

EXPLORE EDMONTON 2021-2023

STRATEGIC ROAD MAP



**EXPLORE
EDMONTON**

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.



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WE ARE EXPLORE EDMONTON

Explore Edmonton Corporation (Explore Edmonton) is Edmonton's visitor economy and venue management organization. We tell Edmonton's story, elevate the Edmonton experience, and generate inbound visitation.

With two award-winning venues - the Edmonton Convention Centre and Edmonton EXPO Centre - the know-how to enhance, execute and support major sport and cultural events, and the commitment to develop products and experiences that are authentic to Edmonton, we strive to make the visitor experience unforgettable.



MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Hello everyone, as interim CEO of the organization, I am proud to present Explore Edmonton Corporation's inaugural multi-year Strategic Road Map.

Explore Edmonton's job is to always be looking at the big picture, leading the way to promote our city as a four-season destination and developing the experiences and partnerships that will position Edmonton as a destination of choice. We are fully aligned to increase the economic impact of the visitor-based economy in Edmonton.

Edmonton's visitor economy has been growing every year with visitors coming to our city from around the globe. In 2019, our work alone contributed over \$258 million in direct economic impact. Local businesses also benefit from the induced spending from our visitors.

Not only does the visitor economy create jobs and generate revenue, it also drives awareness to our amazing city, in turn, contributing to our city's local economic vibrancy, future and quality of life.

COVID-19 has hit Edmonton's visitor economy hard and our city and province have identified our economic sector as a critical component to ongoing economic recovery and future prosperity.

A destination's ability to react quickly and offer new and safe experiences will help meet the pent-up demand when travellers are once again exploring.

This Road Map sets the foundation to face our current challenges, create future opportunities and grow the economic impact of Edmonton's visitor economy by driving real measurable results. We are committed to being nimble, responsive, and competitive.

This year has been a difficult time for many, but we will continue our 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 for our city.

To our stakeholders and community partners, we look forward to working with you and thank you for your continued support. We are here to support you.

When the visitor economy grows, so does Edmonton!

Maggie Davison
Interim CEO
Explore Edmonton





OUR STRATEGIC ROAD MAP

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.

