

UPDATED COMMUNITY PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS - PROGRESS UPDATE

Recommendation			
That the May 21, 2024, Community Services report CS01853, 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.		
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"> Community Safety and Well-being City Policy C620 - Supporting Vulnerable People During Extreme Weather Conditions City of Edmonton Minimum Emergency Shelter Standards 		
Related Council Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> June 27, 2022, Community Services report CS01089, Update on Housing Needs Assessment October 30, 2023 (rerouted to December 4, 2023), Community Services report CS01661, Edmonton's Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness - Lessons Learned June 17, 2023, Community Services report CS01759, City of Edmonton - Corporate Homelessness Plan January 15, 2024, Community Services report CS01673, Updated Affordable Housing Strategy 		

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Executive Summary

- This report provides a progress update on the 2024 Community Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness (the Plan) in advance of it being finalized in June 2024. The implementation of the Plan is the responsibility of Homeward Trust Edmonton, as the designated Community Entity and Systems Planner Organization (federal government) and Community-Based Organization (provincial government), with the support of other stakeholders in the homeless-serving system of care.
- The Homeward Trust and City of Edmonton project team are validating the draft community-created recommendations of The Plan with key stakeholders across the homeless-serving sector and in allied systems (such as healthcare, justice and children and family services) to solidify the Plan's objectives and targets. A public accountability framework will identify which actors are responsible for stewarding each of the actions in the Plan.
- The Plan informs the City of Edmonton's upcoming Corporate Homelessness Plan (CS01759, June 17, 2024). The Corporate Homelessness Plan will articulate the City's role and responsibilities relative to the Community Plan in consideration of City priorities, jurisdictional responsibility and the work of other actors in the sector.

REPORT

Recent non-market housing supply projections (shown in Attachment 1) suggest that over the next five years, in order to have enough housing and supports for those experiencing homelessness, Edmonton needs an additional:

- 1,400 - 1,700 units of supportive housing, with varying levels of social and medical support;
- 150 - 250 units of transitional (bridge) housing, primarily but not exclusively for unsheltered individuals;
- 300 - 600 caseload spaces of scattered site support¹ to address the backlog of individuals who are waiting to be assigned to a housing caseload.

The 2024 Community Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness (the Plan) will provide Edmonton with strategic direction, role clarity and assignment of accountability for all participants in the homeless-serving sector system of care². The success of the Plan will be evaluated by an overall reduction in the number of people experiencing homelessness in the pursuit of Functional Zero,³ (a community's ability to demonstrate that any experiences of homelessness are rare, brief and non-recurring). This aligns with the City Plan target of "no episodic or chronic homelessness in Edmonton by 2050" and the use of a Functional Zero approach to achieve this.⁴

¹ "Scattered Site Supports" includes program streams that support individuals living in market housing and is sometimes referred to as Housing First programming. Homeward Trust Edmonton currently funds 1,563 caseload spaces.

² The sector includes funders, service providers and allied systems including health, justice and child-welfare who support people and families experiencing housing insecurity.

³ <https://homelessnesslearninghub.ca/learning-materials/making-zero-count/>

⁴ "Edmonton will take a Functional Zero approach to ending homelessness by the time our population reaches two million people. This acknowledges that eliminating homelessness or the risk of homelessness

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Rationale for Community Plans

Community Plans align efforts to end homelessness, typically stewarded by the designated Community Entity who leads community-based efforts to end homelessness as a condition of their funding from Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy.⁵ In Edmonton, Homeward Trust is the Community Entity and designated Systems Planner Organization that aggregates funds from three orders of government to coordinate and fund the efforts of organizations to deliver housing programs for people at risk of or experiencing chronic homelessness. This effort is organized using a comprehensive Systems Framework (see Attachment 2).

Previous Community Plans in Edmonton facilitated successful housing outcomes for thousands of Edmontonians. The *10 Year Plan to End Homelessness* (2009) reduced homelessness in Edmonton by nearly half between 2006 and 2016. Its update, released in 2017, resulted in the development of 644 units of supportive housing in addition to housing more than 8,500 individuals between 2017 and 2023. However, since 2017 there have been significant changes to Edmonton's landscape that have resulted in rising rates of homelessness and increased complexity of need among those who are chronically homeless. A new Community Plan is required to guide the next chapter of housing intervention.

