

Indigenous Affordable Housing Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Community Development Committee:

1. Forward Report CD2023-0239 to the 2023 June 6 Regular Meeting of Council as an Item of Urgent Business; and
2. Recommend that Council:
 - a. Endorse Attachment 2 and direct Administration to begin immediate implementation of actions that have no new funding requirement;
 - b. Consider the recommendations of the Housing and Affordability Task Force (C2023-0415) at the 2023 June 6 Regular Meeting of Council as they relate to and align with this report; and
 - c. Direct Administration to bring forward funding requests to the next four-year budget cycle, if required, to implement the medium- and long-term actions in Attachment 2.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE, 2023 MAY 31:

That Council:

1. Endorse Attachment 2 and direct Administration to begin immediate implementation of actions that have no new funding requirement;
2. Consider the recommendations of the Housing and Affordability Task Force (C2023-0415) at the 2023 June 6 Regular Meeting of Council as they relate to and align with this report; and
3. Direct Administration to bring forward funding requests to the next four-year budget cycle, if required, to implement the medium- and long-term actions in Attachment 2.

Oppositions to Recommendations: Councillor Chu

HIGHLIGHTS

- This report presents three pathways with 25 multifaceted recommended actions, designed to address the affordable housing challenges facing urban Indigenous people living in Calgary.
- **What does this mean to Calgarians?** The actions proposed will enable The City to meaningfully respond to Indigenous voices and take concrete action to better address the affordable housing needs of Indigenous people living in Calgary.
- **Why does this matter?** Indigenous people continue to suffer from the impacts of colonization; specifically related to the provision of adequate and culturally responsive affordable housing options. The lack of affordable housing amplifies other social determinants of health such as homelessness, employment and health, including mental health and overall wellness.
- Background and Previous Council Direction is included as Attachment 1.

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DISCUSSION

Indigenous peoples experience unique challenges in accessing affordable housing in Calgary, mostly due to biased colonial systems, practices, and policies that perpetuate racial discrimination across the housing spectrum. For example, in 2021, the proportion of Indigenous people living in Calgary in core housing need was 15 per cent, roughly double the rate for the general population in Calgary (7 per cent). This inequity harms Indigenous people, risks their overall welfare and social wellbeing and is a significant barrier to achieving The City's commitment to Truth and Reconciliation, including the calls to action in the *White Goose Flying* report.

Indigenous housing must be approached through a holistic strategy that acknowledges housing as more than “bricks and mortar”. Often this is difficult for colonial governments to implement as western best practices are often siloed and misaligned to traditional inter-dependent Indigenous practices. Research and the voices of Elders have told us that success in Indigenous housing strategies requires several inter-dependent components including:

- adequate funding;
- long term programming supports;
- policy and systems reforms;
- intergovernmental co-operation;
- collaboration with urban, First Nation and Métis Nation, Calgary region communities; and
- a focus on community economic reconciliation.

Recognizing these systems-level challenges, *Foundations for Home: Calgary's Corporate Affordable Housing Strategy* directed Administration to, “Work with Indigenous community leaders on support required for Indigenous housing in Calgary”. This direction was supported by The City's responsibilities under the *Municipal Government Act*, and through City policies and strategies such as the *Social Wellbeing Policy*, *Welcoming Communities Policy*, *Gender Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy*, *Multicultural Communications & Engagement Strategy*, *Resilient Calgary Strategy*, *Anti-Racism Strategic Plan*, and the *White Goose Flying* report.

We must recognize and acknowledge that the privilege and benefits accorded to western people and governments, of those who occupy this land today, come from a history of stolen land and the displacement of the First peoples who now suffer the most from these actions. These are difficult yet important facts that need to be embedded in any housing plan to support Indigenous communities in their efforts to build housing adequacy and sustainability for their people. As an organization, The City must critically re-think how land and other City-owned assets can be respectfully recovered from western control and returned to create necessary affordable housing for Indigenous people in Calgary.

Attachment 2 identifies actions The City can take to start addressing the multi-faceted and holistic housing inequities faced by Indigenous people who live in Calgary. The actions include both immediate steps The City has begun or will soon take, and longer-term actions that require further research, development, and engagement with Indigenous people. This work embraces a holistic and culturally informed approach to addressing what Administration heard and recognizes the interconnectivity between Indigenous housing and other ongoing work related to reconciliation, generational trauma and the necessary dismantling of damaging and biased colonial systems, practices, and policies.

