



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, March 17, 2026, 6 p.m.

3rd Floor - Poplar Room

315 Jespersen Ave

Spruce Grove, AB T7X 3E8

|           |  |                   | Pages |
|-----------|--|-------------------|-------|
| <b>1.</b> | <b><u>CALL TO ORDER</u></b>  |                   |       |
| 1.1       | Introduction of the New City of Spruce Grove Brand   |                   |       |
| <b>2.</b> | <b><u>AGENDA</u></b>   |                   |       |
| 2.1       | Adoption of the Agenda - Economic Development Advisory Committee - March 17, 2026                                    |                   | 3     |
| <b>3.</b> | <b><u>MINUTES</u></b>  |                   |       |
| 3.1       | Approval of Minutes - Economic Development Advisory Committee Organizational and Regular Meetings - January 20, 2026 |                   | 5     |
| <b>4.</b> | <b><u>DELEGATIONS</u></b>  |                   |       |
| 4.1       | Industrial Land and Building Incentives Strategy Kick-Off  | Dave Walker       | 14    |
| 4.2       | Event Tourism Strategic Plan Workshop  | Jodi Fulford      | 30    |
| <b>5.</b> | <b><u>ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES</u></b>   |                   |       |
| 5.1       | Early-Stage Business Support Program SMARTstart Update   | Monique Pelletier | 44    |
| 5.2       | The Grove Guide  | Karla Daniels     | 53    |
| <b>6.</b> | <b><u>BUSINESS ITEMS</u></b>   |                   |       |
| <b>7.</b> | <b><u>INFORMATION ITEMS</u></b>  |                   |       |
| <b>8.</b> | <b><u>CLOSED SESSION</u></b>   |                   |       |
| <b>9.</b> | <b><u>BUSINESS ARISING FROM CLOSED SESSION</u></b>   |                   |       |

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

10.1 Adjournment - Economic Development Advisory Committee - March 17, 2026

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The City of  
**SPRUCE  
GROVE**

## **REQUEST FOR DECISION**

**MEETING DATE:**

March 17, 2026

**TITLE:**

Adoption of the Agenda - Economic Development Advisory  
Committee - March 17, 2026

**DIVISION:**

Strategic and Communication Services

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**SUMMARY:**

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

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**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

**IMPLEMENTATION / COMMUNICATION:**

n/a

**IMPACTS:**

n/a

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

n/a



The City of  
**SPRUCE  
GROVE**

## **REQUEST FOR DECISION**

**MEETING DATE:**

March 17, 2026

**TITLE:**

Minutes - Economic Development Advisory Committee  
Organizational and Regular Meetings - January 20, 2026

**DIVISION:**

Strategic and Communication Services

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**SUMMARY:**

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

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**PROPOSED MOTION:**

THAT the January 20, 2026 Economic Development Advisory Committee Organizational and Regular 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 of 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 package.

**OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES:**

THAT the January 20, 2026 Economic Development Advisory Committee Organizational and Regular meeting minutes be approved as amended.

**CONSULTATION / ENGAGEMENT:**

n/a

**IMPLEMENTATION / COMMUNICATION:**

n/a

**IMPACTS:**

n/a

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

n/a

DRAFT



**THE CITY OF SPRUCE GROVE**

**Minutes of the Organizational Meeting of EDAC**

**January 20, 2026, 6 p.m.  
3rd Floor - Poplar Room  
315 Jespersen Ave  
Spruce Grove, AB T7X 3E8**

**Members Present:**

Councillor Stevenson, Chair  
Councillor Bennett, Vice-Chair  
Councillor Carter  
Darrell Demers, Industrial Sector Representative  
Don Cooper, Industrial Sector Representative  
Jason Lohr, City Centre Business Association Representative  
Stuart Houston, Public-at-Large Representative  
Teresa Bateman, Public-at-Large Representative  
Tyler Perozni, Commercial Sector Representative

**Members Absent:**

Bruce Mullett, Greater Parkland Regional Chamber Representative  
Victor Moroz, Commercial Sector Representative

**Also in Attendance:**

Dave Walker, Administrative Liaison  
Karla Daniels, Economic Development Specialist - Industrial  
Lindsay O'Mara, City Clerk  
Monique Pelletier, Economic Development Specialist - Business Development  
Nicole Hitchens, Recording Secretary

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Erin Stevenson called the Economic Development Advisory Committee Organizational Meeting to order at 6 p.m.

1.1 Welcome and Member Introductions - 2026 Economic Development Advisory Committee

The Economic Development Advisory Committee members made introductions.

**2. AGENDA**

2.1 Adoption of the Agenda - Economic Development Advisory Committee Organizational Meeting - January 20, 2026

**Resolution:** EDAC-001-26

**Moved by:** Teresa Bateman

THAT the agenda be adopted as presented.

**Unanimously Carried**

**3. BUSINESS ITEMS**

3.1 Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair - 2026 Economic Development Advisory Committee

Lindsay O'Mara, City Clerk, provided a presentation on the appointment of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Economic Development Advisory Committee.

Committee thanked Lindsay O'Mara for the presentation.

3.2 Effective Committee Meetings and Meeting Procedures - 2026 Economic Development Advisory Committee

Lindsay O'Mara, City Clerk, provided a presentation on Effective Committee Meetings and Meeting Procedures.

Committee thanked Lindsay O'Mara for the presentation.

3.3 C-1121-20 - Economic Development Advisory Committee Bylaw - 2026 Overview

Lindsay O'Mara, City Clerk, provided a presentation on C-1121-20 - Economic Development Advisory Committee Bylaw.

Committee thanked Lindsay O'Mara for the presentation.

3.4 Economic Development Advisory Committee 2026 Meeting Schedule

Dave Walker, Administrative Liaison, provided a presentation on the 2026 Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting dates.

Committee thanked Dave Walker for the presentation.

**Resolution:** EDAC-002-26

**Moved by:** Tyler Perozni

THAT the 2026 Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting schedule be approved as presented.

