 2024	Recipients: 1042
Public Engagement, City Event (Online Engaged Edmonton Webpage)	February 5, 2024 - February 25, 2024	Responses opposed: 35 Responses in support: 42 Responses in neutral or mixed position: 17
Public Engagement, Phone Calls and Emails with Planner	January 24, 2024 - March 1, 2024	Responses opposed: 9 Responses in support: 6 Responses in neutral or mixed position: 3

About This Report

The information in this report includes summarized feedback received between February 5 - February 25, 2024 through online engagement via the Engaged Edmonton platform, emails submitted directly to the file planner, and direct phone calls with the planner.

The public feedback received will be considered during the planning analysis to ensure the review of the application takes local context into consideration and is as complete as possible. It will also be used to inform conversations with the applicant about potential revisions to the proposal to address concerns or opportunities raised.

This report is shared with all web page visitors who provided their email address for updates on this file. This summary will also be shared with the applicant and the Ward Councilor, and will be an Appendix to the Council Report should the application proceed to a Public Hearing.

The planning analysis, and how feedback informed that analysis, will be summarized in the City's report to City Council if the proposed rezoning goes to a future City Council Public Hearing for a decision. The City's report and finalized version of the applicant's proposal will be posted for public viewing on the City's public hearing agenda approximately three (3) weeks prior to a scheduled public hearing for the file.

Engagement Format

The Engaged Edmonton webpage included an overview of the application, information on the development and rezoning process and contact information for the file planner. Two participation tools were available for participants: one to ask questions and one to leave feedback.

Email and phone comments to the Planner are also included in this analysis.

The comments are summarized by the main themes below, with the number of times a similar comment was made by participants recorded in brackets following that comment. The questions asked and their answers are also included in this report.

Feedback Summary

This section summarizes the main themes collected.

Number of Responses:

- In Support: 43
- In Opposition: 40
- Mixed: 10

The most common **concerns** heard were:

The proposed height of 22 Storeys is too high: Several community members believe that the increase in height from 60m (18 Storeys) to 75m (22 Storeys) is too large. People believe that the developer can achieve their intent with the current zoning.

The proposal does not fit the neighbourhood character: A repeated concern was that the proposal did not match the character of the area and did not align with the current feeling and family orientated nature of the Mill Woods Town Centre Neighbourhood. Some mentioned the proposal should match heights with existing residential buildings in the area to achieve this.

Inadequate infrastructure capacity: People were concerned with a lack of infrastructure capacity such as schools, hospitals and policing services to support the proposal and increased density in the area in general. Some felt that the neighbourhood's infrastructure had already reached its capacity for density.

Traffic/Parking: Respondents mentioned experiencing congestion around the Mill Woods Town Centre and felt that the current street infrastructure could not support additional density and usage. A decrease in parking availability as a result of this application was also a concern. Some indicated that the developer should be required to provide underground parking for future buildings.

Safety/Crime: Respondents mentioned that they were concerned with an increased crime and vandalism resulting from the proposed redevelopment of the site in addition to the perceived increase in crime due to the LRT.

The most recurring comments of **support** heard were:

Increased density: Many community members were supportive of increasing density around the transit centre. Comments including wanting increased vibrancy of the area, a denser urban core in the town centre, and a reduction in urban sprawl as reasons for support.

Proximity to Transit: Residents noted that having transit so close to the proposed site was a benefit as it would increase transit usage, meet the Citys' policy goals, and could bring business activity to the site.

Housing affordability and housing crisis: Respondents mentioned that the proposal would increase housing supply and potentially lower housing costs. Several recommended that affordable housing be guaranteed in the development to help achieve these goals. Some pointed out the urgency to approve developments like this to help address the housing crisis

Need for redevelopment on this site and revitalization: Some in favour of the proposal noted the mall and were hopeful that redevelopment would revitalize the area. Many hoped to see new tenants in the areas such as a grocery store and the desire for more business patronage to improve the area.

Improvements that were mentioned for the application and engagement process were**:**

Setbacks: There were several suggestions for improvements to the setback. Some preferred to see the building as close as possible to the street to help increase vibrancy and access to commercial space. Others would be happy with increased setbacks if the space was used for patios or green/active spaces to use the space effectively.

Sustainable development requirement for renewable energy: Residents mentioned that renewable energy such as solar panels should be required due to the height and access to sunlight of the proposed buildings.

