

Open Space Amenities in Developing Neighbourhoods - Options Analysis

Option 1: Revised Minimum Park Development Requirement

Description	<p>The minimum requirement for Municipal Parks in developing areas would be revised and developers would be responsible for funding and developing parks to this revised minimum. This revised minimum could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● grade-level-seed ● trees and shrubs ● trails and lighting ● site furniture <p>Features above the minimum requirement such as playgrounds, sports fields, shade structures, or other amenities can continue to be proposed at the discretion of the developer, and will be subject to City approval.</p>
City Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fund and develop amenities above the minimum requirement where they are not contributed by developers, as community needs dictate. ● Complete ongoing maintenance and capital renewal.
Developer Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop parks to the minimum requirement. ● Option to fund and develop amenities above the minimum requirement. ● Fund maintenance until Final Acceptance Certificate (FAC) is issued.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The revised minimum requirement provides a higher level of park development earlier in a community's development than the current minimum requirements, contributing to complete communities and equitable park delivery. ● Better alignment with the minimum requirements of other municipalities in Alberta. ● Reduction in cost of future park development for the City (City would only be responsible for adding amenities above the minimum requirement, not full park development). ● Developers are still able to propose additional amenities at their discretion.
Drawbacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● City will continue to have to fund and develop some amenities above the minimum requirement, such as playgrounds, on park sites where developers do not opt to contribute them.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal of enhanced amenities is at the discretion of the developer and cannot be required by the City. • Increase in developed parks will increase maintenance requirements/costs. • Increased cost for developers due to revised minimum requirements may increase housing costs. • Increased upfront design work required to plan full park sites by developer/consultant/City.
Alignment with Jurisdictional Scan	Option aligns with the City of Calgary's minimum requirements.
Industry Feedback	Ranked 2nd by industry in the final survey

Option 2: Cost Sharing and Revised Minimum Park Development Requirements

Description	<p>The City would use a partnership program, such as the Shared Park Development Program, to incentivize development of amenities above the minimum requirement, including playgrounds. The minimum requirement for new Municipal Parks would be revised, and developers would be responsible for funding and developing parks to this revised minimum, that could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade-level-seed • Trees and shrubs • Trails and lighting • Site furniture <p>If the developer opts to contribute amenities above the minimum requirement, they can apply to the Shared Park Development Program and cost share the development of the park site with the City. This option will allow developers that exceed the required minimum to receive benefits such as cost sharing, increased City assistance with approvals, and no Final Acceptance Certificate (FAC) requirement.</p>
City Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide funding for cost-sharing and managing the Shared Park Development Program. • Fund and develop amenities above the minimum requirement where they are not contributed by developers, as community needs dictate. • Complete ongoing maintenance and capital renewal.

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Developer Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop parks to the revised minimum requirement. • Option to enter into a cost sharing program to develop a site that includes amenities above the minimum requirement. • Fund maintenance until Construction Completion Certificate (CCC) is received.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balances incentives for enhanced development with a revised minimum requirement. • The revised minimum requirement provides a higher level of park development earlier in a community's development than the current minimum requirements, contributing to complete communities and equitable park delivery. • Program can be implemented almost immediately (upon approval of funding). • Cost sharing/partnerships between Industry and the City could incentivize further investment, delivering fully developed parks (i.e., including amenities above the minimum requirement) earlier than City could otherwise. • City's involvement through cost sharing will allow for more control in what amenities are installed and improve equitable distribution.
Drawbacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City would need to allocate funding for the Shared Park Program upfront (immediate investment required). • Developer interest and applications may exceed available funding leaving the City unable to partner on all proposed park developments. • Proposal of enhanced amenities and entry to the program is at the discretion of the developer and cannot be required by the City. • City will have to fund and develop some amenities above the revised minimum requirement, such as playgrounds, on park sites where developers do not opt to contribute them. • Increase in developed parks will increase maintenance requirements/costs. • Increased cost for developers due to increased minimum requirements may impact housing costs. • Increased upfront design work required to plan full park sites by developer/consultant/City.
Alignment with Jurisdictional Scan	The Shared Park Development Program previously existed in the City of Edmonton, but no similar programs were found through the jurisdictional scan.
Industry Feedback	Ranked #1 (tied with Status Quo) by industry in the final survey

