

# A FLOURISHING FUTURE

A REGENERATIVE, RESILIENT VISION AND  
STRATEGY FOR EDMONTON'S VISITOR ECONOMY





# LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Explore Edmonton respectfully acknowledges that we are located within Treaty 6 territory, and Métis Nation of Alberta Region 4. This land is 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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## THE CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY

Edmonton is booming. Its population is forecast to double from 1 to 2 million people by 2050.

Edmonton's visitor economy attracted over 6 million visitors in 2019 and is projected to increase by more than 40% by 2029. This stunning growth opens exciting opportunities for Edmonton, including job creation, local economic impact, and bringing to light the unique stories of Edmonton and its people.

Managed correctly, the visitor economy has the potential to bring about positive social change, increase climate resilience, accelerate innovation, improve livelihoods, and restore nature. Managed badly, tourism can affect the wellbeing of residents, the integrity of Edmonton's communities, and health of the nature supporting everyone.

Increasingly evident, climate change presents significant challenges and impacts for Edmonton and its residents. By the 2050s, the prediction is the annual average temperature in Edmonton will increase by an average of 3.5°C and by approximately 6°C to 8°C by the 2080s. This presents far-ranging risks to the community and for tourism. If there is lack of significant action to decarbonize the tourism and events sector, and to restore nature, there will be harsh impacts on the economy, national health, water availability, and infrastructure. We are already seeing the devastation to biodiversity and wilderness that makes Edmonton so special.

## A NEW MINDSET

Addressing climate change, community challenges and the anticipated growth of the visitor economy will require a change of mindset in tourism leadership, business, and organizations in the visitor economy. It demands a new systemic way of thinking and collaborating that will encourage an urgent transition to a new form of regenerative tourism that unites the community, aligns with the City's goals, and uses tourism and events as a powerful resource that can generate positive changes for all.

This vision is bold and pioneering: It challenges the status quo, making people and institutions reflect and redefine what 'success' looks like for the visitor economy and the systems that support it. It requires an increase in the complexity of the role of Explore Edmonton, not only as a destination marketer but also as a destination manager, working with many other key partners. Regenerative destination management demands more inclusion with broader engagement of people and organizations from all facets of the community. It can unite interested parties with a shared goal, and responsibility to co-create and steward a visitor economy that benefits the diversity of people and cultures that make Edmonton unique.

## THE TIME IS NOW!

We have an opportunity to be the change the world aspires to see happen. We are working on several pioneering strategies and initiatives in tandem and we – the tourism and events industry, have the potential to be a catalytic force in the transformation of Edmonton's economy and society, and advance it on a more regenerative, inclusive, and resilient trajectory by reconnecting people with nature, each other and this amazing place called Edmonton.

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### PAUL HAWES

*Vice President Destination Development and Marketing at Explore Edmonton Corporation*





# INTRODUCTION

*“The work of regeneration is fundamentally an ongoing collective practice of creativity and collaborative caring, learning, and integrating diverse interests and perspectives, rooted in community and in place.”*

*A regenerative tourism strategy is about making a ‘place’ more vital, more viable, more possible, more innovative, and more resilient.*

*It is about increasing the capacity for our communities and ecologies to adapt and thrive; economically, socially, culturally, and environmentally.”*

**“A Regenerative Approach to Tourism in Canada,”  
produced by Destination Canada**



# TOURISM AND EVENTS AS A FORCE FOR GOOD

## WHAT IS REGENERATION?

*“Regeneration means putting life at the centre of every action and decision... It is about bringing the world and each one of us back to life. It has a meaning and a scope; it expresses faith and kindness; it involves imagination and creativity. It is inclusive, engaging, and generous... It restores forests, lands, farms, oceans. It transforms cities, build green affordable housing, reverses soil erosion, rejuvenates degraded land and powers communities.”*

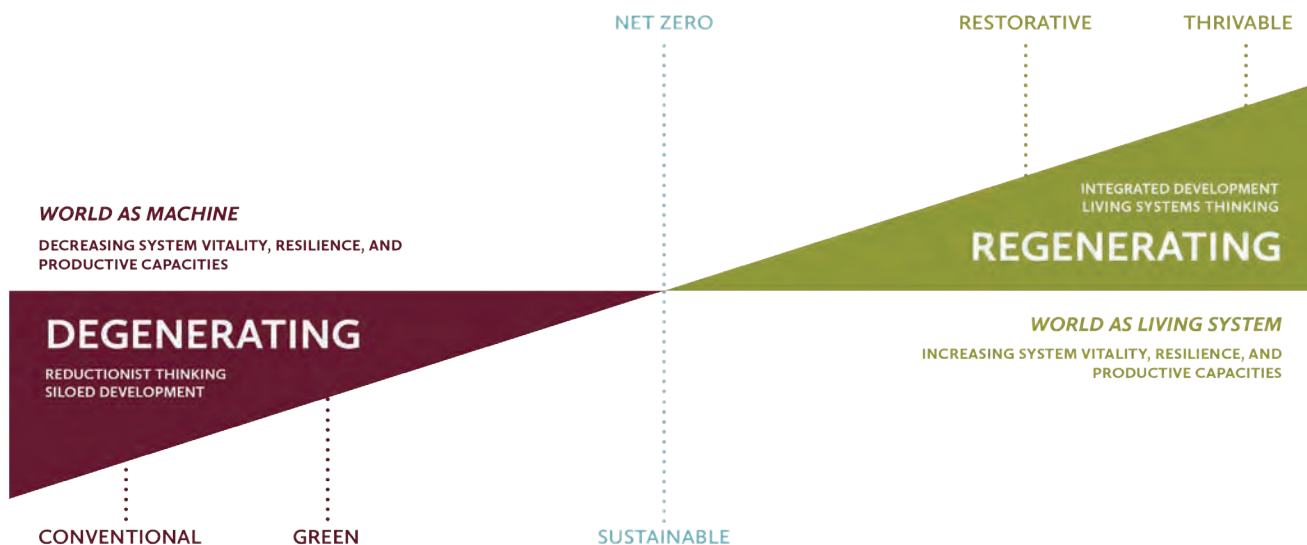
- Paul Hawkin, Regeneration

## A CHANGE OF MINDSET AND A NEW SYSTEMIC WAY OF THINKING

**Regeneration requires a change of mindset and a new systemic way of thinking.** Most of the focus on sustainability over the last 15 years has been about ‘surviving’ rather than thriving but this has not, nor will it, deliver the change we need to see in the world. To ensure a successful future, we must shift the paradigm of linear extractive and reductionist thinking towards a new set of regenerative beliefs and values that embrace what living systems and our Indigenous communities have been pursuing for thousands of years. The diagram illustrates the transition from a mechanistic to living system thinking. The predominant ‘conventional’ approaches shown on the left do the most harm and ecosystems and communities become ever less viable. With ‘green,’ we seek to reduce harm through actions like reducing pollution.

This is a good thing, but we are still polluting. At the centre of the diagram, the generally practiced ‘sustainable approaches,’ are about making operations more efficient and generally practiced ‘sustainable approaches,’ are about making operations more efficient and getting us to zero damage (i.e., zero emissions or waste). Unfortunately, zero damage is unlikely and it is essential that we also heal what has already been harmed.

Meanwhile on the right, the focus switches to regenerating. From designing systems and practices that take a holistic systems approach to solving environmental, social, and economic problems it leads to restorative systems that benefit society and its ecosystems.



## LEARNING FROM NATURE AND INDIGENOUS WISDOM

Regenerative leadership observes and learns from nature and Indigenous wisdom to inspire living systems thinking. It focuses on abundance, vitality, harmony, reciprocity, and wellness of the entire system. It aims for humans to work in partnership with each other and nature rather than in competition. Humans are viewed as part of the broader natural ecosystem and remember they are part of it.

Regenerative systems have a focus on quality and effectiveness. They are circular by design. Energy, natural resources, and materials are re-used, recycled, and waste is designed out of a product or event's life cycle.

## WHAT IS REGENERATIVE TOURISM?

Regenerative tourism explores and challenges the way that visitors, residents, and business owners engage with and benefit from the visitor economy. Where sustainable tourism aspires to minimize negative impacts within an existing system, regenerative tourism goes further to rethink and reshape the industry's future. This approach unites the community to co-create an industry that continuously improves a destination (for all) through its environmental, social, and economic impacts.

Regenerative tourism is inclusive and requires broad engagement and ongoing involvement with interested parties from all facets of the community. To transform into a regenerative destination is challenging and requires a new form of collaboration founded on a sense of collective ownership, and robust governance systems.

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# WHAT IS REGENERATIVE DESTINATION MANAGEMENT?

*“A balanced living systems approach to develop and manage a flourishing and equitable visitor economy. It aims to use tourism and events to transform environmental, social, and economic problems.*

*Aiming to restore and rejuvenate communities, their people and place rather than degrade or merely sustain conditions. It is community centric, inspired by nature, inclusive and circular by design.”*

**– Ayyew approach by the GDS-Movement**





# STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT AND ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The Regenerative Visitor Economy Strategy was initiated as part of the 2021 Tourism Master Plan. Explore Edmonton, with support from regenerative tourism experts ConnectSeven Group and the GDS-Movement.

They managed a process to engage, listen to, and involve local interested parties from more than 148 organizations (non-profit, public institutions and government). All collaborated in the development of this new strategy. The engagement process followed the GDS-Movement's and ConnectSeven Group's collaborative destination development methodology and had three key questions:

1. **Where do we want to go?**
2. **How will we get there?**
3. **Where are we today**

It represents a crucial step forward from the Tourism Master Plan and is one of three strategies being concurrently developed. The other two are the Indigenous Tourism Strategy and the Nighttime Economy Strategy.

The Regenerative Visitor Economy Strategy will work in tandem with these strategies and the Tourism Master Plan to foster inclusive, equitable, and regenerative tourism growth in Edmonton.

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# SUMMARY OF STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## WORKSHOPS WITH INTERESTED PARTIES

Identified and categorized >200 community members who were invited to two in-person engagement workshops:

- February 2023 (80 participants)
- May 2023 (80 participants)

## FORM EXPLORE EDMONTON PROJECT GROUP

Identified Explore Edmonton employees with diverse perspectives to support strategy development across the lifespan of the project.

## 1-1 INTERVIEWS

Conducted ten 1-1 interviews with specialized knowledge holders

## DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Reviewed and analyzed +20 relevant strategies, business plans, action plans, etc, including:

- Tourism Master Plan
- ConnectEdmonton
- Edmonton City Plan
- Nighttime Economy Strategy
- Indigenous Tourism Strategy

## COLLABORATIVE STRATEGY WRITING

Iterative writing process with wide input from interested parties

## ONLINE SURVEY

Gathered insights from 163 respondents across two surveys open from January to February of 2023

- External Survey (Clients and Industry) - 85 eligible responses
- Internal Survey (Explore Edmonton Employees) - 78 eligible responses

## TASKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

Selected 20 community leaders to participate in the strategy co-creation process. We met five times, including:

- Virtual taskforce Kickoff (Jan 2022)
- In-person Strategy Workshop (Feb 2023)
- Virtual Strategy Workshop (Mar 2023)
- Virtual Strategy Workshop (Apr 2023)
- In-person Strategy Workshop (May 2023)

# STRATEGY WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

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# WHERE ARE WE GOING?

*"We are called to be architects of the future, not its victims"*

- R. Buckminster Fuller





# VISION

Shaped by the extensive consultation process, and with refinement by the taskforce, the people of Edmonton expressed their aspirations for the future state of the Visitor Economy.

Edmonton is a vibrant destination with a unique blend of urban and wilderness experiences, where nature flourishes, people thrive and culture flows.

By 2050 the visitor economy in Edmonton will be regenerative and resilient.





# HOW WILL WE GET THERE?

*“To succeed we will need to take a more integrated systems approach where value is created together with other people, other organizations, and the natural ecologies that sustain us all, rather than extracting value from them as expendable resources.”*

A regenerative approach to tourism in Canada,  
produced by Destination Canada



# STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

This bold and innovative framework is the guiding pathway to a Regenerative and Resilient Visitor Economy by 2050.

One vision, five key principles, five pathways, fifteen goals and five enablers provide the basis for all the actions and recommendations in this plan. Shaped and co-created with hundreds of people in the community, they provide a framework for a flourishing visitor economy which not only creates

jobs and generates revenues, but restores and regenerates communities and nature, making Edmonton a more resilient, healthy, inclusive, and prosperous region.

Achieving this vision is a journey. To make a regenerative and resilient visitor economy a reality by 2050, we have defined interim targets where possible. The next vital step will be to prioritize initiatives and actions and develop a clear implementation roadmap.