**Unanimously Carried**

4. ADJOURNMENT

4.1 Adjournment - Economic Development Advisory Committee Organizational Meeting - January 20, 2026

**Resolution:** EDAC-003-26

**Moved by:** Jason Lohr

THAT the Economic Development Advisory Committee Organizational Meeting adjourn at 6:38 p.m.

**Unanimously Carried**

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Erin Stevenson, Chair

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Nicole Hitchens, Recording Secretary

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Date Signed



**THE CITY OF SPRUCE GROVE**

**Minutes of Economic Development Advisory Committee**

**January 20, 2026, 7 p.m.**

**3rd Floor - Poplar Room**

**315 Jespersen Ave**

**Spruce Grove, AB T7X 3E8**

**Members Present:**

Councillor Stevenson, Chair  
Councillor Bennett, Vice-Chair  
Councillor Carter  
Darrell Demers, Industrial Sector Representative  
Don Cooper, Industrial Sector Representative  
Jason Lohr, City Centre Business Association Representative  
Stuart Houston, Public-at-Large Representative  
Teresa Bateman, Public-at-Large Representative  
Tyler Perozni, Commercial Sector Representative

**Members Absent:**

Bruce Mullett, Greater Parkland Regional Chamber Representative  
Victor Moroz, Commercial Sector Representative

**Also in Attendance:**

Dave Walker, Administrative Liaison  
Karla Daniels, Economic Development Specialist - Industrial  
Lindsay O'Mara, City Clerk  
Monique Pelletier, Economic Development Specialist - Business Development  
Nicole Hitchens, Recording Secretary

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Erin Stevenson called the meeting to order at 6:39 p.m.

2. **AGENDA**

2.1 **Adoption of the Agenda - Economic Development Advisory Committee - January 20, 2026**

**Resolution:** EDAC-004-26

**Moved by:** Don Cooper

THAT the agenda be adopted as presented.

**Unanimously Carried**

3. **MINUTES**

3.1 **Approval of Minutes - Economic Development Advisory Committee - December 2, 2025**

**Resolution:** EDAC-005-26

**Moved by:** Tyler Perozni

THAT the December 2, 2025 Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting minutes be approved as presented.

**Unanimously Carried**

4. **DELEGATIONS**

There were no Delegations on the agenda.

5. **ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES**

There were no Administrative Updates on the agenda.

6. **BUSINESS ITEMS**

6.1 **2025 Economic Development Advisory Committee Activity Report**

**Resolution:** CSAC-006-26

**Moved by:** Councillor Spencer Bennett

THAT the 2025 Economic Development Advisory Committee Activity Report be approved and recommended to Council.

**Unanimously Carried**

6.2 2026 Economic Development Advisory Committee Work Plan Approval

**Resolution:** CSAC-007-26

**Moved by:** Stuart Houston

THAT the Economic Development Advisory Committee approve the 2026 EDAC Work Plan and recommend it to Council.

**Unanimously Carried**

**Resolution:** CSAC-008-26

**Moved by:** Tyler Perozni

THAT Economic Development Advisory Committee members Don Cooper and Victor Moroz be selected to present the 2025 EDAC Activity Report and proposed 2026 EDAC Work Plan to Council.

**Unanimously Carried**

7. **INFORMATION ITEMS**

There were no Information Items on the agenda.

8. **CLOSED SESSION**

There was no Closed Session on the agenda.

9. **BUSINESS ARISING FROM CLOSED SESSION**

There was no Business Arising from Closed Session.

10. **ADJOURNMENT**

10.1 Adjournment - Economic Development Advisory Committee - January 20, 2026

**Resolution:** CSAC-009-26

**Moved by:** Stuart Houston

DRAFT

THAT the Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting adjourn at 7:14 p.m.

**Unanimously Carried**

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Erin Stevenson, Chair

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Nicole Hitchens, Recording Secretary

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Date Signed

DRAFT



The City of  
**SPRUCE  
GROVE**

## **REQUEST FOR DECISION**

**MEETING DATE:** March 17, 2026

**TITLE:** Industrial Land and Building Incentives Strategy Kick-off

**DIVISION:** City Manager's Office

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### **SUMMARY:**

The consultants from EBP will share insight into the shortage of industrial land and buildings in Spruce Grove, the low industrial vacancy rate and strong demand within a competitive regional market. They will speak to the project background and objectives and their proposed activities and deliverables. EBP will solicit feedback from EDAC to refine their approach going forward.

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### **PROPOSED MOTION:**

A motion is not required.

### **BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS:**

To address the shortage of industrial land and buildings in Spruce Grove, the City has retained EBP to develop an Industrial Land and Building Incentives Strategy. The strategy will provide a series of recommendations on how the City can help incentivize developers to increase the supply of serviced industrial land and buildings.

EBP will be introduced to EDAC and will provide an overview of the strategy format, solicit feedback, and discuss next steps.

### **OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES:**

n/a

**CONSULTATION / ENGAGEMENT:**

n/a

**IMPLEMENTATION / COMMUNICATION:**

n/a

**IMPACTS:**

n/a

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

n/a

# Spruce Grove Industrial Land and Buildings Incentive Program



# Shape the Future.

We are an interdisciplinary team that supports sustainable decision-making in the transportation, energy, environment, and economic development sectors through data-driven, community-minded practices. We provide tailored solutions to help our public and private sector clients thrive in a dynamic world.

With offices in the US and around the globe, EBP provides a culture of decentralized, client-oriented leadership, and global collaboration and efficiency. Through our tailored and comprehensive approaches, we tackle our clients' most complex challenges and provide viable and visionary solutions that help shape the future.



