

Connecting Policy to Practice

Factors Affecting Suburban Town Centre Development in the City of Edmonton

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Over the years, the City of Edmonton has adopted increasingly ambitious goals and objectives to guide development in a way that promotes sustainability, livability, and economic growth.¹

One of the key goals of the City Plan is to create a more compact and connected city that reduces the impact of sprawl and promotes sustainable transportation options. To achieve this goal, the City Plan establishes a policy direction for denser communities, more integrated land uses that are located near public transit, and an interconnected network of bike lanes and pedestrian-friendly streets that enhance the walkability of the community.

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However, the translation of planning intentions into actual practice can be challenging, particularly in suburban town centres where there are competing interests between planners and developers, as well as limited resources from the city.² At the heart of these competing interests is an urban planner's desire to implement the goals of the City Plan versus the market realities and challenges of commercial development.

This research paper aims to explore the barriers that exist between urban planning intentions and practice in suburban town centres. By examining several town centre developments in the City of Edmonton and speaking to both planners and developers, this study seeks to identify the key factors that hinder the implementation of urban planning initiatives in these areas and provide recommendations for overcoming these obstacles. The findings of this research will have implications for urban planners, policymakers, and local communities, as they seek to create more livable and sustainable suburban town centres.

Keywords: suburban town centres, walkability, suburban design, commercial development, complete communities, policy, planning intention

