

EXHIBITION LANDS PLANNING FRAMEWORK AND OUTDOOR FESTIVAL SPACE

Recommendation

That the March 19, 2024, Financial and Corporate Services report FCS02244, 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.	Urban Places		
City Plan Values	LIVE		
City Plan Big City Move(s)	A community of communities A rebuildable city Greener as we grow	Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities	15-minute districts Economic Growth Climate adaptation and energy transition
Corporate Business Plan	Transforming for the future		
Council Policy, Program or Project Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C512 - Environmental Policy • C511A - Land Development Policy 		
Related Council Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December 3, 2019, Urban Form and Corporate Strategic Development report CR_7713, Exhibition Lands Planning Framework • April 26, 2021, Financial and Corporate Services report CR_8382, Exhibition Lands Implementation Strategy • January 17, 2024, Financial and Corporate Services report FCS02210, Land Sale Approval - Edmonton Exhibition Lands 		

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Previous Council/Committee Action

At the November 21/22/27/28/29, 2023, City Council - Budget meeting, the following motion passed:

That Administration provide a report to Committee outlining the following:

- a. compatibility of the Exhibition Lands Planning Framework with the ongoing operational needs of the Expo Centre, and
- b. consideration of ongoing need for an outdoor festival space to accommodate K-Days and other festivals.

Executive Summary

- The Exhibition Lands Planning Framework's goal to create space for a vibrant new urban community will impact the current operations of the EXPO Centre and the outdoor events that make use of the current site.
- This report outlines the current mitigations to operational impacts to the EXPO Centre as a result of the redevelopment timeline for the Exhibition Lands, including phased demolition and land sales.
- The demolition schedule for the Coliseum provides an opportunity for the North Exhibition Lands site to be an interim outdoor event location while redevelopment continues south of EXPO Centre.
- Administration plans to program the Coliseum lands as an interim outdoor festival and events space after the building's demolition.

REPORT

The Exhibition Lands Planning Framework (Planning Framework), as outlined in the December 3, 2019, Urban Form and Corporate Strategic Development report CR_7713 was received for information by Council. The purpose of the Planning Framework is to provide a clear vision and policies for future development within the plan area over the next 30 years. The Planning Framework's intent is to harness the area's potential for sustainable, transit-oriented development that capitalizes on access to the Capital Line LRT, connects to surrounding neighbourhoods, generates employment, enhances recreational opportunities and celebrates the area's role as an events destination. On March 15, 2021, following the third reading of Charter Bylaw 19267 - Adoption of the Edmonton Exhibition Lands Planning Framework, Council passed the adoption of the Planning Framework.

For more than 110 years, the Edmonton Exhibition Lands site has been a gathering place for Edmonton's social, cultural, entertainment, sports and agricultural life. The site is currently home to K-Days, Farm Fair, several additional outdoor festivals and events, as well as the temporary location for the Heritage Festival through 2025.

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EXPO Centre Operations and Outdoor Events

The EXPO Centre's current leased, licensed and utilized area is spread across the majority of the Exhibition Lands, as shown in Attachment 1. Some buildings and yards across the large site are used for storage and repair, and some areas are used to host long-term tenants, such as the Urban Farm. Conversely, significant portions of the lands are sparsely used, save for major events such as K-Days. Attachment 2 highlights the land and building uses associated with last year's K-Days exhibition.

Administration is phasing initial redevelopment around the outer edges of the Exhibition Lands to successfully market and progress land sales that will:

- increase housing supply;
- facilitate private sector investment to realize the community-supported and Council-approved plans; and
- continue to support multiple current festivals and events.

Administration has heard from Explore Edmonton that additional land may help to support their operations. A full analysis that reviews projected demand, land needs assessment and programming would help to better inform any proposed changes to the Planning Framework. However, that analysis has not been undertaken by Explore Edmonton and Administration would not recommend changes to the Planning Framework at this time. In an effort to find an interim solution, Administration has communicated with Explore Edmonton that land north of 118 Avenue will be reserved for interim festival use, which is further explained below.

Administration is and has been committed to working with Explore Edmonton to ensure that any potential negative impacts to Expo Centre operations as a result of the neighbourhood development are minimized. Development is being phased to allow time for Expo Centre's current state of operations to be planned for and implemented over suitable and predictable timelines.

