

Recover: Edmonton's Urban Wellness Plan

Progress and Next Steps

Recommendations

That Community and Public Services Committee recommend to City Council:

1. That Administration continue Recover in the neighbourhoods of Boyle Street, McCauley, Central McDougall, Queen Mary Park and Downtown for up to five years to allow more time to measure changes of the indicators measuring urban wellness.
2. That Recover begin work in the Strathcona neighbourhood.
3. That Administration, in collaboration with partners, develop a Recover governance structure, to replace the three existing committees, and report back to City Council by the end of March 2019.
4. That Administration advance a distributed model for serving marginalized people to ensure facilities and services are available in other areas of the city where need is evident, and that Administration explore tools and incentives - regulatory, policy and funding levers - that can contribute to more informed, human centered infrastructure to support wellness in the core.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the May 9, 2017, City Council meeting, the following motion was passed:

That Administration work with the Province, Edmonton Police and community stakeholders to prepare a shared 'Inner City Wellness Plan', aligned with current initiatives including but not limited to REACH, McCauley Revitalization, the Plan to End Homelessness and EndPovertyEdmonton. Such work to include:

1. Developing a firm proposal for a Community Wellness Centre, including program statement and site location, designed to achieve the following outcomes:
 - a. Reducing crime and social disorder in core neighbourhoods,
 - b. Optimizing the use of policing and health care resources in serving vulnerable persons experiencing homelessness, mental illness and addiction challenges, and
 - c. Delivering a strategic approach to transition Wellness Centre clients and other agency clients into Supportive Housing and treatment programs.
2. Invitation to existing service providers to partner and co-locate/consolidate into a renovated or purpose-built Community Wellness Centre building.

3. Solicitation of support and financial commitments from philanthropic and government sources for both construction and operation of a Community Wellness Centre.

Executive Summary

The purpose of Recover: Edmonton's Urban Wellness Plan is to cultivate individual and community wellness in Edmonton's neighbourhoods. Since September 2017, Administration has gathered data, conducted research and public engagement, and developed community-generated prototypes in Edmonton's core neighbourhoods using a social innovation approach, which provides the foundational building blocks of the project.

Social innovation refers to the creation, development, adoption, and integration of new and renewed concepts, systems, and practices intended to solve problems. One key part of Recover is the development of prototypes or solutions for improving urban wellness. Thirteen prototypes were developed and tested by over 70 people during an eight week period. Getting feedback in the early stages of a solution provided opportunities for learning and transforming initial ideas into better solutions.

Many strategies, plans, programs, and services are delivered by community organizations and different orders of government. Recover is building on these through research identifying opportunities for innovation or alignment and possible gaps.

Report

Introduction

In April 2017, citizens and community groups expressed their concern to City Council about individual social services projects being approved without consideration for the cumulative effects and neighbourhood impact. Questions focused on concentrating social programs in the downtown core and the impact this has on surrounding neighbourhoods. On May 9, 2017, in response to these concerns, City Council directed Administration to develop an 'Inner City Wellness Plan', in conjunction with the Government of Alberta, Edmonton Police Services, and community stakeholders.

City Council's motion directed Administration to develop a plan for a wellness centre, including proposals on how to provide the services within the wellness centre, to better serve marginalized people experiencing homelessness, complex mental health needs and addictions. City Council also directed Administration to return with terms of reference for an Inner City Wellness Plan, which were presented to Executive Committee in July 2017 (July 11, 2017, Citizen Services report CR_4830).

Council's request for an Inner City Wellness Plan that better meets the needs of marginalized people and engages community stakeholders in improving the wellness of

their neighbourhoods has broadened the scope of the Inner City Wellness Plan from a wellness centre as a key solution, to a larger solution of improving the wellness of individuals and communities. This work is named Recover: Edmonton's Urban Wellness Plan. Though it is a city-wide plan, work began in the five core neighbourhoods of Boyle Street, McCauley, Central McDougall, Queen Mary Park and Downtown.