## STRATEGY FOR A REGENERATIVE VISITOR ECONOMY

1 VISION	REGENERATIVE AND RESILIENT TOURISM BY 2050				
5 PRINCIPLES	Collective Ownership	Positive Impact for All	Stewardship	Radically Innovative and Bold	Evidence Based Decision Making
5 PATHWAYS	Decarbonize and Restore Nature	Transform Mobility	Invest in People and Communities	Steward Purposeful Growth and Innovation	Leverage Events for Change
15 GOALS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decarbonize the visitor economy to increase climate resilience</li> <li>Increase reutilization and reduce consumption of natural resources in the visitor economy</li> <li>Preserve and restore biodiversity of the river valley and other key areas</li> <li>Catalyse food revolution: reshape the way food is produced, experienced and managed in the visitor economy</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the usage of low and zero carbon travel options to get to Edmonton and surrounding regions</li> <li>Increase the number of visitors and residents using transit and active transportation</li> <li>improve accessibility for residents and visitors</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build a stronger and more unified Edmonton where diversity and equity are celebrated</li> <li>Support growth of Indigenous Tourism</li> <li>Foster sustainable and thriving tourism careers</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain and increase resident sentiment and support for purposeful growth of tourism and events</li> <li>Develop pioneering experiences and events that catalyse innovation</li> <li>Steward growth of visitor economy within ecological and social limits</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use festivals and events to accelerate Edmonton's culture, community, environment and the economy</li> <li>Make Edmonton a recognized North American leader in delivering regenerative events</li> </ol>
5 ENABLERS	Policy	Storytelling	Learning and Development	Good Governance	Funding



# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

*The following principles define how we will achieve our shared vision, and how we will work together. While actions and plans may change, these principles unify our work and ensure that we make strategically consistent choices as we work to arrive at our vision of success.*



1

## COLLECTIVE OWNERSHIP

Create a flourishing future together that encourages and is built on shared responsibility and collective ownership

2

## POSITIVE IMPACT FOR ALL

Ensure that the visitor economy has a positive impact on residents, the planet, visitors, and businesses

3

## STEWARDSHIP

Develop and implement programs and policies that prioritize stewardship of the environment, community, culture, and natural resources

4

## EVIDENCE BASED DECISION MAKING

Use data to better inform decision-making and measure progress towards regenerative tourism goals

5

## RADICALLY INNOVATIVE AND BOLD

Foster the Edmontonian culture of radical innovation and bold thinking, encouraging fresh ideas and approaches that challenge the status quo and drive progress towards a flourishing future

# ENABLERS

*Strategic enablers are essential building blocks to the success of each of the five pathways of the Regenerative Visitor Economy Strategy. To execute the work packages, these key enablers must be acted on throughout:*

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## ① POLICY

Policies shape the goals and actions that guide conservation, responsible practices, social equity, and economic resilience in Edmonton. We must co-create destination wide and internal policies, as well as work with organizations to advocate for greater implementation of regenerative policies at all levels of government

## ② STORYTELLING

Through the power of storytelling, we can discover inspiring and creative narratives that will unite visitors and residents and re-connect them to the history, nature, and culture of Edmonton. Stories have the power to transform perceptions and encourage behaviour change. Great strategies have great stories within them, and we will work to develop them and unlock the potential for lasting change.

## ③ FUNDING

Financial, investment and funding are needed to implement this strategy. Developing new revenue streams can directly support environmental restoration and community development. We will be reviewing various global approaches and investigating ways to implement a regenerative tourism fund in Edmonton.

## ④ GOOD GOVERNANCE

Good governance includes measuring impacts, combined with transparent and accountable decision-making processes and management oversight. It demands widespread, inclusive, and effective democratic engagement and collaboration of community members, interested parties.

## ⑤ LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Training, education, and knowledge transfer are vital components that develop the mindsets and skillsets critical for successful implementation of this strategy. Fostering a sense of stewardship, building capacity within the visitor economy, and empowering community members is critical to Edmonton's regenerative journey. This work must also help people within the tourism and events ecosystem to understand their role, and how they can contribute to a flourishing future for their communities.





# STRATEGIC PATHWAYS

*We will work with the City of Edmonton, institutions, tourism industry, community groups and clients to:*

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## TRANSFORM MOBILITY

Enable visitors and residents to have access to safe, reliable, and low and zero carbon travel options to, from, and around Edmonton.

## INVEST IN PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

Leverage tourism and events to build a stronger and more unified Edmonton, where culture, diversity and equity are celebrated and promoted, and a career in tourism is valued and rewarding

## STEWARDS PURPOSEFUL GROWTH & INNOVATION

Strategically grow tourism and events in a purposeful and innovative way that enhances business opportunities, drives wealth for the community, fosters pride among residents, and stewards growth of the visitor economy within ecological and social limits

## DECARBONIZE AND RESTORE NATURE

Decarbonize the visitor economy and restore nature to accelerate the transition to a climate resilient, carbon positive and waste-free city by 2050. Simultaneously creating positive impact for the community by improving energy resilience and costs, enhancing air quality, rethinking resource reutilization, accelerating a local food revolution, and preserving and restoring Edmonton's nature.

## LEVERAGE EVENTS FOR CHANGE

Continuously build upon the success of Edmonton's event landscape by integrating sustainable innovations into all events, establishing carbon-positive approaches for event organizers, and deliberately generating community impacts through events.



# WHERE ARE WE TODAY?

“Today Edmonton offers the opportunity to connect with nature within an urban environment and experience the cultural and spiritual connection with the land that local First Nations, Métis, and urban Indigenous Peoples continue to practice today. For those looking for a cultural adventure, Edmonton is vibrant, dynamic, and yet accessible and discoverable, offering a sense of wonder and inviting exploration for those who wish to uncover its rich cultural diversity...

Edmontonians are progressive thinkers, creators, risk takers, and community neighbours. Our people and their stories have shaped Edmonton into an inventive, courageous, and welcoming place. They are the soul of our city.”

*Explore Edmonton Tourism Master Plan 2021-2030.*





# A CITY OF 2 MILLION PEOPLE

Edmonton is the capital of Alberta and the largest northernmost city in North America. It plays a key leadership role in provincial, national, and international, contexts. An additional 1 million people are expected to live in the city by 2050 and this will double the population.

To support this growth, the communities and businesses of Edmonton must pioneer development that supports the environment and society, and regenerative leadership. Through the Connect(ED) Edmonton Strategic Plan, the City of Edmonton is already defining and implementing a robust environmental, social, and economic strategy with four key goals that drive regional prosperity, enhance climate resilience, develop more vibrant neighbourhoods, and build a healthy city.

This plan encourages innovation, entrepreneurship, and job creation within the city and region; strengthens a focus on inclusive and equitable growth; and positions Edmonton as a destination of choice for living and working.



Key targets from the Connect(ED)monton Strategic Plan that will shape and influence the visitor economy by 2050 include:

- **1 million new residents**
- **Net-zero per person GHG (Greenhouse Gas) emissions by 2050, with a 50% reduction in community-based net greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 (compared to 2005 levels)**
- **Planting of 2million new urban trees**
- **50% of trips are made by transit and active transportation**
- **Development of 15-minute districts that give people access to what they need within a short radius. Less than 35% of average household budgets are spent on housing and transportation**
- **Development of an Innovation program that creates 50,000 more jobs**

Tourism and events can play a dramatic role in supporting the goals of the Connect(ED)monton strategic plan, while accelerating the regeneration of Edmonton's communities, nature, and local economy. To achieve this, the visitor economy needs to be more aligned and integrated with municipal strategies.

Consequently, we worked closely to align with various strategies and goals set out by the City of Edmonton, (including the City Plan), the Community Energy Transition Strategy, the Climate Resilient Edmonton: Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan, the Economic Action Plan, the 25-year Municipal Waste Strategy, the Fresh Edmonton Food Strategy, the River Valley Alliance Strategic Plan, and other choices for living and working.

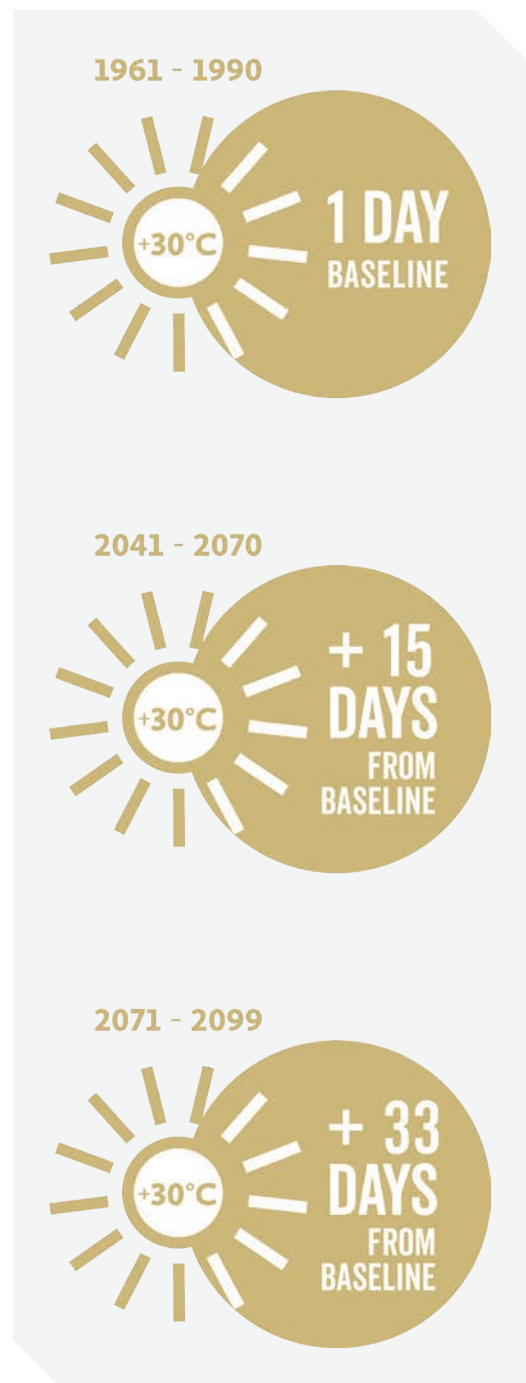
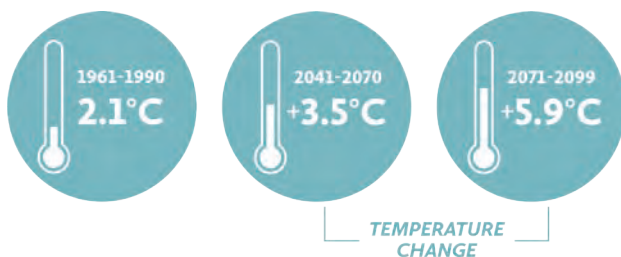
# THE REALITIES OF CLIMATE CHANGE

## IT'S GETTING HOTTER!

Climate change presents significant challenges and impacts, both globally and locally. Canada is experiencing significant changes in temperature, precipitation, snow and ice cover, and extreme weather events.

This will change precipitation patterns, creating drier summers, wetter winters, and more heavy rainfall. As Edmonton grows and the climate continues to change, analysis by the City of Edmonton's indicates that the cost of climate impacts could increase by \$8.0 billion by the 2050s and \$18.2 billion by the 2080s.

Climate changes will have wide-ranging implications for the community and visitor economy. Economic analysis suggests these impacts could result in substantial environmental and financial costs, with the potential to lower the city's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and business income. Furthermore, climate change is expected to have direct health impacts and increase medical and other expenses in the community. Infrastructure can be affected by changing weather patterns, leading to damage and disruptions. Water resources may also be impacted, affecting water quality, quantity, and availability, which affects potable water treatment and supply.





## OPPORTUNITY

On a positive note, the change to weather and climate may produce some unexpected benefits. In addition to encouraging more people to use active modes of public transport more frequently, warmer weather will lead to a shorter shoulder season, an increase in tourism and recreation opportunities, and growth of tourism development projects because there is more time to build. The change will also lengthen the growing and frost-free seasons, that will benefit local agriculture.

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# GROWTH OF THE VISITOR ECONOMY

The visitor economy has grown significantly over the past decade, welcoming more than 6 million visitors to Edmonton in 2019. Over the next ten-year period (2020 to 2030), a robust growth of up to 40% is predicted.

The tourism industry is recognized as playing a crucial role in drawing business, academic, and leisure visitors to the city and contributed over \$1.7 million to Edmonton's prosperity in 2019. The growth forecast for 2030 is \$2.7 million. The Tourism Master Plan identified 5 Guiding Principles that will contribute to the city's economic vibrancy and support an enhanced quality of life for residents. It offers:

- A collaborative approach
- A new paradigm for tourism in Edmonton
- A more equitable, diverse, and inclusive visitor economy
- A regenerative visitor economy
- An expanded role for Explore Edmonton

To ensure the growth of the visitor economy in alignment with these principles, it is crucial that Explore Edmonton champions and adopts a regenerative tourism vision, framework, and actions in partnership with the city, community, cultural organizations, and residents. This approach will enable responsible tourism practices to become an integral part of the city's tourism industry. By prioritizing the principles of regeneration, this collaboration will help to develop a solid foundation for Explore Edmonton and the local tourism and events industry and benefit the community and its residents.

## DELIVERING VALUE TO RESIDENTS

In 2020, Explore Edmonton commissioned a detailed assessment of the visitor economy. Most of Edmonton's residents recognized the positive impact of tourism. 87% agreed that tourism is good for the city, and more than 80% agreed that tourism creates opportunities for local businesses and generates employment opportunities for residents. Additionally, 75% of residents acknowledged that tourism brings new amenities and attractions that they, too, can enjoy, generates funding for the government, and contributes to the positive ambiance of the local community.

According to the Tourism Master Plan, Edmonton residents find parks, outdoor areas, and natural landscapes to be the most appealing aspects of living in the city. The friendliness of the community, high-quality restaurants, access to healthcare, and arts and culture were also top of the list. However, there are areas of tourism that can be improved, including international readiness, accessibility, funding, and place brand equity.

