## CONTENTS

1 | Housing and Homelessness in Edmonton
4 | Mayor’s Message

### The City’s Roles in Addressing Homelessness and Affordable Housing

6 | 1 Increase the Supply of Affordable Housing
11 | 2 Addressing Homelessness
17 | 3 Housing Policy and Planning
21 | 4 Community Connections

24 | Moving Forward
25 | Acknowledgments
HousinG anD HomeLeSSnESS in edMontoN

The City of edMontoN’s 4 ROlEs

1 | Increase the supply of affordable housing
2 | Address homelessness
3 | Develop policy options and plans to address housing needs
4 | Build community connections to promote safe and secure housing

THE CONTEXT

At least 16,000 people, in 4000 households, are on wait lists for affordable housing.

This is despite several years of booming economic growth. They are restaurant servers, hairdressers, store clerks, often earning less than $15/hr. Many live on fixed incomes such as people with disabilities or seniors. For most, the cost of housing has simply increased at a greater rate than their income. As well, the number of low-rent apartments units has gone down. Many have been renovated into more expensive condos.

2,307 Edmontonians simply have no home.

They may couch surf, relying on a friend or family member to let them stay for a while. Or they live rough, sleeping outside or bedding down in a shelter overnight. Many may not ever be able to live completely independently, but can be successfully housed with the right supports in place.

The challenge to address this need is significant and could grow given the current economic situation we face in Alberta with the 2015 collapse of oil prices.

In 2015, the City of Edmonton worked on a number of fronts to address this need.

We provided hundreds of grants to build and upgrade affordable housing units. We worked with many partners on programs to house people living homeless and to support those at risk of becoming homeless. We undertook several key initiatives to gain fuller understanding of how current and upcoming policy and legislative changes will impact our city’s affordable housing needs and the best course for dealing with these changes.

Collaboration is the foundation of our work to address the complex affordable housing challenge.

We are engaging with local residents, service providers and developers to determine individual neighborhood needs. We partner with organizations and agencies to deliver services. We are working closely with the City of Calgary and the Government of Alberta on City Charters and the Municipal Governance Act Review.
Affordable housing is about much more than a roof over one’s head. It’s about stability and security. Access to affordable housing improves people’s mental and physical health, educational and employment outcomes and reduces demand for other government services. It is a critical element of our city’s health and competitiveness, and key to ending poverty. Poverty is a cycle; having access to quality housing is key to breaking that cycle, while remaining in low-quality housing perpetuates it. Most importantly, every person has a right to live in a safe and decent home.

As mayor, I am committed to our city collaborating with governments and non-governmental organizations to end homelessness and address the significant need for affordable housing. Our success will depend on collaborative approaches to sustainable, meaningful change. Already, working as partners, we’ve housed more than 5,000 formerly homeless Edmontonians since 2009 and launched a number of initiatives aimed at preventing homelessness, such as Community Bridge and Heavy Users of Services.

The City’s Housing and Homeless Section continues its breadth of work in anticipating and addressing the many challenges and opportunities for housing, through our 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness, Cornerstones II, the Landlord and Tenant Advisory Board, developer-sponsored affordable housing and other initiatives.

Another significant achievement in 2015 was Edmonton’s Social Housing Regeneration Advisory Group (SHRAG) recommendations for dealing with Edmonton’s aging social housing units. Federal funding for social housing has been in decline since the early 1990s and is set to end completely by 2040. Federal-provincial operating agreements for some
non-profit-run social housing have already expired and agreements for government-run units will begin to expire in 2021. The units discussed by SHRAG will be directly affected by the expiring federal-provincial social housing operating agreements. Resulting from the SHRAG recommendations, I am asking the provincial and federal governments to collaborate in a pilot project in Londonderry which will see an 80-unit building, currently unfit for living, rebuilt into a model mixed-income complex. Rents from market-priced units would cover the costs of the subsidized units.

Despite all this work, there are still more than 2,000 people living without a home in our city. One in four families lives in a home it cannot afford because more than 30 per cent of its income is spent on housing costs. Given 2016’s economic realities, the number of people in need of an affordable home may well increase.

In its 2016 budget, the provincial government is making significant investments in affordable housing, and homelessness and outreach supports.

