

## WELLINGTON PARK LAND OPTIONS AND BUSINESS CASE ANALYSIS

### Recommendation

That the May 14, 2025, Community Services report CS02816, 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.		
City Plan Big City Move(s)	Inclusive and compassionate	Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities	Arts and culture
Corporate Business Plan	Serving Edmontonians		
Council Policy, Program or Project Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• C529A - Migrant Inclusion</li><li>• C538 - Diversity and Inclusion</li><li>• City of Edmonton's Anti-Racism Strategy</li><li>• Community Safety and Well Being Strategy</li></ul>		
Related Council Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• November 21, 2022, Community Services report CS01445, Potential Relaunch of the Africa Centre Facility Project</li><li>• August 8, 2022, Community Services report CS01279, Council for the Advancement of African Canadians - Africa Centre Annual Update</li><li>• March 9, 2015, Citizen Services report CR_1171, Status Update on the New Africa Centre Facility and Strategy for the Involvement of the African Community</li><li>• October 9, 2012, Community Services report 2012CSW023, Establishment of Africa Centre - Follow-up Information</li><li>• March 7, 2012, Sustainable Development report 2012SCO721, Land Acquisition</li><li>• February 22, 2012, Sustainable Development report 2012SCO952, New Canadian Multicultural Centre</li><li>• January 31, 2007, Community Services report 2007CSR008, Proposal for City to Lease Wellington Junior High School</li></ul>		

### Previous Council/Committee Action

At the December 10, 2024, City Council meeting, the following motion was passed:

That Administration provide a report that includes:

- a. Identification of any portion of Plan 2488KS, Block 76, Lot 1 (Wellington Park in the Athlone Neighbourhood) that may be surplus to municipal requirements.
- b. The implications (financial or otherwise) of the potential sale of any identified surplus land at nominal (\$1.00) value to the Council for the Advancement of African Canadians in Alberta for the purposes of building a cultural hub.
- c. An analysis of the most recent business case from 2024 including a financial and social assessment.

### Executive Summary

- The African Multicultural Community Centre (AMCC) is envisioned as a cultural hub to serve People of African and Caribbean descent<sup>1</sup>, fostering unity, celebrating diversity and providing community services.
- The AMCC project aligns with the City's Anti-Black Racism Action Plan, developed in collaboration with Edmonton's Black communities, which highlights the importance of a physical space to promote community unity, strength and wellness.
- People of African or Caribbean descent are growing and diverse, with an expected population in Canada of more than 3 million people by 2041. An increasing proportion of this population is settling in major census metropolitan areas, including Edmonton as one of the top cities—a trend expected to continue<sup>2</sup>.
- The City of Edmonton has played a significant role in Africa Centre's development since 2007, including facilitating a lease agreement, negotiations for land acquisition and capital funding for a functional program and site analysis.
- The AMCC business case outlines the vision, community need and results of engagement, with estimated project costs ranging from \$27 million to \$77 million.
- Since 2012, the Athlone Park site<sup>3</sup> has been identified as a potential location for the AMCC. In 2022, a review of the parcel was conducted and a portion of the site was allocated to

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<sup>1</sup> It is acknowledged that identity and belonging is complex and varied. In this report, 'People of African and Caribbean descent' is used as an umbrella term to refer to all peoples whose current or historical identities originate from the continent of Africa or the Caribbean. This is not intended to diminish the importance of specific cultural identities.

<sup>2</sup> Stats Canada. "Canada in 2041: A larger, more diverse population with greater differences between regions" <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220908/dq220908a-eng.htm>

<sup>3</sup> Officially, the land discussed in this report is designated as 'Athlone Park' (at 13010 129 Street NW) and is located in the Athlone neighbourhood. However, community members still use 'Wellington Park' due to the former Wellington Junior High School previously located on the site.

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Edmonton Fire Rescue Services. Planning and design for the fire station are currently underway.