Option 3: Off-site Levy and Revised Minimum Park Development Requirements

<p>Description</p>	<p>The City would implement an off-site levy collected (likely as a condition of subdivision) to support park development, including amenities such as playgrounds, sportsfields, etc. The City would use these funds for improvement of park sites within a defined catchment area. Off-site levy fees would be in addition to a revised minimum requirement that could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● grade-level-seed ● trees and shrubs ● trails and lighting ● site furniture
<p>City Responsibilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Set up and manage the off-site levy. ● Construct required amenities in the developing area. ● Complete ongoing maintenance and capital renewal.
<p>Developer Responsibilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop parks to the minimum requirement. ● Fund maintenance until Final Acceptance Certificate (FAC) is issued. ● Pay the off-site levy. ● Option to fund and develop amenities above the minimum requirement.
<p>Benefits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Greater City control over distribution of amenities in the developing area within benefiting catchments. ● The revised minimum requirement provides a higher level of park development earlier in a community's development than the current minimum requirements, contributing to complete communities and equitable park delivery. ● Allows a route for developers to propose amenities above the minimum requirement at their discretion, and receive credit for any off-site levy infrastructure installed.
<p>Drawbacks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Administrative burden on the City in relation to financial tracking, consultation, annual reporting, and transparency. ● Park programming and amenity selection would be constrained to a standardized suite of options that may limit the ability to cater to unique needs of communities. ● Money collected may not be adequate to cover the costs of park development and additional funding may have to be provided. ● Increase in developed parks will increase maintenance requirements/costs.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased cost for developers to pay for levy and increased minimum requirements may increase housing costs. • Increased upfront planning/design work required to plan full park sites by developer/consultant.
Alignment with Jurisdictional Scan	Would operate similar to City of Mississauga’s Development Charges utilizing processes the City of Edmonton already has in place for the off-site levies for fire halls
Industry Feedback	Ranked #3 by industry in the final survey

Option 4: Cash-in-lieu and Revised Minimum Park Development Requirements

Description	<p>The City would implement a requirement for developers to pay cash-in-lieu as a fixed portion of their required Municipal Reserve (example X per cent in land and Y per cent cash-in-lieu totalling 10 per cent). Cash-in-lieu would fund the improvement of park sites within the defined catchment area (but will not be used for things such as maintenance).</p> <p>Currently, cash-in-lieu is only taken where less than 10 per cent of a subdivision area is planned for park land. It is used to purchase land in areas either where over 10 per cent is planned (e.g. parcels containing district parks) or where no subdivisions resulting in reserve dedication will occur (e.g. parts of the River Valley).</p> <p>The cash-in-lieu requirement would be in addition to a revised minimum that could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade-level-seed • Trees and shrubs • Trails and lighting • Site furniture <p>Features above the minimum requirement such as playgrounds, sportsfields, shade structures or other amenities can continue to be proposed at the discretion of the developer and will be subject to City approval.</p>
City Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and manage the proportional allocation of the cash-in-lieu fund. • Fund and develop amenities using the cash-in-lieu as community needs dictate. • Complete ongoing maintenance and capital renewal.

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Developer Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop parks to the revised minimum requirement. • Fund maintenance until Final Acceptance Certificate (FAC) is issued. • Provide a percentage of required Municipal Reserve as cash-in-lieu. • Option to fund and develop amenities above the minimum requirement.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater City control over distribution of amenities in the developing area. • The revised minimum requirement provides a higher level of park development earlier in a community's development than the current minimum requirements, contributing to complete communities and equitable park delivery. • Allows a route for developers to propose amenities above the minimum requirement at their discretion.
Drawbacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less land provided for park space in new neighbourhoods • Land value when cash-in-lieu is taken is low, so the City could see less benefit than if reserves were taken as land. • Time delay for implementation - this option would be difficult to implement immediately for neighbourhoods already undergoing development. • Money collected may not be adequate to cover the costs of park development and additional City capital investment may be required. • Increase in developed parks will increase maintenance requirements/costs. • Increased cost for developers due to increased minimum requirements may impact housing costs. • Increased upfront planning/design work required to plan full park sites by developer/consultant/City.
Alignment with Jurisdictional Scan	This option would operate similar to the City of Winnipeg's Land Dedication Reserve Fund.
Industry Feedback	Ranked #4 (lowest) by industry in the final survey

Option 5: Status Quo

Description	The current requirements for Municipal Park sites would remain the same - leaving sites undisturbed or grade-level-seed for disturbed sites. The description of minimum
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	<p>requirements for Municipal Reserve sites will need to be clarified in the Volume 5 standards to ensure consistency in quality of grade-level-seed provided.</p> <p>Features above the minimum requirement such as playgrounds, sportsfields, shade structures or other amenities can be proposed at the discretion of the developer and will be subject to City approval.</p>
City Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund and develop landscaping and amenities for all parks not contributed by developers. • Complete ongoing maintenance and capital renewal.
Developer Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financially responsible for development costs for grade-level-seed for disturbed Municipal Reserve sites. • Option to fund and develop additional landscaping and amenities. • Required to fund maintenance until Construction Completion Certificate is issued for grade-level-seed sites and until Final Acceptance Certificate for more developed sites.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No additional requirements from developers avoiding potential increases to housing costs. • Developers are still able to propose park development and additional amenities at their discretion.
Drawbacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City will have to fully fund development of parks that are not completed by developers. • Current issues with timely and equitable distribution of amenities will continue and impact ability to achieve complete communities.
Alignment with Jurisdictional Scan	None, this option is well below the minimum required standards for all municipalities reviewed in the Jurisdictional scan.
Industry Feedback	Ranked #1 (tied with Cost Sharing and Revised Base Level) by industry in the final survey