

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

Tuesday, June 24, 2025, 7 p.m.
3rd Floor - Poplar Room
315 Jespersen Ave
Spruce Grove, AB T7X 3E8

				Pages	
1.	CALL	TO ORDER			
2.	AGENDA				
	2.1	Adoption of the Agenda - Economic Development 24, 2025	t Advisory Committee - June	3	
3.	MINUTES				
	3.1	Approval of Minutes - Economic Development Ad 2025	lvisory Committee - April 1,	5	
4.	DELEGATIONS				
	4.1	City Centre Incentives Workshop	Jodi Fulford	11	
	4.2	Event Hosting Strategy Presentation	Jodi Fulford	43	
5.	ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES				
	5.1	Early-Stage Business Support Program	Monique Pelletier	62	
6.	BUSINESS ITEMS				
7.	INFORMATION ITEMS				
8.	CLOSED SESSION				
	8.1	Industrial Land Incentives Program	Dave Walker		
	8.2	Return to Open Session - June 24, 2025			

## 9. BUSINESS ARISING FROM CLOSED SESSION

## 10. <u>ADJOURNMENT</u>

10.1 Adjournment - Economic Development Advisory Committee - June 24, 2025

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## **REQUEST FOR DECISION**

**MEETING DATE:** June 24, 2025

**TITLE:** Adoption of the Agenda - Economic Development Advisory

Committee - June 24, 2025

**DIVISION:** Strategic and Communication Services

#### **SUMMARY:**

Committee members are provided the opportunity to add items they would like to discuss during the meeting, remove items, or change the order of proceedings.

#### PROPOSED MOTION:

THAT the agenda be adopted as presented.

## **BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS:**

The agenda sets the course of action for the meeting. This ensures the business of the day is followed through and completed as required.

The agenda is approved by a motion of the Committee and must be passed by a majority of the members present. Once the agenda is approved, no further changes may be made unless approved by the majority of the Committee members present.

## **OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES:**

THAT the agenda be adopted as amended.

## **CONSULTATION / ENGAGEMENT:**

n/a

<b>IMPLEMENTATION / COMMUNICATION:</b> n/a
IMPACTS: n/a
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: n/a



## **REQUEST FOR DECISION**

**MEETING DATE:** June 24, 2025

TITLE: Minutes - Economic Development Advisory Committee - April 1,

2025

**DIVISION:** Strategic and Communication Services

#### **SUMMARY:**

The minutes of the previous Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting are placed on the agenda for approval.

#### PROPOSED MOTION:

THAT the April 1, 2025 Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting minutes be approved as presented.

## **BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS:**

The Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting minutes are the official written record of the actions that took place during the meeting; a snapshot of the decisions that the Committee made and the outcome of the vote.

The minutes are written without notes or transcribing of discussions that may have taken place during an agenda item.

Committee members review the minutes prior to the meeting to review for any changes that may need to be made. A motion for an amendment is required if an error has been noted. If there are no amendments to the minutes, a motion to approve the minutes as presented is made by a member of the Committee. The minutes are signed by the Chair and the Recording Secretary.

A copy of the minutes will be included in a future Regular Council Meeting agenda package.

<b>OPTIONS</b> /	<b>ALTERNATIVES:</b>
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THAT the April 1, 2025 Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting minutes be approved as amended.

## **CONSULTATION / ENGAGEMENT:**

n/a

## **IMPLEMENTATION / COMMUNICATION:**

n/a

## **IMPACTS:**

n/a

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

n/a



#### THE CITY OF SPRUCE GROVE

## **Minutes of Economic Development Advisory Committee**

April 1, 2025, 7 p.m.

3rd Floor - Poplar Room

315 Jespersen Ave

Spruce Grove, AB T7X 3E8

Members Present: Councillor Carter, Chair

Councillor Houston, Vice-Chair

Bruce Mullett, Commercial Sector Representative

Charlene Bell, Public-at-Large

Kelly John Rose, Greater Parkland Regional Chamber Representative

Teresa Bateman, Public-at-Large

Tyler Perozni, Commercial Sector Representative

Victor Moroz, City Centre Business Association Representative

Members Absent: Councillor Oldham

Don Cooper, Industrial Sector Representative

Also in Attendance: Jodi Fulford, Economic Development Specialist - Commercial

Karla Daniels, Economic Development Specialist - Industrial

Nicole Hitchens, Recording Secretary

#### 1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Danielle Carter called the meeting to order at 6:59 p.m.

#### 2. AGENDA

2.1 <u>Adoption of the Agenda - Economic Development Advisory Committee - April 1,</u> 2025

Resolution: EDAC-007-25

Moved by: Teresa Bateman

THAT the agenda be adopted as presented.

**Unanimously Carried** 

### 3. MINUTES

3.1 <u>Approval of Minutes - Economic Development Advisory Committee</u>
Organizational and Regular Meeting - January 21, 2025

**Resolution:** EDAC-008-25

**Moved by:** Victor Moroz

THAT the January 21, 2025 Economic Development Advisory Committee Organizational meeting and January 21, 2025 Economic Development Advisory Committee Regular meeting minutes be approved as presented.

