

CURRENT STATUS OF CITY-ENABLED AND CITY PROVIDED INDIGENOUS BUSINESS SUPPORTS (A. Paquette)

RECOMMENDATION

That the July 11, 2023, Urban Planning and Economy report UPE01844, 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.	Regional Prosperity		
City Plan Values	THRIVE		
City Plan Big City Move	Inclusive and Compassionate	Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities	Economic Growth
Corporate Business Plan	Serving Edmontonians		
Council Policy, Program or Project Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Edmonton Economic Action Plan Edmonton Economic Action Plan Grant Business Friendly Edmonton Indigenous Procurement Framework 		
Related Council Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Friendly Edmonton, Executive Committee, April 13, 2022 		

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the March 20, 2023 Community and Public Services meeting, Councillor Paquette made the following inquiry:

- Can Administration provide a report summarizing information on the current status of City-enabled and City-provided Indigenous business supports?

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Executive Summary

- Administration is committed to advancing economic reconciliation through the Indigenous Framework and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Municipal Response Plan.
- Support for Indigenous businesses is provided by the City of Edmonton, City-funded community partners, external agencies and other levels of government.
- Assisting Indigenous businesses supports Actions 3 and 21 of the Economic Action Plan.
- Support from all levels of the economic development ecosystem contributes to the success of Indigenous businesses in Edmonton.

REPORT

Administration has identified three types of support for Indigenous businesses within Edmonton:

1. City-provided Indigenous business support, which is business support at all stages of growth for Indigenous businesses that is provided directly by the City of Edmonton.
2. City-enabled Indigenous business support, which is support for Indigenous businesses provided by community partners with funding from the City of Edmonton.
3. Indigenous business support provided by external organizations and other orders of government, which is support for Indigenous businesses that are provided without funding from the City of Edmonton.

All three types of business support operate within the economic development ecosystem and contribute to achieving the following actions of the Economic Action Plan¹, the City's 10-year plan to support the growth of an inclusive and diversified economy:

- Action 3 - support building capacity and access to resources for entrepreneurs from marginalized communities, such as racialized entrepreneurs and newcomers
- Action 21 - expand on existing relationships with the City's Indigenous memoranda partners by improving supports for economic development opportunities

Administration will advance economic reconciliation through the Indigenous Framework and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Municipal Response Plan. The examples outlined in this report demonstrate the work Administration has started to advance TRC Call to Action 92², a call to action based upon business and reconciliation. With the Indigenous Framework as a guide, Administration's role is connecting Indigenous Peoples to programs, services, people and resources that enrich the community and foster relationships to create positive change.

¹ Edmonton Action Plan. edmonton.ca/business_economy/economic-action-plan

² TRC Call to Action 92. rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1524506030545/1557513309443

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City-Provided Indigenous Business Support

The City of Edmonton provides the following direct support to Indigenous entrepreneurs and businesses:

- **Business Friendly Support:** While not dedicated solely to Indigenous-owned or run businesses, the customized business service includes one-on-one business support to meet any business owner at any stage of their business. The program removes barriers to navigating City processes, provides public education on City resources and processes, supplements entrepreneur training programs, offers pathfinding for innovative businesses and makes connections or referrals to other non-City programs and resources. Demographic information is being collected, as of March 1, 2023, to reflect the diverse entrepreneurs that are served, including Indigenous entrepreneurs.
- **Economic Action Plan Grant:** Action 3 of the Economic Action Plan supports building capacity and access for equity-deserving communities, such as Indigenous entrepreneurs. Funding is available to eligible projects and programs that align with this action. Eligibility criteria has recently been expanded and outreach to economic development partners that represent equity-deserving groups is currently underway.
- **Indigenous Edmonton Directory:** The Indigenous Edmonton Directory³ helps navigate Indigenous Edmonton personal and business supports.
- **Indigenous Procurement Framework:** The City is working actively to create pathways for Indigenous businesses and the Indigenous community-at-large to realize social and economic impacts through the City's existing purchasing needs. The Indigenous Procurement Framework is intended to address barriers to and increase participation of Indigenous-owned businesses in the City's procurement processes. It applies to procurements across the corporation with the objective of removing barriers and building capacity within Indigenous businesses to more fully participate in City procurement processes.

