

## Summary of Public Consultation

An initial round of public and stakeholder consultation was undertaken as a part of the broader Ground-oriented Multi-unit residential project that took place between 2013 and 2015. This consultation included a survey of row house and semi-detached homeowners, and several stakeholder focus group meetings. The issue of Amenity Area was further explored in a stakeholder workshop held for the RF3 Site Yard Setbacks Review Project.

More recently, stakeholder feedback was obtained through the following:

- A public meeting with Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues on March 14, 2016, with 15 representatives in attendance
- A meeting with Urban Development Institute - Edmonton Region and Canadian Home Builders Association - Edmonton Region on March 16, 2016, with 18 representatives in attendance.
- A meeting with the Community Infill Panel on May 11, 2016, with eight representatives in attendance
- An Insight Community Survey in May, 2016, with 1964 respondents
- A Mature Neighbourhood Overlay Review survey in May, 2016, with 3080 respondents

The feedback from these engagements is captured in below.

### Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues' Feedback

This section summarizes feedback from the March 14, 2016, meeting.

<p>Amenity area size requirements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The current regulations in mature areas are working well and do not need to be changed.</li> <li>● One size fits all (city-wide regulations) is not a good way to go. Suburban standards might not be appropriate in urban areas.</li> <li>● Amenity area requirements should be based on age. Preschool children require 50m<sup>2</sup> of Amenity Area.</li> <li>● Linking required private amenity area to dwelling type creates an unfair situation where those in lower socioeconomic groups cannot afford larger amenity spaces.</li> <li>● Certain ethnic groups use amenity space in different ways; this needs to be considered.</li> </ul>
<p>Characteristics of amenity area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A clearer definition of “at-grade” is needed as it relates to amenity area; it should include access to natural ground cover.</li> <li>● Soft or permeable landscaping should be required for</li> </ul>

	at-grade amenity areas.
Yard space (Front and rear setbacks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The rear yard space should be maximized through reduced front setbacks and garages located closer to the laneway.</li> <li>● Maximize rear yard space.</li> <li>● Staggered front setbacks make an attractive street.</li> <li>● The front yard is where people can interact with their neighbours and those who live in their community.</li> <li>● Front yards provide needed space for greenery.</li> <li>● Allowing front yards to be use for required amenity area could impact property values.</li> <li>● Do not agree with allowing front yards or above grade areas to count as amenity area.</li> <li>● Some front yards face south so the back yard is perpetually shady, in which case allowing these to count as amenity area makes sense.</li> <li>● If front yards are to be considered amenity area, they should be secure.</li> </ul>
Definition of amenity area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Rooftop amenity space is not ideal for children.</li> </ul>
Costs/ trade-off of providing common amenity area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Common amenity area is important and worth the additional costs.</li> <li>● Common amenity area is rarely used, it's not worth the trade off and extra cost.</li> <li>● Quantity is not quality. Common amenity area needs to be configured in a usable way.</li> <li>● If affordability is an issue, keep amenity spaces outdoors.</li> <li>● Outdoor common amenity area should be provided, indoor amenity area should be at the discretion of the developer.</li> </ul>
Proximity to parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Culture is different today than it was in the past, with children not often going to parks unattended. As a result, nearby parks don't ensure greater access to amenity area for children. On-site amenity areas in multifamily housing are important in providing supervised play space for children.</li> <li>● Reducing required amenity area based on proximity to parks is not a good idea.</li> </ul>

## Urban Development Institute & Edmonton Region and Canadian Home Builders Association - Edmonton Region Feedback

This section summarizes the feedback from the March 16, 2016 meeting.