**Local and regional economic evaluation, forecasting, and modeling**, including analysis of industrial land and building markets



**Corporate site selection** and location strategy, with a focus on investor decision drivers and competitiveness factors



**Economic and community development incentives** and finance, including tax-based and non-fiscal incentive design



**Workforce and human capital development**, as it relates to investment attraction and industrial growth



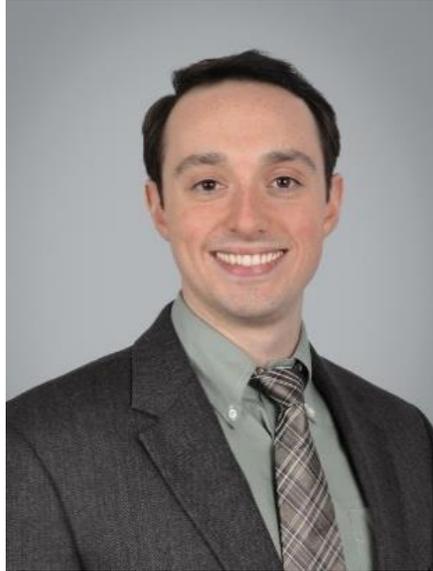
**Economic development policy and program evaluation**, including benchmarking and effectiveness assessment



**Fiscal impact analysis** for varied land uses, supporting return-on-investment analysis and Council decision-making.



EBP Economic Development Project Locations (2021-present)



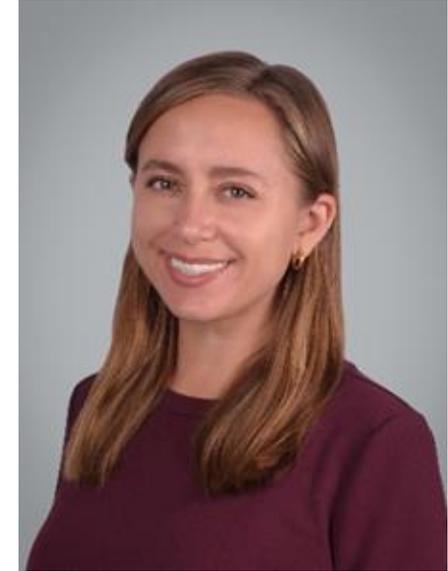
**Scott Brown**  
Project Manager



**Chris Steele**  
Officer-in-Charge



**Jane Haines**  
Analyst



**Allison Van Twisk**  
Analyst

## Spruce Grove Objectives



A clear understanding of current industrial market conditions, development constraints, and competitive pressures



A practical assessment of how peer municipalities in the region are using incentives, and which approaches would be effective for Spruce Grove



Identification of material cost, timing, and regulatory barriers that influence industrial land servicing and building development decisions



A set of incentive options that are feasible within the City's legislative, fiscal, and administrative context, including compliance with the Alberta Municipal Government Act



Decision-ready recommendations that include financial impact, return-on-investment (ROI) considerations, and a clear path to implementation



Implications of maintaining current policy (status-quo)

