



March 3, 2026

Executive Committee & City Council
c/o Office of the City Clerk
City of Edmonton
1 Sir Winston Churchill Square
Edmonton, Alberta, T5J 2R7

Dear Mayor Knack & City Councillors:

Re: Item 7.2 Downtown Attainable Housing Incentive, Executive Committee, March 4, 2026

This letter is to express strong support for the proposed housing incentive for Downtown. The following are the EDBA's key points in favour of the proposal:

- The need to populate Downtown Edmonton with residents has long been identified as a critical action, as directed by the 1984 Mayor's Taks Force on the Heart of the City and the 1997 Capital City Downtown Plan.
- While there have been waves of development activity over the decades and notably successes including the 104 Street corridor – currently there are ~13,000 residents Downtown compared to the current target of 24,000 residents.
- If Edmonton is to meet this target by 2030, a range of tools is required with urgency.
- A significant residential population provides natural surveillance on the sidewalks, in the parks, in transit stations, and in the pedways – fostering a safer Downtown environment.
- Residents support Downtown restaurants, retailers, and entertainment venues. This in-turn attracts investment in offices locating here and instills positive experiences for their workforce. This is the multiplier effect that will be generated from the housing incentive grant.
- Downtown developers are supportive of the incentive, stacked with other supports, as current economic factors mean that residential growth will be hindered otherwise.
- Downtown stakeholders are supportive as the incentive utilizes CRL funding, which in turns fuels self-sustaining momentum.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The following are further considerations that we would ask that the Executive Committee and City Council consider in reviewing the recommendations:

- Give urgency to the proposal, which has the broad support of Downtown stakeholders. We encourage approval of the grant program as proposed.



- It is important for the City to express positive messages to developers and investors that values their investment that the grant seeks to leverage. Private funding will flow elsewhere if the City doesn't show its commitment.
- As a separate initiative, we would ask that Council requests further development of the Tax Exemption option, as an additional tool to incentivize residential growth outside of the Downtown CRL boundaries. This additional tool is critical if Edmonton is to get closer to achieving residential targets.
- As a 6-month lead time has been identified in preparing this additional report, we would strongly discourage City Council from pausing approval of the Attainable Housing Incentive. Please be sensitive not to setback the positive momentum that has been generated to date through the engagement process. We would ask that the Tax Exemption option be considered as an additional tool – not a replacement of what is proposed in this report.

We urge the City's approval of the Downtown Attainable Housing Incentive for helping to meet residential growth targets. Separately, we also encourage exploring further opportunities to incentivize development Downtown that is outside of the CRL. The City's support is foundational and catalytic for the success of the city centre and the long-term prosperity of Edmonton overall.

Sincerely,

James L. Robinson
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