## THE JOURNEY TO REGENERATIVE LEADERSHIP

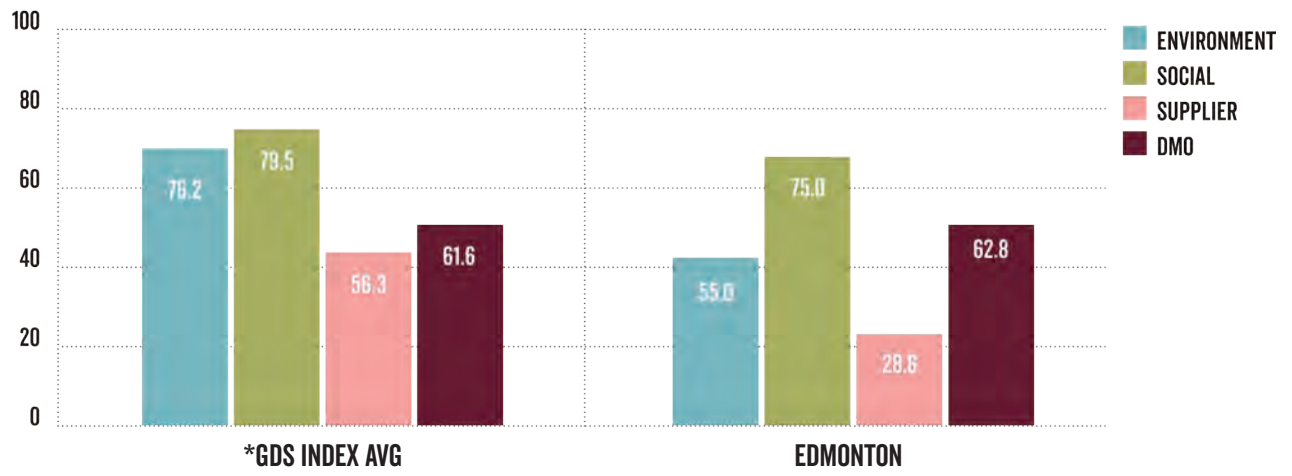
Over the last 10 years, Edmonton has become a leader in sustainable tourism in Canada and a point of reference around the world. As the first city in Western Canada to join the **Global Destination Sustainability Index**, Edmonton has been measuring and benchmarking environmental, social, supplier, and destination management performance since 2020.

In a 2023 assessment of 16 major Canadian cities by the GDS-Movement, Edmonton ranked second in its sustainable destination management performance. This is well-earned: Explore Edmonton's commitment to sustainability has been showing year on year improvement, most recently resulting in a 2022 Destination Management Organization (DMO) score 20 points higher than the year before, and higher than the Global Destination Sustainability Index average. However, the results highlighted a below-average sustainability performance within the supply chain. The interested parties' feedback in the following pages show some insight as to why Edmonton is lagging here.

Edmonton's recent successes are partially due to the development of a 2030 Tourism Master Plan; collaboration with the city, community, and residents; building capacity within the organization; and pioneering social-impact projects.







2022 Global Destination Sustainability Index Average compared to Explore Edmonton's score



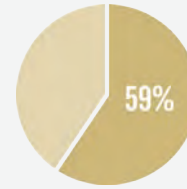
# FEEDBACK FROM INTERESTED PARTIES

While Edmonton has had many recent successes in sustainable tourism, there is still a lot of work to do to fully mainstream regenerative thinking across the visitor economy. From our 2023 research for this strategy, we identified the following key insights:

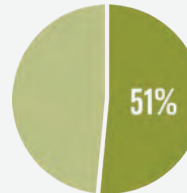
More than half of the respondents see the importance of sustainable tourism, have begun their sustainability journey and are keen to better integrate sustainability within their organizations. They identified more knowledge/skills, availability of suppliers, and more resources as key enablers. Respondents also identified capacity building, advocacy, and standard setting as the top three roles for Explore Edmonton in driving sustainable development

## IDENTIFYING KEY ISSUES

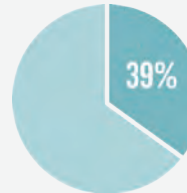
Through the consultation process, community members identified the following key social, economic, and environmental issues affecting the visitor economy in Edmonton. Here they are mapped against the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.



59% of tourism representatives believe integrating sustainability into tourism plans is important.



51% of tourism representatives have already started their sustainability actions, while 14% have deeply integrated sustainability already.



37% of all responding organizations are determined to make more sustainable choices, even if it costs a small premium





## ANALYSIS OF KEY STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

Through workshops and surveys, we discovered a collective understanding of the issues and opportunities facing Edmonton, and a unified interest in working together to make Edmonton a better place to live, visit, and meet in. This section summarizes the key strengths, challenges, and opportunities for Edmonton as a tourism and events destination.

The Strategy Development Taskforce condensed and prioritized the following:

STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Festival and sports event city</li> <li>• River valley, nature, and access to wilderness</li> <li>• Public attractions</li> <li>• Gateway to the North</li> <li>• Spirit of innovation, and local entrepreneurial talent</li> <li>• Booming industry and scientific sectors</li> <li>• Booming art, cultural &amp; festival scene with a unique 'Edmonton' vibe</li> <li>• People of Edmonton</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of residential and regional tourism</li> <li>• Accessibility of and availability of low carbon transit</li> <li>• Mental health issues post COVID</li> <li>• Lack of inclusion and investment in arts/ culture industry</li> <li>• Limited sphere of influence of tourism</li> <li>• Lack of sufficient funding for tourism competitiveness</li> <li>• Availability and retention of talent</li> <li>• Waste management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Iconic and unique product development</li> <li>• Booming night life</li> <li>• Attracting remote workers</li> <li>• Indigenous tourism</li> <li>• Fostering a sense of place, belonging, and pride</li> <li>• Developing 4 seasons of tourism business</li> <li>• Cross-sector partnerships and collaboration</li> <li>• Sustainability education and awareness</li> <li>• Development of river valley</li> <li>• Increase international reputation and awareness</li> <li>• Winning mega events such as the 2030 Commonwealth Games</li> </ul>

## WHAT DOES A FLOURISHING FUTURE LOOK LIKE?

In our workshops, we asked interested parties to define what a flourishing visitor economy would look like. Here is a summary of the results categorised by interested party group:



### FOR THE PLACE

Protected, restored, clean, long-term planning, energy leadership, Indigenous values and guidance, benchmarking and measurement, cultural learning, ecosystems, identity, regional view

### FOR BUSINESSES & ENTREPRENEURS

Growth, rural connections, supportive policies, local support, entrepreneurial ecosystem, risk taking, sustainability, year-round visitors, funding, employment

### FOR VISITORS

Safety, Indigenous tourism, accessibility, affordability, arts and culture, memorable, food, green space, ease of use, connection, welcoming, desirable

### FOR RESIDENTS

Pride, safety, nature, identity, affordability, Indigeneity, transport, community, harmony



# THE PATH FORWARD

To move forward in a good way, we will focus on five interconnected elements: relationships, storytelling, shared leadership, and empowerment & learning, all surrounded by people gathering.

Like the hunters and gatherers, these will require wisdom, patience, and resourcefulness. This is why we will be most successful when we do this as a community.

*- Indigenous Tourism Strategy*







# DEFINING OUR GOALS AND MEASURING OUR PROGRESS

In this section, we provide more detail about the 5 pathways and the 15 goals. With each goal, we explain the key work packages, how they align to the Sustainable Development Goals, identify key partners for this work, and share potential KPIs. As with the whole strategy, this work has been completed in collaboration with hundreds of interested parties. Some of these work packages are short term projects (1 to 5 years) that are clear and well defined. Others are longer term (>5 years). Some of these present audacious goals that we don't yet know how to achieve, or perhaps the technology and solutions haven't yet been discovered. However, this is a long-term strategy, and we know that these "wicked" challenges must be addressed collectively for us to achieve our resilience and regenerative vision as a destination and as "Team Edmonton."

## HOW TO READ THE KPIS

Likewise with the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), we have divided into Short- and Long-Term indicators. For the Short-Term indicators, we already collect the data, or have a clear idea and understanding on how to get it in the next 1 to 5 years. For the long term KPIs (>5 years), a substantial number of resources and collaboration must be invested to make the data point measurable and data available. We may not even know how to collect the data yet, but we know it is important and as part of the Work Packages we will collaborate with partners to define the measurement system and process.



# PATHWAY 1: DECARBONIZE AND RESTORE NATURE

The City of Edmonton is on the path to a low-carbon future. Climate change is already impacting Edmonton and will increasingly affect tourism and events. At the same time, visitors are increasingly drawn to and prize safe, nature rich and climate resilient destinations. As such regenerating nature, decarbonizing the city and increasing climate resilience are key components of this strategy.

By preserving and restoring natural areas, we can guarantee important ecological services and enhance climate resilience while attracting visitors and creating opportunities for eco-tourism activities that prioritize and support the well-being of visitors, residents, and local ecosystems. Decarbonizing the visitor economy and increasing resource reutilization (circularity) are crucial to reducing the industry's significant contribution to greenhouse gas emissions and accelerating the transition to a carbon positive and zero-waste city by 2050. The visitor economy can shift from being an environmental burden to being an enabler and accelerator of this net-positive transition while simultaneously creating economic benefits for the community by reducing energy costs, improving energy resilience, enhancing air quality, rethinking resource reutilization, and accelerating innovation.

## GOALS:

1. Decarbonize the visitor economy to increase climate resilience
2. Increase reutilization and reduce consumption of natural resources in the visitor economy
3. Preserve and restore biodiversity of the river valley and other key areas
4. Catalyse a food revolution: to reshape the way food is produced, experienced, and managed in the visitor economy





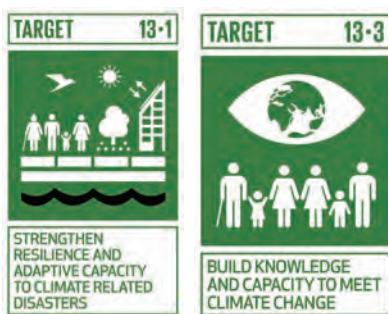
# GOAL 1: DECARBONIZE THE VISITOR ECONOMY TO INCREASE CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Align with the City’s pioneering Climate Emergency Declaration and Climate Resilience strategy to work towards achieving the city’s goal of Net Zero Greenhouse Gas emissions by 2050.

Activate the pledge to the Net Zero Carbon Events Initiative, by developing an in-depth decarbonization and climate resilience plan for leisure and business tourism, and events that works to measure, reduce, and remove emissions by educating, building networks, accelerating innovation, and supporting the financing of the transition.

This will require that the tourism and events industries develop a new leadership mindset for a post carbon future, driven by the Edmonton spirit of business entrepreneurship and innovation, and regulated by clear policy from the City.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL ALIGNMENT



**KEY TARGET: VISITOR ECONOMY IS NET-POSITIVE OF CARBON EMISSIONS BY 2050, WITH A MINIMUM 35% DECREASE BY 2035.**

## KEY WORK PACKAGES:

- **Roadmap:** Develop a Greenhouse Gas footprint approach to scope and measure the baseline emissions of the visitor economy, and then develop a decarbonization and climate resilience roadmap and Climate Action Plan in partnership with the city and other key players
- **Educate:** Build knowledge and skills so that tourism and events businesses can develop, implement, and measure their climate mitigation and adaptation plans
- **Enable** and support businesses, and their supply chains, to innovate and develop net-positive products and experiences
- **Finance:** Promote access to funding and incentives to accelerate decarbonization of businesses (such as the Clean Energy Improvement Program)
- **Develop** carbon removal plan, and product offering with key partners
- **Communicate:** Collaborate with partners to promote leadership and find, inspire, and share ideas, best practices, and solutions. Inspire, inform, and influence visitors to make low carbon choices when they plan their visit and when they are in the city
- **Report:** Define reporting standards and indicators, collect data to inform decision making, and disclose strategy and progress
- **Research:** Develop partnership with the City authorities, local universities, non-governmental organizations, and the climate community to better understand the impact of climate change on the visitor economy. Integrate this learning into a Visitor Economy Climate Action Plan
- **Advocate** and work with policy makers on a city, regional and national level to accelerate development of effective climate policy, with input from residents, the tourism industry and civil society



