

Skyrattler Neighbourhood - First Place Program (M. Walters)

Recommendation:

That the February 18, 2014, Sustainable Development report CR_788, be received for information.

Report Summary

The report responds to questions included in a motion approved by City Council on November 14, 2013, referring to the Skyrattler First Place housing site and other surplus school sites. First Place Program building sites form a small portion of each community and will increase housing choice and attract young families to these communities.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the November 14, 2013, City Council meeting, Councillor M. Walters made the following inquiry:

This inquiry is about whether the Skyrattler neighbourhood and its surplus school site are suitable for development under the City of Edmonton's First Place Program. Skyrattler has a very small park in a neighbourhood with a high percentage of multi-unit housing. The First Place Program is proposing to make the small park smaller and the already dense neighbourhood more dense. Additionally the potential of a significant residential development exists on 22 acres of privately owned land across the road from the Skyrattler park.

Could Administration provide the following information:

1. What proportion of dwellings are multi-family units in each neighbourhood where First Place Program is proposed:
 - a. Do any First Place Program neighbourhoods have as large a proportion of multi-family dwellings as Skyrattler?
 - b. What is the current units/hectare density of the Skyrattler Neighbourhood?
2. What is the size of each green space designated for infill development under the First Place Program?
 - a. If Skyrattler Park is redeveloped as currently planned, how much green space will be retained for public use?
 - b. What is the minimal amount of green space per capita required for a higher density neighbourhood, according to City of Edmonton standards?
 - c. Will the amount of green space remaining in Skyrattler, if Skyrattler Park is developed, meet current standards for higher density neighbourhoods in Edmonton?
3. If Skyrattler Park is developed as currently planned under the First Place Program, what are the potential implications for future redevelopment of the 22 acre parcel of land located at 810 Saddleback Road?

- a. Can Administration provide information about possible plans for development of this land (which was purchased by the Eminata Group in 2010) and the potential number of units in a highest and best use scenario?
 - b. Has Administration completed an analysis of the implications for Skyrattler Park and the subsequent park and green space needs should the Eminata Group lands be developed?
4. Did City of Edmonton representatives associated with the First Place Program commit to review the planned development of Skyrattler Park in 2012?
 - a. Was this review completed?
 - b. If not, why was the review not completed?
 5. Was the initial decision to include Skyrattler Park in the First Place Program based on inaccurate information about the size of the site?
 6. What are potential positive and negative impacts on Skyrattler as a neighbourhood as a result of this development?
 7. Has the City of Edmonton studied the role of parks and green space in families decisions to purchase multi-family infill housing?

I would request the inquiry response return to committee in the normal time frame.

Report

On November 17, 2006, City Council approved the development of entry level market housing through the First Place Home Ownership Program on twenty surplus school sites. On December 12, 2006, Council approved amendments to statutory plans, changes to zoning and reserve designations in support of the First Place Home Ownership Program. On June 19, 2007, City Council considered a motion to reduce the First-time Home Buyer building site to no more than 10% of the overall school/park site and did not support the motion.

This report responds to seven questions posed to Administration regarding the First Place Program site in the Skyrattler neighborhood and the surplus school sites program, more broadly.

1. What proportion of dwellings are multi-family units in each neighborhood where the First Place Program is proposed:

For the purposes of this response, “multi-family units” include semi-detached, duplex, town housing, and apartment units, all housing types that are not single-detached units. The proportion of multi-family dwellings varies between neighbourhoods depending on the Council approved plan, with the percentage of multi-family dwellings ranging from 4 to 97 percent. A full list of each neighbourhood and its respective proportion of multi-

family dwellings is provided in Attachment 1 – *Proportion of Multi-Family Homes in First Place Neighborhoods*.

- a. Do any First Place Program neighborhoods have as large a proportion of multi-family dwellings as Skyrattler?

Yes, the Tawa neighborhood at 97 percent, contains a higher proportion of multi-family dwellings than the Skyrattler neighborhood at 84 percent. Five other neighbourhoods, Blue Quill, Canon Ridge, Casselman, Canon Ridge, Sifton Park have proportions of multi-family dwellings above 70 percent.

- b. What is the current units/hectare density of the Skyrattler neighborhood?

Skyrattler's neighbourhood is considered low to medium residential density with the current unit/hectare density of 36.9 units per net residential hectare. This density is comparable to densities of 35.6 units per net hectare in other nearby neighbourhoods, such as Duggan and Rideau Park.

The Council approved plan (Kaskitayo Outline Plan) identified a total population of 13,400 for the Skyrattler, Bears paw and Keheewin neighbourhoods. In 2012, the population residing in these three neighbourhoods totaled 6,995 or 53 per cent of the approved total. The Skyrattler population peaked in 1991 at 2,290 people and there were 1,947 people residing in Skyrattler in 2012.

2. What is the size of each green space designated for infill development under the First Place Program?

The size of approved First Place Program building sites ranges from 0.8 to 1.6 hectares. Attachment 2 – First Place Program Development Parcel Sizes, provides a full listing of the size of each First Place Program building site and the amount of planned school and related open space in each neighbourhood. All First Place Program development occurs only on the land identified for the planned school's building envelope. All of the land originally planned for parks, open space and sports fields within the community is retained for these purposes.

- a. If Skyrattler Park is redeveloped as currently planned, how much green space will be retained for public use?

Following the development of the First Place Program on the Skyrattler surplus school site, the open space in Skyrattler Park will remain as originally planned, at 2.89 hectares.

- b. What is the minimal amount of green space per capita required for a higher density neighbourhood, according to City of Edmonton standards?