The purpose of Recover is to cultivate individual and community wellness in Edmonton's neighbourhoods using a social innovation approach. Social innovation explores new ways of addressing a social need with government, business and communities working to create better social outcomes. This approach does not replace existing strategies, policies, programs or services, but means working together with residents, businesses and government to build on what is already working, and co-designing and testing solutions that can improve the wellbeing of residents. Recover helps to find ways to better align and collaborate across different orders of government, social services agencies, local businesses and community, improving urban wellness for all Edmontonians

Recover is tackling three problems using this approach:

- How do we best meet the needs of very vulnerable people?
- How do we support thriving communities?
- How does government manage cumulative effects and plan wellness services infrastructure throughout the city?

Since September 2017, Administration has gathered data, conducted research, engaged stakeholders and the public, and developed community-generated prototypes in Edmonton's core neighbourhoods. The focus in the early stages of the project was on how to better serve marginalized people. Administration has learned through engaging with communities, businesses, and community-serving organizations, that focusing on the very vulnerable population can be divisive. A holistic approach to community wellness that includes the vulnerable builds community support.

Recover has developed and will refine a social innovation approach for changing systems and improving urban wellness in the five core neighbourhoods. The Recover approach includes:

- Building and sustaining a framework for urban wellness innovation
- Grounding the approach in data
- Uncovering tensions and building relationships
- Creating opportunities for solutions-based collaboration at smaller scales (prototypes) as well as larger scales (aligning strategies and policies)

See Attachment 1, Recover: Edmonton's Urban Wellness Plan Executive Summary for more information on the process and what was learned.

Progress to Date

Need Finding - As part of understanding the five neighbourhoods, Recover conducted two studies, called ethnography, of people living and working in these neighbourhoods. This showed the diversity of needs and aspirations of residents, businesses and marginalized people. Recover committees defined urban wellness, as well as the focus areas of urban wellness. Administration is finalizing indicators that will measure the progress of Recover. Recover expanded its reach through public engagement to enhance its understanding of issues, needs and aspirations of people living and working in the core.

Identifying Opportunity Areas - Part of the needs finding work led to the generation of about 200 opportunities for improving urban wellness. These opportunities have been themed into five areas:

1. wellness as a service
2. open collaboration
3. work and learning
4. vibrant neighbourhoods
5. community supports

Co-Designing and Testing Prototypes - From these 200 opportunities, Recover developed and tested 13 small-scale solutions (prototypes). More people got involved in Recover as they became members of specific prototype teams and each member contributed about 20 hours of their time to design a slice of a solution, test it in the field and then use the results to evaluate the solution. Five of the 13 prototypes have moved from prototyping into programming. Six of the prototypes are being further developed and tested. Based on the results of the field testing, two prototypes have been closed out.

Building Momentum - During the prototyping, Recover undertook a literature review of interventions that have been tried in North America, United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand to improve urban wellness in Recover's five opportunity areas of urban wellness. This broad-based literature review sets up Recover to do deeper research as the project moves forward.

Recover has identified work to be completed from now to the end of 2019, described below.

Recover Recommendations

Recover has four recommendations for moving forward. These recommendations were shared with Recover's stakeholders who provided their feedback (Attachment 2). Where possible, suggestions have been incorporated into the recommendations.

Recommendation 1

That Administration continue Recover in the neighbourhoods of Boyle Street, McCauley, Central McDougall, Queen Mary Park and Downtown for up to five years to allow more time to measure changes of the indicators measuring urban wellness.

Since the beginning of the project in July 2017, Recover has been about learning and building a different way of solving complex problems. Stakeholder experience and feedback indicated interest in continuing to use social innovation for improving urban wellness. Further refinement of this work is expected to be completed by end of 2019.

This work includes:

- Moving prototype work forward - supporting the existing prototyping and exploring opportunities for a new round of prototypes informed by the current list of urban wellness opportunities.
- Establishing a partnership with a local social innovation network to use the expertise to advance social innovation practices. This network encompasses community, post-secondary institutions (students, faculty and research) and social innovation practitioners.
- Convening and facilitating urban wellness strategy and program alignment work with provincial ministries, city and community service providers like REACH, EndPovertyEdmonton, and Edmonton Police Service.
- Further refining the data sets to develop key indices to measure change in urban wellness. Baseline data will be gathered by end of 2018.
- Supporting a smooth transition as Administration works with partners to create and implement a shared leadership structure for Recover.
- Exploring a funding model that will attract funding from philanthropists and other orders of government.
- Undertaking an evaluation that will inform Recover - what is working and not working - and inform changes for improvement.

Recommendation 2

That Recover begin work in the Strathcona neighbourhood.