Exhibition Lands Implementation Strategy's Redevelopment Timeline Solution

The Exhibition Lands Implementation Strategy (Implementation Strategy) provides a roadmap for successful redevelopment of the area that aligns with the vision and policies of the Planning Framework. A key focus of the Implementation Strategy is aligning redevelopment to be both market-driven, and to meet the site's current and future festival and event needs. Infrastructure investment and land sales began in 2023 with the first phase of demolitions. The relocation and reallocation of buildings and spaces currently being used by Explore Edmonton in the southwest quadrant of the Exhibition Lands is a priority for 2024. These areas and structures include a 20,000+ sq. ft. storage facility, maintenance shop, laydown area and Urban Farm. Explore Edmonton and Administration continue to discuss plans for these relocations and reallocations, at Explore Edmonton's cost, which began upon the approval of the Implementation Strategy.

The medium-term redevelopment timeline includes the eventual expansion of Borden Park north into the existing hardscape, the demolition and redevelopment of the former racetrack, stables and Spectrum building, along with the demolition of the Coliseum building on the north portion of the Exhibition Lands. The development activities in the central site areas present significant

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challenges for Explore Edmonton and the City in hosting K-Days and other outdoor events and festivals, due to the loss of lands currently programmed for such events.

The demolition schedule for the Coliseum (2025) provides an opportunity for the North Exhibition Lands site to act as an interim outdoor event and storage location while redevelopment continues south of EXPO Centre. With the lands north of 118 Avenue not expected for redevelopment until the “Long-Term” phase of the Implementation Strategy (10+ years), Explore Edmonton and the City intend to use the Coliseum site and parking lots for outdoor programming at the Exhibition Lands for an extended period. The size, location and current zoning of the Coliseum lands are favourable to hosting K-days and similar outdoor festivals with no amendments required to the Planning Framework. A further review for additional site preparation costs post demolition, such as backfilling, grading, drainage and utility connections will need to be completed. By providing access to this additional land, there is an opportunity to regularly review the frequency of use and the economic benefits which are created through ongoing festival planning which can then lead to a longer term decision on how the lands should be redeveloped in the future.

Budget/Financial Implications

As a part of the 2023-2026 Capital Budget deliberations, City Council approved capital profile CM-17-5046 Edmonton Exhibition Lands, funded by Land Enterprise Retained Earnings to facilitate the redevelopment of the Exhibition Lands, along with an increase to capital profile CM-99-9000 Infrastructure Delivery - Growth for the demolition of the Coliseum. Work will begin on the Coliseum demolition in 2025 with \$19.25 million in bridge funding provided by Land Enterprise Retained Earnings and \$15.75 million provided by Pay-As-You-Go.

The Implementation Strategy outlines the program of land sales to facilitate activities forwarding the redevelopment of the site, such as demolition, utility and road network upgrades. Following the phasing strategy outlined in the Implementation Strategy, which calls for the lands south of EXPO Centre to be sold and developed in the short-to-medium term, proceeds from those sales can supplement further future neighbourhood development. This ensures that the neighbourhood is developed in line with market conditions and strategy, as well as with the overall goals of the Planning Framework.

Community Insight

Extensive stakeholder and community engagement, which began in 2017, informed the Edmonton Exhibition Lands Planning Framework and Implementation Strategy. The Planning Framework was refined through several rounds of public and stakeholder engagement. Engagement included stakeholder meetings (including Explore Edmonton), public meetings and surveys. Themes heard from engagement participants included: open space, transit orientation and connectivity, the mix of uses as an opportunity to enhance lifestyle, density and housing mix, the future of K-Days and other events.

GBA+

In developing both the Edmonton Exhibition Lands Planning Framework and Implementation Strategy key guiding principles were considered pillars for the future neighborhood. The City is

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working to ensure Exhibition Lands is an inclusive neighbourhood for Edmontonians at a variety of income levels. Market rate housing in the neighbourhood is being targeted towards average income levels and parcels of land have been identified for future affordable housing developments. The City will continue to work with developers and all housing providers to ensure the development has attainable housing and meets the City's aspirational target of 16 per cent affordable housing within the development.

A comprehensive approach to transportation planning will ensure people who walk, cycle, wheel, ride transit and drive have safe, reliable, high-quality and connected travel options to and through the area. Planning will also support vibrant, safe, accessible, and inclusive communities for existing and new residents, and visitors, so people of all ages and abilities have an opportunity to fully participate in the life of their city and neighbourhoods.

Attachments

1. Exhibition Lands Leased & Licensed Areas (Explore Edmonton)
2. K-Days & Event Area Utilization Map