

**Planning & Development Services Report to
Infrastructure and Planning Committee
2025 September 03**

**ISC: UNRESTRICTED
IP2025-0788**

Report Back – Exploring an Alternate Delivery Model for Community-Level Amenities

PURPOSE

This report responds to Notice of Motion EC2025-0525, directing Administration to prepare options for an alternative delivery model for community-level amenities.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION

On 2025 May 27, Notice of Motion EC2025-0525 directed Administration to prepare options for a pilot program exploring how to fund and deliver community-level amenities through an alternate delivery model, and report back through the Infrastructure and Planning Committee no later than end of Q3 2025. The full Notice of Motion wording is in Attachment 1.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Infrastructure and Planning Committee recommend that Council direct Administration to:

1. Where necessary, update the criteria of existing programs for community-level amenities to include use and demand of current community-level amenities, community population intensity, and equity index results as decision factors to prioritize community-level amenity investment; and
2. Consider adding \$1.5 Million of capital budget to the Parks and Playground Amenities Program and \$25,000 of operating budget to fund increased operating expenditures for upgraded community-level amenities in the prioritization of investments in the 2027-2030 Service Plans and Budgets.

GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS

General Manager Deb Hamilton concurs with the recommendations of this report. The recommendations will support community-level amenities to enhance Calgarians' quality of life.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Calgarians enjoy and benefit from community-level amenities, the need for which has been pressured by recent growth. Increased investment is necessary.
- In response to the Notice of Motion, Administration undertook a review of existing programs and processes that fund and deliver community-level amenities (e.g., benches, gazebos, picnic tables, community gardens, playgrounds).
- A Public-Private Partnership process was explored, however due to the scale of community-level amenities the administrative requirements of setting up and running such a process would likely be cost prohibitive relative to the value of amenities provided.
- Typically, community-level amenities in new communities are provided by developers through Municipal Reserve (MR) dedication at no cost to The City. Established areas are unable to utilize MR dedication to provide community-level amenities in the same manner as new communities.
- The City has numerous successful existing programs to fund new or upgraded community-level amenities within established areas.

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- Based on Administration's analysis, it is not recommended that there be any changes to processes for new communities. However, given demand and growth, it is recommended additional funding be considered for to the Parks and Playground Amenities (PAPA) program to increase The City's current level of investment.

DISCUSSION

What are Community-Level Amenities?

Within The City's inventory, amenities can be categorized into regional-level amenities and community-level amenities. Community-level amenities typically serve a single community and include parks and open space projects originally funded or constructed through requirement of developers to dedicate land and amenities to The City through the development and subdivision process. Regional-level amenities serve multiple communities, have large catchment areas and tend to be multi-hour destinations for citizens.

Third-Party Provision of Community-Level Amenities

The City's Procurement Administration Policy applies to all acquisitions using public funds. As such public procurement practices apply to any program where a third-party initially funds an amenity ("front-ends") with a future payback from The City. In addition, The City would need to fund the future payback of any newly acquired asset through a budget approval, or recognize the liability to pay back as debt. The ability to provide front-ending agreements is subject to Council's approval.

While a Public-Private Partnership could be an option, there is a high likelihood the administrative requirements of setting up and running such a process would be cost prohibitive compared to the size and cost of the public amenities contemplated in this program (outside of the Corporate Capital Prioritization Process). A Public-Private Partnership approach may be more beneficial for regional-level amenities as contemplated in GamePlan that balances the higher cost of financing from the private sector with project and risk management objectives.

In addition, where amenities are built by a third-party and become City assets, City of Calgary specifications must be followed to ensure public safety, efficient and effective maintenance and lifecycle management.

Community-Level Amenities Secured Through Municipal Reserve Dedication

There is an established process to provide community-level amenities in new communities through MR dedication. These important amenities are provided by developers through the development process at no cost to The City.

Where MR dedication is required, in alignment with Section 666 of the Municipal Government Act (MGA), developers dedicate 10 per cent of the developable lands for the use of parks, recreation, and school sites. The developer enters into a Development Agreement to fund and construct the amenities and then transfers ownership to The City. As The City is not procuring the asset, public procurement considerations are not required.