**Unanimously Carried** 

#### 4. ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

4.1 <u>2025 Economic Development Advisory Committee Work Plan - Review Summary</u>

Karla Daniels, Economic Development Specialist - Industrial, provided an update on the 2025 Economic Development Advisory Committee Work Plan - Review and Summary.

Committee thanked Karla Daniels for the presentation.

### 4.2 Industrial Land Supply

Karla Daniels, Economic Development Specialist - Industrial, provided an update on the Industrial Land Supply.

DRAFT

Committee requested that more information, including action items and possible incentives to move forward with an Industrial Land Strategy, be brought back to the June 24, 2025 Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting.

Committee thanked Karla Daniels for the presentation.

### 4.3 <u>City Centre Redevelopment Incentives Overview</u>

Jodi Fulford, Economic Development Specialist - Commercial, provided an update on the City Centre Redevelopment Incentives Overview.

Committee thanked Jodi Fulford for the presentation.

#### 5. **DELEGATIONS**

#### 5.1 Event Tourism Strategy

Chair Danielle Carter introduced Meaghan Carey, Partner, RC Strategies.

Meaghan Carey provided a presentation on the Event Tourism Strategy.

Committee thanked Meaghan Carey for the presentation.

### 6. **BUSINESS ITEMS**

There were no Business Items on the agenda.

#### 7. INFORMATION ITEMS

There were no Information Items on the agenda.

### 8. <u>CLOSED SESSION</u>

There was no Closed Session on the agenda.

## 9. <u>BUSINESS ARISING FROM CLOSED SESSION</u>

There was no Business Arising from Closed Session.

## 10. ADJOURNMENT

#### 10.1 Adjournment - Economic Development Advisory Committee - April 1, 2025

Resolution: EDAC-009-25

**Moved by:** Victor Moroz

## **DRAFT**

THAT the Economic Develo	pment Advisory	v Committee ad	iourn at 9:05	p.m.
		,	,	

Unanimously Carried
Danielle Carter, Chair
Nicole Hitchens, Recording Secretary
Date Signed



## **REQUEST FOR DECISION**

**MEETING DATE:** June 24, 2025

**TITLE:** City Centre Incentives Workshop

**DIVISION:** City Manager's Office

#### **SUMMARY:**

The City's consultant will facilitate a workshop with the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) to present preliminary findings and gather feedback on potential redevelopment incentives for Spruce Grove's City Centre. The focus is on supporting revitalization through direct and indirect incentive options.

#### PROPOSED MOTION:

A motion is not required.

## **BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS:**

A business case was included in the 2025 budget to explore whether the City should implement redevelopment incentives in the City Centre. These incentives are used widely by municipalities to encourage investment, redevelopment, and vibrancy in core commercial areas.

The consultant has conducted a jurisdictional scan of comparable communities and reviewed best practices across Canada. Based on this work, a range of potential incentive options has been developed.

At the June 24, 2025 EDAC meeting, the consultant will:

- · Present preliminary recommendations and models;
- Facilitate a discussion with EDAC to gather insights and local perspectives;
- Use this feedback to refine the development of a tailored incentive approach for Spruce Grove.

This session supports the City's broader goals around downtown revitalization and sustainable economic growth.
OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES: n/a
CONSULTATION / ENGAGEMENT: A series of in-person workshops were held with key businesses and property owners in City Centre to solicit feedback.
IMPLEMENTATION / COMMUNICATION: n/a
IMPACTS: n/a
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

n/a



June 24, 2025



# Introductions





**CHRIS LETOURNEUR** 

**PRESIDENT & CEO** 



**MARTIN ANSTEY** 

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT



**ANDREW FAYN** 

**VICE PRESIDENT** 



**PENNY GAZE** 

DEVELOPMENT PLANNER



# Workshop Objectives & Agenda

Build on the strong progress made so far and gather your input on the future of activity and redevelopment in the City Centre.



## 1. Introductions

# 2. Background

- City Centre Progress
- Project Outline

# 3. Best Practices for Incentivizing City Centre Revitalization

## 4. Interactive Discussion

 What incentives would help drive activity and investment in the City Centre?



