

Elevate Report and Draft City of Edmonton Framework – Update

Recommendation:

That Community Services Committee recommend to City Council:

That the January 29, 2013, Community Services report 2013CSN001, be received for information.

Report Summary

This report provides an update on the status of Elevate, partnership initiatives, and neighbourhood priorities.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the June 20, 2012, City Council meeting, the following motion was passed:

1. That Attachment 1 of the June 11, 2012, Community Services report 2012CSN004, be endorsed.
2. That Administration work collaboratively with key partners and stakeholders to implement the framework.
3. That Administration, along with the partners identified in the report, work with the most challenged communities in a collaborative way (much like the Africa Centre experience) to build upon the work already done and develop a plan that would include, but is not limited to:
 - a) landscaping (including access, community gardens)
 - b) security (including policing)

- c) housing diversity
- d) business support opportunities
- e) life-long learning through school boards
- f) other relevant factors and return to Committee with a report outlining the growth plan.

4. That prior to moving ahead with developing or implementing the plan, Administration provide a report to City Council, through Committee, with a budget schedule and possible list of participants and partners.

Report

Background

- Achieving sustainability in Edmonton's mature neighbourhoods is a complex challenge that requires new solutions and strategies. When confronted with significant demographic and historical changes, it is challenging for neighbourhoods and schools to remain vibrant.
- Early in 2011, the Community Sustainability Task Force was formed to bring together a group of citizens to recommend a course of action to support and enhance the viability of mature neighbourhoods.
- In February of 2012, the Elevate report was released, highlighting nine recommendations and action items intended to create solutions for Edmonton's mature neighbourhoods, encourage collaboration between all levels of government, break down boundaries, share resources, create efficiencies, and build effective community partnerships. The report is a blueprint for the next steps that Edmonton can take in seeking ongoing community vitality.

- Over the past several months, both elected and administrative representatives from the City of Edmonton, Edmonton Public, Catholic, and Francophone School Boards have been meeting to discuss the draft City of Edmonton framework (implementation plan) as presented to City Council June 20, 2012, (Attachment 1), and to review governance options that will eventually oversee the work of all partners in this initiative.
- The formation of a new governing structure – Edmonton Community Sustainability Partnership – will guide the work of the Elevate initiative, and will monitor the progress of the strategies and recommendations contained within the report.

Key Milestones:

The following milestones begin to address Elevate Recommendations 1, 2, 8 and 9, which relate to creating innovative partnerships and a channel for collaborative community sustainability, and encouraging Province of Alberta involvement:

- Early in 2012, all three school boards and Edmonton City Council endorsed: *Elevate - the Report of the Community Sustainability Task Force*.
- June 2012 - a workshop was held between Superintendents of School Boards and Senior City of Edmonton Administration to discuss the draft Elevate implementation plan.
- July/August, 2012 - Mayor S. Mandel met with School Board Chairs to discuss Elevate and opportunities for collaboration.

- September 2012 – Mayor S. Mandel met with Alberta Education Minister, the Honourable Jeff Johnson, and School Board Chairs regarding Elevate.
- October 2012 – School Board Superintendents and City Administration met to discuss Elevate and opportunities for collaboration.
- October 2012 – The Elevate Interim Steering Committee was established consisting of the General Manager of Community Services and Superintendents of the three School Boards.
- November 2012 – Invitations from the City Manager’s office were extended to Provincial and Federal Government policy advisors to participate on the Elevate Interim Steering Committee.
- December 2012 - Provincial and Federal representatives were appointed to the Interim Steering Committee.
- January 2013 – The Elevate Interim Steering Committee will hold its first meeting on January 28, 2013, to discuss formalizing the relationship between partners, and to review governance models. Provincial and Federal policy advisors have accepted the City’s invitation to participate on the Interim Steering Committee.