Through the development process, developers provide MR concepts that align with the Development Guidelines and Standard Specifications for Landscape Construction (DGSS). Occasionally MR concepts are above The City's DGSS standards which typically results in higher maintenance costs. While The City accepts these amenities, developers are required to

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enter into an Optional Amenity Agreement to take on the incremental maintenance costs. Typically, developers then set up a Home Owners Association which then takes over these maintenance obligations.

Should a program be created where third-parties are reimbursed for community-level amenities, The City would be funding assets that are currently provided at no cost to The City.

Upgrading or Replacing Existing Community-Level Amenities

Within established areas, many community-level amenities have reached or are beginning to near the end of their lifecycle, do not meet DGSS standards, or no longer meet the needs of community residents. As Calgary continues to grow and develop, community-level amenities within established areas require mechanisms in place to replace and upgrade these amenities.

While there are redevelopment opportunities where community-level amenities can be provided through MR land dedication, there are limited sites with these opportunities within established communities.

To provide new amenities The City has a variety of existing programs including the Playground Optimization and Lifecycle Program, the PAPA program, Established Area Growth and Change Strategy (EAGCS), Growing Spaces Projects & Grants Program (GSP&GP) and the Local Area Investment Fund (LAIF). Details on each of these programs are in Attachment 2.

Response to Notice of Motion

Based on the analysis above and discussions with the mover of the Notice of Motion, Administration does not recommend proceeding with a pilot program where external parties front-end the provision of community-level amenities. However, recognizing and agreeing with the intent of the Notice of Motion to increase the provision of community-level amenities, Administration recommends leveraging existing programs and considering additional funding through PAPA to deliver increased community amenities in established areas as follows:

1. Focus on established communities rather than on new communities.
2. Identify community-level amenity needs through Local Area Plans and engagement with community associations, residents and businesses.
3. Where not already considered, update the criteria in existing programs for community-level amenities to include use and demand of current community-level amenities, community population intensity, and equity index results as decision factors in prioritizing community-level amenity investment.

A full response to the Notice of Motion can be found in Attachment 3.

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EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public engagement was undertaken | <input type="checkbox"/> Dialogue with interested parties was undertaken |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public/interested parties were informed | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public communication or engagement was not required |

IMPLICATIONS

Social

Improved park spaces and community-level amenities provide greater opportunities for Calgarians to connect with the community and the natural environment.

Environmental

Not applicable.

Economic

Not applicable.

Service and Financial Implications

Tax-supported funding

It is recommended that a \$1.5 million capital budget increase be considered for the Parks and Playground Amenities Program (PAPA) for community-level amenities and an estimated \$25,000 operating budget increase be considered to maintain the new amenities for 2027. Funding is subject to budget approval and Administration will consider the required investments in the prioritization of investments in future Service Plans and Budgets.

RISK

Interference with Existing Programs Any program where third-parties front-end community-level amenities must ensure that there is no interference or overlap with the process of community-level amenities provided through MR dedication, Development Agreement and Optional Amenity Agreement processes. These processes ensure that these amenities meet The City's standards and are provided to The City at no cost to taxpayers and at no increased incremental maintenance costs.

Adherence to City Design and Safety Standards Where a third-party is front-ending amenities within City owned land there is risk associated with the third-party not providing amenities to City standards. This can result in increased operating costs, additional oversight and potential rework.

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ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Background and Previous Council Direction
2. Summary of Existing Programs
3. Response to Notice of Motion
4. Presentation

Department Circulation

General Manager/Director	Department	Approve/Consult/Inform
Deb Hamilton	Planning and Development Services	Approve
Doug Morgan	Operational Services	Consult
Katie Black	Community Services	Consult
Michael Thompson	Infrastructure Services	Consult
Les Tochor	Corporate Planning & Financial Services	Consult

Author: Kathy Davies Murphy, City and Regional Planning