- A motion is required from Executive Committee if there is a desire to proceed with either a sale or lease of the land to Africa Centre and return with an agreement for approval (below market), as the land has not been made available publicly, per standard practice.
- Key considerations include reputational impacts for the City to manage expectations regarding providing land to community groups along with financial implications related to the land, funding dependencies, operating model viability and project management capacity.

## REPORT

Cultural hubs are essential for preserving the unique heritage, tradition and contribution of diverse communities. These spaces can foster a sense of belonging, promote intercultural understanding and provide opportunities for cultural expression and community development.

For over a decade, guided by the Multiculturalism Council Initiative<sup>4</sup>, Administration has supported the development and operations of welcoming spaces for newcomers. This has included funding and staffing support for the Clareview Multicultural Centre, Edmonton Intercultural Centre and Africa Centre. Establishing a vibrant cultural hub is a complex undertaking that demands careful consideration of multiple factors, ranging from the initial vision and design, to the subsequent construction and ongoing operations.

### Partnership History: Africa Centre, City of Edmonton and the African Multicultural Community Centre

Africa Centre, officially known as the Council for the Advancement of African Canadians in Alberta (CAAC), is the largest pan-African non-profit organization in Western Canada. Founded in 2006, it serves as a central hub for People of African and Caribbean descent, providing resources and services aimed at improving social, cultural, educational and economic outcomes. Currently serving over 20,000 members annually, focus areas include empowerment, advocacy, cultural preservation, youth leadership, social service support, economic integration and health/well-being.

In the last four years, Africa Centre has grown significantly, with its reach and impact increasing each year. For the last five years, Africa Centre has managed a total annual revenue of just over \$40 million. From youth programming to advocacy and economic development, Africa Centre has expanded its services to address emerging community needs. For the 2023-24 fiscal year, key impact milestones include:

- Supported 212 clients through 1,529 counselling sessions
- Served 37 children through licensed childcare services
- Engaged 230 women and girls in gender equity programs
- Empowered 75 seniors with digital literacy and wellness training
- Awarded 79 scholarships to 38 students, totalling \$74,000

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<sup>4</sup> Deputy City Manager's Office report 2010DCM061, Review of 2007-2010 Council Initiatives - Status Update (November 9, 2010)

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- Engaged 600+ youth in YEGTheComeUp and similar programs that foster youth-led solutions for social issues
- Engaged 800+ participants in community-building events such as sports tournaments and festivals
- Hosted Africa Day Gala, with over 500 attendees celebrating African excellence
- Facilitated the completion of leadership training for 56 youth in the Ujima Fellowship program at NAIT

In addition, since being selected in 2021 as one of the four intermediary organizations to deliver the Government of Canada's Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative (SBCCI) program, a grants and contribution program, Africa Centre has distributed \$12 million in grants to 336 Black-led organizations within the Edmonton regional area over the last four years.

The City of Edmonton has played a significant role in Africa Centre's development and has provided various levels of support, including liaison roles, political advocacy and funding. Current funding is outlined in Attachment 1.

The effort to establish a dedicated cultural space for People of African or Caribbean descent in Edmonton has been a continuous partnership between Africa Centre and the City of Edmonton since 2007.

A detailed account of the partnership history, including specific Council decisions, is provided in Attachment 2. Key milestones include:

- In 2007, the City facilitated a lease agreement with the Edmonton Public School Board, enabling Africa Centre to operate from the former Wellington Junior High School. Under this lease agreement, the City was responsible for capital renewal costs<sup>5</sup>.
- In 2012, Administration acquired the Wellington School and land with the intention of working towards a future development of the parcel inclusive of Africa Centre. Municipal needs identified for the site included the relocation of the Calder library, a future fire station and sports fields.
- In 2015, utilizing Council approved capital funding, Administration and Africa Centre completed a functional program, site analysis and cost estimates in pursuit of a new facility<sup>6</sup>.
- In November 2022, during the 2023-2026 budget deliberations, City Council approved \$300,000, on a one-time basis, for a refresh of the project, including a new business case and community engagement<sup>7</sup>.