Plan Development Process

In the Spring 2023, Homeward Trust and the City of Edmonton contracted an Indigenous firm, pipikwan pêhtâkwan, who partnered with an experienced strategic planning firm, Y-Station Ltd., to lead data analysis and evaluation, research and engagement, and draft plan development. Oversight of project approach and implementation has been managed by Homeward Trust with support to City Administration. The project approach centers the voices of people with lived and living experiences of homelessness (Attachment 3), feedback from the homeless-serving sector (Attachment 4), robust analysis of progress towards goals outlined in the 2017 Plan (Community and Public Services October 30, 2023 report CS01661) and ongoing data analysis and forecasting to determine both programmatic and non-market housing needs. The draft recommendations are undergoing validation and refinement through engagement with key stakeholders and Homeward Trust's Community Advisory Board (CAB).⁶ The CAB includes the Community Plan Leadership Committee (CPLC), who are ultimately responsible for stewarding the plan through the implementation of identified actions tracked in a public facing Accountability Framework that monitors progress.

may not be possible, given the complex nature of how people come to experience homelessness." (page 163) Source: https://www.edmonton.ca/sites/default/files/public-files/assets/PDF/City_Plan_FINAL.pdf

⁵ Reaching Home is the Government of Canada's community based funding stream designed to reduce chronic homelessness nationally by 50% by fiscal year 2027 to 2028 and supports the goals of the National Housing Strategy. Source: <https://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/homelessness-sans-abri/index-eng.html>

⁶ The composition of the Community Advisory Board (CAB) is directed by the Federal Government to be reflective of local community responses to homelessness and is encouraged to include, but is not limited to, representatives from health agencies, Indigenous communities and other equity deserving groups, private and public sector stakeholders, police and correctional services, and people with lived and living experiences of homelessness. Composition requirements can be found:

<https://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/homelessness-sans-abri/directives-eng.html#h2.3-h3.5>

UPDATED COMMUNITY PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS - PROGRESS UPDATE

Proposed Recommendations

The draft recommendations and actions identified in Attachment 1 are designed to address systemic issues related to integration and effective collaboration between systems of care, data collection and use and program improvements. The recommendations are responsive to, and continue to improve upon, the systems changes that have occurred since 2017.

When published, the Plan will include an Accountability Framework which will outline the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders.

The draft problems and recommendations are based on the feedback received from external parties through the engagement process. These recommendations help the City and other stakeholders understand how service providers and individuals with lived and living experience of homelessness experience current challenges. After the recommendations are accepted by community, Homeward Trust, with participation from Administration, will begin to draft the Updated Community Plan to End Homelessness.

City Commitment to The Plan

The City of Edmonton's Corporate Homelessness Plan, to be presented at the June 17, 2024 Community and Public Services Committee meeting (report CS01759) will outline the role of the City of Edmonton in relation to the Plan and detail actions that the City will take to support the collective effort to end homelessness. The actions will align with strategic direction in The City Plan, the Updated Affordable Housing Strategy, the Affordable Housing Needs Assessment, and other commitments and plans within the City's Community Safety and Well-being Strategy. The Corporate Homelessness Plan will also address June 17, 2022 City Auditor Report recommendations (OCA01289, City's Response to Homelessness Audit Report).

Alignment with Governmental Strategies

Homeward Trust is working with HelpSeeker Technologies to develop a quantitative data-model that identifies the number and type of non-market affordable housing unit targets, including temporary housing like bridge or transitional units, needed by people who are experiencing homelessness. The model will also include projections for the number of spaces needed in allied systems of care, including supportive living units managed through Alberta Health Services and the number of spaces needed for people experiencing homelessness for addictions and mental health support in the Recovery Oriented System of Care.

Due to the unique physical, mental and addictions health needs present in Edmonton's homeless population, a variety of housing options and supports are needed to help individuals and families achieve long term housing stability. Work is ongoing with allied systems of care to invite input and data integration into the model to predict the types of health supports individuals experiencing homelessness need to become and stay housed.

