

# COMMUNITY AMENITY CONTRIBUTIONS

A GUIDEBOOK FOR EDMONTONIANS

Edmonton





COMMUNITY AMENITIES BENEFIT LOCAL  
RESIDENTS AND MAKE NEW DEVELOPMENTS  
MORE ATTRACTIVE AND DESIRABLE.

# INTRODUCTION

## Edmonton is undergoing an urban shift, with more people living centrally than ever before.

As demand increases for urban living and commercial space, new real estate developments are proposed in older neighbourhoods. 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.

Certain redevelopment projects are proposed in accordance with plans approved by City Council, while other projects propose more development than anticipated by a local plan. When a major project is proposed using a direct control zone, City Council expects that project to contribute community amenities – public benefits or amenities that include things like park and sidewalk upgrades, new park space, public art, family-oriented housing and heritage preservation.

Community amenities are voluntary contributions made by developers that benefit local residents, including future residents or users of their buildings. Ultimately, community amenity contributions make new developments, and the communities where they reside, more attractive and desirable. This guidebook serves as a companion to Council **Policy C599 – Community Amenity Contributions in Direct Control Provisions**, and is intended to help citizens (community members and rezoning applicants) understand how this policy will affect their neighbourhoods and developments.

### THIS GUIDEBOOK ANSWERS:

What is considered a community amenity?	2
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This guidebook also provides an Appendix on page 8 that describes the rezoning process.

With the information in this guidebook, all stakeholders in the rezoning process should be able to better understand how community amenity contributions work in Edmonton, and participate more fully in the rezoning process.



# WHAT IS CONSIDERED A COMMUNITY AMENITY?

Community amenities are capital improvements either built or paid for by the developer. They must be close enough to the development for local residents to enjoy.

COMMUNITY AMENITY	NOT A COMMUNITY AMENITY
Sidewalk upgrades, extra trees, better benches, lights or bus stops	Replacement of sidewalks and trees damaged during construction
Public access to park/amenity area on site	Private property landscaping
Upgrades to public park, community facility, or trail connections off site	Upgrades to pipes and roads to serve the development
Publicly-viewable art by a commissioned artist	Good architecture or structural features
Family-oriented housing with three or more bedrooms	Other market-priced housing
Improvements to community league facilities	Cash contribution to community group with no clear purpose
Heritage preservation	Community events, memberships or festivals

The City also obtains options to purchase units in multifamily developments to use for affordable housing. This is done through **Policy C582 - Developer Sponsored Affordable Housing**, and has its own criteria and requirements. It is not considered a community amenity as per **Policy C599**.



# WHAT ARE DIRECT CONTROL ZONES?

Edmonton's zoning bylaw governs the use of land in the city, including what can be built on any site. When landowners wish to change the rules for their land, they must obtain City Council's approval for rezoning.

Most land in the city has a "standard zone" - a zone that can be used anywhere in the city and is not connected to a specific site - and most rezonings (70%) change land from one standard zone to another.

The remaining 30% are direct control rezonings (DC1 or DC2) where the landowner proposes a custom-made zone for their property. This requires careful consideration by City staff to help applicants propose a zone that meets their needs, addresses public concerns and ensures the orderly development of land.