An overview of Africa Centre's growing services and partnerships is provided in Attachment 3.

### Alignment with Anti-Black Racism Action Plan

In August 2022, Mayor Sohi reaffirmed the City's support for the UN Decade for People of African Descent<sup>8</sup>. The City committed to addressing issues of racism faced by Edmonton's Black

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<sup>5</sup> Community Services report 2007CSR008, Proposal for City to Lease Wellington Junior High School (January 31, 2007)

<sup>6</sup> Citizen Services report CR\_1171, Status Update on the New Africa Centre Facility and Strategy for the Involvement of the African Community (March 9, 2015)

<sup>7</sup> City Council - Budget, November 30, 2022 - Operating Budget Amendment 25

<sup>8</sup> City Council - Protocol Items, August 29, 2022 - The Decade for People Of African Descent

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communities and to ensure that an Afro-centric lens was incorporated into the Anti-Racism Strategy. Between December 2022 and March 2023, specialized consultants with lived experience held extensive community consultations, engaging more than 1,000 community members and City employees. The What We Heard Report<sup>9</sup> summarizing all these engagements was released in May 2023. The Anti-Black Racism Action Plan<sup>10</sup>, co-created with members of Edmonton's Black communities, was published in June 2023.

A key priority and theme of the engagement was the establishment of the AMCC. Community members emphasized the importance of this center as a tangible step towards addressing anti-Black racism, providing a space for programs benefiting youth, seniors, children and families, as well as a hub for arts and skill development. The AMCC was envisioned as a physical space for gathering, education, inspiration, innovation and celebration, symbolizing the municipal government's commitment to addressing anti-Black racism.

### Business Case Overview and Analysis

The AMCC is envisioned as a cultural hub to serve People of African or Caribbean descent, fostering unity, celebrating diversity and providing a range of community services. The Business Case (Attachment 4) includes strategic alignment, community engagement findings, needs assessments, as well as site, financial and risk analyses.

Three project scenarios are provided, with costs ranging from \$27 million to \$77 million and an 18 month to 24 month construction timeline. Developed in response to feedback gathered through community engagement, these scenarios present different options designed to meet identified community needs and priorities, along with their associated costs and benefits. A summary of the three options can be found in Attachment 5. The Business Case recommends Scenario 2, a two-story building providing basic programming needs and enhanced services such as low-income housing units. This scenario would require a parcel of land of approximately 0.2 ha and an estimated construction cost of \$54 million. The Business Case also recommends that the AMCC be incorporated as a non-profit organization to fulfill the vision that the Black community owns and operates the building facility.

The redevelopment of this site, at various times, included consideration of the AMCC building built on City land, with Africa Centre entering into an agreement to operate the space, such as a lease or license. Therefore, the updated business case was written in the context that the facility should be owned and operated by Africa Centre. Considering this, the City has reviewed the business case in the context of the Community Led Projects Manual<sup>11</sup> and Community Led Construction Process<sup>12</sup> and identified that the next steps for Africa Centre involve further developing readiness related to governance structure, capital funding strategy and operational model viability. Development in these areas will position the capital project with its intended outcomes.

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<sup>9</sup> Anti-Black Racism Action Plan - What We Heard Report

<sup>10</sup> Edmonton Anti-Black Racism Action Plan

<sup>11</sup> Community Led Projects Manual

<sup>12</sup> Community Led Projects on Parkland

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### Community Need

The needs assessment within the business case highlights several key factors driving the need for the AMCC.