No one solution exists for these complex challenges. No single government or organization working alone can successfully address them. I know that with the City taking a leadership role and continued commitment from many partners, we can ensure that every Edmontonian has access to an affordable home that provides a high quality of life. This work is crucial in helping build resilient individuals and families, and a more equitable, prosperous and vibrant city.
16,000 Edmontonians (4000 households) are on wait lists for affordable housing

**WHO IS IN NEED?**

- Single-parent families
- Singles
- Seniors on fixed income

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

- Housing is considered affordable if it costs less than 30% of a household’s before-tax income
- Household income on housing costs
  - 86,745* households spent more than 30%
  - 41,130* households spent more than 50%

*2011 data: latest census numbers available

**HOMELESSNESS**

- 2,307* people in Edmonton don’t have a home
- 29%* of Edmonton’s homeless are children and youth under 24 years old
- 48%* of people without a home identify as Aboriginal

*2014 data

**THE FACTS**

- $1,259 is the average rent for a 2 bedroom apartment
- 77% of rental units that are more than $800 a month
- $48,960 annual income required to afford a 2 bedroom apartment

- 26,823 Number of non-market housing units in Edmonton, including emergency shelter beds and transitional accommodation
- 7% of housing starts that were rental housing (2001-2014)
THE CITY OF EDMONTON'S RESPONSE IN 2015

HOMELINESS

2015 was Year 7 of our city's 10 YEAR PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS
5,028 previously homeless people have been housed in the past 7 years
80%+ of those housed have remained housed or graduated from Housing First

INCREASING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Grants

45* HOPE grants for essential home repairs
35* CO2RE grants to upgrade energy efficiency
19* Curb Appeal grants for exterior home repairs
74* Secondary Suite grants

*Approved applications

Former surplus school sites

547 new market housing homes for first-time buyers being built or planned for 10 former surplus school sites
112 New affordable apartments for seniors planned on 1 former surplus school site

DEVELOPING POLICY OPTIONS AND PLANS

Affordable Housing Strategy 2016-2025
The plan guiding Edmonton’s involvement in provision of affordable housing

11 Social Housing Regeneration Advisory Group (SHRAG) Report recommendations for dealing with Edmonton’s 11,673 aging social housing units

2 NEW CITY POLICIES

• Developer Sponsored Affordable Housing
• Guidelines for Development of the 2009 Surplus School Sites

BUILDING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS TO PROMOTE SAFE AND SECURE HOUSING

Problem Property Multi-agency Enforcement
The Affordable Housing Awareness Campaign
Landlord and Tenant Advisory Board 31,208 served in 2015

Edmonton’s 1st Housing Ambassador
Community Bridge 84% of people who received eviction prevention help were still housed 3 months later

Project Watch
THE CITY’S ROLES IN ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

1. INCREASE THE SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

2015 SUMMARY

CORNERSTONES

HOPE (Housing Opportunities for Edmonton)*

Invested in housing repair and update **

\[2015 = \$1.1\text{ MILLION}\]

\[2014 = \$928,971\]

- 56% households with families
- 31% households with seniors
- 27% households with member with a disability

Curb Appeal

Invested in exterior home repair

\[2015 = \$15,490\]

\[2014 = \$71,527\]

Secondary Suites

\[2015 = \$1.3\text{ MILLION} \text{ invested (including Oxford)}\]

\[2015 = 74 \text{ grant funding applications approved (including Oxford)}\]

\[2014 = 49 \text{ grant funding applications approved}\]

* All grants go to qualifying-income households

** $ figures include investment in HOPE and CO2RE grants

HOPE

Homeowner grants up to $20,000 to ensure homes are at minimum health and safety standards.

CO2RE grants up to $2000 for energy-efficient modifications.

CURB APPEAL

Matching homeowner grants up to $1000 for exterior home repairs.

SECONDARY SUITES

Homeowner grants of up to $20,000 to upgrade or build a secondary suite thus providing new affordable rental housing.
WORKING TOGETHER

HOPE

“The rent from our basement suite is about a quarter of our income. But we seriously couldn’t have kept renting out the basement if it kept flooding every summer.”