# KEY COMPONENTS

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

### SHORT TERM

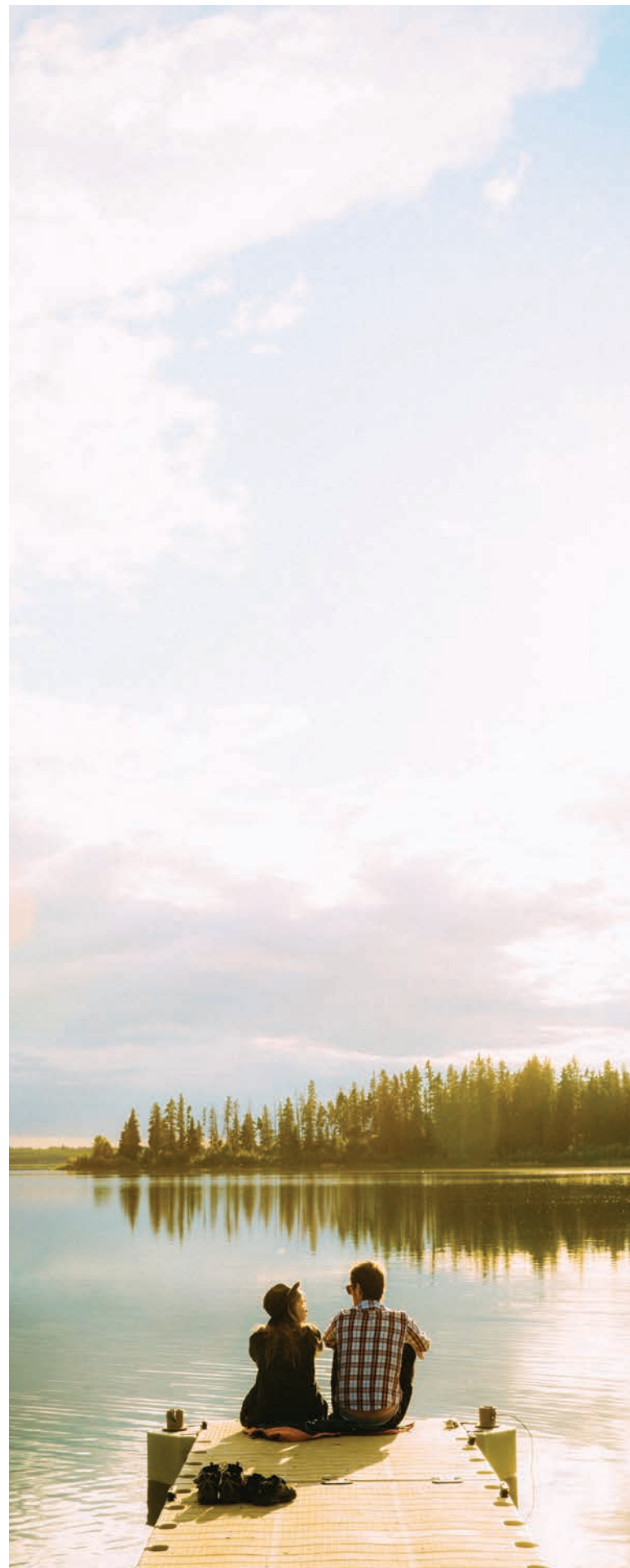
- GDS-Index performance
- Number of businesses who have an established emissions reduction target

### LONG TERM

- Number and percentage of tourism and events businesses by category using renewable energy
- Number and percentage of tourism development projects and sites with climate adaptation considerations included in project planning/validation
- Total greenhouse gas emissions from tourism and events in Edmonton
- Average emissions per visitor (per segment)

## KEY PARTNERS





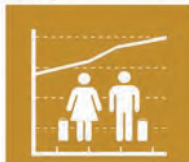
- City of Edmonton
- Explore Edmonton
- Commercial waste management companies
- Hotel and other tourism industry associations



# GOAL 2: INCREASE REUTILIZATION AND REDUCE CONSUMPTION OF NATURAL RESOURCES IN THE VISITOR ECONOMY

The UNWTO (UN World Tourism Organization) report “Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals – Journey to 2030” identifies circularity as one of the key principles for sustainable tourism development. The City of Edmonton’s “Future of Waste” strategy is a comprehensive, 25-year zero waste plan that sets out to continuously improve and rethink resource management so that products and packages are designed to lessen or eliminate waste at the outset, reuse resources in beneficial ways and repurpose left over materials as feedstock within a circular economy. Currently, this plan does not intentionally integrate tourism, and recycling presents major challenges for many businesses operating in the Visitor Economy, due to costs and availability of waste processing infrastructure to recycle.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL ALIGNMENT

<p>TARGET 12-2</p>  <p>SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT AND USE OF NATURAL RESOURCES</p>	<p>TARGET 12-3</p>  <p>HALVE GLOBAL PER CAPITA FOOD WASTE</p>	<p>TARGET 12-5</p>  <p>SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCE WASTE GENERATION</p>
<p>TARGET 12-6</p>  <p>ENCOURAGE COMPANIES TO ADOPT SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES AND SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING</p>	<p>TARGET 12-7</p>  <p>PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT PRACTICES</p>	<p>TARGET 12-8</p>  <p>DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT TOOLS TO MONITOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM</p>

**KEY TARGET: 90% DIVERSION OF WASTE AWAY FROM LANDFILL BY 2040. 20% DECREASE IN WASTE GENERATION AND REDUCTION IN SINGLE-USE ITEMS BY 2027**

## KEY WORK PACKAGES:

- Plan:** Work with City of Edmonton to ensure the visitor economy is integrated into city’s Waste Management Strategy and Waste Reduction Roadmap.
- Collaborate:** Develop a taskforce with the City, commercial waste haulers, and tourism and events industry to define challenges, establish ambitious targets and develop a shared circularity strategy to prevent more materials from becoming part of the waste stream, increase engagement and partnership with the community and implement policy and initiatives to drive reduction in single-use plastics/single-use disposables.
- Measure:** Work with the City and waste management partners to form a working group to explore how to scope and measure data about the waste footprint of the Visitor Economy
- Educate:** Develop training and implement skills development programs and tools for businesses to increase circularity and net-zero waste strategies
- Promote:** Create communication campaigns/awards to promote circularity leadership and awareness
- Finance:** Work with city and key partners to identify/provide access to funding and resources to tourism and events business to support increased circularity



# KEY COMPONENTS

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

### SHORT TERM

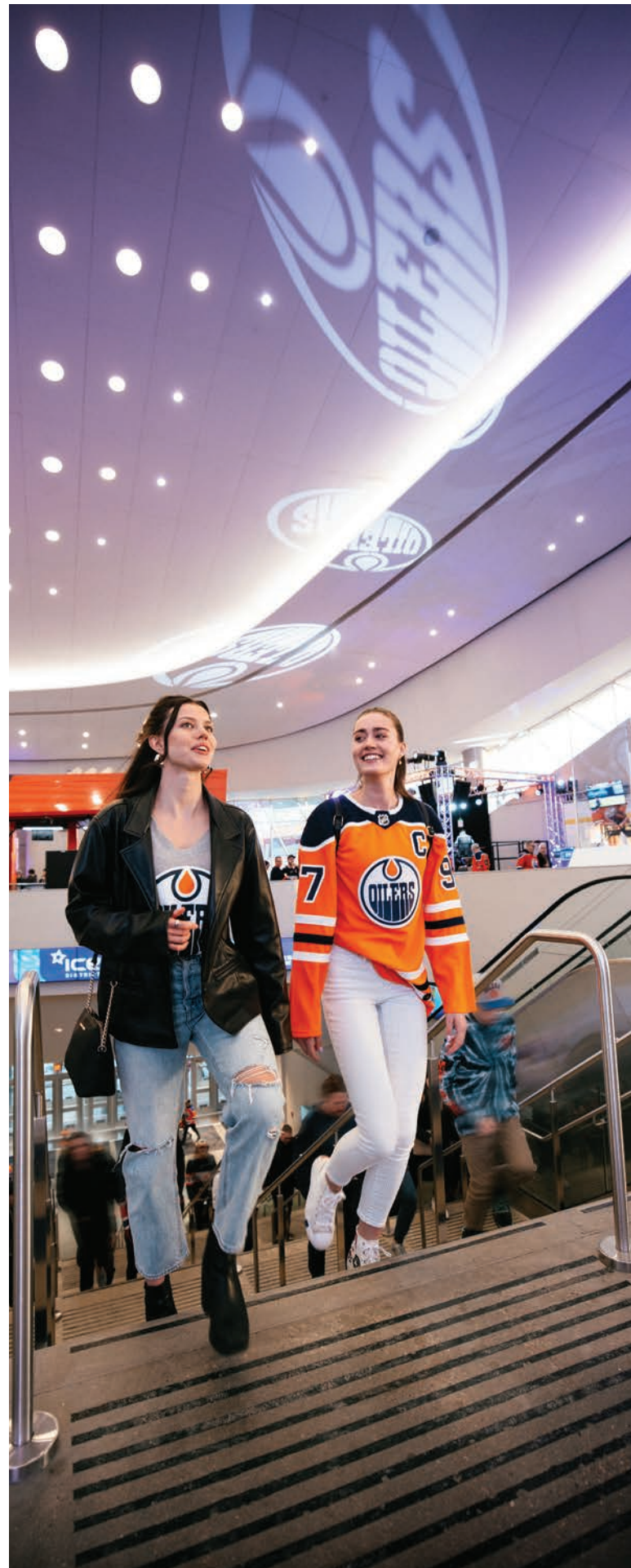
- GDS-Index performance
- Percentage and number of businesses who have established waste management plans and set waste reduction targets
- Number of tourism businesses that have implemented food waste management or food recovery programs

### LONG TERM

- Total volume of waste produced in the defined visitor economy
- Average diversion rate of waste away from landfill by stream (recycled, composted, incinerated)
- Average recycling rate of tourism and events businesses by category
- Volume of single-use items consumed in the Visitor Economy

## KEY PARTNERS

- City of Edmonton
- Explore Edmonton
- Commercial waste management companies
- Hotel and other tourism industry associations



# GOAL 3: PRESERVE AND RESTORE BIODIVERSITY OF THE RIVER VALLEY AND OTHER KEY AREAS

Edmonton’s river valley is situated in one of the largest urban forests in North America. Edmontonians’ strong positive sentiment and sense of place in the natural landscape is connected to this geographic identity and is a vital aspect for visitors and residents alike. The tourism offering and innovative recreational opportunities need to encourage public environmental stewardship, preservation and activation of the river valley and other key nature spaces. Engagement with the city, key community, and environmental groups is critical to catalyzing partnerships and funding that will prioritize the regeneration of biodiversity, the enhancement of sustainable infrastructure and the improvement of amenities that support residents’ and visitor access and enjoyment of Edmonton’s nature.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL ALIGNMENT



**KEY TARGET: PLANT TWO MILLION TREES BY 2030**

### KEY WORK PACKAGES:

- **Advocate** and encourage the city to integrate tourism as a key consideration in city’s Biodiversity Protection strategy
- **Policy:** with River Valley Alliance and environmental groups to advocate for, promote and enhance land / park policies and standards to enhance stewardship of the river valley that minimizes environmental impact, while balancing visitor access with ecological capacity. Explore how to mandate and/ or incentivize major tourism projects to include a biodiversity study in project planning application
- **Awareness:** raise awareness of the importance of environmental health, protection and restoration through communication campaigns aimed at visitors and residents
- **Increase** area tourism by leveraging opportunities for adventure based and river-based events, activities, and attractions.
- **Develop** carbon removal program to invest in natural emissions sequestration projects that regenerate biodiversity (tree planting, wetlands etc.)
- **Promote:** Collaborate with the River Valley Alliance to promote existing and new river valley experiences
- **Increase** support for the Urban Tree Canopy Expansion project through partnerships and sponsorship that incentive tourism development projects to include tree planning and reforestation



# KEY COMPONENTS

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

### SHORT TERM

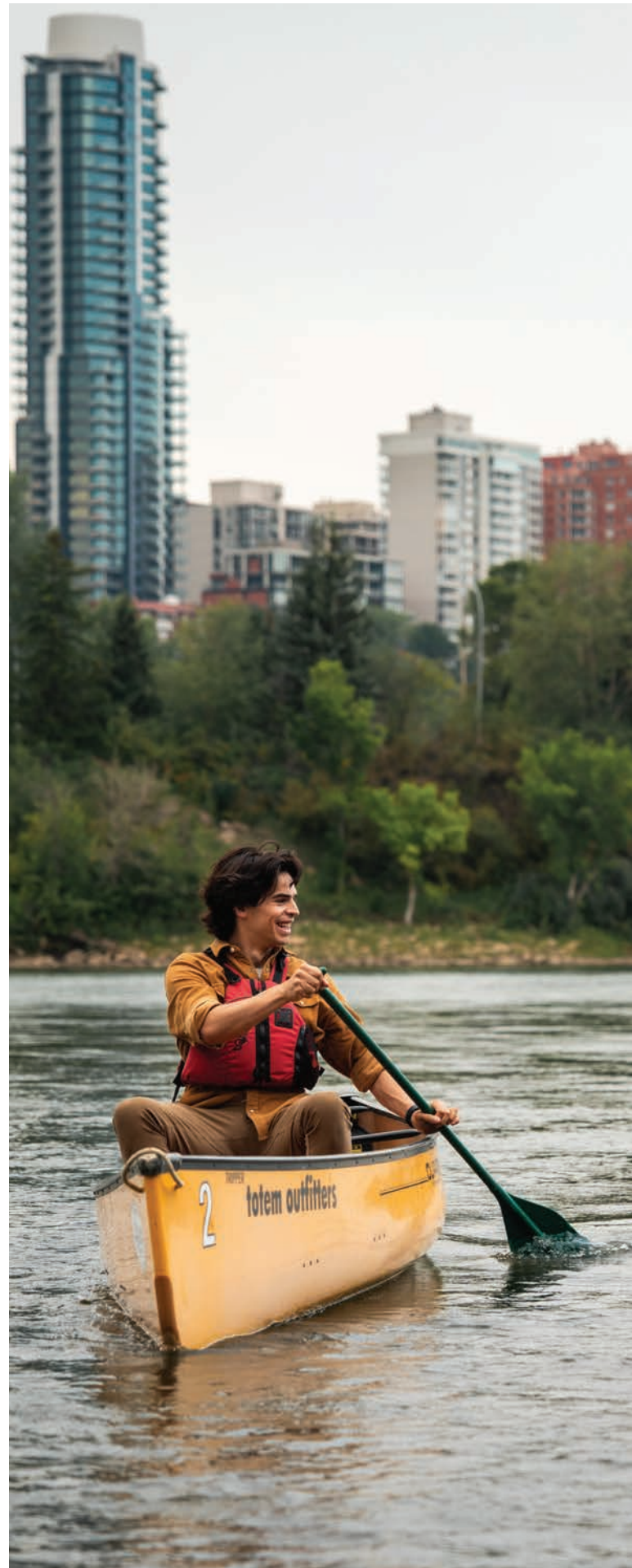
- Percentage contribution of Visitor Economy to city goal of planting two million new urban trees by 2030
- Achievement of River Valley National Urban Park designation
- Number of new Low Impact Development (LID) projects developed as part of tourism sites

### LONG TERM

- Number of visitors accessing designated parks and nature spaces
- Number and percentage of tourism development projects and sites with a biodiversity study, report, recommendations, or a low-impact development project and included in project planning/validation

## KEY PARTNERS

- River Valley Alliance
- City of Edmonton
- Explore Edmonton
- Other NGOs and/or advocacy groups



# GOAL 4: CATALYSE A FOOD REVOLUTION: RESHAPE THE WAY FOOD IS PRODUCED, EXPERIENCED, AND MANAGED IN THE VISITOR ECONOMY

Work with restaurants, caterers, hotels, food producers and regional tourism authorities to implement and promote a resilient food and agriculture system that contributes to the local economy and the overall cultural, financial, social, and environmental sustainability of the city.

