

AFFORDABLE HOUSING AGREEMENT

Catholic Social Services

Recommendation

That Executive Committee recommend to City Council:

1. That the 2024 revenue and expenditure operating budget for the Social Development branch be increased by \$2,775,000, on a one-time basis with funding from the Affordable Housing Reserve, to be spent on a multi-year basis, to fund the subsidy funding affordable housing agreement outlined in Attachment 1 of the December 6, 2023, Community Services report CS02035.
2. That a subsidy funding affordable housing agreement between the City of Edmonton and Catholic Social Services, for an amount not to exceed \$2,775,000, as outlined in Attachment 1 of the December 6, 2023, Community Services report CS02035, be approved, and that the agreement be in form and content acceptable to the City Manager.

Requested Action		Council decision required	
ConnectEdmonton's Guiding Principle		ConnectEdmonton Strategic Goals	
CONNECTED This unifies our work to achieve our strategic goals.		Healthy City	
City Plan Values	LIVE		
City Plan Big City Move(s)	Inclusive and compassionate	Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities	Nobody is in core housing need Community safety and well-being
Corporate Business Plan	Serving Edmontonians		
Council Policy, Program or Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy C601 - Affordable Housing Investment Guidelines • Policy C437A - City Land Assets for Non-Profit Affordable Housing 		

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Relationships	
Related Council Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• August 16, 2021, CS00733, Rapid Housing Initiative - Updated Housing Investment Plan• November 16, 2021, CS00799, Rapid Housing Initiative Funding Agreements - Cities Stream• February 7, 2022, CS00898, Rapid Housing Initiative Hotel Conversion, Coliseum Inn• April 11, 2022, CS00947, Support for Women’s Shelters• June 27, 2022, CS01188, Affordable Housing Investment Plan - Update• June 27, 2022, CS01089, Update on Housing Needs Assessment• March 1, 2023, CS01624, Rapid Housing Initiative Investment Plan - Round 3 of Rapid Housing Initiative

Executive Summary

- The City of Edmonton’s Affordable Housing Investment Plan sets a goal of creating and renewing 2,700 new units of affordable housing over the next four years.
- Catholic Social Services currently operates a women’s shelter, a first-stage, emergency shelter providing safe, secure refuge and emergency services and is looking to build a second-stage transitional affordable housing development to provide further support and stability to women and children fleeing domestic violence.
- The second stage development is situated on a parcel of land adjacent to the women’s emergency shelter. The close proximity of these spaces affords the opportunity to share resources and will ease the transition for women and children moving from a stage one to a stage two shelter.
- The project was one of several that was submitted in partnership with the City, to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation’s Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) Round 3 Project Stream funding. The project was unsuccessful in RHI funding, putting the committed funding from Alberta Social Housing Corporation’s Affordable Housing Partnership Program at risk of being returned.
- Administration now recommends the City of Edmonton provide subsidy funding of \$2.775 million for the proposed affordable housing development, which would result in 33 net new affordable housing units that would remain as affordable housing for a period of 40 years. Funding for the City’s contribution of \$2.775 million to the project is available through the existing Affordable Housing Reserve.
- The City’s funding investment would help offset a total construction cost of \$9.7 million and ensure the proposed project stays on track. The remainder of the funds for the project are expected to come from the Government of Alberta (\$3 million in funding committed) and Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (funding applications are underway).
- Once built, the proposed development would provide safe, affordable, accessible, and energy-efficient-built housing for women and children escaping violence.

REPORT

The City's Affordable Housing Investment Plan (2023-2026) has an overall target of 2,700 new and renovated affordable housing units in the next four years and a longer-term target of meeting all the housing needs identified in the City's Affordable Housing Needs Assessment (2022)¹. These goals are aligned with The City Plan goals of eliminating core housing need and homelessness in Edmonton by 2050. With these goals in mind, this report recommends the approval of subsidy funding for the LaSalle Women's Transitional Housing development led by Catholic Social Services.

Alberta is in the top three provinces in the country to report the highest rates of domestic violence, with Edmonton Police Services reporting a 13 per cent increase in reported victims of domestic violence from 2019 to 2020. The Alberta Council of Women's Shelters reported that from April 2021 to March 2022, shelters received 25,530 calls to request admission to shelters, with only 16.6 per cent of calls being accommodated, with the remaining being turned away due to capacity or other issues.²

The City's Affordable Housing Needs Assessment also identifies that women and children fleeing domestic violence are a priority population in core housing need, where 50 per cent of women-led renter households (5,840 households) are in housing need and only 70 of 2,000 temporary housing units are dedicated to women and their children in Edmonton. This signals a need for additional dedicated transitional housing units.