The following examples respond to City Council’s direction to pursue initiatives and partnerships that build upon work already in progress within the Elevate initiatives in the following categories:

Landscaping (Including Access, Community Gardens) – aligns with Elevate action strategies related to

effective use of public space, redevelopment of vacant lands, beautification and the Great Neighbourhoods program (Recommendations 3, 4 and 5):

- Administration continues to support area residents in developing community gardens within neighbourhoods. For example, community gardens are currently operated at McCauley School, Queen Mary Park, Eastwood, Alberta Avenue, and Elmwood Park Community Leagues.
- Flower barrels have been installed along major arterial and collector roads contributing to enhanced streetscapes.
- The former Alberta Cycle lands are being developed into a green space with the potential for use during festivals. A business case for future development opportunities for these lands is being investigated.
- Administration is continually pursuing opportunities for development of community gardens on vacant lots and on surplus school sites.
- The Urban Forest Management Plan was accepted by the Corporate Leadership Team in 2012 and is a ten-year strategy to enhance, manage, and sustain the City's diverse urban forest system. In 2013, Administration will continue to accomplish goals within the work plan to ensure that the City's urban forest system will be a natural and community focal point of the Edmonton area for generations to come.
- The Root for Trees initiative was celebrated in 2012 through the hosting of four Edmonton area events: Arbor Day, Summer Solstice

Tree Festival, Tour des Trees, and National Tree Day.

- Root for Trees will be formally rolled out to the public in 2013 with the goal of increasing the number of trees within our urban canopy, and to further educate the community about the importance of trees within a municipality.
- The Naturalization Program made a visible and functional impact by doubling the number of shrub and tree plantings in Edmonton in 2012. The program was responsible for planting a total of 11,494 trees and shrubs on sites throughout the city by 32 different community, not-for-profit, and corporate groups.
- Areas utilized for naturalization plantings over the past year were diverse, from arterial roadways, where plant material buffers sound and mitigates particulate pollution created by traffic, to storm water management facilities where additional vegetation intercepts storm run off and provides a biological filter for the City's fresh water resources.

Security (Including Policing) – aligns with Elevate action strategies related to crime reduction and community safety (Recommendations 3 and 5):

- All ten actions within the Violence Reduction Action Plan are underway.
- The City's Social Development Rapid Response Team has completed 60 projects in one year. Examples of these projects include: Developing the "Steps to an Edmonton Poverty Reduction Strategy"; and managing the integrated Panhandling Strategy, which includes the Have a Heart,

Give Smart Public Education Campaign.

- Rising Youth Program: Advances efforts toward reaching newcomer and ethno-cultural youth through recreation and leadership activities. Every \$1 invested, results in \$2.95 gain in social value.
- REACH, Edmonton Police Service and the City of Edmonton continue to cooperate on the development of the 24/7 Service Delivery Model and the Assessment and Sobering Care Centre initiative.
- INJERA has engaged approximately 40 Edmonton Police Service Members and over 60 ethno-cultural animators in community-specific projects through its focus on enhancing trust and relationships between ethno-cultural community members and police.
- Six Neighbourhood Empowerment Teams are working throughout the City on several initiatives.
- There have been increased foot patrols in neighbourhoods by Edmonton Police Service and Community Standards (Bylaw).

Housing Diversity – aligns with Elevate action strategies related to housing options and opportunities for diversity and densification (Recommendation 7):

- In 2012, the Housing and Economic Sustainability Branch initiated the Neighbourhood-Based Housing Assessment Program as a pilot in Jasper Place.
- Building on the work of the City's Neighbourhood Revitalization initiatives, and in conjunction with other City programs, housing assessments will allow residents and Administration to identify housing programs and appropriate strategies

that will achieve desired neighbourhood outcomes.

- The housing assessment process will help to achieve City Policy objectives, including the need for community-driven approaches to strengthen neighbourhoods.
- The City of Edmonton has experienced great success with the Cornerstones Plan. This plan brings communities, businesses, and governments together to develop more available and affordable housing options for residents. From 2006-2012, over 3,000 units have been funded through the Cornerstones Plan.
- The Edmonton Homeless Commission oversees the implementation of the homelessness plan and focuses on a community-based approach to ending homelessness in Edmonton in ten years. In the first three years of the plan, under the management of Homeward Trust, 1,800 individuals have been housed.
- On October 16, 2012, City Council approved eight undeveloped school building sites, declared surplus by school boards in 2009, as locations for seniors housing initiatives. Sustainable Development is working with the Province on processes by which these lands and funding may be made available moving forward.
- The City's Derelict Building and Safe Housing Teams continue to work with property owners to ensure that houses and buildings are meeting structural, plumbing, electrical, and other major building codes. This team works closely with Community Standards, Fire Rescue, Edmonton Police Service and Alberta Health Services to coordinate inspections of

derelict buildings, and enforcement of City and provincial housing and building standards.

