

Net Amenity Losses Due to Flood Mitigation Projects

Recommendation

That the November 29, 2017, Urban Form and Corporate Strategic Development report CR_4579, be received for information.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the March 7, 2017, City Council meeting, the following motion was passed:

That Administration provide a report on the following:

1. Identify the conflict that has emerged among community amenity and sport needs (through breathe or the Open Spaces Master Plan), and the Flood Mitigation Program.
2. What strategies could be used to mitigate the loss of amenities?

Executive Summary

The City prioritizes land use to achieve city-building goals for maximum citizen benefit and cost efficiency. Utilizing dry ponds for surface flood mitigation is much less expensive than using underground storage for flood mitigation. This may create a conflict as, in some cases, the land required for flood mitigation is the same land on which sports amenity infrastructure may already be established. Dry ponds hold water during a storm event; however, no permanent pool of water exists in these basins, so these areas can still be used for other purposes except during storm events.

Currently, Administration consults the public regarding where to best locate dry ponds and how to best preserve sports amenities; however, there have been instances where sports amenities have been reduced. A summary is provided in Attachment 1.

Current flood mitigation practices will add dry ponds throughout the City. Specifically, surface storage of excess flow will continue to occur, as this is the most economical method for flood mitigation.

Assessment of community sport amenity needs is informed by a variety of sources, including City Policy C-594 - Open Space City Policy and Breathe: Green Network Strategy, the current and future Recreation Facility Master Plan, growth monitoring

information, and information from Stewarding Great Neighbourhoods. Administration will use these sources in conjunction with public engagement to inform and rationalize decision making related to amenity needs. Public consultation can include engagement with sports user groups through sports users committees.

Administration will work with EPCOR to ensure amenity needs are properly assessed in relation to flood mitigation projects.

Report Body

Description of Conflict

The conflict between the use of dry ponds as flood mitigation and the resulting loss of sports amenities was identified in the April 11, 2016 Citizen Services report *CR_3210_ Net Loss of Amenity Spaces from Flood Mitigation Works*. An updated summary of information from that report is included in Attachment 1.

Strategy to Mitigate Loss of Sports Amenities

The approach to mitigate the loss of sports amenities is to employ a decision-making framework that takes into account information from a variety of sources: the Open Space City Policy (C-594) and Breathe: Green Network Strategy, the current and future Recreation Facility Master Plans, Growth Monitoring information, and information from Stewarding Great Neighbourhoods. Public consultation and engagement with sports user groups will also continue to inform assessment of sports amenity needs.

The following strategies will help contribute to mitigate the impact:

1. EPCOR Stormwater Integrated Resource Plan

A Stormwater Integrated Resource Plan, which includes the flood mitigation strategy, is under development by EPCOR. The Stormwater Integrated Resource Plan will incorporate best practice design approaches for dry ponds to facilitate the dual use of these sites for recreation and stormwater management.

Administration will work with EPCOR to ensure amenity needs are properly assessed.

2. City Policy C-594 - Open Space Policy and Breathe: Green Network Strategy

The City's recently-adopted Policy C594 - Open Space City Policy and Breathe provide a new comprehensive vision and strategic direction for open space planning. Each open space in the city is characterized by a unique set of functions, and is

interconnected through the overlapping networks that support the themes of ecology, wellness and celebration. The ability of Edmonton's open spaces to support multiple functions simultaneously is important. By adopting the Breathe multi functional approach to open space planning, dry ponds and sports fields may be designed to occupy the same space, as demonstrated at Lendrum Place Park.

The Breathe approach to the use of data and analytics deepens and allows better understanding of the performance of the green network. Whereas previously only the quantity of open space was used to inform service provision levels, the Breathe approach applies analyses of other indicators including access (distribution), diversity and quality (functionality) to determine service level needs. Using a data-driven approach to assess needs will result in better decision making regarding locations for dry ponds. This approach creates the opportunity to rethink and plan comprehensively for required facilities and improvement of existing nearby facilities.

