

INDIGENOUS-LED SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROJECTS

Recommendation

That the November 1, 2023, Community Services report CS01798, be received for information.

Requested 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. LIVE. THRIVE. ACCESS.		
City Plan Big City Move(s)	Inclusive and compassionate	Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities	Community safety and well-being
Corporate Business Plan	Serving Edmontonians		
Council Policy, Program or Project Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy C601 - Affordable Housing Investment Guidelines • Policy C437A - City Land Assets for Non-Profit Affordable Housing 		
Related Council Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • August 22, 2023, Office of the City Manager report OCM02003, Indigenous-Led Housing - Letter of Intent with Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations • September 20, 2023, Community Services report CS01751, Rapid Housing Initiative - Round 3 - Recommendations and Update • March 14, 2023, Community Services report CS01624, Rapid Housing Initiative Investment Plan - Round 3 of Rapid Housing Initiative • June 27, 2022, Community Services report CS00433, Indigenous Affordable Housing Strategy • June 27, 2022, Community Services report CS01188, Affordable Housing Investment Plan - Update • August 16, 2021, Community Services report CS00733, Rapid Housing Initiative - Updated Housing Investment Plan • February 17, 2021, Community Services report CS00189, Indigenous Housing • November 16, 2020, Community Services report CS00137, Plan To Meet 		

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the March 1, 2023, Executive Committee, the following motion passed:

That Administration provides a report with information on how Indigenous-led organizations may be successfully positioned to become recipients of City-led supportive housing projects through future Rapid Housing Initiative funding rounds.

Executive Summary

- The City of Edmonton, through the first and third rounds of Rapid Housing Initiative, led the construction process of six buildings, totaling 273 supportive housing units, on City land and have sold or will sell these buildings at below market value to Homeward Trust Holding Company. In addition, 236 supportive housing units were created through the acquisition and conversion of hotels by partnering housing providers through the second round of Rapid Housing Initiative. In total, 509 supportive housing units have been created through all three rounds of Rapid Housing Initiative.
- As of September 2023, there have not been any announcements on any further future rounds of the Rapid Housing Initiative.
- Supportive housing is geared to people with very low incomes who would not otherwise be able to maintain housing on their own. The building owner/operator typically must secure operating funding from the Government of Alberta or other funding sources.
- In Edmonton there are a range of supportive housing options offered to Indigenous peoples with varying levels of cultural, wellness and health supports.
- Administration is engaging with multiple Indigenous stakeholders and rightsholders in a collaborative manner on supportive housing and developing a workplan for decision making on a potential future Rapid Housing Initiative or equivalent program.

REPORT

The Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) is a federal funding program administered by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) which provides capital grants for rapidly creating affordable housing for vulnerable populations. The grant program comprises two streams:

- Cities Stream, in which predetermined municipalities (including Edmonton) receive direct funding from CMHC. Municipalities are responsible for prioritizing projects that meet or exceed the requirements of RHI; and
- Project Stream, which is open to all orders of government, Indigenous governing bodies and organizations, and non profit organizations. CMHC reviews applications submitted and provides approvals under the Projects Stream.

Since the launch of RHI in 2020 and through three rounds of funding, the City has leveraged the program to develop 509 new supportive housing units. Through RHI round one, the City of Edmonton led construction of 210 new supportive housing units across five developments on

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City-owned land. Once substantial completion of these buildings was reached, the City sold the buildings at below market value to Homeward Trust Holding Company. This process will be replicated for the 63 units of supportive housing funded through RHI round three. Homeward Trust Holding Company is a non-profit private company, of which Homeward Trust Foundation is a shareholder, that was created with the goal of owning and managing rental properties for low income residents and Indigenous communities. Homeward Trust Foundation is Edmonton's community-based organization / designated entity for aggregating operating funding from all orders of government for the purpose of ending homelessness.

As of September 2023, there have not been any announcements on new rounds of RHI or whether a City and Project stream would be the continued delivery approach.

Supportive Housing

Supportive housing is geared to people with very low incomes who would not otherwise be able to maintain housing on their own. The revenues generated by tenant rents are insufficient to meet the operational costs of the building including the social and health services provided to tenants. These services may include 24/7 on-site supportive tenancy management, clinical care services, meal provision, personal support services such as assistance with independent living skills and behavioral management, and provision of enriching recreational and social activities and programs.

To leverage the existing capital investments, the building owner and operator must secure operational funding. Previously, City-led supportive housing developed through RHI has secured operational funding through Homeward Trust Edmonton.

Indigenous-Led Supportive Housing

The term, "Indigenous-led", refers to the degree to which Indigenous peoples are involved in the leadership, operation and delivery of programs and services to Indigenous peoples, as well as the degree to which Indigenous culture and worldviews are incorporated into their work. For Indigenous-led organizations, Indigenous culture and language are the core values of the organizations both in how they organize themselves and how they operate. In terms of governance, there is Indigenous leadership at all levels of the organization. The purpose and intention of the organization is to specifically address the needs and priorities of Indigenous peoples.

