

Background and History of Africa Centre Capital Project

- In 2007, City Council approved the leasing of Wellington Jr. High School from the Edmonton Public School Board. The Africa Centre shared the operations of the surplus school with the Winnifred Stewart Society. The Africa Centre operated in one wing of the school and the Winnifred Stewart Society operated the other wing.
- The Africa Centre maintained primary usage of the two gymnasiums, various classroom spaces and converted the home economics and industrial arts areas into program spaces.
- In 2012, Administration was authorized to negotiate the acquisition of the Wellington School site. This was for the development of the future African Multicultural Centre, the relocation of the Calder library branch and the retention of the sports fields. A funded Capital Profile #14-17-1072 was prepared for the 2012-2014 budget cycle for \$4.180 million dollars.
- In 2014, a Capital Profile #15-21-1040 for \$838,000 dollars was funded for schematic design dollars (including consultation and park site plan) to establish concept drawings and strategies for the future building of a new African Multicultural Centre on the Wellington School park site in partnership with the African community.
- Conceptually, the proposed new African Multicultural Centre building was to be approximately 40,000 square feet but further consideration was needed to explore the future operating costs. It was anticipated that funding for detailed design and construction would be requested in the 2019-2022 capital budget.
- In 2017, Wellington Jr. High School was condemned and City staff assisted with the relocation of the Africa Centre to St. Francis Centre where up until Fall 2022 the group operated some programs and centralized its administrative staff / functions.
- In late 2018, the demolition of the Wellington Jr. High on the northeast area of the site was completed. The Calder Library Branch was constructed on the southeast corner of the site and opened earlier in January 2018.
- At the time of the writing of this report, the Centralized Administrative Office for the Africa Centre is moving to the Circle Square Professional Building located at 11808 St. Albert Trail. Some of the programs will remain at the St. Francis Centre.

Pause on Capital Project and COVID-19 Pandemic Impacts

- In Fall 2018, Capital Profile #15-21-1040, Wellington / African Multicultural Centre project was placed on hold due to the organizational challenges the Africa Centre was facing. \$165,000 was spent on the project, with \$673,000 in the budget remaining on hold until the Africa Centre's audit recommendations were completed.
- In Fall 2019, the remaining funds of \$673,000 were approved by City Council to be reallocated within the City organization to address fiscal challenges of the impacts of the 2019 provincial budget. The Africa Centre was informed that the funding could be reconsidered during future Supplemental Capital Budget Adjustments or the 2023-2026 budget discussions.
- In 2020, the Africa Centre successfully closed all the audit recommendations and incorporated them into their regular policies and practices.