The City of Edmonton does not define a standard amount of green space required per capita for higher density neighbourhoods or any other neighbourhoods. The park and recreational needs of a neighborhood are considered when a neighbourhood is designed at the early planning and subdivision stages of its development. The municipal reserve land assembled to satisfy these needs is based on the planning and design standards of the day for the various parks and schools planned within the area in question, government legislation, the amount of available municipal reserve land and school needs.

- c. Will the amount of green space remaining in Skyrattler, if Skyrattler Park is developed, meet current standards for higher density neighbourhoods in Edmonton?

Please see the response to 2b above.

3. If Skyrattler Park is developed as currently planned under the First Place Program, what are the potential implications for future redevelopment of the 22 acre parcel of land located at 810 Saddleback Road?
 - a. Can Administration provide information about possible plans for development of the land (which was purchased by the Eminata Group in 2010) and the potential number of units in a highest and best use scenario?
 - b. Has Administration completed an analysis of the implications for Skyrattler Park and the subsequent park and green space needs should the Eminata Group lands be developed?

Over the past few years, Administration has received no formal inquiries about the development potential of the subject lands (the lands located at 810 Saddleback Road), and no formal permit application has been received. There is no record that shows the Eminata Group has direct ownership of the site. The Urban Reserve Zone (AGU) designation allows for minimal development opportunities.

Any future residential development on this site will require a rezoning application and would likely require an amendment to the Kaskitayo Outline Plan and should such an application be submitted to the City. Administration would circulate, review, consider and comment on the implications of the development, prior to an application going forward as part of a report to Council for its consideration.

4. Did City of Edmonton representatives associated with the First Place Program commit to review the planned development of Skyrattler Park in 2012?
 - a. Was this review completed?
 - b. If not, why was the review not completed?

Consultation with each First Place Program community is completed before program development begins. Technical reviews including soil tests and site location are now discussed with the community league executive prior to public meetings occurring and the start of the design engagement process.

The public engagement processes and associated technical reviews on the Skyrattler First Place site were originally planned to begin in 2013. Administration met with community representatives on April 17, 2012, to discuss building site configuration and the possibility of changing the location of the development within the school/park site.

In May 2012, community representatives were informed the City's 2012 efforts would focus on design engagement processes in Tawa, Casselman and Caernarvon, and that further engagement on the Skyrattler site would not begin until these other public engagements were complete. Public engagement schedules are reviewed each fall and are adjusted as required.

5. Was the initial decision to include Skyrattler Park in the First Place Program based on inaccurate information about the size of the site?

Council report 2006OOM004 approved the First Place Program on November 17, 2006 to support new home development on surplus school building sites, with retention of adjacent sports fields for City and community use. In the report (2006OOM004), Attachment 3 provided information on planned school type and size of each surplus school building site, along with size of the total site.

The building size information for the surplus public elementary school building site in Skyrattler was shown correctly as 1.2 hectares, but the Skyrattler total site size information was shown as 7.34 hectares rather than 4.09 hectares. The City's legal opinion is that this error is unlikely to be material to the Council's decision to support development of new homes on vacant school building sites as the site location and size for development remains the same as stated in the 2006 report.

The issue of site size was discussed at Council on June 19, 2007(2007PW5100rev). A Council motion "That the school building envelope available for first-time home ownership housing be no more than 10% of the overall school and parks site" was considered and not supported by Council.

6. What are the potential positive and negative impacts on Skyrattler as a neighborhood as result of this development?

The First Place Program was piloted on two sites prior to beginning implementation of the overall program. A review of the First Place Program pilot projects was presented to Executive Committee on July 13, 2011 (2011SCO918).

Evaluation of the First Place Program reveals there are numerous positive benefits associated with the development of First Place Program.

Completed development on First Place program sites have created new housing choices in established neighbourhoods and attracted young families consistent with City strategic directions (see Attachment 4 – First Place Program Alignment with City Strategic Directions). First Place Program developments have increased demographic diversity within neighbourhoods where they are developed, and helped to retain and attract recent graduates to Edmonton. In addition, new home construction in existing neighbourhoods leverages existing City infrastructure investment/servicing and new home owners support the revitalization of local schools and businesses. Please refer to Attachment 5 – First Place Program Purchaser Information for an example of a typical First Place Program buyer.

When fully developed, First Place homes will generate approximately \$1.6 million dollars each year in additional tax levy funding to support the delivery of City services. The First Place Program pilot evaluation did not identify any significant negative impacts to the neighbourhoods surrounding the pilot sites.

Prior to the start of community engagement processes, there are often concerns from some residents about the new people moving into the area, perceived loss of green space, concerns over potential housing tenure and about parking/traffic increases in the neighbourhood.

These concerns are addressed through meetings with community league executives, the neighbourhood at large, and through the design engagement processes, which influences the final design of new homes (e.g. orientation and massing of buildings, site access and integration with adjacent City lands, exterior architectural details and landscaping) in each community.

Transportation Planning has indicated that traffic impacts associated with development of the Skyrattler site under the First Place Program are significantly less than traffic generated by the originally planned new school development.

7. Has the City of Edmonton studied the role of parks and green space in families' decisions to purchase multi-family infill housing?

Administration has studied the role of parks and green space in families' decisions to purchase infill housing in the September 9, 2013 report (CR_81) to Executive Committee. This report shows that 94% of respondents indicated proximity to greenspace/park as an important or very important location feature.

Corporate Outcomes

The Way Ahead, City of Edmonton's Strategic Plan 2009-2018:

- Transform Edmonton's Urban Form
- Improve Edmonton's Livability

Attachments

1. Proportion of multi-family homes in each First Place Neighbourhood
2. First Place Program Developments Parcel Sizes
3. S kyrattler Site Development Plan
4. Alignment with City Strategic Directions
5. First Place Program Purchaser Information

Others Reviewing this Report

L. Rosen, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer