

# Amenity Area Review

## What We Heard Report

### BACKGROUND

The Amenity Area Review project was originally started as a component of the Ground-oriented Multi-unit Residential Review. This project, due to its scale and complexity, has been broken into smaller, more manageable projects, the Amenity Area review being one of them. Further, on April 21st, 2015 Council's Executive Committee asked staff to explore options to include private outdoor amenity at-grade for RF3 Row Housing.

As part of this project's information gathering stage, we reached out to stakeholders in a variety of ways:

- A public meeting was held with Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues (EFCL) on March 14, 2016, with 15 representatives in attendance.
- A meeting with Urban Development Institute and Canadian Home Builders Association on March 16, 2016 with 18 representatives in attendance.

The following table summarizes the key themes and feedback we received. In some instances, we heard similar comments from a range of stakeholders. In other instances, we heard opposing viewpoints expressed.

Thank you to everyone who provided their input into this process. This summary of your feedback will be provided to Executive Committee and used to inform the report presented on August 30, 2016.

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MOTION

At the April 21st, 2015 Executive Committee Meeting, the following motion was passed:

That Administration explore the options of including the provision of private outdoor amenity areas at-grade (RF3 Row Housing) in conjunction with the current Amenity Area Review consultations, and return to Executive Committee outlining the results of the consultations.

### CONTACT

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<p><b>AMENITY AREA SIZE REQUIREMENTS</b></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>· 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>· 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>· Different dwelling types should have different amenity area requirements instead of the current blanket requirement. For Row Houses, specifically, there needs to be consideration for both condo and freehold 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>· Amenity area requirements should be based on age. Preschool children require 50 m2 of Amenity Area</li> </ul>
<p><b>CHARACTERISTICS OF AMENITY AREA</b></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 at-grade amenity areas.</li> </ul>
<p><b>YARD SPACE (FRONT AND REAR SETBACKS)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Front yards are not an efficient use of land</li> <li>· The rear yard space should be maximized through reduced front setbacks and garages located closer to the laneway</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> </ul>
<p><b>DEFINITION OF AMENITY AREA</b></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. It would make building homes with secondary suites easier</li> <li>· The RF5 provision to allow front yards in row houses should be applied more broadly</li> <li>· Amenity area placed on top of rear attached garages and front verandas should count towards the amenity area requirements</li> <li>· Rooftop amenity space is not ideal for children</li> </ul>

## AMENITY AREA REVIEW

<b>COSTS/ TRADE-OFF OF PROVIDING COMMON AMENITY AREA</b>	<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>· Common amenity areas with playgrounds, etc., are a liability for condo corporations</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>· Quantity is not quality. Common amenity area needs to be configured in a usable way</li></ul>
<b>PROXIMITY TO PARKS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Culture is different today than it was in the past; children are now accompanied to the park with their parents. This needs to be taken into consideration when considering on-site amenity area in proximity to parks</li><li>· When a development is in close proximity to a public park, reducing the amenity area requirements makes sense</li></ul>

### NEXT STEPS

City staff will be preparing options for consideration at Executive Committee on August 30, 2016. These options will be informed by your input, technical reviews, and City policy.