

City of Edmonton 2016-2025 Affordable Housing Strategy Progress Update

Goals	Objectives	Strategies	Implementation Actions	Current Status
Goal 1: Increase the supply of affordable housing in all areas of the city	1.1 Play a direct role in increasing supply	1.1.1 Acquire and develop affordable housing units	Develop a new Housing Investment Plan program to replace Cornerstones	The Affordable Housing Investment Plan 2019-2022 guides the City's investments in affordable housing development. As of June 2022, the City has committed to a total of 2,404 units of the 2,500 targeted units, including 644 Supportive Housing, 297 deep subsidy and 1,463 below market units. By the end of 2022, the total commitment is expected to be 2,843, with another 1,559 existing social housing units renewed through provincial (MSP) funding.
		1.1.2 Acquire and dedicate land for the purposes of affordable housing development	Complete a review of City land acquisition and dedication policies and procedures for affordable housing	In 2021 City Council approved the revised City Land Assets for Non-Profit Affordable Housing (Policy C437A). This policy created a process for identifying and approving City-owned sites for development by non-profit housing providers approximately once per year. Administration is currently engaging with stakeholders to develop options for ensuring City land assets are prioritized for affordable housing at less than market value sale or lease.
		1.1.3 Leverage the existing City-owned housing portfolio to increase supply	Develop an asset management strategy for City-owned units	Administration will be reporting to City Council in 2022 with options for ensuring City land holdings are prioritized for affordable housing. The report will include land management governance strategies to ensure affordable housing needs and opportunities are considered at the time of land acquisition and/or initial conceptual designs for all City-owned facilities. The report will also include strategies for ensuring affordable housing projects are prioritized for land opportunities where they will benefit most from proximity to transit and/or other amenities in alignment with the City Plan.
		1.1.4 Coordinate with transportation and land use planning initiatives to encourage new affordable housing development in the planning process for new and existing LRT stations and transit centres	Prioritize locations within proximity to LRT and transit stations in the Housing Investment Plan (as described in 1.1.1)	The Affordable Housing Investment Guidelines (Policy C601), which came into effect on January 1, 2019 ensures that the grants awarded through the Affordable Housing Investment and the Supportive Housing grant programs prioritize projects in proximity to amenities and services.
		1.1.5 Pursue opportunities to include affordable housing in new municipal facilities	Develop a strategy to incorporate affordable housing as a component of other municipal buildings	In May 2020, City Council received the Surplus School Sites Report which contained the current inventory of surplus school sites and information about the future plans of the school boards, the feasibility of using sale proceeds to fund city obligations for new schools, and embedding actions in the Joint-Use Agreement.
	1.2 Enable external organizations to increase supply	1.2.1 Provide capital grants and surplus City-owned land to external organizations to increase the supply of affordable housing, including supportive and supported housing	Housing Investment Plans (as described in 1.1.1)	The Affordable Housing Investment Program is entering its third round of grant award recommendations. So far 761 units of the 2500 target have been achieved. The latest recommendation includes six proposed affordable housing developments. The projects will result in 265 new units and 300 rehabilitated units of affordable housing in exchange for grant funding in the amount of \$16.7 million.
		1.2.2 Advocate for the provision of adequate, appropriate support services for supportive and supported housing	Create a new housing advocacy program	A Shovel Ready Working Group comprised of non-profit housing providers has been created and meets monthly to discuss potential projects and funding needs. Administration also provides letters toward funding applications being submitted to other orders of governments for affordable housing developments in Edmonton.
		1.2.3 Implement effective regulations and internal processes to encourage affordable housing development	Complete a review of City regulations and processes for affordable housing development	In 2021, City Council repealed the Developer Sponsored Affordable Housing Policy (C582) following Administration's recommendation. Administration is currently working on developing a replacement approach for securing affordable housing contributions through the development process and will return to Urban Planning Committee in late 2022.

