



Rezoning for Housing

What We Heard Report

April 2024

What we heard

In total, we had over 1,050 participants at our nine project information sessions, 465 participants at our online webinars, and we received 4,959 comments from 3,930 participants on the City Engage Portal.

Feedback received on the proposed rezoning touched on several different themes. Roughly 70% of comments appeared opposed to or concerned about the proposed rezoning, while 30% were in favor of the change. Feedback collected at in-person sessions, online sessions and responses on our project Engage Portal page all showed a similar range of themes or concerns.

Common themes heard included:

- **Impacts to Community:** Concerns were focused on parking, increased population within the community, community character and a general sense of uncertainty and inexperience with redevelopment, specifically rowhouses. There were also those who expressed excitement at welcoming new Calgarians to their community and that the proposed rezoning would allow them greater development opportunity on their property to support their changing needs over time.
- **Citywide Approach:** Another recurring theme was around taking a city-wide approach to rezoning, and it was suggested by some that select communities or geographic areas should “go first”. Alternatively, we did hear from Calgarians that understood a city-wide approach is the best method to increase supply and increase affordability. We also heard from some communities that they feel they have shouldered the load of redevelopment over the years and that a city-wide approach lessens this burden.
- **Housing Crisis:** We heard disagreement as to whether a housing crisis exists in Calgary and who should “own” and take responsibility for it. At the same time, we heard from Calgarians who cannot find a home to rent or afford to enter the ownership market.
- **Council:** We heard that Calgarians think City Council has already made their decision. Many Calgarians told us they are planning to address City Council and make their voice heard at the April 22 public hearing.
- **Need for more homes:** We heard there was a need for more homes. We heard both that this should be accommodated with suburban growth and with more compact urban development. We also heard that more homes could improve affordability of housing in Calgary.
- **Citywide equity:** Equity was discussed at every event and online. For some they felt it was unfair The City was proposing to change their zoning. Others were frustrated that existing zoning rules and resulting lack of housing choice limits what community they can live in.
- **Economic benefits:** We heard city-wide rezoning benefits a select group of Calgarians but also continuing to make Calgary an attractive place to live is good for businesses and recruiting talent.
- **Density near transit:** We heard that R-CG is only appropriate near Light Rail Transit stations, while others felt that R-CG is too modest for transit-oriented development.



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For a detailed summary of the input that was provided, please see the [Summary of Input](#) section.

For a verbatim listing of all the input that was provided, please visit our project City Engage page, at <https://engage.calgary.ca/rezoningforhousing>.

Project overview

With Council's approval of Home is Here: The City of Calgary's Housing Strategy 2024-2030, City Council directed Administration to:

Prepare the necessary bylaws to immediately:

- I. Make the base residential district [Rowhouse-Ground Oriented] (R-CG) with guidance for single, semi-detached, row and townhouses into a single land use district.
- II. Enable secondary suites and backyard suites on one parcel of land.
- III. Eliminate parking requirements for backyard suites.

Based on this direction, Administration undertook a broad public information campaign with two goals:

1. **Education** - To provide Calgarians with easy-to-find, plain language information about:
 - Why rezoning was being proposed.
 - What rezoning means and how it may affect a property.
 - What was not being proposed.
 - How Calgarians could participate in the public hearing of Council and how they could share their thoughts with Council.
2. **Listen and learn** - To hear from Calgarians on this issue, and then share that feedback with Administration and Council for their consideration through a What We Heard Report.

This process took place using The City's Engage Strategy. The Listen and Learn stage of engagement commits to listen to Calgarians and learn about their views, issues, concerns, expectations, and ideas.

Information and education overview

A range of methods and approaches were employed to meet the information and education goals noted above. This approach focused on in-person and online engagement sessions, as well as a page on The City's engagement portal, <https://engage.calgary.ca>. Additional Councillor and community-led information sessions were supported by The City project team; however, those sessions are not included as part of this report.



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In-person sessions

The City hosted nine public information sessions from January to March of 2024 in support of the project. These sessions were held at the following locations and times.

- **January 30, 2024, 5:00 to 8:00 PM**, Calgary Chinese Cultural Centre (197 1 Street SW)
- **February 1, 2024, 5:30 to 8:30 PM**, Dalhousie Community Association (5432 Dalhart Road NW)
- **February 3, 2024, 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM**, Bowness Community Association (7904 43 Avenue NW)
- **February 6, 2024, 5:00 to 8:00 PM**, Best Western Premier Calgary Plaza Hotel & Conference Centre
- **February 7, 2024, 5:00 to 8:00 PM**, McGivney Hall, St. Mary's University (14550 Bannister Road SE)
- **February 10, 2024, 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM**, Grace Lutheran Church (3610 Sarcee Road SW)
- **March 11, 2024, 5:00 to 8:00 PM**, Radisson Hotel & Conference Centre Calgary Airport (6620 36th Street NE)
- **March 13, 2024, 5:00 to 8:00 PM**, Carriage House Hotel & Conference Centre (9030 Macleod Trail S)
- **March 16, 2024, 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM**, Ranchlands Community Association (7713 Ranchview Drive NW)

These sessions were held in large venues (e.g., gyms, conference rooms, etc.) at different locations throughout the city, and were intended to provide an opportunity for Calgarians to learn more about the proposed citywide rezoning and to share their feedback on these proposed changes. Participants were able to read through project information boards and have small group discussions with City planners and facilitators. Each event included at least 10 small group discussion tables, as well as representatives from The City's Housing Solutions team. Each discussion table was staffed by one City planner and one facilitator. Feedback forms and a collection box were provided for participants who wished to provide written feedback at the event. Feedback forms included the following question: Do you have additional feedback you would like to provide on the proposed rezoning?

