

INDIGENOUS CULTURE AND WELLNESS CENTRE UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION

That the October 25, 2022, Community Services report CS01515, be received for information.

Requested Council Action		Information Only	
ConnectEdmonton's Guiding Principle		ConnectEdmonton Strategic Goals	
CONNECTED This unifies our work to achieve our strategic goals.		Healthy City	
City Plan Values	BELONG		
City Plan Big City Move(s)	Inclusive and compassionate	Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities	Community safety and well-being
Corporate Business Plan	Transforming for the future and Serving Edmontonians		
Council Policy, Program or Project Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">EndPovertyEdmonton Strategy (2015)5 Year Implementation Road Map (2016)		
Related Council Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">March 3, 2021,Community and Public Services Committee, Citizen Services Report CS00337March 15, 2021, City Council, Citizen Services Report CS00337		

Executive Summary

- This report provides an update on the status of the Indigenous Culture and Wellness Centre. A funding request for the development of a Business Case was presented to Council at the March 15, 2021, City Council meeting (CS00337).

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- Highlights of the report include targeted actions the project Steering Committee has done since its formation to advance the project, including the completion of an environmental scan and a first draft of a business case for an Indigenous Culture and Wellness Centre.
- The Steering Committee has faced challenges in building capacity to become an incorporated entity that would enable it to access grants and undertake fundraising for the building and sustainable operation of an Indigenous Culture and Wellness Centre as an Indigenous owned and governed facility.
- The Steering Committee has identified a preferred site for the eventual location of the Centre in Government House Park within the river valley area. It is also exploring the feasibility of purchasing a local existing facility in central Edmonton in the interim. The approximate cost of the existing facility is \$18 million. The Committee does not have funding available for this purchase.
- The Steering Committee has faced several challenges to meet key requirements of the business case to advance the project past the Strategy phase of the City's Project Development and Delivery Model which is used for facility projects.
- There is \$2.53 million remaining in Indigenous Culture and Wellness Centre Capital Profile 19-21-2123 reserved for the Concept and Design phase of the project once the Business Case is fully completed and approved by Council to advance.

REPORT

The establishment of an Indigenous Culture and Wellness Center is referenced in both the EndPovertyEdmonton Strategy (2015) and the five year implementation Road Map (2016) as a City-led action (Attachment 1). In December 2016, as part of the 2016-2018 Supplemental Operating Budget Adjustment, Edmonton City Council approved \$3 million of funding for the first three phases (Strategy, Concept, and Design) of the Centre as part of the EndPovertyEdmonton service package (Attachment 2). In September 2017, a Steering Committee for the Indigenous Culture and Wellness Centre, composed of the Indigenous Circle community and city staff, was formed to oversee the Strategy Phase using the City Project Development and Delivery Model. The initial strategy phase of the project has two deliverables: an environmental scan, completed in 2018 (Attachment 3), and a draft business case that requires further development (Attachment 4).

Focused work on the business case began in January 2019 with the creation of partnership guiding principles by the project Steering Committee. Partnership discussions ensued with local Indigenous organizations having similar visions for an Indigenous centre in Edmonton, including the Canadian Native Friendship Centre. Members of the EndPovertyEdmonton Indigenous Circle, Canadian Native Friendship Centre and City staff identified that a memorandum of understanding between the partners was needed to build an Indigenous centre. A project consultant was then hired in summer of 2020 to facilitate the building of this memorandum which continued for a period of three months before discussions were paused indefinitely at the request of the Indigenous Circle Steering Committee members. The City was asked to step aside from its lead

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role with the Indigenous Culture and Wellness Centre and to be available for support as requested by the Committee.

In January 2021, Administration received a proposal from EndPovertyEdmonton to lead and manage the project going forward as guided by the Indigenous Circle. The proposal set out how the project will be managed including a funding request of \$202,042 for the completion of a business case. The United Way of the Alberta Capital Region, as fiscal agent of EndPovertyEdmonton, would receive the funding through a funding agreement with the City. On March 15, 2021, City Council approved Community Services report CS00337 Indigenous Culture and Wellness Centre, changing the lead role of managing the Indigenous Culture and Wellness Centre project from City of Edmonton to EndPovertyEdmonton. Administration entered into a funding agreement for the completion of the business case.

A first draft of the Business Case was submitted to the Indigenous Relations Office in October 2021. An interdepartmental team of City staff was convened to evaluate its readiness to proceed past checkpoint one in the Project Development and Delivery Model. From the evaluation, it was determined that the business case lacked fundamental elements that would preclude it going forward including:

- the absence of committed funding partners for the construction and operation of the facility,
- an incorporated legal entity to steward the project for the remainder of the project's phases (Concept, Design, Construct, and Operate),
- the lack of experience on the Steering Committee to manage a project through the construction phase, and to operate and maintain a facility of this magnitude,
- and a secured location for the construction of the building.

In November 2021, this information was shared with both the Steering Committee and the business case consultant to use as a guide in the development of the next version of the business case.