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			Create a new housing facilitator position to guide affordable housing proponents through the development permit process	Staff from the Affordable Housing and Homelessness Section of City of Edmonton provide support to affordable housing developers to navigate the necessary City processes in order to speed up approval of projects.
	1.3 Acquire, leverage and provide the financial resources and tools required to increase the supply of affordable housing	1.3.1 Advocate to other orders of government for additional funding and tools	Create a new housing advocacy program	Following extensive public engagement in 2020, Administration is working with communications and research agencies to develop a long-term targeted strategy to raise public awareness of affordable housing and where it is most needed. The launch of the public education campaign is anticipated in 2023.
		1.3.2 Actively seek new sources of dedicated, sustainable funding	Study and develop an affordable housing fund development strategy	In order to encourage a pipeline of prospective affordable housing developments, the City is committed to be an early partner on projects in their early stages. Administration has approached City Council and other orders of government to leverage investments to strengthen and fast-track affordable housing developments.
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Goal 2: Maintain the supply of affordable & market rental housing	2.1 Maintain the existing supply of safe, adequate and affordable market units	2.1.1. Enforce safety standards for market rental housing	Ongoing enforcement activity	Tenant Support Services specialists in the Homeless Prevention Unit provide support on this front.
		2.1.2 Provide financial incentives to facilitate the renovation of inadequate market units	Housing Investment Plans (as described in 1.1.1)	In early 2021, the City launched the Housing Redevelopment Grant as a pilot within the Affordable Housing Investment Program. This pilot allows non-profit organizations to transform or replace problem properties with safe, affordable housing. The City is working to address this issue through its Problem Properties Action Plan, which includes enforcement strategies, better communication, and the housing redevelopment grant. ("Problem properties" are properties that cause concern to their neighbourhoods, pose risks to tenants and surrounding residents, and have a recurring history of violations and non-compliance.)
		2.1.3 Enable multi-sectoral approaches to enforcement of health and safety standards	Complete a study on multi-sectoral approaches to housing enforcement	The Problem Properties Action Plan focuses on improving community safety and livability, by coordinating the efforts of municipal and provincial agencies involved in licensing, regulation and enforcement concerns related to problem properties. Using an integrated and holistic approach, members of the Problem Property Action Team and Residential Inspection Safety Compliance (RISC) team work to achieve compliance with municipal, provincial and federal legislation at high-risk properties to reduce overall risk in the community. This helps foster safer and better connected communities in Edmonton.
	2.2 Enable the long-term sustainability of affordable and social housing projects	2.2.1 Provide research and coordination assistance around the regeneration of existing social housing buildings	Implement the recommendations from the Social housing Regeneration Advisory Group report	The City is currently working with Cvida (formerly the Capital Region Housing Corporation) in developing a redevelopment plan to address the aging social housing facilities owned by the City and currently managed and operated by Cvida. The goal is to regenerate, densify and provide sustainable social housing on mixed-income model.

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		2.2.2 Provide funding and lead the redevelopment of existing City-owned affordable and social housing buildings	2.2 Enable the long-term sustainability of affordable and social housing projects	The City is working on a Social Housing Capital Renewal Plan which will be submitted for integration into the next 10-year Capital Investment Plan. Affordable Housing and Homelessness is also developing a database of affordable housing, which will provide an inventory of affordable housing stock across various neighbourhoods and identify properties funded by the City. An app will be created using this inventory to improve knowledge of available properties as well as help plan for maintenance and renewal of City-funded properties.
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Goal 3: Enable stable residential tenancies & transition people out of homelessness	3.1 Enhance existing supports related to homelessness prevention	3.1.1 Provide an early warning system to identify high-risk eviction situations	Study and develop an early warning system	Tenant Support Services and the RISC Group are engaged in identifying high-risk eviction situations. RISC is a multi-agency group, with representation from Alberta Health Services, the Government of Alberta (Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods and Occupational Health and Safety), the City of Edmonton (Affordable Housing and Homelessness, Complaints and Investigation, Development Services, Fire Rescue Services), and Edmonton Police Services.
		3.1.2 Provide eviction prevention education, training and financial supports	Study and develop eviction prevention approaches	Tenant Support Services provides eviction prevention education and training through multiple workshops. Financial support is provided by the Bissell Centre as part of the Community Bridge program and funded by the City's Families and Community Support Services (FCCS) Program. Additionally, social workers with the City's Financial Empowerment program also support tenants at risk of evictions. The City will be also engaging with partners in 2022 to further discuss its role in homelessness prevention and to develop an appropriate strategy.
		3.1.3 Advocate for financial subsidies to enable low-income tenants to maintain stable tenancies in market rental units	Monitor housing market conditions to evaluate need for rent supplement program	The Community Bridge program -- operated by the Bissell Centre and funded through the City's FCCS program -- provides financial assistance in form of a one-time interest-free loan to individuals and families at risk of eviction. Additionally, engagement for the Housing Needs Assessment revealed a strong preference for rental subsidies linked to individuals, not properties. This insight will be incorporated in City's ongoing advocacy to other orders of governments given the limited influence and financial capacity the City currently has in offering rental subsidies.
		3.1.4 Coordinate action to implement Goal 3 of Edmonton's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness: transitioning people quickly into permanent housing	Work with a range of partners to develop an inner-city shelter strategy	The City is working on this with the Edmonton Zone Vulnerable Populations Relaunch Committee and Alberta Health Service's Edmonton Zone Office. In August 2021, City Council approved the adoption of a Minimum Emergency Shelter Standard to supplement existing shelter expectations and to make it easier for people experiencing homelessness to access shelters. The goal is to work cooperatively with the homeless-serving sector to improve standards, reduce barriers, increase uptake of available space, and help more people exit homelessness by rapidly connecting them with housing.
			Complete an update to Edmonton's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness	Homeward Trust Edmonton leads the systemic response to homelessness in Edmonton. They will be leading this work.

