



## STAFF REPORT

**Title:** Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) Recommendation - Letter to 4 Wing Cold Lake

**Meeting Date:** April 22, 2025

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### **Executive Summary:**

In an effort to better prepare for the influx of workers expected with the federal government's Future Fighter Capabilities Program, Cold Lake's Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) requested that council consider sending a letter to the Wing Commander seeking greater clarity on the expected timelines involved in the project.

Since that time, however, EDAC has learned that the leadership and personnel at 4 Wing must be very cautious with how matters of procurement and information gathering about the project's timelines are messaged.

The Future Fighter Capabilities Program has also come under political scrutiny as the federal election approaches. The federal government has stated that it will conduct a review of the planned purchase of the F-35. It is unknown at this time whether the scope of work at CFB Cold Lake will change, whether the work will see any delays, depending on the outcome of that review.

It should be noted that EDAC now has a very effective and engaged liaison after personnel shifts left the committee without a liaison for some time.

Given the above, administration is recommending that Council request that EDAC revisit this request after the federal election, once a clear direction on the Future Fighter Capabilities Program has been established by the next federal government, and in light of the information that EDAC's liaison is able to bring to the committee.

### **Background:**

The Government of Canada has the following information posted about the Future Fighter Capability project on its website:

*As outlined in Canada's defence policy, Strong, Secure, Engaged, Canada will purchase 88 advanced fighter aircraft to contribute to the safety and security of Canadians and to meet Canada's international obligations. A modern fighter jet fleet is essential for defending Canada and Canadian sovereignty and contribute to our NORAD and NATO commitments, now and in the future.*



*On January 9, 2023, the Government of Canada confirmed that Canada will be procuring the F-35A advanced fighter aircraft. This represents the most significant investment in the Royal Canadian Air Force in more than 30 years.*

*The acquisition will include associated equipment, weapons, infrastructure, information technology, and sustainment, including training and software support. This project will leverage Canadian capabilities and support the growth of Canada's aerospace and defence industries.*

*Initially, the first eight aircraft will be located at the F-35A Pilot Training Center in Luke Air Force Base (AFB), Arizona, to enable the training of Royal Canadian Air Force pilots while the Department of National Defence completes the necessary infrastructure to support aircraft delivery in Canada. The first aircraft is expected to be delivered to Luke AFB in 2026, and the first aircraft will arrive in Canada in 2028. The fleet is expected to be in service beyond 2060.*

The Government of Canada's website also states that the project is in its fourth of five Phases, with the phases being described as follows:

1. Identification
2. Options Analysis
3. Definition
4. Implementation
5. Close Out

It is unclear whether the review ordered by the Canadian Government will continue after the election, and if so, which phase the project could be sent back to, given the outcome of the report.

At its February 6, 2025, meeting, the Economic Development Advisory Committee passed the following motion:

EDAC20250206.1003

Moved by Paul McWilliams to make a recommendation to Council to write a letter to 4 Wing Cold Lake and request an official timeline regarding infrastructure, budget, and personnel, all in the spirit of being engaged stakeholders and collaborative partners in support of economic development.

Carried Unanimously

The federal government has stated that it is requesting a review of the F-35 contracts:

Liberal Leader Mark Carney says stalled F-35 review will happen as 'rapidly as possible'



<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/federal-election/article-liberal-leader-mark-carney-says-stalled-f-35-review-will-happen-as/>

Canada reconsidering F-35 purchase amid tensions with Washington, says minister  
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/f35-blair-trump-1.7484477>

**Alternatives:**

- Council may pass or defeat a motion authorizing a letter to 4 Wing Cold Lake and requesting an official timeline regarding infrastructure, budget, and personnel, all in the spirit of being engaged stakeholders and collaborative partners in support of economic development.
- Council may pass or defeat a motion requesting that EDAC revisit the request outlined in motion EDAC20250206.1003 after the federal election, once a clear direction on the Future Fighter Capabilities Program has been established by the next federal government, and in light of the information that EDAC's liaison is able to bring to the committee.

**Recommended Action:**

That Council pass a motion requesting that EDAC revisit the request outlined in motion EDAC20250206.1003 after the federal election, once a clear direction on the Future Fighter Capabilities Program has been established by the next federal government, and in light of the information that EDAC's liaison is able to bring to the committee.

**Budget Implications (Yes or No):**

No

**Submitted by:**

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