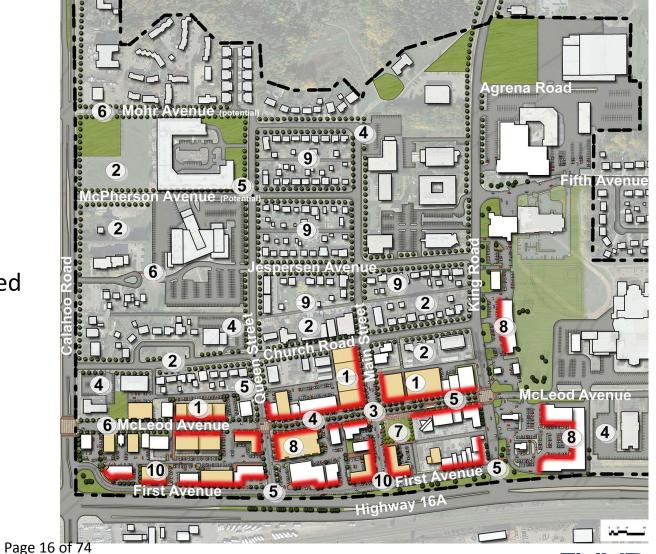
# 10+ Years of Progress in the City Centre

## **City Centre Revitalization Progress Timeline**

2014 City Centre Revitalization Paper 2016 City Centre Business Association and Business Improvement Area established 2020 City Centre Area Redevelopment Plan 2022 Redevelopment of Columbus Park 2023 Storefront Improvement Program launched 2024 Major Streetscape & Infrastructure

upgrades undertaken along McLeod

## **City Centre Redevelopment Plan**





Avenue & Main Street

# **Study Objectives**



Vision for City Centre Revitalization



**Enabling Infrastructure** 



Columbus Park & Street Scape Improvements



Events Schedule



Incentives for Storefront Improvement

With this strong foundation, what more can we do to accelerate activity and redevelopment within the City Centre?



# **Study Outline**

# **MXD Key Tasks**

- Background Review
- Stakeholder Engagement & Industry Input
- Best Practices & Comparative Analysis
- Menu of Incentive Program
- Implementation Strategy & Recommendations

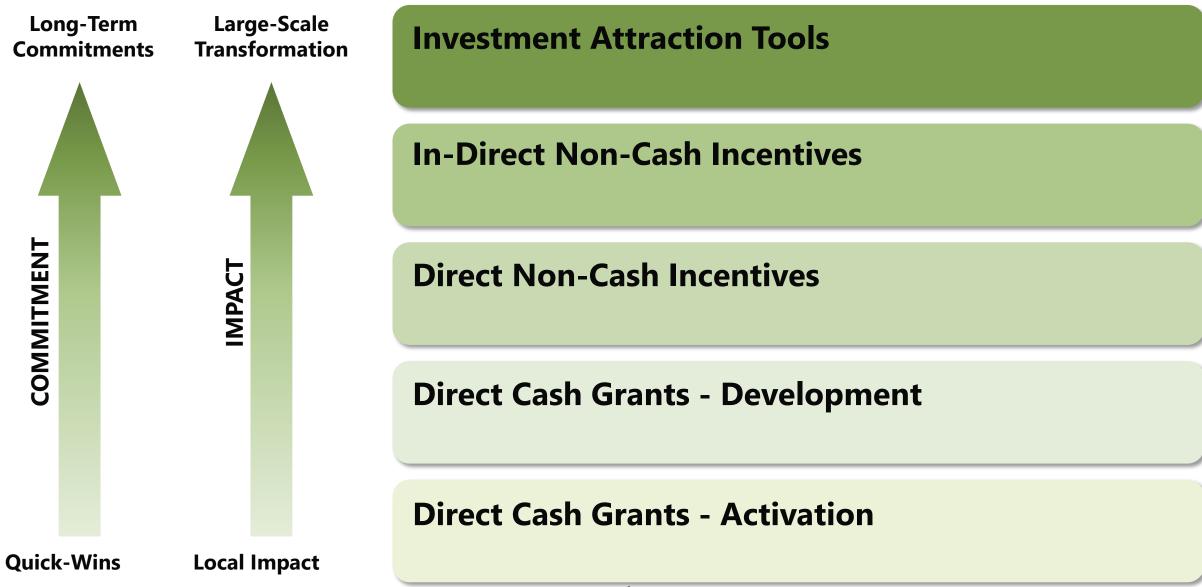
## **Study Area**



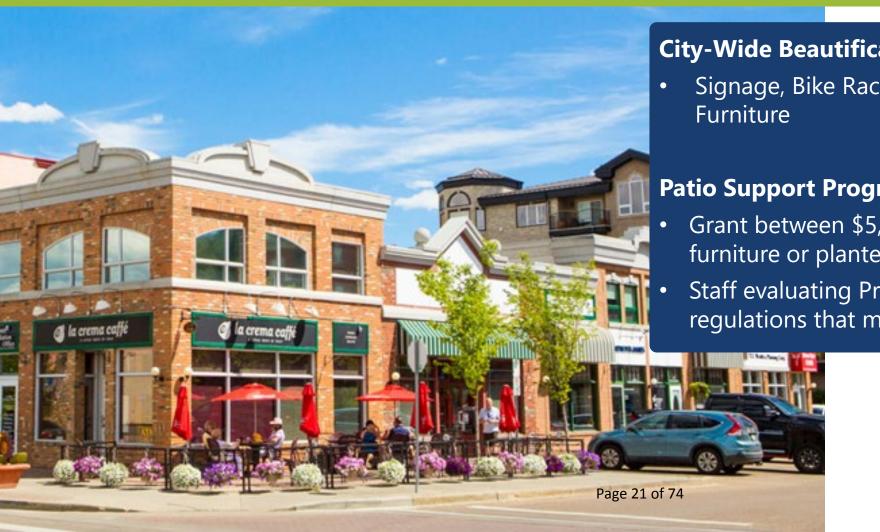
# City Centre Redevelopment Incentive Best Practises



