

# Safer for All

A Work Plan for Community  
Safety and Well-Being



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## **TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

This work plan was developed by partners who serve, support and respect those living within the traditional land of Treaty 6 Territory and within the Métis homelands and Métis Nation of Alberta Region 4. We honour all the diverse Indigenous peoples whose ancestors' footsteps have marked this territory for centuries such as: Cree, Dene, Saulteaux, Blackfoot, Nakota Sioux, as well as Métis and Inuit, and now settlers from around the world.

The city of Edmonton owes its strength and vibrancy to these lands and diverse Indigenous peoples, as well as settlers from around the world who continue to be welcomed here and call Edmonton home.

Together, we call upon our collective honoured traditions and spirits to work in building a great city for today and future generations.

## FOREWORD

**When we live in Canada, we will be treated equally.** It's a basic principle in law and part of our sense of fairness. When we know that we will be judged on our actions, not personal traits like our appearance or beliefs, we can live with confidence.

**When we live in a community, we belong.** It's a basic dream ... being where we are welcomed, appreciated and included. When we live in a welcoming place, we can live with pride.

**When we call for help, someone will come.** It's a basic hope ... that when trouble strikes, someone will answer the call -- family, neighbours, health care workers, uniformed responders, anybody. When we know that help will come, we can live with trust.

Collectively, Edmontonians say that belonging and thriving are what they imagine for their community. They envision a progressive and compassionate city where both individuals and organizations make conscious efforts to provide opportunities for everyone.

Individually, most residents say that they feel safe and well. The Edmonton Police Service's online dashboard reports that more than [80 per cent of Edmontonians](#) say that they have confidence in the Service. In a survey conducted by the City, [62 per cent of Edmontonians](#) say they perceive the city as safe overall and, in the [Alberta Community Health Survey](#), they rate their personal wellness at 79.6 on an index ranging from 0 to 100. Most recognize that public organizations have made changes to better reflect their changing demographics and attitudes.

Most Edmontonians, but not all. In recent months, dozens of people stepped forward to say their experiences do not reflect safety, trust, pride, compassion, or belonging. While they share the same collective sense of what our city should be, their individual experiences are very different from their expectations. The imbalance between individual experience and collective well-being was significant and the calls to take additional action were clear.

The City of Edmonton, the Edmonton Police Service and the Edmonton Police Commission have long been collaborating and working with the community to advance well-being at both the individual and community level. In building this work plan, the three organizations partnered and looked at their own work already underway to advance safety and inclusion priorities. They identified core themes of community well-being based on previous conversations with Edmontonians, ongoing public engagements and public hearings, academic research and insights provided by the Community Safety and Well-being Task Force, a temporary committee of Council struck to recommend actionable ideas to make the city anti-racist.

The actions identified in this work plan address elements within the direct control of the participating organizations and bring together information about a number of projects. The partners describe the work underway, outline next steps to be taken within the next 90 days, incorporate new insights and reflect a shared commitment to making Edmonton a more inclusive, compassionate and safe city. As directed by Council, the partners will develop a more in-depth report to be brought forward in the first quarter of 2022.

## INTRODUCTION

### **Social and protective services are critical to community well-being, and they must change as a community changes**

Edmonton has had organizations to protect public safety and support vulnerable people since its earliest days. Residents and municipal governments have long recognized the importance of these critical public services and have consistently allocated resources to support them. There is underlying public support for police, protective, social and health services, and for their ongoing role in making Edmonton a safe, prosperous and healthy city.

The scale of services, the ways they are provided and how organizations have worked together has changed significantly over time. The city has grown in size, which means services are offered in more places. The city has welcomed new technologies, which means services are provided in new ways. Community and family expectations have changed, which means the types of services are changing as well.

The faces of Edmontonians themselves have changed. Between 2006 and [2016](#), the population of the Edmonton census metropolitan area grew by more than 20 per cent, from 722,255 to 913,585 people. Within that population, the proportion of visible minority residents grew from 23 to 37 per cent, and the largest growth was seen in the South Asian, Filipino and Black communities. The proportion of self-identified Indigenous residents remained constant at about five per cent. The proportion of young people increased, with the average age dropping from 36.1 to 35.7 over the decade. What statistics do not capture, however, is the intersection of identities and how different individual circumstances can compound to systemic challenges. Diversity and inclusion are significantly more complex than census statistics and acknowledging statistics is only the beginning.

The City of Edmonton, the Edmonton Police Commission and the Edmonton Police Service have long understood the many ways the community is changing and that their organizations need to change too. To better understand the issues and the changes that were needed, they listened to Edmontonians.

### Partner organizations listened and learned

In [2018](#), the Community and Public Services Committee of Edmonton's City Council recommended the creation of an Anti-Racism Advisory Committee. Council created the [Anti-Racism Advisory Committee](#) in 2019 and tasked it with raising awareness and catalyzing action on racism and anti-racism in Edmonton and providing advice on related issues. That Committee consults with stakeholders, conducts research, funds priority initiatives and provides insights to Council.

In June 2020, Edmonton City Council held a public hearing to better understand how Edmontonians viewed police-community relationships. Following the hearing, Council [directed](#) Administration and the Edmonton Police Commission to provide a series of reports in response to what they heard from Edmontonians.

In parallel to other actions, Edmonton City Council also created the [Community Safety and Well-Being Task Force](#) (Task Force). This civic agency was a temporary Committee of Council comprised of community members, representatives from the City of Edmonton, Edmonton Police Commission and the Edmonton Police Service. The Task Force worked independently to develop recommendations to address racism, discrimination, excessive use of force, poverty and homelessness based on trends, best practices and change models from across Canada. Recommendations also included options to enhance community safety and well-being in the city. The Task Force highlighted the critical connection between addressing systemic discrimination and the desire to have a community that is safe for everyone.

### Partner organizations have set strategic direction

With these new insights and a deep appreciation of the need to act, the organizations identified their strategic approaches. This allowed them to clarify the direction they were headed, the outcomes they envisioned, and the type of work that was needed within their own organizations, in the programs they deliver and in the ways their organizations work together.

All three partner organizations have set overall direction to respond to changing community needs, set new relationships with the community, and improve service. The broad vision for the city is outlined in ConnectEdmonton and the City Plan, which are outlined in detail later in this

report. Corporate and departmental business plans confirm the actions they are taking. In short, the Edmonton Police Service, the Edmonton Police Commission and the City of Edmonton have all set their strategic course towards a safer, more diverse and more inclusive future.

### **Partner organizations have made structural changes and introduced new initiatives**

The organizations have also introduced structural changes to focus the people and resources serving as agents of change and are now making policy and operational changes to drive change forward.

The City of Edmonton's [Indigenous Framework](#) is meant to guide City staff on their learning journeys of reconciliation and relationship-building with Indigenous Peoples. Following advice from Elders, Knowledge Keepers, youth and other Indigenous community partners, the City outlined that staff have four critical roles: listener, connector, advocate and partner. Departments are developing action plans to fulfill the City's seven commitments to support reconciliation, eliminate racism, make city spaces safer, build relationships, host events, create careers and engage with the community.

Within the City of Edmonton, the department of Employee Services was created in 2018 with a mandate to steward the employee experience from recruitment to offboarding, enable a more agile workforce and be a leader in inclusive workplace culture. Within this new department, a Respect in the Workplace section includes a Diversity and Inclusion Unit and employees include equity specialists. The City has introduced a Respectful Workplace Policy, which sets corporate expectations for respectful behaviour between colleagues, and introduced instructor-led training sessions which have been taken by 40 per cent of employees.

Edmonton's City Council passed a [Diversity and Inclusion policy](#) in 2008. The City of Edmonton introduced a revised framework, the [Art of Inclusion, Our Diversity and Inclusion Framework](#), in 2019, including 75 actions to foster diversity, equity, skill and growth across the organization. A City-wide corporate Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee has been created, pulling together the insights from a network of parallel department Diversity and Inclusion committees. Separately, Employee Resource Networks are employee-led, voluntary groups which connect, educate and share experiences as well as provide valuable advice and input to City business. The



City supports four Networks: Race&Ethnicity@theCity, Pride@theCity, Edmonton Indigenous Employee Resource Network (EIERN) and Women@theCity. They all work to support a culture of respect and inclusion.

The City also introduced the [Accessibility for People with Disabilities](#) policy in 2019. The policy outlines objectives, while an [Accessibility Plan](#) currently under development outlines the specific actions the City will take to ensure people with disabilities are treated with respect, have equitable access and have opportunities to participate and contribute to the fullest extent in their city.

Separately, the City has also developed a series of leadership competencies to define the behaviours which create the organization's desired culture. The six competencies focus on personal behaviours (being courageous and inclusive), team behaviours (being a values-based influencer and a collaborative networker) and results-oriented behaviours (being a systems thinker and a creative innovator).