UPDATED COMMUNITY PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS - PROGRESS UPDATE

To be successful, the Community Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness must be aligned with the strategic priorities of all orders of government in order to integrate with adjacent service delivery systems, such as health, and to capitalize on funding opportunities. The principles, objectives and actions in the Plan are aligned with the Government of Alberta's Recovery Oriented Housing model⁷, Stronger Foundations⁸, the Government of Alberta's ten year housing strategy⁹ and the Government of Canada's National Housing Strategy¹⁰.

Next Steps

Further engagement and relationship building work is planned to validate the draft recommendations, objectives and accountabilities that will be included in the finalized 2024 Community Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness. The engagement will be completed by Homeward Trust as stewards of the federally-mandated Community Advisory Boards, which include the Indigenous Advisory Council, the Project Review Committee and the Community Plan Leadership Committee. Leading up to the launch of the final Plan, a comprehensive communication strategy will include an interactive web-based resource to document progress.

Budget/Financial Implications

When the Community Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness and Corporate Homelessness Plan are finalized, estimated budget impacts will be presented to Council for consideration and potential inclusion in future supplemental budget adjustments.

Community Insight

keeoukaywin, or The Visiting Way, was central to how insights were gathered. *keeoukaywin* is a decolonized methodological approach to research and engagement that centers relational ways of knowing and is "caring, respectful, and grounded in self, place, land, and family" (Gaudet 2019)¹¹. Attachments 3 and 4 provide detailed engagement reports from pipikwan pèhtâkwan and Y-Station Ltd.

Lived and Living Experience Engagement

More than 150 individuals with lived and living experience were engaged during the Lived and Living Experience engagement process. Key themes from the engagement include:

- individuals feel they need greater and more appropriate supports for their concerns;
- individuals do not see the supply of affordable housing or culturally appropriate supports matching their needs;

⁷ <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/recovery-oriented-housing-model-report-of-ccrh-task-force>

⁸ <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/d17f3af6-fa5a-4cb0-b36e-248823cddff1/resource/d11b4795-763a-4221-b6f9-2f5769df50a5/download/sh-stronger-foundations-albertas-10-year-strategy-affordable-housing-2021.pdf>

⁹ <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/d17f3af6-fa5a-4cb0-b36e-248823cddff1/resource/d11b4795-763a-4221-b6f9-2f5769df50a5/download/sh-stronger-foundations-albertas-10-year-strategy-affordable-housing-2021.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://www.placetocallhome.ca/>

¹¹ Keeoukaywin: The Visiting Way - Fostering an Indigenous Research Methodology. Janice Cindy Gaudet, University of Alberta, Campus Saint-Jean. Source: <https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/aps/index.php/aps/article/view/29336/pdf>

UPDATED COMMUNITY PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS - PROGRESS UPDATE

- a negative impact on individual perception of their ability to make a successful exit from their state of homelessness.

Sector Engagement

More than 150 participants from more than 70 homeless-serving or intersecting organizations echoed the finding from the lived and living experience engagement that there is not enough non-market housing supply to meet the current or forecasted need. Some prominent themes include:

- alignment among front line workers and administrators that individuals have more complex needs in terms of disabilities, addictions and mental health but available supports do not address that complexity, making it difficult for those experiencing homelessness to find and maintain housing;
- the homeless-serving system and intersecting systems are still operating in silos and current funding structures unintentionally enhance siloing;
- there is a desire from the sector to meet more frequently in structured settings to discuss emerging issues and opportunities.

Relationship Building and Information Exchange

In addition to structured engagement, the project team seized opportunities to gather with thought-leaders to share updates about the Plan work underway and catalogue emerging information and research from the sector.

GBA+

Client-level data and census data since the 2017 Plan consistently shows that there is an overrepresentation of some groups experiencing housing precarity and homelessness, including but not limited to: Indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, lone-parent households, 2SLGBTQI+ persons and racialized communities. Evaluation of the 2017 plan, the two streams of engagement, and analyses of past lived experience engagements prompts the homelessness serving sector, including the City of Edmonton, to identify equity seeking measures that can be implemented. Three of the draft recommendations are designed to address equity gaps (recommendations six, seven and ten) while other recommendations should include GBA+ or other methods of equity analysis to support successful implementation.

Attachments

1. Draft Recommendations
2. System Planning Framework
3. Lived Experience Engagement Interim Summary Report
4. What We Heard - Sector Engagement