# **Overview of Incentives**



St. Albert, AB **Various Support Grants** 



## **City-Wide Beautification Grant of up to \$2,500**

Signage, Bike Racks, Flower Planters, Street

## **Patio Support Program**

- Grant between \$5,000 to \$7,500 for patio furniture or planters
- Staff evaluating Provincial alcohol-serving regulations that may affect patio uses



# City of Leduc, AB Downtown Programs



## **Main Street Outdoor Patio Program**

- Allows for patios on public property during the summertime
- City loans concrete planters for patio perimeters at no cost
- Quick-win with very low-cost and 1 to 2 day setup

## **Downtown Storefront Improvement Program**

- \$25,000 in funding
- Grant for façade 'facelifts'
- Between 2012 and 2019, 10 buildings and 23 storefronts improved



# Fort Saskatchewan, AB Downtown Development Incentives





# Fort Saskatchewan, AB Downtown Development Incentives







# Medicine Hat, AB City Centre Vibrancy Incentives



- Self-Guided Walking Tour Maps
- Outdoor Patios and Parklets
- Medicine Hat Mural Fest
- City Centre Vibrancy Incentive
  - 50% Matching Grant for improvements/upgrades
  - Up to maximum of \$25,000 for City Centre
  - 133 businesses took advantage of incentives between 2021 and 2024
- Housing Infill and Redevelopment Incentive:
  - One-off grant of \$15,000 per dwelling unit up to a maximum of \$750,000 for new residential
  - \$1.8 million awarded in 2024 for 160 units.



**Grande Prairie, AB City Centre Vibrancy Incentives** 

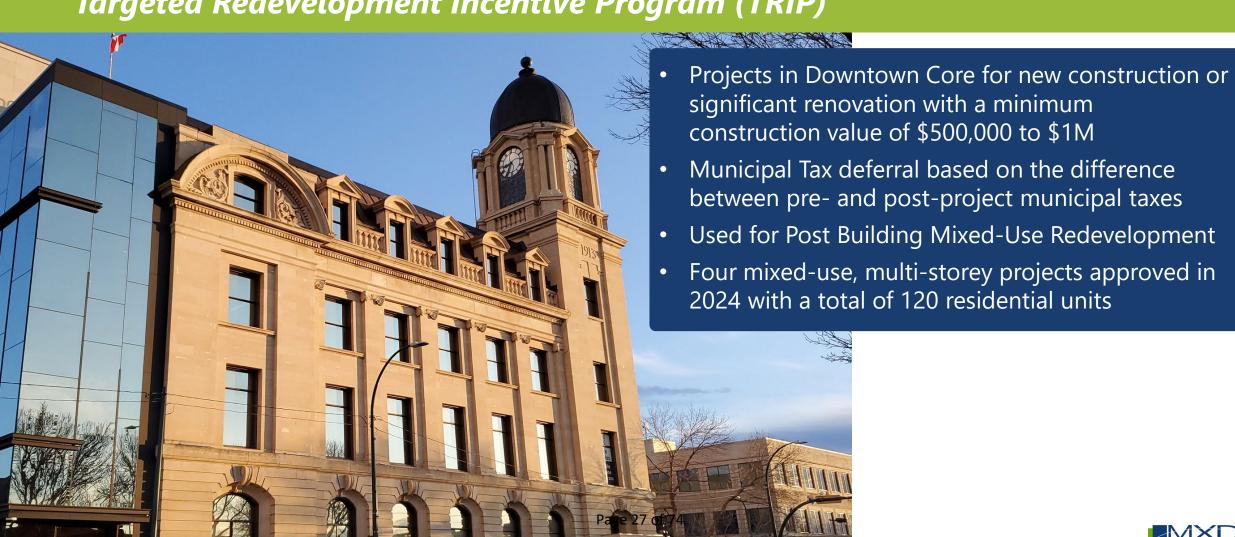


- **Urban Residential Grant**
- Façade Improvement Grant
- **Demolition Grant**
- Seasonal Campaigns & Events Construction Carl



Lethbridge, AB

Targeted Redevelopment Incentive Program (TRIP)





