

INTRODUCTION



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“THE GLOBAL EMBRACE” EDMONTON’S BID TO HOST EXPO 2017

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What distinguishes Edmonton? Who lives here, and why? And what is it that we might contribute to one another, and to the world? These are vital inquiries for a city on the threshold of broader global stature, and it is through such reflection that a city advances. But how best can a city pose and respond to these questions?

One of the simplest and most effective ways do so, while simultaneously reaching out to the larger world, is to secure a global platform for exploration, innovation, connection, and interaction. There are very few opportunities for a truly global exchange available to cities; in fact, there are primarily two – the Olympic Games and hosting an EXPO, or “world’s fair”.

The recently concluded Beijing Olympic Games amply demonstrated that for all our diversity, we still share common bonds. EXPOs are designed precisely to embrace that combination of diversity and commonality, and Edmonton, a famously welcoming and participatory city, has arrived at a point in its history when it is ideally suited to host an EXPO.

2017 presents a unique opportunity for our city and our country. That year will be Canada’s 150th birthday celebration – and a point at which our city can show the world we are an economically prosperous city, an environmental leader and a recognized cultural centre with a rich heritage and multi-cultural texture.

Hosting an EXPO provides a unique platform for the exchange of knowledge and growing understanding. More importantly, it’s a chance to align our community around a shared mission. The theme for Edmonton’s EXPO 2017 bid has not yet been decided. It will be of great importance to choose an idea with global resonance and ongoing relevance, and one in which every country of the world has a stake. Once our city’s theme is chosen, Edmonton’s EXPO will act as a synaptic link allowing Edmonton to touch and spark and create with the rest of the world.

An EXPO bid. It’s a monumental undertaking, and we need to be sure the hard work will be worth the benefits. The broader goals of having an EXPO are to foster relationships between nations and to have the EXPO act as a cultural, technological and diplomatic tool for society’s benefit, but EXPOs can also draw millions of visitors to the host city.

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If successful in its bid, Edmonton will quickly become a centre for innovation and development in our theme area. Conferences in advance of EXPO 2017 will be held, attracting the world's best and brightest to Edmonton. The post-EXPO legacy can build on that recognition and attraction of ideas and talent through the establishment of permanent facilities and centres focusing on the theme area. In short, EXPO 2017 will make Edmonton a recognized world centre for work and thought on our theme subject.

The International Exhibition Bureau (BIE) encourages cities seeking an EXPO to use it as a development tool. Hosting EXPO 2017 will allow Edmonton to support initiatives that will benefit the city not just intellectually, but physically. Past EXPO cities have seen transformations in their civic landscapes, and enduring revitalization and regeneration. There will be many opportunities for Edmonton to use EXPO 2017 as a stimulus to consider how we want our city to function as a physical space. Centres for Study, housing, public transportation, public spaces - all of these and more can become an infrastructure legacy.

Hosting an EXPO will also benefit Edmonton in another very important way.

We can broaden ourselves by welcoming the world to our city. Through EXPO 2017 we can bring a message to the world. We can say: *We have a vision for the world that is generous and bold, and so we welcome the world to our city to share and grow knowledge, and while the world is here, to learn about us.*

Edmonton is a city of the future, a prosperous, confident, friendly, innovative place, and that's worth sharing.

In so doing, we can share with the world what it means to have all these things we cherish together in the same place, this city called Edmonton. Hosting EXPO 2017 is the perfect vehicle to advance our aims.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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Edmonton is a confident, growing and ambitious city. It has become a leading centre of higher education and research; of arts and culture; and of health, wellness and sport. As Alberta's capital city, it serves as the natural focal point for showcasing our province and people to a world that is hungry for new energy, innovation and ideas.

It is against that backdrop that work has been undertaken to assess the viability of an Edmonton bid for EXPO. As a Special Initiative of City Council, the World EXPO project has involved high-level research and analysis by a Project Committee made up of City officials, and a Citizen's Committee comprised of community and business leaders across Edmonton. These Committees have examined the basic elements of EXPOs and the requirements associated with hosting an EXPO; assessed the capacity of Edmonton to meet these requirements; and provided initial ideas and thoughts concerning the key elements and processes for an official EXPO bid.