A truly regenerative approach marries ancient wisdom with systemic change. Edmonton has an opportunity to consider the role of food and urban agriculture in its economy and in the lives of its citizens. We have a long history of food production, and we are a major urban centre with some world-class players in the food sector. Edmonton also has an emerging food culture —from small local producers at farmers’ markets to successful large commercial farms, from food trucks offering diverse and delicious meals to unique high-end restaurants.

By partnering with the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board, Regional tourism authorities, Edmonton Food Council, City and key players, the visitor economy can accelerate the development of local and regional regenerative food systems; reducing energy, carbon emissions and food and packaging waste. It creates healthier ecosystems; emphasizes plant-based and local ecologically responsible meat options; educating visitors and locals on food impacts and choices; shaping a greater appreciation of the region. Edmonton’s food becomes part of the city’s USP’s and nourishes all.

EDUCATION AND GOVERNANCE		
PROCESSING AND DISTRIBUTION	BUYING AND SELLING	FARMING AND FOOD PRODUCTION
LAND AND SPACE FOR AGRICULTURE	EATING AND CELEBRATION	FOOD WASTE AND RECOVERY

*Elements of a food systems*

**KEY TARGET: 20% INCREASE IN SALE OF LOCALLY AND REGIONALLY PRODUCED PRODUCTS TO THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR BY 2030.**

## KEY WORK PACKAGES:

- **Map** the local Edmonton food scene for regeneration, sustainability, and agritourism experiences; connecting and updating existing food mapping initiatives
- **Partner** with the Edmonton Food Council, City, and key players to integrate Tourism and Events into the Edmonton Food and Agriculture Strategy (Fresh) update process
- **Develop** an Edmonton culinary tourism plan that builds on the new Edmonton Food and Agriculture Strategy (Fresh) by promoting and supporting development of local food experiences and itineraries
- **Collaborate** with Edmonton’s regional tourism organizations and Travel Alberta to share knowledge and develop a regional food tourism plan that advocate, enables, and measures the development of agritourism standards and experiences in harmony with local communities and nature
- **Build** consensus around the definition of terms, and use of local/regional food labels and standards, about regenerative food across the industry
- **Educate** culinary industry around food, health, climate action, menu design and procurement
- **Enhance** and promote food donation programs for restaurants, caterers, and event organisers
- **Promote** and recognize regenerative leadership of restaurants/caterers through campaigns, communications, and awards
- **Connect** and promote rural and urban providers, farmers, and buyers to increase local food supply and demand in partnership with regional tourism organizations
- **Attract** and bid for major food and regenerative agriculture/livestock events to Edmonton and identify/support opportunities to create new events about regenerative food



# KEY COMPONENTS

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

### SHORT TERM

- Number of jobs generated in the local food and agriculture sector
- Number of landmarks, neighbourhood and community destinations and gathering places related to local food
- Percentage of hospitality businesses committed to an Edmonton Food and Agriculture Strategy





### LONG TERM

- Number of new regenerative food and beverage-focused itineraries or experiences
- Annual sales of locally produced products to Edmonton's hospitality businesses
- Number of jobs generated in the local food and agriculture sector
- Amount of waste (organic and solid) diverted and composted in the hospitality sector

## KEY PARTNERS

- Edmonton Food Council
- Restaurant and hotel associations
- City of Edmonton
- Regional Tourism Organizations and Travel Alberta
- Not-for-profit food and agriculture organizations

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL ALIGNMENT

TARGET 2-3	TARGET 2-4	TARGET 2-5	TARGET 12-3
			
DOUBLE THE PRODUCTIVITY AND INCOMES OF SMALL-SCALE FOOD PRODUCERS	SUSTAINABLE FOOD PRODUCTION AND RESILIENT AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES	MAINTAIN THE GENETIC DIVERSITY IN FOOD PRODUCTION	HALVE GLOBAL PER CAPITA FOOD WASTE





# PATHWAY 2: TRANSFORM MOBILITY

Good mobility is what makes Edmonton a connected and vibrant destination. Safe and livable streets benefit public health, the local economy, and the environment. Visitors benefit by experiencing urban places built for people and equally accessible.

Improved mobility systems are needed to provide reduced or carbon-free alternatives to Edmonton's car-dependent citizens, and to enable visitors and residents to get to, from, and around the city safely and efficiently. Additionally, people traveling by foot and bike spend more money in the local economy than people in cars, and active transportation projects generate more jobs per dollar spent than road building projects (CRISP).

Being a strategic goal of the Tourism Master Plan, this pathway requires us to strengthen relationships and long-term cooperation with partners such as the City of Edmonton, Edmonton Regional Airports Authority, and Edmonton Transit Service (ETS). Although the tourism and events industries are not solely responsible for Edmonton's mobility opportunities, it's overall enhancement can be achieved by the following goals.

## GOALS:

5. Increase the usage of low and zero carbon travel options to get to Edmonton and surrounding regions
6. Increase the number of visitors and residents using transit and active transportation
7. Improve accessibility for residents and visitors



# GOAL 5: INCREASE THE USAGE OF LOW AND ZERO CARBON TRAVEL OPTIONS TO GET TO EDMONTON AND SURROUNDING REGIONS

Ensuring low-carbon travel options to Edmonton and surrounding regions is a paramount priority in our mission to decarbonize the visitor economy and enhance regional accessibility for residents, both for work and leisure purposes. We recognize that achieving decarbonization in visitor transportation requires low-carbon flight access, efficient transportation to and from the airport, as well as seamless connectivity to key regional cities and destinations outside of Edmonton.

The current state of our visitor economy heavily relies on individual vehicle transportation, which falls short of our objectives. The existing transportation options, requiring transfers and multiple modes of transportation from the airport to downtown (and the suspension of private shuttles since COVID-19) are not ideal.

However, the Edmonton International Airport (YEG) is at the forefront of building sustainable transportation infrastructure and leading the way in sustainable travel. By actively collaborating and partnering with YEG, there is opportunity to position Edmonton as a thriving hub for sustainable travel but also to highlight YEG's pioneering efforts and establish it as a global leader in sustainable aviation and transportation.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL ALIGNMENT



**KEY TARGET: 50% OF VISITOR TRIPS ARE MADE BY TRANSIT AND ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION BY 2040.**

### KEY WORK PACKAGES:

- **Promote:** Work with Via Rail to develop and promote increased visitor access to Edmonton via long distance and regional trains
- **Collaborate** with YEG to support the growth and promotion of private low-carbon and accessible transportation from city to airport
- **Advocate:** Work with ETS and YEG to continue advocating for a direct, low-carbon public transit to/from the airport
- **Leadership:** Work with YEG to amplify the story and successes of sustainable transportation aviation development and position Edmonton as a hub for sustainable aviation fuels
- **Collaborate** with ETS and Urban Planning and Economy to ensure key city and regional visitor needs, routes and experiences are considered in planning
- **Communicate:** Work with ETS' communications teams to develop and promote campaigns about shared ride programs (i.e., On Demand Service), locations, etc.
- **Finance:** Work with tourism and events partners (private/public/philanthropic/city) to identify and provide access to financing to accelerate the decarbonization of private sector transportation within the visitor economy

# KEY COMPONENTS

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

### SHORT TERM

- Number and percentage of visitors arriving to the city by low carbon transportation
- Number of EV (Electric Vehicles) charging infrastructure available at tourism attractions
- Number and percentage of visitors arriving in Edmonton by train, plane, automobile

## KEY PARTNERS

- Edmonton Food Council
- Restaurant and hotel associations
- City of Edmonton
- Regional Tourism Organizations and Travel Alberta
- Not-for-profit food and agriculture organizations





## GOAL 6: INCREASE THE NUMBER OF VISITORS AND RESIDENTS USING TRANSIT AND ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Active and public transportation play a vital role in fostering interconnectivity among events, businesses, and overall well-being in Edmonton. Additionally, embracing these modes of transportation helps address the pressing issue of climate change. These modes of transportation have been recognized as a crucial element in various city plans, strategies, and our initiatives, contributing to goals of connectivity, inclusion, climate action, and the creation of 15-minute districts.

The City of Edmonton and the Edmonton Transit Service (ETS) are actively working to decarbonize the transportation network. This collaboration involves implementing strategies outlined in the Low Carbon City and Transportation Plan, the Mass Transit Plan, and other multi-mode transportation plans, as well as exploring the adoption of low-carbon fleets.

We need to work with the City and ETS to ensure that the city's objectives and action plans align with the needs of visitors. Furthermore, we aim to amplify messaging and communication to visitors regarding the availability and benefits of active transportation networks in Edmonton.

*It is important to note that many concerns and ideas were raised about enhancing the availability, effectiveness, and safety of public transport. While these issues are key concerns that need to be addressed, many of them need to be addressed in multiple ways as they fall outside the direct control of tourism. This pathway focuses on low-carbon transportation.*

**KEY TARGET: 50% OF RESIDENT AND VISITOR INTERCITY TRIPS ARE MADE BY TRANSIT AND ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION BY 2040.**

### KEY WORK PACKAGES:

- **Advise** the City, ETS and Urban Planning to ensure transportation plans and networks includes visitor needs, routes and experiences
- **Advocate** for low-carbon public transit and policies to enhance low-carbon private transportation
- **Measure:** Work with ETS to track ridership for key visitor routes and points of interest
- **Communicate:** Work with ETS' communications team to better communicate the use and ease of shared ride programs, how the transport system works, special programs and events, and connection to soft transportation
- **Promote** Edmonton as a premier biking destination and identify opportunities for improving biking amenities/services across Edmonton's active transportation network
- **Promote** active and public transportation in all proposals and within visitor marketing and campaigns
- **Develop** active and zero carbon transportation trails, itineraries, and experiences
- **Expand** convention programs to offer discounted or free public transport for convention and congress visitors and/or leisure visitors

### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL ALIGNMENT



# KEY COMPONENTS

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

### SHORT TERM

- Number of kms of bicycle paths/lanes
- Number of EV charging infrastructure available at tourism attractions

### LONG TERM

- Number and increase of electric busses and routes
- Number of visitor trips made by transit and active transportation on identified visitor routes

## KEY PARTNERS

- Explore Edmonton
- City of Edmonton
- Edmonton Transit Services (ETS)
- River Valley Alliance





# GOAL 7: IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS

Promoting accessibility in tourism is important to ensure that everyone, regardless of their abilities or needs, can fully participate in, and enjoy Edmonton’s offerings all year round. This includes visible and invisible access, such as improved infrastructure and affordable and reliable mobility options that support community members of all socio-economic backgrounds, cultures, lifecycle, and intellectual, physical, sensory, and mental needs. By prioritizing accessibility, Edmonton can create an inclusive environment that caters to diverse visitors and tap into a larger market of travellers with specific accessibility needs.

This goal not only aligns with principles of equality and social inclusion but also brings economic benefits by attracting more visitors, increasing tourism revenue, and enhancing the city’s reputation as an inclusive destination.

