

EXPLORE EDMONTON

# 2022 BUSINESS PLAN



**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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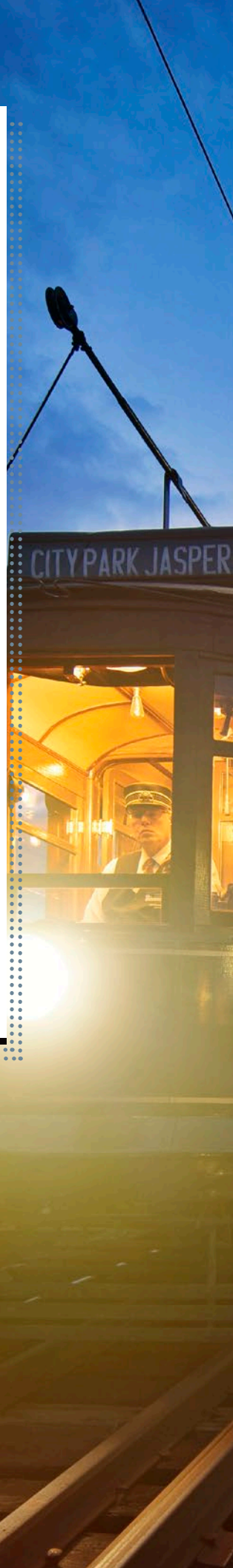
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# INTRODUCTION

The global pandemic, which shut down the world in March of 2020, continued to rage throughout 2021. With the roll out of vaccines in 2021 across the world, there does appear to be light at the end of the tunnel. Explore Edmonton, as our city's destination management and marketing organization (DMMO), expects 2022 to be the year that recovery begins in earnest for tourism and events. While we are optimistic and enthusiastic about the days ahead, we must remember that the tourism industry – and the sectors that contribute to it – was the first hit, will likely be the hardest hit, and will take the longest to recover. Many of the businesses that are connected to the tourism industry are the very definition of small and medium sized businesses. They will require our collective support for years in order to survive and fully recover.

The pandemic was also incredibly difficult for our Explore Edmonton team, but we have made it through by working together, by supporting each other, and taking the difficult pandemic environment one day at a time. Now, like a coiled spring ready to launch, we are ready to dig in and kickstart the visitor economy in Alberta's capital city. The struggles of the last 18 months have highlighted the importance of our visitor economy, the significant economic impact it drives for our local economy, and there is opportunity to make it stronger than ever now.

As an agency of the City of Edmonton, governed by a board of directors, we are tasked with telling Edmonton's story and elevating the Edmonton experience. While the watchword of 2021 was 'caution', Explore Edmonton is excited to see what 2022 will bring and all the visitors that will make a return to our great city.





# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

The world needs more Edmonton, and Edmonton needs more of the world. In 2019, Edmonton's visitor economy had a banner year. It was the culmination of hard work across the sector for the better part of a decade to elevate Edmonton as a destination of choice, year-round. That year, we welcomed more than 6 million visitors to our city, injecting nearly \$2 billion into our economy, supporting hundreds of businesses and thousands of workers. Explore Edmonton's efforts across the venues and within tourism contributed \$260 million in economic impact alone. While it will take time to build back to that 2019 benchmark, we are ready to get to work.

Edmonton has missed welcoming the world, and it's incredibly exciting that it appears 2022 will give us the chance to open our doors to visitors once again, in a safe way.

Explore Edmonton, along with the City of Edmonton and partners, have worked incredibly hard to ensure that Edmonton is a safe place to visit. Not just for the visitors, but also for Edmontonians who will be understandably cautious about restarting the tourism industry. We want visitors and residents to feel confident about their health and safety when they take in shows, attend events, eat at restaurants, and stay in hotels. And our efforts to keep Edmonton safe and healthy will continue.

There's no denying that the visitor economy has been hit hard since March 2020. In fact, the devastation to our sector is profound. We're determined to help rebuild a vibrant and sustainable visitor economy, contributing to the large economic ecosystem in Edmonton. We'll work hard with our partners to strengthen the experiences and events in our city that attract visitation and enhance the quality of life for Edmontonians.