In 2019, the Edmonton Police Commission hired a Chief to bring a new vision to the Edmonton Police Service. The current and future Chiefs are responsible for moving forward with building better relationships with marginalized communities and in partnering with social service agencies to provide better, outcome-focused ways of managing and reducing calls for service to the police. EPC is confident that initiatives already implemented, and initiatives planned in the medium and long term, will help build bridges, improve community safety, enhance trust and strengthen a culture of anti-racism, professionalism and accountability.

In 2019, the Edmonton Police Service developed the new Value and Impact Division to report directly to the Chief. With this higher level of scrutiny, the Division was designed to use data to determine the relative value of a number of EPS processes and initiatives, and focus on determining the root causes driving the work of the police service and to measure whether resources are making a tangible impact on alleviating demand. From the onset, divisional staff recognized that the work of EPS cannot be viewed in isolation and that it needed to work with community partners towards a collective goal of delivering public safety.

Within the Value and Impact Division, the Equity and Inclusion Branch oversees community engagement, equity and workplace harassment, and

equity and inclusion from a gender-based analysis lens. The Division also includes the Strategy and Engagement Branch that oversees strategic planning, corporate performance and evaluation. The team includes staff with PhDs and a plethora of experience and skills, including an equity and inclusion design consultant, an Indigenous relations advisor and a research centre of excellence that works closely with the Community Solutions Accelerator (a separate unit using business applications and data management to solve problems) to ensure EPS becomes leading-edge in the world of policing.

In September 2020, the Edmonton Police Service [launched](#) a commitment to action to build a stronger relationship with members of Edmonton's marginalized communities. The initiative includes the creation of a community advisory council with people with lived experience, as well as community and business partners who are committed to meaningful inter-community collaboration. Ongoing initiatives [include](#) monthly listening sessions with the Chief and 'lunch and learns' about policing operations and practices. The initiative creates the space for significant community work -- listening, learning and leading -- and is supported by the newly-created Value and Impact Division within the Police Service. In addition, \$28 million in police resources was repurposed to create a Community Safety and Well-Being Bureau in [November 2019](#). A national first, the Bureau moves people away from the criminal justice system and toward community agencies which can provide the addictions, health, or other supports needed to help break the cycle of disruptive behaviour. The Bureau has implemented several initiatives to balance support with enforcement, and is invaluable to frontline officers by providing officers resources for their interactions with Edmonton's vulnerable and at-risk population.

### **Partner organizations have changed their practices**

The City has introduced the practice of Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) into the policy development process. Through this analytical approach, employees can better understand diverse perspectives, experiences and needs, and create services that better serve everyone. The goal of GBA+ is to identify opportunities to reduce inequality and discrimination and ensure equality of outcomes for both employees and the communities the City serves. The "plus" in GBA+ is critical, because it identifies there are many intersecting factors beyond gender to consider -- race, culture, ethnicity,

physical ability, mental health, culture, language and more. Training in applying a GBA+ is mandatory for staff at the Director level and above within the City, but is both recommended and offered to other people in the organization.

Within the Edmonton Police Service, GBA+ training has been rebranded as Modern Policing Analysis. The tool is used to assess how diverse groups of people may experience service provision and be differently affected by policies, programs and initiatives across the EPS. It identifies ways to reduce and prevent inequalities in police service, and promote equality of outcomes through practicality, pragmatism and accessibility.

**While there has been progress, the partners recognize there is more to do**

The partner organizations have made steady progress through identifying the need for action, developing strategic direction, implementing structural change and adjusting programs to meet changing needs.

There is also a commitment to measure progress and report results. Partners track their work, measure their results, and publicly report their outcomes. Annual reports, dashboards, audit reviews and public engagement are all part of the three agencies' accountability to Edmontonians.

Even so, all three organizations can see that Edmonton still has more work to do. Input from Edmontonians, community activity, incoming 911 calls, public sentiment and media headlines all point to the ongoing need to ensure that every Edmontonian feels welcomed and safe.

This work plan focuses on activities which can be done by the participating organizations. It recognizes the strategic directions which have been set, and the prioritization of this work within the organization. It also recognizes common themes and issues, and takes a more integrated approach to aligning actions by the partner organizations. While this is a less direct response to individual recommendations, motions and incidents which have been part of public conversations about safety and racism in recent years, it reflects a more systemic approach to collaboration, consideration and action. As directed by Council motion, it considers actions within the City's areas of responsibility.

The work plan describes where related projects are already underway, and acknowledges but does not duplicate those efforts. For example, while the partners recognize the calls for changes to funding for policing and social services, a separate funding analysis is underway. While partners recognize the call for an integrated provincial government review of social service operations and outcomes, the launch of any such initiative would be directed by others.

The City of Edmonton, the Edmonton Police Service, and the Edmonton Police Commission are committed to an equitable and diverse future. They also recognize that getting to that future is a journey ... walking with partners, and learning along the way.

## OUR DIRECTION

Edmontonians and their City government have defined the community they aspire to be over the longer term. This vision is ConnectEdmonton.

City Administration contributes to this long term vision by moving forward in the directions outlined in The City Plan. The documents which set organizations' strategic direction are important baselines, because they describe destinations and set priorities. When actions align with an organization's strategic directions, there are organizational resources to move them forward.

### ConnectEdmonton

[ConnectEdmonton](#) sets the aspirational direction for Edmonton's future, and outlines the steps we need to take today and over the next few years in order to realize this vision by 2050. The direction was created in collaboration with the community, for the community through robust public engagement. Healthy City, Urban Places, Regional Prosperity and Climate Resilience make up the four strategic goals and focus areas where transformational change will be needed in the next ten years to achieve the shared vision. The goals will be achieved through strategic actions, partnerships and collaboration.

As a healthy city, Edmonton will be a neighbourly city with community and personal wellness that embodies and promotes equity for all Edmontonians.

The healthy city idea encompasses both Edmontonians' well-being and the wellness of our communities. It requires that all people have the means to access and maintain a good standard of living. When they feel safe, empowered and supported as individuals, they are better able to connect with and enrich the community. It is about harmony, happiness and health as a whole.

Working together to advance the equity and conditions for all Edmontonians to live their best lives is essential to achieving liveability for all. The health and wellness of Edmontonians is core to our quality of life. It is why we want to build urban places, have regional prosperity and become climate resilient.

## The City Plan

[The City Plan](#) takes direction from the four strategic goals in ConnectEdmonton. It articulates the choices the City will need to make to become a healthy, urban, climate resilient city of two million people that supports a prosperous region.

Edmonton in many ways is, and is continually aspiring to be, a welcoming and healing city. The City Plan identifies that “Inclusive and Compassionate” is one of the six significant areas where the City has extended an invitation to work together in new ways, to deliberately change the status quo, and to set ambitious targets.

The City Plan indicates that “being inclusive and compassionate means we are rooted in concepts and efforts to improve equity, end poverty, eliminate racism and make clear progress towards Truth and Reconciliation” (p26).

ConnectEdmonton and the City Plan confirm that acting on social justice, inclusion and wellness are priorities for Council, Administration, and Edmontonians. While recognizing that these are large and complex challenges, the organizations have identified what their actions will look like.

## Vision 2020

[Vision 2020](#) is Edmonton Police Service’s organizational review and restructuring of existing resources aimed to better manage service demands by rebalancing traditional enforcement services with additional social supports. Launched in early 2019, it modernizes police service in the city, and aims to improve community safety and become efficient at reducing crime. At the heart of Vision 2020 are three fundamental concepts:

- Maintain and improve core policing functions that support community safety while reducing crime, disorder and victimization;
- Further develop relationships with external social service agencies and community partners to support individuals to break free of the arrest-release-remand cycle and divert them from the criminal justice system; and
- Realign organizational structure to encourage increased collaboration, efficiency and innovation.

The elements of Vision 2020 have been incorporated into the Edmonton Police Service’s [2020-2022 Strategic Plan](#) which defines EPS’ goals and

outcomes, and its [2020-2022 Business Plan](#) which highlights the actions being taken to achieve those goals and outcomes. [Ottawa Life](#) called the Vision 2020 approach “a model of change for police services across the country.”

## OUR ACTIONS

### SYSTEM INTEGRATION AND CO-ORDINATED RESPONSE

When you call for help, someone will come. When an emergency response system is working at its best, the right person comes quickly and deals with the matter well. At the individual level, the person needing assistance knows where to go for help and what to ask for, people in the dispatch system know who to deploy, the people providing the service are skilled and available and the people providing the service can work safely. At the system level, integration requires information, protocols and processes, training and education, technology and governance.