- Other housing programs such as Safe Housing, Secondary Suites, and Public Safety Compliance Teams continue to be promoted within Edmonton's neighbourhoods.

Business Support Opportunities – aligns with Elevate action strategies related to creating and supporting business diversity in communities (Recommendation 6):

- The implementation of the Business Revitalization Zone Strategic Plan will assist Edmonton's main streets to become vibrant, healthy and distinctive, and will provide the energy and synergy to form unique cultures, a robust local economy and strong social connections.
- The Façade and Development Incentive Programs continue to increase business viability in Edmonton.
- Enhanced streetscaping investments continue to be made by the City in the four neighbourhood revitalization areas.

Life Long Learning Through School Boards – aligns with Elevate action strategies related to life-long learning as a foundation for community sustainability (Recommendations 8 and 9):

- The Edmonton Catholic, Edmonton Public, and Conseil scolaire Centre-Nord School Boards have the lead role in identifying actions required to achieve the objectives stated in the Elevate report in the section entitled: Promote Life Long Learning.
- The three School Boards are founded on the principles of

providing multiple learning opportunities to students, primarily Kindergarten to Grade 12; however, they are also committed to providing access to educational opportunities for all citizens.

- School Boards have worked together to propose a list of strategies that may be employed to address the intent and spirit of the Elevate recommendations.
- Supplementary inventories, data related to school buildings and use, as well as current educational service delivery, have been shared with Administration by School Boards.
- The Edmonton Public Library has established Memoranda of Understanding with the Edmonton Public, Edmonton Catholic, and Conseil scolaire Centre-Nord School Boards with the intention of pursuing common areas of interest between parties. The Memoranda of Understanding agreements are based on the premise that all partners promote life-long learning opportunities for children, youth, and adults through shared programs, outreach, communication initiatives, and professional development opportunities. Where possible, the School Boards and Edmonton Public Library are working together to advance innovative approaches to develop literacy, improve language learning, and the linking of home, school, library, and community.
- Edmonton's City of Learners Initiative is a partnership with 15 area organizations that promotes life-long learning. The focus of this program is to embrace learning in our daily lives, enhance our role in the community, enhance

performance in the workplace, as well as personal development and physical well being.

- In 2013 the Edmonton City of Learners initiative will focus on the implementation of the following action items:
 - Update the Community Learning Foundations Plan based on feedback obtained by the City of Learners dialogue.
 - Identify and secure the Health and Learning Working Committee Lead.
 - Propose a governance model to effectively monitor the goals and lead the strategies of the City of Learners initiative.
 - Provide an update on the City of Learners Initiative to Community Services Committee.
- The Edmonton Literacy Coalition (consisting of members of Norquest College, The Learning Centre Literacy Association, Centre for Family Literacy, Edmonton Community Adult Learning Association, Project Adult Literacy, and Edmonton Public Library) have recently met to work together on a plan to raise awareness of literacy issues in the Edmonton community.

Other Relevant Factors:

In addition to the above mentioned examples, the following provides a summary of initiatives relating to various other Elevate Recommendations:

1. Learning Scenarios Project – Jasper Place Area Redevelopment Plan
 - As part of Sustainable Development's Citywide Area Redevelopment Plan program, work has begun on an Area

Redevelopment Plan process in Jasper Place. The Area Redevelopment Plan is building on the work of the Jasper Place Revitalization Strategy and will focus on policies and principles for land use, developing local implementation strategies for city-wide land use policies, and providing clarity on how the Jasper Place neighbourhoods will re-develop in the coming years.