Edmonton's metropolitan area has an increasing and diversifying population of People of African or Caribbean descent, representing 5.8 per cent (80,570) of the population (1,397,750) in 2021<sup>13</sup>. Projections indicate that by 2041, the Black population is expected to represent approximately 10 per cent of Edmonton's population<sup>14</sup>. As specifically highlighted in the business case, Edmonton's People of African or Caribbean descent encompass a wide array of cultural traditions, with diverse origins including those from Somalia, Nigeria, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Ghana, Eritrea, South Sudan and Ethiopia, among others.

The business case identifies gaps in services and programs tailored to the specific needs of the People of African or Caribbean descent, impacting social inclusion, community development and cultural preservation. For example, there is a need for more culturally relevant programs for youth, including mental health support and spaces for community gatherings and cultural celebrations. The community also expressed a desire for increased access to recreational programs, entrepreneurship support and services that aid newcomers with settlement and integration.

A significant challenge identified in the business case is that Africa Centre's current leased office location on 118th Avenue and St. Albert Trail lacks sufficient space for expanding operations, community engagement and outreach. The business case asserts that Africa Centre's substantial growth, marked by expanded service offerings and national recognition, necessitates a new facility. The proposed AMCC addresses this need by offering greater visibility, community connectivity, programming, service reach and accessibility. To achieve this, the facility will provide expanded space for existing programs, facilitate the development of new initiatives and enhance financial sustainability through revenue-generating aspects integrated into the proposed operating model. Beyond Africa Centre's use, the AMCC would also provide opportunities for community gathering and recreational use.

### Community Engagement

The AMCC's business case and its program and service objectives were informed by community engagement undertaken by Africa Centre. This engagement used various methods such as digital surveys, focus groups, town halls and interviews to provide a thorough understanding of community needs. Consultations included People of African or Caribbean descent, youth, Athlone residents, community leagues, schools and City representatives.

Various accessibility measures were included in the engagement methods, including a digital survey in both English and French, which collected demographic data to ensure the

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<sup>13</sup> Statistics Canada. "2021 Census of Population."

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>

<sup>14</sup> Statistics Canada. "Projected population by racialized group, generation status and other selected characteristics (x 1,000)" Table 17-10-0146-01 Projected population by racialized group, generation status and other selected characteristics (x 1,000)



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representation of diverse ethnocultural groups within People of African or Caribbean descent in Edmonton. Town hall meetings accommodated diverse age, language and geographic needs with open forums and on-site Arabic and Dinka translation. Additionally, a mid-project check-in allowed community leaders to validate findings, ensuring data accuracy.

Overall, the community engagement results support the AMCC as a vibrant hub for cultural celebration, integration and education. A majority (62 per cent) of survey participants want the center to showcase the rich cultural heritage of People of African or Caribbean descent, with town hall attendees emphasizing the importance of reflecting African cultures through art, food, literature and educational initiatives. The surveys saw a 10 per cent engagement rate from the Athlone neighbourhood. No further details were provided on the engagement rate from other community league members, such as Kensington, Wellington and Calder.

A detailed breakdown of the engagement methods and findings, along with these additional considerations, can be found in the Community Engagement Report (Attachment 6).

### **Capital Project and Financial Analysis**

As part of the business case review, Administration concluded the construction cost estimates are reasonable, reflecting industry standards related to cost per square metre, contingency and soft costs. All costing is considered as Class 4 per the practices of Administration, which is a preliminary cost estimate typical of projects in the initial planning phases. Class 4 expected cost accuracy range is -30 per cent and +50 per cent.

While the business case addresses operational costs, a comprehensive lifecycle cost analysis is needed in future phases. This analysis should consider long-term expenses such as maintenance, repairs, replacements, energy consumption and potential future renovations that Africa Centre would incur. Incorporating sustainable design principles and energy-efficient technologies can help reduce long-term operating costs but may require higher initial investment.