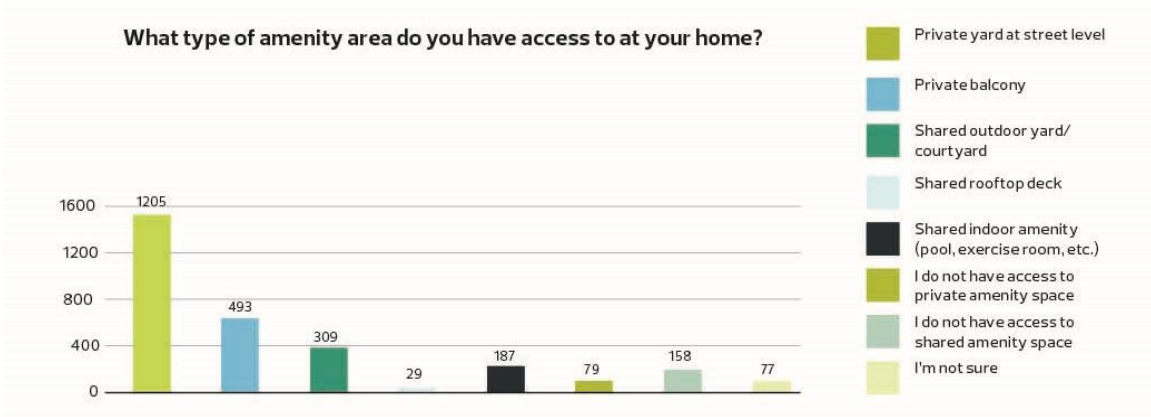
<p>Amenity area size requirements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In the mature parts of the city, development is generally more compact; space and site dictate amenity area</li> <li>● The site setback and lot coverage regulations ensure a certain amount of open space on a lot. For low density housing, the current regulations are redundant.</li> <li>● Different dwelling types should have different amenity area requirements instead of the current blanket requirement. For Row Houses, specifically, there needs to be consideration between condo type projects and fee-simple projects.</li> <li>● Larger amenity area requirements will result in challenges to delivering projects and will reduce building footprints, creating less desirable floor plans for the end consumer.</li> <li>● Current requirements prevent larger parking pads desired by homebuyers from being provided.</li> <li>● No need for amenity area regulations as consumers will buy based on their preferences.</li> </ul>
<p>Yard space (Front and rear setbacks)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Front yards are not an efficient use of land.</li> <li>● Front verandas can use the front yards space and buyers can use their back yards for gardening.</li> <li>● Minimum rear yard requirements already create a backyard amenity space. Additional regulations are redundant.</li> <li>● Most lots will have at least the minimum amount of amenity space based on the other regulations in the Zoning Bylaw.</li> <li>● Above grade decks/balconies should count towards required amenity area. Minimum dimensions should be relaxed as well.</li> </ul>
<p>Definition of amenity area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● It is unclear why front yards are not considered amenity area.</li> <li>● Allowing the front yard to be counted as required amenity area makes sense. This would help in instances where rear parking is required for secondary suites.</li> <li>● RF5 already allows front yards to be counted as amenity area and it works well. The RF5 provision to allow front yards in row houses should be allowed more broadly.</li> <li>● Amenity area placed on top of rear-attached garages and</li> </ul>

	<p>front verandas should count towards the amenity area requirements.</p>
<p>Costs/ trade-off of providing common amenity area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Common amenity areas with playgrounds and other equipment are a liability for condo corporations so they typically do not use the space.</li> <li>● Affordability is a more important consideration than shared amenity space; increasing amenity area will drive up prices.</li> <li>● Increasing the amenity area requirements could discourage infill development.</li> <li>● There should not be any common amenity area requirements; providing shared amenity space should be at the discretion of the developer.</li> <li>● Exempting indoor amenity area from Floor Area Ratio calculations would encourage its provision and would be especially helpful when developing seniors’ housing.</li> <li>● If consumers want common amenity area, they will pay for it and the market will respond. Don’t legislate it as a requirement.</li> <li>● In multi-family type projects, price is the driving factor of sales. Requiring common amenity area would drive up prices.</li> <li>● Most people may say they would like common amenity area; however, when they found out the price they would probably change their minds.</li> </ul>
<p>Proximity to parks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● When a development is in close proximity to a public park, reducing the amenity area requirements makes sense.</li> <li>● The majority of buyers would be more likely to use a conveniently located park than a small amenity area.</li> </ul>

