

May 17, 2024



First, I want to thank everyone who shared their valuable insights, concerns, and opinions on the changes to the zoning bylaw. We all have deep, emotional connections to our homes and community, and any discussion about potential impacts on those connections can be fraught. In the weeks leading up to the public hearing, I took the opportunity to connect directly with citizens and engaged in numerous 30-minute to 1-hour phone calls with all Ward 2 constituents who contacted my office and were open to speaking with me about this important issue. I wanted to ensure I had a holistic understanding of the issues and concerns of Ward 2 residents, as this is a widespread and complex topic that would affect everyone differently. I listened intently, took in valuable feedback from each conversation, and brought forward thoughtful amendments which were supported by Council.

This was a difficult decision. The majority of Ward 2 (north of Stoney) is already built as R-G zoned communities (single-family, duplexes, rowhouses), and all our Ward 2 communities were built with a plan that balances low-density options available under R-CG. Every Ward 2 community has a diverse mix of rowhomes, duplexes, and single-family homes. The vast majority of our communities are built with a street design that maximizes the greatest and best use. This makes it challenging to increase density because we are not built in a grid street design with rectangle lots that are 50' x 120'. In the end, this change to R-CG has minimal if any impact on Ward 2. This is an inner-city solution to an inner-city problem and where redevelopment is already occurring.

Many people expressed valid concerns about the impacts of increased density, including the number of allowable units, higher population, traffic, and parking requirements. I worked with Administration and Council colleagues on both sides of the issue to develop two thoughtful amendments I introduced to address those concerns.

Amendment 1: Secondary suites and carriage homes are to be included in the unit calculation.

This has been a great frustration of mine since joining office. The density in Ward 2 is higher than that of all wards except Ward 8 and Ward 5. The city is turning into a density donut, where our outer communities have a higher density of homes and population than post-war suburbs. One issue which greatly impacts the level of services (i.e. transit) an area receives is density calculations. Secondary suites are not included as living units in density calculations and need to be reflected in the true density calculations of an area. Ward 2 already absorbs a substantial portion of the city's density without receiving more services in return. Communities like Evanston, with a high growth rate in secondary suites and potential renters, have not received increased City services to reflect that growth. With this amendment, that will soon change. Separate living units will all be counted in the density calculations. This will also increase parking requirements, as they are calculated on a per-unit basis.

Amendment 2: Tiered parking requirements based on age of community.

The theory behind having no parking requirements is that if people do not have a place to park a car,

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they will instead take transit. Transit infrastructure is not equitable across the city, and unfortunately, the Route Ahead Strategy is aiming to make it less so. The City's re-zoning changes under R-CG proposed that developments required 0.5 parking stalls per unit. It is not practical, nor does it make sense to have 0.5 parking stalls per unit in outer communities that have poor transit service. Inner-city communities have significantly better transit services and are better suited for a minimum of 0.5 parking spaces per unit. As such, my amendment requires communities built post-1970s to have a minimum of 1 parking spot per unit, and those pre-1960s remain with 0.5 spots per unit. (This [map](#) shows communities by age.) This was supported by Council with a 12-2 vote.

Market Impact:

Given our proximity in Ward 2 to greenfield development, there is little to no market support for large infills in Ward 2. With the high cost of developed properties in Ward 2, it does not make economic sense for developers or property owners to do infill projects in Ward 2. The potential profit margins are not there and will not be for many years. Additionally, older communities in Ward 2 already have rowhomes and duplexes available in material quantities, which sell for a market price below the current costs to build a similar unit. The market factors and additional unit and parking considerations from the amendments I brought forward will drive development into older inner-city communities closer to transit and the downtown with a grid street design, or to our greenfield developments.

Campaign Platform:

I ran on a platform stating that I would make difficult decisions in the best interest of our community. This was one of those decisions. The media and political partisans are taking advantage of general and warranted frustrations in our politicians, the economy, and the cost of living to make this a lightning rod issue. In reality, this is not a very impactful piece of legislation. The biggest benefit is removing one of many red tape layers in redeveloping low-density dwellings. Public appeal processes at the development permit stage still exist, current owners will benefit from a slight land lift in the value of their homes. The result isn't what I had envisioned, but it represents a positive step forward.

My Continued Commitment to Ward 2 Residents:

My office is always open, available, and accessible. I will personally have a conversation with you about any concerns that may arise. Should there be a proposed development in your community that worries you, I pledge to advocate for necessary amendments and facilitate dialogue between all involved parties to reach mutually beneficial solutions.

Again, thank you to everyone who reached out to my office, to those who took the time to come to the public hearing, and to those I was able to have conversations with. I truly appreciate your insights, I too love this city and our community, and want to make sure Calgary remains a city where everyone can thrive and prosper under our Calgary advantage.



Jennifer Wyness
Ward 2 Councillor