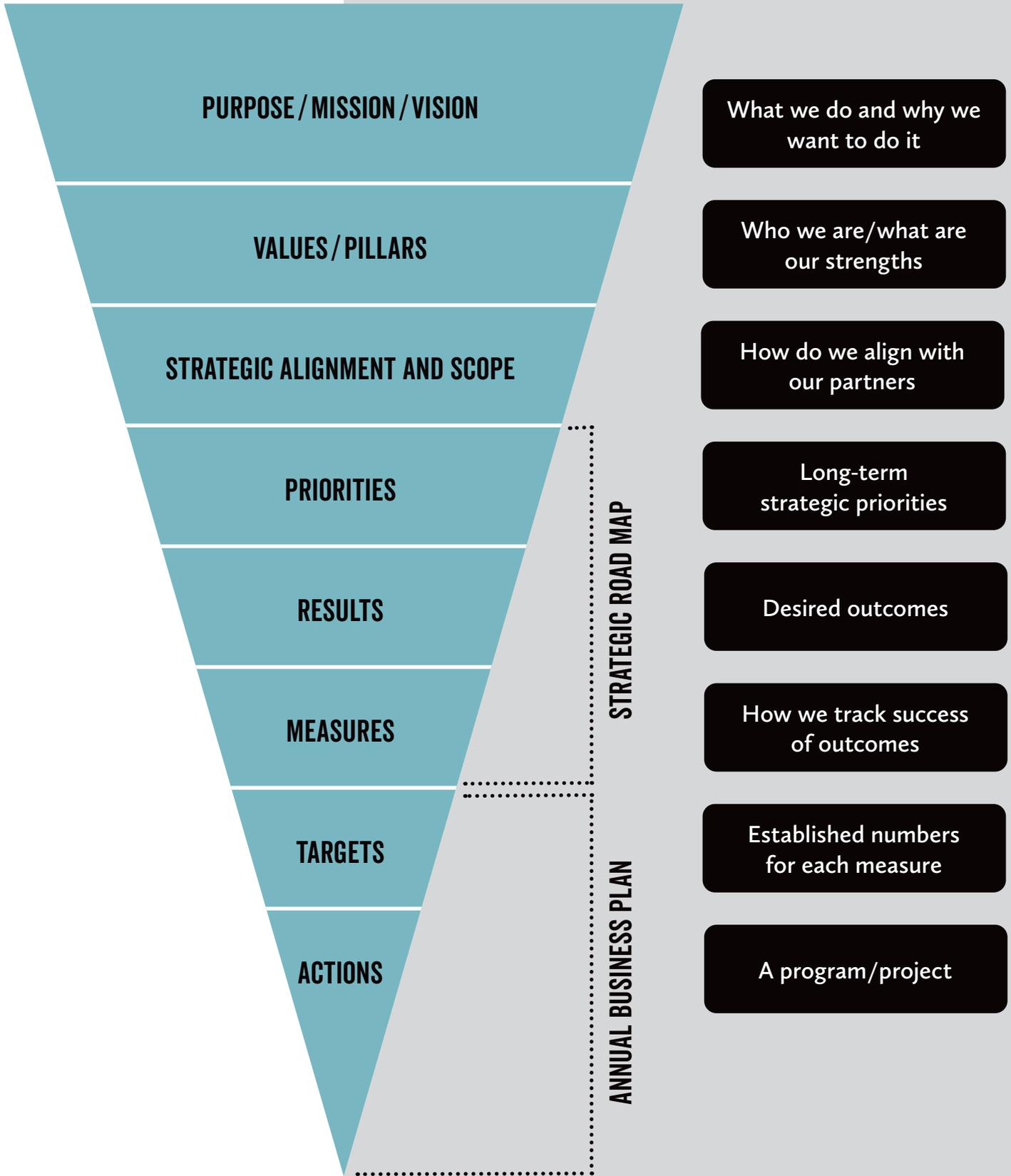
WE NEVER WORK ALONE OR RIDE SOLO. We see the big picture and ensure that our role in economic development contributes to Edmonton's success. The impact of the visitor economy and venue industry is growing in importance and we will steward its success as we work in partnership with the City of Edmonton, our stakeholders and the businesses that depend on revenues from the visitor economy.

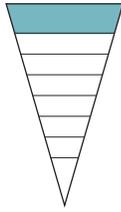
EMBARKING ON A JOURNEY IS EASIER WHEN WE HAVE A PLAN. A plan gives us direction, and a shared idea of what we want to accomplish. We know where we're going anchored to our purpose, mission and vision; how we are going to get there aligned to our pillars of excellence; and our priorities keep us focused 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 ROAD MAP 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 page 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

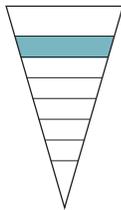
Increase the economic impact of the visitor-based economy in Edmonton.

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 and 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

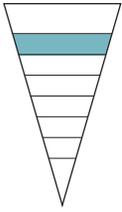
Everything we do is done in collaboration – within our teams, across our organization and with our stakeholders / clients – and when we win, we win together.

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.

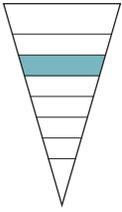
SOCIAL PROSPERITY

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.