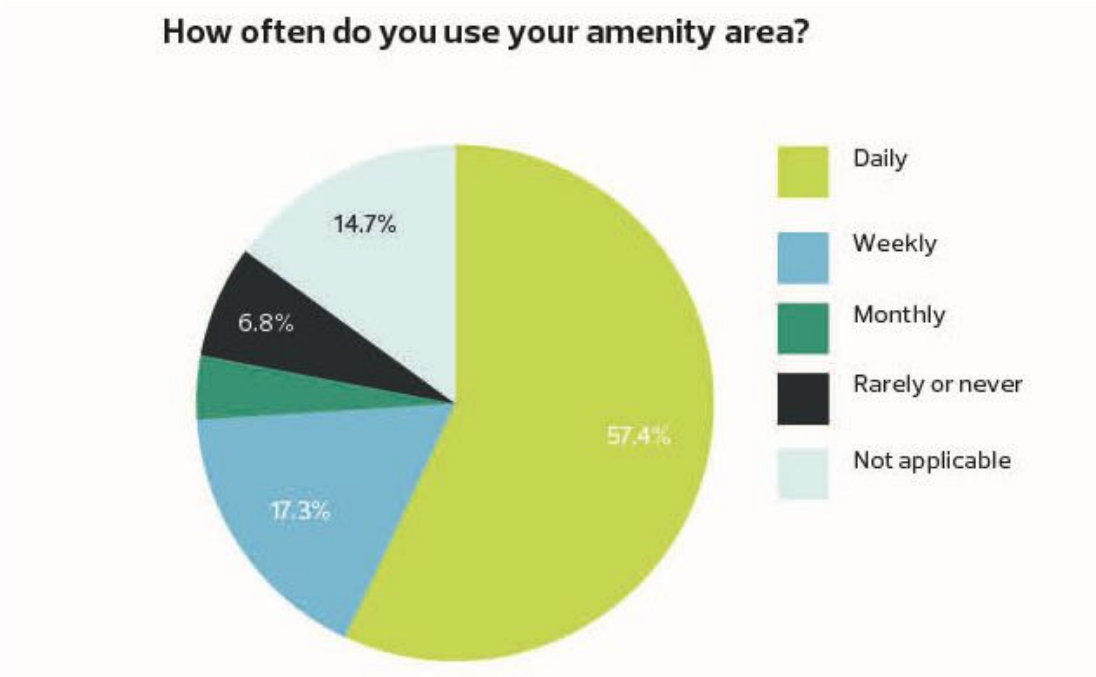
**Insight Survey Results**

The May, 2016, Insight Survey, was completed by 1964 people. The results are presented below.

