



EDMONTON HERITAGE COUNCIL - ANNUAL REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

RECOMMENDATION

That the November 7, 2023, Edmonton Heritage Council report EXT02106, be received for information.

Report Purpose

Information only.

Note: David Ridley, Executive Director of Edmonton Heritage Council, is attending the November 7, 2023, City Council meeting to present this report, if selected.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the June 25, 2013, Community Services Committee meeting, the following motion was passed:

- *That Administration work with the Edmonton Heritage Council to provide a report on the museum strategy, the grant program, and other key issues to the Community Services Committee, on an annual basis no later than by June 30 of each year.*

At the January 17, 2022, Community and Public Services Committee meeting, Edmonton Heritage Council presented its most recent annual report and the following motion was passed:

- *That the January 17, 2022, Edmonton Heritage Council report EXT0883, be received for information.*

Executive Summary

- This report provides an annual report and update on the Edmonton Heritage Council's (EHC) and its key programs and initiatives for 2022/23.
- This report is to be received for information.

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- EHC's mission *is to connect people to the stories of their city* through support and leadership in preserving, researching, interpreting, and documenting Edmonton's history and heritage.
- The work of EHC aligns with the City Plan, noting the strategic goals of Healthy City, Urban Places, Regional Prosperity, and Climate Resilience.
- EHC receives annual operating, programming and Community Investment funding from the City of Edmonton, detailed in the 2020-2023 Service Agreement. This agreement is aligned with City Council's approval and allocations for Connections & Exchanges: A 10 Year Plan for Transforming Arts and Heritage in Edmonton.
- EHC is implementing the heritage-related recommendations in the City Council-approved Connections & Exchanges, whose Aims, Ambitions and Actions are being fulfilled by EHC in partnership with Edmonton Arts Council and Arts Habitat Edmonton. EAC provided an arts-related update at the May 31, 2023, Community and Public Services Committee meeting.
- EHC's programs advance participation and access to heritage experiences for all Edmontonians. The FIRE (Funding Indigenous Resurgence in Edmonton) program works to support First Nations, Métis, and Inuit traditional practices and protocols in connection to lived heritage.

REPORT

Edmonton Heritage Council's mission is to connect people to the stories of their city through support and leadership in preserving, researching, interpreting, and documenting Edmonton's history and heritage.

Edmonton Heritage Council envisions an Edmonton embracing its diverse heritage, inclusive of all people, communities, and cultures, on Treaty 6 territory, consistent with principles of truth and reconciliation.

Edmonton Heritage Council's strategic aims are derived from the eight Aims of Connections & Exchanges. Currently, EHC's priorities are:

1. Remove barriers for all Edmontonians to participate in heritage experiences;
2. Edmonton's heritage sector, organizations, and individuals are innovative and economically resilient;
3. Edmonton's neighbourhoods offer meaningful opportunities for heritage participation and engagement;
4. Edmontonians have a sense of belonging and connectedness to the people, places, and stories of their city;

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5. Heritage leaders are actively engaged in civic planning and engagement;
6. Dynamic exchanges of ideas and expertise occur between Edmonton's heritage sector and the world;
7. Diverse platforms for heritage collaboration within Edmonton allow communities to connect and create.

Edmonton Heritage Council's board and staff are committed to applying principles of reconciliation in alignment with the City of Edmonton's Indigenous Framework, including the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, specifically those actions on culture and heritage.

EHC affirms its commitment to stated organizational values of Heritage; Inclusion; Diversity; Truth & Reconciliation; and Community Engagement. EHC's equity policy further expands on these values and their application to our programs and services.

EHC receives annual funding from the City of Edmonton, through a 2020-2023 Service Agreement. In the most recent City of Edmonton budget cycle, City Council approved a phased 2023-2026 increase to Edmonton Heritage Council's core and investment program funding.

A renewed Service Agreement will be drafted with City Administration, anticipated to continue EHC's leadership in the heritage aims of Connections & Exchanges, in relation to the City Plan (and related project strategies), and in its continuing advisory role to City Council.

Key Program Initiatives

Edmonton City as a Museum Project

Launched in 2013 as part of a larger Edmonton museum strategy, the Edmonton City as Museum Project (ECAMP) is a multi-platform initiative to explore the stories that connect us, the stories that divide us, and the stories that nurture an appreciation of our differences as Edmontonians. EHC is reviewing ECAMP after its first 10 years to chart a course for its future development and growth.