City Council, partner agencies, and Edmontonians support integrated service and single points of entry. The City's 311 information service, the province's 211 social services, and the 911 fire/police/ambulance service are examples of integrated ways to bring together information, dispatch, and response across multiple types of programs. Together, they support thousands of interactions every day.

For example, Edmontonians may call 211 to request help for a person in distress. Through a 24/7 Crisis Diversion Team, health and mental health supports can be provided by trained outreach workers. This approach ensures people get the help they need, and emergency responders can focus on emergencies.

Advancing to a comprehensive response system is a move further along that continuum. The Edmonton Police Service often responds to calls for service in collaboration with therapists and mental health practitioners. The level of response depends on the information provided by the caller seeking service, as well as the availability of social services professionals. While emergency responders are available on a 24/7 basis the additional team members are not, which means that services provided vary based on the time of day of the call.

Proposals for social agencies to resource 24/7 programs are not being systematically developed at this time. Collaboration between the City, the



Government of Alberta and community partners with collective outcomes and funding would be required, and are beyond the scope of this work plan.

Work is underway to enhance 911 dispatch and response, and to move its work from traditional emergency response toward an integrated continuum of response. In June 2020, City Council directed Administration to explore the creation of an integrated dispatch centre that merges and amalgamates all social service ecosystem partners to ensure the right services and units (ranging from fire to police to peace officers to Emergency Medical Services to crisis diversion or mental health teams) are being appropriately and efficiently dispatched to calls for service.

In [November 2020](#), City Council received an update. At that time, Administration noted the need and importance of including the social services support ecosystem in this work, the opportunity for mental health and other experts to better triage needs and the value of connecting citizens faster with appropriate emergency responders. Opportunities for real-time information sharing were also identified. At that time, Administration was tasked with developing a business case for an integrated call evaluation and dispatch system.

Beyond the coordination of emergency response, partners are also focusing on community response by identifying ways to focus on the well-being of our city's communities and the people within them through the RECOVER well-being framework. After three years of listening to people and completing an extensive literature review, the research identified that a critical pathway to well-being is through strengthening six connections (connection to the land/ground, to body and self, to family/friends/community, to the sacred, to the human project, and to culture). RECOVER applies its well-being framework to design new practices which help people feel more connected to themselves, the land and others as a means of building community, healthy people, and safe, vibrant spaces.

RECOVER does this work to improve well-being through social research and design. This includes ethnographic research and testing new ideas and practices that complement existing practices and services. RECOVER includes people with lived experience in communities that have been marginalized, and builds partnerships to strengthen communities' mutual understanding and respect for each other. Through the work, RECOVER also supports

communities to deepen their capacity to nurture well-being. Importantly, RECOVER is aligned with the Indigenous Framework and has embraced practices that foster the development of the “Two-Eyed seeing” approach to considering both Indigenous and mainstream knowledge in research, prototyping and evaluation work.

### Current Actions

To support integrated dispatch:

- The City of Edmonton, Edmonton Police Service and partner agencies are working towards an integrated dispatch system to co-ordinate across multiple business lines. A business case is currently underway that explores opportunities to enhance integration of call evaluation and dispatch. It is reviewing the current call evaluation and dispatch functions for emergency, crisis diversion, and general safety and well-being programs delivered by the Edmonton Police Service, Edmonton Fire Rescue Services, the City of Edmonton’s Community Standards and Neighbourhoods Branch, Edmonton Transit Service, Alberta Health Services’ Emergency Medical Services as well as Addictions and Mental Health, the crisis diversion program (including REACH, Boyle Street Community Services, and Hope Mission), the Canadian Mental Health Association, and the City of Edmonton’s 311 program. It considers eight components: the needs/abilities of each partner; risk, risk ownership and mitigation; viable delivery options; financial impact and options; governance; parameters for measuring success; the transformational readiness of the partners; and possible implementation steps.
- The Integrated Call and Evaluation Dispatch Model Business Case report is coming forward as a separate report to Council.

To support integrated response:

- Edmonton Transit Service is working with Edmonton Police Service to provide live access to its camera feeds. This would allow for a more co-ordinated response to emerging situations.
- Collaboration with partners is an essential part of the RECOVER approach. A partnership with REACH, InWithForward, and the Edmonton Police Service is testing ways to connect marginalized people with community supports to help them address grief and loss. Another partnership with the Downtown Business Association is

testing how to improve interactions between local businesses and marginalized people and testing how a streetscape can play a role in building a sense of connection. Because RECOVER is focused on relationships, they have also convened a diverse group of community leaders called the Catalyst Group who are working to shift the well-being landscape, support prototypes and learning.

### Next Steps

- The Integrated Call Evaluation and Dispatch business case includes steps to be actioned in 2021 in five areas of activity: governance; protocols and processes; information; technology; and training and education. Steps being explored as part of that work include:
  - Securing an Integration Director and formalizing a governance structure with appropriate Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs).
  - Establishing a Technology Working Group and assessing technology sharing opportunities.
  - Developing resource/reference materials for sharing information on available resources, common language, mental health and resource connections.
  - Holding orientation and familiarization training between organizations.
  - Investigating the feasibility and need for co-locating call evaluation and dispatch services.
- The partners are exploring establishing opportunities for cross-training, secondments, and temporary assignments in current dispatch centres to support learning and culture change among dispatchers.
- As part of ongoing efforts to improve program effectiveness, the City will explore working with community partners and funded agencies to create further efficiencies and co-ordinated approaches to social service delivery in Edmonton.

## ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURES

Organizational culture reflects both individual and organizational elements. The perspectives of decision-making teams can drive what those decisions are, how they are implemented, and how they are communicated. The organization sets recruitment practices, trains and develops employees, sets expectations for how work is conducted, and steers the employee experience from onboarding to departure. Further, individuals' behaviours and how the organization responds to them set the tone for what is discouraged, tolerated, accepted, or welcomed.

### **Organizations are intentionally building a more diverse workforce**

City Council has been intentional in seeking diverse perspectives in municipal organizations -- with diversity including visible and non-visible differences including ethnicity, age, gender, family status, religion, geographic location, educational background and more. Organizationally, Council has actively sought diverse perspectives and adjusted recruitment practices when recruiting to agencies, boards and commissions. Recruitment advertising was redesigned to be more inclusive, and materials highlighted the varied skills, backgrounds and experiences of participating Edmontonians. Information was shared with community groups and social media followers, while advertising was placed in outlets which attract a more diverse audience.

These changes are bringing more diverse applications. As a result, the Edmonton Police Commission, for example, is now more diverse than in the past, with its 11 members including five men, six women, four people who are Black, Indigenous or People of Colour, and two who are 2SLGBTQ+. They also have a wide range of educational backgrounds and lived experiences.

The Edmonton Police Service has undertaken significant new recruiting practices in an effort to attract a more diverse pool of applicants. EPS is increasing the number of Indigenous applications by working with the University of Alberta's Faculty of Native Studies and First Peoples' House, the Fishing Lake Métis Settlement, Rupertsland Institute, Edmonton Catholic Schools Indigenous Learning Services, attending the yearly National Aboriginal Day, Oteenow Industry and Engagement Conference, the Native Nationals hockey programs, and others. The EPS Recruit Selection Unit has also been turning to social media to attract more diverse applicants. The

team hosted a live Facebook “Talk with a Recruiter” session where the public asked questions about the recruiting process and requirements. This expanded to include an Instagram Question and Answer segment.

Separately, a Recruit Mentoring Academy for under-represented applicants is a 12-week program that exposes attendees to subjects like professionalism and ethics, mental readiness, command presence, and stress management. About 60 per cent of Academy participants eventually get hired by EPS.

Since the beginning of 2017, EPS has hired 333 new police officers with educational qualifications ranging from certificates to doctorate degrees. Of these new officers: 28 per cent self-identify as female, five per cent Indigenous, three per cent sexually diverse, and 50 per cent were from under-represented communities. Currently, the national average for female police officers in a police organization is approximately 20 per cent. Since 2017, police officers’ diversity has increased substantially, with the number of recruits self-identifying as belonging to a diverse population increasing from 12 per cent in 2016 to 58 per cent in 2020. This is intentional: the EPS has deliberately sought to build a more diverse front-line workforce, and has completed an equity review of recruitment processes.

The City of Edmonton has also made efforts to ensure its workforce reflects the city it serves. A decade ago, just over 30 per cent of the City’s managers were female; by January 2021, the ratio was just over 44 per cent. In the senior management ranks, numbers increased from nearly 25 per cent to nearly 49 per cent over the same period.