To ensure the project's success, several critical factors have been identified. These include securing adequate project funding, community support, bylaw and zoning approvals, site suitability, sufficient users and visitors to justify funding, operation and adequate and responsible staffing. Administration identified a need to further develop readiness in terms of governance model, funding model and further examination of the viability of Africa Centre's sources of ongoing revenue made in the business case. The business case also acknowledges potential risks to the project's feasibility, such as land constraints, financial feasibility concerns due to the current inflationary environment, the need for further clarity on project management and construction development leadership and confirmation of adequate staffing and resources.

### **Surplus Land Identification and Process**

To address the motion, Administration reviewed the entire parcel with all relevant parties, considering the varied interests involved to determine what land may be available for the AMCC. The analysis excludes land already utilized for municipal purposes, including the library, sports fields, infrastructure and a future fire station. The Athlone Park site was identified as a potential location for a future fire station in 2020 and in 2024 the northwest corner of the site, comprising 0.676 ha, was allocated for Edmonton Fire Rescue Services.

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Based on the above, there is approximately 1.2 ha portion of land on Plan 2488KS Block 76 Lot 1, which could be sold to Africa Centre as generally shown in Attachment 7. A subdivision would be required if the land is sold, as the outlined portion is part of a larger parcel. In addition, rezoning may also be required depending on the final development plans.

### Land Sale Process

Administration follows the City Administrative Standard (Disposal of City Owned Interests in Land<sup>15</sup>) when disposing of surplus land. The standard identifies the importance of publicly offering all land that is surplus to municipal requirements, as this ensures a fair, consistent and equitable approach when disposing of City real estate assets. Aligned with best practices, it aims to maximize social, economic, environmental and cultural returns for the City.

While many community organizations seek land at nominal value, following the Administrative Standard promotes equitable access and maximizes city-building outcomes. In this situation, no other community organization has had an opportunity to submit an offer on this specific parcel of land as it has not been made available through a public offering.

Many cultural organizations have also inquired to Administration about purchasing City-owned open space for redevelopment, however, these lands typically serve the municipal need for recreational space and are not considered for disposal. From a land and building perspective, the City has very limited surplus holdings available for the numerous community organizations seeking land or space each year. This scarcity aligns with the conclusion of the February 12, 2012, Sustainable Development report 2012SCO952, New Canadian Multicultural Centre which identified no suitable holdings within the City inventory and resulted in the City acquiring the former school and land to maintain Africa Centre onsite.

Considerations for this project require balancing the City's commitment to equitable processes with the unique historical context of the partnership with Africa Centre, the significant community need for the AMCC and the City's broader goals related to anti-racism and community development.

### Risk Assessment

#### Implications of Sale

The City's standard practice is to publicly list surplus land for sale which is regularly communicated to all interested parties. There is a reputational risk that by selling land directly to AMCC, other organizations may perceive this as being inequitable. However, this approach aligns with previous City Council intentions of utilizing the land as the potential location for the AMCC.

Based on the number of land requests that Administration has received over the last few years, it is anticipated that a sale to Africa Centre will create increased expectations and pressure for support. Administration intends to mitigate this risk by continuing to encourage any organizations that seek to acquire land to make a submission on a property when it becomes available for sale through a public offering.

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<sup>15</sup> [Disposal of City Owned Interests In Land](#)



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### Funding Requirements

The Athlone lands originally considered for the AMCC were purchased using funds from the Parkland Purchase Reserve Account (PPRA). These funds, as per section 671(4) of the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA), represent money provided in place of municipal reserve and must be accounted for separately and used only for municipal reserve purposes such as public parks and recreation. If the Athlone lands are sold at \$1.00, there are financial implications and other impacts that should be considered. As the original acquisition was funded via the PPRA, at minimum, to ensure compliance with the MGA, the sale proceeds (if any) should be returned to the PPRA. Administration's standard practice for the sale of lands purchased with funds from the PPRA is to reimburse the account by the market value of the site. In this case, this is estimated at \$3.9 million to \$4.5 million (for the 1.2 ha site). While Council can determine the level of repayment beyond the proceeds of the sale, which may include reimbursing the book value or allowing the PPRA to absorb a loss, this approach is offside the original purchase intent. The potential loss of reserve revenue in this scenario is not a sustainable model in terms of City-led support for partner groups who may lack the financial capacity to carry land acquisition costs.