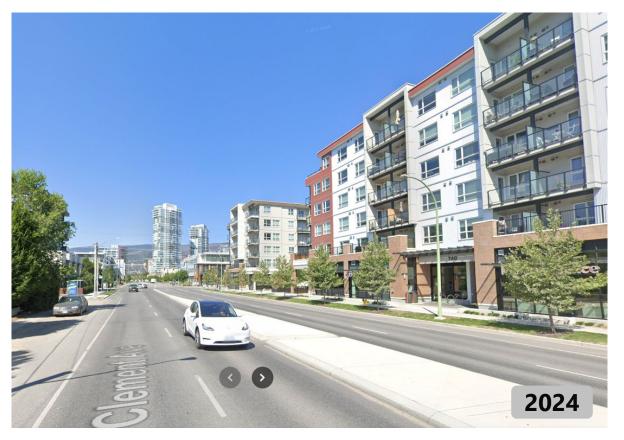
Kelowna, BC Revitalization Tax Exemption





# Kelowna, BC Revitalization Tax Exemption







Chilliwack, BC

Downtown District Land Assembly & P3



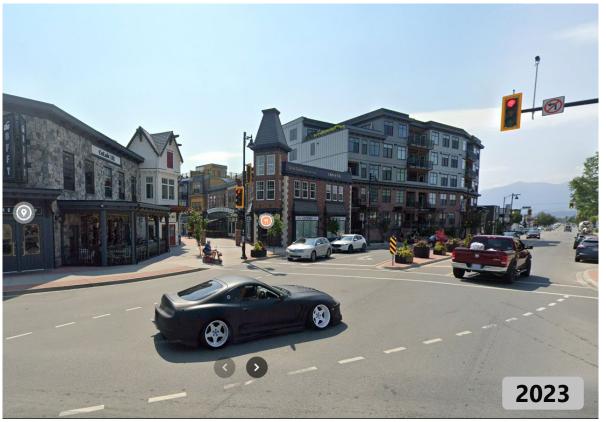
# District 1881 Development by Alga Bros.

- City of Chilliwack and the Chilliwack Economic Partners Corporation (CEPCO) assembled properties to create 4-acre site.
- Combination of retail, commercial, residential and mixed-used developments as part of the multi-year, multi-phase project across nine buildings
- 40 to 45 commercial tenants and 52 residential units in Townhomes and apartments
- Catalyzed further mixed-use redevelopment.



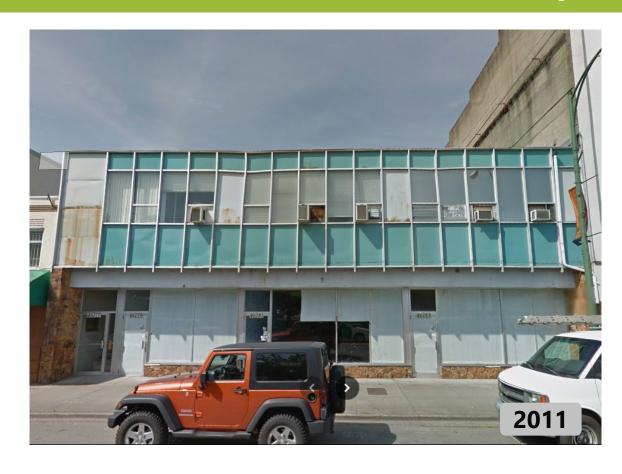
# Chilliwack, BC Downtown District Land Assembly & P3







# Chilliwack, BC Downtown District Land Assembly & P3







# City of Maple Ridge, BC **Downtown Incentive Program**



- 3-Year Program including Priority Processing, Fee Waivers or Reductions, Tax Exemptions, Cash Grants
- Specifically for Residential Development
- Generated over \$77 million in investment
- Cost \$1 million to the City
  - Around 1,000 condos built in the Downtown



# Maple Ridge, BC Downtown Incentive Program







Prince George, BC

Downtown Revitalization Tax Exemption





# Prince George, BC Downtown Revitalization Tax Exemption







### City Centre Redevelopment Best Practises

**Brampton, ON** 

**Activate Downtown Brampton** 





### City Centre Redevelopment Best Practises

## Brampton, ON Activate Downtown Brampton







### City Centre Redevelopment Best Practises

## **Emerging Retail Concepts Pop-Up Container Retail**







- Can help to 'establish the address' and create a destination quickly
- Catalytic effect to attract more permanent, long-term investment
- Attracts visitors and increases foot traffic to existing stores









## Interactive Discussion



### Your Input on Investment & Redevelopment







YOUR VISION FOR THE CITY CENTRE



MISSING INGREDIENTS



INCENTIVE IDEAS



## THANK YOU!

**Andrew Fayn** 

**Vice President**MXD Development Strategists
andrew@MXDdevelopment.com

**Penny Gaze** 

**Development Planner**MXD Development Strategists
penny.gaze@MXDdevelopment.com

MXDdevelopment.com





#### **REQUEST FOR DECISION**

**MEETING DATE:** June 24, 2025

**TITLE:** Event Hosting Strategy Presentation

**DIVISION:** City Manager's Office

#### **SUMMARY:**

RC Strategies will present the working draft Event Tourism Strategy for review and feedback. The strategy focuses on event hosting and tourism development through an economic development lens.