Enforcement roles within the city include community standards peace officers, transit peace officers and municipal enforcement officers. The qualification, training, and recruitment of peace officers is governed by [provincial training and hiring standards](#). The City’s workplace programs to increase diversity in the workforce are continuing to meet these standards. After a successful pilot in 2020, a review of all enforcement postings from a GBA+, inclusive and anti-racist perspective is being undertaken throughout 2021 as job openings occur. Interview panel members also have diversity training. Ongoing evaluation will determine the impact of these changes and how to improve the implementation of anti-racism and GBA+ in the hiring of enforcement personnel.

The efforts to increase diversity within municipal organizations has been underway for quite some time, and there has been steady progress. Work is now underway to ensure that workplaces are also more inclusive, more respectful, and more welcoming, to ensure that employees with diverse backgrounds are both recruited and retained.

### **A different approach to collective bargaining**

In unionized workplaces, the principle of seniority may be used to determine salary levels, shift allocations, vacation entitlements, priority for temporary or permanent layoff and other benefits. Employees' rights as seniority accrues are an important element of collective bargaining.

Advocates for change often refer to the workplace principle of seniority as a barrier, and this conflict appears in discussions about changing educational, medical, policing, and other professional practices. When workforces are changing, the newest employees have the lowest seniority, and it may take longer for new attitudes and practices to become standardized.

The City of Edmonton and the Edmonton Police Service are both unionized workplaces, and all of the City's existing collective agreements have provisions related to seniority. Some use seniority to drive processes for bumping, selection, and grievance disputes.

Any changes to collective agreements would have to be negotiated and ratified by the employer, the union and the working members they represent. As agreements are renegotiated, opportunities to renegotiate the current seniority rules may be explored.

There are other approaches to bringing new ideas forward, and to increase inclusion in collective agreements. For example, in a previous round of collective bargaining the Edmonton Police Service and the Edmonton Police Association overhauled the part-time program to make it more inclusive. The EPS is currently in collective bargaining, and is updating language to ensure inclusivity.

Within the City, recent collective agreements have also been updated to be more inclusive. References to employees do not use gender-specific language, and job titles have been changed to be more inclusive. In addition, negotiating teams work with inclusion specialists or GBA+ policy analysts so

that any adjustments to working conditions are considered with an equity lens.

### **Inclusive and informed approach to hiring a Police Chief**

Virtually all progress to strengthen community safety and well-being relies on collective effort. Whether it is improving equity, addressing disparities, supporting individuals or creating safer conditions, various aspects of a community must be simultaneously addressed through multiple partners. Police play a role as connectors, which is seen through the work done with the health care system, education system, community organizations and other social service agencies. As the world has evolved, the demands on policing and expectations of safety have changed.

In 2018, and reflecting this desire to craft a new direction for the police service, the Edmonton Police Commission commenced a process to recruit a new Chief of Police. EPC desired a visionary leader, a person who would take the police service in a new direction through achieving partner-focused, meaningful, outcome-based change in how services are delivered to the public.

To find the right individual, EPC engaged with community leaders in Edmonton to determine what qualities they wanted in the next Chief of Police. Additionally, EPC spoke with thought leaders from across Canada to develop criteria for the person who would be able to deliver on the agenda for change desired by EPC.

This process helped ensure the EPC was able to hear directly from those in the community about the type of person to represent the leadership of change for policing in upcoming years.

This process is now being used across Canada, and will be used in Edmonton when the time comes for new leadership of the police service.

Both now and in the months ahead, work on mindsets, heartsets and skillsets ... competency, leadership style and culture is underway ... to advance inclusion and well-being even further.

### Current Actions

The partners are introducing and changing workplace programs to more actively involve diverse perspectives, increase understanding, and pilot new approaches.

- The City has developed an Anti-Racism Project and assigned resources to lead its implementation. As a result, the 15 action items being undertaken across the organization are building a pool of shared knowledge, applying a co-ordinated approach to advocacy, and introducing meaningful actions for change.
- The City has introduced paid internships for newcomers. The program helps people who are new to Canada gain local experience in their field of training.
- Recently, the City successfully applied for a federal grant supporting summer student placements for employment equity-seeking youth.
- Outside the collective bargaining process, the City has started collaborative conversations with union leaders about what the City is doing to enhance equity and what actions the unions can take.
- The City has reviewed its internal recognition programs (such as its Cultural Commitment Awards) and ensured that criteria reflect GBA+. For example, the safety-focused award criteria now recognize the importance of promoting an inclusive workplace, recognizing intersectionality in program design, and taking steps to ensure equitable outcomes for individuals and groups.
- In 2021, the Edmonton Police Service established an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee to act as an accountability mechanism and lens for issues that arise in the EPS as it supports resource groups of under-represented employees. As well, an Inclusive Language Guide has been created that prioritizes people-first, unbiased language. The goal is to help employees better understand, work with and serve diverse communities in Edmonton.
- To increase equity, reduce harm, and be an inclusive workplace and public service provider, the EPS will now recognize sacred objects from other cultures and religions when individuals are swearing an



oath. Previously the Bible and Qur'an were made available, but these two sacred objects do not fully capture Edmonton's diverse cultural and religious makeup. The procedure update will use language that is adaptable to multiple religious and spiritual beliefs. It also reflects what is being used in all three courts in Alberta. As part of this initiative, the EPS will make Eagle Feathers available at public-facing locations to give people who embrace those beliefs an option for swearing an oath that aligns with their faith. The Eagle Feather will also be available for the recruit swearing-in ceremony.

The City, Edmonton Police Service, and the Edmonton Police Commission are undertaking efforts to modernize their recruitment systems.

- The City has developed guidelines for inclusive job postings, including introducing new equity statements when opportunities are advertised.
- Job postings and position requirements for peace officers and municipal enforcement officers are being adjusted to rebalance how applications are assessed. For example, practical experience with the vulnerable sector or knowledge of another language are now considered an asset.
- The candidate review process for peace officers and municipal enforcement officers is being assessed through an inclusivity and anti-racist perspective.
- The interview process for peace officers and municipal enforcement officers is being enhanced, as an anti-racism and GBA+ perspective is being applied to interview questions and the ways that responses are measured. A bank of diversity and inclusion related interview questions for peace officers and firefighters has been developed for interviewers' use.
- Hiring panels for peace officers and municipal enforcement officers are intentionally being made more diverse.
- The City's recruitment process for agencies, boards and committees is being reviewed, and improvements to attract more diverse applicants are expected in early 2022.

- Within the Edmonton Police Service, the Run with Recruiters (RWR) program continues to introduce the EPS to new candidates, and allow recruiters to coach and mentor potential applicants. Prior to the pandemic, attendance at RWR sessions ranged from 75 to 105 participants, and many were from under-represented communities with a wide range of backgrounds. Sessions have expanded to include University of Alberta and MacEwan University students, and now include a women's-only RWR.
- In addition to the sworn officers, EPS continues to increase the diversity of its civilian employees.

The partners are also developing and delivering training to set organizational expectations and improve individual skills and understanding.

- The City has introduced anti-racism training, first to senior leaders in 2020, and to all staff starting July 2021. Senior leaders across the organization asked how they could inform themselves and learn more about being anti-racist. To become more informed and equipped to make decisions, they attended intense training sessions developed by community experts. To support that learning, Administration put together an Anti-Racism Learning Guide which outlines a year of monthly learning goals, recommended readings, videos, podcasts, articles and activities. It also includes discussion questions for teams.
- The City has developed resources for employees to use in adding diversity and inclusion goals and objectives when they are developing individual training and performance plans for themselves and their team members.
- Within the Edmonton Police Service, all dispatchers and evaluators have received unconscious bias training. This helps them better understand bias awareness, understand adverse childhood experiences, the victim-offender overlap, historical trauma and cultural safety, and better enables them to ensure trauma-informed policing, police legitimacy, and procedural justice.
- A mandatory electronic learning module, "Managing Unconscious Bias" is currently being delivered to all EPS employees and will be

offered to other Canadian law enforcement agencies through the Canadian Police Knowledge Network. This introductory module was developed to assist police in better understanding and interrupting the cycle of bias and its implications in law enforcement. It discusses topics such as types of unconscious biases, stereotypes, consequences of bias, prejudice, systemic discrimination, and discrimination. The content was reviewed by representatives of marginalized and underserved communities, and is one of the first steps in creating an anti-discrimination series intended to promote understanding of equity and inclusion within the EPS. In-person training is planned once it is safe to do so, as well as an Equitable and Inclusive Leadership Training series for supervisors.

- Within the Edmonton Police Service, recruits receive training in trauma, Indigenous historical trauma, police impact on trauma, power and privilege, symptomatic criminality, the victim-offender overlap, LGBTQ2S+ issues, procedural justice, police legitimacy and community engagement.
- Within the Edmonton Police Service, recruits are doing a placement with a social agency as part of their learning. This builds connection with community and a broader understanding of social issues.