Our 2022 Business Plan directly aligns with Edmonton's first comprehensive Tourism Master Plan, an initiative that was undertaken by Explore Edmonton during the pandemic and that guides growth in our sector through to 2030. Explore Edmonton must take on an expanded role to help reboot the visitor economy and it will take thinking outside the box to make certain that Edmonton is a four-season destination of choice.

Just as importantly, we want what we do to contribute to creating an exciting community for Edmontonians and give them a reason to explore their own city. Our 2022 business plan is about continuing to build partnerships, delivering for our stakeholders and Edmontonians, and telling the Edmonton story to the world. We've added to our teams to bring in more major events, increase our marketing reach, support entrepreneurs, operators and business owners in the tourism industry, and enhance the Edmonton experience. All of which drives dollars to our cherished local businesses.

Explore Edmonton has always been about pushing forward and taking risks, and we will need to do that now more than ever to increase the economic impact of the visitor economy. But we will do it responsibly with an expanded focus on environmental sustainability and community benefits.

**Maggie Davison**  
**Interim CEO**  
**Explore Edmonton**

# 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 connection 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.

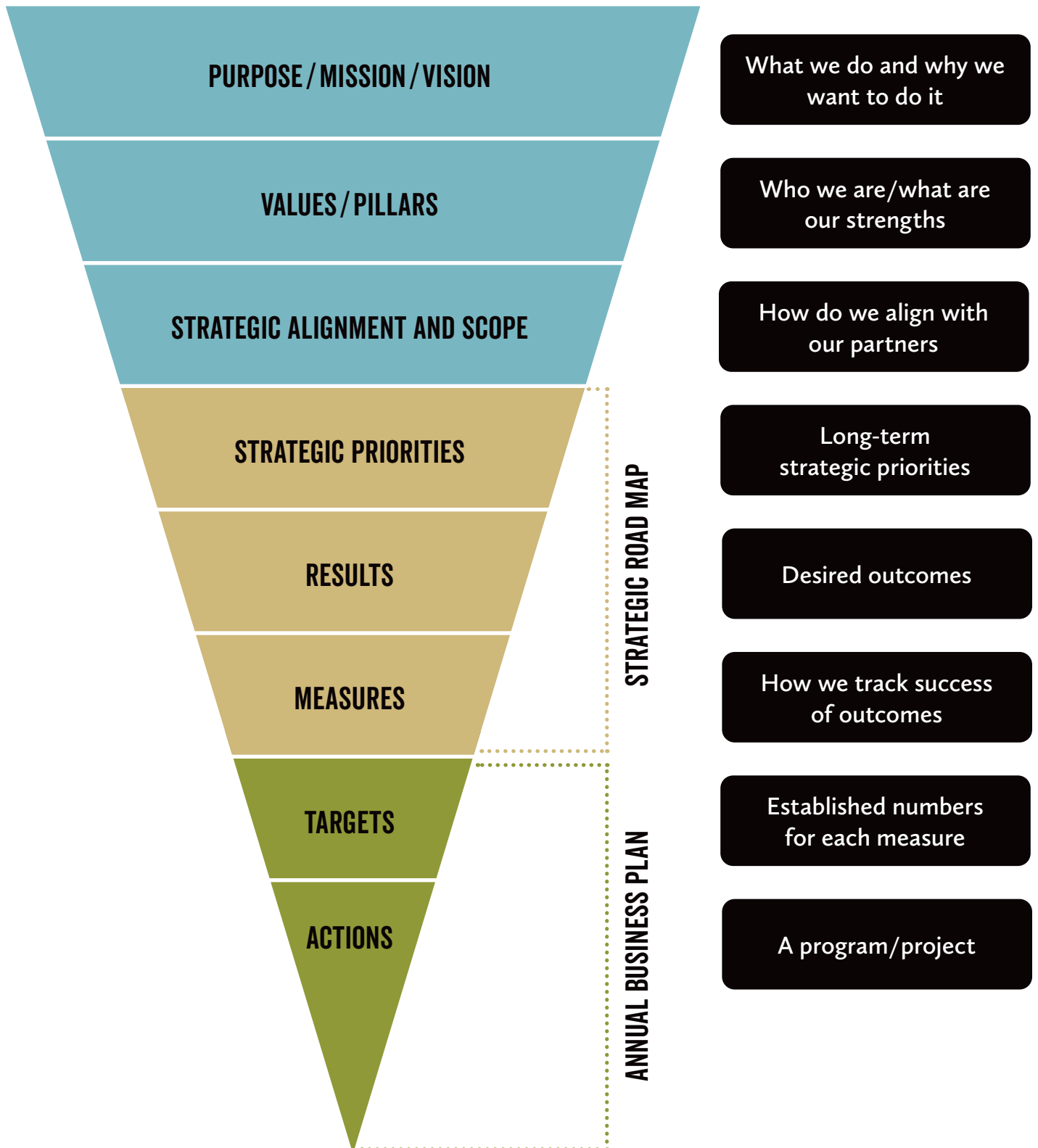
## COMMUNITY & SIGNATURE EVENTS

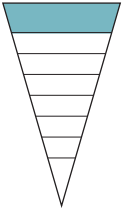
In 2021, Explore Edmonton's focus expanded to include the Community & Signature Events portfolio, which is responsible for producing K-Days, Farmfair International, the Edmonton Pro Rodeo as well as stewarding urban agriculture within the Edmonton Urban Farm.



# OUR STRATEGIC ROAD 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, services, and projects. The image below depicts how we plan.





# PURPOSE, MISSION, VISION

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

## PURPOSE

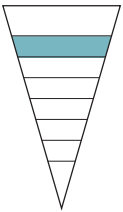
Increase the economic impact of the visitor-based economy in Edmonton.

## 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

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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

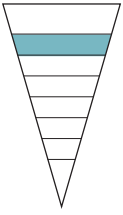
Everything we do is done in collaboration – within our teams, across our organization and with our stakeholders / clients – and when we win, we win together.

## 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

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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 build 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.

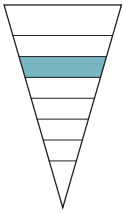
## SOCIAL PROSPERITY

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.