Leveraging Edmonton's Indigenous Procurement Framework will support and expand Indigenous economic participation given the City's significant procurement activities. By actively removing barriers to bidding on City contracts, Indigenous businesses and the community-at-large will achieve higher rates of economic success, which leads to better social outcomes and stronger relationships between the City and Indigenous peoples.

Implementation of the Indigenous Procurement Framework includes Administration addressing six recommendations from the Indigenous Procurement Advisory Committee. Three of these recommendations being addressed through the updated Sustainable Procurement Program are enhancing evaluation criteria, creating a communication plan and improving networking opportunities. Within this program, evaluation criteria has been revised and adding contractual requirements to the program will integrate Indigenous economic and social impacts into City

³ Indigenous Edmonton Directory.
<http://www.edmonton.ca/sites/default/files/public-files/assets/PDF/IRO-Directory.pdf>

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contracts. Administration has developed communication tools such as Selling to the City information sessions for potential suppliers and has engaged with industry partners to create networking opportunities.

Work on other recommendations, including Indigenous procurement set-asides, providing a mix of procurement opportunities and methods of Indigenous heritage verification to ensure the Framework benefits those it is intended to are ongoing and will be addressed with new tools and procedures by the end of 2023.

City-Enabled Indigenous Business Support

In addition to programming and supports put in place by the City of Edmonton, several community organizations funded by the City provide support for Indigenous businesses, including:

- **Aksis:** Aksis is Edmonton's Indigenous Business and Professional Association, a member-driven not-for-profit organization created to serve as a central meeting point that inspires Edmonton Indigenous businesses and professionals to connect, collaborate and flourish. The organization provides referral and pathfinding services to businesses, facilitates connections between and amongst the larger business community and serves as a catalyst to create a voice for its members within the Edmonton business community. The City of Edmonton committed funding for Aksis to a maximum amount of \$180,000 per year from 2022-2024.
- **I.A.M Collective:** The City financially supports the Indigenous Artists Market (I.A.M) Collective by paying the annual fees for the Downtown Farmers Market, where artists display their artwork every weekend.
- **Additional Community Organizations:** Attachment 1 outlines community organizations that provide employment support for Indigenous community members with the help of funding from the City of Edmonton. The intention of this funding is to create indirect support for local businesses through skill development for the local labour market. Note that some - but not all - of these organizations are Indigenous-led, but all serve Indigenous clients (either exclusively or in significant numbers). These organizations include:
 - Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society
 - Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women
 - Bissell Centre
 - Boyle Street Community Services
 - Dickinsfield Amity House
 - The Elizabeth Fry Society of Northern Alberta

Indigenous Business Support Provided by External Organizations and Orders of Government

Attachment 2 highlights external organizations and orders of government that provide Indigenous business support without funding or other resources from the City of Edmonton.

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These organizations and orders of government operate within the local business ecosystem, helping Indigenous businesses and entrepreneurs thrive in Edmonton. Support by these external parties range from grants and funding, to mentorship and business accelerators.

GBA+

Edmonton is located on Treaty 6 Territory, the traditional lands of the Cree, Dene, Saulteaux, Blackfoot, Nakota Sioux and Métis homelands. The City of Edmonton recognizes that, as settlers to this land, we must work toward reconciliation by living the values of mutual respect, responsibility and renewal to build and maintain strong relationships with Indigenous Peoples.

The City of Edmonton Indigenous Framework was created to answer the question, “How can the City of Edmonton best support relationships with Indigenous Peoples in Edmonton?” Acknowledging the responsibilities of the City as a partner of the Indigenous Peoples in Edmonton, Action 3 of the Edmonton Economic Action Plan supports building capacity and access to resources for entrepreneurs from equity deserving communities, including Indigenous entrepreneurs. Additionally, through Action 21 the City promotes economic participation by Indigenous peoples, nations and businesses in the region.

Business Friendly Edmonton provides one-on-one support to Indigenous entrepreneurs, as well as non-Indigenous entrepreneurs and those from other equity-deserving communities, making connections to programs, services, people and resources that provide value and acting as a single point of contact to navigate City processes. In the spirit of working toward an inclusive economy, the Business Friendly team has begun to collect demographic information to:

1. Gain insights into barriers entrepreneurs from equity deserving communities face to improve City support.
2. To highlight and champion the unique and important contributions of Indigenous entrepreneurs to the local economy.

ATTACHMENTS

1. City Enabled Indigenous Employment Support
2. Indigenous Business Support Provided by Other Organizations/Orders of Government