### Next Steps

To continue building a strong foundation of diversity, equity and inclusion into the organization's culture, in 2021 the City has committed to:

- Embed diversity and inclusion content in new employee orientation and onboarding.
- The development and implementation of data-driven metrics to measure and better support the City's four Employee Resource Networks.

The City, Edmonton Police Service, and the Edmonton Police Commission will be making further changes to workforce and recruitment practices.

- Edmonton Police Service is reviewing its strategic approach to employee development. A Human Resource Strategy and Leadership Development Framework are currently being developed.

- The City of Edmonton is reviewing its recruitment practices for enforcement personnel including leadership, municipal enforcement officers and peace officers. The City may apply new practices to broaden the diversity of applicants.
- Administration will work with the [Anti-Racism Advisory Committee](#), the [Accessibility Advisory Committee](#), the [Youth Council](#), and [Women's Advocacy Voice of Edmonton Committee](#), the [Community Services Advisory Board](#) and potentially other civic advisory boards to review practices, policies, processes and approaches from an anti-racist and equity-seeking lens. That work will include seeking input on policies and standards.
- A series of Council Orientation training sessions will be held for the new City Council elected in October. One of the first sessions includes an in-depth review of diversity and inclusion, (for example, GBA+, Art of Inclusion, Anti-Racism, and Indigenous Framework).

The City, Edmonton Police Service, and the Edmonton Police Commission will be implementing new training programs to ensure employees have a modern understanding of cultural issues and anti-racism practices. These efforts will also increase the City's capacity to develop and advance operational and policy initiatives.

- As the integrated dispatch centre is implemented, call evaluation and dispatch staff will continue to be required to take specialized training about unconscious bias, cultural awareness, and racist or discriminatory behaviours in the context of their services.
- The Community Standards and Neighbourhoods Branch of the City will develop and schedule ongoing GBA+/anti-racist/anti-bias/Indigenous awareness and trauma-informed curriculum that includes community-led courses. This includes mandatory training for all new hires, and mandatory annual training and annual refresher courses for existing staff. It also includes examination requirements, with a pass/fail assessment.
- In mid-2021, the City will institute an anti-racism training program for all City staff, Commissioners and EPC staff.

- In fall 2021, the Edmonton Police Service will expand training currently provided to the HELP team to others across the Service.
- The City will provide input into the peace officer program in 2021 regarding evaluation and training for peace officers. It will, in conjunction with the Anti-Racism Advisory Committee, seek to develop its own training with an eye to assessing students' reaction to the training, their learning, their behavioural change, and the results on the community.

## SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Social responsibility includes stewardship of the relationship between organizations and the community, and a belief that organizations have an obligation to assess the impact of their actions on their community. In municipal government, it includes commitments to openness and transparency so that knowledge is shared, and decisions more clearly understood. Within enforcement, it includes mechanisms to ensure that those who enforce the law also follow the law. There are limits on what enforcement organizations can do, and mechanisms to protect individual freedoms, and opportunities for decisions to be reviewed. For both organizations, social responsibility includes public engagement, so that government decisions reflect diverse and changing community attitudes. Social responsibility reflects the idea that those with power -- in this case a City government and a police service -- have special obligations both to deliver services, and also to make their communities better.

### Street Checks

A street check is a proactive conversation with a person or a group of people. The purpose of a street check is to gather information that may assist police officers in preventing or investigating criminal activity. They are initiated when an officer wants to check on a person's health and well-being. This engagement consists of police trying to better understand what the individual is doing in that location at that time. The information gathered from a street check can be a critical tool for police in preventing or solving crime. There is no detention authority in a street check, and there is no onus on the individual to provide information to the police. It is a voluntary non-detention, non-arrest interaction between a police officer and individual for those purposes.

The Edmonton Police Service conducted a review of street check reports in 2016, and discovered some areas that required improvement. In response the EPS conducted a comprehensive review of street check policies, practices and processes, conducted community engagement and information sessions, and implemented changes.

Part of the review included community engagement and information sessions with several groups, including the African Youth Dialogue, John

Humphrey Centre's Youth Action Project, Treaty 6 Chiefs and Board members, Boyle Street Community Services, Bissell Centre, iHuman, and Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society. These groups and numerous others provided EPS with a wide range of perspectives. In addition, the Chief's Advisory Council, a group of citizens who represent religious, cultural and ethnic communities in Edmonton, was consulted and provided insights. The EPS implemented a bi-annual auditing process to identify opportunities for improvement and continued with an annual process of reporting to the Edmonton Police Commission.

In 2018, the EPC engaged an external consultant to conduct a further review (the Griffiths report). The above-listed recommendations from 2016 were in the process of being implemented at the time of the Griffiths Report. It resulted in 17 recommendations focused on specific street check processes and broader organizational issues, and the EPC directed the police service to implement them. Several of the recommendations support the goals of becoming more diverse and inclusive:

- Increase the diversity of the EPS
- View street checks as a microcosm of the larger issues related to racism and discrimination against communities of diversity
- Improve officer knowledge of the communities and persons they police
- Monitor for pretense policing
- Monitor for procedural justice in police-citizen encounters.

The Edmonton Police Service is running a "[Know Your Rights](#)" campaign to inform people and community organizations about the rights and responsibilities of individuals and police officers. Wallet cards and online information let people know what information they do and do not need to provide, when warrants are needed, and when a street check can be done. Public reporting about police interactions continues, and is found on the [Edmonton Police Commission](#) website.

**Police have the legal authority to use force; legal restrictions and review processes are designed to ensure they use it reasonably**

A general principle of modern law enforcement is to use force only when it is lawful, ethical and necessary. That is why some police actions can be as subtle as walking by. At public events, for example, just through making their presence known, police can reduce the likelihood of disruptive behaviour. In individual situations, most interactions with police and City enforcement officers start with a calm conversation. Significant enforcement training focuses on maintaining professional conduct and de-escalating a situation, because these skills are essential both in protecting the public and in keeping officers safe.

There are legal restrictions about how police use force, and operational practices to monitor and report on its use. The Criminal Code of Canada allows police to only use 'reasonably necessary' force, and the Edmonton Police Service applies a series of questions about what is reasonable in different circumstances. Mandatory use of force reporting ensures that records document these interactions.

The Edmonton Police Service committed to implementing in-car video in May 2020, and procurement is expected to be completed by the end of 2021 pending budget finalization and installation of equipment. Body-worn video is another form of video technology. [Research](#) has not shown a statistically significant effect on officer and citizen behaviour, and the Edmonton Police Service has not received direction from federal or provincial jurisdictions mandating its implementation.

Twice-annual [reports](#) about the use of force are relayed to the Edmonton Police Commission, a civilian oversight body. Records are provided whenever a person is injured, when force higher than "empty hand" is used for handcuffing, when control tactics are used, when a firearm is drawn, or when a colleague believes that unusual circumstances exist.

In those rare cases where a serious injury or death may have been caused by police, where there are serious allegations of police misconduct, or when the Director of Law Enforcement directs, reports must be made to the [Alberta Serious Incident Response Team](#) (ASIRT). Investigations follow, and in some cases members of police forces have been charged for their use of force.



The Edmonton Police Commission and the Edmonton Police Service concur that the Province must strike an independent, civilian-led body with carriage of all investigations throughout Alberta involving police conduct. The creation of this independent body has been endorsed by both the Alberta Association of Chiefs of Police and the Alberta Association of Police Governance. It will foster a relationship of enhanced trust between Albertans and the various police agencies across the province.

### **Organizations measure and report their work; reporting on outcomes remains a challenge**

As part of the City's work to support ConnectEdmonton's strategic goal of a Healthy City and as discussed at the City's Executive Committee in [November 2020](#), Administration [identified](#) indicators of community wellness (discrimination/racism, crime, and sense of safety), personal wellness, crime (property crimes) and equity (housing conditions, homelessness, income inequality and poverty). Work to analyze these measures, identify common approaches to benchmarking, and prioritize next steps is underway. A report is expected in late 2021.

The Edmonton Police Service public dashboard ([dashboard.edmonton.ca/eps](https://dashboard.edmonton.ca/eps)) shows results on crime, investigative excellence, efficiency and effectiveness, and commitment to professionalism. The dashboard indicates that in April 2018, 81 per cent of Edmontonians strongly or somewhat agreed with the statement that they have a lot of confidence in the Edmonton Police Service.