- ECAMP's newest digital platform (exhibit), the Edmonton Living Rooms Project, launches this fall.
 - This collection of documents, drawings, written and recorded stories, and interactive features allows the world to explore the diverse ways seven new immigrant and refugee communities make Edmonton home. Over 100 community members participated in sharing their stories. This initiative is a key platform for EHC to support newcomers' cultural expression and belonging in the city.
 - The Exhibition builds on a federally funded Canada 150 project from 2017-2018 and is developed in partnership with the Multicultural Health Brokers Cooperative.

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- Preparations are also underway for the ECAMP digital platform for exploring the North Saskatchewan River Valley and its Edmonton/Amiskwaciywashikan connections through the Commonwealth Walkway Indigenous Expansion.
 - The Commonwealth Walkway invites Edmontonians and visitors alike down into our River Valley to explore stories of natural and built history via an interactive web application. After its initial development as an initiative supported by the City of Edmonton and corporate sponsors, EHC serves as steward of this work, including expanding content that reflects broader, diverse community heritage.
 - A new expansion will launch in 2024 developed with pipikwan petawkan (Indigenous consultancy), connecting with knowledge keepers, and the Indigenous Relations Office, providing access to stories collected through campaigns like Touch the Water and the River Crossing Heritage Interpretation Plan, funded through the Department of Canadian Heritage Museums Assistance Program.
- Our Digital Initiatives team completed work on a foundational new Digital Exhibitions Policy.
 - This policy represents best practices for stewarding, interpreting, and presenting cultural materials in digital formats.
 - The primary intention of this policy is to care for the keepers of the physical artifacts, stories shared, and/or lived knowledge.
 - This policy will be made widely available to our museum and heritage partners here and across Canada by the end of 2023.
- ECAMP hosted a fully subscribed walking tour, exploring the Footsteps of Early Black Settlers in Edmonton.
 - Over 30 people attended the walking tour that moved from downtown to Commonwealth Stadium, curated and led by Dr. Russell Cobb, with contributions from Deborah Dobbins of Shiloh Centre for Multicultural Roots, and Tanika Burlie-Tanner, the grand-daughter of Marie Burlie.
 - Many of the attendees were the descendants of these early settlers and shared their own stories and memories of places like Hatti's Harlem Chicken Inn, Immigration Hall, and houses throughout the McCauley neighbourhood.
- Since the beginning of 2022, 16 new stories have been added to the ECAMP platform. New stories include pieces centering:
 - Imrie House, Canada's first female-led architectural firm;
 - Usha Gupta and her groundbreaking work to push the North Indian Kathak dance style to the mainstream in our city; and
 - The generation of Filipino pioneers in Alberta in the 1960s following Canada's 1952 Immigration Act.

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Funding Indigenous Resurgence in Edmonton

Funding Indigenous Resurgence in Edmonton (FIRE) developed from the 2020 symposium Reconciliation & Resurgence: Heritage Practice in Post-TRC Edmonton to reignite First Nations, Métis and Inuit traditional practices and protocols in connection to lived heritage. FIRE is a first-of-its-kind funding program in Treaty 6 and Métis Nation Region 4, working side-by-side with applicants locally and elsewhere in Treaty 6 territory to develop their projects to full grant applications by connecting them to Knowledge Keepers, professional resources, community partners, and direct mentorship on the funding process.

- In 2022, the program doubled its granting allocation to just under \$100,000 distributed to 11 recipients. In 2023, allocations will increase over 50% to \$154,300, distributed to 17 projects advancing Indigenous resurgence in Edmonton and Treaty 6 territory.
 - We received 38 applications across the two 2023 intakes. Funded projects include:
 - Charis Auger’s efforts to bring 13 young people to the kihcihkaw askî Sacred Land to receive rite-of-passage teachings from Elder Marjorie Wright; and
 - A new language preservation project from Chad Whitford, which will develop new interview-based content educating communities in Plains Cree via TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube.
- FIRE has also been able to nimbly support community need-driven projects such as the iskwehew kamik (Women’s Firsts Lodge).
 - This project saw the FIRE team administering resources from the EHC, Edmonton Public Library, and City of Edmonton to hold ceremony led by Elders Jo-Ann and Jerry Saddleback.
 - Rite of passage was provided to 30 women in becoming ceremonial leaders.
 - Nine individuals received Cree names and many more built invaluable new connections to traditional knowledge.
- The next undertakings of the FIRE team will be the FIRE Spotlight Series and the Cultural Connection Fund
 - FIRE Spotlights will provide Edmontonians access to monthly events highlighting exciting research led by Treaty 6 Indigenous researchers regarding vital topics to contemporary Indigenous resurgence in our Edmonton like language preservation, environmental stewardship, and territorial acknowledgements.
 - The Cultural Connection fund will provide funding for Indigenous people to connect to culture, land, and Knowledge Keepers. This fund is being piloted this fall.

