

ALBERTA AVENUE ARTS COMMON OPTIONS

Recommendation

That the June 18, 2025, Financial and Corporate Services report FCS02812, 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	THRIVE		
City Plan Big City Move(s)	A rebuildable city	Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities	Arts and culture Economic Growth
Corporate Business Plan	Serving Edmontonians		
Council Policy, Program or Project Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Problem Properties Initiative - Action Plan 2020-2022• ArtsCommon - Avenue Initiative Revitalization Strategy (March 24, 2014)• ArtsCommon - Further Analysis: Response to Council Directive (March 3, 2014)• ArtsCommon - Avenue Initiative Revitalization Strategy (August 29, 2013)• Neighbourhood Revitalization		
Related Council Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• November 27, 2024, Financial and Corporate Services report FCS02680, Edmonton Community Development Update• July 4, 2023, Community Services report CS01929, Partnership Update• September 26, 2022, Community Services report CS01007, Edmonton Community Development Company - Progress Report and Strategic Plan• November 26, 2019, Financial and Corporate Services CR_7596 - Update on Edmonton Community Development Company (Land Transfers)• September 5, 2017, Office of the City Manager report CR_4295 - Recommendations for Sale Agreement for Parcels Transferred to the Community Development Corporation• November 22, 2016, Sustainable Development report CR_3802 - Community Development Corporation - Business Case		

ALBERTA AVENUE ARTSCOMMON OPTIONS

- April 7, 2014, Community Services report CR_646 - ArtsCommon Joint Venture Options
- September 10, 2013, Community Services report CR_565 - ArtsCommon Business Plan

Previous Council/Committee Action

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

That Administration enter into discussions with the Edmonton Community Development Company to transfer the parcel back to the City for nominal value, and provide a report to Committee with options that would facilitate accelerated development of the site in a manner that maintains the spirit and intent of ArtsCommon 118, while adapting to current conditions and supporting the needs of the wider Alberta Avenue Community.

Executive Summary

- Edmonton Community Development Company (ECDC) was established in 2017 to advance community and economic development.
- The ArtsCommon 118 Project was to be developed on land transferred to ECDC.
- After years of working with various groups, ECDC did not see the original ArtsCommon Project as a viable development option.
- In December 2024, Council directed Administration to buy back the ArtsCommon 118 site.
- Administration intends to offer the site on the open market. The listing will highlight the needs of the wider Alberta Avenue Community and intent of ArtsCommon 118. Applicants will be encouraged to incorporate these elements into their proposals.

REPORT

Background

In August 2022, the site at 9131 118 Avenue (Attachment 1) was transferred to ECDC to develop ArtsCommon 118. The project's intent was to create a community-based, multi-disciplinary arts facility featuring a theatre, gallery, program rooms, artists' studios, meeting and rental rooms, main-floor retail and artist living space. After years of working with various groups, ECDC did not see ArtsCommon 118 as a viable development.

As per the December 10, 2024, motion, the City reacquired this site in May 2025.

Future Development

Administration received feedback from Arts on the Avenue and various community groups, including ArtsHabitat, Nina Haggerty Centre for the Arts, Alberta Avenue Business Association, Northwood Neighbours Association, Alberta Avenue Community League and numerous local businesses and property owners. These groups consistently emphasized that the ArtsCommon project objectives are still needed in the community.

ALBERTA AVENUE ARTSCOMMON OPTIONS

Through this feedback, Administration gained a better understanding of the community's current vision for the site. Key elements that the community would emphasize for any future development include:

- Flexible black box theatre/performance space (flex space that can be converted for other uses but is primarily set up as a black box theatre)
- Gallery and exhibit space
- Variety of arts-related flexible spaces (studio and maker spaces, workshop spaces, dance space)
- Residential (market or affordable housing or artists' live/work units)
- Community-focused commercial kitchen
- Retail space
- Accelerated development
- Developer-led community discussions through the permitting and development process
- Financial viability

While this list summarizes common desires, it presents a significant challenge for developers. Two primary priorities were highlighted throughout the discussions:

- Arts-related development
- Timely and efficient development with ongoing community engagement

The community acknowledged the challenges associated with many of their key development elements. They are willing to continue discussions with the City and the developer to ensure that the future development, at a minimum, aligns with the two primary priorities, while striving to incorporate as many of the key elements as feasible.

Approximately \$3.3 million is being held in the appropriated Financial Stabilization Reserve, which through the Fall Supplemental Operating Budget Adjustment in December 2024 was identified as potentially supporting future community purposes. Should Council wish to use these funds to support the accelerated development of this site, a motion would be required.

Listing

The standard City sales and development agreement encourages accelerated development by requiring construction to commence within one year of closing. These agreements include a buyback option that can be exercised should construction commencement not align with the timeline in the agreement, and a performance fee to encourage specific environmental standards and completion within three years. Given the location and listing complexity, Administration will extend these timelines to construction commencement within two years and completion within four years of closing.

The City's listing documentation will encourage proposals that align with the original ArtsCommon 118 project, focusing on the delivery of an achievable community-based, multi-disciplinary, but market-driven neighbourhood arts facility. The listing will emphasize the key elements outlined above to help provide direction and assistance to developers for their proposals, along with the availability of any grant funding.

ALBERTA AVENUE ARTSCOMMON OPTIONS

Administration will list the property with a submission window of six months. Following the closure of the listing period, Administration will present a report to Executive Committee summarizing the proposals received.

At the time of writing this report, Administration is confirming whether any new municipal need for the property has arisen since the property was originally sold, along with any technical conditions required to sell the site. The results will help further inform Administration's listing on the site.

The alternative to listing the property would be to fund a City-led development on site with a third party operating the facility on completion. Administration does not support this option as there is no funding identified currently for such a development and this process would delay development on site.

Community Insight

Administration gathered informal feedback from Arts on the Avenue and also participated in a meeting held by the Alberta Avenue Business Association with interested community members. The meeting included local artists' groups, businesses, the community league, and area property owners and developers. The feedback from these discussions will enable Administration to align any property listing with the community's vision for future development. This ensures potential buyers understand the community's needs and expectations. Through ongoing discussions, Administration aims to negotiate accelerated development that aligns with the wider Alberta Avenue Community's needs and reflects the spirit of the ArtsCommon 118 project. The listing will also identify that further community engagement will be required as a condition of any future agreement.

GBA+

Administration did not complete GBA+ process for this report. However, any future listing for this site will be publicly available on the City of Edmonton's website, with detailed information surrounding the requirements and the offer process. Signage will be placed on the property to build awareness of the sale within the community. Administration is prepared to answer general questions in several languages to ensure that anyone understands the listing and requirements to make an informed decision. Mandating community engagement as part of any future agreement will help ensure that any future development is designed to serve the needs of the community.

Environment and Climate Review

This report was reviewed for environment and climate risks. Based on the review completed, no significant interactions with the City's environmental and climate goals were identified within the scope of this report.

Attachment

1. Subject Site Plan