### **Current Actions**

To support transparency and public reporting about police operations:

- Each year, the City submits a report to Alberta Justice and Solicitor General about peace officer activities in the previous year. Program data, including use of force statistics, are provided. Information is released publicly and discussed at Council (most recently in [March 2021](#)).
- In 2020 the Edmonton Police Service established a Police Liaison Team Coordinator to establish and maintain open and transparent lines of communication with stakeholders who may be directly or indirectly affected by planned or unplanned demonstrations, rallies,

protests, major events, labour disputes and other events deemed to be critical incidents. The Police Liaison Team works toward building a relationship of trust, mutual understanding and respect between police and the community.

To deliver service, ensure safety, and make communities better:

- The City has researched methods to reduce force in its peace officer teams, including updating policy and procedure, evaluating and providing additional training, enhancing outreach activities, updating hiring practices and evaluating when the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) could be applied.
- Public transit both connects communities (literally and figuratively) while also cultivating a community of its own. With that in mind, Edmonton Transit Service has taken a multidimensional approach to providing safety and security for both destination and non-destination riders, including:
  - Adding additional security (April 2021) at various locations. Security guards are provided by Commissionaires, who are highly trained according to provincial standards, and act as welcoming ambassadors for the system and provide customer service. They also have direct access to the ETS Control Centre, so should there be an emergency or need for supports, they can help get the appropriate resources immediately dispatched.
  - Integrating members of EPS' Crime Suppression Branch with transit peace officers. As part of the new Transit Safety Initiative shifts, four transit peace officers and four EPS officers began joint patrols at various transit locations (May 2021).

To support better measurement and data-driven decision making:

- The City is finalizing a community safety and well-being dashboard which brings together the indicators of a safe and healthy city. It will include, among others, the nine measures envisioned in the ConnectEdmonton [Safety Indicators](#) discussed at Executive Committee in [November 2020](#), namely: the percentage of

Edmontonians who say they have witnessed or experienced racism or discrimination, the crime severity rate, the percentage of Edmontonians who feel the city is safe overall, property crimes, perceptions of personal wellness, housing conditions, homelessness, income inequality, and the percentage of Edmontonians who live in poverty.

- The Edmonton Police Service is working with the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police and Statistics Canada to develop a national, standardized, comprehensive and consistent approach to the collection of race-based data in crime statistics. The project was announced in July 2020.

To support community projects which make Edmonton a more welcoming community and improve public engagement:

- In June 2021, Administration in conjunction with the City's Anti-Racism Advisory Committee launched the inaugural cycle of the new Anti-Racism Grants Program. Funding of \$300,000 will be made available to support youth, non-profit and local grassroots organizations with the development of anti-racism projects and events.
- The City is engaging with its advisory boards and committees on an updated policy about remuneration and expenses. The policy review will consider structural inequalities and barriers to participation. The matter is scheduled to be considered by Council in mid-2021.

### Next Steps

To steward the relationship between organizations and the community:

- The City will replace the current Diversity and Inclusion policy with a new Equity Policy.
- The City has invested in a two-year pilot program starting in July 2021 where a Community Outreach Transit Team consisting of a Transit Peace Officer and an Outreach Worker use a collaborative approach to assist individuals with no fixed address and/or who may be experiencing mental health or addiction challenges while in the transit system. The specialized support is informed through a trauma

informed lens, as well as education, knowledge, and experience working with individuals who may be under the influence of various substances or experiencing a mental health crisis.

To continue to deliver service, ensure safety, and make communities better:

- Edmonton Transit Service is embarking on a series of initiatives, projects, and campaigns from summer through to the end of 2021 including:
  - Reinvigorating various safety campaigns: (Let's Keep Each Other Safe, Transit Watch, and campaigns that share safety resources);
  - Posting the Transit Watch number at clear locations in stations and centres;
  - Commencing a Bystander Awareness Program to help empower bystanders to identify and effectively respond to forms of harassment and sexual violence. The program will start with Edmonton Transit Service, with the intent to build a program that can be expanded across the full organization.
  - In addition to the ongoing work to incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) in the design of transit infrastructure, Stadium Station is currently in the process of a complete renovation. Its new design incorporates all four principles of CPTED: natural surveillance, access control, territorial reinforcement and maintenance.

To support transparency and reporting on progress:

- The City will refine the community safety and well-being dashboard. This will build on the measures envisioned in Community Safety reporting under the City's Healthy City priority.
- The Edmonton Police Service will advance the robust Corporate Performance Framework outlined in its [2020-2022 Business Plan](#), allowing it to share progress on its goals to balance support and enforcement, partner and advocate, innovate and advance, and grow diverse talent. The framework will include metrics in police resources, activities and deployment, crime and victimization, and trust and

confidence in the police. As part of the framework, the EPS will include the community in the evaluation process.

- In 2021, the EPS Critical Operational Risk and Ethical Evaluation (Training) section initiated an assessment and review of the use of force training program for both recruits and serving members. The objective was to ensure that the training program provides the members with the core skills and abilities to achieve the highest professional and ethical standards that support and maintain community trust. Immediate revisions were approved and implemented into the Reasonable Officer Response Framework. “Community trust” was added to emphasize the expected outcomes of professional police action, and additional changes supported de-escalation of at-risk behaviour and providing immediate attention to wellness or medical issues. To ensure that the EPS is responsive to community expectations, the training area within EPS is constantly evaluating the training that is being delivered to police officers. A broad range of skills beyond using force are reinforced, including conflict resolution, de-escalation, and sensitivity training. While police officers can lawfully use force to defend themselves and others, the EPS trains police officers to engage with everyone in the community in a professional and ethical manner at all times.
- The City of Edmonton is exploring ways to provide existing data on the work of peace and municipal enforcement officers publicly, and to build a process that adopts new performance measures for their work.
- As part of RECOVER Urban Well-being, the City and its partners will learn how data collection methods can be mutually beneficial to the people from whom the data is being collected, as well as the data collector. Auricle, the evaluation prototype, is currently in progress.

To support community initiatives to address racism and build community capacity:

- The Anti-Racism Advisory Committee will recommend projects for grant funding to Council in late summer 2021.

## PREVENTION AND SUPPORT

The themes of prevention and support reflect the longstanding beliefs that preventing small problems also prevents big problems, and that if people can access services they will avoid disruptive activity. It also recognizes that increased police interactions are sometimes a signal that adequate investments in effective social programming have not occurred: when community resources are in place, people can have their needs met without turning to anti-social behaviours. When people know what services are available, they can call for help from agencies other than the police. City, police, and community agency staff who are interacting with vulnerable people can direct them to appropriate services, rather than only relying on enforcement actions. The partners recognize that crime rates and calls for service to the police can only be reduced by investments in social services, mental health and addiction services, education, and health.

Ensuring that partnerships are in place to provide a continuum of services will reduce vulnerable people from coming into contact with the justice system.

Since 2013, the Heavy Users of Service partnership brings together the City of Edmonton, Edmonton Police Service, the Government of Alberta, Alberta Health Services, Boyle Street Community Services, Homeward Trust, Bissell centre, REACH Edmonton, Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society, Boyle McCauley Health Services, E4C, and the George Spady Society. The collaboration was developed as a response to highly vulnerable community members who were frequent users of health, justice and social services. Recognizing that people would cycle through services between agencies and repeatedly fall through the cracks, the partnership is an effort to deliver integrated service, reduce barriers, and provide better results for both the individual and the community.

Because police and peace officer authorities are set out in law, the tools at their disposal are those which the law allows. They have the authority to stop, detain, question, search and arrest. They cannot require someone to go to an emergency shelter or a healthcare facility, they cannot require drug treatment. The hours of service of other community service professionals, the willingness of individuals to receive social services, and the accessibility of

services all affect the overall effectiveness of support and prevention services.

### Current Actions

- Launched in January 2021, the Human-centred Engagement and Liaison Partnership ([HELP](#)) is one of the first fully integrated social response teams in Canada. The aim is to divert the members of the vulnerable community away from the judicial system when appropriate, and navigate them to better suited social, health and community resources where their social determinants of health are better met. HELP provides an integrated service delivery model. This is a data-driven approach which uses a matrix to identify those most at risk of disorder and victimization, and at greatest risk of harm to themselves, others and the community.
- EPS police officers deploy with EPS-funded Boyle Street Community Service outreach navigators to respond to the immediate needs of front-line police officers. During initial interactions with community members the HELP teams attempt to identify unmet basic needs or social determinants of health, and navigate them to the appropriate social agencies and programs. HELP is a consent-based, client-centred, multi-disciplinary approach with navigation being the critical aspect of the response to the client who is directly involved in an individual case and care plan. The ultimate outcome will be reflected in each individual's lived situation.
- The City is a partner in the [Sector Emergency Response](#), a collaboration between more than 25 agencies to keep people safe and warm. When extreme weather warrants, the partners provide busing, essential services, security services, and shelter from the cold. City Council has adopted a [policy](#) directing Administration to support vulnerable people during extreme weather.
- Partnerships involving the City, Edmonton Police Service and/or community agencies are delivering programs which meet community needs. Examples include the Encampment Response Team (ERT), Child at Risk Response Teams (CARRT), Domestic Abuse High Risk

Teams (DAHRT), Neighborhood Empowerment Team (NET), Police and Crisis Team (PACT) and the Senior Protection Partnership (SPP).

