

City of Edmonton and Africa Centre Partnership History

2006:

- The Council for the Advancement of African Canadians in Alberta, operating as Africa Centre, was established and began working with the City of Edmonton to find a permanent location.
- The Africa Centre Board acted as an administrative board, managing the centre programs directly as well as guiding the development of the organization.

2007:

- City Council approved the leasing of Wellington Jr. High School from the Edmonton Public School Board. Africa Centre shared the operations of the surplus school with the Winnifred Stewart Society¹.
 - Africa Centre operated in one wing of the school and the Winnifred Stewart Society operated the other wing.
 - Africa Centre maintained primary usage of the two gymnasiums and various classroom spaces, and converted the home economics and industrial arts areas into program spaces.

2008:

- Africa Centre received \$150,000 in Family and Community Support Services funding to support its initial programs.
- A City of Edmonton Multicultural Liaison was assigned as the primary staff contact for the Africa Centre Board and Executive Director.
- Africa Centre hired its first Executive Director. This started the shift of administrative roles from the Board to the Executive Director.

2009:

- A full-time Africa Centre Liaison (one FTE) was assigned by the City of Edmonton to support the Africa Centre Board and Executive Director. This was to help Africa Centre in capacity building.

¹ Community Services report 2007CSR008, Proposal for City to Lease Wellington Junior High School (January 31, 2007)

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2010:

- Administration began working on a new Framework for Service Delivery to support African Communities.

2012:

- Council directed Administration to negotiate the acquisition of the Wellington School site. This was for the development of the future African Multicultural Centre (AMCC), the relocation of the Calder library branch and the retention of the sports fields².
 - A funded Capital Profile #14-17-1072³ was prepared for the 2012-2014 budget cycle for \$4.18 million dollars. Funding was split between the Parkland Purchase Reserve for the parks and recreation uses and Pay-As-You-Go for the remainder of the parcel. The land was acquired in May 2015.

2013:

- In response to the planned demolition of the Wellington school, Africa Centre began working with the City to explore options for a new building at the site.
- Council approved \$232,000 in annual operational funding⁴ for core staffing and facility operations.

2014-15:

- A Capital Profile #15-21-1040⁵ for \$838,000 was funded for schematic design dollars (including consultation and park site plan), to establish concept drawings and strategies for the future building of a new AMCC on the Wellington School park site in partnership with the African descent community.
 - Conceptually, the proposed new AMCC was to be approximately 40,000 square feet but further consideration was needed to explore the future operating costs. It was anticipated that funding for detailed design and construction would be requested in the 2019-2022 capital budget.

2017

- Wellington Jr. High School was condemned and City staff assisted with the relocation of Africa Centre to St. Francis Centre where, up until fall 2022, the

² Sustainable Development Report 2012SCO721, Land Acquisition (March 7, 2012)

³ Budget Cycle, 2012-2014, Capital Profile Report - 2012-2014

⁴ 2013 Operating Budget (November 27, 2012)

⁵ Budget Cycle, 2015-2018, Capital Profile Report - Wellington / African Multicultural Centre

- group operated some programs and centralized its administrative staff/functions.
- Council approved a new service package for additional Operating Grant funding of \$237,500 on an ongoing basis.⁶
 - The approved funding was to fund a facility coordinator position to lead community engagement and communications, and to offset low rental revenue.

2018:

- The demolition of the Wellington Jr. High on the northeast area of the site was completed. The Calder Library Branch was constructed on the southeast corner of the site and opened earlier in January 2018.
- The Office of the City Auditor completed the Governance & Management Review⁷ for Africa Centre. Key outcomes from the report were:
 - Africa Centre can make improvements to its governance by better aligning its governing structure, processes and documents to best practice.
 - Africa Centre is using City grants in accordance with the grant requirements.
 - Africa Centre needs to adopt a collaborative budgeting process that considers entity risks, operational needs and strategic priorities to ensure optimal use of grant awards year-over-year.
- In fall 2018, Capital Profile #15-21-1040⁸, Wellington / African Multicultural Centre project was placed on hold due to the organizational challenges Africa Centre was facing, identified through the Office of the City Auditor's Governance & Management Review. \$165,000 was spent on the project, with \$673,000 in the budget remaining on hold until Africa Centre's audit recommendations were completed.