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	3.2 Improve access to supports for newly homeless individuals and the most vulnerable	3.2.1 Provide information, advice and support service referrals based on an inventory of available supports and supported housing projects	Create and update an inventory of support services related to housing and homelessness	Homeward Trust Edmonton's Coordinated Access Online Service Team (CAOST) assists those at risk of homelessness with information on housing program. The City's website also provides preliminary information on supportive housing and some homelessness supports. Tenant Support Services offer support to residential tenants as part of the City's efforts to end homelessness by providing information on tenancy matters.
		3.2.2 Coordinate and provide leadership to ensure Housing First serves the needs of newly homeless households and the most vulnerable homeless with highest needs	Complete a study on the feasibility of adapting Housing First to meet the needs of newly homeless households and the most vulnerable homeless	Homeward Trust Edmonton implemented coordinated access as part of their Housing First approach in 2019. This involves triaging individuals, taking severity of needs into account. While the Housing First approach is proven and provides its greatest savings for individuals who would otherwise be diverted to health, justice and other less appropriate public services, evidence shows targeted supports are also required to ensure individuals are able to maintain stable, safe housing.
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Goal 4: Anticipate, recognize and coordinate action to respond to housing and homeless needs	4.1 Increase understanding of housing needs and affordable housing best practices	4.1.1 Be proactive in research, planning, and stakeholder engagement	Develop a new housing research program	To encourage the development and progression of housing innovation in Edmonton, the City has been supporting the Affordable Housing Solutions Lab (previously known as the Centre of Excellence for Affordable Housing) since its establishment in 2018. The Lab works with communities, partners and stakeholders in Edmonton's housing system to research, model, prototype, and analyze housing solutions towards improving housing security for Edmontonians.
			Implement the Finding Common Ground recommendations	Recommendations #1 to #3 of the Finding Common Ground Report have been implemented. Recommendation #4 has not been implemented exactly as described, but various methods and tactics to proactively engage community stakeholders have been tested and used over time to progressively improve how residents and stakeholders can participate in the development of affordable housing. This includes the use of panels and advisory committees. The City has also adopted an aspirational target for every neighbourhood in Edmonton to have 16% of affordable housing, so that those who require affordable housing can also have choice in where they can live. The national conversation on a human-centered to housing has also helped collective efforts at destigmatizing affordable housing and fostering a sense of belonging for everyone in mixed income communities.
		4.1.2 Disseminate findings from research, planning, and engagement activities to external partners	Complete an annual housing needs monitoring report	The final Housing Needs Assessment will be presented to the City Council in September 2022. It is anticipated that the housing needs assessment will be updated periodically to captures shifts in trends and to inform policy decisions. Insights from past (2009 onwards) research and engagement activities undertaken in the course of development of Council Reports on housing and homelessness matters are also accessible through online records of Past Council and Committee meeting archives .

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		4.1.3 Increase public awareness of the need for and right to affordable housing	Complete an information and awareness initiative Study and develop human rights guidelines for affordable housing development	As mentioned above, Administration is working with communications and research agencies to develop a long-term targeted strategy to raise public awareness of affordable housing and where it is most needed. The launch of the public education campaign is anticipated in 2023. The City also provides general support for communication and education to non-profit housing developers on affordable housing as part of its overall efforts to create awareness of the need for affordable housing.
		4.2 Enable external organizations to pursue collective action to address affordable housing needs	4.2.1 Bring housing sector partners, including both the private and public sectors, together to coordinate action and identify shared objectives	Complete an update for Edmonton's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness
		4.2.2 Provide support to external organizations to guide action, build organizational capacity and foster leadership development	Ongoing collaboration and support	The City has a long history of supporting affordable housing. While its current role does not typically involve building, operating or maintaining affordable housing, the City works closely with partners to foster affordable and supportive housing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - raising public awareness of the need; - developing policies to guide development; - offering land or grants for construction; - advocating for funding from other orders of government; - providing residential tenants with information to address tenancy matters.