Administration recommends starting Recover in the Strathcona neighbourhood in response to data from 24/7 Crisis Diversion calls, Boyle Street Community Services Outreach and Edmonton Police Service calls. Preliminary conversations identified marginalized people are living in this area.

Recommendation 3

That Administration, in collaboration with partners, develop a Recover governance structure to replace the three existing committees, and report back to City Council by the end of March 2019.

The original Recover terms of reference, approved by City Council in July 2017, described the governance of Recover comprising three stakeholder committees:

- Community Advisory Committee comprising of community leagues, social services agencies, business associations, community organizations and residents.
- External Partners Committee comprising Edmonton Police Service and Edmonton Public Library, four provincial ministries, community organizations and philanthropy.
- Integrated Corporate Team comprising City of Edmonton staff from various departments.

These committees started meeting separately in September 2017. To improve collaboration and communication, Recover moved to joint meetings between the Community Advisory Committee and the External Partners Committee and will continue this way until a new shared leadership or governance structure is developed by March 31, 2019. Recover stakeholders have given suggestions on how to make these larger group meetings effective in the interim.

Recover is part of the Bloomberg/Harvard Cross Sector Collaboration Program which engaged Edmonton, two cities from the United Kingdom, and seven American cities. Coalition-building for strong shared leadership is the key focus of the Bloomberg/Harvard initiative and will help inform Recover as it moves forward with shared decision-making, mutual benefits and effective use of community strengths and resources.

Recover is using Dr. Mark Moore's work, *Recognizing Public Value*, for the shared leadership approach. Recover will work with key organization stakeholders to:

- Define the public value of Recover. This will include finding agreement (enough) on what the problems are; and agreeing (enough) on what the coalition is trying to accomplish (outcomes) and how they will measure the accomplishments.
- Get organizations who lend legitimacy to Recover on board and secure the resources from each party.
- Confirm the operational capacity of each organization.

The broad system called urban wellness needs a shared-leadership governance structure that brings key parties together to work on the whole. This coalition needs to:

- get the right leaders involved
- build sufficient trust
- set up communications channels
- agree on how decisions will be made
- agree on who will do what
- set up an effective governance structure.

Recommendation 4

That Administration advance a distributed model for serving marginalized people to ensure facilities and services are available in other areas of the city where need is evident, and that Administration explore tools and incentives - regulatory, policy and funding levers - that can contribute to more informed, human centered infrastructure to support wellness in the core.

Three parts of the original City Council motion directed Administration to explore a wellness centre for marginalized people, where a range of services would be co-housed and capital costs of this wellness centre be funded by philanthropists and other orders of government. The ethnographic research found that current agencies in the core offer a range of programs and services that already meet a diversity of needs, that agencies collaborate to address the complex needs of clients, and that clients did not express a need for a more concentrated co-location of services in the core, such as a wellness centre. The literature review on interventions for marginalized people found that interventions were most effective when implemented locally, where people had existing social ties and access to culturally appropriate services.

Edmonton Police Service wants to be able to take intoxicated individuals to a safe sobering space, rather than putting them in jail. Current shelters are meeting part of this need but there are gaps that require greater understanding. Some of this work has started with Recover.

Recover recommends that service expansion for marginalized people take into consideration the needs in other parts of the city. See Attachment 3 for need maps. Capital development for agencies providing services for marginalized people could be directed to other areas of the city where there is demonstrated need. Some considerations to move the distributed model from concept to practice include recommendations that service providers:

- conduct ethnographic research and client-centred research to understand needs at individual, community and systems levels
- engage the community in the planning stages to find out how the proposed development can improve urban wellness
- incorporate harm reduction as a philosophy of practice and approach to service delivery
- show clear linkages to and collaboration with other service providers who are also contributing to shared client outcomes for marginalized people
- figure out how to help their clients access other services, through service navigators and help with transportation. Journey maps, developed as part of the ethnography research with marginalized people, showed that individuals use multiple service providers in the core. With a distributed model, there will be issues of service navigation and transportation to be resolved.

Integration of Recover with Related Plans and Strategies

The foundational components of City Council's strategic plan for 2019-2028 (Vision 2050, principle and goals) were approved by City Council on June 12, 2018. To achieve Vision 2050, City Council has identified four strategic goals to guide transformational shifts over the next ten years.

