

EXPLORE EDMONTON 2023-26 STRATEGIC PLAN





Table of Contents

- About Explore Edmonton..... 3
- Our Strategic Plan4
- Our Strategic Framework.....5
- Purpose, Mission, Vision 6
- Values 7
- Pillars of Excellence..... 7
- Strategic Alignment and Scope 8
- Strategic Priorities..... 9
 - 1 Strengthen Edmonton Experiences and Events 9
 - 2 Increase Awareness and Attraction 9
 - 3 Improve Employee, Guest/Visitor, and Stakeholder Satisfaction..... 9
 - 4 Improve Operational Excellence 9
- Results Map 10
- 2023-26 Strategic Plan: Measures | Targets | Actions..... 11
 - 1 Economic Impact..... 11
 - 2 Net Promoter Score | Stakeholder Satisfaction 12
 - 3 Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG) | Environmental..... 13
 - 4 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)..... 14
 - 5 Social | Community Benefit 15
- Financials 16
- Glossary 16
- Appendix A | City of Edmonton Alignment..... 17

Explore Edmonton respectfully acknowledges that we are located within Treaty 6 territory, and Métis Nation of Alberta Region 4. We acknowledge this land as the traditional home for many Indigenous Peoples including the Cree, Blackfoot, Métis, Nakota Sioux, Dene, Saulteaux, Anishinaabe, Inuit and many others whose histories, languages, and cultures continue to influence our vibrant community.

About Explore Edmonton

We are the Destination Management and Marketing Organization (DMMO) for Edmonton. We strive for excellence in everything we do, which is reflected in the two award-winning venues we manage, the Edmonton Convention Centre and the Edmonton EXPO Centre, and our industry-leading marketing teams. We help tell Edmonton's story, elevate the Edmonton experience, and drive visitation year-round.

In collaboration with our hotels, attractions, and businesses, and in tandem with organizations like Edmonton Global who support economic growth throughout the region, we strive to make Edmonton a four-season destination of choice, delivering year-round transformational visitor and guest experiences.

While Explore Edmonton's mandate is focused on attracting visitors from beyond our city's limits, what we do and how we do it also enhances and amplifies the quality of life for Edmontonians. The people who live here are our greatest ambassadors, so making it easier for them to love our city makes it easier for us to sell it.

Edmonton Convention Centre

Recognized as one of North America's top five performing venues, we bring people together to learn, innovate, trade, and celebrate. We are committed to creating connections to the community, to the land, to local culture and to others.

Our sustainable venue is built into the foundation of downtown Edmonton's river valley. We connect to this land through our sustainable business practices and dedication to locally sourced and inspired cuisine. As a community hub, we foster a culture of giving back and connect with the community through social programs and commitment to our people.

Edmonton EXPO Centre

The Edmonton EXPO Centre brings people together to experience the biggest and best trade shows, live entertainment, sporting events, conferences, galas and more. Spread over 522,000 square feet, the Edmonton EXPO Centre is the largest venue of its kind in Western Canada with seven exhibit halls, mid-size arena, conference centre and exquisite ballrooms. We welcome more than 1.3 million visitors each year.

Community & Signature Events

In 2021, Explore Edmonton's focus expanded to include the Community & Signature Events portfolio, which is responsible for producing K-Days, Farmfair International, the Edmonton Pro Rodeo as well as stewarding urban agriculture within the Edmonton Urban Farm.



Our Strategic Plan

Why do we plan when we know so little about the future? It gives us a direction to rally around; a shared idea of what we want to accomplish and what we think will help get us there. This plan is a rallying cry and we will respond to each wave of change that comes, knowing we have worked together to determine our highest priorities. Our annual business plan works in tandem with this longer-term strategic plan and contains our visitor growth and venue action plans that need to be resourced. Have a read, explore where you can make an impact and join our journey to success.

We never work alone or ride solo. We see the big picture and ensure that our role in economic development contributes to Edmonton's success. The impact of the visitor economy and venue industry is growing in importance, and we will steward its success as we work in partnership with the City of Edmonton, our stakeholders and the businesses that depend on revenues from the visitor economy.

Embarking on a journey is easier when we have a plan. A plan gives us direction, and a shared idea of what we want to accomplish. We know where we're going anchored to our purpose, mission and vision; how we are going to get there aligned to our pillars of excellence; and our priorities keep us focused on what we want to accomplish to make our journey not only successful, but also worth the trip.

