



March 3, 2015

Members of Special Policy Committee
For Community & Protective Services
PO Box 2100 Station M
Calgary, AB T2P 2M5

Dear Mayor Nenshi and City of Calgary Councillors:

Re: imagineParks, CPS 2015-0259

UDI Calgary generally supports the City of Calgary Parks' objective to set a 30-year vision and strategic planning framework for the development and management of public parks and open space, addressing long range urban sustainability and future land use and services.

For the most part, the high level aspirational language around the visioning is positive. The intent of environmental conservation, essentially retaining the asset essence and recognizing the new urban context of the future of the natural environment, is appreciated.

The UDI Calgary would express concern, however, related to the potential implementation of the imagineParks Policy through future planning decision-making.

Natural environment conservation is a desired outcome and supported however it should not be the single or highest consideration in planning and development decisions.

Those decisions should be evaluated through multiple lenses... with balanced weighting of the considerations. At a time when we are struggling with delivering affordable housing and dealing with not only the capital costs of growth but, very specifically, the maintenance and operating costs associated with that growth, we need to apply a further level of scrutiny with those planning and development decisions.

Note, the policy makes reference (p 15) to:

- implementing construction guidelines to minimize the impact on soil, protected vegetation and habitat
- implementing an alternative energy production strategy for parks and open space, for example composting, animal waste, wind power, solar energy, etc
- implementing a public art and culture guideline for parks and open space

On the face, these may be positive goals, however there could be associated capital costs which will be transferred to homebuyers and impact affordability. Certainly, it is foreseeable that the City of Calgary and, through the tax base, the citizens, will be responsible for increased operation, maintenance and life cycle costs (such as increased park maintenance, tree replacement, public art maintenance and replacement costs and so on).

Attachment 2, the Telephone Survey results entitled Attitudes towards Future Parks Concepts, does not address additional costs associated with the Parks concepts and who will pay for those.

The Report itself to Committee and Council indicates there are no operating financial implications or capital budget implications associated with the Report. Both statements indicate further budgetary analysis will occur with implementation plans and four-year departmental plans.

UDI Calgary would propose that from a prudent fiscal position, the referenced analysis should accompany the Policy as it is placed before Committee and Council to more fully appreciate the financial implications of the Policy before – not after - it is approved.

UDI Calgary would ask, if possible, there be further analysis of the financial implications of the Policy, based upon a reasonable scope of the implementation of the Policy.

Alternatively, perhaps include some language in the executive summary or embedded within the Policy to place value on **financial considerations in the reasonable implementation of the policy/guideline.**

Yours truly,
URBAN DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE CALGARY



Beverly J. Jarvis
Director of Policy & Government Relations

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