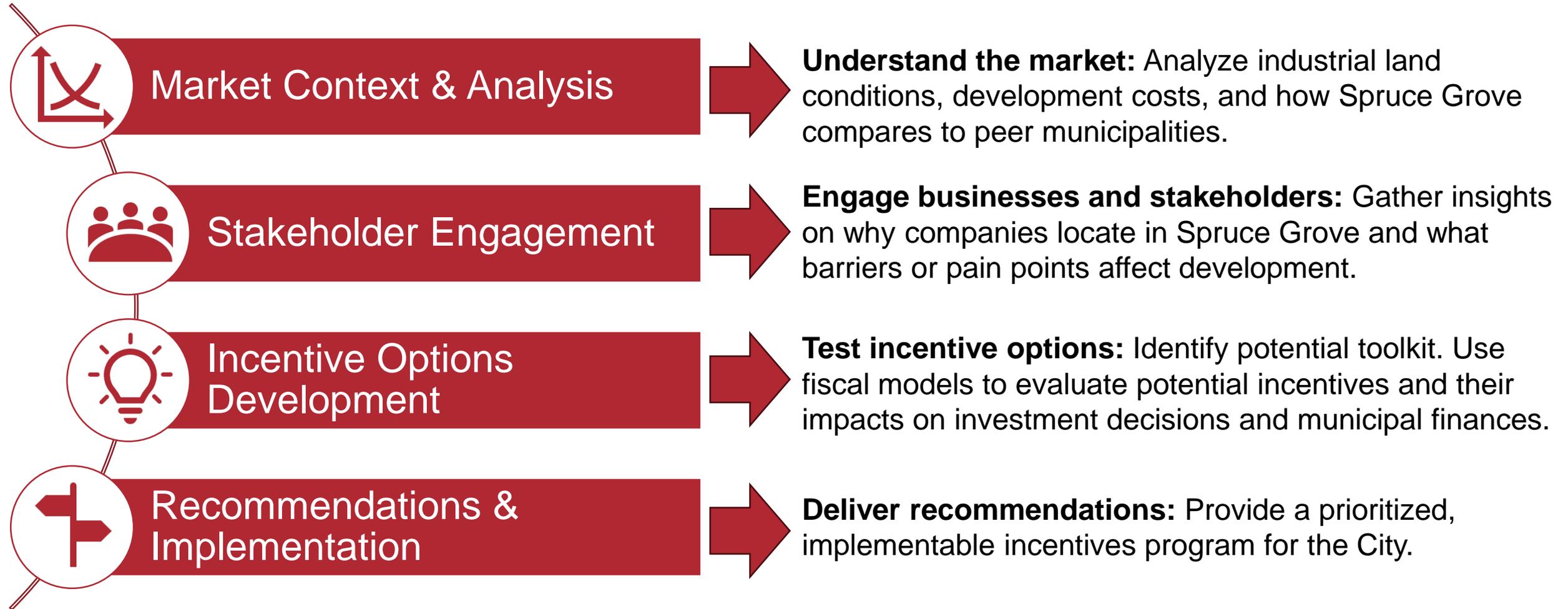
## Project Outcomes

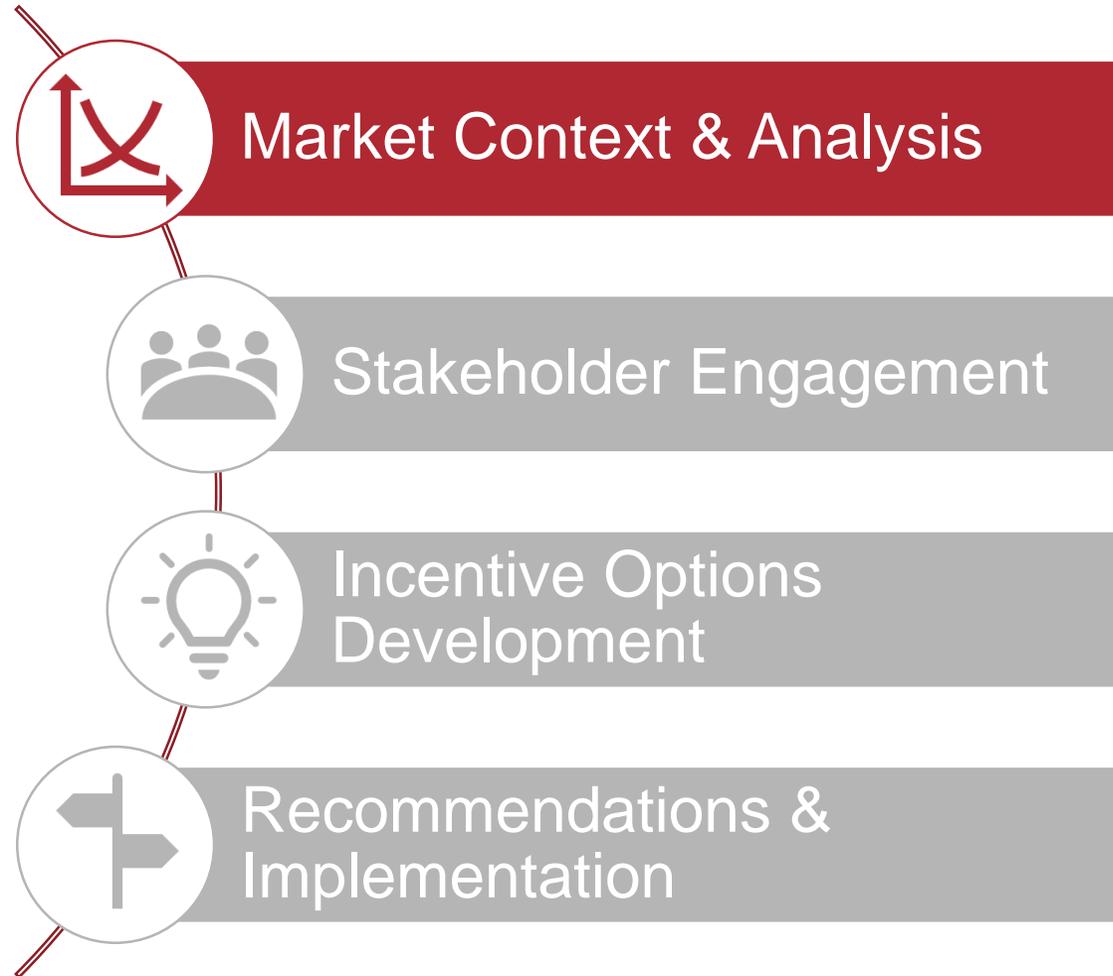
Evidence-based incentive options

Fiscal impact and ROI analysis

Implementation framework

Decision-ready recommendations for Council





## Task 1.1. Review of Existing Policies, Strategies, and Studies

- Examine Industrial Land Strategy (2020) and related economic development strategies and planning policies that shape industrial land activity

## Task 1.2. Current Industrial Land and Building Conditions

- Overview supply serviced industrial land:
  - Characteristics, absorption, and vacancy
  - Readiness and servicing/infrastructure considerations

## Task 1.3. Incentive Landscape Analysis

- Contextualize Spruce Grove among peers within EMR and Alberta to identify effective tools, common elements, and limitations

## Task 1.4. Competitive Cost Analysis

- Benchmark Spruce Grove against peer jurisdictions in industrial development costs (e.g., land, construction, labour, tax, utilities)