City of Edmonton Policy: A comment suggested that the Mill Woods Station ARP designates too much land for commercial use than what is needed for the neighbourhood.

Engagement Process Improvements: Respondents mentioned the difficulty they had with understanding the information. They felt that the information provided could have been presented in a more accessible manner such as a short FAQ document. Increased mail notification and billboards to inform the public was recommended. A recommendation to provide material in residents' preferred language to help with understanding and participation in the engagement was also suggested to align with Edmonton's message of diversity and inclusion.

What We Heard

The following section includes a summary of collected comments with the number of times a comment was recorded in brackets (comments received once do not have a number).

General:

- General support of the proposal (x43)
- General non-support of the proposal (x40)
- Redevelopment is needed on this site (x5)
- The proposal is a better uses for the site than the current use (x3)
- The proposal could help improve the viability of Millwood Town Centre (x3)
- Proposal can help reduce urban sprawl (x3)
- Maximize return on investment on existing transit infrastructure in the area (x3)
- Edmonton is a city not a village (x2)
- Proposal can help with housing crisis/increase housing supply (x2)
- Like the proposal's aesthetics (x2)
- Concerns the LRT is detracting from the neighbourhood (x2)
- Proposal may attract new businesses to the mall (x2)
- Maintain the current mall setup as is (x2)
- No need for disruptive towers (x2)
- Millwoods town centre should be a hub for Southeast Edmonton (x2)
- Red tape should be removed to permit more development
- Approve the development as quickly as possible

- The City of Edmonton should embrace the concepts of urbanization
- Cannot continue on with car-centric development
- The 400m area around LRT stations is valuable and it shouldn't be a parking lot
- There has been an increase in crime and vandalism in the area
- The homeless population has increased with the opening of the Valley Line LRT
- Concerns with where taxes are allocated
- There is enough land for four 22 storey tower
- We need a city-wide bold vision when approving projects
- Concerns that City council is not listening
- Sound proofing for residential units will need to be considered
- Concerns that the current mall provides integral services to residents and possible higher rents will push current tenants out
- New vibrancy for the area
- Millwoods Town Centre needs a hotel conference center
- Millwoods is a area well positioned for growth
- The proposal could Increase tax revenue for the City
- The proposal would eliminate active mode access to food shopping/other amenities if transit riders are not offered sufficient grocery/commercial amenities
- Ensure proposal doesn't impact bike routes
- Proposal will negatively impact my place of employment and inconvenience my family

Site Layout and Built Form:

- The proposed 22 storeys is too high (x15)
- Proposed increased height is not a concern (x7)
- Commercial uses should be located on the ground floor (x4)
- Building should be no higher than 16 storeys (x3)
- Setbacks should not be increased (x3)
- Pathway between the LRT station and transit centre should be sheltered and pedestrianized (x3)
- Street orientated ground floor residential uses are okay in locations not suited for commercial (x2)
- Increased setbacks are okay if they are not used for dead space/parking (x2)
- Construct wider treed boulevards (x2)
- Commercial uses should be located along the LRT Station to Transit station pathway (x2)
- Adjusting the setback is justified (x2)
- Keep the lower levels as commercial (x2)
- No commercial/services should be provided in the residential towers due to proximity to the mall
- Hope that the proposal integrates with local transit/pedestrian facilities
- The towers should match the height of existing buildings

Parking and Traffic:

- Concerns the proposal will increase traffic congestion (x9)
- Current street network cannot support more traffic (x7)
- Concerns the proposal will decrease parking availability (x5)
- Concerns that no parking replacement will be provided (x3)
- Underground parking is needed to accommodate this proposed development (x3)
- Upgrades are needed to the street network (x2)
- The street level LRT line has increased time to get through the 28 ave intersection
- 66th St south of 23rd ave is only one lane and cannot support more traffic
- The proposed increase in residents will require reconfiguration of the transportation network
- Despite promotion of active modes it is not realistic to commute without a vehicle in winter

- 50th street deals with traffic from all areas including Beaumont
- Increased density will increase vehicle and foot traffic and negatively impact the area
- Concerns that City and ETS will need to find a better solution for street access entering the mall along 66 Street as the main entrance is currently used to access the relocated transit centre and increased density will congest this entrance
- Concerns with congestion around the Town Centre at rush hour
- Include non-accessory parking as a permitted use if this is a DC rezoning
- LRT station increases parking demand in the area