The ISO 21902 standard establishes a comprehensive set of guidelines for key players in the tourism value chain to support their efforts in making their infrastructure, products, and services accessible. Successful implementation of the criteria of this standard could position Edmonton as a global leader in Accessible Tourism.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL ALIGNMENT



KEY TARGET: TO BE DEFINED BASED ON MEASUREMENT OF A BASELINE

### KEY WORK PACKAGES:

- **Assess:** Work with the City of Edmonton to include the visitor economy in a transit accessibility strategy, ensuring that accessibility is integrated into all tourism planning
- **Develop:** Map and promote accessible experiences as part of the Regenerative Experiences Map
- **Enable:** Develop program to incentivize, train, promote and support businesses complete accessibility assessments, ISO21902 certification and/or align with Accessible Canada Act standards
- **Communicate:** Raise awareness of the social and economic advantages of accessible tourism and its potential for business development
- **Finance:** Work with the City of Edmonton and accessibility associations to help businesses access funding for accessibility upgrades and experience/product development
- **Create** and promote a destination accessibility guide highlighting accessible tourism resources and experiences
- **Advocate** for an increase in accessible taxis and public transportation

# KEY COMPONENTS

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

### SHORT TERM

- Number of businesses that have completed accessibility assessments and/or training
- Percentage of tourist attractions that are accessible to people with disabilities and/or participating in recognized accessibility schemes

### LONG TERM

- Number of accessible tourism experiences and events offered through new or existing tourism businesses

## KEY PARTNERS

- Explore Edmonton
- City of Edmonton
- Accessibility groups/associations



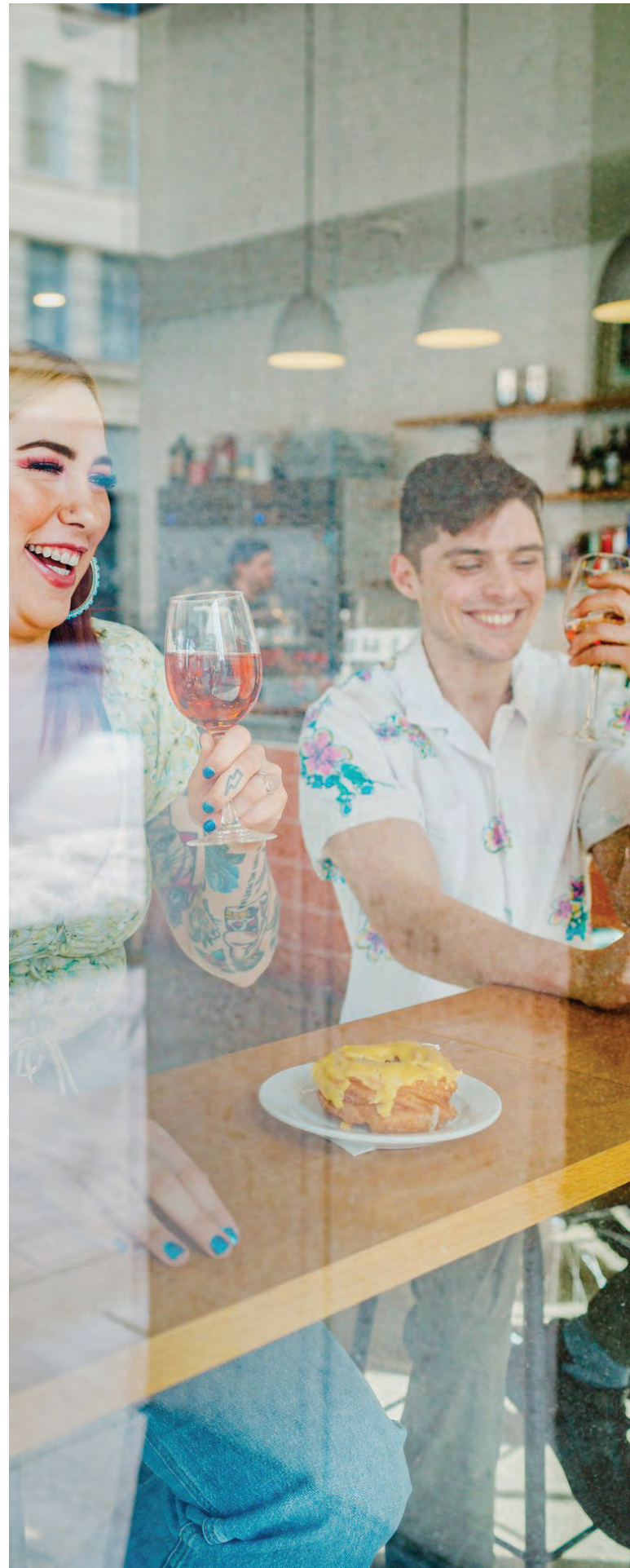


# PATHWAY 3: INVEST IN PEOPLE AND COMMUNITY

Edmonton is a community that takes care of its residents and a place where culture, identity, and values are upheld, respected, and fostered. The objective of investing in people and communities is to ensure that the visitor economy is a positive catalyst for community development and that everyone - visitors and residents - can experience Edmonton in an equitable, safe, and meaningful way. Investing in people and communities aligns directly with the Tourism Master Plan principles about creating “a new paradigm for tourism in Edmonton” and “a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive visitor economy.”

## GOALS:

8. Build a stronger and more unified Edmonton, where diversity and equity are celebrated
9. Support growth of Indigenous tourism
10. Foster sustainable and thriving tourism careers

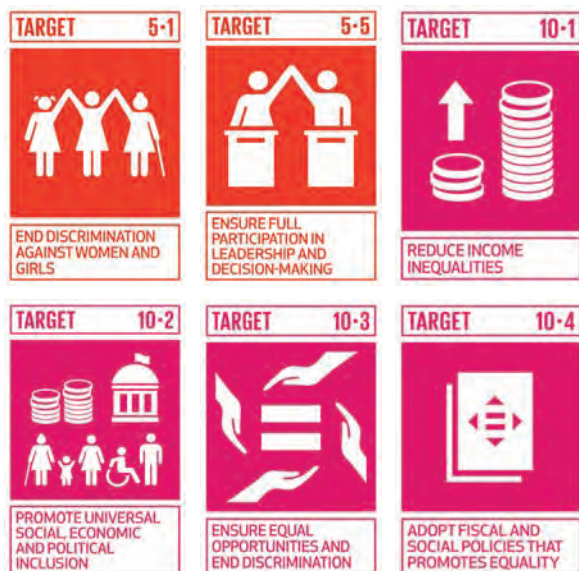


# GOAL 8: BUILD A STRONGER AND MORE UNIFIED EDMONTON, WHERE DIVERSITY AND EQUITY ARE CELEBRATED

We believe that creating a safe and inclusive environment for all individuals is paramount. Our Strategic Roadmap identifies the importance of establishing and nurturing equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) within its culture and supporting interested and affected parties and the industry with EDI endeavours. The focus on EDI is driven by the understanding that it is not only a moral obligation but also essential for the prosperity and vitality of Edmonton as a whole and its future proofing.

Embracing diversity and promoting equity is vital for fostering a welcoming atmosphere that values the unique perspectives, backgrounds, and contributions of every person. We will work to collaborate with key community groups and equity-deserving groups to enhance inclusivity of the visitor economy, provide more opportunities for equity-deserving groups, share the story of Edmontonians, and create a diverse and welcoming foundation for the visitor economy. Collaborative efforts will be made with interested parties, partners, and the community to provide resources, guidance, and support for EDI initiatives.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL ALIGNMENT



**KEY TARGET: NET PROMOTER SCORE OF EQUITY-DESERVING RESIDENTS AND VISITORS THAT IS EQUAL TO THE OVERALL NET PROMOTER SCORE OF EDMONTON**

## KEY WORK PACKAGES:

- **Establish:** Work with the City of Edmonton to co-create an External EDI Working Group with equity-deserving groups for guidance and inclusion on EDI programs
- **Create** an EDI and anti-racism strategy with working group and equity-deserving groups
- **Enable:** Develop, promote, and support EDI training and skills development programs for tourism businesses to better support equity-deserving groups and incentivize businesses to participate
- **Preserve:** Develop and promote Edmonton arts and culture groups, organizations and events that uplift and preserve heritage, equity-deserving groups, and cross-cultural learning
- **Conduct** an inclusive marketing audit
- **Develop** EDI experiences as part of the Regenerative Experiences Map
- **Promote** and raise awareness of the communities and diversity of Edmonton and EDI-recognized experiences
- **Host** ongoing learning circles with equity-deserving groups



# KEY COMPONENTS

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

### SHORT TERM

- Number of net promoter score respondents from equity-deserving groups
- Number of EDI organizations included in the Regenerative Experiences Map
- Number of learning circles hosted with equity-deserving groups
- Number of businesses that meet EDI standards and/or have completed EDI training

### LONG TERM

- Average wage in the tourism industry for equity-deserving groups compared to provincial averages
- Diversity of equity deserving groups in tourism business leadership teams

## KEY PARTNERS

- Community groups
- City of Edmonton
- EndPoverty Edmonton
- Explore Edmonton EDI Council
- External EDI Working Group
- Edmonton Arts Council

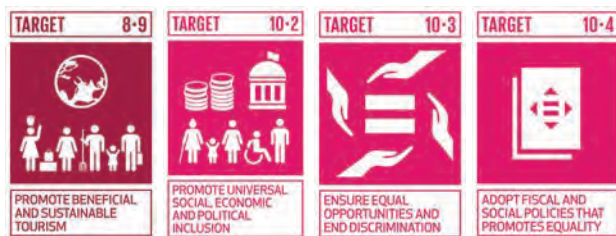


# GOAL 9: SUPPORT GROWTH OF INDIGENOUS TOURISM

We recognize the power of tourism in advancing Indigenous Reconciliation. Regenerative tourism holds many of the same principles that Indigenous peoples have exemplified since time immemorial, such as community-first thinking, relationships with and protection of the natural environments, inclusivity, and storytelling. This is also reflected across the Indigenous tourism industry, which is one of the fastest growing in Canada and a powerful driver of reconciliation.

Given the richness of these teachings, we recently launched an Indigenous Tourism Strategy that was developed through extensive partnership, consultation, and guidance with Indigenous communities across Treaty 6 territory. A regenerative tourism strategy in Edmonton could not thrive without Indigenous tourism, and for that reason the Key Work Packages below fully align with the recommendations, key performance indicators, and key audiences presented in the Indigenous Tourism Strategy.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL ALIGNMENT



**KEY TARGET: TO BE DEFINED BASED ON MEASUREMENT OF A BASELINE**

### KEY WORK PACKAGES:

- **Promote** destination differentiator by encouraging the inclusion of Indigenous tourism at meetings, events and conferences hosted in non-Indigenous venues
- **Partner:** Support the development of an Indigenous youth tourism scholarship program through partnerships
- **Enable:** Create an Indigenous tourism incubator/mentorship program to co-create products, itineraries, programs, and events and support ITAC (Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada) Original Original Mark of Excellence accreditation
- **Learn:** Work with Indigenous partners to provide cultural awareness training for non-Indigenous businesses in the visitor economy, including all staff of Explore Edmonton
- **Gather:** Co-create annual tourism networking event aimed at relationship building and knowledge sharing between Indigenous and non-Indigenous tourism communities
- **Action:** As per the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Call to Action #91, ensure that Indigenous peoples’ territorial protocols are respected, and local Indigenous communities are engaged in all aspects of planning and participating in international sporting events



# KEY COMPONENTS

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

### SHORT TERM

- Number of purchasable regional Indigenous experiences
- Number of events that unite Indigenous and non-Indigenous tourism communities
- Number of Indigenous tourism businesses that obtain the ITAC Original Original accreditation by 2025
- Number of tourism businesses that have completed Indigenous cultural awareness training
- Estimated income of Indigenous Tourism market (and growth)

### KEY PARTNERS

- Explore Edmonton
- Indigenous communities
- Indigenous Tourism Alberta
- Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada
- EndPoverty Edmonton
- River Valley Alliance



## GOAL 10: FOSTER SUSTAINABLE AND THRIVING TOURISM CAREERS

The pursuit of increased equitable work, talent attraction, long-term career opportunities, and retention in the tourism industry is crucial for Edmonton's future development. The Edmonton Tourism Master Plan emphasizes the importance of job creation within tourism and events. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the industry has faced challenges in retaining human resources necessitating strategic efforts to rebuild and strengthen the workforce.

By embracing the principles of regeneration, businesses can position themselves as competitive employers, appealing to the values and aspirations of the youth. This focus will not only attract top talent but also foster employee loyalty and contribute to the long-term success of the tourism industry.

### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL ALIGNMENT



KEY TARGET: TO BE DEFINED BASED ON MEASUREMENT OF A BASELINE

### KEY WORK PACKAGES:

- **Certification:** Drive awareness and certification of tourism businesses as living wage employers through **Living Wage Alberta**
- **Enable:** Develop a program to incentivize and support businesses to become Living Wage certified
- **Encourage** businesses to adopt regenerative missions, values, and policies
- **Development:** Collaborate with EndPoverty Edmonton to develop workforce development training and awareness programs
- **Educate:** Collaborate with post-secondary institutions and industry certification education programs to develop and encourage career development pathways in tourism and events.
- **Communicate** and promote professional success stories



# KEY COMPONENTS

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

### SHORT TERM

- Employment in tourism sector (as per the Edmonton Economic Action Plan)
- Employment related to events (as per the Edmonton Economic Action Plan)

### LONG TERM

- Average annual salary and hourly wage by defined talent levels
- Average tourism workers' expenditures spent on housing and transportation
- Number of tourism businesses certified with Living Wage Alberta
- Number of professionals staying for more than 10 years in the hospitality and events industry
- Job satisfaction
- Career advancement satisfaction

## KEY PARTNERS

- Explore Edmonton
- City of Edmonton
- Post-secondary institutions
- EndPoverty Edmonton
- Social Innovation Institute



# PATHWAY 4: STEWARD PURPOSEFUL GROWTH & INNOVATION

While growth is an important metric of Edmonton's visitor economy, doing so purposefully and responsibly is essential to ensuring this increase balances with the wellbeing of local communities and biodiversity integrity. Explore Edmonton is bold enough to shift the narrative around growth and purposefully foster year-round, community-centred opportunities for the visitor economy.