Despite the business case including potential contribution amounts from the City, Africa Centre has articulated a clear strategy to secure funding for the AMCC's construction independently. Their funding model focuses on leveraging the City's contribution of the land and its value as a catalyst to attract significant investment from federal sources, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and corporate contributions. Securing the necessary funding from these external sources is not guaranteed and delays or shortfalls could still jeopardize the project's timeline or scope. In future budget cycles, Africa Centre could request consideration to Council for an allocation ranging from \$5.3 million to \$15.4 million, which is currently unbudgeted. Africa Centre is currently developing a diversified funding plan with multiple revenue streams and contingency plans for phased development based on available funding. Other mitigation strategies include the utilization of conditions within the sale agreement that confirm adequate funding is in place to progress construction.

Environmental assessment has shown that there is some minor contamination on the site; however, it is not expected that Alberta Environment and Protected Areas will require remediation as the environmental impacts are negligible. Even though remediation of the site is likely not required, remediation could be requested by the purchaser as part of the land transfer agreement, which would have funding implications for the City.

### Reputational Risk

The AMCC project carries reputational risks for both the City and Africa Centre. For the City, these risks include managing expectations regarding providing land and funding, ensuring equitable processes for all community groups and demonstrating fiscal responsibility. For Africa Centre, there are risks associated with project delivery, financial sustainability and effectively representing the diverse needs of Edmonton's People of African or Caribbean descent. Proactive communication, transparent decision-making and robust community engagement are crucial to mitigating these risks.

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### Project Management

The successful delivery of a complex capital project like the AMCC requires strong project management capacity and experience. Risks in this area include delays, cost overruns and quality issues due to inadequate project management. Mitigation strategies may involve providing project management support or requiring independent project oversight.

### Cost Escalation

Current economic conditions, characterized by high inflation in the construction sector, supply chain disruptions, tariffs and labour shortages, could also pose a risk of potential cost escalation. Given that the current cost estimates are at a Class 4 (with an accuracy range of -30 per cent to +50 per cent), the potential for cost increases is substantial. Mitigation strategies include incorporating realistic contingency allowances, exploring phased development options and implementing cost control measures.

### Operating Model Viability

The chosen operating model will significantly impact revenue generation and cost management. The business case refers to self-ownership and self-governance by a non-profit organization, which often relies heavily on fundraising, grants and donations in addition to earned revenue. Africa Centre hopes to offset operating costs through commercial space rentals in the AMCC, as a revenue-generating stream and create funding diversification. The business case projects an annual net income of \$55,115 based on anticipated revenues and expenses. Upon a cursory review, \$150,000 of anticipated revenue would come from fundraising (casino and other) and no vacancy allowance has been factored in for the commercial, housing, daycare or restaurant spaces. There is a risk that, if fundraising efforts do not materialize and the commercial or housing units experience prolonged vacancy, the AMCC may experience an annual net operating loss, which could lead to requests for ongoing operational funding from the City. A comprehensive lifecycle cost analysis and a more detailed assessment of revenue projections are needed to validate the financial sustainability of the project.

### **Considerations for Next Steps**

Based on the historical context and the business case review, Executive Committee should consider the following key points before providing further direction:

- Administration and Africa Centre have worked over years to advance the concept of establishing the AMCC.
- The AMCC is considered a key equity measure reflecting the commitment of the City to the Anti-Black Racism Action Plan.
- City Council has funded and supported this concept in multiple ways, including, the acquisition of the Athlone lands, entering into a below-market lease, demolition of the Wellington Jr. High School, support in relocating Africa Centre to its current location and supporting the organization through their business case development.
- Based on the review of the business case, further work and coordination with Africa Centre may be required prior to the project proceeding to design, which would be the next phase.