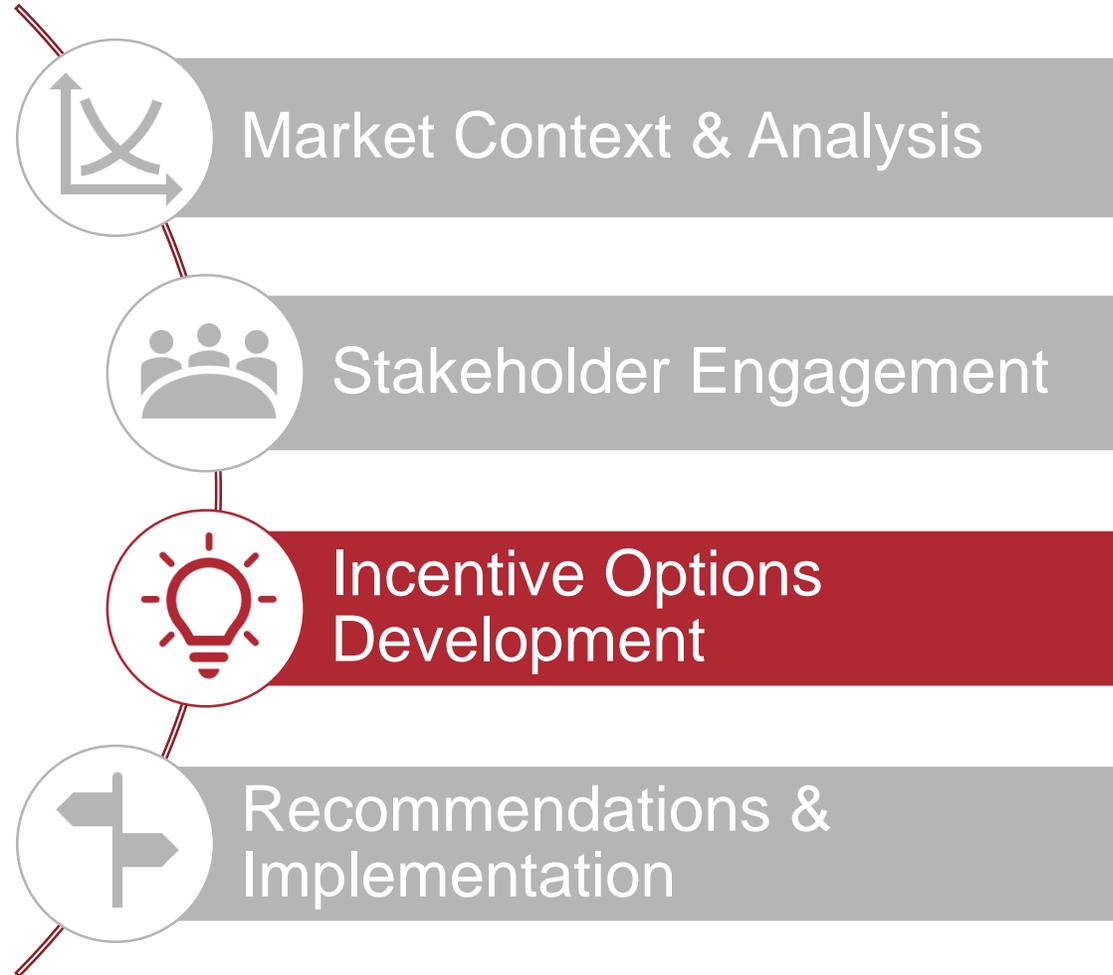
## Task 1.5. Market Behavior Analysis

- Analyze investment trends and site location determinants to understand how Spruce Grove will be perceived in the investment landscape



## Task 2.1. Stakeholder Engagement

- Conduct targeted engagement to reveal key themes, pain points, barriers, and opportunities for targeted intervention:
- 2-3 facilitated round-table discussions organized by industry or stakeholder type
- 2-3 small-group meetings with key City departments
- 3-5 one-on-one interviews with developers, landowners, and businesses



## Task 3.1. Fiscal Incentives & Modeling

- Test tax-based incentives (tax exemptions, phase-ins, fee reductions).
- Model impacts on investment decisions, City revenue, and ROI.
- Deliver an interactive tool for the City to test incentive scenarios.

## Task 3.2. Non-Fiscal Incentives

- Identify 3-5 non-financial measures to support development, e.g., faster permitting, fee reductions, regulatory changes, land readiness.
- Assess benefits, risks, and feasibility.
- Identify quick wins vs. longer-term policy changes.



## Task 4.1 – Incentive Program Recommendations

- Develop **draft incentive options** based on analysis, benchmarking, and stakeholder input.

## Task 4.2 – Prioritization Workshop

- Facilitate a **City workshop to review and prioritize incentive options** based on impact, feasibility, and alignment with City priorities.

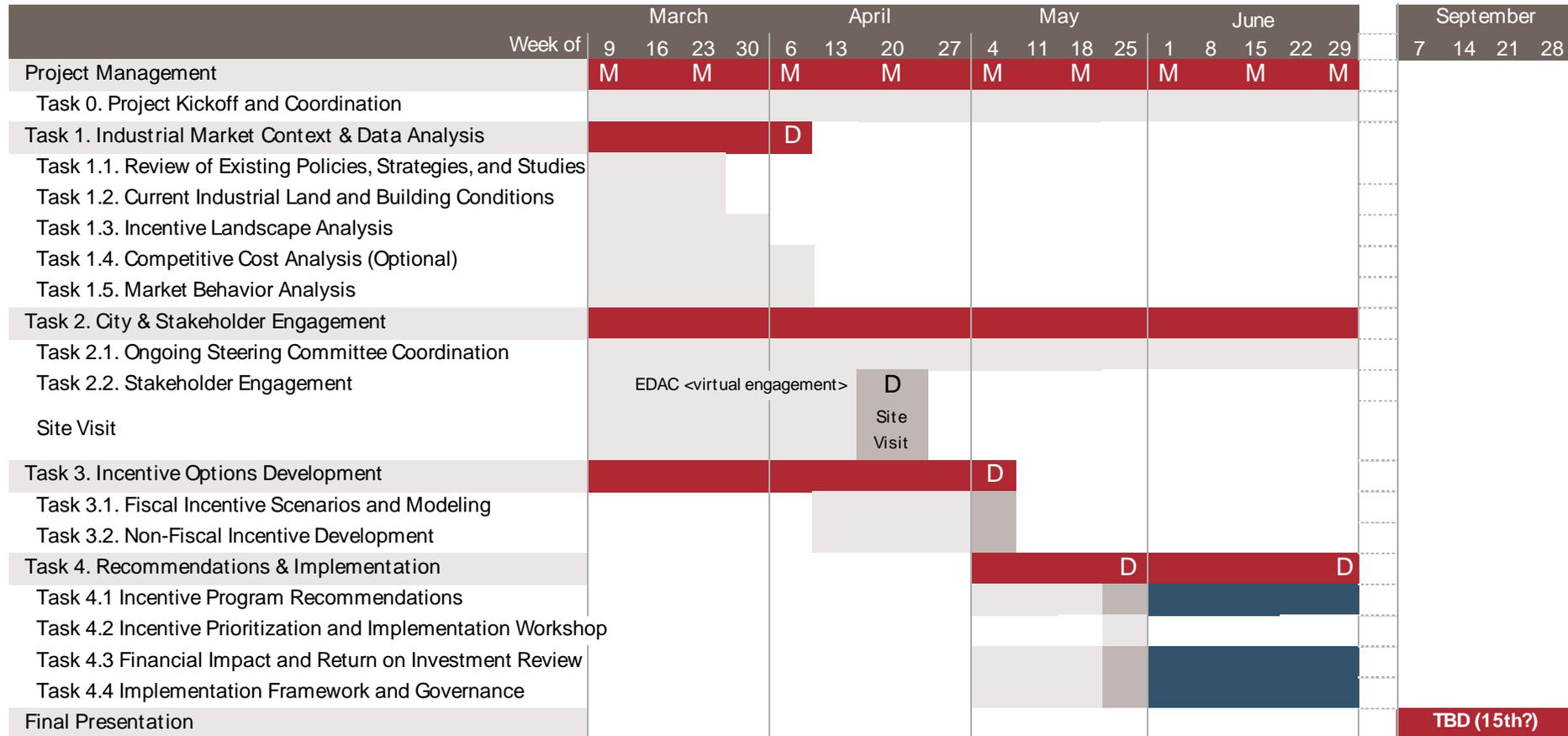
## Task 4.3 – Financial Impact & ROI Review

- Refine **fiscal analysis for prioritized incentives**, including municipal revenue impacts and ROI.