3. Recreation Facility Master Plans

The 2020 - 2040 Community and Recreation Facility Master Plan (currently in development) will provide future direction for the development of community and recreation facilities and amenities in new, mature and established neighbourhoods. The plan will address a strategy for both new and existing community and recreation places and space. The plan will ensure public recreation spaces and places continue to be accessible and welcoming, and respond to community needs and resources.

The plan will use a refreshed facility model approach with principles and a continuum of facility provision to describe the preferred future. The plan and more detailed five year implementation plans will help to inform decisions and effectively coordinate public recreation facility planning, development, and program delivery for the City and its partners.

The 2020 - 2040 Community and Recreation Facility Master Plan is expected to be completed in the end of the first quarter of 2018. In the interim, the current Recreation Facility Master Plan may be used to assess amenity needs.

4. Growth Monitoring Information

The Annual Growth Monitoring Report provides general information about growth in the City in the previous year. Growth is regarded as a balance between supply (land) and demand (population). The report examines spatial demographic changes, land absorption, residential density, and infill and greenfield permitting activity. Integral to the growth monitoring activities are the low density lot registration, lot servicing reports, and the population and employment forecasts. The former reports provide information on the level of neighborhood completion and the number of lots in developing

neighborhoods. The lot servicing report also forecasts the number of single family lots that are likely to be serviced over a ten-year period. The population and employment forecasts establish population and jobs in any given traffic zone over a 25-year time period, in 5-year increments. These reports can collectively inform Administration and EPCOR of the future needs of Edmonton neighbourhoods in the years to come, including potential needs for amenities and recreational facilities.

5. Stewarding Great Neighbourhoods

Stewarding Great Neighbourhoods has collected extensive business intelligence about the neighbourhoods in Edmonton's core/mature/established areas, including current activities, priorities and future needs. It is in these areas where conflicts between outcomes of flood mitigation and recreation/amenity spaces are most likely.

EPCOR's Stormwater Integrated Resource Plan (currently under development) will incorporate review of Stewarding Great Neighbourhoods metrics on population demographics, pace of growth, and level of access to existing amenities (open space, recreation centres, sports fields), to understand effects of potential lost amenity space in areas where flood mitigation work is considered.

In addition, the strategic scan of opportunities/barriers and analysis of key gaps/needs can be reviewed to determine areas where open space and recreational gaps or excesses may already exist and where a review of changing community needs for space is required. This information may proactively highlight areas where conflict between recreation and flood mitigation outcomes might be especially likely, and may offer opportunities for detailed study and public engagement to identify solutions in advance.

Budget/Financial

Through drainage utility rates, Utility Committee approved the Capital Profile for Reactive Flood Mitigation work (CM-31-9511, CM-31-9611, and CM-23-9612) in the 2015 to 2018 budget cycle. With the transition of the drainage utility to EPCOR, funding for these projects will continue to be collected through drainage utility rates and approved by Utility Committee. All dry ponds currently under construction are proceeding as indicated in public engagement for specific projects. Future dry ponds will be reviewed and prioritized by EPCOR. Plans for dry pond construction and funding approaches are to be reviewed by Utility Committee and City Council.

Corporate Outcomes and Performance Management

Corporate Outcome(s): Edmontonians are connected to the city in which they live, work and play			
Outcome(s)	Measure(s)	Result(s)	Target(s)
Parks, green spaces, natural areas, river valley are available and accessible	Hectares (Ha) of open space per 1000 people	7.6 (2017- baseline from Breathe)	TBD (through Breathe Implementation)
	Residential open space access - Percentage of dwelling units within distance and time to open space	94 percent within 400m/5 min walk (2016)	TBD (through Breathe Implementation)

Attachment

1. Update - Effects on Sports Amenities and Breathe

Others Reviewing this Report

- T. Burge, Chief Financial Officer and Deputy City Manager, Financial and Corporate Services
- C. Campbell, Deputy City Manager, Communications and Engagement
- D. Jones, Deputy City Manager, City Operations
- R. G. Klassen, Deputy City Manager, Regional and Economic Development
- A. Laughlin, Deputy City Manager, Integrated Infrastructure Services
- R. Smyth, Deputy City Manager, Citizen Services