

Terms of Reference – Edmonton Learning City Initiative

Initiative Title:	Edmonton Learning City Initiative
City Council:	Councillor Don Iveson
Supporting Department and Lead Staff:	Community Services Department Heather McRae

BACKGROUND:

- We are already a Learning City, blessed with many fantastic formal and informal learning opportunities provided by excellent institutions of all shapes and sizes, from innovative not-for-profits to world-leading Public Schools and Post Secondary.
- A network of Edmonton organizations and representatives invested in lifelong learning formed an informal committee in 2008, under the leadership of Councillor Iveson, to explore approaches necessary to cultivate Edmonton as a Learning Community. There is a strong belief that by bringing together many representatives and organizations across the city and by working together more effectively in this diverse urban setting, we can make substantial gains to improve lifelong learning for all and contribute to the development of sustainable and inclusive communities.
- Canadian Council on Learning (CCL) has worked closely with a number of Canadian municipalities to help enable them to assess their development in realizing their goals and objectives as a learning community, and provided considerable resources and knowledge to the informal work in 2009. CCL has also been working to measure learning trends through an annual measure called the Composite Learning Index (CLI). The CLI is designed as an independent and consistent tool that may assist communities in measuring aspects of the impact of their learning community strategies and policies. Measurement, supplemented by local evaluation and assessment already occurring here in Edmonton, is an important component of this initiative.
- Both the CCL and the Edmonton Learning City Initiative have used the UNESCO Four Pillars of Learning framework, which is an internationally recognized model, to conceptualize a broad understanding of learning. The Four Pillars are:

Learning to Know involves the development of skills and knowledge needed to function in the world. These skills include literacy, numeracy, critical thinking and general knowledge.

Learning to Do refers to the acquisition of applied skills that are often linked to occupational success, such as computer training, managerial training and apprenticeships.

Learning to Live Together involves developing values of respect and concern for others, fostering social and inter-personal skills, and an appreciation of the diversity of Canadians.

Learning to Be refers to learning that contributes to the development of a person's body, mind and spirit. Skills in this area include personal discovery and creativity, and can be acquired through reading, use of the internet and activities such as sports and the arts.

DESIRED OUTCOMES:**Phase One (2010): [Completed.]**

- To develop a vision and definition of a 'Learning Community' and establish some preliminary directions for the initiative.
- To prepare a Civic Declaration with respect to the importance of Learning to our community.
- To develop an Asset Inventory of potential partner agencies operating in Edmonton that deliver learning opportunities in our community.
- To hold a Dialogue Event with public and partner agency representation and generate discussion about opportunities for collaboration.
- To identify priorities for action based on the Asset Inventory & Public Dialogue Event.

Proposed Phase Two Activities:

- To discuss, clarify, align, and design effective strategies for each one of the priorities and prepare a community learning plan.
- Through partnerships, to develop, implement and monitor an inclusive Learning Community Plan including ongoing measurement of success.
- To develop a transition plan for the initiative to become self-sustaining.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC DIRECTION:

- The Edmonton's Learning City Initiative is aligned with the City's strategic goal of Improving Edmonton's Livability:
 - Three-year priority goals:
 - Enhance social connectedness for all citizens
 - Preserve, celebrate and support Edmonton's heritage, arts and culture
 - Reduce barriers to participation in recreation activities and local programs
 - Improve community engagement and participation
- The Edmonton's Learning City Initiative supports the 10-year goal of improving Edmonton's livability by aligning with the following goals and objectives of The Way We Live: Edmonton's People Plan:
 - Goal 1: Edmonton is a vibrant, connected, engaged, and welcoming community
 - Goal 2: Edmonton celebrates life
 - Goal 3: Edmonton is a caring, inclusive, affordable community

START-UP BUDGET REQUIREMENTS:

- Budget for this initiative would be minimal if any. To date various organizations such as the University of Alberta, the Edmonton Public Library and others have donated in-kind services and the intention is to continue to seek in-kind support for all elements of the Phase One activity.
- Once a Community Learning Plan is developed by the group, an implementation plan will identify any budget requirements.

TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION OF PROJECT:

- The identified Phase One outcomes will be completed by December 2010.
- Timelines for Phase Two activities will be completed by Q2 2012.

ALIGNMENT TO RELEVANT CIVIC AGENCY

- Edmonton Public Libraries is represented on the steering committee.
- Edmonton Economic Development Corporation is an identified stakeholder with an interest in improving productivity and labour attraction.