

# WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

## Community Amenity Contributions

### Drop-in public engagement event

### March 27, 2018

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**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** Create an official City policy governing community amenity contributions from direct control rezonings

**EVENT TYPE:** Open house

**LOCATION:** Heritage Room - Edmonton City Hall

**NUMBER OF ATTENDEES:** 24

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#### ABOUT THIS REPORT

The information in this report includes feedback gathered during the March 27, 2018 drop-in public engagement event. This report is shared with all attendees who provided their email address during the event. As summary of the feedback from this event will be provided to Urban Planning Committee in report CR\_5398.

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#### MEETING FORMAT

The meeting format was a station-based open house where attendees were able to view display boards with project information, and receive a copy of the draft policy to review and discuss. City Staff engaged participants in conversations about the draft policy, the history of community amenity contributions in Edmonton, and implementation issues. Participants were invited to share their feedback on a poster boards by offering general feedback, as well as by answering the following questions:

- What, if anything, is unclear about the policy?
- Is the policy on the right track?
- How would having the policy in place change the process for you?

28 sticky notes were submitted and their comments are summarized below.

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## WHAT WE HEARD

- Excellent step in the right direction. Encouraged by transparency. Should reduce conflict between communities and developers.
  - Establishing a policy that sets a baseline and encourages developers to engage with the community on public amenities early in the process is key to allowing infill development.
  - Communities require more support from City Planning for direct control rezoning applications, including clear information on how the rate was chosen, how to participate in the rezoning process, how to determine amenity priorities.
  - Consider expanding the policy to RA9 zones or other standard zones.
  - Good to see family friendly housing included as an amenity - communities need more of this.
  - Family housing is good, but should be provided some other way rather than as an amenity through this policy.
  - Affordable housing also needed, especially to replace affordable housing lost to redevelopment.
  - The City must address enforcement and ensure that a permanent public benefit is achieved. Amenities on public land are better than amenities on private land because access is guaranteed and the public will feel more comfortable using the space.
  - The rate is too low.
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## ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

*How was the rate (\$37.50 per additional square meter of floor space) calculated?*

- One key principle of the project was to neither increase, nor decrease contributions, but to focus on improving the process. To accomplish this, the average contribution from past rezonings needed to be calculated.
- The initial rate is the average contribution made over the past eight years by direct control upzoning projects. Each of the 82 projects were analyzed to construct an estimate of the value of the amenities provided in the zone, with the values and methodology reviewed by external land economics experts. The top and bottom 10% of results were removed to prevent skew by outliers.

*What resources will the City provide to communities to determine amenity priorities?*

- The City is preparing a Community Amenity Contribution Guidebook to be released when the policy is approved. It will help both members of the public and developers understand what community amenity contributions are, what is required, and how the rezoning

process works. This information will help communities determine what amenities could be provided through this policy, and what amenities can not. Once published, this guidebook will be available at [edmonton.ca/communityamenitycontributions](http://edmonton.ca/communityamenitycontributions).

- The City's Neighbourhood Resource Coordinators support neighbourhood groups in the 'strategy' phase of the development process for amenity development in neighbourhoods. This can include setting priorities, identifying funding sources, and planning community projects.

#### *Why isn't affordable housing included as an amenity?*

- Affordable housing is also obtained through direct control rezonings under City policy C582 - Developer Sponsored Affordable Housing.
- Including affordable housing as one of many amenities that could be selected would create risk that no affordable housing would be offered. Because affordable housing is a Council priority provided in part by an existing policy, it was not included in this policy.
- Amenities are intended to offset the impact of development in existing communities. Affordable housing development also creates impacts and will be expected to provide amenities in accordance with this policy.

#### *How will the City enforce requirements and ensure lasting public benefit?*

- Amenities are secured through the development permit process, meaning that the provision of amenities are made a condition of development permit. These conditions must be met in order to complete development. If they are not met, the City can issue a stop-work order.
- Specific enforcement mechanisms are different for different amenities. For example:
  - Public access to private amenity space is secured through a public access easement, which is registered on title and cannot be discharged without permission from the City.
  - Cash contributions towards specific projects (like park space improvements) are secured through a binding agreement between the City and the developer, which is required as a condition of development permit. Typically, these agreements use a security, such as a letter of credit, held by the City to ensure funds are paid when construction is complete.
  - Specific streetscape improvements are defined and met through the development permit and building permit processes and must be constructed to comply with the permits issued. Completed streetscapes are protected through a servicing agreement held by the City that requires the developer to maintain the improvements.
  - A developer will need to demonstrate that they are building three bedroom units, community space, or childcare space in accordance with regulations in the text of

the zone to obtain a development permit. Subsequent changes to interior building space will require another development permit, which will not be issued unless it conforms to the zone, preventing the loss of this space.

*How will the City ensure affected communities are represented when determining amenities? It should go beyond Community Leagues.*

- Communities participate in determining amenities through the rezoning process. Individuals can respond with their input directly to the applicant, or to City staff through a variety of methods. For additional information on community consultation in the rezoning process, see [www.edmonton.ca/documents/What\\_is\\_Zoning\\_Final.pdf](http://www.edmonton.ca/documents/What_is_Zoning_Final.pdf) and [www.edmonton.ca/city\\_government/documents/Respondto\\_Land\\_Development\\_Application.pdf](http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/Respondto_Land_Development_Application.pdf)
- City staff will encourage applicants to propose amenities that address community priorities and needs.

*What happens when communities and developers disagree on which amenities to provide?*

- Because direct control zones are custom zones proposed by an applicant, the developer may seek Council approval without community or Administration's support through the public hearing process. Community and Administration's concerns are shared with Council in an accompanying report and presentation, and members of the public are invited to speak at public hearing. Ultimately, Council decides on rezoning approval after considering many factors, including amenity contributions.

*Can amenity contribution funds be pooled to provide a larger amenity?*

- Yes. Cash contributions must be earmarked for specific projects, but can be pooled with other funds or contributions towards a larger project. These funds are held in trust by the City as community leaders complete planning, design, and fundraising efforts for the projects identified.

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If you have questions about community amenity contributions please contact:

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