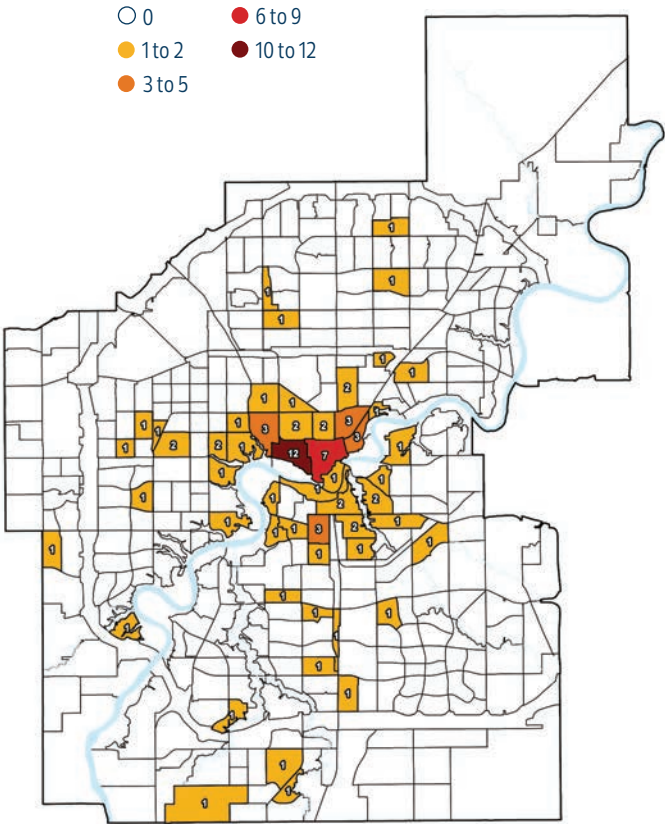
Direct control zoning is used when no standard zone works for the proposed development. About half of the time, direct control rezonings propose a larger building than allowed by the existing zone or neighbourhood plan. When this occurs, it is called "upzoning".

Upzonings are typically used to build apartment buildings or mixed-use buildings in downtown or in mature neighbourhoods close to downtown or LRT stations.

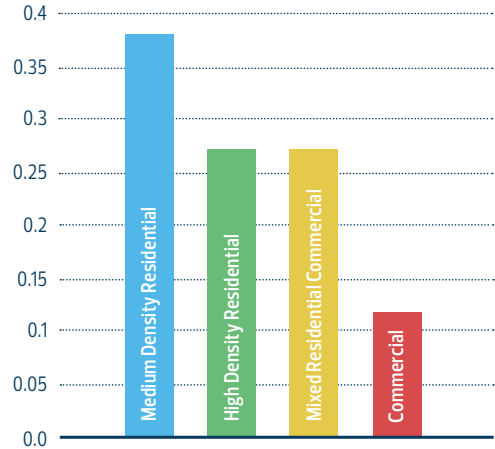
Because they are custom made, direct control zones offer the City the opportunity to establish specific regulations with the applicant. When applicants propose a significant direct control upzoning, the City asks them to contribute community amenities to support the additional growth in the community.

Because upzonings increase the value of the land, contributing community amenities shares the value of upzoning between the developer and local residents. **Policy C599** establishes Edmonton's rules for these contributions.

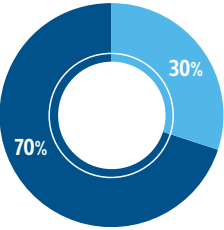
**CITY OF EDMONTON**  
DIRECT CONTROL UPZONINGS 2010-2017



**TYPES OF DIRECT CONTROL UPZONINGS**

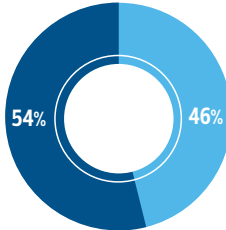


**TYPES OF REZONINGS**



● Standard rezonings  
● Direct control rezonings

**DIRECT CONTROL REZONING AND BUILDING SIZE**



● No increase  
● Increase

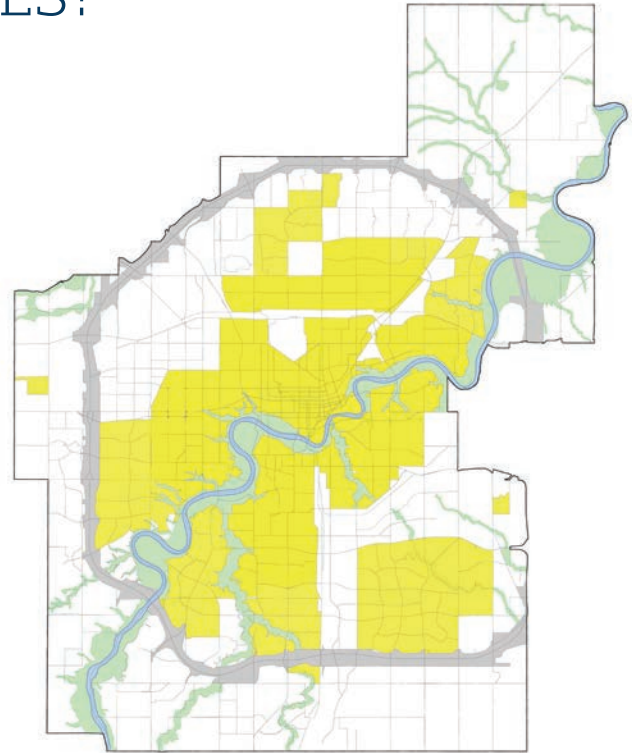
# WHEN DO DEVELOPERS CONTRIBUTE COMMUNITY AMENITIES?