Our plan is the cornerstone of our business. It informs our daily decisions and the allocation of resources noted in our annual business plan. As change is the one thing we can always count on, we are ready to evaluate and adapt to change to achieve the desired results for our Shareholder and Stakeholders. Our strategy will ensure we are nimble, responsive and competitive.

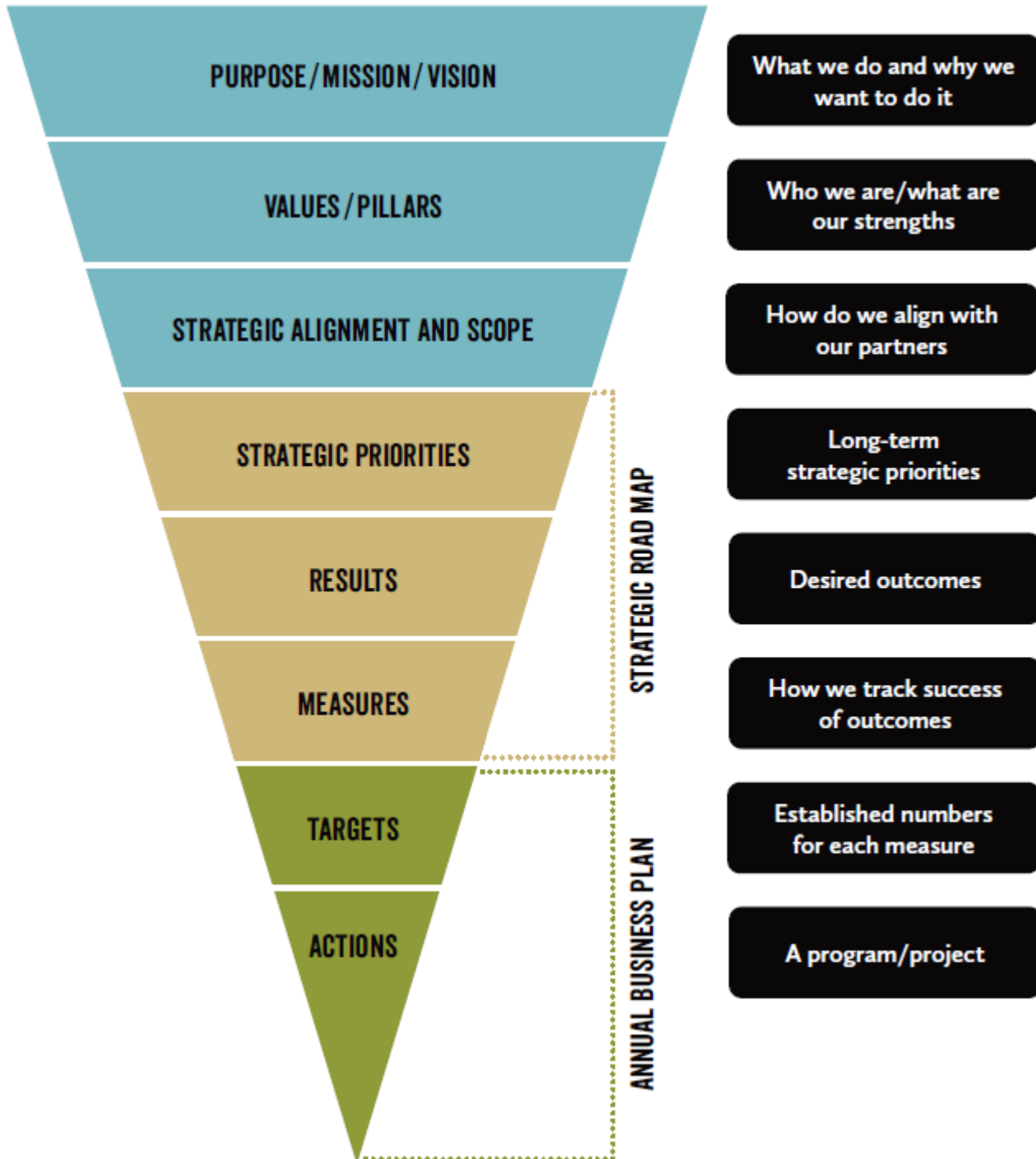
Explore Edmonton's Strategic Plan determines our highest priorities for the next few years and works in tandem with our **Annual Business Plan**. In the annual business plan, you will find the short-term key actions that will be driven by each business unit to achieve the results in our results map.