Alden Lowrey

Alden and Ariane Lowrey are professional, freelance musicians. Their older home in Bonnie Doon is a lively place with their two children, 2 and 4 years old. A few years ago, Alden and Ariane built a basement suite with the help of a City Cornerstones grant. But recent summer storms were repeatedly flooding the basement, so badly that Alden and Ariane were worried they were going to lose the suite and, with it, the rent income which makes up about a quarter of their annual income.

“We couldn’t afford the repair bill. We aren’t low income, but we do fall under the maximum income threshold. The HOPE funding paid for a sump pump, weeping tile and landscaping so the yard doesn’t slope down to the house.

“There’s no way we could have done this without help from HOPE. The HOPE program saved a home for two lower income households – ours and our renter’s.”
DEVELOPER SPONSORED AFFORDABLE HOUSING

2 new apartments

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

24 homes built

$1.5 MILLION invested to build an additional 25 family homes

$2.5 MILLION contributed in land value for future homes

homeEd

836 people and families living in an affordable unit owned and/or run by homeEd, Edmonton’s non-profit housing corporation

CAPITAL REGION HOUSING CORPORATION

$547,000 invested in 1,032 social housing units owned by the City, managed by CRHC

$231,946 CRHC payments to the City for the 2,600 social housing units on land owned by the City

DEVELOPER SPONSORED AFFORDABLE HOUSING

5% of units in certain developments are made available to the City at 85% market cost for affordable housing. These homes will be managed by homeEd, the City’s non-profit housing corporation.

CAPITAL REGION HOUSING CORPORATION

Edmonton’s largest social housing management body, CRHC provides 4500 homes to some of the city’s lowest income families. In 2015, CRHC’s expertise was invaluable in its work with the Social Housing Regeneration Advisory Committee to understand the scope of financial challenge we face as federal/provincial operating subsidies for social housing expire in upcoming years.
“Working with the City as a partner is invaluable to us here at homeEd. We are all walking on the same path … journeying toward the same objectives … as opposed to working at cross purposes.”

Bill Bell, Executive Director, homeEd

homeEd is the City’s non-profit housing corporation providing affordable rental housing to vulnerable Edmontonians for almost 40 years. It owns and operates 807 apartments and townhouses and manages an additional 41 city-owned affordable housing units on behalf of the City of Edmonton. The homes are integrated into neighborhoods across the city.

About 10% of homeEd’s tenants were previously living homeless.

homeEd was created by the City of Edmonton and given a very clear mandate “to develop, provide, operate and maintain housing accommodation of all kinds”. While currently focusing its efforts on a particular type of housing, homeEd is well-positioned to pursue other initiatives and support the implementation of the City’s new Affordable Housing Strategy.

In 2015, homeEd took on managing two new units – the first under Edmonton’s new Developer Sponsored Affordable Housing policy.

“Our success can be attributed, in part, to our history of successful partnerships with the City, our tenants and client placement agencies. The City provides us with a number of support services and, perhaps most importantly, with guidance on municipal priorities and direction. Client placement agencies provide the supports required for their clients (our tenants) to be successful in their homes.”
GREATER EDMONTON FOUNDATION

$3.7 MILLION invested for 883 seniors lodge accommodation beds

FORMER SURPLUS SCHOOL SITES

Seniors housing

$6.6 MILLION invested (funds and land value) into Sakaw Terrace
5 community meetings for input into Sakaw Terrace plans

First Place homes
(market housing for first-time buyers)

99 families moved into new homes
437 homes built or being built on 8 sites
110 homes planned for 2 more sites
2 community information open houses
6 community design engagements held

SENIORS HOUSING
In 2015, plans were finalized for Sakaw Terrace in Millwoods; the first of eight surplus school sites to be used for affordable seniors’ housing communities. These developments will depend on provincial funding and community partnerships.

FIRST PLACE HOUSING
20 new first-time buyers housing developments, built or to be built on former surplus school sites. Homes are market-priced but have a five year deferral on the land portion of the mortgage.
10 YEAR PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS

2015 was Year 7 of the 10 Year Plan, which used the Housing First approach: getting people into a home and then providing the supports they need to be successful there. Homeward Trust Edmonton continues to manage implementation of the 10 Year Plan and the Housing First program.