**Question 1 - What type of amenity area do you have access to at your home?**

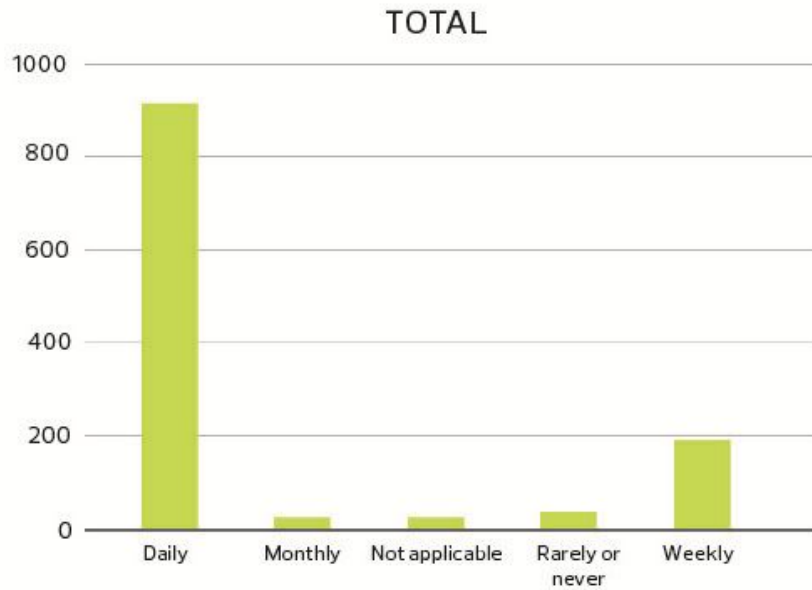


**Question 2 - How often do you use the amenity area you have access to?**

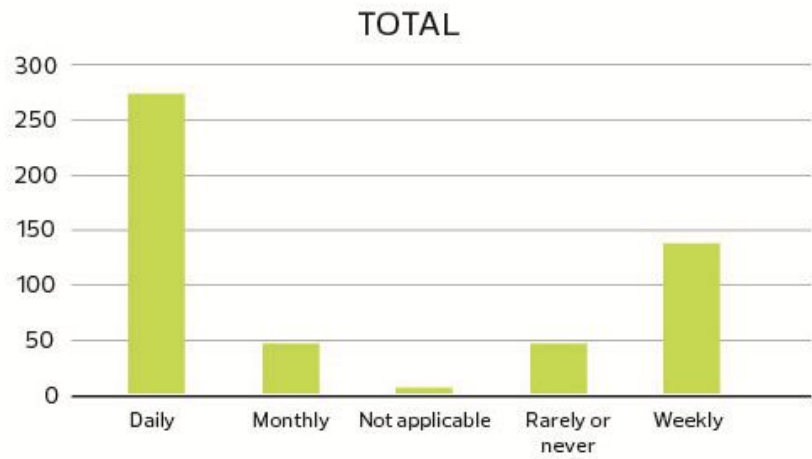


**Question 2** was further analyzed based on the type of amenity area respondents have access to. These results showed that similar proportions of people use their amenity space regardless of what form it is provided in.

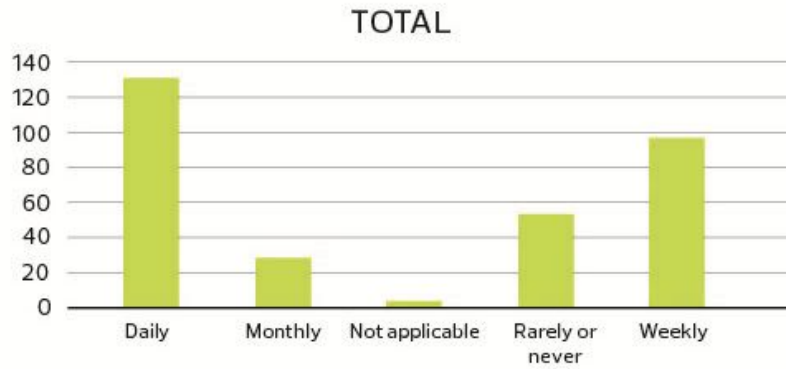
**Respondents with access to a private yard at street level:**