A rezoning must meet the three criteria of **Policy C599** to trigger a contribution requirement. The rezoning must:

1. Be a direct control rezoning (DC1 or DC2);
2. Propose a building at least 5% larger than currently allowed in the existing zone or area plan; and
3. Be for a redevelopment site - meaning it is located in one of Edmonton's older neighbourhoods or on any land that has been built on already.

All development in the yellow highlighted areas is considered redevelopment. **Policy C599** also applies in other areas if the land has already been developed for something other than agriculture.

The amount of development that can occur on a site is measured by Floor Area Ratio (FAR).



## HOW ARE UPZONINGS MEASURED?

The amount of development that can occur on a site is measured by Floor Area Ratio (FAR).

$$\text{FAR} = \frac{\text{total floor area}}{\text{total site area}}$$

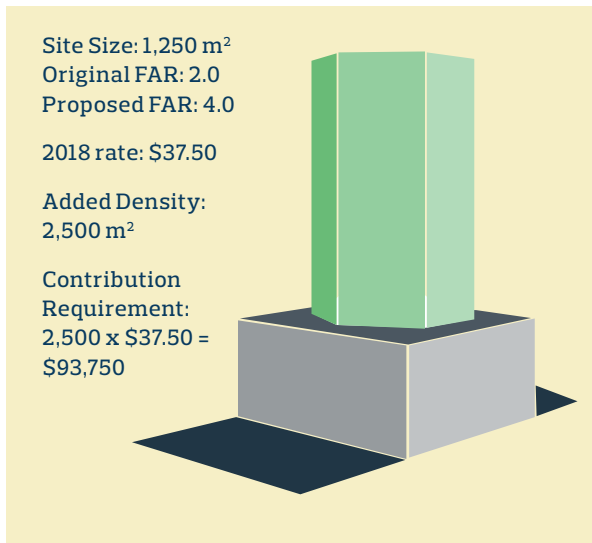
The easiest way to think of FAR is to imagine it as a "multiplier". For example, a site with FAR = 1 can build one times the total site area, or put a 1,250 m<sup>2</sup> building on a 1,250 m<sup>2</sup> site. The same site with FAR = 2 could build a 2,500 m<sup>2</sup> building. The sites in the following diagram all have FAR = 1.

**Policy C599** only applies where a change in FAR increases the building size by more than five percent. Rezoning that change other regulations such as height, number of apartments, or setbacks are not affected by the policy and are not required to contribute community amenities.



## HOW MUCH DOES A DEVELOPER HAVE TO CONTRIBUTE?

The contribution amount is determined by the increase in floor area proposed through rezoning. For 2018–2019, each additional square metre of floor area prompts an amenity contribution of \$37.50. This amount is updated every two years. The current rate can be found at [edmonton.ca/communityamenitycontributions](http://edmonton.ca/communityamenitycontributions)



To calculate a contribution requirement, the floor area under the existing zoning must be calculated, then subtracted from the floor area permitted under the proposed zoning.

A few areas of the city have a statutory plan that calls for more intensive development than the existing zone. In these cases, the equivalent standard zone for development described in the plan will set the base amount of development. When redeveloping multiple sites with different base zones, an aggregate FAR will be calculated based on each site's base FAR and the proportion it contributes to the total site area.