Before creating a business plan, it is essential to review and understand who we are as an organization. Our purpose, mission, and vision shape all our programs and projects. The image on the following depicts how we plan.



Our Strategic Framework

Before creating a business plan, it is essential to review and understand who we are as an organization. Our purpose, mission, and vision shape all our programs, services, and projects. The image below depicts how we plan.





Purpose, Mission, Vision

We are aligned through a unified purpose, mission, and vision to increase the economic impact of the visitor-based economy in Edmonton:

PURPOSE	Increase the economic impact of the visitor-based economy in Edmonton.
MISSION	To showcase and inspire more people to visit Edmonton for exceptional experiences, while also enriching the quality of life for residents and creating economic prosperity.
VISION	Edmonton will be a destination of choice, delivering year-round transformational visitor & guest experiences.





Values

Our values describe the core ethics and principles that guide and inspire us. They reflect appropriate workplace behaviour and play an important role in building a positive culture.

PUBLIC STEWARDSHIP	We have been given a tremendous responsibility — to be stewards of public trust as well as the architect of bold ideas.
LEAD THE WAY	We step up. Start something. Change something. Connect and support others who are willing to take a risk — on our teams, in our city.
SELFLESS APPROACH	Everything we do is done in collaboration — within our teams, across our organization and with our stakeholders / clients — and when we win, we win together.
MAKE AN IMPACT	When every action, big or small, can make an impact, every action contributes to building a city that matters.
CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER	We have a genuine commitment to the success of each other, our Shareholder, and our community.

Pillars of Excellence

Our four pillars of excellence describe what we must do extremely well to achieve our aspirations for the future as a visitor economy and venue management leader. These are written as if we have achieved the level of excellence we seek and are referred to in the development of our strategy and our priorities. They serve to continually remind us, at the highest level, what is most important to our Shareholder, stakeholders, and clients.

MARKETING & SALES	Our sales and marketing decisions drive demand for Edmonton experiences, support stakeholders’ business performance, and builds ambassadors for Edmonton.
OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE	We operate with a continuous improvement mindset, ensuring that we have best practices in place for all aspects of our operations. Scalability is key in all operations and flexibility in our support services is the key to serving our Shareholder needs.
SOCIAL PROSPERITY	We contribute to the social prosperity of Edmonton by supporting local producers, partners and community groups as well as providing a workplace of choice for our own employees.
SUSTAINABILITY	We invest in environmental and social sustainability as it benefits us all today and into the future.



Strategic Alignment and Scope

Explore Edmonton is an agency of the City of Edmonton, governed by a board of directors. Our leadership, partnerships and collaborative approach to shared outcomes are essential for ultimate success in building a prosperous city and region. Our strategy aligns with the City of Edmonton’s economic development plans and goals (see Appendix A). As a key partner in Edmonton’s economic development ecosystem, our work includes strategic collaboration to maximize the collective economic and social impacts to the overall prosperity of our city. Partnership examples include:

- Government (all levels)
- Not-for-profits (e.g. Edmonton Global, Edmonton Destination Marketing Hotels Assoc.)
- Industry partners (e.g. EIA, Travel Alberta, Indigenous Tourism Assoc.)
- Visitor economy sector stakeholders (e.g. hotels, restaurants, attractions)
- Business community (e.g. Chamber of Commerce)





Strategic Priorities

Our strategic priorities define our high-level strategic intent for the next three years. Each priority includes a brief description and is what informs our results map.

1 Strengthen Edmonton Experiences and Events

We work in partnerships to enhance existing and develop new experiences and events to meet the needs of guests, visitors, and stakeholders. This includes increasing our investment in event growth as part of the approved Major Event Growth & Attraction (MEGA) strategy approved by City Council. Additionally, environmental, and social sustainability will be key differentiators that can be incorporated in these offerings.

2 Increase Awareness and Attraction

We are improving our marketing and sales efforts by acting as one team. This will be accomplished through quality research, enhanced partner relations, and leveraging Edmonton ambassadors, which will help in targeting and prioritizing activities to build awareness and ultimately attract guests/visitors.

We undertake marketing and communication activities that build awareness and positive recognition for Edmonton. With our understanding of various target audiences, we deliver content that is emotionally engaging and inspires guests/visitors to action. This content can also be shared by our partners and ambassadors for Edmonton to drive attendance to events in Edmonton and in the venues.