## Task 4.4 – Implementation Framework

- Develop a **practical implementation plan** outlining steps, governance, costs, and monitoring requirements.

# Project Timeline



| Key  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| <span style="background-color: #c00000; color: white; padding: 2px;"> </span>            | Task Duration    |
| <span style="background-color: #d3d3d3; padding: 2px;"> </span>                          | Subtask Duration |
| <span style="background-color: #cccccc; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">D</span> | Deliverable      |
| <span style="background-color: #cccccc; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">M</span> | Check-in Meeting |
| <span style="background-color: #003366; color: white; padding: 2px;"> </span>            | Revision         |



Thank you!

EBP 

## EDAC's role in the project

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Assess feasibility and anticipate challenges



Validate market and administrative barriers with on-the-ground knowledge



Ensure recommendations reflect real-world conditions and align with City objectives



Weigh in on incentive ideas

- 1** Why now? What inspired this project at this moment?
- 2** What peers do you compare Spruce Grove with in the EMR, Alberta, and Canada? What sort of city does Spruce Grove aspire to be like?
- 3** What are the primary goals of the project? What would be the signs of success?
- 4** What challenges or risks do you think EBP will encounter in this project?
- 5** How do you want this project to fit into the economic development strategy?



The City of  
**SPRUCE  
GROVE**

## REQUEST FOR DECISION

**MEETING DATE:** March 17, 2026

**TITLE:** Event Tourism Strategic Plan Workshop

**DIVISION:** City Manager's Office

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### **SUMMARY:**

RC Strategies will provide an update on the status of the Event Tourism Strategic Plan and EDAC will participate in a roundtable workshop to provide input.

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### **PROPOSED MOTION:**

A motion is not required.

### **BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS:**

In 2025, the City retained RC Strategies to develop an Event Tourism Strategy aimed at enhancing the City's ability to attract and support sport, cultural, and business events.

An update on the status of the strategy will be presented. EDAC will then participate in a roundtable workshop to provide input, share ideas, and to further guide the direction before an updated draft of the Strategy is presented at a future EDAC meeting.

### **OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES:**

n/a

### **CONSULTATION / ENGAGEMENT:**

n/a

**IMPLEMENTATION / COMMUNICATION:**

n/a

**IMPACTS:**

n/a

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

n/a

SPRUCE GROVE

# *Amplified*

## Event Hosting Strategy

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Presentation to the Economic Development Advisory Committee

**Building the Right Mix of Events  
to Increase Visitor Stays and Spending**

## Three Strategic Priorities

1. The Right Events for Spruce Grove

2. Great to Work With

3. Be Future Focused

# Today's Agenda

*What we'll cover in this presentation*

**01**

## **The Economic Opportunity**

Why event hosting is a direct driver of tourism revenue

**02**

## **Where Spruce Grove Stands Today**

Strengths, gaps, and what the strategy tells us

**03**

## **Lessons from Comparable Communities**

What Riverboat Days, Discovery Days & Pioneer Days teach us

**04**

## **Building the Right Event Mix**

Existing events + new signature events = sustained visitor growth

**05**

## **Increasing Visitor Stays & Spending**

The economic model behind the event portfolio

**06**

## **Governance & Next Steps**

The Tourism & Event Hosting Committee and implementation pathway

# The Economic Opportunity

*Events are one of the most direct tools for activating tourism revenue*



## Visitor Spending

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Restaurants, hotels, shops, and fuel all benefit when events bring people to town



## Overnight Stays = 2x Spend

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Visitors who stay overnight spend approximately twice as much as day-trippers



## Ripple Effect

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Strong event culture leads to improved facilities, stronger organizations, and city-wide recognition

*The strategy's vision: 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.*

# Where Spruce Grove Stands Today

*A strong foundation with clear opportunities to grow*

## STRENGTHS

- › New infrastructure: Tri-Leisure Centre, Fuhr Sports Park, Civic Centre
- › Proven track record: Alberta Summer Games, CCAA National Championships, Doyle Cup
- › Active volunteers and strong community organizations
- › Growing, family-oriented population

## WEAKNESSES

- › Limited policies supporting event hosting
- › Staff resourcing constraints for event attraction
- › Limited public transit for large events
- › Accommodation gaps for out-of-town visitors

## OPPORTUNITIES

- › Develop signature events unique to Spruce Grove
- › Attract regional tourism through well-marketed, high-impact events
- › Expand partnerships with businesses, schools, sport and cultural groups
- › Grow volunteer base capacity

## THREATS

- › Competition from Edmonton and surrounding communities
- › Volunteer fatigue and recruitment challenges
- › Limited higher-quality accommodation options
- › Economic fluctuations affecting sponsorship

# Lessons from Comparable Communities

*What Riverboat Days, Discovery Days & Pioneer Days tell us about building lasting events*