#### PROPOSED MOTION:

A motion is not required.

#### **BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS:**

As identified in EDAC's 2025 work plan, "Tourism Attraction" remains a key focus area for promoting Spruce Grove as a destination for events that drive economic benefit.

RC Strategies has a draft Event Tourism Strategy aimed at enhancing the City's ability to attract and support sporting, cultural, and business events. This strategy is designed to align with the City's long-term economic development goals and leverage existing and emerging facilities.

At the June 24, 2025 EDAC meeting, RC Strategies will:

- Present the draft strategy and its core themes;
- · Highlight key recommendations and priority areas;
- Facilitate a feedback session with EDAC to refine the strategy before finalization.

This engagement supports the City's objective of building a coordinated and impactful approach to event tourism that delivers measurable economic and community outcomes.

### **OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES:**

n/a

### **CONSULTATION / ENGAGEMENT:**

Discussions with potential partners, including the TransAlta Tri Leisure Centre.

### IMPLEMENTATION / COMMUNICATION:

The consultant has made presentations on the strategy to EDAC during its development to solicit feedback.

#### **IMPACTS:**

n/a

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

n/a



# Spruce Grove Event Strategy

EDAC Project Process Update - June 24, 2025

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## Agenda

- SWOT: Analysis of Findings
- Strategy Development Update
  - Foundations
  - Priorities
  - Actions
- Valuing Event Hosting
- Next Steps

## **SWOT** Analysis of Findings

### STRENGHTS (internal)

- New City infrastructure to support event hosting.
- Strong sense of community and civic pride.
- Positive relationships between City Staff and Community Organizations.
- Proven success with local events (e.g., Canada Day, Light Up, Farmers' Market)
- Active volunteer base and engaged community groups
- Growing population and family-oriented demographic.
- Evolving policy and planning strategic context.

### **WEAKNESSES** (internal)

- Limited policies supporting event hosting.
- Limited number of dedicated event spaces or large-scale venues.
- Limited public transit and transportation options for large events.
- Staff resourcing to manage event portfolio and implementation of Strategy.
- Budget constraints and competing priorities.
- Limited accommodation options in City for out-of-town guest, including a gap in higher quality accommodations.

## **SWOT** Analysis of Findings

### **OPPORTUNITIES** (external)

- Expand partnerships with local businesses, schools, and sport and cultural groups.
- Develop signature or themed events unique to Spruce Grove.
- Attract regional tourism through well-marketed, high-quality events.
- Enhance City event infrastructure and amenities through strategic investments.
- New / proposed private infrastructure in the community and region to support event hosting (i.e., ballpark, pickleball / racquet sport facilities)
- Changing market conditions conducive to adopting new approaches.
- Growing recognition of the importance of recreation and culture.
- Promote inclusivity and accessibility in event design.

### **THREATS (external)**

- Competition with regional events in Edmonton and surrounding communities.
- Economic fluctuations impacting sponsorship and attendance.
- Volunteer fatigue and difficulty recruiting new volunteers.
- Community concerns about noise and traffic impact.
- Group concerns about disruptions to regular activity.
- Disruptions to outdoor events due to weather, climate events.

## **Guiding Foundations**

Vision

Mission

Events in Spruce Grove drive community connection and a strong local economy - making our city a vibrant place to live and a compelling destination to visit.

Spruce Grove will foster a dynamic events portfolio that celebrates local culture, delivers economic and social value, enhances the city's identity, and uses resources wisely.

## Strategic Priorities

### **Priority #1: The Right Events for Spruce Grove**

• Spruce Grove is building a purposeful mix of community, sporting and cultural events - big and small - that reflect what matters to our residents, align with our City's goals, and responsible use of our resources.

### **Priority #2: Great to Work With**

• Spruce Grove will be a reliable and collaborative partner by ensuring clear processes, timely decision-making, and strong communication. This approach supports a coordinated event industry and helps deliver successful events that are well-promoted to residents and visitors.

### **Priority #3: Be Future Focused**

 Spruce Grove is committed to future-ready planning by investing in infrastructure, community partnerships, and City resources that support sustainable event growth for years to come.

## Priority #1: The Right Events for Spruce Grove

### **Actions**

- Partner with the local business community to create opportunities that support economic growth and add value to the city.
- Ensure community-driven events are inclusive and representative of Spruce Grove's diverse population.
- Prioritize events that deliver strong economic benefits and enhance the City's regional reputation.
- Embed principles of inclusion in the planning and execution of all events.
- Develop a balanced portfolio that offers a variety of event types, impacts, seasons, and locations across the city.
- Support innovative event delivery that integrates commercial partnerships and sponsorship opportunities to strengthen event sustainability.