Also known as the World Exposition or World's Fair, the EXPO is one of three major international events, including the Olympic Games and the World Cup (soccer). Regulated and awarded by the International Exhibitions Bureau (BIE), EXPOs are intended to share knowledge, information, ideas and innovation around a theme of future significance to the global community. Initially conceived as an international exhibition of new inventions from around the world – such as the telephone, the electric light and the typewriter – the EXPO has evolved into a broader event aimed at addressing the opportunities and challenges facing the planet. Modern EXPOs are centered on themes such as water and sustainable development, world food supply, urbanization, and oceanic and coastal preservation.

Hosting an EXPO is a major undertaking – one that requires countless hours of planning, thousands of volunteers, and significant financial commitment. The planning aspect of an EXPO is perhaps the most important. Well-planned EXPOs permanently improve a host city's urban areas and quality of life, leaving lasting legacies such as improved transportation corridors, new parks and recreation areas, unique architecture, increased housing, augmented community spirit and enhanced international recognition. Poorly planned EXPOs, by contrast, often result in vacated buildings, deteriorated sites, and financial drains on government budgets and taxpayers.

Fortunately, Edmonton has a strong record of successfully and competently hosting major international events, including the 2005 World Masters Games, the 2001 World Championships in Athletics, the 1998 World Volunteer Conference, the 1983 World University Games (Universiade), and the 1978 Commonwealth Games. Edmonton also routinely hosts a wide array of regional, national and international conferences and sporting events, including the Canadian Finals Rodeo and Edmonton Indy (formerly Grand Prix). Over time the City has developed world-class facilities and institutions suitable for major international gatherings. Most importantly, Edmonton benefits from a citizenry that actively volunteers and participates in such events, resulting in a huge pool of experienced, committed and energetic community members.

A strong argument in favour of an Edmonton EXPO is the large number of ways the event would advance the objectives of the City, the province and the country.

All of the major goals articulated in the City's vision would be served, including: building Edmonton as an international destination; supporting arts and culture; integrating sustainable and smart urban design; contributing to diversity; and inspiring energy and community spirit. The Alberta government's five key priorities would be advanced. EXPO would also be consistent with the mandate and goals of Canadian Heritage, which is the federal department responsible for Canada's participation in the BIE and EXPOs.

Key findings from the Conceptual Study report include the following:

- Edmonton has the capacity to host a recognized EXPO in 2017. EXPOs come in two classes: recognized and registered. Edmonton's size and location would not accommodate hosting a large registered EXPO in 2020, but Edmonton could pursue a recognized EXPO in 2017. The recognized EXPO would also offer better programming and cultural opportunities, since it would fall in the year of Canada's 150th anniversary.
- A recognized EXPO 2017 in Edmonton would have an estimated target attendance of 4.7 million visits and would welcome 1.2 million visitors to the city. Edmonton would have sufficient capacity to accommodate these levels.
- EXPO 2017 in Edmonton will require a strong and memorable theme; a suitable site no more than 25 hectares in size; support areas for transportation, storage, and accommodation; a solid post-EXPO legacy plan; an entertaining and eventful arts and cultural program; and a strong communications plan. Many options exist, and detailed work in Phase 2 of the EXPO initiative will identify these key elements.

- A number of financial elements have been identified for EXPO 2017 in Edmonton, including: bidding and planning costs; capital and operating costs associated with developing and running EXPO 2017; and capital investments in related municipal infrastructure. Although costs of EXPOs vary widely, preliminary assessment suggests that an EXPO 2017 in Edmonton would lie in the same financial range as EXPOs hosted by Vancouver and Zaragoza – around \$1.6 billion to \$3 billion (in 2008 dollars). Rigorous financial analysis of EXPO 2017 costs, potential revenue streams, and economic impacts will need to be undertaken in Phase 2 of the EXPO initiative.
- The bid process for an EXPO will involve a number of key steps and a high degree of competitiveness. Edmonton will need to compete with other Canadian cities to become the official Canadian bid city. It will then need to compete internationally under the BIE's official bid process, which involves an enquiry mission, two major symposiums on the proposed EXPO theme, and major presentations to the BIE's General Assembly. At every step of the process, the support of international organizations, partners, governments, and BIE members will need to be secured.

The findings from this Conceptual Study present a compelling case to proceed with Phase 2 work on a Detailed Business Case for EXPO 2017 in Edmonton. Led by an appropriate and creative organizational and governance structure, Edmonton is well-positioned to advance a competitive and memorable application to host the world in 2017.