## GOALS:

11. Maintain and increase resident sentiment and support for purposeful growth of tourism and events
12. Develop pioneering businesses, experiences and events that catalyze innovation
13. Steward growth of visitor economy within ecological and social limits







# GOAL 11: MAINTAIN AND INCREASE RESIDENT SENTIMENT AND SUPPORT FOR PURPOSEFUL GROWTH OF TOURISM AND EVENTS

To ensure the purposeful growth of tourism and events, it is important to maintain and increase resident sentiment and support. Resident engagement studies conducted since 2019 have revealed that Edmontonians' generally have a positive view of tourism and perceive few negative impacts. However, compared to other areas of Alberta, there is room to enhance residents' pride and ambassadorship of Edmonton. A key aspect of regenerative tourism is prioritizing resident quality of life because they play a crucial role in enabling tourism when they recognize its benefits and are proud to promote their home. By actively involving residents in the decision-making process, we can collaboratively develop strategies that ensure the distribution of both burdens and benefits of tourism, in harmony with social well-being

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL ALIGNMENT

TARGET 8-9	TARGET 12-B
	
PROMOTE BENEFICIAL AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM	DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT TOOLS TO MONITOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

**KEY TARGET: 10% INCREASE IN RESIDENT SENTIMENT AND SUPPORT OF THE VISITOR ECONOMY**

### KEY WORK PACKAGES:

- **Expand** local ambassador programs to incentivize residents to experience the city and rethink what tourism in Edmonton can be
- **Measure:** continue to improve engagement strategy for formalized and regular communication with residents to monitor satisfaction of the visitor economy
- **Communicate:** Develop a campaign to help residents understand the visitor economy and its opportunities and benefits
- **Collaborate:** Continue to improve governance and resident engagement program through more representation from community associations, business improvement areas, current governance committees, and residents per district (including alignment with quarterly Neighbours Meetings)

# KEY COMPONENTS

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Resident sentiment score (i.e., Percentage of residents who think tourism and events are good for the city)
- Percentage of residents who support growth of the visitor economy

## KEY PARTNERS

- Explore Edmonton



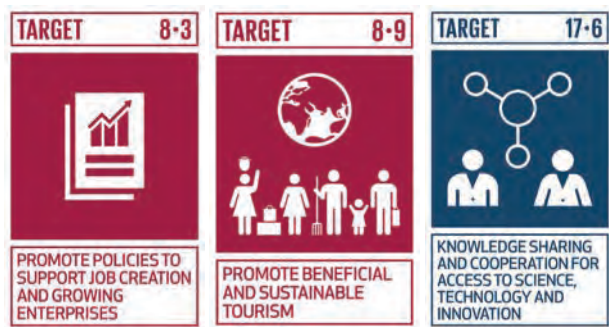


# GOAL 12: DEVELOP PIONEERING EXPERIENCES AND EVENTS THAT CATALYSE INNOVATION

Regenerative experiences encompass more than just nature experiences. They build a greater connection between people, culture, history, wellness, and the environment in a destination. Many destinations and tourism businesses are already working on defining criteria for developing, mapping, and promoting these experiences. Further development of nature-based, Indigenous, and year-round visitor products are already objectives of Edmonton.

This pathway places Edmonton at the forefront of offering regenerative experiences.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL ALIGNMENT



KEY TARGET: TO BE DEFINED BASED ON MEASUREMENT OF A BASELINE

### KEY WORK PACKAGES:

- **Develop:** Map and promote regenerative products and services as part of the Regenerative Experiences Map
- **Establish** tourism incubator program/s to support the development of new regenerative and technology powered businesses, experiences, and product innovations. Emphasize how artificial intelligence can accelerate regeneration
- **Align** tourism within plans for the Innovation Corridor
- **Education:** provide training and education on regenerative tourism opportunities
- **Attract** and/or create new events to Edmonton that focus on Regeneration and innovation in tourism
- **Recognize:** Work with community partners to create a regenerative tourism innovation award as part of the Edmonton Tourism Awards
- **Develop:** a community give-back program for visitors where the money they spend can directly support community initiatives
- **Finance:** Provide financial support and resources for regenerative tourism experience and product development
- **Promote** regenerative experience itineraries

# KEY COMPONENTS

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Number of regenerative experiences offered in market
- Number of shoulder season experiences available
- Number of new “regenerative tourism” jobs created
- Number of “regenerative tourism” startups and other startups created

## KEY PARTNERS

- Explore Edmonton
- River Valley Alliance
- Social Innovation Institute
- EndPoverty Edmonton
- Edmonton Unlimited

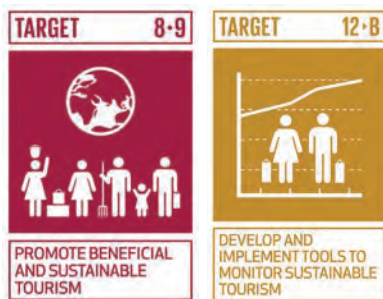




# GOAL 13: STEWARD GROWTH OF VISITOR ECONOMY WITHIN ECOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL LIMITS

Measurement plays a vital role in enabling the visitor economy to grow within limits of acceptable change. By measuring the impacts of visitors, we can identify areas of concern and opportunities like building a four-season destination and supporting 15-minute districts. This goal does not exist on its own: Pathway 1 supports environmental measurement while the resident engagement of Goal 11 supports the assessment of social impacts.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL ALIGNMENT



**KEY TARGET: UP TO 40% GROWTH OF THE VISITOR ECONOMY BY 2029 COMPARED TO 2019**

## KEY WORK PACKAGES:

- **Leverage** technology to measure, map and monitor visitor flows (where do visitors go, for how long, and when)
- **Account:** Analyze the development of a new local accounting systems that capture the full range of costs stemming from the growth of tourism, in place of an incomplete set of economic impact measures.
- **Partner** with City of Edmonton to survey, measure, monitor and understand resident sentiment about growth visitor economy
- **Promote** the dispersal of visitors to various neighbourhoods and beyond the city through experience development and marketing
- **Finance:** Review the local tourism revenue systems to identify the best way to develop a Visitor Economy Regeneration Fund to allocate of a portion of revenue to infrastructure, social and environmental conservation, innovation, and restoration
- **Measure** visitor value against environmental impacts as part of carbon footprint analysis (Goal 1)
- **Quantify** tourism leakage (income from visitor economy that stays in community including direct/indirect economic contributions)
- **Research** initiatives/opportunities for minimizing economic leakage and maximizing portion of visitor spending and tourism business profits that are reinvested in the local economy
- **Report:** quantify and report the non-financial social and economic benefits of tourism and events to the community, including reputation, workforce, and economic development

# KEY COMPONENTS

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Economic impact of the Visitor Economy (as per the Edmonton Economic Action Plan)
- Net promoter score with residents and visitors
- Growth of Visitor Economy
  - Number of visitors in shoulder/winter seasons
  - Number of visitors visiting dispersed areas/neighbourhoods/regions (not downtown)
  - Visitor value compared to environmental impacts ratio

## KEY PARTNERS

- Explore Edmonton
- City of Edmonton





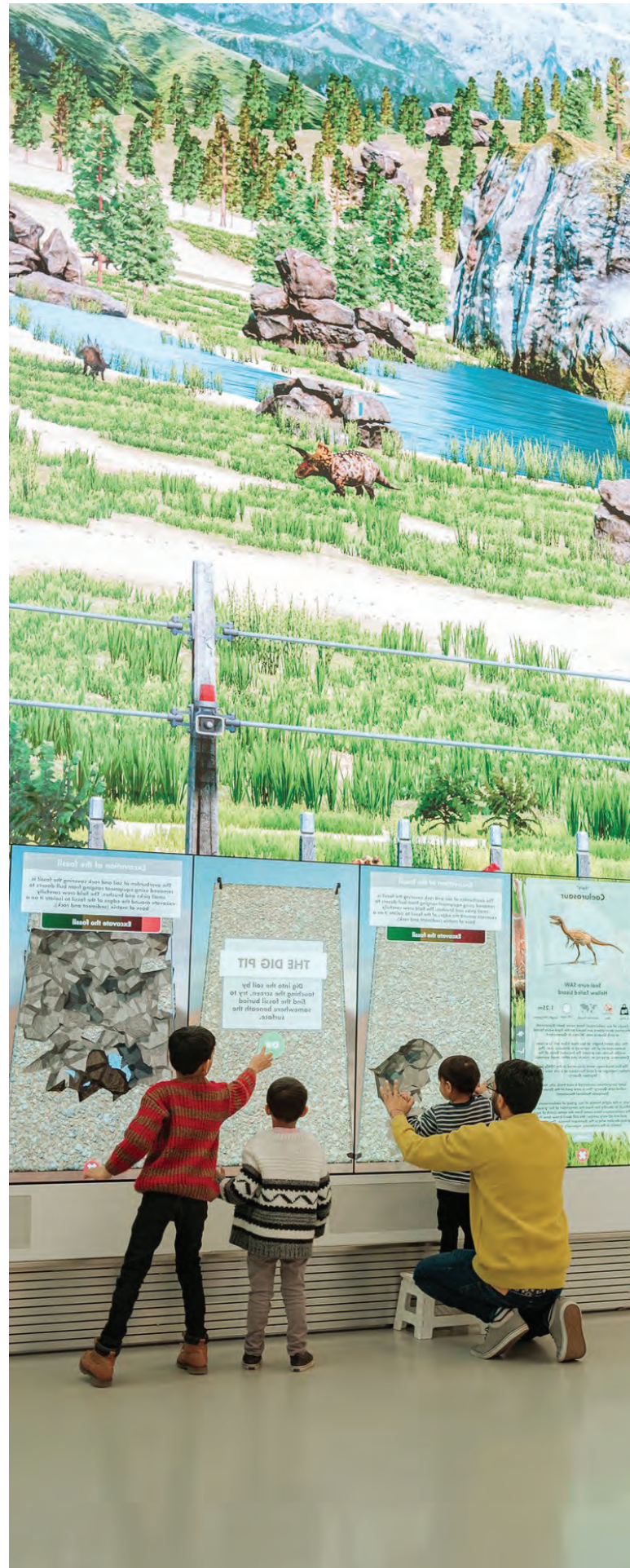
# PATHWAY 5: LEVERAGE EVENTS FOR CHANGE

Strategic events play a pivotal role in driving regenerative growth by propelling economic sectors, fostering trade and innovation, nurturing communities, revitalizing cultures, offering platforms for learning, and weaving the stories about heritage within them.

Edmonton, with its rich portfolio of over sixty annual festivals, strong sports foundation, and its early adoption of sustainable and regenerative initiatives in the realm of business events, is poised to emerge as a guiding light in the development of regenerative events. To fully realize this vision, Edmonton must leverage its existing efforts by formalizing robust processes and procedures for event hosting; supporting a sustainable supply chain; and beginning to measure and share the impacts of events.

## GOALS:

14. Use festivals and events to accelerate Edmonton's culture, community, environment, and economy
15. Make Edmonton a recognized North American leader in delivering regenerative events



# GOAL 14: USE FESTIVALS AND EVENTS TO ACCELERATE EDMONTON'S CULTURE, COMMUNITY, ENVIRONMENT, AND THE ECONOMY

Edmonton already has great programs in place and a formidable reputation for events. However, to take events to the next level and achieve intentional and strategic impacts on the economy, environment, and community, a focused approach is required. Collaboration with the city is essential to establish clear impact goals and intentions, allowing for the assessment and prioritization of events based on their alignment with these objectives. Given the finite availability of funds and resources, it becomes crucial to identify and support events that best align with Edmonton's vision.

This goal centers on the evaluation, measurement, and support of event producers for capacity building and collaboration that advances Edmonton's culture, community, economy, and environmental goals. By implementing a robust framework for assessing events, Edmonton can optimize its resources, nurture the growth of aligned events, and effectively measure their impacts, ensuring a strategic and impactful event landscape for the city.

KEY TARGET: UP TO 40% GROWTH OF THE VISITOR ECONOMY BY 2029 COMPARED TO 2019

## KEY WORK PACKAGES:

- **Collaborate** with the city to develop an analysis framework that prioritizes event supports based on regenerative objectives
- **Procurement:** Develop and promote procurement guidelines to include diverse and social value organizations as defined in The Social Enterprise Strategic framework.
- **Develop** an Event Legacy Impact Framework and Measurement Methodology
- **Communicate:** Share and promote the successes and impacts of regenerative events
- **Enable:** Create an incubator/mentorship program to support the development of new events
- **Assess** the accessibility of local festivals for Edmontonians, including equity-deserving groups

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL ALIGNMENT





# KEY COMPONENTS

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

### SHORT TERM

- Percentage and number of funded and supported events that have regenerative goals and implementation plan
- Percentage and number of city-wide business events that participate in the Edmonton Event Legacy Impact Framework
- Percentage and number of major festivals that participate in the Event Legacy Impact Framework
- Percentage and number of diverse and social value suppliers as defined in the Social Enterprise Strategic Framework

### LONG TERM

- Number of event impact case studies by 2026
- Number of new regenerative events created with Explore Edmonton support
- Net promoter score of festivals by residents

## KEY PARTNERS

- Explore Edmonton
- City of Edmonton
- Festival and Event Producers



# GOAL 15: MAKE EDMONTON A RECOGNIZED NORTH AMERICAN LEADER IN DELIVERING REGENERATIVE EVENTS

Edmonton already has some goals and initiatives in place to make a more regenerative event industry, including a pathway to zero-waste events and offering support to event planners for carbon measurement and offsetting. However, the challenge lies in accessing sustainable suppliers, which is a common issue faced by the events industry in Canada. Engagement with interested parties has revealed that 59% of survey respondents from the tourism industry consider sustainable integration as very important or important for tourism development, while 51% indicated that they are at the preliminary stages of their sustainability journey. Limited resources and a lack of knowledge and skills are major obstacles to sustainable development.