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Heritage Community Investment Program

The Heritage Community Investment Program (HCIP) was established in 2013, following City Council approval of funding, and City Policy C211H - Community Investment Grants to Organizations and Individuals. The HCIP program funds organizations and individuals through:

- Operational Investments (annual investments in heritage organizations)
- Change Capital (project-based grants to assist organizations in handling major change or transition)
- Career Development (grants for individuals to develop skills in the heritage sector)
- Research & Development (small investments for individuals for preliminary research towards larger projects)
- Project Accelerator (small investments for individuals to move projects to a new phase)
- Community Impact Project (major projects led by individuals or organizations)

HCIP's Career Development, Change Capital, and Operational Grants see very high success rates.

- In 2022, these programs received 14 applications of which 100% were successful.
- In 2023, 3 of 3 received applications have been successful for Change Capital. Twelve 12 further applications are pending to the Operational Grants stream for 2024 funding. We anticipate an 80-100% success rate on these applications.

HCIP's Community Impact Projects, Project Accelerator, and Research & Development Grants have significantly more competitive intakes.

- In 2022, these programs funded 17 projects from 47 applications.
- In 2023, 61 applications have been received to these programs, a 30% increase over 2022. 11 of 36 processed applications have been successful.
 - Of the 25 applications to these programs still pending peer assessment, we anticipate 7-10 further successful applications.
- We anticipate \$570,000, an increase of 14% over 2022, to be disbursed in 2023 through HCIP.
- Projects funded in 2022 & 2023 include:
 - A series of maps of Edmonton's Chinatown developed by Emily Chu highlighting business, arts, and heritage sites across the district; and
 - A multimedia presentation displayed at Edmonton City Hall in December 2022/January 2023 of the stories of eight families who either are currently or have been undocumented in Canada led by the Alberta Workers' Associate for Research

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and Education.

- A report including descriptions of each successful Community Impact Project and Project Accelerator Grant from Run 1 of 2023 is attached.
- 2023 HCIP Operational Grants (assessed in fall 2022 and distributed in early 2023) invested in these organizations: Alberta Aviation Museum, Alberta Genealogical Society (Edmonton Chapter), Alberta Labour History Institute, Alberta Pioneer Railway Association, Edmonton and District Historical Society, Edmonton Chinatown Library Foundation, Edmonton Radial Railway Society (High Level Streetcar), Société genealogique du Nord-Ouest, and Société historique francophone de l'Alberta.

For 2024, we will see applications (not yet adjudicated) from cultural heritage organizations reflecting more of Edmonton's diversity.

Key Priorities

- Community Safety and Well-Being
 - Edmonton Heritage Council recognizes its role in supporting and implementing CSWB pillars (anti-racism, equity, reconciliation, and well-being) across Edmonton's heritage sector starting with our internal and program operations.
 - EHC is in the process of engaging an external Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Belonging firm to address operational and policy-based opportunities for EHC to actionably combat racism in our sector and stakeholder relationships.
 - EHC has begun its role as an active collaborator in the City's Anti-Black Racism Action Plan in discussions with organizations such as the Africa Centre and Shiloh Centre for Multicultural Roots.
- Fund Diversification
 - EHC's operations and funding programs are reliant on the City of Edmonton's investment.
 - As cost of living rises, EHC continues to seek partners to support its ECAMP, FIRE, and HCIP program activities.
 - ECAMP and Edmonton Heritage Network projects in 2022-23 have been made possible through support from the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Government of Alberta, and the Edmonton Public Library totaling \$238,000.
 - EHC has seen a significant increase in applications across all FIRE and HCIP streams. EHC continues to seek new opportunities to increase allocations to meet community needs.

