

Community Services Report to  
Community Development Committee  
2022 May 27

ISC: UNRESTRICTED  
CD2022-0706  
Page 1 of 5

## Affordable Housing for Urban Indigenous Calgarians

### RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Community Development Committee recommend that Council:

1. Direct Administration to engage relevant business units on the results of the Attachment 2 – *What we heard: Community engagement and research report* to inform development of a Recommendations Report with Indigenous community stakeholders.
2. Direct Administration to bring the Recommendations Report to Council for consideration and approval by Q2 2023.

### RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE, 2022 MAY 27

That Council:

1. Direct Administration to engage relevant business units on the results of the Attachment 2 – *What we heard: Community engagement and research report* to inform development of a Recommendations Report with Indigenous community stakeholders.
2. Direct Administration to bring the Recommendations Report to Council for consideration and approval by Q2 2023.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- The recommendations provide an update for Council on the work completed to date with Indigenous stakeholders to identify what The City's role could be to better support the delivery of affordable housing for urban Indigenous Calgarians. It will enable Administration to move forward in the development of a Recommendations Report with community stakeholders that will be brought to Committee and Council for approval.
- **What does it mean to Calgarians:** Indigenous people living in Calgary will have access to more affordable housing that is safe and culturally appropriate.
- **Why does it matter:** Urban Indigenous Calgarians continue to be over-represented in affordable housing need. According to the 2018 Point in Time Homeless Count, 20 per cent of those experiencing homelessness in Calgary identified as Indigenous, and the 2016 Federal Census indicated that non-reserve Indigenous households experience higher incidences of core housing need (19 per cent) as compared to non-Indigenous households overall (12.2 per cent).
- Foundations for Home: Calgary's Corporate Affordable Housing Strategy was approved in 2016 and directs Administration to collaborate with Indigenous leaders and look for opportunities to support Indigenous housing in Calgary.
- Strategic Alignment to Council's Citizen Priorities: A prosperous city
- Background and Previous Council Direction is included as Attachment 1.

## DISCUSSION

Between 2006-2016, Calgary's urban Indigenous population grew by 35 per cent. Migration to Calgary's urban centre will continue to rise as the state of on-reserve housing stock deteriorates, and development of new housing is limited/non-existent. There is also a lack of culturally appropriate housing delivered for Indigenous Calgarians by Indigenous housing providers, which is a contributing factor to housing instability.

## Affordable Housing for Urban Indigenous Calgarians

Key legislation and Council directives mandate Administration to create and sustain safe and viable communities for all Calgarians – for example, the Municipal Government Act; Foundations for Home: Calgary’s Corporate Affordable Housing Strategy; Social Wellbeing Policy, and The City’s Commitment to Anti-Racism. Thus, it is The City’s responsibility to translate these strategies – with community stakeholders – to ensure Indigenous Calgarians have access to safe and affordable homes.

A high-level scan was undertaken to understand how municipalities across Canada are addressing Indigenous affordable housing needs. Most municipalities, including Calgary, are in the early stages of their work – for example, resourcing an Indigenous Relations Office to action Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission declarations, developing relationships with Métis and First Nations, supporting mandates of local Indigenous advisory committees/collaboratives, and addressing Indigenous homelessness through community partnerships.

### **Urban Indigenous Engagement**

In collaboration and alignment with the Indigenous Relations Office, a parallel engagement framework was applied to create ethical space for Indigenous stakeholders and The City of Calgary to work collaboratively in a genuine way. The first phase of engagement focused on working with Elders, Indigenous-serving housing providers and service organizations to set the strategic direction of the work, as well as identify gaps and barriers Indigenous Calgarians face when seeking and sustaining affordable housing. This work has been captured and summarized in Attachment 2 – *What we heard: Community engagement and research report – Understanding the affordable housing needs of Indigenous Calgarians: By Indigenous people for Indigenous people*, and includes the following key themes:

1. **Reconciliation:** Formally declare The City of Calgary and Affordable Housing priorities for advancing urban Indigenous housing.
2. **Natural Laws:** Honour and respect Indigenous worldviews that are built from Natural Laws/way of life; create parallels in research, planning and designs to better reflect Indigenous concepts of what home meant prior to colonization.
3. **Recognize the Land:** Build and create safe spaces for home with access to land that is culturally relevant/appropriate.
4. **Safe Spaces:** Design for a sense of community and places for seniors, youth and community to come together and be free of trauma.
5. **Colonization and External Racism:** Recognize external influences unique to Indigenous people; acknowledge racism and stereotyping.
6. **Supports:** Provide Indigenous programming and supports for people living in Calgary, as well as people moving from reserve.

In 2021 December, the What We Heard Report was taken to community stakeholders for validation. Through a metaphorical translation of a Niitstítapi (Blackfoot) Tea Dance ceremony, the urban Indigenous content of the report was validated, and permission was granted by Elders and community to move forward with the work.