While Administration, City Council and the public work together to determine what the transformational shifts will be, initial public engagement identified equity as one of the key five themes for the strategic plan. Based on this engagement, the goal of Healthy City was updated to "Edmonton is a neighbourly city with community and personal wellness that embodies and promotes equity for all Edmontonians." The recommendations for the ongoing and future work of Recover supports the City in delivering services that promote equity to ensure that "everyone has what they need to succeed."

City-wide distribution of non-market housing is another element of a dispersed service delivery approach endorsed by Executive Committee in September 2017. Edmonton's Updated Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness defines a set of goals and actions to guide community-wide efforts to address the needs of Edmontonians experiencing or at risk of homelessness. A key goal of the updated plan is to develop permanent supportive housing throughout Edmonton. The lack of permanent supportive housing units has been one of the largest factors in preventing progress in the work to end homelessness in Edmonton, and is one of the main reasons that Edmonton has experienced persistent levels of homelessness over the past two decades. The updated plan defines an objective of developing 916 permanent supportive housing units in the next six years.

The City of Edmonton is committed to increasing the supply of affordable housing, including permanent supportive housing, in Edmonton. Achieving this goal requires dedicated, sustained sources of funding, which must be provided by all orders of government, particularly the federal and provincial governments. Funding that is targeted to homeless-serving organizations and systems should be prioritized to achieve long-term housing outcomes for Edmontonians, particularly those with more complex needs.

Recover also aligns with the goals and objectives of the City's Affordable Housing Strategy. Through several current initiatives, the City is advancing specific plans to develop affordable housing throughout Edmonton. For example, Administration has proposed a guideline of 16 percent affordable housing for every neighbourhood in Edmonton. Administration is also currently preparing an update to the City's Affordable Housing Investment Plan, which will define an enhanced investment approach, based on requests for proposals and property offerings for affordable housing developments in all areas of the city. Administration is also researching best practices for municipal tools

for increasing the supply of permanent supportive housing. Additional information on this work will be provided to City Council in fall 2018.

Concurrent with this direction, Administration will further identify the best opportunities for encouraging urban investments in the core neighbourhoods. Recover cannot expect better neighbourhood wellness outcomes in the core neighbourhoods by focusing on services for marginalized people only; it must take into account holistic needs for personal and community wellness for all those in the area. The neighbourhoods surrounding downtown have a lot of vacant and underutilized land that detract from urban wellness and, in their void, serve to highlight issues related to marginalized people, and therefore increase tensions between the agencies serving marginalized people and members of the community.

Recognizing the social, economic and ecological problems posed by empty spaces and empty buildings, Administration should sponsor rapid small-scale tests to improve the safety, accessibility and vibrancy of neighbourhoods. Evidence independently gathered from experiments will inform the allocation of investment funding to the highest impact interventions. This includes consideration to increase the population densities – to add to a sense of life and activity that feels more urban and vibrant. It is possible to lessen the impact of 'undesirable' activity by making places more inclusive and friendlier for everyone. This aligns closely with the goals of Urban Places and a Healthy City in Council's Strategic Plan 2019-28; the Strategic Plan will form the basis for the City Plan, Edmonton's new spatial development and transportation plan starting in 2020.

Other cities have developed incentives to encourage property owners to turn empty buildings and the empty spaces between buildings into hives of commerce, learning, community activity and, potentially, more housing. Administration should look for opportunities to leverage City assets, such as City-owned land, to encourage human-scaled development that will bring more people to these neighbourhoods, and improve the public realm. The Edmonton Community Development Corporation can further this work. This requires the use of a systems thinking approach, including reviewing potential incentives and appropriate regulatory tools.

Measuring Results

Recover is committed to using a data-informed approach to defining wellness and measuring progress towards the overarching outcome of improving urban wellness.

Building on the work of Stewarding Great Neighbourhoods, Recover compiled a comprehensive set of indicators to evaluate the wellbeing of neighbourhoods in Edmonton. The indicators were divided into five indicator categories: social capacity, economic vitality, safety and security, physical and mental health, and built and natural environments. The categories were developed through a combination of best/leading practice research and stakeholder engagement.

Supporting the indicator dashboard, Recover developed an online data explorer GIS map, enabling several of the neighbourhood indicators, as well as other informative data sets, to be visualized in a quick and easily consumable way, to help inform decision-making. See Attachment 2 for sample maps.