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- Funding from other orders of government is unconfirmed, which poses a significant hurdle to the realization of this project.
- Some form of land commitment—whether through sale or lease—may support Africa Centre in its efforts to seek funding from other levels of government.

If Executive Committee supports selling a portion of the Athlone Park land, a motion would be required since the land is not surplus and the original intent was to maintain ownership. Additionally, a below market sale of the land is outside of Administration's delegated authority. If a land sale is preferred, Administration would negotiate a sale agreement conditional on Africa Centre to confirm their equity position, refine the business case and meet other conditions deemed necessary. This would then be brought back for Executive Committee's consideration and approval. A buyback provision would also be included, requiring the organization to commence construction by a set date; otherwise, the City could reacquire the site at the sale price. Upon land sale, Africa Centre would be responsible for advancing construction, with the City's involvement limited to the regulatory/permitting process.

There are different considerations if the City were to retain the land and work with Africa Centre on a land lease, such as, more direct City involvement in the design and construction of the facility, the need to allocate ongoing maintenance/capital renewal requirements and determining whether the asset is demolished at the end of the lease term or if it becomes a beneficial asset to the City.

### Budget/Financial Implications

The acquisition of the Athlone site was funded using a combination of Pay-As-You-Go and the PPRA. If land acquired using funding from the PPRA is sold for below market value, Administration's standard processes would require a funding source to reimburse the PPRA for the full market value of the land (approximately \$3.9 million to \$4.5 million total for a 1.2 ha site). Council will need to consider whether to adhere to the standard processes regarding the return of market value to the PPRA or to exercise its authority to deviate from these guidelines and determine an alternative repayment structure. At minimum, the sales proceeds (if any) should be returned to the PPRA to ensure compliance with the MGA.

Additional unfunded budgetary impacts, which will vary depending on the land and/or building scenario options chosen, may include remediation costs of the land, contribution towards construction if other funding is not secured and potential for operating funding requests from AMCC if the revenue assumptions in the business case are not fully realized. Funding for these impacts, once determined, would require Council approval through a future Council report or the supplemental or four-year budget process.

### Community Insight

The AMCC business case details community engagement that underscores strong community support for the project's envisioned positive outcomes, including greater access to recreation programs for Black youth and community members, space for local businesses and entrepreneurs, a facility symbolizing social justice, respect, equality and inclusivity and the

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potential for broader community access through commercial space rentals. These insights reflect the community's belief in the AMCC's potential to deliver positive outcomes.

However, Administration recognizes that the AMCC project also presents potential reputational risks for both the City and Africa Centre and the need to balance diverse community needs. To mitigate these risks and ensure the project's success, collaboration and strategic alignment are crucial. This involves aligning with internal business areas, City policies and the functions of external establishments such as the Edmonton Arts Council and Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, resulting in a coordinated effort that fosters broader integration within the city's cultural and recreational landscape, demonstrates fiscal responsibility and avoids duplication of resources.

Administration acknowledges the significant role of Africa Centre in supporting People of African or Caribbean descent and the considerable community support it has cultivated for the AMCC, a project grounded in its foundational mandate to serve as a central focal point for People of African or Caribbean descent. The City also notes the inherent diversity within Edmonton's People of African or Caribbean descent, which encompasses a wide array of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Consequently, while Africa Centre possesses significant reach, it may not represent the perspectives of every distinct group within this broad community. This is further highlighted by other requests that Administration has received for space and/or land from other ethnocultural community groups across Edmonton, indicating a wide range of community needs.

It is essential for Administration and Executive Committee to consider the wider implications of this initiative on the City's Truth and Reconciliation commitments, especially concerning current and ongoing discussions with Indigenous communities about providing land and reconciliation within Treaty 6 territory. This involves careful consideration of any precedence set by this project, how it may impact the diverse needs and aspirations of Indigenous communities.