## Riverboat Days

*Terrace, BC · 30+ years*

Heritage identity = cohesion across diverse programming

10-day multi-format structure maximizes community reach

Independent volunteer society sustains the event long-term

Arts festival integration opens funding eligibility

## Discovery Days

*Dawson City, YK · 100+ years*

Clear narrative (gold rush) makes the event unforgettable

Multi-venue arts festival extends economic footprint

Accommodation sells out weeks in advance, plan capacity early

Combining sport, arts and heritage serves all demographics

## Pioneer Days

*Steinbach, MB · 57 years*

Chamber + Heritage Village co-governance shares risk & costs

120+ parade entries signal deep community ownership

August long weekend anchoring drives regional attendance

Connects residents to place through shared origin story

**Key Takeaway for Spruce Grove: Lasting events need identity, distributed economic and a mix of community + visitor programming; not just a bid strategy.**

# The Event Level Framework

*A tiered approach ensures resources are directed where they create the most impact*

## A-LEVEL

*TARGET: 1–2 per year*

Provincial/national championships · Large sport tournaments ·  
Headline cultural events

High support: Multi-department coordination, tourism  
marketing, logistics, post-event evaluation

## B-LEVEL

*Community & regional*

Regional tournaments · Partner-led festivals · Mid-sized cultural  
events · Signature Community Events

Moderate support: Guidance from Recreation & Culture, facility  
coordination, light communications

## C-LEVEL

*Grassroots*

Block parties · School events · Club activities · Charity runs · Church  
events

Minimal support: Standard permits only — Recreation & Culture  
not involved beyond approvals

*Strategic Recommendation: Add a 'Signature Community Event' designation within B-Level for events with long-term identity-building potential and are evaluated beyond economic metrics alone.*

# Building the Right Event Mix

*Strengthening what exists + adding what's missing to create a full-year economic engine*

## STRENGTHEN EXISTING EVENTS

### Canada Day & Light Up

*Build visitor overnight packages around these anchor events*

### Farmers' Market

*Extend Saturday market into a wider weekend festival draw*

### Saints Hockey & BCHL Events

*Leverage venue profile to attract provincial/national tournaments*

### Alberta Summer/Winter Games

*Use proven legacy to secure recurring multi-sport events*

### Existing Sport Tournaments

*Systematically grow regional to provincial reach via evaluation matrix*

## ADD COMPLEMENTARY NEW EVENTS

### Signature Summer Festival

*Multi-day, identity-anchored*

### Cultural Heritage Weekend

*Celebrate western heritage & diverse cultures; federal funding eligible*

### Outdoor Music / Arts Series

*Activate outdoor spaces; builds creative economy and overnight stays*

### Regional Sport Hub Events

*Target national championships aligned to new HMP capacity*

### Food & Agri-Tourism Events

*Leverage proximity to farmland; shoulder season visitor draw*

# The Signature Event Opportunity

Every great host community has one event that defines it — Spruce Grove can build that event now

## What a Signature Event Does

- Creates a repeating annual visitor draw that compounds over time
- Generates media coverage and social sharing that no ad budget can replicate
- Anchors surrounding B and C-level events into a coherent identity
- Builds volunteer depth — people commit to something they believe in
- Unlocks federal and provincial heritage/culture funding streams
- Differentiates Spruce Grove from Edmonton and neighbouring communities

## Building It: A Phased Approach

### Year 1–2

### Identify & Test

Run a pilot signature event; evaluate community resonance, attendance, and visitor origin data

### Year 3–4

### Build & Formalize

Establish a dedicated event society; grow the program; seek B-level community event designation

### Year 5+

### Amplify & Attract

Multi-day format; regional tourism marketing; pursue federal arts/heritage funding

Comparable communities show that 30–57 year old festivals all started as modest single-day events. The time to plant that seed is now.

# Increasing Visitor Stays & Spending

*Translating the event portfolio into measurable economic outcomes*



## A-Level Events

Provincial/national draws attract out-of-region visitors who require accommodation



## Multi-Day Events

Events spanning 2–3 days convert day-trippers into overnight guests



## Complementary Programming

Side events extend visitor stay duration and fill shoulder periods



## Partnership Packages

Hotel + event bundles coordinated through Tourism & Event Hosting Committee

EVENT PORTFOLIO → VISITOR ATTRACTION → OVERNIGHT STAYS → VISITOR SPENDING → LOCAL ECONOMIC BENEFIT

## The Accommodation Gap

The SWOT identifies limited higher-quality accommodation as a key threat — and comparable communities confirm it is the single biggest constraint on overnight visitor growth.

**Action required:** Work with the hospitality sector proactively to grow accommodation inventory before pursuing A-level bids — not after winning them.

## Measuring What Matters

- › Estimated visitor spending per event (matrix criterion)
- › Hotel occupancy uplift during event weekends
- › Visitor origin data (% from outside Spruce Grove)
- › Average length of stay for event attendees
- › Local business revenue generation per event

# Governance: Tourism & Event Hosting Committee

*The coordinating structure that turns strategy into action*

## Strategic Guidance

- › Advise on priorities & resource allocation
- › Review event assessment criteria
- › Guide long-term portfolio development

## Community Liaison

- › Diverse community perspectives inform decisions
- › Address programming displacement concerns
- › Facilitate City ↔ community communication

## TOURISM & EVENT HOSTING COMMITTEE

## Partnership Development

- › Regional collaboration opportunities
- › Connect organizers to facilities & resources
- › Develop innovative funding models

## Performance Oversight

- › Review annual portfolio outcomes
- › Assess strategy effectiveness
- › Ensure accountability for public resources

*EDAC role: Champion the Committee's establishment and provide economic development expertise as a standing member*

# Recommended Next Steps

*Turning the strategy into action — phased implementation for sustainable growth*

## Immediate (0–6 months)

Establish Tourism & Event Hosting Steering Committee with EDAC representation

Finalize and adopt the event evaluation matrix for immediate use

Audit existing events against the A/B/C framework; identify B-level candidates for Signature designation

Begin hospitality sector conversations around accommodation inventory growth

## Near-Term (6–18 months)

Pilot one new complementary signature event concept (e.g., summer festival, cultural weekend)

Submit 1–2 targeted A-level event bids aligned with local facility capacity

Develop a volunteer development and recognition program

Establish baseline economic metrics: visitor spend, overnight stays, hotel occupancy uplift

## Long-Term (18+ months)

Formalize a community event society for the emerging signature event

Pursue federal Building Communities Through Arts & Heritage funding for cultural events

Develop regional event calendar (and coordinate with Stony Plain and Parkland County)

Conduct first annual portfolio review: outcomes vs. community and economic targets

SPRUCE GROVE

# *Amplified*

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The right events. The right mix. The right time.

