

# Establishment of Africa Centre

## A Case Study

### Recommendation:

That the June 11, 2012, Community Services report 2012CSW017, be received for information.

### Report Summary

**This report provides a case study on the establishment and development of the Africa Centre by the Community, volunteers and Administration, highlighting the successes, challenges and shared learnings of this innovative approach to working with newcomers in our city.**

### Previous Council/Committee Action

At the February 21, 2012, Community Services Committee, the following motion was passed:

That Administration provide a report with a case study on the development of the African Centre including the process and all activities taken by the Community, volunteers and Administration to establish the African Centre.

### Report

#### A Unique Community Hub

- Since it opened in 2007, the Africa Centre has become a meeting place for a growing non geographic community, a support system and a resource portal for African Canadians in Edmonton.
- The leadership of the Council for the Advancement of African Canadians in Alberta has relentlessly pursued

its vision of creating a safe and welcoming community hub.

#### Why an Africa Centre

- The Africa Centre reaches out to a diverse array of citizens who come from a continent of over 55 countries with more than 2,000 languages spoken. The Pan African approach championed by the Africa Centre brings together people from very different countries for a common purpose.
- Today, the Africa Centre provides an evolving array of culturally-appropriate programs to meet the specific needs of people in the community. It also celebrates the richness of African cultures and traditions, and shares them with other Edmontonians.
- The attached Case Study reflects how the Africa Centre has laid a solid governance and facility management foundation and successfully leveraged partnerships and resources to support its work. The story reflects the perspectives of the Centre's Board, staff, key community partners and City staff. (Attachment 1)

#### A Framework for Services

- Community Services embarked in 2010 on the creation of a new *Framework for Service Delivery to support African Communities*.
- Building in part on its experience working with African community leaders on the Africa Centre model, the Framework was rooted in consultation with the broader African community, organizations and immigrant serving agencies.
- The Framework offers a strategic context, including guiding principles and success factors, along with tangible ways for the City to become

more strategic, proactive and effective in supporting and serving citizens of African origin.

- The Framework still requires both internal and community review. Once complete, it may chart a strategic new course for how the municipality facilitates, serves and partners with our ethno-cultural communities in achieving a vibrant, connected and inclusive city. (Attachment 2)

### Future Plans

- The Centre's Board completed a forward looking three year Strategic Plan in February 2012. Developed by the Board, staff and the City of Edmonton staff liaison, the Strategic Plan examines strengths, challenges and opportunities to consider. Some of its priorities include: diversifying its financial resource base; exploring how to bring Africa Centre services and connections to citizens across the city and raising its visibility through enhanced communications and volunteer opportunities.
- The Strategic Plan specifically recognizes the physical limitations of the current facility. Capital planning and fund raising for a new partnership-based multicultural facility at the Wellington site lies ahead.
- The existing lease on the Wellington school site expires in February 2013.
- City Council has authorized Administration to enter into negotiations with the Edmonton Public School Board to purchase the Wellington school site land and buildings.
- If negotiations are successful, the City will redevelop the property in cooperation with the Africa Centre,

Edmonton Public Library and other stakeholders.

- Municipal support to date for the operations of the Africa Centre has been reallocated from existing branch resources in Community Services. In addition, Community Services has provided the support of one full staff liaison coordinator for the Africa Centre since 2008.

### An Emerging Model

The story of the Africa Centre is one of resilience and determination. As an emerging partnership model, it is unique in Canada. It showcases a collaborative new approach to working with our diverse citizens to build a more livable city.

### **Policy**

- Immigration and Settlement Policy (C529)
- Diversity and Inclusion Policy (C538)

### **Corporate Outcomes**

- The Africa Centre story aligns with The Way We Live 10 Year Plan (Goals 1, 3 and 6).
- It also aligns with the *Elevate Report* and the *REACH Report*, with their focus on mature neighbourhoods, engagement of newcomers and creation of sustainable community hubs.

### **Attachments**

1. Africa Centre: A Case Study
2. Framework for Services: An Overview

### **Others Reviewing this Report**

- R. Boutilier, General Manager, Transportation Services
- D. H. Edey, General Manager, Corporate Services

- R. G. Klassen, General Manager, Sustainable Development
- L. Rosen, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer
- M. Koziol, General Manager, Infrastructure Services