Density:

- Area surrounding the transit centre/LRT station should have increased density (x16)
- Increased density will attract more business traffic (x5)
- Concerns crime will increase with density (x5)
- The more residents in the area the better (x2)
- Increased density will help increase transit usage (x2)
- Increased density will increase vibrancy (x2)
- Decrease the number of proposed residential units
- Concerns that Millwoods density is too high
- Concerns highschools in the area can't handle influx of new students
- Small schools throughout the area will thrive with influx of new children

Location & Neighbourhood:

- Proposal does not fit character/town feel of the neighbourhood (x5)
- A grocery store is needed in the neighbourhood (x3)
- Good location for increased height due to limited impacts tp residential and proximity to transit
- The entire area should be high-density residential with low impact commercial
- Commercial uses should be mandated along the pathway between the LRT and transit centre
- More people will help foster sense of community
- Revitalization of retail space
- Addition of housing units would be welcomed
- The mall and library are community hubs
- The proposed development needs to reflect and respect the surrounding community
- Concerns if ground-level residential is viable near a busy transit centre/commercial area
- Good location for affordable housing
- Great potential with existing services to create an accessible neighbourhood
- Millwoods is already at capacity
- Concerns that the proposal will negatively impact the family orientated nature of the community
- Good access to public transit
- The proposal developed thoughtfully this location could make this a destination for transit riders
- Proposal will interfere with the esthetic of the surrounding parkland
- Proposal will interfere with the livability of the area
- No interest in high rises being developed in millwoods town centre
- The town centre was designed for shopping and health care needs and should be limited to them

Unit Affordability & Potential Residents:

- Ensure affordable housing units are allocated in the proposed development (x4)
- Concerns that affordable housing will negatively impact neighbourhood (x3)
- Increasing height/the number of units will help housing affordability (x2)

- Rent control should be put in place and added to the zoning to make it permanent
- Overly expensive residential units like those at heritage valley are a shame
- Affordable housing will help leverage the nearby LRT station/transit centre
- Affordable housing will compound existing problems
- Concerns with providing rental units rather than owned units

Alternative Development Options:
- The proposal would make more sense near a major intersection
- Building should be no higher than 10 storeys
- Preference for walk up apartments or 4 storey apartment condos
- Build new neighbourhoods on undeveloped land instead
- The increased setback should be greenspace
- There are other locations which would not impact millwoods residents as negatively such as the area on the east side of 34 street heading toward Terwilliger
- Hope the proposal can find a better way than tearing down existing buildings

Infrastructure Impacts:
- Concerns that infrastructure (schools/hospitals) will be strained with increased density (x3)
- Concerns that there are a lack of resources to address crime (x2)
- Would like to see the city publish a report on impacts to infrastructure
- Ensure public services have sufficient capacity to support the proposal

Sustainable Development:
- Solar power should be added to the building
- The proposal makes no mention of using renewable energy systems
- There is a lot of area on the towers/podium for solar PV and heat systems

City Policy and Plans:
- The Mill Woods Station ARP demands too much commercial than what is viable
- Edmonton's zoning bylaw has been responsible for Edmonton's urban sprawl
- A mixed use development would help contribute to 15 minute communities
- The Mill Woods Station ARP possibly calls for commercial units/active frontages facing the transit centre on the south and would be an excellent location for retail and provide eyes on the street

Application and Process:
- Developer does not need additional height to achieve their vision (x3)
- No need for developer to modify current zoning
- Have wind studies been done on a building of this size

Engagement
- Information is not easy to understand (x2)
- Feedback from previous consultation was communicated poorly
- Consider a mailout for residents in the Millwoods area and billboards for notification
- Add a short 10 page FAQ document written for the general public
- Concern that residents would have a difficult time understanding and responding to public engagement due to language barriers

- Recommend having engagement in other languages to ensure residents receive communication in their preferred language and surprised the City has not already done this with the push for diversity and inclusion
- Layout of information needs to be simplified
- Inadequate information on impacts to infrastructure provided

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Questions & Answers

Q1. I agree with Quadrocaterpus that height increase is good but setback increase is likely bad. I would be very curious to know what the motivation is for that move. In general, I think businesses and even residences along the pedestrian path between buses and trains would be good. Ideally, these could open directly onto that pedestrian path to create a sort of outdoor pedestrian mall experience that could really set Mill Woods transit centre apart.