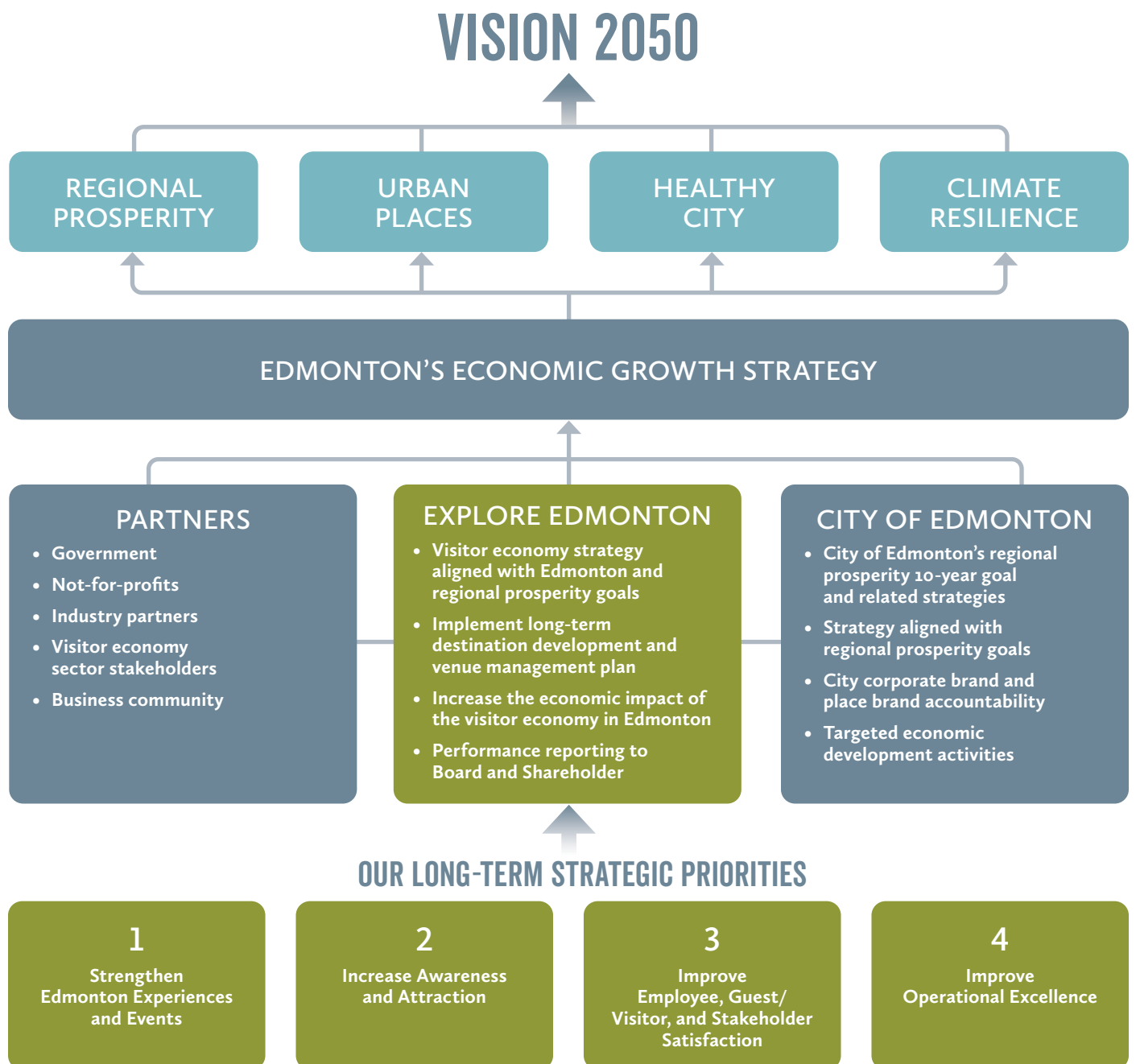




# STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT AND SCOPE

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)





# 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.

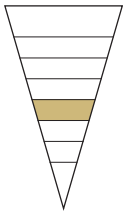
We will improve our sales efforts to secure more opportunities that best match Edmonton's strengths, as well as focus on retaining existing clients. Our roles are clearly defined, and messages are unified within Explore Edmonton and across all stakeholders to put us in the best possible position to attract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



# 2022 BUSINESS 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.

PRIORITY LINK	RESULTS LINK
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increase Awareness and Attraction</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stakeholders receive a high rate of return from investments in our programs</li><li>• Maximized direct economic impact</li></ul>

## 2022 TARGETS – ECONOMIC IMPACT (DIRECT\*)

PORTFOLIO	2022 TARGET
Venues	\$84M
Business Development	\$95M
Destination Management & Marketing	\$3M
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$182M</b>

*\*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.*

## 2022 KEY ACTIONS

- As part of the business attraction process with event planners and to garner community support, highlight benefits ranging from sustainability, sport/cultural impacts, and industry advantages.
  - Relaunch the Business Events Legacy Council, an ambassador program with industry sectors.
  - Develop and execute a new business-to-business (B2B) sustainability campaign promoting Edmonton's sustainability offerings as a differentiator.
- Enhance websites to improve lead generation from an existing and newly transitioned assets.
  - Redevelop the Edmonton Convention Centre (ECC) website to improve conversions, user experience and elevate aesthetics.
  - Redevelop the K-Days and Farmfair International websites to align with the new visions of these two events and building in effective marketing tools.

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

### 2022 TARGETS

NET PROMOTER SCORE	2022 TARGET
Visitor Economy (stakeholders)	25
Venues (clients)	40
Venues (guests)	40
Employees (proxy)	36
Satisfaction %	
Employee Engagement	77%