To measure Recover's progress towards the outcome Improving Urban Wellness, a subset of key measures that best illustrates the indicator category areas that stakeholder and public engagement deemed most important were selected from the indicator dashboard. The measures are:

- *Social Capacity Index* - a measure of citizen connectedness, engagement, and inclusion, drawn from the Citizen Perception Survey.
- *Social Vulnerability Index* - a composite measure of nine elements commonly associated with neighbourhood vulnerability, such as unemployment rate, low income, lone parent families, and home ownership.
- *Safety Perception Index* - a measure of citizens' feelings of safety.

Budget/Financial Implications

When the terms of reference for Recover were approved by City Council in July 2017, Administration stated that phases 1, 2 and 3 would be completed using existing resources. Since that time, Administration secured one-time funding from Family and Community Support Services and the 2017 operating budget carry over totalling \$710,000. This funding has covered research, social innovation framework development, prototyping, communication and public engagement and partner governance. To undertake the work described in recommendations 1, 2 and 3, Administration requires approximately \$500,000 annually, which would support research, prototyping, public engagement, and shared leadership. Staffing for Recover will continue to be reallocated using current staff. Administration has confirmed \$100,000 of funding from Family and Community Support Services for 2019.

In 2019, as part of establishing a Recover Coalition, Administration will pursue a cost-sharing model to sustain Recover long enough to measure how the work is affecting urban wellness. In anticipation of finding partnership funding in each of the next four years, Administration requires a declining amount of funding each year as follows:

- 2019 - \$400,000
- 2020 - \$300,000
- 2021 - \$200,000
- 2022 - \$100,000

If directed by City Council, Administration would bring forward a \$1 million unfunded service package for the 2019-2022 operating budget.

Public Engagement

Between January and May 2018, Administration undertook a comprehensive public engagement effort, built collaboratively and in conjunction with the committees. The process included three phases:

1. Community meetings
2. Community interviews
3. Wellness walks

A public showcase on May 8, 2018, provided Edmontonians an opportunity to see the initial results and prototyping aspect of Recover. Participants of the community meetings and neighbourhood walks were invited to the showcase, and provided feedback along with all the other Recover stakeholders. Each prototype group assembled their feedback and decided on whether they were going to celebrate/close out, iterate, pilot or launch.

The goal of the engagement was to promote public awareness about Recover and to hear from those people who live, work, and play in the core neighbourhoods. Particular care was taken to capture the voices of people not traditionally heard from in public engagement processes. Participants included members of the newcomer community, small business owners, local residents and people who are street-involved. They expressed:

- that they want to live and work in places that are safe
- a desire for high-quality, vibrant public spaces
- A desire for better access to quality public service

Despite some frustration about accountability with wellness in the core neighbourhoods, public engagement saw a cautious optimism building in the community about a different approach to engagement and addressing complex issues.

As the project moves forward, Administration will continue to maintain and build on existing relationships with stakeholders, as well as create new connections and identify opportunities for participation and collaboration.

Corporate Outcomes and Performance Management

Corporate Outcome(s): Edmontonians are connected to the city in which they live, work, and play; Edmonton is a safe city.			
Outcome(s)	Measure(s)	Result(s)	Target(s)

Improved Urban Wellness	<p>- Social Capacity Index: a measure of citizen connectedness, engagement, and inclusion</p> <p>- Social Vulnerability Index: a composite measure of nine elements commonly associated with neighbourhood vulnerability</p> <p>- Safety Perception Index: a measure of citizens' feelings of safety</p>	Baseline data is being aggregated, with impact measurement to begin in 2019	TBD through measure testing
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Risk Assessment

See Attachment 5.

Attachments

1. Executive Summary, Recover: Edmonton's Urban Wellness Plan
2. What We Heard from our committees about RECOVER recommendations - Summary of Stakeholder Feedback
3. Need Maps
4. RECOVER Engagement Process - What We Heard
5. Risk Assessment

Others Reviewing this Report

- M. Sturgeon, Acting Deputy City Manager, Communications and Engagement
- L. McCarthy, Deputy City Manager, Urban Form and Corporate Strategic Development
- S. Padbury and R. Kits, Acting Deputy City Managers, Financial and Corporate Services