

## Update: Northern Relations

<b>Initiative Title:</b>	Northern Relations
<b>City Council Sponsor(s):</b>	Mayor D. Iveson/ Councillor T. Caterina/ Councillor E. Gibbons
<b>Supporting Department and Lead Staff:</b>	Sustainable Development, Walter Trocenko/Paul Ross

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### BACKGROUND:

- Alberta's northern region contributes approximately \$41 billion (17 percent) to Alberta's GDP each year. The region encompasses much of Alberta's resources including 100 percent of Alberta's oil sands deposits; 86 percent of its forests; 28 percent of its farmland; and 30 percent of the province's conventional oil and gas. Edmonton's locational proximity to this region as the largest northern city has opened up a gamut of economic opportunities for the city in a variety of sectors including transportation/logistics, energy services, construction, and manufacturing/fabrication.
- Rising temperatures and retreating sea ice in the region north of the 60<sup>th</sup> parallel are creating new opportunities for Alberta and Edmonton. Alberta is at the helm of prospects created by new transportation links, untapped natural resources and provisions of goods and services for Canada's arctic and beyond. Edmonton is at a geographic vantage point to leverage the brief window of opportunity created in the region.
- It is critical for Edmonton to leverage the strengths of its world-class educational and social institutions, strong entrepreneurial and industrial base, and its advantages as the political centre of Alberta to help foster new regional partnerships that add to the vitality of all the associated communities.
- City Council directed Administration to build and nurture stronger ties with the North as an objective under the Council approved, *The Way We Prosper* strategic plan. This strategic objective was recognized as a driver for stronger community-to-community, business-to-business and municipal-to-municipal links that are essential to create an atmosphere conducive to the economic growth of Edmonton.

### DESIRED OUTCOMES:

- **Edmonton experiences increased growth in business and investment:** City Administration, the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce /World Trade Centre Edmonton (ECC/WTCE) and Edmonton Economic Development Corporation (EEDC) recognize that strong connections with partners in the North will lead to opportunities that attract new businesses and create growth for existing businesses in Edmonton. The three organizations will:
  - continue to work collaboratively and transparently through regular working group meetings and staff-to-staff linkages, to represent a shared northern agenda to the City Council.
  - continue to develop their individual programs and plans for the North based on an agreed and shared vision for the region.

- aim to expend their combined resources and advantages to accomplish northern objectives and targets.

Administration and EEDC will share the progress in the North with Council periodically, to aid policy changes, to garner political support, and for northern strategy evaluation to help reach the city's vision for its regional growth.

- **Edmonton is recognized as a Global Business Leader in the North:** The City and its partners (EEDC, ECC/WTCE) will progress their work to advance Edmonton as a business and regional champion for the North.
  - The City will continue to promote its role as a catalyst for business process and policy changes, transformational infrastructure and strong connections with its regional municipal partners.
  - EEDC will continue to advance its agenda as the Northern Relationship driver to develop the critical business partnerships through ideal connections and networks and by recognizing opportunities for Edmonton to play a leadership/ collaborative role.
  - The ECC/WTCE will further its objective to provide a business driven view to Administration through policy advocacy and informed public opinion. The ECC/ WTCE will also use its longstanding and vested relations with the northern chambers of commerce and business community to influence progressive business development for Edmonton.
- **Edmonton fosters increased collaboration at community-to-community level:** Edmonton along with its community partners in the North would create and support mutually-beneficial opportunities and present a cohesive front to regional issues and opportunities to the provincial and federal levels of government.
- **Edmonton is a crucial link between the North and the South:** Edmonton will work to create and promote a business-friendly environment and pursue a strengths (economic and social) based approach to marketing, support emerging regions and attract investments. The city is a crucial link for growth and expansion to the North and a gateway for opportunities to the South.
- **Edmonton provides support to the growth of local economies:** All three organizations will facilitate local economic development initiatives not only in Edmonton but the emerging cities and towns in the North through common regional economic development agendas, knowledge and skill transfer, regional and local innovation and a shared vision for the North.

#### **ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC DIRECTION:**

- The Northern Relations Initiative closely aligns with *The Way We Prosper (TWWP)* 10-year strategic goal to 'diversify Edmonton's economy'. The initiative supports the following *TWWP* goals and strategic objectives:
  - Goal 1: A confident and progressive global image
    - Strategic Objective 1.1: Edmonton is uniquely positioned nationally and internationally as an industrious and entrepreneurial city
  - Goal 2: Internationally renowned as a powerhouse of industry

- Strategic Objective 2.2: Canada's northern region looks to Edmonton for expertise in resource and industrial development
- EEDC has been recognized by the Administration as the main driver to lead the Councils Northern Relationship agenda. The City Administration and ECC/WTCE will continue to support and help facilitate this initiative.

**START-UP BUDGET REQUIREMENTS:**

- No new budget allocation is required for this Council Initiative.
- Support to the Mayor and Council will be provided by Sustainable Development department, Intergovernmental and External Affairs Branch, and EEDC.

**TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION OF PROJECT PLAN:**

- Yearly Northern program plans are developed and re-evaluated by each individual economic development agency (City of Edmonton, EEDC and ECC/WTCE).
- Northern performance measures are currently being developed by EEDC to monitor the advancement of Edmonton as a regional hub to the north and the south.