### GBA+

Edmonton is home to a growing population of communities from African descent, accounting for 5.8 per cent (80,570 of 1,397,750) of residents in 2021, with projections indicating a rise to approximately 10 per cent by 2041. Notably diverse, Edmonton's People of African or Caribbean descent originate from various nations, including Somalia, Nigeria, Jamaica, Ghana and Ethiopia and collectively form the third largest visible minority group in the province (17.5 per cent). These communities face barriers to accessing culturally relevant services and spaces—including a lack of tailored programs and a central community hub—which hinders social inclusion, community development and cultural preservation. Addressing these barriers and prioritizing the needs of Edmontonians of African descent ensures that the AMCC project and subsequent work are more inclusive and effective.

To reflect these opportunities for the AMCC project, consultations for the AMCC project included a broad range of community members to ensure a comprehensive understanding of community needs and aspirations. These consultations specifically involved a wide range of community members, including diverse People of African or Caribbean descent, other racialized groups, Athlone residents, community leagues, schools and City representatives, reflecting varied ages, cultures and affiliations. Given the strong emphasis on engaging diverse People of African or

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Caribbean descent, future analysis may benefit from further exploring the nuances of intersectionality within the broader feedback received.

Diverse engagement methods like digital surveys, focus groups, town halls and interviews were used in accessible formats and locations to ensure broad participation and incorporate diverse perspectives into the project.

### Environment and Climate Review

Development plans will be subject to review by Administration to ensure compliance with the City's land development application requirements, which include relevant guidelines for stormwater management, landscaping and other environmental considerations. Developers are also responsible for adhering to all applicable environmental regulations, including construction and ongoing obligations related to site conditions.

The potential sale of the northeast quadrant of the parcel for the future development of the AMCC could impact the environment and climate in the following ways:

- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** Access to existing transit services enables low-carbon transportation for this development. At the same time, future building construction and operation could contribute to an increase in community greenhouse gas emissions. It is noted that scenarios 2 and 3 incorporate allowances for low carbon building design in the project cost comparison, which would reduce operational emissions.
- **Environmental Function:** The existing soft landscaping, consisting of grass and a minimal number of trees, provides benefits for air temperature regulation by mitigating the urban heat-island effect and for surface water management by reducing stormwater runoff during precipitation events. Replacing this soft landscaping with hard surfaces would diminish these environmental functions.
- **Contamination:** Due to the historic landfilling activities encroaching on the west portion of Athlone Park, environmental site assessments have been conducted. These assessments did not identify landfill debris in the northeast quadrant of the parcel. Some metal concentrations in the soil samples collected in this area were above the Alberta Tier 1 Soil Quality Guidelines for ecological soil contact, designed to protect ecological receptors. The assessments indicate that the ecological risks were negligible and no further action was required. However, given that historical landfilling activities encroached onto the west side of Athlone Park, the City is developing contaminant management strategies for this area and all reports have been submitted to the provincial regulatory agency for review. While remediation is not anticipated for development in the northeast quadrant (the potential AMCC site), the regulator will determine if further action or testing is necessary.

Some City funding programs and real estate transactions incorporate requirements associated with climate resilience which can mitigate climate impacts. Consideration could be given to including terms related to the incorporation of enhanced energy efficiency and solar-ready provisions and low-impact development designs in the sale agreement. A lifecycle cost analysis has not been conducted to fully assess the potential financial implications (construction and operations costs) associated with these measures.

### Attachments

1. City of Edmonton Funding to Africa Centre
2. City of Edmonton and Africa Centre Partnership History
3. Africa Centre Overview
4. Africa Centre AMCC Business Case
5. AMCC Project Scenario Overview
6. AMCC Community Engagement Report
7. Site Plan Athlone Park (Plan 2488KS, Block 76, Lot 1)