

Edmonton's Poverty Reduction Initiative

Recommendation:

That Community Services Committee recommend to City Council:

That the Terms of Reference for the 2012 – 2013 Council Initiative Edmonton's Poverty Reduction Initiative, as outlined in Attachment 1 of the October 9, 2012, Community Services report 2012CSW027, be approved.

Report Summary

This report recommends Terms of Reference for the 2012 – 2013 Council Initiative Edmonton's Poverty Reduction Initiative.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the May 16, 2012, City Council meeting, the following motion was passed:

1. That a Council Initiative called "Edmonton's Poverty Reduction Initiative" be approved.
2. That Councillors B. Henderson and A. Sohi be assigned to work as the advisors and advocates on Edmonton's Poverty Reduction Initiative.
3. That Administration work with key partners and appointed City Councillors to develop terms of reference for the development of a poverty reduction strategy for Edmonton, including:
 - proposed City role
 - identification of partners and proposed partner roles
 - scope of the strategy

- timelines
- integration with Provincial initiatives
- integration with other City efforts such as The Way We Live, Immigration Settlement Policy, Aboriginal Accord, Ten Year Homelessness Strategy, Cornerstones Plan for Affordable Housing, REACH and City of Learners.

Report

- As directed, in May, 2012, Administration began discussions with the Province and other key stakeholders to determine how Edmonton's Poverty Reduction Initiative could best align with other government and community efforts.
- Councillors B. Henderson and A. Sohi convened a working group to draft terms of reference for the initiative. In addition to Administration, the group included: the President of United Way of the Alberta Capital Region; the Executive Director of the Edmonton Social Planning Council; the Lead Medical Officer of Health, Alberta Health Services: Edmonton Zone; and a citizen champion.
- The recommended terms of reference, which outline City and partner roles, scope, timelines, integration with provincial and other City efforts, are outlined in Attachment 1.
- The City will be a partner in a community-based collaborative effort to end poverty in Edmonton. The City will take a major role in convening partners and stakeholders in the process. The list of partners will be very diverse, including government, major funders, the not-

for-profit sector, the public sector, the private sector, faith groups, neighbourhood or advocacy groups with an interest in poverty issues, and representatives of those at risk of, or experiencing, poverty.

- Strategy development will build upon United Way of the Alberta Capital Region's Community Impact Framework entitled "Creating Pathways out of Poverty", focusing on education, income, and wellness.
- United Way of the Alberta Capital Region has undergone extensive consultations with its partner agencies on its Community Impact Framework and will begin community consultations in the fall of 2012. The results of these consultations will be considered in strategy development.
- The next phase of Edmonton's Poverty Reduction Initiative will be the engagement of partners in the process, leading to the development of a poverty reduction strategy. A progress report will be presented to City Council by June 2013.
- Existing resources will be used for the start-up of the initiative in 2012.

Policy

City Policy C518 – Council Initiatives

Corporate Outcomes

The Way We Live: Edmonton's People Plan identifies a number of objectives and strategic policy directions related to poverty reduction including: 3.2.5 Engages stakeholders, other orders of government and community organizations to reduce poverty and 3.2.6 Advocates to reduce poverty and its effects.

Public Consultation

- A public consultation plan will be developed in collaboration with partners. The plan will identify and address any gaps in consultation beyond those which have already been undertaken by the City and its partners. Related consultations include:
 - United Way of the Alberta Capital Region's agency and community consultations.
 - Community consultations on the Government of Alberta's Social Policy Framework. The City hosted a conversation on Alberta's Social Policy Framework with community agencies on August 30, 2012. The Edmonton Social Planning Council hosted a number of focus groups with low-income Edmontonians.
 - The Way We Live: Edmonton's People Plan: The Quality of Life Needs & Priorities of Edmontonians Facing Social & Economic Barriers (2009).

Justification of Recommendation

Under City Policy C518 - Council Initiatives, terms of reference will be forwarded to Council or Committee for approval.

Attachments

1. Terms of Reference Edmonton's Poverty Reduction Initiative

Terms of Reference Edmonton's Poverty Reduction Initiative

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| Initiative Title: | Edmonton's Poverty Reduction Initiative |
| City Council Lead(s): | Councillors B. Henderson and A. Sohi |
| Supporting Department and Lead Staff: | Community Services: K. Barnhart |

BACKGROUND:

- There is a strong economic case for ending poverty, as the estimated annual cost of poverty in Alberta has been calculated as between 7.1 billion – 9.5 billion dollars.
- While Edmonton has responded to the needs of its most vulnerable citizens through such successful initiatives as the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness, momentum has been building across the country to address the complex root causes of poverty.
- Premier Alison Redford announced her intention to create a ten year plan to end poverty in Alberta on April 11, 2012.
- Fort McMurray/Wood Buffalo, Grande Prairie, Medicine Hat, Red Deer, Lethbridge, and Calgary are all working on poverty reduction plans.
- United Way of the Alberta Capital Region has adopted an Impact Framework focused on Creating Pathways out of Poverty through Education, Income, and Wellness.
- City Council recognized the importance of Edmonton working with the Province and other key stakeholders to ensure that the unique needs and aspirations of Edmontonians are addressed. On May 16, 2012, City Council moved that a Council Initiative called "Edmonton's Poverty Reduction Initiative" be approved.