We will improve our sales efforts to secure more opportunities that best match Edmonton's strengths, as well as focus on retaining existing clients. Our roles are clearly defined, and messages are unified within Explore Edmonton and across all stakeholders to put us in the best possible position to attract events.

3 Improve Employee, Guest/Visitor, and Stakeholder Satisfaction

We are strengthening our relationship with our employees, guests and visitors, and various stakeholders by delivering exceptional experiences and services. We strive to gain an increased understanding of each of our clients' needs, which provides a foundation for improvement and more effective partnerships.

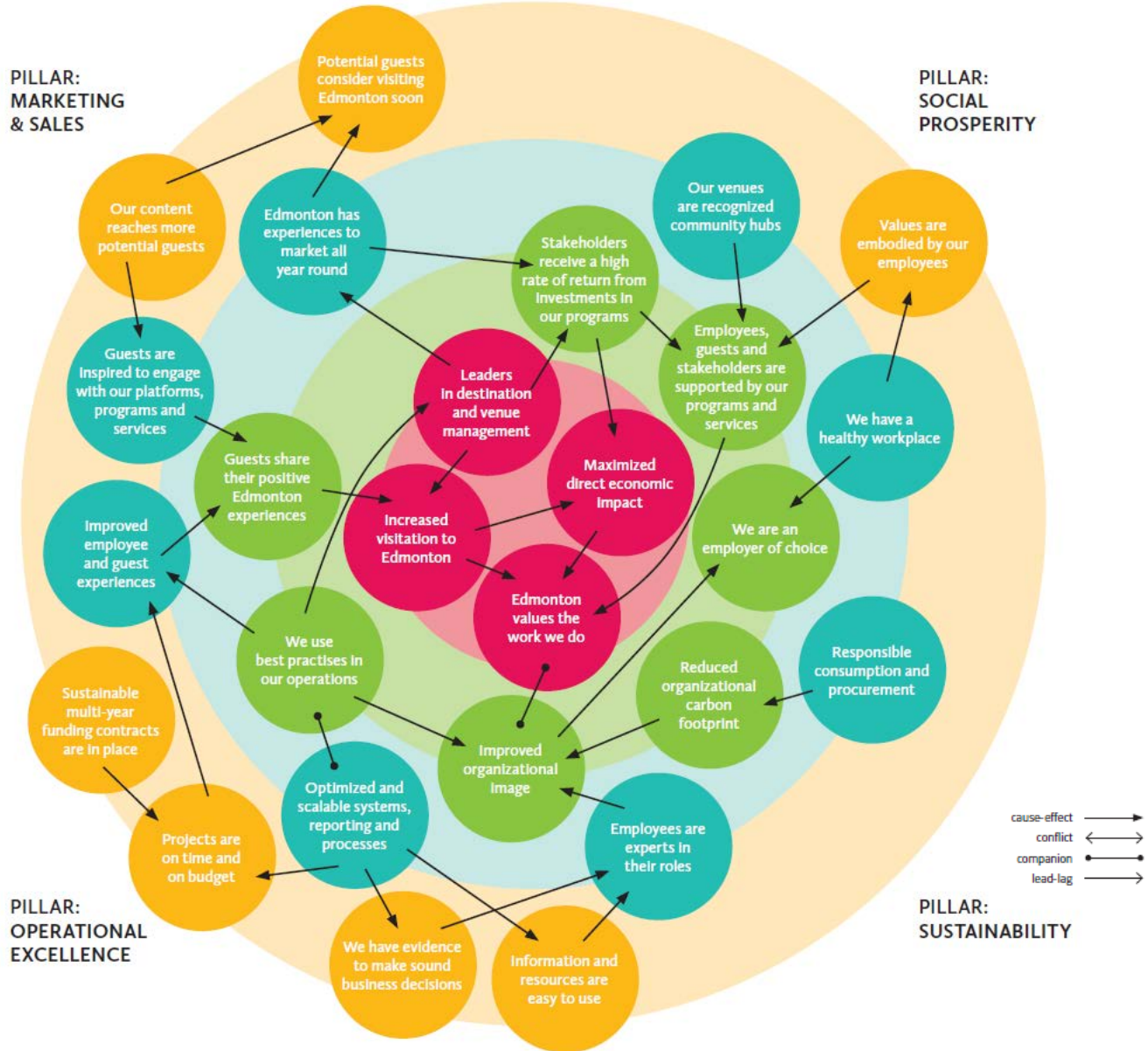
4 Improve Operational Excellence

We will achieve operational excellence across the organization by using best practices to support the delivery of our priorities. With the principle of continuous improvement and long-term sustainability, we will adapt our processes, tools, systems, and reporting to ensure we make sound and timely business decisions that are evidence-based. This will support our goal of building a strong future that offers economic and social prosperity as well as environmental sustainability.