To date, we’ve seen significant success: in the number of people housed, the retention rate, shelter use (down slightly) and ongoing commitment from Housing First providers. As Edmonton’s 2015 EndPoverty Strategy is implemented, it will also help prevent people from becoming homeless.

However, the primary challenge continues to be capital funding for affordable housing and, critically, for permanent supportive housing which meets needs for the most complex cases. The reality is we’re not meeting our Year 7 targets in this area. In order to achieve the targets set out in the Plan, we require an additional 1,650 units of affordable housing and 1,000 units of permanent supportive housing. The full spectrum of housing need can be addressed only through active partnerships between all orders of government.

Edmonton’s investment, in funding and support, continues through Homeward Trust, homeEd, the Capital Region Housing Corporation and the Greater Edmonton Foundation.
Role 2 – Addressing Homelessness

Homeward Trust

1,611 previously homeless Edmontonians were housed
1,530 are living independently with some agency help
81% require permanent supportive housing
81% were housed outside the inner city
91% are still successfully housed or have successfully exited Housing First

$1.2 Million
City’s 2015 investment

Community Bridge
(Eviction Prevention)

187 people helped
117 retained housing
13 evicted
35% of cases don’t require monetary help

$60,000
City’s 2015 investment

Pregnancy Pathways

The City in partnership with a broad range of agencies and AHS is working to develop a housing program for pregnant women who are homeless. In 2015, the City issued an RFI for agencies interested in leading this initiative – which will provide these women a home and intensive wraparound health and social supports during pregnancy and the post-partum period, and work to find them appropriate permanent housing.

Housing First Providers

- Alberta Health Services (DiverseCity Housing)
- Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society
- Bill Rees YMCA
- Bissell Centre
- Boyle McCauley Health Centre (Pathways to Housing)
- Boyle Street Community Services
- E4C Case Management
- George Spady Centre
- Hope Mission
- Jasper Place Health and Wellness Centre
- The Mustard Seed
- Niginan Housing Ventures
- Schizophrenia Society of Alberta

Community Bridge

This program provides range of rapid response interventions to stop evictions. For example, a tenant might need bridge funding, or help with relationship management with landlords, utility companies or service partners.

Run through Bissell Centre, Community Bridge work is guided by an Advisory Committee.

- Bissell Centre
- City of Edmonton
- Edmonton Apartment Association
- Edmonton Community Foundation
- EMCN
- EPCOR
- HR3 Consulting
- Stollery Charitable Foundation
- United Way

In 2015, Community Bridge signed MOUs with the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers (EMCN) and the Landlord and Tenant Advisory Board.

Funders: The City of Edmonton, Edmonton Community Foundation, Stollery Charitable Foundation, and United Way of the Alberta Capital Region.
WORKING TOGETHER
Community Bridge

“We set out to discover whether a true cross-sector, partner-based approach to preventing evictions could work. And now we know. It’s definitely working.”

Rachelle Sutherland, Bissell Centre

July 2015 marked the start of the second year for Community Bridge; Edmonton’s first prototype collaboration aiming to prevent homelessness by preventing evictions. It provides interventions such as funding, employment, health or other supports to help people and families from losing their homes.

There is no maximum loan or grant provided to prevent evictions, and repayment is requested but not enforced.

Importantly, these supports are provided when they’re needed. So people don’t have to wait through long application processes, during which time they would likely have been evicted. The average ‘loan’ needed is $1,260; and often renters just need bridge funding to help them through a difficult period.

Because of high demand, a second full-time staff position was added in 2015, doubling the number of applications processed and follow-up supports offered to renters.

“It was important for the partnership that we set this up as a prototype. It allowed us to work together very openly; to learn together what was working, and what we needed to do differently for our clients, and for our collaboration. This open forum has made it a real partnership.”

An Edmonton family housed by Bissell Centre
Steve (not his real name) was Edmonton’s heaviest user of services. Every day, he interacted with police, an emergency room, an EMS crew or a jail cell. For the last 10 years in West Division, every police member knew him. We’d find him passed out in a snowbank or on the street; we saved his life many times. He was simply unable to care for himself.”