- The Area Redevelopment Plan is being developed in collaboration with community members and other local stakeholders over the next 12 months.
- The first phase of the Jasper Place Area Redevelopment Plan is focused on a learning scenarios exercise. The purpose of the learning scenarios is to use models to understand the potential impacts of future redevelopment in the Jasper Place neighbourhoods. This will create a shared knowledge base between the City and the community to allow informed discussions and decision making when developing land use policies in the Area Redevelopment Plan.
- School enrollment is an important potential impact of redevelopment in mature neighbourhoods, as recognized in Elevate. The Area Redevelopment Plan team has been working closely with the local school boards in order to collect information about school enrollment patterns in the Jasper Place neighbourhoods. This information will be used to

- calibrate the learning scenario models.
 - As the Area Redevelopment Plan moves towards developing land use policies in subsequent phases over the next year, administration will continue working with the school boards to ensure their interests are represented in the Area Redevelopment Plan and that the Area Redevelopment Plan supports the key land use objectives in Elevate.
2. McCauley Top Five Strategies
- In response to emerging needs and opportunities in the McCauley neighbourhood, members of the McCauley, Boyle Street, Downtown, Central McDougall and Queen Mary Park Community Leagues were consulted to identify and understand their top five priorities to improve the livability in the southern part of the Chinatown business area.
 - The following strategies align with the McCauley Revitalization Strategy and have been approved by City Council as follows:
 - Safety and Security – This strategy focuses on the development and implementation of community based programs that will address business and residents' safety concerns in the McCauley neighbourhood.
 - Community Services staff is developing programs in partnership with the Edmonton Police Service to enhance safety and security in the area. The Edmonton Police Service Violence Reduction Strategy continues to focus efforts on reducing the severity and frequency of violence, reducing the conditions of social disorder, and better addressing needs of community members in places of high crime.
 - Shelter Strategy – Sustainable Development staff will work with the Edmonton Homeless Commission on a process to review and understand the operations of Edmonton's shelter service agencies to effectively align City programs and service capabilities to agency based initiatives. An investigation of opportunities related to shelter service operations will form an integral part of this strategy.
 - Agency Strategy – Community Services staff are primarily working with community agencies, organizations, and also with municipal and provincial government agencies to develop a simplified and inclusive process of providing supportive services to vulnerable populations in the McCauley area. The purpose of this strategy is to support the current work being done by various agencies and to develop a comprehensive and streamlined 'Edmonton agency approach' to service delivery.
 - Housing Strategy – Sustainable Development

staff will lead this strategy to improve housing quality in the McCauley neighbourhood. This will be accomplished through existing and future programs including: secondary suites, Housing Opportunity Program for Edmonton (previously Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program), derelict and distressed housing, residential enforcement, Development Incentive Fund and the High Threshold Neighbourhood Program.

- Urban Design – Working towards the goal of improving the connectivity between the Boyle Street and McCauley neighbourhoods, Sustainable Development staff will work with the communities, Revitalization Steering Committee, Business Revitalization Zone, and other stakeholders to develop and implement physical improvements to the public realm in the McCauley area.

3. Schools as Community Hubs

- Ongoing examination of aging and closed schools as community focal points with opportunities for use as community hubs or resource learning centres.
- City Council approved the use of Wellington Junior High from the Edmonton Public School Board to co-house the Winnifred Stewart Association and the Africa Centre. These two entities provide much-needed community-based programs to

vulnerable populations and newcomer communities.

- McCauley school is currently being examined as a site where existing community-based organizations would come together to develop an Intercultural Learning Centre of Excellence keeping the school in use for the community to access.

4. Neighbourhood Revitalizations

- Four neighbourhood revitalizations are underway in the City of Edmonton. Each revitalization project addresses many of Elevate's recommendations and action items around mature neighbourhood beautification, safety and security, and the establishment of community connections.