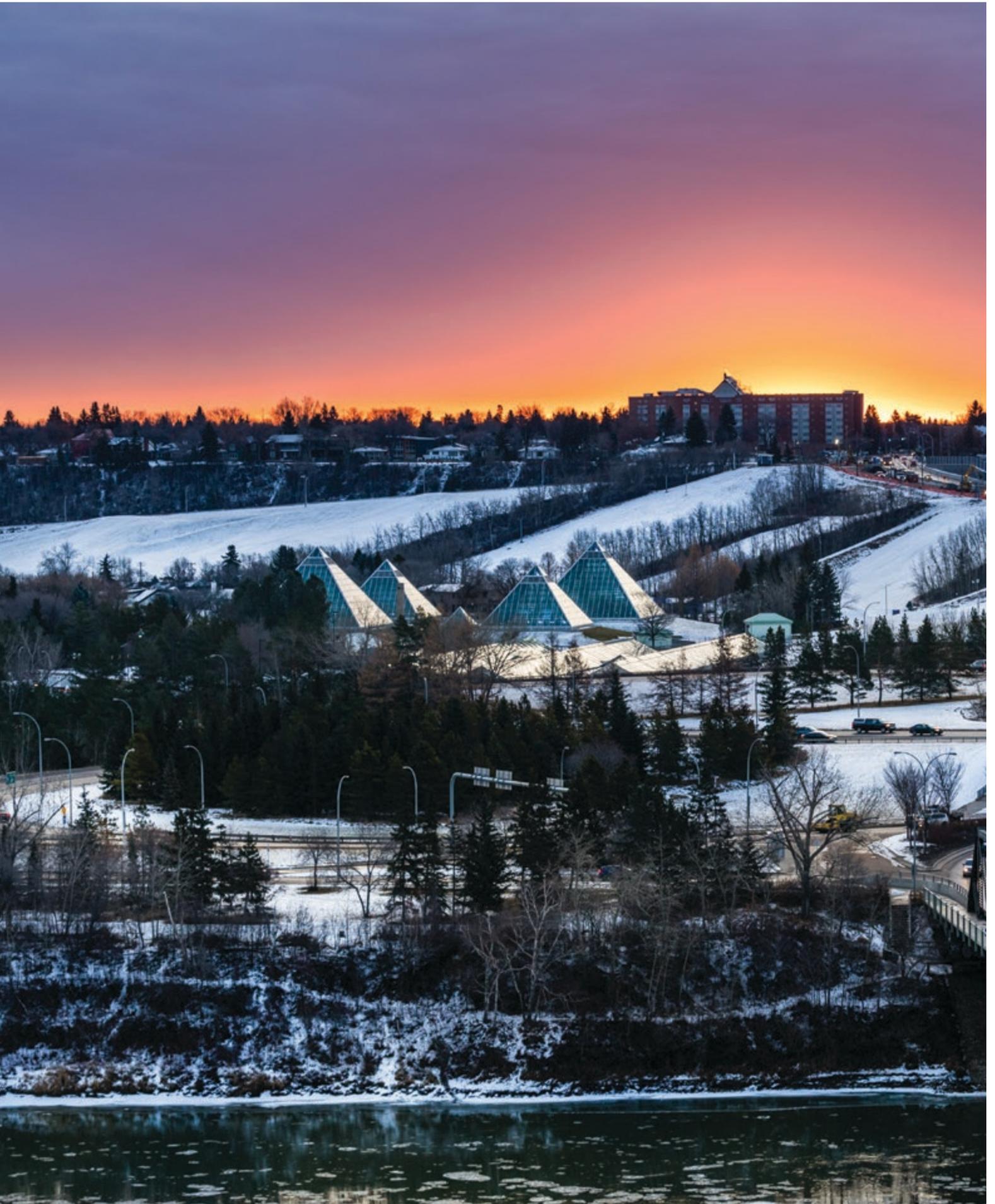


STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT AND SCOPE

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. 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)







HOW WE DISCOVERED THE EDMONTON BRAND

In 2011, business and community leaders gathered to discuss the future of economic development in Edmonton. They collectively said our city's image and reputation was its number one challenge. Instead of hiring an agency to "rebrand" Edmonton, the mayor assembled a task force who set out with genuine curiosity.