EPS Staff Sgt. Derek McIntyre
But in spring 2015, Steve’s life changed dramatically, with the help of several members of the HUoS team. HUoS is made up of 16 partners – including EPS, the City, and social serving agencies – that work with 15 Edmontonians who are the city’s heaviest users of justice, emergency, health and social services. They’re all well known to police; they’re chronically homeless, addicted and often have mental health illnesses. If they agree to be in HUoS, the partner agencies work together on a plan to get these people the help needed for a better life.

“Last summer, Officer Bill Lefurgey, a beat officer in West Edmonton, asked me about Steve because the officers hadn’t seen him for a while. Steve was by then in HUoS, living at the Royal Alex Hospital with a diagnosis of alcohol-induced dementia. He can’t ever live on his own; he’s still there now waiting for permanent supportive housing. When Officer Lefurgey heard this, he rounded up the other West end beat officers and they all went to visit Steve in hospital.

“You have to know Steve was like beat furniture before HUoS. He was always in need; you know you were going to see him every day on the beat. We never saw him in a capacity that was socially appropriate. In truth, people like this can become perceived as a nuisance for officers. But these officers cared enough to ask where he was and to visit him.

“This empathy and compassion demonstrates a big shift in police attitudes. Officer LeFurgey has already referred another person to HUoS. We’ve come really far in our organization in our approach with vulnerable people, in that officers aren’t thinking just about the warrants and dealing with wrongdoings. It’s not to say we don’t have a ways to go. But those six officers who visited Bill are setting the bar higher and as leaders their attitudes will permeate. Our HUoS team was amazed at their compassion.”
HEAVY USERS OF SERVICES (HUoS)

15 Edmontonians are HUoS clients
58% decrease in police interactions
25% decrease in emergency department interactions
70% increase in self-sufficiency scores
$75,000 City’s 2015 investment

HEAVY USERS OF SERVICES (HUoS)
The City, Edmonton Police Service (EPS) and 14 other partners (as of 2015) focus efforts on 15 vulnerable people with complex needs who frequently interact with police, justice, health and social services.

HUoS took on its first clients in 2015. The goal is to break their cycle of interaction with police, emergency services, hospitals and jail, and get clients the help they need to stabilize.

In its first year, HUoS clients’ interactions with police decreased by 58%, interactions with Edmonton Transit Service decreased by 51% and visits to hospital emergency departments decreased by 25%.

HUoS PARTNERS
- City of Edmonton
- Edmonton Police Service
- Homeward Trust
- Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society
- Boyle Street Community Services
- Alberta Health Services
- Boyle McCauley Health Centre
- Alberta Human Services
- George Spady Centre
- Bissell Centre
- Hope Mission
- REACH Edmonton

HUoS FUNDERS
- Alberta Solicitor General
- City of Edmonton
- Edmonton Police Service
The City of Edmonton works with partners to understand and plan for housing needs and develop policy options.

2015 SUMMARY

AFFORDABLE HOUSING STRATEGY

In November 2015, City Council approved Edmonton’s new Affordable Housing Strategy 2016-2025. The Strategy was developed to guide the City’s involvement in affordable housing for 10 years.

Affordable Housing Strategy Goals:

1. Increase the supply of affordable housing in all areas of the city
2. Maintain the supply of affordable and market rental housing
3. Enable stable residential tenancies and transition people out of homelessness
4. Anticipate, recognize and coordinate action to respond to housing and homeless needs

The Strategy’s implementation plan has clear objectives, strategies and actions, to further understand and meet the spectrum of affordable housing need in our city.
AFFORDABLE HOUSING INFRASTRUCTURE GAP REPORT TO COUNCIL

This report frames the scale and financial implications of our city’s affordable housing situation. The scale of need is substantial enough that it cannot be addressed within corporate financial guidelines over the next few years.

Finding solutions to the affordable housing crunch we face will also address other City priorities including a more compact city, broad and varied housing choices, and cultivating partnerships to meet diverse housing needs.