- The [Encampment Response Team](#), for example, responds to low-risk homeless camps. Outreach workers visit encampments to ensure the safety of residents and provide a direct connection to housing supports. Providing these services before enforcement activity gives unsheltered Edmontonians the opportunity to connect to housing and other supports and reduces the need for further peace officer or police involvement.
- Partnerships between the City, Edmonton Police Service and/or academic and business organizations are helping advance research on crime trends, or implement sector-specific theft prevention projects.
- EPS announced its new Young People Strategy, outlining how the service is balancing support with enforcement by working with young people in developmentally-appropriate ways. This strategy is a first of its kind in Canada. Recognizing that the human brain does not fully mature until the mid-to-late 20s, the service will now be expanding its focus on youth from the ages of 12-17 to 10-24 inclusive. In delivering this strategy, the Service will enhance its ability to address young people-related policing issues and build or strengthen community partnerships.
- Providing more public washrooms is reducing the challenges with public waste, disruption to businesses, and violations of the Public Places Bylaw. Gender-neutral washrooms with attendants and products provided in partnership with local social agencies were introduced downtown and in Borden Park in May.
- In April 2021, City Council directed that fines for transit fare evasion be reduced from \$250 to \$150 to be in line with other jurisdictions, and that provisions for loitering be amended to consider exempting helping agencies. Work on the Conduct of Transit Passengers [Bylaw 8353](#) is underway.



- Partner organizations monitor changes to the Criminal Code of Canada, particularly possible changes like those [announced in February](#) which could encourage greater use of diversion programs.
- In February 2020 the Community Solutions Accelerator was launched in the EPS. It is a ground-breaking new approach to public safety and well-being modelled on business applications that combine amalgamated data, artificial intelligence and machine learning to solve complex problems. Using data from a variety of sources, the CSA will focus on the interconnected challenges affecting Edmonton such as crime, addictions, homelessness, and mental health. The data will be a roadmap for change, and while the solutions will benefit the safety and well-being of Edmontonians, they could potentially be applied to other communities facing similar challenges. Because of the collaborative nature of the CSA and the sharing of large volumes of data, research initiatives will be ethical, transparent, and compliant with privacy legislation. The CSA is believed to be the first of its kind in North America and will pioneer a human-centred and holistic approach to policing and community safety. It will be evaluated on how well its solutions mitigate harm to individuals and diminish criminal activities.

### Next Steps

- RECOVER Urban Well-being will work with partners to begin the discovery phase researching how an enforcement interaction could become an opportunity to strengthen well-being. It would also explore where citizens can offer “tickets to well-being” (for example, passes to wellness experiences) rather than tickets.
- With Business Improvement Associations, the City is exploring installation of additional mobile washroom facilities.
- RECOVER Urban Well-being is exploring and testing the concept of healing-informed practice with organizations to support trauma-informed care. A current prototype called Expectant will explore moving from merely treating emotional and behavioural symptoms of trauma to a more holistic approach of restoring well-being.

- As directed by City Council on [April 6, 2021](#), Administration is working with social agency partners to co-create equitable fine repayment options, and conduct an anti-racism review of current low income fare programs to remove barriers and support equitable participation. A report is expected in early 2022.
- In March 2021, the Community Safety and Well-Being [Bylaw Review](#) identified six bylaws that most commonly affect marginalized people. The review outlined 13 potential actions, including educating people on the bylaw, exploring other options beyond fines, undertaking community engagement, and better understanding the reasons for and impacts of the behaviours.
- Administration is actioning greater integration and support from social networks and community partners. For example, transit peace officers on the transit system are partnering with social agency staff to support a harm reduction approach when interacting with people in need. Social agency staff have the expertise to respond more effectively to people who are marginalized and may require a connection to supportive housing, mental health supports or other resources as alternatives to enforcement. This program is slated to start mid year 2021.
- The City is engaging with emergency shelter operators and stakeholders to develop a comprehensive minimum standard for housing-focused, accessible, and trauma-informed shelter services. This work marks an important change from shelters' providing emergency relief to also steering people toward housing. While funding and regulatory authority for shelters continues to rest with the Government of Alberta, these voluntary standards will help shelter providers work towards adopting evidence-based best practices that lead to better housing and health outcomes for shelter guests. The standards may include basic operational standards to improve core service provision (for example, food services, sleeping and hygiene, safety), to outline required programs and services (for example, housing programs, cultural supports, and integration of health services including mental health and addictions supports), and to set infrastructure requirements (for example, private or semi-private sleep spaces and designated program areas). Other

provisions may relate to good neighbour agreements and business licencing. The proposed standards are expected to be brought forward to Council in August 2021.

- An EPS partnership with Ice District Group will enable HELP, additional EPS units and key external community partners to come together in a co-location. This integrated site will allow agencies to be better aligned in the supports and services provided to the community members. Having multiple agencies co-locate will allow for more effective collaboration and case plan development through creating shared goals, sharing information, creating efficiencies and aligning consistently in measuring outcomes, all while ensuring top multi-disciplinary service provision for vulnerable, marginalized and at risk people. The integrated location, which has already received national attention, is centrally located for ease of access, with the proximity of transit services and shelter supports.
- As part of ongoing engagement, the [Chief's Community Advisory Council](#) is being guided by people who experience marginalization, racism and discrimination, as well as community and business partners, to allow for meaningful inter-community collaboration and problem solving. to focus on guiding EPS as it implements recommendations and changes that have come out of efforts to engage the community.
- The EPS Nisohkamakewin Council, a new Indigenous advisory council, is working with community members on systemic changes to policing as EPS works on implementing recommendations from the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) Inquiry, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. This council will rely heavily on the expertise and experience of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities in Edmonton.
- The City received the MMIWG National Action Plan (and accountability framework) on June 3, 2021. Given that several of the Calls for Justice are addressed to "all governments," it will be beneficial for Administration to be able to review and identify alignments to the activities of both federal and provincial governments and Edmonton

Police Service, as well as any impacts of their work on the City of Edmonton. The work to address the MMIWG Calls for Justice is multi-sectoral and needs a cross-jurisdictional approach to achieve collective impact. Indigenous Relations is currently in discussions with Women Elders and Knowledge Keepers, community partners, and with community members on some grassroots initiatives to address the MMIWG Calls for Justice.

## GOVERNANCE

Governance actions include determining strategic priorities, establishing legislative, regulatory, and financial mechanisms, and setting service delivery models that drive the customer or client experience.

Within the City, governance mechanisms include:

- City Council which sets the overall vision and direction for the City, delegating some authorities to Administration and relying on council committees to provide a forum for public input and recommendations to be made to elected officials.
- The Edmonton Police Commission, a civilian oversight body which creates an essential balance between public accountability and police independence. The Commission sets leadership and professional expectations for the Chief of Police and the entire Service, responds to citizens' concerns on policing matters, helps develop the annual policing plan and budget, and builds positive relations with community partners.
- The City Manager who oversees the administration and operations of the City.

City bylaws create a framework of rules and guide citizen behaviour. They also include fines, which are generally set to be proportionate to the severity of the offence and act as a deterrent.

There are also provincial laws which set expectations on how City staff perform their work.

- The provincial *Peace Officer Act* and regulations set requirements for becoming a peace officer, uniform requirements, and obligations on the City as an employer of peace officers.
- The provincial *Police Act* governs municipal policing in the province. It requires Council to establish and maintain an adequate and effective municipal police service under the general service of a police commission. The Alberta government is currently [reviewing](#) that legislation, with an eye to reducing excessive use of force, ensuring

officer safety, and enhancing trust in police organizations. In fall 2020, Alberta consulted on three areas of the *Act*: governance and public trust (including complaints and oversight), Indigenous policing, and the role of police. In 2021, Alberta consulted further with cultural communities about their experiences with police. The Edmonton Police Commission and the Edmonton Police Service have provided input to that review and are committed to working with the provincial government when review recommendations come forward. The results of the review are expected in the fall of 2021.

- The [Law Enforcement Review Board](#) hears appeals about police services' decisions on public complaints, and appeals about the Alberta government's cancellation of a peace officer's appointment.
- The Professional Standards Branch of the Edmonton Police Service investigates all complaints about police conduct, and provides [an annual report](#) about the number of complaints received, the nature of the complaints and the penalties applied. [Quarterly reports](#) outline the number of complaints, the status of disciplinary hearings and findings of hearings (complaints not proven, or disciplinary actions taken).