DESIRED OUTCOME:

Poverty is eliminated in Edmonton through sustained coordination of resource allocation, social service policy, and community action.

The deliverable will be: an Edmonton poverty reduction strategy, developed in collaboration with community partners, to be presented to City Council and United Way of the Alberta Capital Region. This strategy will:

- provide guidance to the City of Edmonton as to the most strategic, effective, and appropriate ways to improve the lives of its vulnerable populations, in alignment with: The Way We Live; the Province of Alberta's strategic plans; and community-based initiatives.
- build upon United Way of the Alberta Capital Region's Impact Framework focused on Creating Pathways out of Poverty through Education, Income, and Wellness.
- include recommendations on goals, objectives, measures, and actions to end poverty.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC DIRECTION:

The Way We Live Edmonton's People Plan identifies a number of objectives and strategic policy directions related to poverty reduction. These include: Objective 3.1 The City of Edmonton nurtures a caring and inclusive society and strategic policy directions 3.1.1. Provides and partners to deliver services and programs to vulnerable populations and 3.1.2 Provides its people services so that they are accessible and available to Edmontonians; and Objective 3.2. The City of Edmonton increases opportunities to improve the lives of its vulnerable population, and related policy directions 3.2.5 Engages stakeholders, other orders of government and community organizations to reduce poverty and 3.2.6 Advocates to reduce poverty and its effects.

ALIGNMENT WITH IMMIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT POLICY C529:

While other levels of government have primary responsibility for immigration and settlement, the City recognizes its role in responding to the needs of its newcomer residents, and the benefits of working in partnership with the federal and provincial governments. Elements of Immigration and Settlement Policy C529 which may be aligned with Edmonton's Poverty Reduction Initiative include:

- ❑ In partnership with immigrant and refugee communities and other community organizations, support the development and implementation of community development and community economic development initiatives that support the economic well-being of immigrants, refugees, and their families.
- ❑ The City of Edmonton will examine, update and improve policies, programs and services that impact the lives of immigrants, refugees and their families.
- ❑ The City of Edmonton will review policies, programs and services that impact the lives of immigrant women.

ALIGNMENT WITH CITY OF LEARNERS:

It is anticipated that any poverty reduction plan would be developed in consideration of the importance of skills and knowledge to function in the world, and the acquisition of applied skills linked to occupational success as described in the City of Learners Terms of Reference.

ALIGNMENT WITH REACH:

Research demonstrates that, although poverty itself is not linked to crime, there is a correlation between income inequity and crime. A community with less inequity between rich and poor is a safer community. REACH Edmonton's vision aligns with poverty reduction - a city where everyone is safe and feels safe. The REACH report speaks to creating a sustainable strategy for prevention by supporting affordable housing, safe places and shelter for homeless youth.

ALIGNMENT WITH URBAN ABORIGINAL ACCORD:

Aboriginal people do not experience the same level of well-being and quality of life as many other groups in our region. Aboriginal people experience significant disparity in the areas of education, health and justice and face inordinate levels of poverty, under-employment and other social problems including racism. These struggles have exacted painful outcomes for Aboriginal Peoples. The imbalances call for the active involvement of Aboriginal people in identifying the issues and priorities and in developing partnerships, including partnerships with municipal and other levels of government, and well-supported plans of action to achieve needed change. The City will listen carefully to the concerns and wisdom of the aboriginal community, and ensure the inclusion of aboriginal representation in the process.

ALIGNMENT WITH TEN YEAR HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY: The Ten Year Homelessness Strategy takes a housing first approach to homelessness. Addressing homelessness is a key component of a poverty reduction strategy.

ALIGNMENT WITH CORNERSTONES: Poverty reduction efforts will align with and link to "*Edmonton Area Community Plan on Housing and Supports: 2011-2015*" as outlined in Cornerstones II: Edmonton's Plan for Affordable Housing 2012 – 2016. Affordable housing remains an integral component of poverty reduction. Increasing the number of people who are able to access and maintain quality housing is a key strategy identified within United Way of the Alberta Capital Region's income pillar.

ALIGNMENT WITH PROVINCIAL INITIATIVES: The Province of Alberta is working on its social policy framework and will move on to address specific poverty reduction strategies upon Government approval of the framework in November or December of 2012. In discussions with provincial officials, they have indicated interest in community-led, place-based poverty reduction strategies. Alberta Health Services Edmonton Zone: Public Health is participating in the initiative with the goal of improving Edmontonians' health outcomes by addressing social determinants of health.