DEVELOPER SPONSORED AFFORDABLE HOUSING POLICY

In 2015, Council passed policy C582 formalizing the partnership the City and developers have had since 2006 to increase the supply of affordable Housing (commonly known as 5/85 inclusionary housing). The policy outlines the process for developers to make available to the City 5% of the units in certain new residential developments. The City can purchase these units at 85% market cost to become affordable housing. The City maintains ownership and homeEd manages the units.

The City and developers have been informally working together inclusive housing since 2006 under the City’s Cornerstones I Affordable Housing Plan. Since then, the City has purchased 23 inclusive affordable units.
ROLE 3 - HOUSING POLICY AND PLANNING

SOCIAL HOUSING REGENERATION ADVISORY GROUP (SHRAG)

Of the 28,823 total non-market housing units in Edmonton, 11,673 are made affordable to people living on very low incomes through federal-provincial long-term operating subsidies. But these subsidies will be coming to an end, which will leave thousands of individuals and families at risk of losing their homes unless alternative funding sources are found.

To address this issue, Mayor Don Iveson brought together the Social Housing Regeneration Advisory Group. In 2015, SHRAG presented its Summary Report to City Council. Its 11 recommendations provide the framework for redevelopment and regeneration of our city’s social housing. The SHRAG Report recommendations are reflected in the 2016-2025 Affordable Housing Strategy.

GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING SURPLUS SCHOOL SITES

City policy C583 was approved by City Council in July, 2015. It establishes guidelines for residential development on former surplus school sites placed on the City’s land inventory in 2009.

- 50-75% of residential units built on these sites will be non-market housing (remaining will be market housing)
- Non-market housing units will not be visibly distinguishable from the market units in the development
- There will be no single detached homes
- Developments can include other uses that benefit the community as a whole

REALIZING HOUSING POTENTIAL

This public engagement initiative brought together community members from five central Edmonton neighborhoods with city staff to develop actions for improving housing conditions in the five communities.

Through a series of meetings, small group interviews and workshops they produced a final report and five Neighborhood Housing Roadmaps. These identify policies, programs and projects which would improve housing conditions in the five neighborhoods.
WORKING TOGETHER

Sakaw Terrace Seniors’ Housing

“This is the first partnership and development of its kind in Edmonton. We’re combining non-market and market housing for seniors in one complex. It means more of the community’s seniors can age in their neighborhood, together with their friends.”

Raymond Swonek, CEO, Greater Edmonton Foundation

In 2015, the City of Edmonton, the Government of Alberta and the Greater Edmonton Foundation (GEF) finalized plans for affordable seniors’ housing at the Sakaw former surplus school site: a 158 unit complex with independent living and supportive living.

The City’s Cornerstones I Program provided funding and land value worth $6.6M, the Province of Alberta committed $20M and the Greater Edmonton Foundation’s commitment was $1.1M.

Rent in 70% of the units will be 15% below the market rates. Remaining units will have higher rents, though still not reaching the market rate. This combination means the project, owned and run by the GEF, will be self-sustaining with no need for future operating funds from the city. The GEF is also partnering with the Millwoods Seniors Activity Centre to offer seniors’ programs

“We have partners at the funding and programming levels but, importantly, we can’t do projects like this without extensive community input. Solid partnerships are the fundamental to our success.”
4. COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

THE CITY’S ROLES IN ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

2015 SUMMARY

LANDLORD TENANT ADVISORY BOARD (LTAB)

The LTAB works with landlords and tenants to resolve and prevent disputes through mediation services, public education and advice. It partners on several city initiatives including: Project Watch; Community Bridge; and Crime Free Multi-Housing certification for rental properties.

Citizens served
2015 = $31,208
2014 = $27,000

70 public education workshops and mediations
1,916 participants

2 Crime Free Multi-Housing Certification Courses in collaboration with Edmonton Police Services
156 participants

19 Landlord Courses
214 participants

98% Satisfaction for all services
SAFE HOUSING

283 Safe Housing building inspections
10 buildings with 22 units and
35 shared amenities upgraded

DERELICT BUILDINGS
(Derelict Buildings moved to Community Standards Branch in July 2015)

8 upgrades to derelict housing
20 repair permits obtained by property owners

PROJECT WATCH
A collaborative initiative between the City and the Province of Alberta to ensure safe housing conditions for vulnerable people living temporarily in motels and hotels.

