



Edmonton City Council requests support for community safety and well-being

Edmonton has a unique local context related to its role as a hub for social services for the Edmonton region, Northern Alberta, and the Territories.

Compared to Calgary, Edmonton receives lower financial and service support, despite experiencing significantly greater social pressures and challenges. Although progress has been made in addressing some of the inequity and inadequate funding, much more still needs to be done. We appreciate the investments announced October 1, 2022 by the Government of Alberta including \$12 million to provide funding equity to Homeward Trust, establishing a Recovery Community in Edmonton, and forming of a hybrid health and police operated facility in the downtown. We are eagerly waiting for full implementation of these investments. We also appreciate the additional commitment in Budget 2023 for housing and shelter spaces and are looking forward to understanding the impact of those investments on Edmontonians.

While all of these investments are welcome, we worry that the Government of Alberta is not fully grasping the severity and the complexity of Edmonton's context. Edmontonians facing houselessness, mental health illnesses, and the drug poisoning crisis require a more immediate and robust response. The effect is particularly profound for Indigenous peoples and the unhoused population who are disproportionately and severely impacted by drug poisonings and houselessness. The underinvestment in tackling these issues not only have a human cost, but severely impact businesses and organizations operating in the Downtown core and other business districts impacted by the social disorder. Edmonton should be a community where everyone feels safe and has the opportunity to thrive. There is still much work to be done and we are asking for the Government of Alberta to step up to fulfill its jurisdictional responsibilities.

While tackling homelessness, mental health, and the drug poisoning crisis are primarily provincial responsibilities, Edmonton City Council is taking action. For 2023-2026, Council allocated the following funding to accelerate and build on previous investments to the implement the [Community Safety and Well-Being Strategy](#) and the [Downtown Core and Transit System Safety Plan](#):

- An additional \$7 million for 2023 to the Edmonton Police Service to improve enforcement.
- Since 2019, the Government of Alberta reduced the City's share of automated enforcement revenues from 73.3% to 60% effectively reducing the EPS budget by \$7- \$8 million annually. In order to deal with this funding shortfall and to permanently reduce EPS dependency of this unpredictable and declining revenue, Edmonton City Council made a

significant decision to replace traffic enforcement revenues with a \$22.3 million annual property tax levy.

- \$15.2 million for the Healthy Streets Operations Centre located in Chinatown to improve safety in the Downtown core, Chinatown, and other nearby business districts.
- \$13.5 million over four years for additional transit enforcement and social services support, including hiring new Transit Peace Officers.
- An additional \$35 million in capital funds and \$18.7 million annually in operating funds for Affordable Housing and Homelessness Prevention.
- An additional \$6.6 million annually for the Affordable Housing Grant Program that provides municipal property tax relief to affordable housing providers. The Government of Alberta continues to collect its share of property taxes from affordable housing providers.
- \$10.8 million over four years for 24/7 Crisis Diversion to reduce pressure on EPS resources.
- \$3.7 million annually for the Public Washroom to improve cleanliness and public health.
- \$1.2 million annually for the Problem Property Initiative.

We must do this critical work in partnership with the Government of Alberta. To achieve our shared goals of a safe, vibrant and prosperous Capital City, we need the Government of Alberta's immediate attention:

1. Create additional permanent 24/7 shelter beds to meet the target of 1250 dignified spaces, creating parity with the number of spaces in Calgary.
2. Provide \$18 million per year for 70-100 bridge housing units to help transition people from shelters into supportive housing.
3. Provide increased capital and operating funds to develop an additional 550 units of supportive housing that will expand recovery-oriented care opportunities in Edmonton.
4. Poor and exclusionary shelter standards have contributed to the number of encampments in Edmonton, and limited operating hours have led to social disorder in the Downtown core and Chinatown. In order to address this issue, we're asking the Government of Alberta to provide additional funding to shelter providers to implement the City's Minimum Emergency Shelter Standards (as recommended by the Government of Alberta's Coordinated Community Response to Homelessness Task Force)
5. Edmonton is currently in the midst of a drug poisoning crisis with a record number of recorded drug poisoning deaths. There is a critical need for additional treatment spaces and investment to meet the increased need for harm reduction services in the city. We ask



that you establish harm reduction, treatment and recovery facilities throughout Edmonton with ongoing support to help sustain long-term recovery.