Results Map

Our results map demonstrates all the desired results we need to achieve. It was developed based on our purpose, vision, and mission as well as our strategic priorities as outlined in the Strategic Road Map. On the map below, we have identified four different kinds of results, starting from the centre, and working our way out. The diagram illustrates the inter-connectedness of our actions.

Success/Sustainability Result:	Our core results that demonstrate the success we create for the city and our Shareholder.
Current Strategic Result:	Results that we attain through our strategic initiatives
Process Result:	Results achieved at the operational level, focused primarily on key organizational processes.
Critical Activity Result:	Results of tactical activities undertaken by each team.





2023-26 Strategic Plan: Measures | Targets | Actions

Using the results map, we have identified measures that would provide evidence that we are achieving these results. The focus will be on a key set of organizational performance measures; actions identified in this plan are in service to delivering on these performance measures.

1 Economic Impact

Measure Description

Economic impact (EI) is a broad term with several accepted definitions. In general, it is the effect on various economic indicators for a region, such as employment, taxes generated or GDP. For the Visitor Economy, this may include a tourist visiting Edmonton, a large sports event occurring, a convention / trade show that we attract to our city, or a new tourism-related business opening or expanding. Explore Edmonton uses an economic calculator leveraged by most Canadian Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) to ensure consistency and to accurately compare results.

Priority Link	Results Link
✓ Increase Awareness and Attraction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Stakeholders receive a high rate of return from investments in our programs ✓ Maximized direct economic impact

2023-26 Targets

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Economic Impact (Direct*)	\$182M	\$201M	\$219M	\$232M	\$248M

**Explore Edmonton reports direct EI as it reflects the direct results of our work; although there is also indirect and induced economic impact, it is not included.*

2023-26 Key Actions

- As part of our 10-year Tourism Master Plan (TMP), 2022 has seen the roll-out of a 3-year tactical plan focused on executing the following strategies:
 - Indigenous Tourism Strategy
 - Regenerative Tourism Strategy
 - Night-time Economy Strategy
- In alignment with the TMP, build a Place Brand Strategy in collaboration with the City to strengthen the awareness and perception of Edmonton as a tourism destination.*
- Support EIA and new route development with investment into marketing and trade support once routes are confirmed.*
- Elevate the focus on building the sales funnel for business events plus sports and culture; developing a network of “big thinkers” to bring meetings and conventions to the region.*
- Update major sport and cultural event attraction strategy.
- Create strategy and execute around attracting the next mega event.
- Leverage Rendezvous Canada in 2023 prior to hosting the event in 2024.
- Develop a locals’ strategy, balancing communications and marketing messaging. Drive interest and appreciation for Edmonton’s tourism assets and help encourage visiting friends and family.*

**Part of the TMP.*

2 Net Promoter Score | Stakeholder Satisfaction

Measure Description

Every action we undertake is to ensure that our guests/visitors, stakeholders/partners, and employees have positive experiences at our venues, in Edmonton, and in our place of work. If we do this right, we expect they will recommend our venues, our city, or our organization to others. The Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a single question asked as part of a survey about a respondent’s likelihood to recommend based on a scale from 0-10. Based on their rating, they are classified as a promoter, detractor, or neutral.

Priority Link	Results Link
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Strengthen Edmonton Experiences and Events ✓ Increase Awareness and Attraction ✓ Improve Employee, Guest/Visitor, and Stakeholder Satisfaction ✓ Improve Operational Excellence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Edmonton has experiences to market year-round ✓ Guests, visitors and Edmontonians are inspired to engage with our platforms, programs and services ✓ Employees, guests and stakeholders are supported by our programs and services ✓ Improved organizational image ✓ We are an employer of choice

2023-26 Targets

Net Promoter Score	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Visitor Economy	25	30	35	40	45
Venues (clients)	40	85	87	88	88
Venues (guests)	40	40	42	42	45
Employees	36	36	36	40	40
Satisfaction %					
Employee Engagement	77%	77%	77%	78%	78%