Current Project Status

Over the past year, the Steering Committee has faced challenges in building the capacity required to move the Indigenous Culture and Wellness Centre project forward. Indigenous Relations staff regularly participate in Steering Committee meetings and offer advice and support when requested. A viable incorporated partnership entity, which has yet to be developed, would provide the skills and experience needed for the development of a solid business case which is the final deliverable in the Strategy phase. This would include the financing and oversight needed to build and sustainably operate the Centre. Once a business case with this degree of rigor is developed, it will then be in a suitable form for presentation to Council which, pending its final approval, will move the project to the next phases of Concept and Design in line with the City's Project Development and Delivery Model. Currently, there is no capital funding set aside for the delivery of the Centre.

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The Steering Committee is interested in Government House Park as a preferred location for the Indigenous Culture and Wellness Centre. However, Administration has concerns about the feasibility of this location due to development constraints in the River Valley, the size and scope proposed for the project, the lack of any utility infrastructure in the park, accessibility, as well as significant consultation with First Nations and Métis communities which is often required through regulatory processes.

In May of 2022, the Steering Committee approached Administration with an interest in acquiring an existing facility in Edmonton, as a temporary solution for the Indigenous Culture and Wellness Centre with the intent of eventually developing a new building in the river valley area as proposed in the Business Case. This new direction of acquiring an existing facility would require a new or updated business case and would need to address the same issues of forming a legal entity, developing an operating plan, financial model and acquiring funding partners.

The Steering Committee has not yet confirmed the desire to acquire an existing facility as a priority or how it would go about integrating that option into an updated or new business case.

Potential impacts of the Indigenous Culture and Wellness Center to the City

The Steering Committee has been clear in their desire to see this project Indigenous-led. To advance beyond the Strategy phase an Indigenous incorporated entity that includes partnerships should be formed to lead the work. This next step is critical for the project to proceed to Design, Construction, and Operating phases of the Project Development and Delivery Model.

There are foreseeable impacts that should also be carefully weighed including:

- The City or an incorporated entity may be eligible for facility funding opportunities from other orders of government that the Steering Committee, as a non-registered entity in its current state, would not be able to access.
- The capacity of the Steering Committee to manage an infrastructure project through the design and construction phase may require the City to assign a City project manager to support the Committee and engage an external consultant and construction company through the delivery phase.
- The capacity of the Steering Committee in operating and maintaining a facility of this magnitude
- There is currently no additional funding in the ICWC capital profile other than the monies approved for the Strategy, Concept, and Preliminary Design of the project.
- The purchase of an existing facility would be outside of the current approved funds.

Budget/Financial Implications

Of the \$3 million approved by City Council in 2016 for the Strategy, Concept, and Preliminary Design of the Indigenous Culture and Wellness Centre as part of the EndPovertyEdmonton service package, the remaining funds of \$2.53 million in Capital Profile 19-21-2123 are reserved for the

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planning and preliminary design of the Centre. Funding of approximately \$470,000 from the \$3 million originally approved has been used to fund the Environmental Scan and the initial draft of the Business Case for the Centre which are the two deliverables for the Strategy Phase of the Project Development and Delivery Model which is used for facility development.

The purchase of an existing facility as proposed by the Steering Committee as an initial space for the Indigenous Culture and Wellness Centre has an estimated acquisition cost of \$18 million. Beyond that, funding will likely be required for lifecycle replacement costs and to renovate the facility for its intended use. A building condition assessment would be required to develop a better estimate of the lifecycle replacement costs. There is currently no additional funding in the Indigenous Culture and Wellness Centre capital profile other than the funds approved for the Strategy, Concept, and Preliminary Design of the project.

Being that the Steering Committee is still committed to seeing a new facility eventually developed in the river valley, there will be additional financial costs to the City associated with this development notwithstanding funding contributions from other orders of government and community partners should these occur.

If the Steering Committee puts the development of a new facility on hold and pursues the purchase of an existing facility, funding sources and other support will need to be determined that may or may not be available from the City of Edmonton given that the lead of the project is EndPoverty Edmonton.

COMMUNITY INSIGHT

The Steering Committee engaged a consultant to conduct a broad environmental scan aimed at garnering Indigenous voices for their feedback on an Indigenous Culture and Wellness Center. Through community conversations, surveys and specialized meetings held from May to October 2018 a total of 1,614 participants contributed feedback which was used to guide the subsequent development of a draft Business Case for the Center. Throughout the past two to three years, the Steering Committee has periodically engaged the community to update on the Centre's status and to seek out project partners.

GBA+

The Indigenous Culture and Wellness Centre project aligns with the City's Art of Inclusion: Our Diversity and Inclusion Framework

- Equity pillar: *We implement systems and practices that advance equity and respect.*
- Objectives
 - Prioritize Indigenous reconciliation
 - Identify needs of equity seeking groups and implement equity measures
 - Reduce harassment and discrimination and support those impacted

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ATTACHMENTS

1. EndPovertyEdmonton Road Map - Final Report
2. EPE Service Package (submitted)
3. Indigenous Culture and Wellness Centre E-Scan - Final Report
4. Indigenous Culture and Wellness Centre - Business Case Report (Draft 1)