6. Provide \$100 million for business revitalization areas such as Chinatown, Downtown, Whyte Avenue, 107 Avenue, 118 Avenue, and other areas that are struggling due to a high presence of social disorder.
7. Unhoused individuals are dropped off in our city near shelters or agencies without a proper plan in place to ensure they have the support they need to recover. In order to address this issue, we ask the Government of Alberta to immediately develop a comprehensive integrated release plan before discharging patients from correctional facilities, hospitals and persons in care. We also request that the Government of Alberta advocate to the Federal Government to do the same.

Understanding Edmonton's local context: contrast of Alberta's two largest cities

	Edmonton	Calgary
Housing and Emergency Shelter	<p>2,815 unhoused people (Feb 2023)¹ 57% of whom identify as Indigenous</p> <p>1,335 people who are sleeping outdoors or in emergency shelters (764 sleeping outdoors) (Feb 2023)²</p> <p>278 unhoused per 100,000 Edmontonians³</p> <p>622 permanent shelter beds⁴ 0.22 shelter beds per unhoused person</p> <p>3 shelter operators⁵</p> <p><i>Of the 622 permanent shelter beds, Hope Mission is responsible for 525 or 84.4% of the beds.</i></p>	<p>2,782 unhoused people (Sept 2022)⁵ 30.1% of whom identify as Indigenous⁵</p> <p>795 people who are unsheltered or in an emergency shelter (137 sleeping outdoors) (Sept 2022)⁵</p> <p>213 unhoused per 100,000 Calgarians⁶</p> <p>1,736 permanent shelter beds⁴ 0.62 shelter beds per unhoused person</p> <p>7 shelter operators⁵</p>
Drug Poisoning Crisis	<p>3,479 EMS calls for opioid related events in 2022 and 522 EMS calls in 2023⁷</p> <p>556 Drug Poisoning Deaths between Jan - Nov</p>	<p>1,761 EMS calls for opioid related events in 2022 and 299 EMS calls in 2023</p> <p>465 Drug Poisoning Deaths between Jan - Nov</p>

¹ Homeward Trust, [Edmonton Homelessness Dashboard](#)

² Homeward Trust, [Edmonton Homelessness Dashboard](#)

³ Government of Canada, [2021 Census of Population](#)

⁴ Government of Alberta [Emergency Shelters Daily Occupancy AB Open Data](#)

⁵ Calgary Homeless Foundation [Point In Time Count Report](#) - Most current public information available.

⁶ Government of Canada, [2021 Census of Population](#)

⁷ Government of Alberta, "[EMS responses to opioid related events by week - January 1, 2018 to February 26, 2023](#)"



	<p>2022⁸</p> <p>56.7 Drug Poisoning Deaths per 100 000 between Jan - Nov 2022⁹</p>	<p>2022</p> <p>35.5 Drug Poisoning Deaths per 100 000 between Jan - Nov 2022¹⁰</p>
<p>Regional Service Pressures ¹¹</p>	<p>2 provincial remand and correctional facilities within the Capital Region with capacity for 2,498 adults and 1 facility with capacity for 286 youth — the Edmonton Remand Centre and the Edmonton Young Offenders Centre</p> <p>4 federal correctional facilities within the Capital Region with a combined rated capacity for 581 adults ¹² - three of these facilities (Edmonton Institution, Edmonton Institution for Women, and Grierson Centre) are within Edmonton's boundaries <i>All maximum security spaces and all spaces for women are in Edmonton</i></p> <p>An adult health services catchment of Edmonton, Northern Alberta, and the territories¹³</p>	<p>2 provincial remand and correctional facilities within the Calgary Metropolitan Region with capacity for 1,111 adults and 1 facility with capacity for 116 youth</p> <p>A health services catchment of Calgary and Southern Alberta</p>

⁸ Government of Alberta, "[Counts of drug poisoning deaths by month](#)"

⁹ Government of Alberta, "[Rate of drug poisoning deaths per 100,000 person years by month](#)"

¹⁰ Government of Alberta, "[Rate of drug poisoning deaths per 100,000 person years by month](#)"

¹¹ Edmonton Metropolitan Region includes 6 cities, 1 specialized municipality, 3 municipal districts, 10 towns, 3 villages, 8 summer villages and 4 reserves for 3 First Nations ([Statistics Canada](#)). In contrast, the Calgary Metropolitan Area consists of 3 cities, 1 municipal district, 3 towns, 1 village and 1 First Nation Reserve ([Statistics Canada](#)).

¹² Government of Canada, "[Institutional profiles: Prairie region](#)"

¹³ [Alberta Health Services Northern Health Services Network](#)