The LaSalle Women's Transitional Housing project will provide 43 bedrooms in 33 self-contained housing units. All units will be furnished and include a living room, eating area, bathroom and in-suite laundry. There are four studios, 19 one-bedroom and 10 two-bedroom units. To allow for maximum flexibility, eight of the one-bedroom units have connecting doors so the units may be combined to create two-bedroom units. Of the 33 self-contained units, seven (three one-bedroom and four two-bedroom units) will also be barrier-free for accessible needs. This development has been designed to be energy efficient with an estimated 34 per cent reduction in energy consumption and estimated 31 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions relative to 2017 National Energy Code of Canada for Buildings standards. This will enable Catholic Social Services to meet the changing needs of families accessing the shelter.

The transitional housing site is situated on a parcel of land adjacent to a stage one/domestic violence shelter (Women's Shelter) also operated by Catholic Social Services. The close proximity of these spaces affords the opportunity to share resources and will ease the transition for women and children moving from a stage one, emergency shelter situation, to a stabilized stage two shelter for longer term transitional affordable housing.

¹ <https://www.edmonton.ca/sites/default/files/public-files/assets/PDF/Housing-Needs-Assessment-August-2022.pdf>

² "2022 ACWS Data Release".

<https://acws.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/2022-12-06-Data-Release-2022-FINAL.pdf>

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Second stage shelters are safe, longer-term (six months to two years), affordable apartment-style residences that are part of the spectrum of domestic violence support and housing services. They often bridge the transition between an emergency shelter and independent living.

This project was previously supported by the City of Edmonton as a Project Stream submission through the third round of the Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) program. Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) provided feedback that this project scored well but that demand nationally for funds minimized their ability to fund this project. This project was also supported by Alberta Social Housing Corporation and their Affordable Housing Partnership Program grant for \$3 million. However, without the RHI funding, the project could not move forward without further support, which put the provincial funding at risk of being returned.

Administration is bringing forward this report and recommendation for a funding commitment outside of its typical Affordable Housing Investment Program grant cycle to ensure the project stays on track. Catholic Social Services has requested a commitment of \$2.775 million in funding from the City of Edmonton, which is equivalent to 25 per cent of total capital costs. This funding will be used in conjunction with the \$3 million grant already committed by the Government of Alberta as equity to ensure the project is able to proceed. Catholic Social Services will also be pursuing CMHC's Co-Investment Funding grants and mortgage loan insurance (MLI Select) multi-unit financing program to fund the remaining balance of the project.

Budget/Financial Implications

City funding of \$2.775 million for the subsidy funding affordable housing agreement (Attachment 1) is available in the existing Affordable Housing Reserve, but requires a budget adjustment to transfer the reserve funding to the Social Development operating budget (Recommendation one).

Catholic Social Services has committed operational funding from the Government of Alberta and the Government of Canada for this development. This project is considered self-sustaining and the City of Edmonton has not received any requests for operating funding.

Legal Implications

Bylaw 16620 - City Administration Bylaw enables the City Manager to approve affordable housing agreements that do not exceed \$1 million. Council approval is required for affordable housing agreements that exceed these delegated authority limits.

Community Insight

All residents of Edmonton deserve a place to call home and housing security is critical to a healthy city. Residents have informed the City through previous public engagement that there is not enough affordable housing supply in the city, as many struggle finding an affordable home. Providing grant funding for this housing development would help people find housing by increasing the affordable housing supply.

GBA+

The number of Edmontonians experiencing homelessness has almost doubled since the beginning of the pandemic. Homeward Trust's By Name List serves as a real-time record of all

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known people currently experiencing homelessness across Edmonton. As of October 10, 2023, there are more than 3,100 people on this list. Of those 3,100+ people, over 1,300 are either currently staying in a shelter or sleeping outdoors, with the remainder provisionally accommodated (couch-surfing, short-term housing, etc.)³.

Of the 3,100+ individuals experiencing homelessness, approximately 47 per cent identify as female. Women are more likely to be represented in the “hidden homeless” population. Women are less likely to use shelters, services and other services for individuals experiencing homelessness. As a result, they are often under-reported in homelessness counts. In 2016, there were 7,795 renter single mothers/female heads of household living in core housing need, which constituted two-thirds of all single mothers/female heads of household in Edmonton.

In addition to the ongoing barriers individuals experiencing homelessness face in accessing public services like transportation, regular and appropriate health care, food, and shelter, the identities of those individuals intersect with other equity-seeking groups. The experience of racialized and two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, and plus (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.

As per the City of Edmonton Housing Need Assessment, there is a critical need for supportive housing units to support marginalized and vulnerable individuals.

Attachment

1. Catholic Social Services - Subsidy Funding Affordable Housing Agreement - General Terms and Conditions

³ homewardtrust.ca/data-analytics-reporting/