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## Priority #2: Great to Work With Actions

- Promoting the benefits of events by sharing the positive impact they have on local businesses, residents, and community life.
- Offering a friendly and streamlined process that helps event organizers easily connect with the City and access the support they need—from permits to planning.
- Providing hands-on guidance for complex events, with dedicated support to help navigate regulations, logistics, and compliance requirements.
- Adopt a framework to guide the selection events to support that aligns with Spruce Grove's strategic goals and contributes to broader regional priorities, especially for larger-scale events.
- Showcasing and maintaining great event spaces, so organizers and attendees can easily find and enjoy Spruce Grove's parks, venues, and public areas.

## Priority #3: Be Future Focused Actions

- Caring for and improving our event spaces, so they continue to meet the needs of residents and organizers now and into the future.
- Working with private venues and new developments to ensure Spruce Grove has the right mix of event spaces for a growing community.
- Supporting a strong and inclusive event staffing resources, including volunteers, by creating opportunities for training, development, and long-term involvement.
- Building sustainability into everything we do, from policies to event practices, as part of the City's commitment to a greener future.
- Staying informed and inspired by tracking event trends and innovations in other cities to bring the best ideas to Spruce Grove.

## Valuing Event Hosting

Level of Event	Regional	Provincial	National / International
Proportion of Day to Overnight	95/5	75/25	50/50
Proportion of domestic to international	100/0	95/5	70/30
Average number of participants	50	100	150
Estimated proportion of spectators to participants	1.5/1	2/1	3/1
Estimated number of daytime spectators per event (\$110)	71	143	158
Estimated number of overnight spectators per event (\$592)	4	48	158
Estimated number of international spectators per event (\$2,201)	0	9	134
Estimated economic output generated per event	\$10,178	\$63,955	\$405,850

### Next Steps

- Continue engagement with key partners to affirm foundations and direction to be contained in Strategy.
- Refinement of framework to support decision making and roles in attraction and hosting events.

## Thank you! Questions



## Tourism & Event Hosting Discussion Points



## Emerging Themes: Tourism & Event Hosting

Spruce Grove is already a proven host for major events

The City has successfully delivered national and provincial tournaments, regional festivals, and large-scale community events.

Events are classified by scale and matched with clear City support

A tiered event framework distinguishes between local, regional, and high-impact events. Each level corresponds with defined City roles, resources, and expectations.

Departmental roles and decision-making processes are clearly defined

Economic Development leads high-impact tourism events, while Recreation and Culture manages permits and logistics for community-led events. Events involving bid fees or major City investment are brought to Council.



## Emerging Themes: Tourism & Event Hosting

A dedicated tourism role anchors implementation

Effective event tourism requires a lead staff position to coordinate partnerships, respond to opportunities, manage bids, and steward major events.

The ballpark is a core asset within the event hosting network

The Energy City Ballpark expands the City's hosting capacity in a meaningful way. As with other key stakeholders – the City of Spruce Grove, Tri-Leisure Centre, and community groups – the ballpark plays a foundational role in attracting high-value events.



## Emerging Themes: Tourism & Event Hosting

Major events and tourism attraction are a significant economic development lever

Many municipalities already recognize the value of event tourism through active programs and dedicated staffing. The strategy positions Spruce Grove to do the same, with a focus on generating both community vibrancy and measurable economic return.

√ The opportunity spans far beyond sport

The scope of events available to Spruce Grove includes culture, trade shows, special interest gatherings, and regional showcases. A targeted and coordinated approach allows the City to tap into this broader range of opportunities, ensuring we don't miss out on high-impact events beyond traditional sports.



## Thank you!



### **REQUEST FOR DECISION**

**MEETING DATE:** June 24, 2025

**TITLE:** Early-Stage Business Support Program

**DIVISION:** City Manager's Office

#### **SUMMARY:**

The presentation will provide an update of the Early-Stage Business Support Program (EBSP). The EBSP is designed to foster entrepreneurship growth and support early-stage businesses in Spruce Grove. This presentation will provide an update on the progress of the ESBP, including the SMARTstart program, and other efforts.

#### **PROPOSED MOTION:**

A motion is not required.

#### **BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS:**

The EBSP aims to enhance the local economic ecosystem by supporting small businesses and startups, as outlined in the City's Strategic Plan 2022 - 2025 (Goals 10 and 13).

The EBSP includes several initiatives including the SMARTstart program, a partnership with Community Futures Centre West. The SMARTstart Program, which launched on February 3, 2025, is a foundational component in supporting early-stage businesses by providing entrepreneurial support through online learning, in-person / virtual workshops, and mentorship.

### **OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES:**

n/a

### **CONSULTATION / ENGAGEMENT:**

On May 8, 2025, a Welcome Launch Kick-off was held to bring together the entrepreneurs, mentors, and program supporters. This evening included a speed connecting session between the entrepreneurs and the mentors, that served as part of the matching process.

On May 28, 2025, the Entrepreneurs participated in their first workshop, "Monsters Under the Bed - Identifying Your Fears".

On June 5, 2025, the Entrepreneurs participated in the second workshop on "Business and Strategic Planning".