After speaking with 150 Edmontonians, from students to CEOs, Indigenous communities and new immigrants, pianists and pipefitters, they saw a common pattern emerge. People struggled for the first ten minutes and then talked about what made them proud of this city – not with grand superlatives but with simple stories, an Edmonton kind of success. These moving, powerful, often funny stories were about a spirit of invention, about cooperation, about taking risks, and about a peculiar kind of openness.

The city's image and reputation strategy inspired a movement called "Make Something Edmonton" – a way to build our city, and prove the truth of its brand, through community action. We lit up the High Level Bridge, planted community gardens in schoolyards and launched new businesses in a uniquely Edmonton way.

The Edmonton brand is more than a logo, slogan or marketing. It's about being true to who we are at our best; it's not about weather, structures, geography, clichés or fads. We uncovered the brand together and now we're preparing to take it to the world, to market and promote the city, to deliver on the promise of exceptional hospitality and to build more of what makes this place unlike any other.

We preserve the origins of the Edmonton brand and build on its strengths, to inspire everyone to visit Edmonton soon.

PROMOTING EDMONTON: BRAND ATTRIBUTES

Edmonton, as a city and a destination for visitors, continues to evolve. Moving the needle on image and reputation doesn't happen immediately but takes time and effort from everyone, including community leaders, organizations, and the City, to bring it to life. As we are the leader in the promotion of the city for the potential regional, national and long-haul visitor, various messages are used to convey our story to different target audiences.

For meetings and conventions, the messaging angle is one of "All In". This is meant to convey how all aspects of hosting a meeting, convention or event in Edmonton come together to make the experience memorable and seamless for delegates and attendees.

In speaking to individual travellers, the focus is on Explore Edmonton and the notion of authentic and unique Edmonton experiences. This messaging is meant to express that for a long time (since way back, in fact) we, in Edmonton, have known about the wonderful experiences and hidden gems Edmonton has to offer and we're happy to engage in great conversations to share our piece of the world.

The Edmonton Events partnership that exists between the City of Edmonton and our sales teams is a business-to-business platform that supports event owners and hosts in having remarkable and effectively-planned events. Connections to citizen services, marketing, or referrals on sponsorship opportunities can all be made through Edmonton Events.

Our venues have an ability to bring people together, to create destinations and to shape a collective experience among those who enter them. Together, our venue teams come to work with the shared vision of being among North America's top performing venues and a commitment to generating a positive social, economic and environmental impact on the place we call home.

Edmonton...

THE LARGEST NORTHERNMOST METROPOLIS.
THERE'S UNIQUENESS TO HOW WE DO
ORDINARY THINGS. IT'S A SPIRIT THAT
YOU'LL ONLY APPRECIATE ONCE YOU'VE
VISITED EDMONTON.

**EXPLORE
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EDMONTON EVENTS

Edmonton loves sports and culture.

Not only do Edmontonians come out by the thousands as spectators, they are passionate and experienced volunteers who will help deliver something unforgettable. While we have a strong history of hosting international and multisport events, there's no such thing as "cookie-cutter" here. We know what it takes to deliver the extraordinary: we challenge ourselves to think differently, while grounding the experience in attentive support from bid to event execution.



**EDMONTON
EVENTS**

MEETINGS AND CONVENTIONS — A CATALYST FOR CHANGE

As the world changes around us – at an unprecedented pace – so does the need for companies near and far to do the same. **Edmonton is a city that knows what it takes to make things happen.** That's because entrepreneurship is in our DNA. So is lending our expertise along with a helping hand.

Imagine coming together in a city **where possibilities are encouraged** and nurtured. Where someone always knows someone who can't wait to make that call, share their expertise, inspire new thinking, celebrate creative solutions. **A city with a unique, authentic, welcoming spirit.** A meeting is an opportunity to **embrace challenges and champion change.** And in Edmonton you will have more than a meeting space, you'll have **the ally you need to succeed.**

EDMONTON
All in.



