

Housing Day overview

On June 27, the Community and Public Services Committee will discuss eight reports related to the City's efforts to increase the supply of affordable housing.

The discussion will include: updates on the City's 2019-2022 targets, a snapshot of affordable housing needs, and three potential funding scenarios to create 2,400 to 3,500 new and refurbished units as part of the next four-year affordable housing plan.

Additional reports explore potential approaches to the overrepresentation of Indigenous people in core housing need and homelessness, property tax grants as a way of ensuring consistency and predictability for affordable housing providers. The co-location of affordable housing at a new fire station in southeast Edmonton will also be considered.

Update on 2019-2022 targets

The City of Edmonton does not typically build or operate affordable housing, it supports affordable housing providers through capital grants, below-market land sales, as well as servicing and organizational support. The City's approach ensures affordable housing providers are able to incubate shovel-ready projects, then attract investment from donors and other orders of government.

In 2018, City Council approved a \$132-million investment to incentivize \$377 million in affordable housing investments. The Affordable Housing Investment Plan set targets of 2,500 new or renovated affordable housing units by the end of 2022, including 600 supportive housing units.

As of June, the City has committed \$115 million in land and grants towards 644 supportive housing units and 2,404 affordable units overall, activating a total of \$527 million of investments. In addition, the City also leveraged provincial funding to refurbish another 1,559 units of City-owned social housing developed in previous decades.

In the remaining six months, the City expects the total number of affordable housing units committed through the plan to rise to 2,843 units, including a total of 704 supportive housing units. These units are in earlier stages of development or under review from the recently closed round of Affordable Housing Investment Program capital grants.

Housing Needs Assessment

The City of Edmonton is the first Alberta municipality to develop a new Affordable Housing Needs Assessment tool that uses quantitative and qualitative data to identify market gaps and better understand core housing need. Core housing need is defined by the Canada

Mortgage and Housing Corporation as housing that is inadequate, unsuitable or unaffordable.

Edmonton's full report will be published in September, ahead of City Council budget deliberations. Some preliminary findings include:

- One in seven Edmonton households – 49,215 – are in core housing need.
- One in four renter households – 33,320 – are in core housing need. Renters are four times more likely than homeowners to experience core housing need.
- Edmonton's median household annual income (\$87,225) is higher than the national average (\$70,336), but 38 per cent of Edmonton renter households earn less than \$45,000, compared to 24 per cent nation-wide.
- Without continued investment and renewal of operator agreements, Edmonton is at risk of losing many of its 14,837 social and affordable housing units, which were mostly built in the 1960s to 1980s.

The demographics of renter households in Edmonton that are living in inadequate, unsuitable or unaffordable housing include:

- Mobility and other physical health challenges (57,230 households)
- Racialized households (23,350 households)
- People with intellectual disabilities (18,895 households)
- People with psychosocial disabilities (15,715 households).
- Seniors (9,055 households)
- Indigenous (8,330 households)
- Single mothers (7,795 households).

The needs assessment also identifies the need for more affordable housing for large families, more supportive housing and bridge housing.

Potential funding scenarios

Three funding scenarios are being proposed ahead of City Council's budget deliberations in the fall, which include targets of 2,400 to 3,500 new and refurbished units over the next four years:

- **Scenario 1:** City contributions of \$163.4 million for 2,471 units, with an expected project value of \$508.2 million.
- **Scenario 2:** City contributions \$187.2 million for 2,857 units, with an expected project value of \$613 million.
- **Scenario 3:** City contributions of \$246.4 million for 3,596 units, with an expected project value of \$917 million.



BACKGROUNDER

Affordable Housing
Committee Report Preview
June 17

All three 2023-2026 Affordable Housing Investment Plan scenarios include the creation of 409 units of supportive housing and a capital plan for the renewal of 870 units of City-owned social housing operated by Civida.

They differ on the extent of capital grants and land sales, extent of development on surplus school sites, and the extent of deep subsidy units aimed at Edmontonians with the lowest incomes, including units anticipated as part of a new Indigenous-led affordable housing strategy.

Indigenous-led Strategies

Indigenous people represent less than six per cent of Edmonton's population, and 62 per cent of individuals experiencing homelessness in Edmonton according to Homeward Trust's By-Names-List. In 2016, 57 per cent of Indigenous renter households were in core housing need, more than twice the average. Of these households, 23 per cent spent more than half of their income on rent and utilities, while 16 per cent were living in overcrowded conditions.

Two reports detail approaches to support Indigenous-led providers across the affordable housing spectrum and in the homeless-serving sector. Indigenous communities and organizations currently own or operate 929 units of housing, and are looking to develop another 132 units.

An Indigenous affordable housing strategy was developed with an advisory committee of Indigenous organizations delivering housing and support services in Edmonton. Tasked with exploring ways the City can prioritize and incentivize affordable housing for Indigenous people in Edmonton, the committee's report includes 23 recommendations, which make suggestions for City policies, collaborations with other levels of government, funding, a new Indigenous-led organization focused on housing in Edmonton, and the creation of tools to improve communications, working relationships, and data collection.

As there are currently no Indigenous-led emergency shelters, the City is exploring the possibility of an Indigenous-led shelter to provide a culturally relevant option and address barriers that keep Indigenous people from accessing the existing shelter system. Preliminary engagement was completed, with additional engagement to be undertaken based on City Council's approval of \$1 million in one-time funding for concept development.



Other Reports

Council previously requested a potential grant to offset property taxes paid by affordable housing providers. A proposed new grant program would use legal agreements to identify properties operated by non-profit organizations that qualify for tax relief.

Administration is proposing an adjustment to the scope of the future Walker fire station on Ellerslie Road and Watt Boulevard in southeast Edmonton to allow for supportive housing onsite, following successful projects in Calgary, Vancouver and other North American cities.

The Committee will also continue discussions on standards for Edmonton's emergency shelters.