Zones that do not have a FAR will be treated as FAR = 1.

## WHEN ARE COMMUNITY AMENITIES BUILT OR CONTRIBUTIONS PAID?

There are three stages to providing amenities:



Amenity contributions are written as regulations in the direct control zone. The developer must comply with these regulations in order to obtain a development permit and complete construction.

Amenities provided on site are built during project construction. When the applicant provides cash toward an amenity, they must enter into a binding agreement with the City as a condition of their development permit. This agreement requires a security and then the necessary payment at a milestone set out in the agreement (usually when the building can be occupied).

Sites that are rezoned may not develop immediately. City staff will help applicants propose amenity contributions that are sufficiently flexible to allow for delays in development.

Public access to amenities such as pocket parks is preserved by easement, which is a legal instrument registered on the land title and cannot be removed without the City's consent. Amenities on public land may be maintained by the City or by the owner of the land after they enter into a servicing agreement with the City.

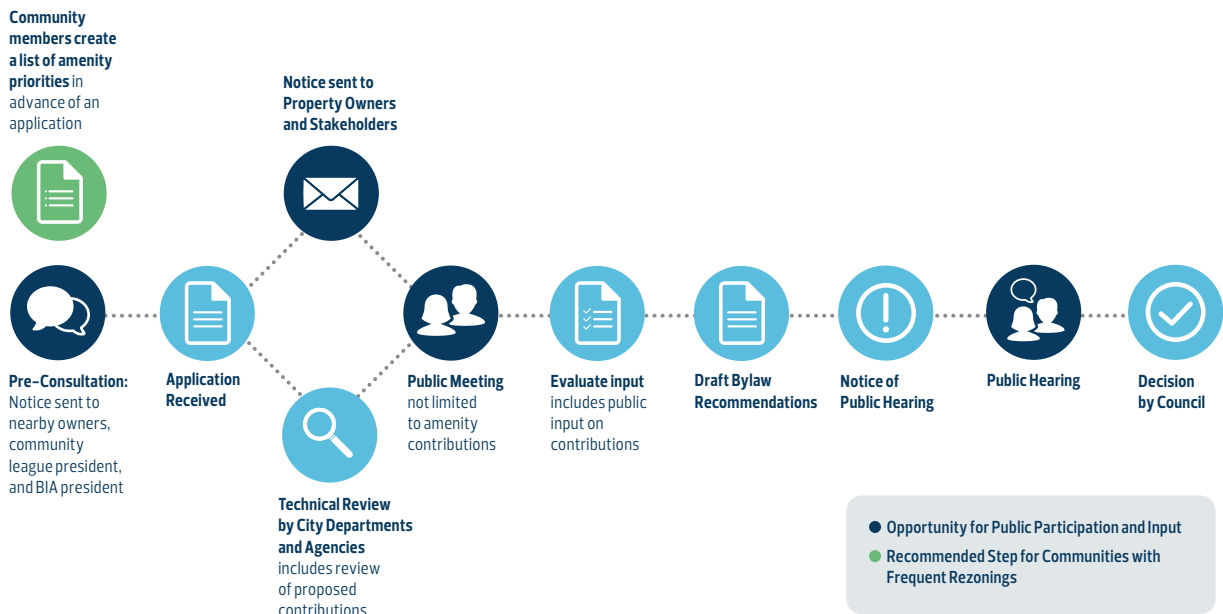
# HOW ARE COMMUNITY AMENITIES CHOSEN?

Amenities are proposed, discussed and decided on through the rezoning process, which involves a number of stakeholders.

- **Applicants** choose which amenities to propose when submitting a rezoning application.
- **Community members** share their priorities with applicants and City staff during the rezoning process.
- **City staff** encourages applicants to align amenities with community and City priorities.
- **City Council** decides at the Public Hearing whether or not to approve the rezoning with its amenities.

Community organizations such as community leagues can use the information in this guidebook to brainstorm priorities for amenity contributions. This will prepare them to engage in the rezoning process when an application occurs.