### 2022 KEY ACTIONS

- Identify and implement projects/initiatives based on the 10-year Tourism Master Plan. Initial work in supporting the development of air service to Edmonton has begun and will continue over the next few years.
- Launch an Explore Edmonton podcast that features people, places and businesses that make Edmonton an exciting place to visit.
- Modernize the ECC and EXPO to remain competitive and to improve guest experience.<sup>1</sup>
  - ECC – upgrade public restrooms; install atrium on Riverview patio
  - EXPO – develop exterior master plan; create Food & Beverage experience plan; improve experience with new wayfinding/digital signage and updated furniture design.
- Improve the overall employee experience from pre-hire to offboarding (e.g. process changes, enhanced communications).
- Upgrade systems and processes to deliver operational efficiencies and drive improved decision-making.
  - Upgrade accounting system
  - Implement new scheduling system for hourly staff
  - Review key business processes
- Re-imagine K-Days / Farmfair with input from the community.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Funding for venue modernization is currently not included in the 2022 budget; discussions underway to source funding.

<sup>2</sup> Assumption that external funding has been approved.

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

#### 2022 TARGETS

For annual reporting purposes, preliminary (unofficial) results for metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO<sub>2e</sub>) will be used as this is available in Q1; official results validated by a third party are generally not available until Q3/Q4.

LOCATION	2019	2022 <sup>1</sup>
ECC	7,656	6,930
EXPO	9,429	9,207
WTC	3,166	3,166
<b>EXPLORE EDMONTON TOTAL (MTCO<sub>2e</sub>)</b>	<b>20,252</b>	<b>19,303</b>

(1) 2020 and 2021 excluded as GHG was lower given the pandemic (i.e. GHG reduction not due to intentional actions). The 2022 target is primarily related to the organization's efforts to reduce GHG, however, there is still some lingering impacts from the pandemic.

#### 2022 KEY ACTIONS

- Initiate GHG reduction plan for WTC starting with staff training and developing reduction targets.
- Develop sustainability policies to help with improving upon baseline Global Sustainable Destination Index (GSDI) results, pursuit of ISO 20121, and organizational practices (e.g. procurement).
- Execution of waste management strategies and increased waste diversion.
- BOMA certification at the venues.
- Solar roof installation at the Edmonton EXPO Centre.

# 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 in our operations. The development of an employee EDI sentiment is underway in 2021 to gauge how we are doing on this front.

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

## 2022 TARGETS

- Employee EDI sentiment – target to be established once baseline 2021 results are available.

## 2022 KEY ACTIONS

- Setting up the EDI Council, newly formed in 2021, for long-term success (governance, rotating membership, and budget).
- Continue to build EDI awareness, training, and tools within the organization, including Indigenous awareness training.
- Execute on EDI implementation plan to adapt operations/processes ranging from marketing assets, procurement, building accessibility, technology accessibility, recruitment practices, and policies. Measures specific to these areas to be identified.
- Facilitate and support creation of EDI support/working groups at the venues for hourly staff.



## 5 SOCIAL | COMMUNITY BENEFIT

### MEASURE DESCRIPTION

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

### 2022 TARGETS

MEASURE	2022 TARGET
Number of active volunteers	650
Volunteer hours	10,000
Urban Farm visitation	7,500

