

# Building Great Neighbourhoods Program Funding Review

## Recommendation:

That the May 23, 2017, Sustainable Development report CR\_3697, be received for information.

## Report Summary

**This report outlines the sources of funding that may contribute to the elements of the Building Great Neighbourhoods capital program.**

## Previous Council/Committee Action

At the May 3/4, 2016, City Council meeting, the following motion was passed:

That Administration provide a report on a review of the funding currently in place for the Building Great Neighbourhoods Program growth work, to include an analysis of the ability of current funding to address recent policy changes around the Complete Streets program and Traffic Safety programs.

## Report

### Background

The City's Neighbourhood Renewal program was developed with the intention of maintaining the City's existing neighbourhood transportation infrastructure assets within road right-of-way. The program generally replaces existing local and collector roadway infrastructure with similar-scope elements that reflect current guidelines and practice.

The level of investment assigned to the program is based on the assessment methodology analogous to the City's Risk-based Infrastructure Management System, determining the required investment to ensure neighbourhood transportation infrastructure is in a condition that is acceptable to Council and Edmontonians.

Together with the Neighbourhood Renewal program, two other programs (Drainage Neighbourhood Renewal and Great Neighbourhoods) comprise the Building Great Neighbourhoods program:

- 1. Drainage Neighbourhood Renewal** renews and replaces sewers, typically one to two years before road reconstruction.

- 2. Neighbourhood Renewal** involves the renewal and rebuilding of local and collector roads (including base, paving, curb and gutter, and any required asphalt overlay) as well as sidewalks in existing neighbourhoods. Related work that is coordinated with the program includes street lighting renewal and upgrading, mature tree management, and geometric and active modes improvements to improve safety and connectivity for walking and cycling (such as sidewalks, shared-use paths, and curb ramps). Arterial roadway renewal, tree canopy replacement and streetscaping (public realm features/enhancements), as well as investments on parkland, are considered out-of-scope for the Neighbourhood Renewal program.
- 3. Great Neighbourhoods** uses residents' input to identify and make improvements on City-owned property that enhance neighbourhood livability and connectivity. These investments are unique to each neighbourhood, and may include trail and pathway improvements, trees, sidewalk connections, neighbourhood amenities and street furniture.

Refer to Attachment 1 for program details.

### **Growth Components**

The Neighbourhood Renewal program budget has historically incorporated minor modifications, such as the following:

- Improved pedestrian safety (such as curb extensions at school crossings to reduce crossing distances and to improve visibility).
- Improved intersection safety and accessibility (such as adding curb ramps, changing turning radius).
- Enhanced connectivity to transit (such as installing short connector sidewalks and/or adding bus pads where they are not currently present).
- Enhanced connectivity for active modes (such as installing pieces of new sidewalk or shared-use paths along road right-of-way).
- Upgraded or installed pedestrian crossing controls.

The City's processes on renewal programs are to allocate ten percent or less of its budget to growth elements. Neighbourhood Renewal funding is collected from a dedicated tax levy for the specific purpose of funding neighbourhood renewal; growth elements beyond the intent of the minor modifications noted are not intended to be funded from this source. Thus, the two different types of funding profiles (renewal and growth) are required to work together to deliver results to the same neighbourhood.

These additional funding programs include (Attachment 1):

#### *Local Improvement Program:*

The City includes two kinds of local improvements in conjunction with Neighbourhood Renewal: sidewalk renewal (City-initiated) and decorative street lights (community-initiated).

### *Active Transportation Capital Program:*

The Active Transportation program is a composite program that supports active transportation, and most of the funding within this program is intended to fulfill citizen requests. The Active Transportation program has funded the construction of missing pedestrian and cycling infrastructure in renewal neighbourhoods where the costs associated with the construction of the missing links exceeded the funding available for the minor enhancements that are typically included as part of the Neighbourhood Renewal program itself. Significant contributions from the Active Transportation program are required to address missing sidewalk infrastructure in conjunction with Neighbourhood Renewal in industrial neighbourhoods, where very little pedestrian infrastructure currently exists. Greater emphasis on higher-quality pedestrian and cycling infrastructure in communities may increase reliance on the contributions of the Active Transportation program in the future.

### *Community Traffic Safety Countermeasures Capital Program:*

The Community Traffic Safety Countermeasures program funds measures specifically to address safety concerns due to neighbourhood traffic shortcutting and speeding, as well as school zone safety initiatives. Neighbourhoods entering into the Neighbourhood Renewal process are reviewed to determine whether community-wide or localized traffic calming is appropriate; if so, Administration works with neighbourhood stakeholders to develop a Community Traffic Management Plan, with the Community Traffic Safety Countermeasures program funding elements that cannot be accommodated in the renewal budget (for example, raised crosswalks, curb extensions at locations other than schools, access changes). This practice has been successfully employed in the communities of Prince Charles (renewal in 2018/2019) and Belgravia (renewal in 2017/2018).