2023-26 Key Actions

- Activate a Marketing Agency of Record, driving marketing excellence across all channels; venues, consumer, CSE, business events, sports and culture.
- Support the enhancement of Culture attractions as well as Festivals & Events.*
- Reignite the destination activation/street team and identify new technology platforms for visitor service automation.*
- Expand participation in the YEG Expert Program.*
- Modernize the ECC and EXPO to remain competitive and to improve guest experience.
 - ECC: Riverview Room enhancements, modernize furniture, digital signage, restroom upgrades.
 - EXPO: Exterior/interior digitization, grounds improvements, common space furniture modernization; Hall D upgrades (part of the City’s rehabilitation program).
- Execution of the Re-imagine K-Days and Re-imagine Farmfair recommendations in alignment with Shareholder and community expectations.
- Execution of People & Culture Strategy, which is under development in 2022.
- Execution of Corporate Relations Strategy, which is under development in 2022.
- Upgrade systems / processes to deliver operational efficiencies and improved decision-making.
 - Upgrade Finance system
 - Data strategy development including data warehouse and reporting
 - Evolve project management approach

*Part of the TMP.

3 Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG) | Environmental

Measure Description

Explore Edmonton is committed to environmental sustainability and are participants in the City of Edmonton’s Corporate Climate Leaders Program. We are also aligned with the City of Edmonton’s climate adaptation strategy, retrofitting and upgrading our facilities to reduce their carbon footprint and enhance their sustainability. Our goal is to achieve a 15% reduction (from 2018 levels) by 2025 and 30% by 2035. Emissions are recorded as Scope 1, 2 or 3 in accordance with the principles outlined in the GHG Protocol (GHGP), which is the accounting and reporting standard for GHG emissions used globally. Emissions are recorded based on the level of control the organization has over the energy use or emission sources:

- Scope 1: Direct GHG emissions - sources owned or controlled by the company
- Scope 2: Indirect GHG emissions - generation of purchased electricity consumed by the company
- Scope 3: Other indirect GHG emissions - includes emissions that occur in the value chain of the company

Priority Link	Results Link
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Improve Operational Excellence ✓ Improve Employee, Guest/Visitor, and Stakeholder Satisfaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ We have a healthy workplace ✓ Improved organizational image ✓ We are an employer of choice ✓ Reduced organizational carbon footprint ✓ We use best practices in our operations ✓ Guests share their positive Edmonton experiences

2023-26 Targets

For annual reporting purposes, preliminary (unofficial) results for metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO2e) will be used as this is available in Q1; official results validated by a third party are generally not available until Q3/Q4.

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Total MTCO2e	19.3K	17.3K	16.8K	15.0K	14.6K

2023-26 Key Actions

- Installation / expansion of Electric Vehicle charging capacity.
- Implementation of single-use item transition strategy.
- Develop and implement Venues Zero Waste Plan in alignment with the Zero Waste Canada Alliance.
- Develop Social and Environmental Procurement Guide.
- Continued focus on sustainability with signature events such as K-Days.
- Garbage Room Expansion and Transformation.





4 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)

Measure Description

At Explore Edmonton, we expect that everyone should be able to feel included and have an equitable stake in their interactions with others. The EDI Council is 16-people strong with representation across the whole organization. We are committed to doing our part in ensuring we entrench and foster EDI practices and learnings in our culture and operations. In 2021, we undertook an EDI sentiment survey. In 2022, we completed a second GDEIB assessment. These combined metrics are the basis of our EDI evaluation going forward.

Priority Link	Results Link
✓ <i>Improve Employee, Guest/Visitor, and Stakeholder Satisfaction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>We have a healthy workplace</i> ✓ <i>Improved organizational image</i> ✓ <i>We are an employer of choice</i> ✓ <i>Employees, guests and stakeholders are supported by our programs and services</i>

2023-26 Targets

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
EDI Sentiment ¹	77%	84%	85%	86%	87%
GDEIB Assessment ²	2.49	2.65	2.80	2.90	3.10

(1) Based on an annual survey of employees responding to the question "I feel that Explore Edmonton is an equitable, diverse and inclusive organization."

(2) Global Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Benchmarks assessment.