5. Edmonton Public Library Initiatives:

- a) School Library Card Project - This is a collaborative initiative between the Edmonton Public Library and three School Boards where the goal is to get Edmonton Public Library cards into students' hands easily. The project involves using each other's internal distribution systems to keep costs down, and ensures the cards and student information remains secure. From September, 2011 to August 2012, 26,578 students borrowed 492,427 public library items through this program.
- b) Reading Rockstars – Edmonton Catholic School District principals and consultants identified the need for additional literacy

- building support for certain populations of students in particular areas of the city. They reached out to the Edmonton Public Library for help. The Edmonton Public Library developed a literacy building program and agreed to offer it at schools identified by school district partners. A great deal of collaboration at the partnership level went into setting up as there was a need to compromise and align policies for staffing and use of space, and to determine appropriate authority and liability for the program.
- c) Welcome Baby in Translation – Babies at the Edmonton Public Library are offered a free Welcome Baby Package consisting of an illustrated rhyme book among other items. Edmonton Catholic School Board found great success in this program in English but thought it could also benefit newcomer families with young children. Edmonton Catholic School Board found translators and had the rhyme booklet and promotional materials translated into French, Spanish, Simplified Chinese, Vietnamese and Tagalog. The Edmonton Public Library is now doing the design and layout of these booklets in various languages and will also handle the distribution.
- d) How to Be an Information Ninja - This information literacy program is offered by Edmonton Public Library staff to Grade 8 students in all three School Districts. The program was developed by Edmonton Public Library librarians with school principals, teachers, and school library staff acting as consultants. In the spring of 2012, 34 presentations were delivered to 913 students.
- e) Building a Safer Community Through Inclusive Learning – In partnership with Boyle Street Community Services, the Edmonton Public Library has established an outreach program in response to increasing numbers of people seeking refuge in the downtown library. With funding from the Provincial Safe Communities Innovation fund, three Edmonton Public Library staff members are working to empower at-risk Edmontonians through literacy, education and social support. Results of this program have increased the Edmonton Public Library's capacity to respond to emergencies and public disruptions without having to involve enforcement or emergency services.
- ELEVATE - Next Steps
- Work with partners to identify areas and inner city neighbourhoods in which to focus Elevate efforts.
 - Continue to implement action strategies and to refine approaches for identified neighbourhoods that reflects both the City of Edmonton's partners' and other collaborative initiatives.
 - Continue to consult with the Elevate Interim Steering Committee on partnership opportunities.
 - Investigate opportunities for a series of "pilot" projects that reflect the diversity of interests of our partners and communities.

- Work with Provincial and Federal Government representatives and School Board partners towards the formal establishment of the Edmonton Community Sustainability Partnership to oversee the priorities and progress of the Elevate recommendations.
- Develop a communications strategy to connect with communities once all partners are engaged in the process towards formalizing the Edmonton Community Sustainability Partnership.

Policy

The following City Policies are connected to Elevate:

- *The Ways* – Edmonton’s Strategic Plan
- *The Way We Grow* – Edmonton’s Municipal Development Plan
- *The Way We Live* – Edmonton’s People Plan
- *The Way We Move* – Edmonton’s Transportation Master Plan
- *The Way We Green* – Edmonton’s Environmental Plan
- *The Way We Prosper* – Edmonton’s Economic Development Strategy
- *The Way We Finance* – Edmonton’s Financial Sustainability Plan

Corporate Outcomes:

The following corporate goals are a focus for Elevate:

- Improving Edmonton’s Livability
- Transforming Edmonton’s Urban Form
- Ensuring Edmonton’s Financial Sustainability
- Diversifying Edmonton’s Economy
- Preserve and sustain Edmonton’s Environment

Public Consultation

This report was prepared in consultation with the Elevate Implementation Working Committee consisting of senior representatives of the Edmonton Public, Edmonton Catholic and Edmonton Francophone School Divisions and senior City Administration. The Edmonton Public Library and Edmonton Police Service were also consulted on this report.

Budget/Financial Implications

- The primary objective of the Elevate Implementation Plan is to develop a partnership approach to support and enhance the viability of neighbourhoods, and neighbourhood institutions that are community based, share resources and build effective community partnerships.
- An accurate and thorough understanding of the financial needs of the Elevate initiative will require a comprehensive review of community sustainability priorities across all business units in the Corporation, and of those initiatives that the City is undertaking in partnership with community and government agencies.

Attachment

1. Draft: City of Edmonton Response to Community Sustainability Task Force Recommendations and Actions

Others Reviewing this Report

- R. G. Klassen, General Manager, Sustainable Development
- L. Rosen, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer