

Administrative Standard

Corner Store Program

Program Impacted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Development: Edmonton has a diverse and prosperous economy that thrives locally and globally. • Project and Asset Management: The City of Edmonton's projects are well managed and assets are maintained for accountable service delivery.
Approved By	City Manager
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Approval History	n/a
Next Scheduled Review	September 2028

Purpose

The City of Edmonton (City) supports the revitalization of Neighbourhood Commercial Areas in mature and established (redeveloping) neighbourhoods through the Corner Store Program (CSP). This Administrative Standard establishes the framework for administering the CSP Building Renovation Grants as well as the Streetscape Improvements that are typically implemented and coordinated through the City's Neighbourhood Renewal Program.

Program Goals

The City Plan identifies the importance of small-scale commercial centres as Local Nodes servicing Edmonton neighbourhoods. To stay relevant as community anchors and contributors to the local economy, while contributing to The City Plan goal of 15-minute communities, many Local Nodes in redeveloping neighbourhoods may require streetscape upgrades beyond standard renewal, combined with grants that contribute to property owners making complementary improvements to their commercial buildings.

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The CSP aims to deliver Streetscape Improvements and building renovations that improve community connection and economic viability of the Local Node, which in turn supports 15 minute communities. To do this, the program focuses on the following goals:

- Build more attractive and functional streetscapes.
- Encourage business retention and reduce commercial vacancy.
- Create barrier free spaces for all modes of transportation.
- Connect commercial properties to bike networks.
- Add placemaking elements that make the area more engaging.
- Install features that facilitate community connection.
- Increase the perception and experience of safety.
- Improve property values.

Scope

This Administrative Standard applies to:

- The administration of the CSP commercial property improvement grants.
- The administration of Streetscape Improvements to City owned land surrounding commercial sites (i.e. City right of way) and/or publicly-accessible private commercial properties in redeveloping areas.
- Collaborative processes between the City's Urban Planning and Economy (UPE) and Integrated Infrastructure Services (IIS) Departments.

Roles and Responsibilities

Urban Planning and Economy (UPE)

- Administer and keep current the CSP commercial property improvement grant guidelines and eligibility criteria, as contained in the attached Corner Store Building Renovation Grant Procedures and associated Program Guides.
- Lead community engagement with commercial property owners and businesses, and promotion of the CSP.
- Administer commercial property improvement grant projects from application to project completion.
- Collaborate with Integrated Infrastructure Services to identify, agree upon and coordinate associated streetscape projects.

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Integrated Infrastructure Services (IIS)

- Develops and delivers capital streetscape projects as per the City's Project Development and Delivery Model.
- Owns and manages Capital Composite Profiles including those that contain Corner Store growth funding.
- Ensures alignment with broader City infrastructure plans.

Joint Responsibilities (UPE and IIS)

- Complete project initiation requirements for each committed streetscape project.
- Conduct regular inter-departmental meetings to review prospective projects (from identification to selection to implementation), considering opportunities and constraints for City investments on publicly-accessible private property.
- Conduct regular inter-departmental meetings to review status of all active projects, addressing any challenges or emerging opportunities.
- Jointly review and approve streetscape scope and budget for each project (project initiation requirements).
- Jointly meet with community members and property owners throughout appropriate stages of design and construction.
- Resolve project-related issues collaboratively.

Target Areas and Limitations

Commercial Property Improvement Grants

Eligible properties are located in Neighbourhood Commercial Areas in Redeveloping Areas of the City within the boundaries of the Anthony Henday Drive freeway and must meet all of the eligibility requirements outlined in the attached Corner Store Program Building Renovation Grant Procedures and applicable Program Guides.

Streetscape Improvements

Eligible properties are limited to Neighbourhood Commercial Areas within Redeveloping Areas of the City. Projects delivered in alignment with renewal or other capital projects are typically prioritized but opportunities for stand alone corner store projects are also considered.

Streetscape Improvements primarily focus on adjacent City-owned land, with limited capital investment on publicly-accessible private property. Investments in such private property are considered when they are practical, deliver significant value toward achieving program goals, require minimal site disturbance, and address site-specific opportunities, such as complementing commercial property improvements, creating inviting gathering spaces, improving perception of

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safety, enhancing accessibility, mitigating climate factors, or completing pedestrian connections through the site.

Processes

Commercial Property Improvement Grants

1. Promotion:
 - UPE leads promotional efforts through City communication channels and in-person outreach.
2. Application Process:
 - Applicants submit a comprehensive application for consideration for a CSP commercial property improvement grant as required in the applicable Program Guide.
 - UPE reviews applications for eligibility and alignment with the CSP goals.
3. Approval:
 - Applications are evaluated and approved or rejected based on alignment with the CSP objectives and guidelines.
4. Grant Agreement:
 - Successful applicants sign a reimbursement grant agreement with the City outlining funding terms, timelines and reporting requirements.
5. Monitoring and Reporting:
 - UPE monitors project milestones and ensures compliance with grant agreements.
 - Applicants submit final documentation of completed work as required in the applicable Program Guide in order to qualify for eligible reimbursement.

Streetscape Improvement Projects

1. Community Engagement:
 - IIS and UPE jointly promote streetscape project opportunities to property owners and community members.
2. Site Selection:
 - IIS assesses technical feasibility and alignment with infrastructure renewal plans relative to site-specific opportunities including investment on publicly-accessible private property and in alignment with program budget.
3. Implementation:
 - IIS manages design, procurement and construction for approved projects.
 - IIS and UPE ensure alignment with community goals and monitor community feedback.
4. Monitoring and Reporting:
 - IIS oversees construction and ensures compliance with City policies and standards, which could include construction agreements and maintenance agreements.

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Inter-Departmental Collaboration

1. Regular Meetings:
 - Regular coordination meetings between UPE and IIS to address program and project progress, challenges, and opportunities.
 - IIS and UPE jointly promote streetscape project opportunities to property owners and community members.
 - Defining project scope with particular focus on areas where investments may be warranted on publicly-accessible private property.
 - Setting project budgets.
2. Problem Solving:
 - Addressing site-specific and budget-related challenges that may emerge during a project.
3. Shared Reporting:
 - Jointly prepare reports on program outcomes as required for senior management and City Council.
4. Capital Planning:
 - UPE initiates the business case with IIS supporting to ensure alignment for funding requests.
5. Records Management:
 - Maintain detailed records of applications, agreements and financial transactions in accordance with City records management policies.
6. Review and Amendments:
 - This Administrative Standard will be reviewed annually or as required to reflect changes in City priorities or program needs. Either IIS or UPE can trigger a review.

Definitions

- **Capital Composite Profiles:** Composite profiles consolidate funding for multiple infrastructure projects within a specific asset type (e.g., Facilities, Transportation, Open Spaces) or a particular program (e.g., Neighbourhood Renewal).
- **Corner Store Program (CSP) Building Renovation Grants:** Matching grants offered to eligible commercial properties within target areas to make improvements to the exterior and interior of their buildings.
- **Local Nodes:** A local node serves a residential neighbourhood or business area and includes existing or new small scale activity centres. It is a community focal point for business, services, gathering and housing.
- **Neighbourhood Commercial Area:** Refers to a small-scale commercial zone designed primarily to serve the immediate needs of the surrounding residential community in a redeveloping area of the City. These areas were originally developed as community-oriented amenities, offering accessible goods, services, or social spaces to nearby residents.

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They typically consist of locally focused businesses and are distinct from large commercial corridors, regional shopping malls, or retail commons, which cater to broader markets and larger geographic areas. Neighbourhood Commercial Areas are integral to fostering walkable, vibrant, and community-centered environments.

- **Neighbourhood Renewal Program:** A long-term initiative to rehabilitate infrastructure in mature neighbourhoods, including roads, sidewalks, and streetlights, with funding primarily from a dedicated property tax levy.
- **Project Development and Delivery Model:** A phased framework that outlines the stages and checkpoints involved in planning, designing, and constructing capital infrastructure projects within the city.
- **Project Scope Statement:** Defines the specific infrastructure work (roads, sidewalks, streetlights, etc.) to be rehabilitated within selected mature neighbourhoods, guided by program objectives and available funding.
- **Redeveloping Areas:** Are neighbourhoods that have completed the cycle of growth, build out and maturation, and are changing to accommodate compact, mixed use development in support of Edmonton's City Plan. Focusing investment in these areas aligns with program goals of revitalizing and enhancing long-standing community hubs and supporting the unique commercial needs of these established neighborhoods.
- **Streetscape Improvements:** Projects typically involve upgrades to the City owned land surrounding commercial sites. Improvements may include: new landscaping, sidewalks, street lights, furnishings, bus shelters, accessibility features, amenities for people who bike, decorative features, upgraded pedestrian connections and other elements that support commercial vibrancy and placemaking.

Additionally, projects may involve select targeted improvements on publicly-accessible private property that respond to site specific opportunities and directly relate to facade improvement investment. These strategic opportunities may require moderate site disturbance, but provide significant value and achieve program goals that would otherwise be unattainable. This includes elements that would typically be considered as part of a streetscape design if the building fronted the street instead of a parking lot. Examples may include: wider walkways, upgrading or relocating garbage areas, planting trees/shrubs, decorative lighting, adding permanent space for cafe seating.

Attachments:

- [Neighbourhood Renewal Program Policy C595A \(2020\)](#)
- [Corner Store Program Building Renovation Grant Draft Procedures](#)