While the rezoning process is not identical for every application, this chart (and the table in the Appendix) shows where citizens participate in the process:



Community amenities are only one of many considerations evaluated for a rezoning. Support for proposed amenity contributions by City staff or by community members does

not constitute support for the project overall. Ultimately, City Council decides whether or not to approve proposed rezonings at Public Hearing.





## WHAT ABOUT OTHER NEEDS IN THE COMMUNITY?

Amenities provided through **Policy C599** are intended to support quality infill development, and cannot meet all community needs. Community projects and revitalization are primarily supported by other City programs.

**The following are some of the City's programs for neighbourhood improvements:**

**The Neighbourhood Renewal Program** replaces worn out roads, sidewalks and street lights in mature areas.

**Neighbourhood Revitalization** works in partnership with citizens, organizations and business owners to set neighbourhood goals and achieve results through collaboration and partnership.

**The Neighbourhood Park Development Program (NPDP)** provides funding to support improvements to parks at the neighbourhood level. Community amenity contributions could include funds toward NPDP projects, leveraging City grant funding.

**The Community League Infrastructure Program (CLIP)** provides funding assistance to community leagues for capital costs to preserve and enhance existing facilities or for construction of new facilities that provide an overall

benefit to the community and value to Edmontonians. Community amenity contributions could include funds toward CLIP projects, leveraging City grant funding.

All of Edmonton's neighbourhoods are served by Neighbourhood Resource Coordinators who serve as a foundation for community development. **To learn more about these programs visit [edmonton.ca](http://edmonton.ca) or call 311 to find the Neighbourhood Resource Coordinator for your neighbourhood.**

**Contact information for this program can be found at [edmonton.ca/communityamenitycontributions](http://edmonton.ca/communityamenitycontributions) or by contacting 311.**

# APPENDIX – REZONING PROCESS AND COMMUNITY AMENITY CONTRIBUTIONS

DIRECT CONTROL REZONING STEPS	PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT	COMMUNITY AMENITY CONTRIBUTION CONSIDERATIONS
<b>1   Pre-application</b>		
<p>Assess proposal for consistency with plans and policies. Provide initial feedback to applicant.</p>	<p>Applicant contacts nearby landowners, community leagues and business improvement area with information on proposal.</p>	<p><b>Policy C599</b> and <b>C582</b> discussed with applicant, if applicable.</p> <p>Residents contacted may respond to applicant with comments on community amenity priorities.</p>
<b>2   Rezoning application submitted &amp; reviewed</b>		
<p>Rezoning fee is paid.</p> <p>Planning review for land use policy and urban design.</p> <p>Technical review for traffic, parking, servicing, etc.</p>	<p>Rezoning application signage erected on site.</p> <p>Notification letters sent to surrounding properties.</p> <p>Application posted on edmonton.ca</p> <p>Plans and policies in effect reflect earlier public engagement as well as Council direction.</p>	<p>Calculation of contribution requirement.</p> <p>Evaluation of proposed amenities against requirement.</p>
<b>3   Formal public input</b>		
	<p>Public open house(s) organized/ hosted by City staff.</p> <p>Input from Urban Design Committee.</p>	<p>Residents contacted may respond to the City with comments on community amenity priorities or the suitability of the proposed amenities.</p>

DIRECT CONTROL REZONING STEPS	PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT	COMMUNITY AMENITY CONTRIBUTION CONSIDERATIONS
<b>4   Staff recommendation</b>		
Staff compiles all technical and public input and makes recommendations for support/non-support for rezoning.	Public input is a key consideration in staff recommendation.	Draft bylaw amendments describe all proposed contributions.
<b>5   Public Hearing</b>		
After hearing from the public, applicant and staff, Council decides on rezoning.	Council hears from all interested members of the public.  Applicants may make a presentation.	Council may ask applicant or speakers about suitability of proposed amenity contributions.
<b>6   Project development</b>		
Applicant can apply for development permit.  A building permit is then required to allow construction.  An occupancy permit is required at project completion.	Development permit signage erected on site.  Notification letters sent to surrounding properties.	On-site amenities are constructed.  Off-site amenities may be constructed or funded for later construction.





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