2019-2020:

- In fall 2019, Council approved the remaining funds of \$673,000 to be reallocated within the City organization to address fiscal challenges of the impacts of the 2019 provincial budget. Africa Centre was informed that the funding could be reconsidered during future Supplemental Capital Budget Adjustments or the 2023-2026 budget discussions.

⁶ Operating Budget Amendment 13 (December 6, 2017)

⁷ Audit Committee report CR_6548, Africa Centre: Governance & Management Review (November 9, 2018)

⁸ Budget Cycle, 2015-2018, Capital Profile Report - Wellington / Africa Centre Multicultural Centre

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- In 2020, Africa Centre successfully closed all of the audit recommendations and incorporated them into their regular policies and practices.

2021:

- Africa Centre was selected as one of the four intermediary organizations to deliver the Government of Canada's Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative, a grants and contribution program. Africa Centre became a national funder in 2021. Total funding received from 2021-2023 has been \$15.2 million, as stated on the Government of Canada's Employment and Social Development Canada website, (last updated 2024-06-25). Goals of the initiative are:
 - Celebrate and share knowledge about People of African descent's contributions in Canada,
 - Build capacity in vibrant Black communities across Canada,
 - Reflect Black voices in policies and programs that affect their lives, and
 - Remove barriers related to anti-Black racism and other systemic inequities.

2022:

- The Centralized Administrative Office for Africa Centre moved to the Circle Square Professional Building located at 11808 St. Albert Trail.
- On September 10, 2022, at Africa Centre's annual Africa Day Gala, Mayor Sohi publicly reaffirmed the City's commitment to the AMCC project, reinforcing Council's earlier motion.
- Council directed Administration to work with Africa Centre to explore relaunching the AMCC project⁹.
- Council committed its support for the UN International Declaration of People of African Descent and announced new actions towards addressing anti-Black racism in Edmonton.¹⁰
- In November 2022, during the 2023-2026 budget deliberations, Council approved \$300,000 for this refresh from the Financial Stabilization Reserve to fund the pre-strategy work required for the AMCC project. This funding enabled Africa Centre to update documentation, revise the business case and reinitiate community engagement.

⁹ Community and Public Services Committee CS01445, Potential Relaunch of the Africa Centre Facility Project (November 21, 2022)

¹⁰ City Council - Protocol Items, August 29, 2022

2024:

- On May 29, 2024, Africa Centre submitted their revised business case to Administration for consideration. The development of the capital project continued to progress with a Council motion in December 2024 for Administration to provide a business case analysis and explore surplus land to municipal requirements, land sale options and land sale implications¹¹. Various City business areas continue to provide liaison support to Africa Centre.
- The City Manager signed a Partnership Framework with Africa Centre to formalize principles of collaboration between the City and Africa Centre. The Partnership Framework does not create a binding and enforceable agreement between the Parties.
- Africa Centre signed a funding agreement on March 4, 2024, for \$400,000 to support community services, community engagement and community empowerment recommendations made in the City's Anti-Black Racism Action Plan.

2025-Present:

- On May 14, 2025, Executive Committee received Community Services report CS02816, Wellington Park Land Options and Business Case Analysis, for information. Administration provided a comprehensive business case overview and analysis for the AMCC project, covering community need, engagement results, financial analysis, risk assessment and capital project scenarios. This report also provided information around the potential sale of a portion of Athlone Park land to Africa Centre.
 - Executive Committee also directed Administration to negotiate a nominal value sale agreement and come back with other information for Council's consideration. This report (March 26, 2026, Financial and Corporate Services report FCS03903) provides Administration's response.
- Following this direction and in preparation for FCS03093, Administration has provided guidance to Africa Centre to address Council's requirements.

¹¹ City Council - Minutes December 10, 2024