ALIGNMENT WITH ELEVATE: Edmonton's Poverty Reduction Initiative aligns with the Report of the Community Sustainability Task Force, Focus B, Recommendation 7, Action 7.5: "Encourage the Province and other stakeholders to develop a formal poverty reduction strategy, including steps to reduce the concentration of poverty in individual neighbourhoods." It is proposed that the leadership group convened for the poverty reduction initiative include representation from the Community Sustainability Task Force.

SCOPE:

Edmonton's Poverty Reduction Initiative has the potential scope of addressing the needs of all Edmontonians living in poverty, building on the focus areas of income, education, and wellness. As the initiative is a community effort, it is anticipated that the scope will evolve over time in collaboration with partners.

The Initiative will be developed in stages. The first stage will be the engagement of partners, followed by the development of a strategy for poverty reduction. There will be multiple levels of partnership within project development, to ensure that there is alignment of policy and resource allocation, as well as coordination of community action.

Objectives for the City would be appropriate to areas of municipal jurisdiction and the strategy will note partnership recommendations which would be out of municipal scope. The poverty reduction strategy will provide guidelines for the City of Edmonton to assess policies and programs for a mitigating effect on poverty, and/or a community benefit.

The poverty reduction initiative will align with current supports and implementation plans within The Way We Live that have a direct or indirect impact on vulnerable citizens. The strategy could expand on current successful initiatives. It could also provide recommendations for hiring practices related to newcomer/immigrant needs, aboriginal needs, and other target populations. The strategy could also contain recommendations for funding models.

Upon approval of the strategy by Council, Administration would move forward with partners on implementation.

CITY ROLE:

The working group recommends that, as well as being a partner in the initiative, the City take a major role in convening the broad range of partners and stakeholders required to effectively address poverty. It is anticipated that there may be multiple existing or new working groups engaged in the process. The City will be contributing staff and resources to the initiative. The City will also have a role in ensuring that the citizens of Edmonton are engaged in the process, including citizens with lived experience of poverty, and that the process is inclusive of Edmonton's diverse population. It is proposed that Councillors Henderson's and Sohi's roles as initiative advocates and advisors continue.

PARTNERS AND PARTNER ROLES:

Partners will be engaged in different ways. The intent is that anyone who wants to contribute to the cause of ending poverty in Edmonton will have an opportunity to do so. Initial partners include: The City of Edmonton (Council and Administration); United Way of the Alberta Capital Region; the Edmonton Social Planning Council; Alberta Health Services Edmonton Zone: Public Health; and a citizen champion. The list of partners will continue to expand to include representation from:

- The Province of Alberta
- The corporate sector
- The public sector
- The not-for-profit sector, including service delivery and policy organizations
- Major funders of poverty reduction efforts in community
- Faith groups
- Edmontonians with lived experience of poverty.
- Other community/neighbourhood groups interested in taking action to end poverty in Edmonton.

The Edmonton Social Planning Council and Lead Medical Officer of Health, Alberta Health Services: Edmonton Zone will contribute research resources. United Way of the Alberta Capital Region will take lead responsibility for engaging the corporate community in the initiative and for contributing the results of their community consultations. There will need to be further discussions with the Government of Alberta to determine their specific involvement as their focus shifts from social policy framework development to poverty reduction.

It is anticipated that there will be a number of working groups from sectors broadly related to education, income, and wellness. Example could include: issues related to housing; mental health; early childhood; post-secondary; workforce training; or social enterprise. These working groups may include citizen stakeholders in addition to organizational representation. Roles, responsibilities, and governance structures will continue to develop as specific partners are engaged upon approval of the initiative.

TIMELINES:

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| May 2012 – Oct. 2012 | Scoping/Planning United Way Consultations begin |
| Nov. 2012 – Jan. 2013 | Recruiting, Convening, and Orienting Partners Developing Communication & Evaluation Plans |
| Jan. 2013 – Feb. 2013 | Defining Shared Vision & Policy Direction |
| Mar. 2013 – Apr. 2013 | Choosing Priorities for Action Progress Report to Council and Partners |
| May 2013 – June 2013 | Confirming Shared Investment Commitments |
| June 2013 | Completion and Launch of Strategic Framework Report to Council and Partners Implementation begins |
| Dec. 2013 | Report to Council and Partners |

BUDGET REQUIREMENTS:

Community Services will provide administrative support and professional expertise to the Initiative. There may be additional costs for: the development of a communication plan, including the development of a website or other social media strategy; an evaluation plan; hosting; consulting fees; and limited travel.

Implementation of the Edmonton Poverty Reduction strategy may require additional resources in 2013 depending on the outcome of further consultation and discussions.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

Partners will report to their respective organizations upon completion of major milestones. There will be progress reports to Community Services Committee/Council in June 2013 and December 2013.