

# **Progress Update and Proposal**

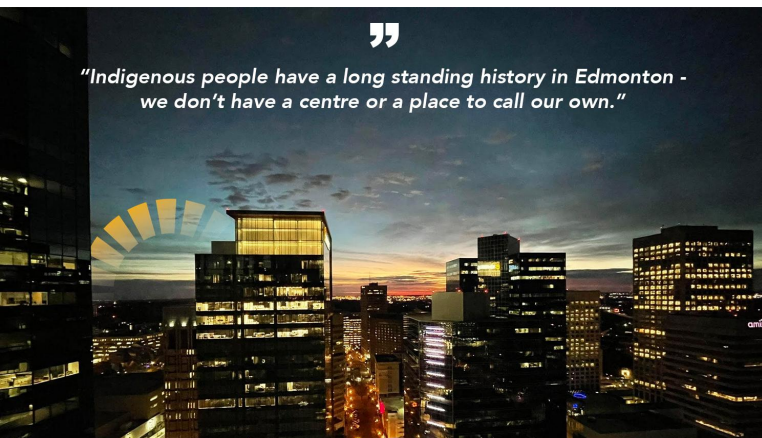
**Presented to City Council Community & Public Services  
Committee October 25, 2022**



# ICWC Progress Update and Proposal

## Introduction

The City of Edmonton's commitment to reconciliation and the Indigenous Culture and Wellness Centre stems from the EndPovertyEdmonton Strategy (2015) and Road Map (2016) which was a result of engagement undertaken by the Mayor's Task Force to Eliminate Poverty (2014-15). However, for decades the diverse Indigenous communities in the Edmonton region have voiced the need for a dedicated space.



The Indigenous Culture and Wellness Centre (ICWC) is envisioned as a welcoming space for the benefit of all urban Indigenous people in the region with the aim of providing a safe space for the practice of community, ceremony and wellness. To date, several pieces of work within the City of Edmonton Strategy Phase of the ICWC

development have been completed, including an environmental scan that validated the need for a centre in Edmonton. The ICWC Steering Committee (Steering Committee) continues to work towards revising the draft business case and undertake engagement on the concept and plan.

## Background

In late 2020, discussion between the City Administration, EndPovertyEdmonton, and the Steering Committee highlighted challenges and concerns regarding progress and direction of the project. The Steering Committee communicated the need for the project to be Indigenous-led with support from City Administration and EndPovertyEdmonton. As a result, in early 2021 EndPovertyEdmonton submitted a proposal (see appendix A) to City Administration detailing its plan to lead and manage the ICWC project.

The March 2021 proposal aimed to transition the project from the City to community through the EndPovertyEdmonton Indigenous Circle (IC). The IC along with the Steering Committee would advance an Indigenous-led process leading to the completion of a business case and establishment of partnerships for the operation of the centre. As part of the proposal, the City of Edmonton would provide assistance in the form of staff support and

to promote the ICWC. In order to complete the business case, the proposal requested funding of \$202,042. The following key deliverables were included in the proposal and aligned with the City Administration's work plan:

1. Hiring the Project Team
2. Creation of a Legal Entity
3. Continued Community Participation
4. Business Case draft is completed
5. Business Case presented to the Indigenous Community
6. Business Case presented to City Council

In March 2021, the Community and Public Services Committee (CPSC) recommended to City Council to amend Action # 1 of the EndPovertyEdmonton Road Map to change the lead from "City of Edmonton" to "EndPovertyEdmonton". The amendment, March 2021 proposal and funding request was approved. Today, the Steering Committee will provide a progress update on the deliverables, challenges and opportunities, next steps and a proposed scope for additional funding from the existing capital profile.

## Progress on Deliverables

In an effort to build relations with Mayor and Council, the IC organized a luncheon on August 17, 2022. The ICWC project was of particular interest to those in attendance and Mayor Sohi encouraged the Steering Committee to present to committee or council prior to budget deliberations. Based on this advice, the following

table was developed which outlines the 5 deliverables from the March 2021 proposal along with information on our progress to date and plans going forward. Specifically, the deliverables included hiring a project team, creation of legal entity, community engagement, completion of a draft business case and reporting back to Council.



Task	Deliverables from March '21 Proposal	Progress to Date	Next Steps
1. Hiring the Project Team	Hire Project Manager, Business Case Consultant, Community Engagement Specialist, and Governance Consultant. RFPs and Indigenous-led selection of proponents is a feature of this work	A Business Case & Governance Model Consultant was hired in April 2021 to manage and provide expert consultation in the development of a business case and governance model	Deliverable completed
		A Community Engagement Consultant was hired in March 2021 to identify and implement a community engagement strategy for continued active community participation of Indigenous peoples, the City of Edmonton as key partner, and the wider non-indigenous community throughout the business case phase. That consultant transitioned to full time employment at EndPovertyEdmonton	Deliverable completed
		Project management was supported by EPE staff	In the process of contracting a Strategic Project Advisor

Task	Deliverables from March '21 Proposal	Progress to Date	Next Steps
2. Creation of a legal entity	To provide governance and oversight of the building and operation of the ICWC. The Governance Consultant/s will work with the Indigenous Circle members, City of Edmonton staff, and EndPovertyEdmonton staff to create and incorporate a legal entity responsible for the remaining Phases (Concept, Design, Phase, Operate) of the ICWC project. The entity will be designed to be Indigenous led and owned and representing Indigenous governance within existing legal structures.	There have been discussions throughout the project regarding the options and implications of choosing a legal container. Exploration of potential Indigenous governance models are being considered. However, with additional options emerging, the most suitable incorporation and governance options for ICWC has not been determined.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Bring in expertise to help inform on structure and feasibility of options</li> <li>● Build consensus on legal container</li> <li>● Build consensus on governance model</li> <li>● Undertake Incorporation process</li> <li>● Indigenize by-laws</li> </ul>
3. Continued Community Participation and Engagement	With the goal of broad based support for the ICWC Business Case from the Indigenous and non-Indigenous community.	Continued community participation aimed at introducing and generating interest in the concept, gathering feedback, building relations and forming partnerships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Continue to engage community on the development of ICWC and garner support</li> <li>● Develop partnership engagement strategy</li> <li>● Update and maintain communication channels</li> </ul>

Task	Deliverables from March '21 Proposal	Progress to Date	Next Steps
4. Business Case draft is completed	The Business Case completed under the direction of, and approved by, the Indigenous Circle including staff from the Indigenous Relations Office at the City of Edmonton.	A draft business case was completed in October 2021 and shared with the City. In November 2021, an inter-departmental team of City staff was convened to evaluate business case readiness and made recommendations. The Steering Committee is considering the implications of, and actions required for, the suggested revisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete revisions to draft business case</li> </ul>
5. Business Case presented to the Indigenous Community	For feedback and revisions through a series of webinars, meetings and gatherings	Dependent on when the revised draft business case is ready for public release.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage community to gather input and validate the draft business case</li> </ul>
6. Business Case presented to City Council	Business Case presented to City Council before the next civic election	Dependent on community input and validation of the final draft business case.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present business case to City Council</li> </ul>



## Challenges & Opportunities

As a Steering Committee, we are attempting to balance complex and diverse Indigenous interests, agendas, perspectives and pressures from community members, political bodies and organizations. The Steering Committee is taking these considerations seriously, as they build out a shared vision and understanding of ICWC. In addition, we use a consensus based decision making process that is grounded in an Indigenous worldview that at times can be time intensive.

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*“Indigenous people have a long standing history in Edmonton - we don't have a centre or a place to call our own.”*

Since spring of 2021, the Steering Committee has faced many challenges and interruptions that slowed progress towards the deliverables as outlined in the March 2021 proposal. These challenges included the COVID-19 pandemic, staffing and organizational growth at EndPovertyEdmonton, leadership transition of ICWC, fluctuating steering committee membership

and exploring the feasibility of other potential site options.

Adjusting to the impacts of the pandemic slowed our progress and made it difficult to broadly engage with the Indigenous community in a meaningful way. For most of 2021, other secretariat staff, in addition to their own duties, covered off key aspects of the ICWC project as an interim measure while a position was being backfilled. Additionally, the transition of ICWC project lead from City Administration to the IC proved to be more challenging and time consuming than originally anticipated. As a result of the transition, the level of city resources dedicated and accessible to the project diminished. Similarly, while the original funding amount in the proposal was \$202,042, only \$151,530 was received and the remainder was held back. Also during this time, EndPovertyEdmonton was experiencing growth and underwent organizational restructuring as a result of incorporating as a separate entity from United Way. There were also external factors that impeded the participation of Steering Committee members in making progress towards fulfilling the deliverables.

In addition, an unanticipated opportunity emerged that required exploration and

consideration by the Steering Committee that could potentially impact the direction of the project and the business case. The Steering Committee is assessing this emergent opportunity and the current draft of the business case to fully understand cost, location and timeframe.

As the Steering Committee continues to develop the ICWC and navigate the changing climate, we look to Mayor and Councillors for advice and are interested to hear about potential opportunities that align with the vision of an ICWC such as innovative partnerships to pursue, available buildings, land or developments as well as internal expertise that may amplify, contribute to, or expedite the availability of an ICWC within our community.

## Current Situation

Although the Steering Committee has faced many challenges, we have been working diligently to address issues as they arise. With time, the Steering Committee has learned to adjust and adapt our practices to pandemic realities and are prepared for the impact if COVID cases increase again. In addressing staffing issues, the Indigenization Game Changer is now staffed with two full-time employees who offer a portion of their time to support the Steering Committee. We continue to work on the business case readiness recommendations and revising the draft business case. We are focused on the areas of governance, partners, legal entity, and engagement. The

expanded volunteer membership of the Steering Committee regularly meets bi-weekly to discuss, build consensus and provide direction on moving the ICWC project forward. However, there is need for additional support in the area of strategic project facilitation, project development and completion of additional feasibility studies exploring other buildings/sites. Given the significance and necessary expertise, we are seeking additional support to undertake these steps.

## Timeline & Proposed Plan

Over the next year, with additional, qualified consultants under contract for support, the ICWC Steering Committee plans to:

- Continue to develop and refine the draft Business Case in the areas of partnerships, governance structure, and incorporation;
- Continue to explore and assess the feasibility of emergent opportunities and consider how to include them in the current business case;
- Build our capacity through consultant expertise in project development, governance and legal requirements; and,
- Further expand and engage Indigenous communities and relevant stakeholders on the revised Business Case.

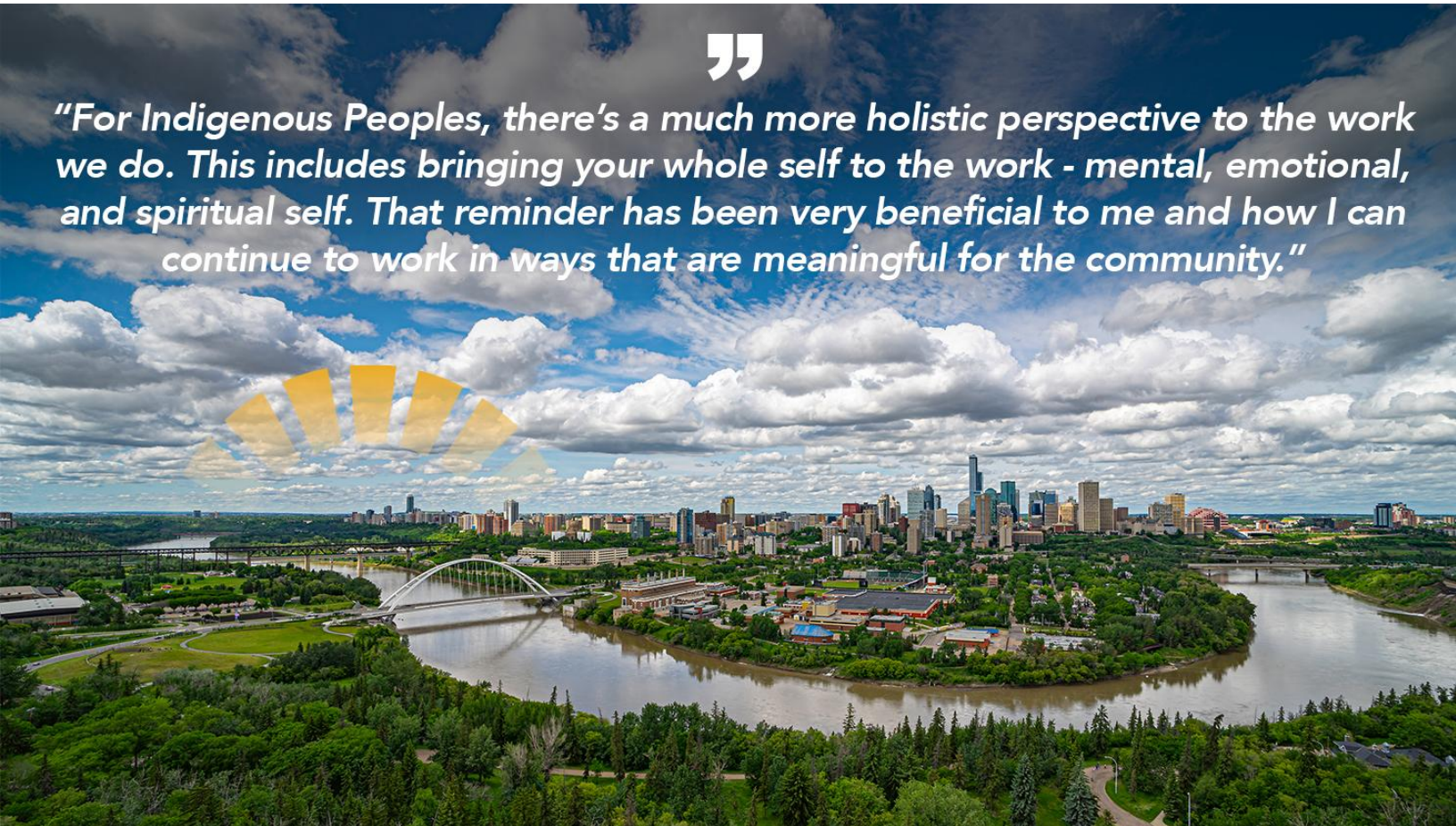


We have estimated that completing the activities listed above will cost approximately \$339,020.00 and are submitting that the following budget request come from the existing capital profile (19-21-2123) for ICWC which we understand has a current balance of \$2.53 million. The ICWC requests that EndPovertyEdmonton act as fiscal agent entering into a funding agreement with the City. Our aim is to be in a position to approach City Council with a capital budget request in November/December 2023.

We have not yet completed our due diligence regarding the ICWC project and ensuring we understand and are meeting the unique and diverse needs of the Indigenous communities in the Edmonton region. Given that the business case is currently a draft, has not been validated with community and there is ongoing and critical discussions underway, we are not in a position to speak to the details contained within the ICWC draft business case at this time.

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*“For Indigenous Peoples, there’s a much more holistic perspective to the work we do. This includes bringing your whole self to the work - mental, emotional, and spiritual self. That reminder has been very beneficial to me and how I can continue to work in ways that are meaningful for the community.”*



## Proposed Scope and Budget

Item	Details	Estimated Costs
Steering Committee Strategic Project Advisor	\$100/hr x 15 hrs/wk x 52 wks + GST (Oct 2022 - September 2023)	\$ 81,900.00
Feasibility Studies	Relevant or recommended studies to assess current and potential options	\$ 99,700.00
Consultants	Expand capacity by bringing in expertise in project development, communications, governance and legal requirements	\$ 80,000.00
Honoraria	Elders	\$ 10,000.00
Community Engagement	Ongoing engagement and partnership development	\$ 7,500.00
	Printing and Supplies	\$ 1,800.00
Administration	EPE 10% Administration Fee	\$ 28,090.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$ 308,990.00</b>