### *Complete Streets - Enhancements Capital Program:*

The Complete Streets program provides funding to add Complete Streets enhancements to other transportation capital programs, with a goal of ensuring that roads are designed in accordance with their context and that enhancements beyond like-for-like infrastructure replacement are included in the final product. To date, funding from the Complete Streets program has been allocated to alter roadway cross-sections to allow for the addition of shared-use paths and sidewalks on arterial roadways and bridges, as well as bicycle facilities on collector roadways.

### *Great Neighbourhoods Capital Program:*

The Great Neighbourhoods program is a ten year (2009 to 2018), asset based, community development approach that invests in revitalizing neighbourhoods, while also supporting localized improvements in conjunction with the Drainage Renewal and Neighbourhood Renewal programs. Projects reflect the uniqueness of each neighbourhood and include priorities identified by the community.

### Conclusion

A key insight from the work on Stewarding Great Neighbourhoods emphasized that major investment in the renewal of a neighbourhood happens only once in a very long time period, but offers a significant opportunity to make improvements in a more cost-effective way than if the enhancements were undertaken separately.

However, the focus of the Neighbourhood Renewal Reserve funding being primarily on renewal, limits the scope of renewal projects beyond minor modifications as noted in this report. As a result, funding for the additional growth elements associated with typical Neighbourhood Renewal requires contributions from a number of other capital programs: Complete Streets, Active Transportation, Community Traffic Safety, and Great Neighbourhoods.

In the 2015-2018 budget cycle, capital dollars within these programs have been allocated to fund the safety and amenity enhancements that have been jointly prioritized by community stakeholders and Administration as part of the Neighbourhood Renewal process. However, as noted in Attachment 1, additional pressures on these funding sources for other City projects (for example, the Downtown Bike Grid) further compromise the ability of these programs to support Neighbourhood Renewal and fulfill their own program mandates.

Edmontonians' expectations for more enhancements at the time of Neighbourhood Renewal are increasing, including higher-standard facilities for walking and cycling, more streetscape-type Complete Street amenities, and potential growth of the Community Traffic Management program that will see more traffic-calming initiatives in developed neighbourhoods. A review of a possible increase in growth capital programs to collectively support these demands may be required to meet citizens' growing expectations as the City moves forward into the next budget cycle.

### Policy

#### Active Transportation Policy C544:

- Enhance accessibility, safety, security, and convenience through strategic improvement, expansion, and maintenance of the infrastructure and facilities that support Active Transportation, including sidewalks, curb ramps, shared pathways, marked bicycle and shared-use lanes, and end-of-trip facilities; share the responsibility for the provision of infrastructure, facilities, programs, and initiatives to support and encourage Active Transportation through collaboration, cooperation, and partnerships.

#### Complete Streets Policy C573A:

- Acknowledge that the design of all streets will reflect the characteristics of the area and all users (cyclists, pedestrians, truck drivers, auto drivers, young and old citizens and people who have mobility challenges) of the roadway and that an integrated, connected network approach is needed to serve all modes.

## Corporate Outcomes

This report contributes to the corporate outcomes “Edmonton is attractive and compact” and “The City of Edmonton has sustainable and accessible infrastructure”, as it outlines funding sources for the renewal of infrastructure in neighbourhoods, ensuring that Edmonton’s neighbourhoods are well-maintained, environmentally-sustainable, attractive, and accessible to all, including those who face mobility challenges.

This report also contributes to the corporate outcomes “Edmonton is a safe city” and “Edmontonians use public transit and active modes of transportation” by confirming that funding is in place to ensure that opportunities are leveraged to improve safety for all road users, and in particular, for those who choose to use active modes of transportation.

## Metrics, Targets and Outcomes

Metrics	Targets	Outcomes
● Average response rating gathered through post-program customer satisfaction surveys - 4.1 / 5 in 2016	● Target satisfaction rating of 4/5	● Citizens perceive the Neighbourhood Renewal process is a coordinated effort across City departments

## Attachments

1. Funding Program Details

## Others Reviewing this Report

- T. Burge, Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer, Financial and Corporate Services
- A. Laughlin, Deputy City Manager, Integrated Infrastructure Services
- R. Smyth, Deputy City Manager, Citizen Services
- D. Jones, Deputy City Manager, City Operations