In response, Explore Edmonton, the City of Edmonton, and key partners have a crucial role to play in building capacity, advocating for sustainable practices, and setting industry standards. Many destinations in Europe and around the world have set targets and are achieving certification rates of local suppliers above 80%. We believe as a leader Edmonton can achieve +90%.

As part of Goal 15, Edmonton aims to become a leading destination for hosting regenerative events in North America.

**KEY TARGET: ALL CIVIC EVENTS, MAJOR SPORTING EVENTS, CITY-FUNDED EVENTS AND ATTRACTED EVENTS ARE NET-POSITIVE BY 2040**

## KEY WORK PACKAGES:

- **Advocate** and support government policy to mandate that all Civic events have sustainability policies and report on ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) impacts
- **Create** and promote a shared regenerative events pledge and standards
- **Develop** a program to share event resources and materials to help event producers adopt regenerative practices
- **Develop:** Map and promote regenerative suppliers and experiences as part of the Regenerative Experiences Map
- **Educate:** Develop training and tools for businesses and event planners to develop regenerative strategies, measure impacts and become certified
- **Promote:** Promote regenerative strategy, progress, suppliers, experiences, and partners to event planners in all proposals

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL ALIGNMENT





# KEY COMPONENTS

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

### SHORT TERM

- Number of new regenerative event businesses, experiences, and products
- Number of events that have obtained third party sustainability certification
- Number of event supply businesses (by category) that have obtained third party sustainability certification

### LONG TERM

- Number and percentage of City support events that have a sustainable plan and measurements in place by 2025

## KEY PARTNERS

- Explore Edmonton
- City of Edmonton



# NEXT STEPS

## RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CONSULTANTS

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### PRIORITIZATION:

This strategy was created alongside, and with integration from, the Indigenous Tourism Strategy and the Nighttime Economy Strategy. The development of all these strategies resulted in invaluable insights, action items and visions aimed at optimizing the quality of life for Edmontonians, and establishing the city as a desirable destination. The next step is additional alignment and collaboratively prioritizing the numerous action items and work packages to craft a comprehensive destination roadmap for the next seven years and beyond.

### MEASURE AND SOCIALIZE:

Measurement and transparent communication of the implementation and progress of this strategy is critical. It is also a crucial element in building the business case and gathering support for the benefits of regenerative tourism across the city, region and country. As a pioneering initiative in Canada, it is important to share the successes, challenges, and lessons learned with Edmontonians and the global tourism industry. By doing so, you will improve the framework, help build capacity, and promote best practices to elevate and maximize the positive impact that tourism can have for a place, and its communities.

### ENGAGEMENT:

During the development process, Explore Edmonton has connected with and engaged hundreds of organizations, including those not typically involved in tourism or the visitor economy. These organizations have shown great enthusiasm in embracing this new perspective on tourism and its potential to enhance Edmonton's community and visitor economy. It is crucial to maintain ongoing engagement by sharing this document, seeking further feedback and exploring partnerships to deliver on the goals in this strategy. Ongoing consultation and updates is then critical. This strategy comes from a place of immense collaboration, engagement, and extremely valuable input from diverse perspectives within the community, within tourism, within businesses and within advocacy for social and environmental change. This strategy is just the beginning, setting the foundation for what's to come:



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## EDITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The strategy work was facilitated and written by Alexis Kereluk and Hannah Kellett of ConnectSeven Group, Guy Bigwood of the Global Destination Sustainability Movement, and members of the Explore Edmonton Tourism Master Plan working group, led by Melissa Radu. See Appendix B for a full list of the project team.

Graphic design was provided by Rachel Tripodi.

## COMMUNITY AND PARTNER ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This strategy was prepared with the support of Edmonton’s business, not-for-profit, public institution, and government communities. This includes industry partners, community organizations, clients, and Edmontonians. Explore Edmonton is grateful for the involvement of these communities; their collective knowledge and insight was critical to understanding the specific social, environmental, and economic issues and impacts expected in the development and growth of Edmonton’s tourism and events industry (the Visitor Economy).

We acknowledge the contributions from the Regenerative Tourism Taskforce, the Explore Edmonton project team and the 148 organizations and community members that provided input. This strategy is a major milestone in the journey towards creating a flourishing future for Edmonton, its residents, and visitors. But it is only the first step. As we move ahead with implementation, we look forward to further collaboration with these and other communities. Explore Edmonton acknowledges support for the development of this strategy from Prairies Canada Economic Development.

## WORDS THAT MATTER

In this document, we avoid jargon as much as possible. Nonetheless, we are using terms and concepts that can have multiple meanings, contextual implications, and geographical nuances. To overcome these factors, there is a glossary of the words in the appendix.

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The preparation of “A Regenerative Vision and Strategy for Edmonton’s Visitor Economy” was carried out with the assistance from the Government of Canada with the Tourism Relief Fund. Notwithstanding this support, the views expressed are the personal views of the authors, and the Government of Canada accepts no responsibility for them.



# APPENDICES





# APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY

In this document, we try to say it without jargon, using everyday language. Nonetheless, we are using terms and concepts that can have multiple meanings, contextual implications, and geographical differences. So, here are the words and meanings that matter.

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**Circularity** - The intentional design of systems that minimize economic leakage by keeping tourist spending within local communities and economies, and actively reinjecting those resources to benefit local businesses, residents, and the environment.

**Community** - A group of people with common interests living in a particular area.  
**Ecology** - The totality or pattern of relations between organisms and their environment.

**Economic Leakage** - When spending leaves the local economy, resulting in limited benefits to local businesses, residents, and the overall community.

**Equity-Deserving Groups** - Those groups of people who identify barriers to equal access, opportunities, and resources due to disadvantage and discrimination. They may also be referred to as people experiencing marginalization. This marginalization could be created by attitudinal, historic, social, and environmental barriers based on age, ethnicity, disability, economic status, gender, nationality, race, sexual orientation, and transgender status, etc.

**Impact** - The measurable and observable effects that tourism has on the environment, society, and economy of a destination. It includes both positive impacts (such as job creation, cultural preservation, and environmental conservation) and negative impacts (such as pollution, overcrowding, and displacement of local communities).

**Interested Party** - An individual or group that has an interest in any decision or activity of an organization. Previously referred to as 'stakeholder.'

**Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** - A key performance indicator measures the performance of specific factors critical to the success of each work package. They are the metrics by which progress, and impact can be tangibly measured.

**Living System** - Self-organizing life forms and entities that interact with their environment. These systems are maintained by flows of information, energy, and matter.

**Long Term KPIs** - A metric that can be measured and achieved in 5+ years. For long term KPIs, a significant amount of resources, investment, or collaboration must be achieved to make the data point measurable.

**Mobility** - Availability and access to transportation of all kinds.

**Place** - The unique, multi-layered network of living systems within a geographic region that results from the complex interactions over time of (a) the natural ecology (climate, mineral and other deposits, soil, vegetation, water and wildlife, etc.) and (b) culture (distinctive customs, expressions of values, economic activities, forms of association, ideas for education, traditions, etc.).

**Regeneration** - The process of renewal, restoration, and growth that makes organisms, and ecosystems resilient to natural fluctuations or events that cause disturbance or damage. It is the ongoing cycle of evolution: birth, life, death, and rebirth.

**Regenerative Agriculture** - Conservation and rehabilitation approach to food and farming systems. It focuses on topsoil regeneration, increasing biodiversity, improving the water cycle, enhancing ecosystem services, supporting bio sequestration, increasing resilience to climate change, and strengthening the health and vitality of farm soil.

**ITAC's Original Original** - Accreditation that assures visitors that a business offers authentic, high-quality Indigenous tourism products and services. This accreditation is administered by the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada.

# APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY

## CONTINUED

**Regenerative Development** - The capability of the people to engage in a continuous and healthy relationship with the place where they live. There is continuous learning and feedback so that all aspects of the system (natural, cultural, and economic) are an integral part of the process of life in that place—co-evolution.

**Regenerative Tourism** – Aims to restore the harm that our system has already done to the natural world, and by using nature’s principles, to create the conditions for life to flourish. It views wholes and not parts of a system, and is a very different way of looking at the world.

**Request for Proposal (RFP)** – Request for Proposal (RFP): A formal document issued by a tourism organization or destination seeking proposals from potential suppliers or service providers. RFPs typically outline the requirements, objectives, and criteria for selection to facilitate the procurement process and ensure transparency.

**Regenerative Experiences Map** – A comprehensive listing of organizations that actively contribute to regenerative principles within the tourism industry. Criteria must be developed for this map with the intention of highlighting enterprises that create positive social impacts, rejuvenate culture, promote inclusivity, support local communities, and foster sustainable practices.

**Short Term KPIs** – A metric that can be measured and achieved within 1-5 years. For short term KPIs, data is or can be more readily available.

**Stewardship** - A shared sense of responsibility and obligation to protect and preserve, and the actions that support this. It involves both the protection of the environmental, sociocultural, and economic aspects of the destination.

**Sustainability** – Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the needs of future generations.

**Sustainable Tourism** – The ability and practice to recognize and tackle all impacts of tourism. Social and environmental negative impacts are reduced, and positive impacts are amplified.

**United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs)** – Published in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, they are a collection of 17 interconnected goals with 169 targets and 230 indicators adopted by 193 world leaders.

**Visitor Economy** - All the activities and businesses that are supported by tourists, including accommodations, attractions, restaurants, and transportation, which contribute to a region’s economic growth through visitor spending.

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# APPENDIX B: EXPLORE EDMONTON PROJECT TEAM

Many Explore Edmonton colleagues supported the development of the Regenerative Tourism Strategy. The following members of the Explore Edmonton Tourism Master Plan working group contributed their time, energy, and expertise to this process.

TITLE	POSITION
MELISSA RADU	DIRECTOR, SOCIAL & ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY
SHELLEY GROLLMUSS	PROJECT MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT
PAUL HAWES	VICE PRESIDENT, DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT & MARKETING
JASON LETWIN	RESEARCH & PERFORMANCE MANAGER
TYA WATERMAN	MANAGER, STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS
JAMES LEPPAN	SENIOR MANAGER, DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT
VALERIE SALKEN	BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LEADS



# APPENDIX C: STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT TASKFORCE

The taskforce inclusively represents the local visitor economy ecosystem, and have volunteered their time to develop this strategy

NAME	ORGANIZATION	TITLE
AGNIESZKA KOTOWSKA	CITY OF EDMONTON	SENIOR PLANNER
APRIL BANNERMAN	SUSTAINIVAL	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
BLAIR LEBSACK	RGE RD	OWNER
BROOKE LEIFSO	NORQUEST COLLEGE	DISABILITY ADVOCATE & ACCESSIBILITY RESEARCHER (AUTISM CANTECH!)
CANDICE SAWCHUK	EDMONTON UNLIMITED	MANAGER, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND EVENTS
CRYSTAL EYO	INDIGENOUS TOURISM ALBERTA	DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR
JAY BALL	RIVERWATCH INSTITUTE OF ALBERTA	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
JUAN VARGAS ALBA	CLIMATE EMERGENCY UNIT	PRAIRIE ORGANIZER
KRISTINE ARCHIBALD	RIVER VALLEY ALLIANCE	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
MEGHAN KLEIN	EDMONTON MENNONITE CENTRE FOR NEWCOMERS	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
MELISSA RADU	EXPLORE EDMONTON	DIRECTOR, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY
ROCHELLE IGNACIO	TAMARACK INSTITUTE FEED THE SOUL DINING WEEK	DIRECTOR, EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION FOUNDER
ROWENA CUI	PLANiT SOUND	COO
SARA AWATTA	YEG SERVICES	FOUNDER & PRINCIPAL CONSULTANT
SUSAN KNOOP	NORTHERN ALBERTA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (NAIT)	PROGRAM CHAIR, HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT
SUSANNAH CAMERON	ENDPOVERTYEDMONTON	CO-DIRECTOR OF INCLUSIVE ECONOMY
TARA MCCARTHY	CBC EDMONTON	JOURNALIST
TIM ADAMS	FREE PLAY FOR KIDS	CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



# APPENDIX D: FURTHER READING AND REFERENCES

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## EDMONTON SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES AND PLANS THAT INSPIRED US

- [ConnectEdmonton: City Strategic Plan](#)
- [Climate Resilient Edmonton Adaptation Strategy And Action Plan](#)
- [Community Energy Transition Strategy](#)
- [The Future Of Waste: Edmonton 25-Year Comprehensive Waste Management Strategy](#)
- [Edmonton Waste Reduction Road Map](#)
- [Change for Climate: Edmonton City's citizen engagement campaign for climate action](#)
- [Explore Edmonton Tourism Master Plan](#)
- [River Valley Alliance Strategic Plan](#)

## REGENERATION REPORTS AND WHITEPAPERS THAT INSPIRED US

- [A Regenerative Approach to Tourism in Canada: Produced by Destination Canada, and written by Bill Reed and Michelle Holiday](#)
- [A Regenerative Revolution: Produced by IMEX, written by Guy Bigwood and the Global Destination Sustainability Movement.](#)

## DESTINATION STRATEGIES THAT INSPIRED US

- [Visit Scotland Climate Action Plan](#)
- [Travel to a thriving future, Queenstown Lakes' Regenerative Tourism Plan](#)
- [Lead Tourism For Good: 10-year Vision For Tourism In Banff And Lake Louise](#)