Changes to provincial government legislation and regulations directly affect City policing activities. For example, in November 2020, Alberta Justice and Solicitor General released new guidance about street checks. Edmonton applies that guidance to both police and peace officers. This guidance will become law through amendments to the Police Act passed [in Bill 63](#) and currently awaiting proclamation.

In December 2020, the Edmonton Police Commission [responded](#) to City Council's request for a proposal considering amending the scope of the Commission to include responsibility for public safety. The Commission undertook a preliminary review of issues and options, and recommended exploring the concept of developing new governance systems for municipal and provincial services in the "Human Services Ecosystem". After discussing the matter, Council asked City Administration to review the material and report back. Administration will return to Council mid-2021 with this review.

This work plan considers those actions which are entirely within the scope of the City of Edmonton, the Edmonton Police Service and the Edmonton Police

Commission, and are manageable within a reasonably short time frame. Given the number of partners involved in governance matters and the number of reviews already underway, additional work is not within the scope of this plan. As provincial government amendments to the *Police Act*, policing standards and related regulations are introduced, new work will be undertaken.

## CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

### **The work of city-building creates opportunities for collaboration and conversation**

Beyond the work of policing and safety, there are new opportunities to build a safer, more inclusive city. The proximity of a recreation centre, the lighting at a bus stop, the cleanliness of the local park and support for business development all affect well-being. How a City is planned, designed and built affects residents' experiences and opportunities.

Conversations about safety, inclusion and well-being are becoming part of the broader efforts of city-building. This new approach allows communities to discuss inclusion and well-being as they reimagine communities together. For example, zoning bylaws determine land use -- residential options, business opportunities, community design and how people experience public spaces.

The Zoning Bylaw Renewal Initiative is a comprehensive overhaul of Edmonton's bylaw that includes rethinking how, what and why the City regulations in land development. As part of this review, the City has created a GBA+ and Equity Toolkit to ensure equity considerations are embedded in any bylaw changes. Community members from under-represented and marginalized communities (including Black, Indigenous and racialized groups) were engaged to better understand how current zoning regulations have contributed to existing inequities and to help build the toolkit. In addition, the City is creating a podcast series inspired by the GBA+ and Equity Toolkit's engagement with under-represented and marginalized communities. The series will focus on stories around inequity to help Edmontonians better understand the unintended impacts of current land use planning and regulatory practices, and invite change to help realize The City Plan's vision for a more equitable Edmonton. Intentional listening, information sharing and storytelling are critical components of city building.

Efforts to build community vibrancy, particularly downtown vibrancy, also make communities safer. People can feel safe in an urban centre, even when they are among complete strangers, if there is an atmosphere of safety. The "eyes on the street" concept follows the logic that the more people are in the streets, the safer they become. Creating ample room for walking, designing



ways for people in buildings to see the street, removing high solid fences, making welcoming public spaces and improving lighting well can all ensure that people feel safe in their city. Organizing events to bring people together in these spaces, creating opportunities to enjoy their communities, and creating downtowns that are homes, economic drivers, entertainment areas and learning centres are all connected to the broader goal of building safe and inclusive cities.

The City's recently-released [Downtown Vibrancy Strategy](#) outlines a partnered approach to bringing vibrancy to downtown. This strategy outlines the commitment to building an inclusive downtown and using a Gender Based Analysis (GBA+) approach to understand the potential opportunities and impacts of our plans and actions on diverse individuals and communities. The strategy includes 20 areas of action, with initiatives ranging from expanding wellness practices by developing healthy relationships between businesses and marginalized community members, to encouraging walkable streets by improving lighting in alleys, and enhancing safety with bystander training.

### **Community builds safety**

Many individuals and organizations build Edmontonians' experiences in their city. Family members, friends, neighbours, community leagues, social agencies, religious organizations, public institutions, businesses and countless other groups all play a role in how people feel and act in their home, on their street, in their community and in their city. Strong relationships support both individual well-being and community well-being. While community activation, restorative justice and local community building are beyond the scope of this work plan, Edmonton's success in creating safety and well-being relies strongly on community.

The work of community agencies, for example, advances safety and well-being in different ways. They work with stakeholders to develop a shared vision of safety, engage with the public to build support for that vision, advance policy ideas, raise and mobilize funding, develop and deliver community programs, and measure the effectiveness of their work. These efforts, and the work of the countless volunteers and professionals who support them, is critical for building a safe and inclusive city.

The City funds, works with and otherwise supports many of these agencies, including significant partnerships with [REACH Edmonton](#), [EndPoverty Edmonton](#), the [Edmonton Community Development Company](#), the [United Way of Alberta Capital Region](#), [Homeward Trust](#) and others. While they share and are working toward many of the same goals outlined in this report, most of their contributions are beyond the scope of this work plan.

### **Housing is critical for well-being**

The City's ongoing support for housing is an example of creating community safety by creating individual safety. Income levels, mental health, addictions, social isolation or a host of other factors may drive people to the justice system. While housing is not a direct program area considered for the purposes of this work plan, it plays a significant role in creating individual and collective well-being. The shelter system provides emergency services, affordable housing provides access to shelter for those with financial challenges, and supportive housing provides both shelter and onsite supports for health, mental health and cultural or community connections. Evidence has consistently shown that a housing first approach reduces harm, trips to the hospital and access to the justice system.

[In May 2021](#), the City provided more than \$10 million in grant funding to Avana Rentals, Right at Home Housing Society and Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta Holdings to create 124 new units of affordable housing for women fleeing violence, newcomers and Indigenous Edmontonians. This funding is part of a \$132 million multi-year Affordable Housing Investment Plan and marks continued progress in the effort to create 2,500 new or refurbished units of affordable housing by 2022. The City supports housing by providing land, making zoning bylaws to enable more housing development and expediting permits and approvals, in an effort to leverage additional federal and provincial funding for affordable housing to Edmonton. Early next year, the City of Edmonton will release its first Indigenous Affordable Housing Strategy, which is currently under development in collaboration with representatives from a broad range of Indigenous-led organizations. The City of Edmonton remains a ready and willing partner for these other orders of government and continues to advocate for increased investment in housing and the homeless-serving system.

**Individual people are about more than race**

We also recognize that individuals are unique. An intersectionality approach sees each individual experience as uniquely shaped by the intersection of multiple identity factors, within a specific historical, social and political context. This approach enables us to understand how we can better understand people's lived experience by intentionally considering their compounding experiences of marginalization and discrimination in reconsidering our programs, policies and practices.

Individual Edmontonians experience their city differently. Two people may be of the same race, and live in different neighborhoods, have different sexual orientations, family structures and income levels. Their lived experiences will be different. Their expectations of their community, their views on the role of government, their skills and their areas of interest are likely different as well. An individual's circumstances may reflect or be compounded by any number of individual barriers or advantages. Programs which focus on only one element of individual identity may be challenged in delivering better community results given the diversity of individual backgrounds and the underlying complexity of each individual.

While the work plan focuses on broad programs and discussions about race and inclusion, it is important to recognize that race alone does not determine an individual's situation, outlook, approach, or lived experience. Many of the elements of this work plan focus on race, but it is equally important to build communities that tolerate -- and even celebrate -- the differences of each tile in the human mosaic.

## CONCLUSION

Safety, compassion, inclusion and well-being are complex issues. They are individual and collective, visible and invisible. Challenges have deep roots in the community; they have been present for generations and they will take years to address.

Many of the conversations about community well-being turn to systemic issues and many of the discussions about solutions turn to the call for systemic reform -- multi-partner, comprehensive overhauls of health, social and education policy, programming and funding. The ongoing advocacy for a systemic approach is important.

But it is slow, it requires willing participants, and it needs leadership to pull the participants together.

In the meantime, the Edmonton partners are choosing to move forward with focus. Within their own organizations, they have acted, are acting, and are planning next steps in system integration and co-ordinated response, organizational culture, social responsibility and prevention and support. Recognizing that safety and wellness are about the behaviour of everyday people as well as the responses of organizations and systems, the partners also recognize that community members and agencies will need to be involved in developing, delivering and evaluating progress. Some of the mechanisms for that involvement are part of the existing advisory, governance and operating arrangements in place.

For the purposes of this work plan, efforts to address these issues include the insights and contributions of a number of City employees and partners, community agencies and individual Edmontonians. We value their perspectives, we believe their stories and we trust their insights to guide us.

We believe that Edmonton is working in good faith to navigate the path, and that, with the ongoing collaboration of partners, we will continue moving forward together to co-create a city that is safer for all.