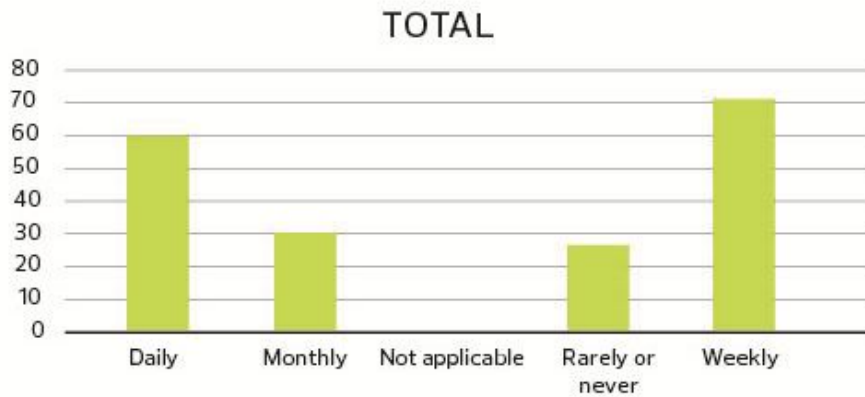
**Respondents with access to a private balcony:**



**Respondents with access to a shared outdoor yard or courtyard:**

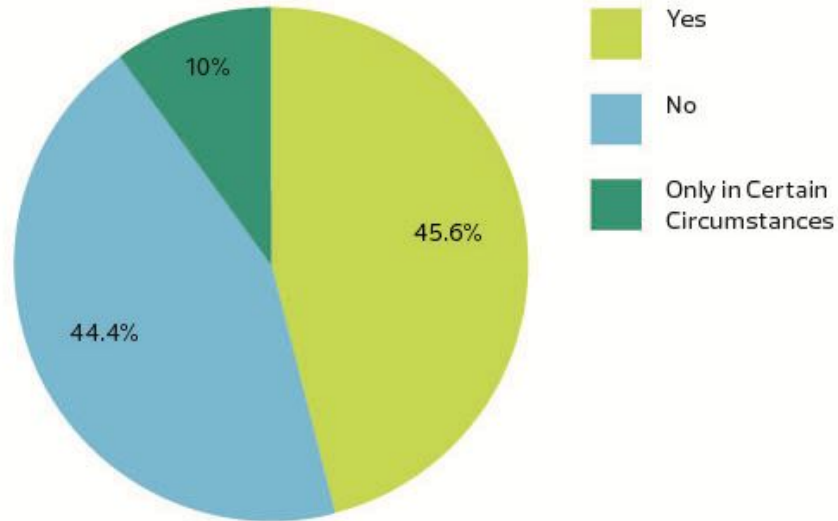


**Respondents with access to a shared indoor amenity area:**



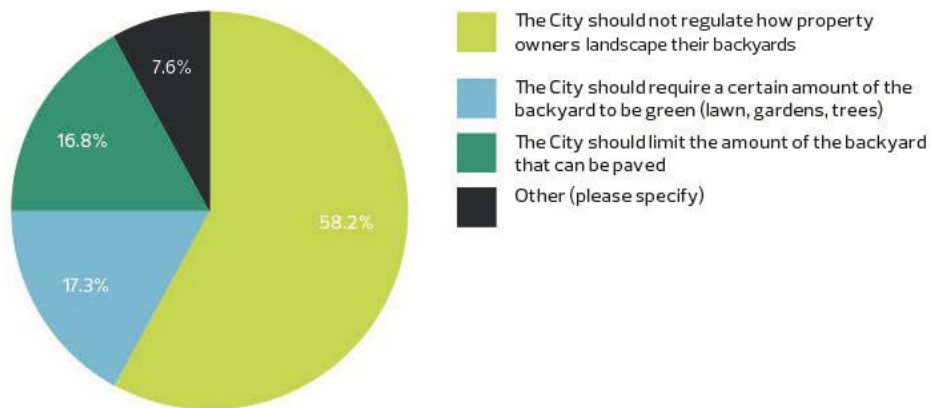
Question 3 - Do you think front yards should be considered as amenity area?

Should front yards be considered as amenity area?



Question 4 - Which statement BEST describes your opinion on how property owners should be required to landscape their backyards?

Which Statement BEST describes your opinion?