In addition to the public information sessions, The City had planned two walking tours in cooperation with the Federation of Calgary Communities to show Calgarians different examples of rowhouse development in established communities in Calgary. These walking tours were cancelled due to security concerns.

Public and industry webinars

The City hosted four online webinars. All four sessions were open to the general public, with two focussing on more technical questions. These sessions were hosted on:

- January 29, 2024 - 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM
- February 5, 2024 - 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM
- February 8, 2024 - 7:00 to 8:30 PM
- February 12, 2024 - 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM



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All sessions included a presentation from the project team, followed by a question-and-answer period. Participants were able to submit questions through the public meeting chat and Question & Answer tool. Participants were directed to provide feedback through either the Engage Portal tool, or directly through Clerks' webpage for submitting comments on items coming before a Public Hearing of Council.

Dedicated Call Centre

A dedicated call centre was put in place to provide callers with specific information and to reduce wait times in the regular 311 call centre. Call centre operators were able to offer to send Calgarians hard copy information materials if they desired.

Engage Portal

The City's Engage Portal page for this work was launched on January 15, 2024, and was open to collect feedback until April 11, 2024, at <https://engage.calgary.ca/rezoningforhousing>

The page included a brief overview of the project, information on potential affects on Calgarians, information on online and in-person sessions, and a feedback tool. There were also links to relevant webpages and documents.

Participants were asked the following question on the Portal page: Do you have additional feedback you would like to provide on the proposed rezoning?

Accessibility and inclusivity considerations

Given the broad reach of this initiative, effort was taken to support Calgarians in accessing the information needed, regardless of technological constraints, language or availability. Actions to support accessibility included:

- 580,000 postcards sent out to all homes to direct Calgarians to the Rezoning for Housing webpage and other sources of information.
- Plain language descriptions of our proposal on all websites and at all events.
- Print copies of our website content available through our dedicated call center for Calgarians without access to technology, included translated materials for major language groups.
- A translation tool for the City Engage Portal page, which provided translations in Calgary's top ten language groups.
- A mix of in-person and online events, including daytime, evening, and weekend options; and
- Interpreters available at key events where translation services have been required for past City sessions.
- Dedicated 5311 call centre available to answer questions specific to accessibility to information, engagement, language translated services. This included ensuring PDS support for notification letters.



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Next steps

This report will be provided to Council for their consideration at the April 22, 2024, public hearing of Council.

Summary of Input

The following tables provide summaries of the key themes from feedback provided through our project Engage Portal as well as our information sessions.

Key Concerns

Theme	Description
Parking	Concerns that the proposed rezoning will create new parking issues in neighborhoods and would exacerbate these issues where parking is already limited.
Community character	Some feel they have purchased their home because of the single-family nature of their community, and that additional density would not be appropriate in that context.
Built form	Concerns about uncertainty around what will be built next door and having limited ability to provide feedback.
Infrastructure and traffic	Concerns that existing City infrastructure, such as water and sanitary lines, electrical supply, and roads, are not adequate to accommodate the strain caused by additional density. Additionally, concerns that the proposed rezoning will create new issues with traffic congestion in communities or exacerbate those issues in communities where traffic and congestion is already a concern.
Property values	Concerns that the proposed rezoning will lead to decreased property values, especially once R-CG developments are constructed in their communities. Some respondents feel they pay higher property taxes given the value of their home and expect that this would lead to greater protection for the types of housing that exist there currently.
Loss of trees and landscaping	Concerns that R-CG developments will reduce the amount of green space and number of trees in their community, which would negatively impact the character of their community and lead to environmental issues such as increased runoff.
Zoning of parks	Concerns that the proposed rezoning map shows parks spaces being proposed for rezoning. There are concerns that this means parks will be redeveloped for housing.



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Theme	Description
Timing	Concerns about the timing of the proposed rezoning, and that The City is moving too fast.
Local considerations	A preference by some for more housing in new communities or a community-by-community approach. Some respondents believe that additional density would be better located closer to transit corridors, and in communities where redevelopment is already taking place.
Immigration	Concerns over immigration policies being the underlying cause of the housing crisis.
Affordability	Doubt that adding housing supply would result in greater affordability. There is a desire for more data to justify these recommendations.
Accountability	Some feel individual property owners are being made responsible for solving the housing crisis themselves.
Foregone conclusion	Feelings that this decision has already been made. Frustration and a lack of trust in Administration and in Calgary City Council.
Plebiscite	Request for a plebiscite or referendum on this matter.
Federal funding	Feelings that this change is only needed to secure federal funding.

Key Benefits

Theme	Description
More homes needed	More units are needed across the city to create greater housing affordability and availability, provide greater housing choice for Calgarians at all income levels, reduce the infrastructure required for new communities and support the long-term maintenance of municipal infrastructure, and support more amenities at a community level.
Location considerations	If rezoning is important citywide then it should be citywide with no exclusions. There were some communities specifically pointed out as needing to be included from an equity perspective.
Economic benefits	The proposed rezoning would have a variety of economic benefits, including enabling businesses to attract new talent to Calgary, and general benefits to the local economy, including for small business.



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Theme	Description
Density near transit	Some in favour of the proposed rezoning also support higher density housing near transit stations and corridors.