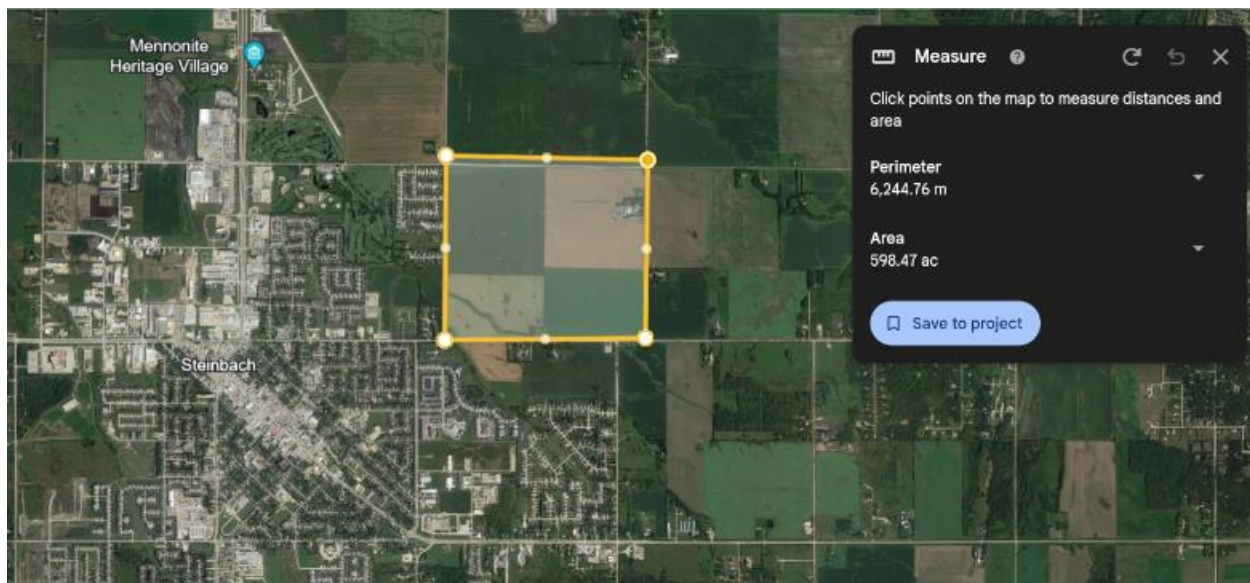


ZONING FOR A STRONGER CITY

Per the existing City of Steinbach Official Community Plan, the city will need over 3000 new residential units by 2026. At a rate of 5 single family houses per acre,[1] that will result in the city needing to develop over 600 acres of land for houses alone in less than 3 years. Based on these numbers a denser method of development will be required for the city to continue on a sustainable growth path.



A screenshot of ~600 acres of land compared to the existing City of Steinbach

A popular method of densification in Winnipeg is to develop existing infill lots with medium density multi-family buildings. These buildings are often around 3 storeys tall and contain between 6-12 residential units, oftentimes within the same size property as an exiting single-family home. Considering the poorly maintained nature of some of the more mature neighbourhoods in Steinbach, this method of development could work great for decreasing the amount of new land needing to be developed to meet the required residential unit count.

Unfortunately, these types of developments are often rejected in Steinbach because they “don’t match the existing character of the neighbourhood”, even though the new buildings often look better and add positive character when compared to the houses they replaced. A perfect example of this would be the west end of First Street where several dilapidated buildings were demolished to make way for a medium density townhouse development. Soon after those were completed several other medium density multi-family buildings were constructed, making the block much more welcoming when compared to how it looked with the original houses.



First Street houses prior to demolition (Source: Steinbach Online)