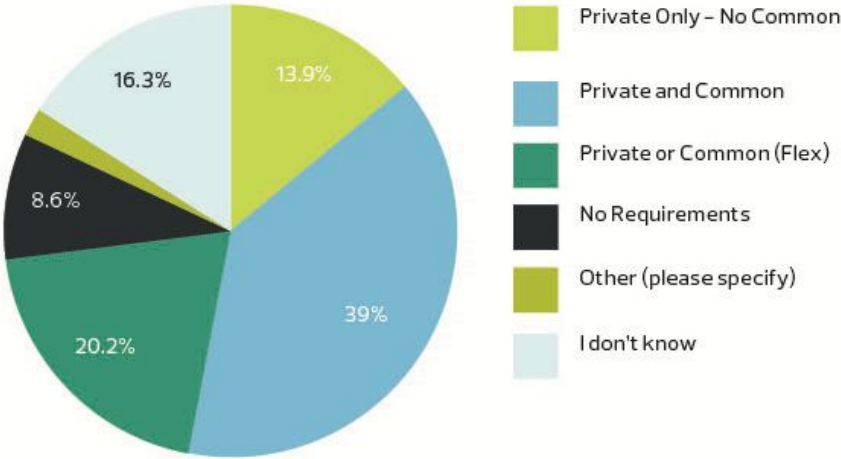


**Question 5** - Do you have any additional comments on amenity area regulations for low density residential areas?

- The most frequent comments expressed that the City should not regulate either front or rear yards. A number of these comments suggested that only safety, lot grading, and reasonable maintenance levels on private property should be regulated by the City. The desire for flexibility in how private space is used was emphasized.
- Other comments highlighted the importance of soft landscaping in creating beautiful neighbourhoods and creating relaxing amenity spaces. A number of comments raised concerns over the prevalence of grass due to the associated water and fertilizer use. The opportunity to incorporate urban gardening, naturalized landscaping and tree planting were highlighted.
- A random number generator was used to select 5 quotations from the feedback provided:
  - “I have a backyard, a balcony off one bedroom and a veranda. I use veranda most days when the temperature is >15C, I hardly ever use my back yard, and I pretty much never sit on the balcony.”
  - “Less regulation would be nice... lets make edmonton ours... not theirs.”
  - “Each neighborhood needs to have specific regulations based on lot size and character. Consult properly with the community leagues.”
  - “I think this sounds like a make work project and that you should be putting your focus elsewhere.”
  - “Based on the number of people that I see using the park and boulevard areas in Royal Gardens, I see parks as a very important amenity.”

**Question 6** - Which statement best reflects your opinion on amenity space for apartment and condo buildings?

**Preference for Amenity Area Requirements**



**Question 7** - Do you have any additional comments on amenity area regulations in row houses, apartment or condo buildings?

- A number of comments highlighted the importance of shared amenity spaces in higher density housing. It was noted for its importance in building community and providing space to relax. Comments additionally identified the importance of private amenity space in providing opportunities for outdoor recreation.
- Other comments expressed that there should be fewer regulations and that the market should determine the quantity and type of open space. These comments highlighted that both common and private amenity spaces can be underused by residents, and many noted the desire for flexibility in how amenity space is provided.
- The potential for less private amenity space to encourage the use of public spaces was noted. Comments highlighted the importance of nearby public spaces in meeting residents' amenity needs.
- A random number generator was used to select 5 quotations from the feedback provided:
  - "If a building can't offer balconies to all units, it should have some sort of outdoor common area, such as a rooftop patio or closed in lawn area."
  - "Don't care not my problem as this is not the style of housing that appeals to me."
  - "It is the totality of amenities in the area that needs be considered."
  - "Condo owners should decide that by themselves."

- “Courtyard space is a lovely amenity to connect with your neighbours.”

**Mature Neighbourhood Overlay Review Survey**

The results of the May, 2016, Mature Neighbourhood Overlay Review Survey included a question on residential yards, the findings of which are provided below.

**Question 1 - What do you value more?**

**1. What do you value more?**