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- EHC has accessed small amounts of funding from the Government of Alberta to establish an Alberta heritage place network, with ongoing educational, conference and awareness program. EHC is working with organizations throughout the province in this initiative.

Edmonton City Plan Implementation

Edmonton Heritage Council's ongoing development and activities in 2022-23 align with several City Plan Intentions. A handful of selected Intentions are outlined below.

- 1.1 Edmonton fosters wellness and mental health by providing opportunities for all people to engage in community life and supporting those who are isolated, marginalized or at risk.
 - The Edmonton Living Rooms Project actively engaged youth and families in the development of exhibit materials to build community well-being by providing more opportunities for families to see themselves reflected in cultural exhibitions.
 - The FIRE program engaged more new applicants in 2023 than ever before, integrating community care and long-term relationship building to reduce perceived barriers to accessing professional training and resources.
 - EHC continues to be an active partner in the Community Safety and Well-Being task force.
- 1.2 Edmontonians can connect, be active in their community and celebrate Edmonton's heritage, diversity, and unique identity.
 - ECAMP staff collaborated with tour curator Dr. Russell Cobb for Walking the Footsteps of Early Black Edmonton, welcoming Edmontonians to explore the storied legacies of Black migration to townships like Amber Valley and Keystone while visiting many Black-owned businesses in June 2023.
 - The Commonwealth Walkway encourages families, tourists, and all other Edmontonians to go into Edmonton's River Valley and learn the history of its lands, and its Indigenous expansion launching in 2024 will provide entirely new access points for the history of the land prior to (and since) colonization.
- 2.3 Edmonton's growth and development mutually benefit the city and region.
 - EHC's support of the iskwehew kamik project brought 40 Indigenous community members to the kihcihkaw aski Sacred Land, one of EHC's continued efforts to sustain cultural development in this site alongside its Elder Council.
 - EHC completed evaluation of the currently dormant Edmonton Heritage Network. Work will begin in 2024 to revitalize this essential tool enabling a well-connected heritage ecosystem that promotes and connects organizations and practitioners for innovative, creative new work.

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- 3.1 Edmontonians acknowledge and celebrate Indigenous heritage while honouring the diverse cultures, perspectives and experiences residents bring from around the world.
 - EHC and the Edmonton Public Library are in a current partnership implementing the Indigitization project (based on the Indigitization program currently active at the University of British Columbia), providing free training and in-kind equipment to Indigenous researchers across Treaty 6 and Métis Region 4 allowing them to document and digitize stories, artifacts, and other histories at no cost.
 - We are currently piloting a Cultural Connection Fund providing Indigenous community members with funds to travel to home and traditional communities for personal journeys of cultural reconnection and land-based learning.
 - EHC will continue to improve access to FIRE funding and educational outreach in accordance with the City's Indigenous Framework and our network of Treaty 6 and Métis Region 4 partners.
- 3.3 Edmontonians, entrepreneurs, and investors have opportunities and support to grow a diverse and resilient economy.
 - EHC continues to maintain and expand its range of community partners in 2022-23 including the Multicultural Health Brokers (Edmonton Living Rooms), the Edmonton Public Library (iskwehew kamik and Indigitization), and the Indigenous Knowledge and Wisdom Centre (FIRE Spotlight Series).
 - HCIP has increased fees for peer assessors in line with industry best practices set by the Canadian Artists' Representation / le Front des Artistes Canadien (CARFAC) to continue setting high standards for professional work in the heritage sector.
- 5.2 Edmonton protects and enhances its image and identity through heritage.
 - EHC has increased investments in Change Capital Grants and Operational Grants to allow Edmonton's heritage institutions to respond quickly and implement industry best practices in asset management, equity and diversity, and facility accessibility.
 - EHC-funded projects have elevated Edmonton's cultural profile on a national and international level (Omar Mouallem's HCIP-funded feature documentary The Lebanese Burger Mafia debuted at the Toronto International Film Festival, ShiftLab's ambassadors demonstrated Exploring Wahkohtowin board game nationally and internationally with funding from HCIP).
 - ECAMP's new Digital Exhibitions Policy is at the front line of digital museum work across Canada and will place our research and relationships to sector experts on a national scale.

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ATTACHMENTS

1. Edmonton Heritage Council - 2022 Annual Report
2. Edmonton Heritage Council - Spring 2023 Grant Recipients (Updated October 2023)
3. Edmonton Heritage Council - 2022 Audited Financial Statement