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EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Public engagement was undertaken | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Dialogue with interested parties was undertaken |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Public/interested parties were informed | <input type="checkbox"/> | Public communication or engagement was not required |

In response, Administration conducted engagement with Elders and Knowledge Keepers, Indigenous housing and social service providers, as well as Nation administrative leadership from 2020 July to 2021 December. The results of this engagement were presented to Council in 2022 June through report CD2022-0706. Through approval of that report, Administration was directed to return with a follow up recommendations report to Council by Q2, 2023. This work is now complete and is presented in Attachment 2.

The purpose of this internal work was to identify short- and long-term actions that The City will commit to in response to what we heard from previous engagements with Indigenous people. An Elders Advisory Council was also created to guide the development of these recommendations and this group will continue to support and guide the work over its implementation.

IMPLICATIONS

Social

Safe, affordable, and adequate housing is an important social determinant of health and a condition for community and economic development. It is also a fundamental human right recognized in Canadian and international law. Yet, First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples have been dealing with a longstanding housing crisis across Canada for decades. That crisis extends beyond the boundaries of rural, and on-reserve Indigenous communities and affects Indigenous people living in urban areas such as Calgary. This has severe consequences for the physical and mental health, and personal, social, educational, and economic development of Indigenous people who come to Calgary seeking a new life only to find a lack of housing options that are both culturally relevant and safe. The actions proposed in Attachment 2 are The City's response to addressing these issues in a holistic and comprehensive manner.

Environmental

Indigenous people have been stewards of this land for time immemorial. The actions proposed in this report are intended to lead to the creation of culturally relevant housing that enables Indigenous people and Indigenous organizations to return to some of the original land stewardship practices that were taken away through colonization. This includes space for traditional plants and medicines, and for operating housing in a way that does as little harm to the environment as possible.

Economic

There is a huge imperative for all orders of government to focus on Indigenous economic development, especially since Canada, and Calgary specifically, has a large, young, and growing Indigenous population. Engaging with Indigenous communities to invest in, construct, and implement affordable housing for their communities is a potent instrument and a significant

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way to advance economic reconciliation. First Nation, Métis, Inuit, and urban Indigenous communities are striving for economic self-sufficiency and self-determination through the acquisition of real estate, and of other assets; both private and public. The recovery of land and housing assets for affordable housing will require shifts in western policy and practice such as The City of Calgary Non-Market Housing Land Disposition Policy (CP2019-02) which was recently amended to commit a minimum of one parcel of land that has been identified as culturally relevant, if available, to be sold to an Indigenous non-profit housing provider.

Securing public buildings, gardens, and parkland for Indigenous housing, that is holistic in nature (inclusive of on-site ceremonial, cultural, commemorative activities), offers options that can promote healing as well as housing for Indigenous families, which over time translates into economic opportunities for both individual Indigenous people and Nations.

Service and Financial Implications

Other:

With the exception of an Indigenous Affordable Housing Funding Program, the remaining immediate actions identified in Attachment 2 can be implemented within existing resources.

The Housing and Affordability Task Force will also recommend to Council on 2023 June 6, that funding for Indigenous Housing be brought to the 2027-2030 Service Plans and Budget process and for this reason, Administration recommends that Council consider the recommendations of the Housing and Affordability Task Force in their totality. Therefore, this report does not contain a budget recommendation.

For actions identified as medium- and long-term, Administration will work to refine cost requirements for these actions and bring a budget request, if required, to the 2027-2030 Service Plans and Budget process.

RISK

Should the recommendations not be approved, there is a risk that Indigenous people will continue to suffer from the harms of colonization, experience heightened rates of core housing need, and a lack of social wellbeing. Additionally, as this work was directed by Council, there is a reputational risk to The City if the Indigenous community, Nations, organizations and agencies perceive a lack of interest, intention, or commitment to support a holistic approach to address the multi-faceted affordable housing need for Indigenous Calgarians.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Background and Previous Council Direction
2. The Ways Forward: Affordable Housing for Indigenous Calgarians Through a Holistic Plan
3. Presentation

**Community Services Report to
Community Development Committee
2023 May 31**

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Department Circulation

General Manager/Director	Department	Approve/Consult/Inform
Katie Black	GM Community Services	Approve
Chris Arthurs	GM People Innovation and Collab Services	Consult
Carla Male	Chief Financial Officers	Inform
Stuart Dalgleish	GM, Planning & Development Services	Inform