### 2022 KEY ACTIONS

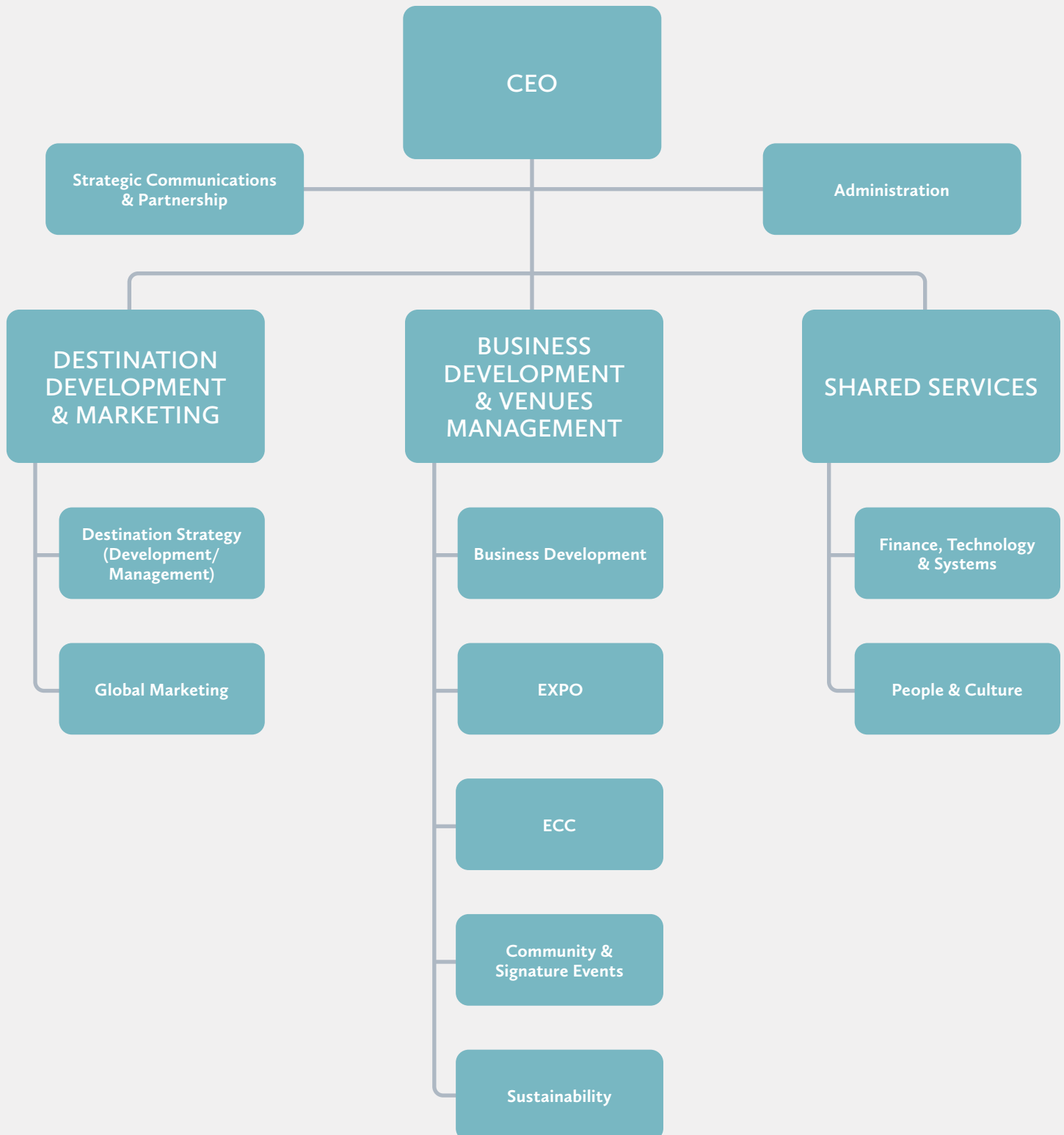
- Identify appropriate operating mechanisms to deliver on this effectively and in alignment with our GHG/environmental and EDI goals, as well as our existing community programs.
- Build awareness, training, and tools for the organization to use so they can apply the community perspective/lens in their work.
- Grow the volunteer program and enable the rest of the organization to leverage the program.
- Promote and grow the Urban Farm with updated brand and online presence.