PROBLEM PROPERTY MULTI-AGENCY ENFORCEMENT
The City and the Province of Alberta gathered with Edmontonians in 2015 to hear their concerns and gather ideas for dealing with run-down properties, which can often attract criminal activity. The final report is expected in 2016.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING AWARENESS CAMPAIGN
“This awareness campaign is primarily designed to dispel the myths, including that having affordable housing next door will negatively affect your property value.”
Mayor Don Iveson

The City’s new Affordable Housing Awareness Campaign was launched in October 2015, providing information and a toolkit to help Edmontonians learn more about the needs and benefits of affordable housing. The toolkit will also be used by the Edmonton’s Housing Ambassador in his community work.

This City initiative is championed by the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues, the Urban Development Institute, the Canadian Homebuilders Association and the Capital Region Interfaith Housing Initiative.
WORKING TOGETHER
Edmonton’s first housing ambassador

“The idea was so well received; we had excitement from all the partners from the start.”
Mike Van Boom, Housing Ambassador

In 2015, Mike Van Boom became Edmonton’s first Housing Ambassador. His job is to help local neighborhoods have conversations on new affordable or supportive housing in advance of specific projects; making sure everyone has access to good information and is given the opportunity to speak and be heard. One of his tools will be Edmonton’s new Affordable Housing Campaign toolkit.

“Faith communities have been very involved, through the Interfaith Housing Initiative, in the City’s 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness. We felt we could help in this area.”

The Anglican Diocese provides office space, the City of Edmonton and the Edmonton Community Foundation cover the salary for the Housing Ambassador and the Roman Catholic, Anglican and United Church communities fund a half-time coordinator.

“We all bring different strengths, ideas and wisdom to the table. When we sit down together in all our diversity and work through things together we make better and wiser plans. This applies to our partnerships and also to the work I’ll be doing with community members. Really great things can happen!”
Many call it a crisis: the critical shortage of safe, suitable affordable housing for 4.4 million Canadian households, including almost 87,000 households here in our city. We know the number of Edmontonians in need of affordable housing will grow – by an average of 1300 people every year. Seniors will make up 43% of this growth. Overall it’s a situation that carries significant economic and social costs.

We know that every dollar we invest in affordable housing actually increased our country’s GDP. And every $10 spent on housing and supports for a chronically homeless person results in $21.72 in savings on healthcare, social, housing and justice costs. EndPovertyEdmonton identifies access to affordable housing as a key element in ending life in poverty for 123,000 Edmontonians.

The City of Edmonton is well positioned to address Edmonton’s social housing gap. City Council has identified affordable housing a high priority and as such set many initiatives in motion, including housing on former surplus school sites, the planned Blatchford development (Canada’s largest infill project to date), Cornerstones II and more Developer Sponsored Affordable Housing. The City has developed and will continue to cultivate partnerships and collaborative approaches: no one organization or order of government can, on its own, solve the complexities of the affordable housing challenge. Importantly, our Housing and Homeless Section knows the context of affordable housing here in the city: the history, the demographics, and the spectrum of need and of possible solutions. In short, the City of Edmonton and its current and potential partners are ready to move forward on this issue.
It’s very encouraging that the provincial government in its 2016 budget has announced $843 million over 5 years for affordable housing and $181 million over three years for ending homelessness and outreach supports. As well, the 2016 federal budget outlines significant investments in social housing and provision for rent subsidies. Success in tackling this complex issue is dependent on committed partnerships between all orders of government and cooperation from all Canadians. In the end, we will all come out winners.

Jay Freeman, Executive Director, Housing and Homelessness, City of Edmonton

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
The work done by the City of Edmonton to address affordable housing and homelessness would not be possible without the support of the Government of Alberta, the Government of Canada and Homeward Trust Edmonton.

In addition, there are many organizations, agencies, communities and individuals whose experience, knowledge and commitment we depend on for success in our housing initiatives.

The leadership provided by Mayor Don Iveson, Councillor Ben Henderson and Councillor Michael Walters, through the Council Initiative on Housing, has guided the City’s work in identifying proactive solutions to address issues of housing affordability and homelessness in Edmonton.