Response: Generally setbacks for residential uses are greater to allow for separation between residents and the public realm. This is intended to create privacy for future residents, as well as allow for the establishment of yards for those units.

While the maximum setback is being increased, the minimum setback is not being proposed to be changed from the current 0 metres. This is intended to continue to allow for opportunities for the development of pedestrian malls in appropriate locations: however, the detail and design of those spaces would be reviewed at the Development Permit stage.

Q2. Why the change to setback regulations? What's the motivation for placing these residences farther from the conveniences that would entice people to live there in the first place? Thanks.

Response: The proposed changes to setbacks are to increase the distance from the edge of buildings to adjacent roadways and adjacent properties for buildings constructed around the Transit Centre.

These changes are primarily intended to allow for the creation of a semi-public plaza space adjacent to the LRT platform, and to create opportunities for front yards for at grade residential units.

These proposed changes will not significantly alter the location of buildings within the site and the proximity to other uses, but to create separation between the private and public property.

Q3. What was was reason for the increased height? Will there be any small business opportunities built into the building if the main level will be changed to residential. Will the unit parking be allocated to on-ground. Or have a separate structure to the mall

Response: The applicant is requesting the increase of 15 metres (or approximately 4 storeys) to allow for a specific building design to be constructed on the site directly adjacent to the LRT Station.

As part of this, a change is being requested to allow for residential uses on the ground floor in addition to the currently permitted commercial uses on the ground floor. Specifics of what potential uses may be found in the building would not be determined until after construction of the building is completed and would be up to the land owner to determine.

The proposal is intended to be a stand alone building located between the Transit Centre and the LRT Station and would not be connected to the existing mall.

Q4. Will there ever be competition for Sobeys back in the mall? and
How will you entice another Grocer into the area? CoOp left due to theft and Mall owners unwillingness to work with CoOp with design changes.

Response: The operations of the mall and the tenants within the mall are the responsibility of the mall's owners and managers The City has no influence over these decisions.

Q5. What area has the city purchased to provide LRT parking? As we know how dismal it is to find parking at Century place.

Response: The City has not purchased land for a Park & Ride near the Mill Woods LRT stop because it's likely that, in the future, that stop won't be the end of the line. Park & Ride services are provided at the terminus stop for LRT. The City has a Park & Ride strategy that will continue to be implemented in the coming years in conjunction with the Mass Transit Strategy. For context, in the future, Valley Line Southeast (which includes the Mill Woods stop) may be extended further south to Ellerslie Road where a future park-and-ride facility has been contemplated, therefore the Mill Woods LRT stop would no longer be the terminus stop.

Web Page Visitor Definitions

Aware
An aware visitor, or a visitor that we consider to be 'aware', has made one single visit to the page, but not clicked any further than the main page.

Informed
An informed visitor has taken the 'next step' from being aware and clicked on something. We now consider the visitor to be informed about the project. This is done because a click suggests interest in the project.

Engaged
Every visitor that contributes on the page, either by asking questions or leaving a comment, is considered to be 'engaged'.

Engaged and informed are subsets of aware. That means that every engaged visitor is also always informed AND aware. In other words, a visitor cannot be engaged without also being informed AND aware. At the same time, an informed visitor is also always aware.

Next Steps

The public feedback received will be considered during the planning analysis and will be included in the administration report for City Council. The administration report and finalized version of the applicant's proposal will be posted for public viewing on the City's public hearing agenda website approximately three (3) weeks prior to a scheduled public hearing for the file.

When the applicant is ready to take the application to Council (the Administration makes a recommendation of Support or Non-Support):

- Notice of Public Hearing date will be sent to surrounding property owners and applicable nearby Community Leagues and Business Associations.

- Once the Council Public Hearing Agenda is posted online, members of the public may register to speak at Council by completing the form at edmonton.ca/meetings or calling the Office of the City Clerk at 780-496-8178.
- Members of the public may listen to the Public hearing on-line via edmonton.ca/meetings.
- Members of the public can submit written comments to the City Clerk (city.clerk@edmonton.ca).

If you have questions about this application please contact:

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