### **Nation Engagement**

The scope of this project is to understand affordable housing challenges for urban Indigenous Calgarians – it does not address on-reserve housing. However, due to the significant movement of people on and off-reserve, the What We Heard Report also captures initial conversations with Nation housing administrative leadership teams to understand the needs of their members choosing to live in the city.

## **Affordable Housing for Urban Indigenous Calgarians**

Conversations were held with the housing administrative leadership of the Blackfoot Confederacy representing the Piikani, Kainawa and Siksika Nations; Group of 4 representing the Tsuut'ina and Stoney Nations; and the Métis Nation of Alberta Region 3. Each Nation identified their distinct emerging housing needs and how The City can better support development of affordable housing for Nation members living or wanting to live in Calgary. This information was also captured in the What We Heard Report and validated by Nation Administration.

### **Respectful Engagement with Nations**

Based on the recommendation from the Indigenous Relations Office, Affordable Housing's work with the Nations will move forward in consultation with the Indigenous Relations Office and their path forward with Mayor and Council regarding Nation-to-nation work. This respects the unique levels of governance and decision-making authority for the Nations and The City, as well as the role of the Indigenous Relations Office as the City lead for thoughtful and respectfully-aligned work.

## **STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION (EXTERNAL)**

- Public Engagement was undertaken
- Public Communication or Engagement was not required
- Public/Stakeholders were informed
- Stakeholder dialogue/relations were undertaken

To ensure meaningful and useful engagement with community, Elder Dr. Reg Crowshoe's governance model was applied – with permission – in the development of a parallel engagement framework to equally recognize Indigenous and non-Indigenous systems. Further details can be found in Attachment 3 – Parallel Engagement Framework.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

### **Social**

Affordable housing is vital in creating and sustaining safe and viable communities for all Calgarians. Thus, enabling and supporting the delivery of affordable housing that is safe and culturally appropriate for Indigenous Calgarians is critical, and a fundamental step in advancing The City's commitment to Truth and Reconciliation work.

To premise Indigenous worldviews and systems, this project and the supporting parallel engagement framework aligns with The City's Indigenous Policy:

1. Ways of knowing – The City will be present in the community.
2. Ways of engaging – The City will be more authentic when working with Indigenous people.
3. Ways of building relationships – The City will have a spirit of reciprocity in relationships with Indigenous people.
4. Ways towards equitable environments – The City will recognize and remove barriers to full participation for all Indigenous people.

## **Affordable Housing for Urban Indigenous Calgarians**

---

### **Environmental**

Climate change poses the greatest threat to populations that have been systemically disadvantaged or under-served – for example, those on low-incomes or experiencing homelessness. The provision of safe, adequate and affordable housing for urban Indigenous Calgarians will help contribute to building resilient communities better able to withstand the impacts of climate change.

### **Economic**

Future recommendations based on this work may lead to investment in affordable housing development, which improves economic development by creating new jobs, attracting and retaining a stable workforce, and saving taxpayers money by reducing pressure on emergency services. People in affordable housing have greater chances to find and keep jobs, to learn and build skills, and be active participants in their communities.

### **Service and Financial Implications**

#### **No anticipated financial impact**

\$0

The report recommendations currently have no impact to Operating or Capital budgets. There may be future impacts to budgets.

### **RISK**

By undertaking this project at Council's direction, Administration made a commitment to identify how The City can better support the delivery of affordable housing for Indigenous people living in Calgary. Elders and community stakeholders have invested considerable time and effort on the work completed to date. Early trust and relationships have been built, and future work with community is dependent on continued progress of this project.

Council direction to engage relevant business units across the Corporation will enable Administration to co-create a Recommendations Report with community stakeholders. The Recommendations Report will include actionable projects with timing, budget and resourcing considerations, demonstrating genuine and long-term commitment to advance The City's Reconciliation work.

Should Council not continue with the work completed to-date, The City as a whole (including the Indigenous Relations Office) could face considerable reputational and relational damage with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, Indigenous housing providers and service agencies, as well as the Nations.

### **ATTACHMENT(S)**

1. Background and Previous Council Direction
2. What we heard: Community engagement and research report – Understanding the affordable housing needs of Indigenous Calgarians: By Indigenous people for Indigenous people
3. Parallel Engagement Framework

**Community Services Report to  
Community Development Committee  
2022 May 27**

**ISC: UNRESTRICTED  
CD2022-0706  
Page 5 of 5**

**Affordable Housing for Urban Indigenous Calgarians**

---

Department Circulation

| <b>General Manager/Director</b>    | <b>Department</b>                       | <b>Approve/Consult/Inform</b> |
|------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| Chris Arthurs, Deputy City Manager | People, Innovation and Culture Services | Inform                        |