

Press release

Edmonton Exhibition Lands offer historic opportunity to imagine, engage, build

December 1, 2017

Today, City Administration released four reports for Council that are a step forward in unlocking new potential in the Exhibition Lands. These reports bring together completed work and next steps to attract the most innovative, sustainable and economic ideas for the future of the area.

“There’s a long list of details about the Exhibition Lands that rightly get public attention and scrutiny: land agreements, festival leases, the fate of the Coliseum, operating agreements for the EXPO Centre, the Area Redevelopment Plan. These all deeply matter to Edmontonians,” said City Manager Linda Cochrane. “But so does the rare opportunity to build on our history and take bold steps forward. The Exhibition Lands are 160 acres of exciting potential on which we, with the neighbourhoods and with the best thinking out there, can do some transformational city building.”

City Administration is bringing forward reports to the December 5 Council meeting that outline decisions made to date, current considerations and future actions that prime this redevelopment opportunity for the future. Council is receiving:

- Proposed agreements required to transition the site and operations throughout 2018,
- Information responding to a motion about practical re-purposing, site security and potential demolition costs for the Coliseum building, and
- A proposal for an expanded process to optimize the future potential for the site.

“The work we have completed to date with Northlands and Edmonton Economic Development Corporation has provided us with financial and operational clarity moving forward,” said Cochrane. “Knowing Edmontonians can expect K-Days and Farmfair International to continue for a number of years and that the business of events and conferences in our city will be brought under EEDC is a strong step forward.”

Since August 31, 2016, Administration has been investigating alternative uses for the Coliseum.

“We know Edmontonians are interested in what happens to the Coliseum building,” said Cochrane. “Ultimately, no decisions have been made about the future of the building, except the doors will be closed. We do know from other work completed that repurposing the building would be a challenge from a dollars-and-cents perspective.”

The recent site and lease changes have raised city-wide questions about how future opportunities on the site will be realized. Recognizing this opportunity, Administration is putting forward an expanded strategic approach to the Edmonton Exhibition Lands City-Building Opportunity. This means the ongoing Area Redevelopment Plan could be supplemented by a new approach that taps into the magnitude of the opportunity for transformation.

Indeed, no similarly sized city in North America is confronted by the challenge of redeveloping such a large parcel of land so close to downtown, regional road networks, LRT and quality public transit, a river valley, parks and green space and existing communities.

“Essentially, this is the City wanting to fully understand the opportunity before us and show clear and appropriate stewardship of a critical city asset,” said Cochrane. “We invite everyone to take advantage of this unique opportunity to imagine the future, engage by sharing their ideas and help us re-shape the Edmonton Exhibition Lands.”