In Edmonton, there are varying levels of supportive housing options offered to Indigenous peoples through on site and in-reached (brought to the site) supports. A noteworthy development funded through RHI is the Pimatsiwan site (former Sands Hotel) operated by NiGiNan Housing Ventures. This development was supported by the City of Edmonton with funding of \$5,059,237 through RHI round two.

Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy provides Indigenous-specific funding to address local priorities in Edmonton through a designated Community Entity called Red Road Healing Society. This funding was previously provided through Homeward Trust Edmonton, but in 2023 was redirected to be provided by an Indigenous agency.

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Approach for Success: Indigenous Supportive Housing

A takeaway from ongoing engagement with Indigenous housing providers (Attachment 1) is that early dialogue between funders and Indigenous-led operators on project specific opportunities must be the starting point well before an expression of interest or request for proposals is issued. Based on all the input received to date, an approach to Indigenous involvement that enables and empowers involvement of Indigenous peoples through meaningful, flexible and ongoing dialogue is an appropriate path forward in deciding how best to allocate a future supportive housing project through RHI or an equivalent program.

To successfully position an Indigenous housing provider to become a recipient of a City-led supportive housing project, dialogue will need to occur with the following stakeholders and rightsholders - and in some cases, rightsholders - within the context of existing agreements and the parameters of the capital funding program. These agreements and organizations include:

- a Memorandum of Cooperation and Dialogue (MOCD) with the Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations (first signed in 2012, and re-negotiated and signed in 2021) and a Letter of Intent to work collaboratively on Indigenous-led housing (2023);
- a Memorandum of Shared Recognition and Cooperation with the Métis Nation of Alberta (2013);
- a Memorandum of Understanding with Enoch Cree Nation (2017) that speaks to shared values and a commitment to work together and engage on projects of mutual interest, and
- multiple urban Indigenous affordable housing operators within Edmonton.

Additionally, engagement will need to occur with potential operational funders of the site including Homeward Trust Edmonton, Red Road Healing Society, Alberta Health Services, Governments of Alberta and Canada, and others.

Next Steps

Administration is in conversations with the current stakeholders and rightsholders independently on different ways that the City may assist them with creating new Indigenous-led supportive and affordable housing developments that they or their members would own and manage.

Administration will work with stakeholders and rightsholders to determine a potential recipient of a newly constructed purpose-built supportive housing project. This will include determining which First Nation or Métis bodies and or Indigenous-led housing providers are interested in owning supportive housing and which funder may be in a position to provide operating funds to that owner. The results of these efforts could be a proof of concept for continued decision making.

Engagement will be ongoing and, if another round of RHI or alternative program designed for supportive housing is announced, those program parameters will help shape an eventual decision on a recipient and how operational funding to sustain the project could be acquired.

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Budget/Financial Implications

If a future round of RHI or an alternative program is announced, the City will assess its available funding sources, including any unallocated amounts within capital profile 19-90-4100 Affordable Housing Land Acquisition and Site Development, with a focus on leveraging funding from other orders of government. Administration may also consider budget requests through the supplemental budget adjustment processes to ensure funding is available for Indigenous-led and other housing projects.

Legal Implications

With respect to the receipt of RHI funding from CMHC, the City would be required to enter into legal agreements with CMHC that impose requirements as to how the funds can be used, with progress reporting and minimum affordability requirements of 20 years. The City, as recipient of the RHI contributions, would have the ability to cascade requirements (as and where applicable) into agreements with Indigenous-led organizations receiving the funds or developed housing.

Potential sale and affordable housing funding agreements with Indigenous-led organizations would be subject to the requirements of the *Municipal Government Act* as well as authority limits outlined in City Bylaw 16620 - City Administration Bylaw.

Community Insight

Extensive engagement with Indigenous housing providers has already been conducted for related projects and reports. The community insight in this report was informed by the previous engagement for the Indigenous Affordable Housing Strategy, as well as conversations between City of Edmonton Administration and Indigenous housing providers in seeking City land or grant funding.

GBA+

Homeward Trust's By Name List is a real-time record of all known people currently experiencing homelessness across Edmonton. As of September 2023, there are 3,050 people on this list, of which more than 1,200 are either currently staying in a shelter (565) or sleeping outdoors (648), with the remainder provisionally accommodated.¹ Despite making up only five per cent of Edmonton's overall population, 56 per cent of the individuals on the list are Indigenous and approximately 45 per cent identify as female. In addition to the ongoing barriers people experiencing homelessness face in accessing public services like transportation, basic hygiene, regular and appropriate health care, food, and shelter, the identities of those individuals also intersect with other equity-seeking groups, who may face additional structural barriers to their housing security and well-being. For example, experience of racialized and 2SLGBTQ+ community members experiencing homelessness is uniquely challenging in that they face additional discrimination and lack of appropriate support when trying to access existing shelter, housing and social service systems.

¹ "Data, Analytics & Reporting". <https://homewardtrust.ca/data-analytics-reporting/>. Homeward Trust.

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There is a critical need for supportive housing to support marginalized and vulnerable individuals, as indicated by the City of Edmonton's Housing Need Assessment and Homeward Trust's By Name List.

Attachment

1. City of Edmonton's role in Indigenous-led Housing