On April 8, 2025, the City co-hosted a Technology Alberta Friendly Friday event that brought together over 90 entrepreneurs and service providers, to hear from a panel of innovative companies including NAIT, and the opportunity to network and foster relationships and build an eco-system.

On June 11, 2025, the City co-hosted an Edmonton Regional Innovation Network (ERIN) event, that brought together over 50+ entrepreneurs and service providers, a featuring talk discussing "Innovation Fundamentals" and why innovation matters.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION / COMMUNICATION:**

Ongoing collaborations with organizations such as Community Futures, Business Link, Edmonton Regional Innovation Network (ERIN), and Technology Alberta. The coalition of organizations in the Edmonton region that support innovation startups and enterprises. They provide support services aimed at assisting innovation companies to improve market readiness to increase profitability and longevity.

<b>IMPACTS:</b>
n/a

#### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

n/a

## Early-Stage Business Support Program

**Economic and Business Development Department** 

Presentation to EDAC - June 24, 2025



### Early-Stage Business Support Program

### **Agenda**

- 1. Summary
- 2. Implementation
- 3. Next steps





### Early-Stage Business Support Program

### **Summary:**

Launched the SMARTstart program on February 03, 2025



- An award winning and successful entrepreneurial training program offering online learning, workshops, business planning, and mentorship
- 50-to-60-hour program offered over eight months, in cohorts of up to 20 entrepreneurs and 20 mentors that consists of:
  - Online training through Masterclass at Work and the GoForth Institute
  - Workshops 12 workshops, delivered approx. twice per month facilitated by local experts
  - Mentorship established business owners from the community paired with entrepreneurs
  - Entrepreneurs Graduate from the program with a business, feasibility study, or strategic plan for their business or idea

## Early-Stage Business Support Program Implementation:

- Virtual and In-Person information sessions were held to promote the program.
- Inaugural cohort established with 16 entrepreneurs and 16 mentors
- Hosted SMARTstart Welcome Launch and Speed Connecting Session to assist in the matching process
- Entrepreneurs have completed three of their 12 workshops
- Topics ranging from Business & Strategic Planning, Legal Essentials, Taxation, HR, Financing, Sales & Marketing, Branding, Insurance, and Cyber Security
- Entrepreneurs are working on their business, feasibility, or strategic plan, with support from their mentors.
- Entrepreneurs are working through their online learning throughout the program
- Entrepreneurs will receive a Certificate of Completion at the end of the program
- SMARTstart will wrap up with a Celebration Event on Dec 11, 2025

## Early-Stage Business Support Program

Welcome Launch - Speed Connecting Session



## Early-Stage Business Support Program SMARTstart Workshops







### Early-Stage Business Support Program

### **Implementation:**

- The EBSP aims to enhance the local economic ecosystem by supporting small businesses and startups, as outlined in the City's Strategic Plan 2022-2025 (Goals 10 and 13)
- Partnership Development: Ongoing collaborations with organizations such as Community
  Futures, Business Link, Edmonton Regional Innovation Network (ERIN), and Technology
  Alberta. The coalition of organizations in the Edmonton region that support innovation startups
  and enterprises.
- On April 8<sup>th</sup>, we co-hosted a Technology Alberta "Friendly Fridays" event that brought together over 90 entrepreneurs and service providers, to hear from a panel of innovative companies including NAIT, and the opportunity to network and foster relationships and build an ecosystem.
- On June 11<sup>th</sup>, we co-hosted an Edmonton Regional Innovation Network (ERIN) event that brought together 30+ entrepreneurs and service providers, a featured talk discussing "Innovation Fundamentals" and why innovation matters.

## Early-Stage Business Support Program Hosted Tech Alberta and ERIN Events





### Early-Stage Business Support Program

### **Next steps:**

- 1. SMARTstart will launch again Feb. 2026 for a new cohort, and will run from March November
- Once successful implementation of the SMARTstart program, we will position a launch of a secondary programing, potentially to support a broader range of entrepreneurs outside of SMARTstart.

The Early-Stage Business Support Program will increase the chances of business success rate and will adapt and change over time to meet the needs of Small Businesses in our community.

Thank you!





### **REQUEST FOR DECISION**

**MEETING DATE:** June 24, 2025

**TITLE:** Adjournment - Economic Development Advisory Committee - June

24, 2025

**DIVISION:** Strategic and Communication Services

#### **SUMMARY:**

Adjournment indicates the end of the meeting and the completion of the agenda items.

#### **PROPOSED MOTION:**

THAT the Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting adjourn at TIME p.m.

#### **BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS:**

The Chair shall ask for a motion from the Committee. Once the motion has been made and the members vote, the meeting is now complete.

### **OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES:**

n/a

### **CONSULTATION / ENGAGEMENT:**

n/a

### **IMPLEMENTATION / COMMUNICATION:**

n/a

### **IMPACTS:**

n/a

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

n/a