Spruce Grove has the assets, the community spirit, and the strategic framework to build an event culture that grows visitor stays, drives local spending, and puts our city on the map as a destination worth travelling for.

## Questions & Discussion



The City of  
**SPRUCE  
GROVE**

## **REQUEST FOR DECISION**

**MEETING DATE:** March 17, 2026

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

**DIVISION:** City Manager's Office

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### **SUMMARY:**

EDAC will be provided an update on the 2026 SMARTstart program which is designed to support new or early-stage businesses in Spruce Grove.

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### **PROPOSED MOTION:**

A motion is not required.

### **BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS:**

The SMARTstart program is a made-in-Alberta Entrepreneurial Development Program, that has been supporting entrepreneurs for the past 13 years. The program is designed to support new business or early-stage businesses, as well as for those that are interested in giving back to their community by becoming a mentor to support a new entrepreneur.

Applications for the 2026 SMARTstart program closed on March 1, 2026. The new cohort will be formed, and the program will run from April - November, 2026.

EDAC will be provided an update of the SMARTstart program and members will be encouraged to continue to support the program as mentors and subject-expert presenters.

**OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES:**

n/a

**CONSULTATION / ENGAGEMENT:**

n/a

**IMPLEMENTATION / COMMUNICATION:**

n/a

**IMPACTS:**

n/a

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

n/a

# Early-Stage Business Support Program

**Economic and Business Development Department**  
Presentation to EDAC - March 17, 2026

# Early-Stage Business Support Program

## Agenda

- Summary
- Updates
- Next steps



# Early-Stage Business Support Program



INCREASE YOUR CHANCES  
**OF BUSINESS  
SUCCESS**

**SMARTstart**  
setting your business up for success



# Early-Stage Business Support Program

## Summary:

- The **SMARTstart** program was launched on February 3, 2025
- An award winning and successful entrepreneurial training program that provides:
  - **Online training** - through Masterclass at Work and the GoForth Institute
  - **Workshops** - 12 workshops, delivered in-person bi-weekly facilitated by local experts
  - **Mentorship** - entrepreneurs are paired with established business owners
  - **Entrepreneurs** - complete the program with a business, feasibility study, or strategic plan for their business or business idea
- 50 - 60-hour program delivered over eight months, in cohorts of up to 20 entrepreneurs and 20 mentors
- The inaugural 2025 SMARTstart cohort was formed with 17 entrepreneurs and 17 mentors

# Early-Stage Business Support Program

## Updates:

- The SMARTstart Program will run again in 2026
- Applications closed on March 15<sup>th</sup>
- Applicants will be notified by March 31<sup>st</sup>
- Welcome Launch Kick Off event on April 7<sup>th</sup>
- Workshops and Online Learning will go from April - November
- Workshop topics will include:
  - Identifying Fears
  - Business & Strategic Planning
  - Legal Matters
  - Insurance for Small Business
  - Human Resources
  - Financial Tools & Reports
  - Financing
  - Taxation
  - Branding
  - Marketing
  - Sales
  - Networking

# Early-Stage Business Support Program

## Updates:

- Throughout the program Entrepreneurs will:
  - Participate in bi-weekly workshops either in-person or virtual
  - Work on their business, feasibility, or strategic plan with support from their mentors
  - Complete online learning throughout the program
  - Receive a Certificate of Completion at the end of the program
- Entrepreneurs and Mentors will gather over three Peer-to-Peer sessions, to inspire participants through a panel & roundtable discussions, and fireside chat with insights from entrepreneurs at different stages of their business evolution.
- SMARTstart will wrap up with a Celebration Event on December 11<sup>th</sup>

# Early-Stage Business Support Program

## Next steps:

Once successful implementation of the **SMARTstart** program, we will consider secondary programming, 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!

Economic and Business Development



The City of  
**SPRUCE  
GROVE**

## REQUEST FOR DECISION

**MEETING DATE:** March 17, 2026

**TITLE:** The Grove Guide - Online Destination Guide

**DIVISION:** City Manager's Office

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### **SUMMARY:**

The Grove Guide is Spruce Grove's online destination guide that highlights local experiences and businesses. It features an interactive map, an events calendar, and highlights attractions in the region. EDAC will be given a live demonstration and provided with an overview of the maintenance and promotion.

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### **PROPOSED MOTION:**

A motion is not required.

### **BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS:**

The Grove Guide, Spruce Grove's new online destination guide is designed to help visitors discover what Spruce Grove has to offer while they are in our City. Created to position Spruce Grove as a compelling destination for both short visits and longer stays, The Grove Guide showcases the diverse experiences and businesses that can be found in the city.

The Grove Guide features an interactive map with broad categories that list things to do, places to eat, where to stay, star attractions, and more along with an events calendar. It also showcases regional attractions that can easily be accessed by a stayover in Spruce Grove; such as golf courses, cultural experiences, events, and recreation opportunities.

EDAC will be provided a demonstration of the The Grove Guide with an opportunity to try it out on their mobile device, an overview on how the guide is being maintained, and where it is being promoted.

**OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES:**

n/a

**CONSULTATION / ENGAGEMENT:**

n/a

**IMPLEMENTATION / COMMUNICATION:**

n/a

**IMPACTS:**

n/a

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

n/a



The City of  
**SPRUCE  
GROVE**

## **REQUEST FOR DECISION**

**MEETING DATE:** March 17, 2026

**TITLE:** Adjournment - Economic Development Advisory Committee -  
March 17, 2026

**DIVISION:** Strategic and Communication Services

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### **SUMMARY:**

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

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### **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