

Affordable Housing Advocacy Strategy

Recommendation

That Executive Committee recommend to City Council:

1. That Administration bring forward an unfunded service package for Council's consideration during the 2019-2022 Operating Budget for two FTEs to provide dedicated support for affordable housing programs and initiatives.
2. That Administration bring forward an unfunded service package for Council's consideration during the 2019-2022 Operating Budget for \$1.48 million on a one-time basis to fund the affordable housing public information campaign.
3. That Attachment 3 to the August 13, 2018, Citizen Services report CR_5960, remain private pursuant to sections 24 (advice from officials) and 25 (disclosure harmful to economic and other interests of a public body) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the April 25, 2018, City Council meeting, the following motion was passed:

That, whereas affordable housing is a key priority for City Council, Administration advance the following:

- a. Develop an advocacy strategy and public information campaign that clearly communicates the case for more affordable housing investment across the City of Edmonton.
- b. Develop a public engagement toolkit based on best practices and key learnings from recent public engagement activities.
- c. If required, prepare a funding request for Council's consideration, which identifies funding required for the strategy, campaign and toolkit as outlined above and return to Executive Committee.

Executive Summary

In 2017, the federal and provincial governments both released affordable housing strategies that indicate significant levels of affordable housing funding will be available over the next ten years. In anticipation of this funding, Administration has developed a set of initiatives to enhance City processes related to affordable housing investments, public engagement, and communications for affordable housing developments.

Since the mid-2000s, the City has gained important experience with best practices for public engagement and communications strategies for affordable housing. Based on these learnings, Administration is advancing three new initiatives: a new marketing campaign for affordable housing, a public engagement charter and toolkit, and an advocacy strategy to enhance the City's position in advocating for increased federal and provincial funding in Edmonton.

These initiatives, as well as other current housing programs, require significant communications and engagement time and expertise. To allow for the successful planning, execution, and oversight of the new marketing, engagement, and advocacy initiatives described in this report, Administration requires the addition of two new FTE positions. An additional \$1.48 million over 4.5 years is required to deliver a successful public information campaign on the need for affordable housing in our city.

Administration will evaluate priorities as part of the 2019-2022 Operating Budget and if required, prepare an unfunded service package for one Public Engagement FTE and one Communications FTE and the one-time funding of \$1.48 million required for the affordable housing marketing campaign.

Report

In 2017, the federal and provincial governments released affordable housing strategies. The two strategies identified significant levels of affordable housing grant funding that would be delivered over the next ten years. In order to best position Edmonton to attract these funding dollars and to ensure this funding is directed towards the local priorities identified by Council (including the distribution of affordable housing across the city and the development of new units of permanent supportive housing), the City must take a proactive approach to its interactions with Edmontonians, non-market housing providers, and other orders of government.

Administration has begun a set of initiatives that will enhance City processes related to affordable housing investment, communications, public engagement and advocacy. This report summarizes current and proposed initiatives and identifies additional resources required to support this work.

Current Initiatives

Since the mid-2000s, Administration has gained significant experience with best practices for engaging and communicating with stakeholders for affordable housing developments. For example, a key lesson learned was that clearly defining processes and transparency regarding decision-making for City affordable housing investments can help to build trust with stakeholders.

Based on these learnings, Administration is advancing the following initiatives:

- City Policy C601 Affordable Housing Investment Guidelines, which defines guidelines for the siting of affordable housing projects and supports a long-term, aspirational City-wide target of affordable housing in all neighbourhoods;
- An update to the City's Affordable Housing Investment Plan will be presented to City Council in October 2018, which will refine the City's investment plans for affordable housing, and clarify current project and program priorities;
- A new public information/marketing campaign for affordable housing;
- A new public engagement toolkit for affordable housing; and
- An advocacy strategy to support Edmonton's ability to attract housing investment dollars from other orders of government.

The overall objective of these initiatives is to develop a clear and concise investment agenda for affordable housing that balances community perspectives, best practices, and the housing affordability needs of Edmontonians.

Communications and Engagement Initiatives

In April 2018, City Council directed Administration to develop an advocacy strategy and public information campaign to advocate for affordable housing investment in Edmonton. Administration has developed three affordable housing marketing, engagement and advocacy initiatives.