THE EDMONTON CONVENTION CENTRE brings people together to learn, innovate, trade and celebrate in the heart of downtown Edmonton. Our sustainable venue is built into the banks of the North Saskatchewan River Valley. We connect to this land through sustainable business practices and a dedication to locally sourced and cuisine. As a community hub, we foster a culture of giving back and connect with the community through social programs and a commitment to our people.

**EDMONTON
CONVENTION
CENTRE**

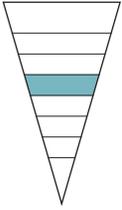
EDMONTON EXPO CENTRE

As the largest venue of its kind outside of Toronto, the Edmonton EXPO Centre is a powerful economic catalyst, providing authentic experiences and limitless opportunities in the most imaginative event space in Canada. Designed with adaptability and scale in mind, the Edmonton EXPO Centre has deep roots in Edmonton as a place to come together for amazing event experiences.

Edmonton
EXPO
Centre



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 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.

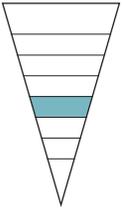
We will improve our sales efforts to secure more opportunities that best match Edmonton's strengths, as well as focus on retaining existing clients. Our roles are clearly defined, and messages are unified within Explore Edmonton and across all stakeholders to put us in the best possible position to attract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

3 IMPROVE EMPLOYEE, GUEST/VISITOR, AND STAKEHOLDER SATISFACTION

We are strengthening our relationship with our employees, guests/visitors, and various stakeholders by delivering exceptional experiences or services. We strive to gain an increased understanding of each of their needs, which provides a foundation for improvement opportunities as well as more effective and constructive 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

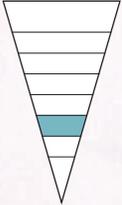
Our results map demonstrates all the desired results we need to achieve. It was developed based on our purpose, vision, and mission as well as our strategic priorities as outlined earlier. On the map below, we have identified four different kinds of results, starting from the centre, and working our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



- cause-effect →
- conflict ↔
- companion ●—●
- lead-lag →

- **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.

KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES



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 as identified below. Please see our annual business plans for specific actions and associated targets for each measure.





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.

PRIORITY LINK

- Increase Awareness and Attraction

RESULTS LINK

- Stakeholders receive a high rate of return from investments in our programs
- Maximized economic impact

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

- Strengthen Edmonton Experiences and Events
- Increase Awareness and Attraction
- Improve Employee, Guest/Visitor, and Stakeholder Satisfaction
- Improve Operational Excellence

RESULTS LINK

- 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

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. Our goal is to achieve a 15% reduction (from 2018 levels) by 2025 and 30% by 2030. 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

- Improve Operational Excellence
- Improve Employee, Guest/Visitor, and Stakeholder Satisfaction

RESULTS LINK

- 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

4 EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION (EDI)

MEASURE DESCRIPTION

At Explore Edmonton, we expect that everyone should be able to feel safe and included in their interactions with others, whether that is at an event, in their working environment, or in our city. We are committed to doing our part in ensuring we entrench and foster EDI in our organizational culture and by supporting our stakeholders in their EDI efforts.

PRIORITY LINK

- Improve Employee, Guest/Visitor, and Stakeholder Satisfaction

RESULTS LINK

- We have a healthy workplace
- Improved organizational image
- We are an employer of choice
- Employees, guests and stakeholders are supported by our programs and services

5 SOCIAL BENEFIT

MEASURE DESCRIPTION

Explore Edmonton contributes to the social prosperity of our city, whether it's hosting events such as Homeless Connect, providing shelter during a pandemic, or bringing in events that raise awareness for specific industries, sports, or cultures. How we measure this social return is under review.

PRIORITY LINK

- Improve Employee, Guest/Visitor, and Stakeholder Satisfaction

RESULTS LINK

- Our venues are recognized as community hubs
- Improved organizational image





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 who, 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 organizations desired culture.
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.

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EDMONTON**