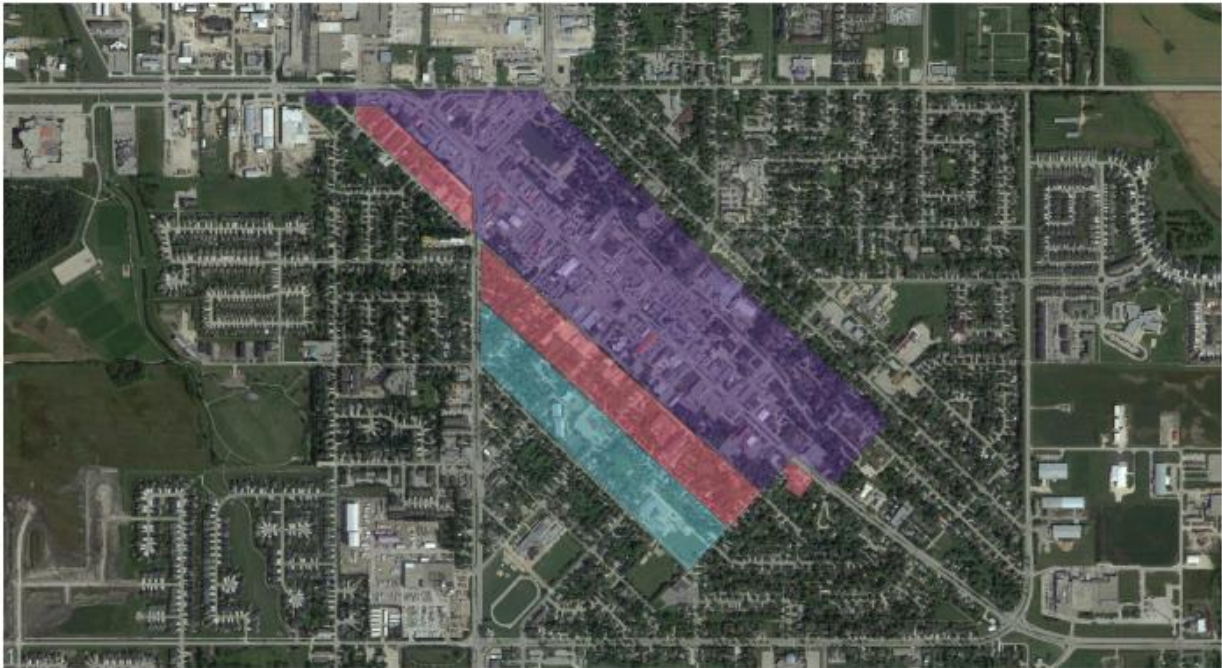


Prairie Lofts after construction (Source: Kingdom Home Building)

In the current community plan, medium density housing location criteria is described as: “on the periphery of low-density residential areas, along major streets, or within or adjacent to the Central Business District”. This description requires some interpretation as “major street” is not a defined term in the community plan; does First Street meet this definition? Does a street count as a major street only after a medium density development is constructed?

After several multi-family buildings were approved/constructed on First Street, the City of Steinbach amended the official community plan to include the north side of First Street into the CBD Transitional Zone. The CBD Transitional Zone is intended to blend the difference of the CBD with surrounding residential neighbourhoods.

The main use case for the CBD Transitional Zone is medium – high density residential & low impact commercial developments. Currently, the south side of this zone lies on the north-east side of Second Street. We believe it would be in the best interest of the city to increase this zone one street south-west to Third Street – viewing this street it is simple to see why. The 300 block of Third Street is home to Fernwood Place, a 6-storey high-density retirement home. Also included in this block (which is all outside of the transitional zone) is SAC and the Steinbach Mennonite Brethren Church.



- Map Legend
- Proposed Transitional Zone
 - Existing Transition Zone
 - CBD



Satellite map showing proposed extension of the CBD Transitional Zone (Source: Colin Sobering)

The north-east side of Third Street also contains several deep lots which are prime for redevelopment into larger multi-family buildings. Combining lots and careful planning could also allow parking to be placed at the rear of the property, behind the building, allowing the development to maintain a “residential look”. Redeveloping this area is an attractive concept to bring more affordable housing units to the city and drive economic development in the downtown core as many amenities are easily within walking distance, even on a cold winter day.

Oftentimes developers are hesitant to rezone properties because of the requirements & investment into it (time & financial costs), and because of this it means that higher density development is often pushed aside for more traditional uses. Therefore, we think it would be in the best interest of the city to streamline this process and perhaps introduce an incentive to rezone properties where rezoning said property would align it better with the Official Community Plan. This could also be used for renovations/conversions, when a building is being renovated to provide more units & higher density the developer could apply for this incentive.

[1] STEINBACH SUSTAINABLE GROWTH STRATEGY – SUMMARY REPORT (OCT. 2014)

[HTTPS://WWW.STEINBACH.CA/SITE/ASSETS/FILES/1963/STEINBACH SUSTAINABLE GROWTH STRATEGY SUMMARY - WEB COMPRESSED.PDF](https://www.steinbach.ca/site/assets/files/1963/steinbach_sustainable_growth_strategy_summary_-_web_compressed.pdf)