

Policy C599

Community Amenity Contribution Amendment

Recommendation

That Executive Committee recommend to City Council:

That revised Community Amenity Contributions in Direct Control Provisions Policy C599A, as set out in Attachment 1 of Urban Form and Corporate Strategic Development report UFCSD0003, be approved.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the August 18, 2020, City Council Public Hearing, the following motion was passed:

That Administration prepare an amendment to Policy C599 to exempt projects of 12 or fewer units from community amenity contribution requirements and return to Committee.

Executive Summary

An amendment to Policy C599 has been prepared to reduce a barrier to small scale infill development by exempting projects of 12 or fewer units from the policy. These developments have a modest impact on communities, and the existing policy may contribute to financial burdens to the project which can negatively impact the City's objective of welcoming new people and homes to Edmonton's older neighbourhoods.

Report

Background

In July 2018, City Council adopted City Policy C599 - Community Amenity Contributions in Direct Control Provisions. This policy was created to be a broad based policy capturing all density increases not outlined in a geographic plan that are made through the use of a direct control rezoning. Redevelopment can benefit communities by bringing new people to local schools and shops, and increasing housing and employment choices. However, it can also present new challenges for existing communities. This policy is in recognition that non-planned density increases place strain on neighbourhood amenities which the Community Amenity Contributions help offset. These public benefits or amenities include things like park and sidewalk upgrades, new park space, public art, family-oriented housing and heritage preservation.

Amenity contributions from density increases predate policy C599 by many years; the policy was created to provide predictability and transparency to the process through a standardized contribution rate and a defined set of amenities.

Recent rezoning proposals have revealed that the current policy can create financial hardships for small scale infill projects that also require infrastructure upgrades. In these cases, community amenity contributions can create a financial barrier to the project. While the contribution rate set by the policy is standardized for all development, small scale infill often requires expensive infrastructure upgrades. These combined costs can make some small scale developments unfeasible.

Proposed Amendment

Given these considerations, Administration has prepared an amendment to Policy C599 to exempt developments of 12 or fewer units (see Attachment 1). The proposed amendment does not otherwise affect the policy. Projects with 12 or fewer residential units typically have a modest impact on their surroundings. Also, projects of this scale often provide family oriented units even in the absence of policy incentives. These act as a defacto contribution, as this is one of the possible amenities considered in the policy.

Infill Development Considerations

The City is committed to welcoming more people and new homes into Edmonton's developed communities, and is creating a supportive environment for quality infill development through initiatives such as the City Plan, the Infill Roadmap and Zoning Bylaw Renewal.

As part of the Infill Roadmap, Administration made significant changes to middle density zones in 2019 to make standard zones more usable and reduce the reliance on direct control provisions. The Zoning Bylaw Renewal initiative will further improve standard zones and reduce regulatory barriers to good development. However, unique sites and circumstances will still require the occasional custom zone. Where these produce significant increase to density, Policy C559A will ensure that the benefits of rezoning are shared between the proponent and the surrounding community.

Corporate Outcomes and Performance Management

Corporate Outcome(s): Edmonton is attractive and compact			
Outcome(s)	Measure(s)	Result(s)	Target(s)
Edmonton is attractive and compact	City achieves residential densification	26 percent	25 percent The Way We Grow, MDP (2010) section 3.1.1.2

Risk Assessment

Risk Element	Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Score (with current mitigations)	Current Mitigations	Potential Future Mitigations
Political Influences	Amending the policy may result in additional exemption requests, undermining the intent of the policy to provide consistency and transparency.	3 - Possible	1 - Minor	3 - Low	Having a Council policy prevents case by case negotiation.	N/A
Customers/ Citizens	Exempting small scale projects may result in fewer community amenity contributions.	5 - Almost Certain	1 - Minor	5 - Low	Continue to obtain community amenity contributions from large projects.	Address community amenity needs through other means.

Attachment

1. Policy C599A - Community Amenity Contributions in Direct Control Provisions

Others Reviewing this Report

- C. Owen, Deputy City Manager, Communications and Engagement
- M. Persson, Chief Financial Officer and Deputy City Manager, Financial and Corporate Services
- B. Andriachuk, City Solicitor