2023-26 Key Actions

- Continue to build EDI awareness, training, and tools within the organization, which leads to expectations such as:
 - Continued alignment with our Indigenous Tourism Alberta MOU
 - Ongoing training from external experts
 - Identify external speaking opportunities to share best practices from lived EDI experience
 - Explore mechanisms to build more EDI programs for our part-time, hourly teams.
 - Develop a social and environmental procurement strategy
 - Facility upgrades that consider EDI to ensure appropriate access to all.
 - Adaptation of marketing assessments
 - Evolve our recruitment practices to ensure we highlight our EDI culture during the recruitment process.



5 Social | Community Benefit

Measure Description

Explore Edmonton, as do all other organizations, have a basic Corporate Social Responsibility to give back to the community. We take this a step further by hosting events such as Homeless Connect, providing shelter during a pandemic, or bringing in events that raise awareness and leave legacies for specific industries, sports, or cultures. We also have a strong volunteer program and an Urban Farm that support our community, which is what our current measures are based upon. Looking forward, as we incorporate this community perspective into all aspects of our work, these measures will evolve.

Priority Link	Results Link
✓ <i>Improve Employee, Guest/Visitor, and Stakeholder Satisfaction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <i>Our venues are recognized as community hubs</i> ✓ <i>Improved organizational image</i> ✓ <i>We are an employer of choice</i> ✓ <i>Edmonton values the work we do</i> ✓ <i>We are leaders in venue and destination management</i>

2023-26 Targets

Measure	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Number of active volunteers	650	750	800	850	900
Volunteer hours	10,000	5,000	5,500	6,500	7,000
Urban Farm visitation	7,500	7,500	8,000	8,500	9,000

2023-26 Key Actions

- In alignment with the goals of #MEET4IMPACT to create positive societal impact of events:
 - Evolve the Responsible Events Program (sustainability product offering for clients).
 - Development of Event Legacy Plan for Edmonton.
- YEG Natural & Cultural Preservation Education*
- Grow the volunteer program and enable the rest of the organization to leverage the program.

*Part of the TMP.



Financials

See tables in budget submission to the City of Edmonton.

Glossary

- **Action:** A specific task, program or project undertaken by a business unit that works towards improving a priority and attaining a result.
- **Measure:** Tools or processes that can be used to track the success and progress of achieving a result linked to a priority.
- **Mission:** Describes what our organization does currently, for whom, and how.
- **Pillars of Excellence:** Describes what we must do extremely well to achieve our priorities with improved results now and for the future.
- **Priority:** A high-level summary of strategic expectations.
- **Purpose:** What our organization was created to accomplish.
- **Results Map:** Reveals our intended outcomes that will help us achieve our aspirations for the future and deliver value to our stakeholders.
- **Shareholder:** City of Edmonton
- **Stakeholder:** A broad range of organizations that include government, not-for-profits, industry partners, visitor economy sector stakeholders, and the business community. It also encompasses visitors, clients/guests, and Edmontonians. Stakeholders may vary based on the nature of the work.
- **Target:** An achievable goal that will let us know we have accomplished a result or portion of a result. Ex. 75% Stakeholder satisfaction.
- **Values:** Describes our organization's culture and desired behaviours.
- **Vision:** Describes the way we envision our organization. It communicates that dream to our employees and customers in an inspirational manner.
- **Visitor Economy:** Direct, indirect, and induced economic activity resulting from visitors' interactions within a destination.



Appendix A | City of Edmonton Alignment

Explore Edmonton is aligned to the City of Edmonton's plans as outlined below:

Connect Edmonton (2019-28 Strategic Plan)

✓ **Strategic Goal: Regional Prosperity**

- Indicator: Global Awareness

Edmonton's position against other cities in a number of selected national and international rankings as a place to live, visit and invest in

Jointly owned by the City of Edmonton and Explore Edmonton (formerly Edmonton Economic Development Corporation)

City Plan (2020-65 Visionary Plan)

✓ **Big City Moves (collective projects): Greener as we Grow**

- Strategic measures:
 - Greenhouse gas emissions generated by City assets
 - Greenhouse gas emissions generated by the community
 - Recycled solid waste

Edmonton Economic Action Plan (2021-2030 Action Plan)

- ✓ **Action 2:** Align relevant economic development activities, reporting metrics, funding agreements, and grants to ensure we're working together as effectively as possible.
- ✓ **Action 19:** Develop and implement an integrated place brand strategy.
- ✓ **Action 24:** Utilize and coordinate the City of Edmonton's event strategy and Explore Edmonton Tourism Master Plan as tools to support investment by creating awareness about local opportunities for businesses and people.
 - Performance Measure: Economic impact (as measured by Explore Edmonton)