1. Affordable Housing Public Information Campaign

Administration is proposing an affordable housing public information campaign (Attachment 1), which would involve a targeted, evidence-based campaign designed to create positive attitudes and behaviours related to affordable housing. The social marketing campaign will clearly articulate the need for affordable housing in Edmonton, explain the rationale for the City's commitment to this goal, and challenge misperceptions about affordable housing.

Best practices suggest that a long-term, sustained approach is required for this initiative, as short-term or low-profile campaigns are not effective in shifting public perceptions. The proposed approach would be implemented over the course of approximately five years and would require a budget of \$1.86 million. Of this budget, \$380,000 can be funded through existing funding, and an additional \$1.48 million will be requested through the 2019-2022 operating budget. The staff resources required to support this work are described below.

2. Affordable Housing Public Engagement Toolkit

Administration is currently preparing a new Affordable Housing Public Engagement Charter (Attachment 2) that will clearly define expectations for public engagement related to affordable housing projects. The charter will also clarify the role of the City in

supporting affordable housing public engagement processes. This project will be completed in the fourth quarter of 2018.

Following the completion of the charter, Administration will develop a public engagement toolkit which will integrate key messages from the marketing campaign, provide information on housing needs, and describe what opportunities exist for communities to provide input and feedback on individual affordable housing project proposals. Moving forward, public engagement for City-funded affordable housing projects will be consistent with the direction provided in the engagement charter and public engagement toolkit.

Non-staff costs associated with this work are estimated at approximately \$60,000 and will be managed within existing budget allocations. Staff resources required to support this work are described below.

3. Affordable Housing Advocacy Strategy.

Administration is advancing a new City advocacy strategy for affordable housing (Attachment 3).

The non-staff costs associated with this work will be managed within existing budget allocations. The staff resources required to support this work are described below.

Overall, these three initiatives form a core component of Administration's risk mitigation strategy for affordable housing development. These initiatives and the requested resources are required to mitigate risks related to public perception, funding shortfalls, and public awareness.

Budget/Financial Impact

Over the next four years, Administration will plan for the disposition of approximately 14 surplus school sites and will take an even more proactive approach to catalyzing projects that meet specific local needs (such as increasing the supply of permanent supportive housing and the distribution of affordable housing to all parts of the City).

To increase Administration's capacity to manage current and future project workloads and to allow for the successful planning, execution, and oversight of the new marketing, engagement, and advocacy initiatives described in this report, Administration requires:

- One dedicated FTE for public engagement to support land acquisition/disposition and other affordable housing programs and projects on an ongoing basis; and
- One dedicated FTE for marketing, communications and public outreach support on an ongoing basis.

Administration will prepare an unfunded service package for one Public Engagement FTE and one Communications FTE on an ongoing basis and additional one-time funding of \$1.48 million to fund the affordable housing public information campaign for City Council's consideration as part of the 2019-2022 Operating Budget.

Public Engagement

No specific public engagement was completed in the development of this report. Administration plans to engage stakeholders in the process of developing the Affordable Housing Public Engagement Charter. As well, Administration will use public opinion research to inform the development of the affordable housing public information campaign.

Corporate Outcomes and Performance Management

Corporate Outcome(s):The City of Edmonton has sustainable and accessible infrastructure			
Outcome(s)	Measure(s)	Result(s)	Target(s)
Increased access to affordable housing	Number of affordable housing units created with City funding, land contributions or in-kind supports	730 units created through the Cornerstones II programs (2012-2016)	2018-2021 target under development

Risk Assessment

Risk Element	Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Score (with current mitigations)	Current Mitigations	Potential Future Mitigations
Financial	Inconsistent funding from other orders of government to increase the supply of affordable housing	3 - Possible	4 - Severe	12 - Medium	Ongoing advocacy at all orders of government for affordable housing Coordination with external providers	Focused Advocacy Strategy

Public Perception	Neighbours may resist the building of affordable housing in their proximity	3 - Possible	3 - Major	9 - Medium	Development of a Public Engagement Charter for Affordable Housing	Approval of two new positions to support effective public engagement and communication s processes for affordable housing Execution of a marketing campaign for affordable housing and the execution of a transparent public engagement charter
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Attachments

1. Affordable Housing Marketing Campaign
2. Public Engagement Charter and Toolkit
3. Advocacy Strategy (Private Attachment)

Others Reviewing this Report

- M. Sturgeon, Acting Deputy City Manager, Communications and Engagement
- S. Padbury / R. Kits, Acting Deputy City Managers, Financial & Corporate Services