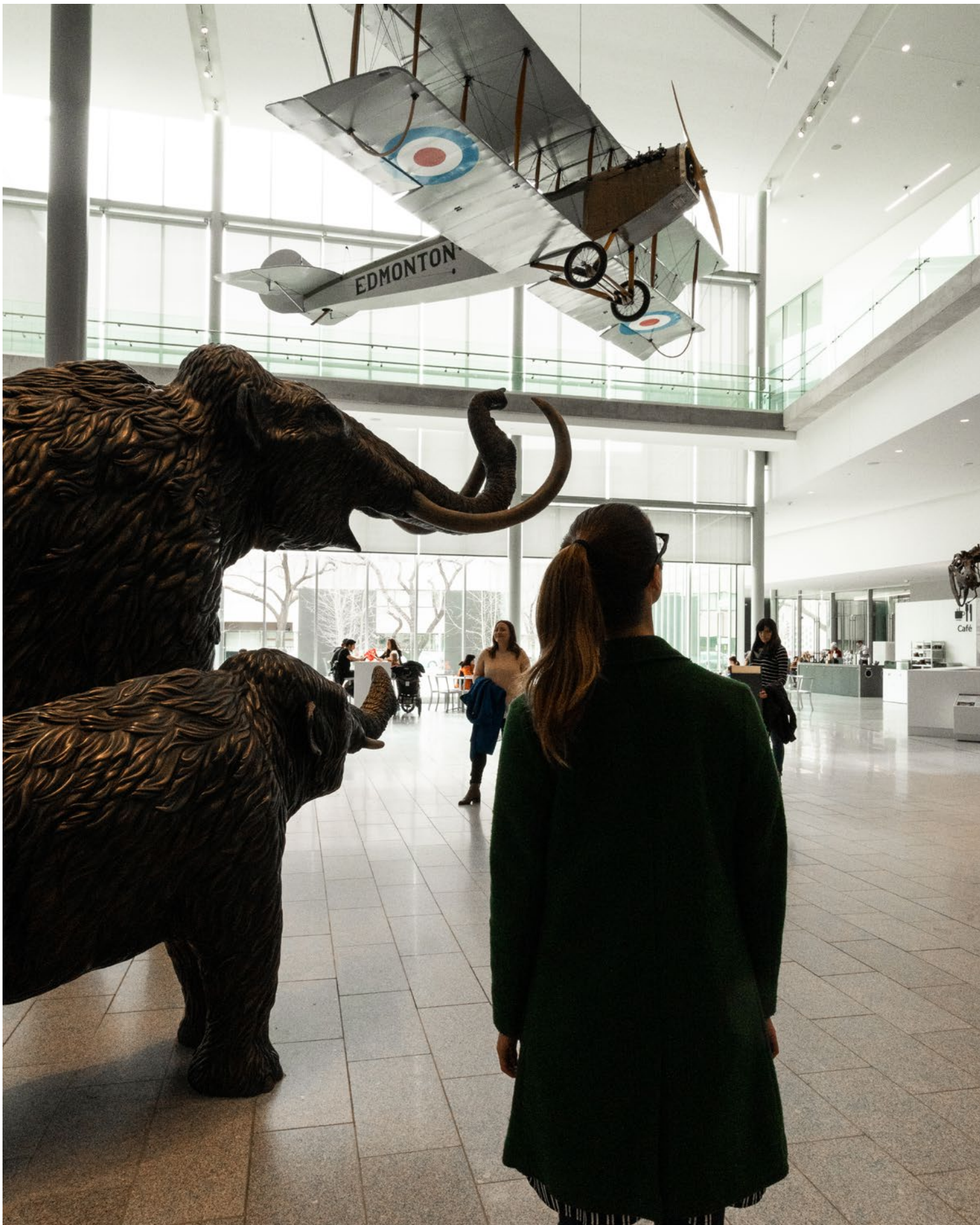


# GLOSSARY

<b>Action</b>	A specific task, program or project undertaken by a business unit that works towards improving a priority and attaining a result.
<b>Measure</b>	Tools or processes that can be used to track the success and progress of achieving a result linked to a priority.
<b>Mission</b>	Describes what our organization does currently, for whom, and how.
<b>Pillars of Excellence</b>	Describes what we must do extremely well to achieve our priorities with improved results now and for the future.
<b>Priority</b>	A high-level summary of strategic expectations.
<b>Purpose</b>	What our organization was created to accomplish.
<b>Results Map</b>	Reveals our intended outcomes that will help us achieve our aspirations for the future and deliver value to our stakeholders.
<b>Shareholder</b>	City of Edmonton
<b>Stakeholder</b>	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.
<b>Target</b>	An achievable goal that will let us know we have accomplished a result or portion of a result. Ex. 75% Stakeholder satisfaction.
<b>Values</b>	Describes our organization's culture and desired behaviours.
<b>Vision</b>	Describes the way we envision our organization. It communicates that dream to our employees and customers in an inspirational manner.
<b>Visitor Economy</b>	Direct, indirect, and induced economic activity resulting from visitors' interactions within a destination.

# ORGANIZATIONAL CHART





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