

SECTION 3: THE PLANNING CONTEXT



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Before undertaking the large volume of work required to make a successful bid for EXPO 2017, it is worthwhile examining whether an EXPO would advance the interests and objectives of our city, province and country.

EDMONTON'S EXPERIENCE

The City of Edmonton has a proud history of hosting large international events ranging from sport to arts and culture to the social sciences. Achievements in international sport include the 1978 Commonwealth Games, the 1983 Summer Universiade, the 2001 World Championships in Athletics, and the 2005 World Masters Games. The city has been home to the Canadian Finals Rodeo every year since 1974 and new events continue to be attracted to our city, including Edmonton Indy (formerly Grand Prix). Other festivals include the Fringe Festival, Heritage Festival, Edmonton International Street Fest and Folk Music Festival. In addition, Edmonton has a number of internationally-recognized venues and programs including The Citadel Theatre, the Francis Winspear Centre for Music and the widely recognized Arts program at the University of Alberta. A more complete list of Edmonton's hosting record can be found in Appendix 2.

The region is home to a strong network of international-level facilities, services and infrastructure, and has a record of holding events on budget and on time. During the June, July and August time frame, Edmonton's weather is generally ideal for major international events, boasting plenty of sunshine and a moderate climate.

Most importantly, Edmonton enjoys an enviable level of community involvement and volunteerism that makes every event a success. Volunteers in Edmonton are experienced, skilled, organized, committed and enthusiastic. The business community is a strong and stable financial supporter of events. And the city's festival atmosphere during the summer months brings Edmontonians out by the hundreds of thousands.

Edmonton has demonstrated that it is competent, consistent, and committed when it comes to welcoming the world and holding international events. Edmontonians take great pride in these achievements, and relish the opportunity to take on bigger challenges. A preliminary survey of 300 residents from Edmonton and the surrounding region is illustrative of this great spirit:

- 92% of respondents say they have heard of EXPOs
- 89% of respondents agree that Edmonton has a history of success when it comes to hosting large scale events
- 85% of respondents indicate they somewhat or strongly support the City of Edmonton putting forward a bid to host EXPO 2017

- 87% of respondents agree that the level of volunteer support for EXPO 2017 would be strong if Edmonton were to host the event

As a city, we are ready to take on a bold new challenge like EXPO. And from our record of past achievements, we know we have the experience and expertise to make it a success.

ALIGNMENT WITH EDMONTON'S OBJECTIVES

Hosting EXPO 2017 will significantly advance the strategic objectives and aspirations we hold for Edmonton. It supports our position as a provincial capital and will help us achieve our city vision.

In May 2008, City Council unveiled **envision Edmonton** - a vision designed with input from Edmontonians, which articulates goals for our city and describes how we want Edmonton to look by 2040. The city vision was designed to guide decision-makers as the city grows and encounters new challenges and opportunities.

EXPO 2017 would help achieve many of the goals and elements in envision Edmonton.

An energy city - EXPO would contribute incredible human energy and vitality to Edmonton, stimulating a high level of involvement, spirit and community pride. Thousands of volunteers would come together to welcome the world. Edmonton could also showcase its environmental stewardship by using new and alternative energy sources to power its EXPO. This could serve as a lasting legacy for the city and the nucleus of a new sector of economic development.

A city of design - The innovative and inspiring design and architectural possibilities offered by an EXPO could transform Edmonton. Elements of sustainable development, contemporary urban planning, smart building, and universal accessibility could be incorporated into facilities and pavilions that would be designed with post-EXPO purposes in mind.

An international destination - Welcoming the world to EXPO 2017 would boost the city's international recognition and offer the chance to showcase our incredible universities and colleges, our world-class health and research facilities, and the business opportunities we offer. New linkages with other continents would be formed.

A recreation and arts city - Edmonton's arts and culture community would be supported by an EXPO, and its recreational areas would be enjoyed by domestic and international visitors alike. Facilities built for EXPO could be given new life as museums, galleries, theatres, and public parks.

A city of diversity – With visitors and participants from around the world converging on Edmonton for EXPO 2017, cultures would connect, education and knowledge would flourish, and political, social and economic ideas and perspectives would be shared. Edmonton would serve as a crossroads for big thinking – a great city on a river that carves out a new space of public debate about the challenges facing the global community and the opportunities on its horizon.

Hosting EXPO 2017 would also provide Edmonton with the opportunity to advance the objectives of several related plans and priorities, including:

Planning – As the City crafts a new **Municipal Development Plan** to anticipate the next 30 years of growth, it will need to consider how to integrate residential areas, commercial services, transportation, infrastructure and the environment. The site of an EXPO 2017 would offer a large range of possibilities for the city's future growth. Strategically planning the EXPO site so that it is seamlessly integrated into the new City Plan would advance the city's planning goals and foster urban renewal.

Transportation – The City's **Transportation Master Plan** seeks to efficiently move people while expanding mass transit and ensuring integration with Edmonton's land use planning. Hosting EXPO 2017 would facilitate investment in Edmonton's transportation systems, including the LRT, and advance the City's long-term goals of transit-oriented development, high-quality urban design and transit-centered growth.

Environment – The City's **Environmental Strategic Plan** maintains the healthy climate and high-quality land, air, and water resources important to Edmontonians. Edmonton has shown leadership in pursuing environmentally-friendly building design and boasts state-of-the-art waste management facilities. Edmonton's River Valley stands as a testament to the City's commitment to responsible growth and environmental protection. EXPO 2017 could further augment the City's efforts, employing leading-edge building techniques and operational approaches that minimize the environmental footprint and demonstrate green leadership.

Arts and Culture – Edmonton's cultural plan **The Art of Living** makes us a great creative city. Edmonton has a commitment to a unified vision for the city where arts and heritage are valued, celebrated as an integral part of life and connected to the community. This is expressed through the enthusiastic participation of all citizens, the centrality of arts and heritage to education, and support for arts and heritage by business and government. The international influences inherent in EXPO 2017 could support and nurture the many different aspects of culture that are reflected in Edmonton, Alberta, and Canada.

The objectives and opportunities associated with EXPO would also advance many of the exciting developments taking place in Edmonton. The sharing of information and innovation that comes with EXPO would converge with the amazing knowledge frontiers being explored in our city, including:

- Major expansions of the University of Alberta and the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, in both teaching and research excellence
- Continued growth of the Edmonton Research Park featuring leading research and development in a host of high technology areas
- Ongoing leadership in biotechnology, with over half of Alberta's biotech companies calling Edmonton home
- Investments in new initiatives such as Enterprise Square, aimed at leveraging new discoveries into commercial products and services
- Leading achievements and investments in the Health Science – such as the Edmonton Protocol for the treatment of diabetes, and the Mazankowski Alberta Heart Institute – contributing to Edmonton's growing reputation as a centre of international excellence in health care and research

ALIGNMENT WITH ALBERTA'S OBJECTIVES

An EXPO in 2017 would also help advance several aspects of the Alberta government's five key priorities.

Ensure Alberta's energy resources are developed in an environmentally sustainable way.

The knowledge, discoveries and innovations showcased through an EXPO bring new bodies of knowledge and best practices to light. EXPO also offers hosting governments the opportunity to demonstrate areas of leadership and reinforce their image on the international scene. Alberta will remain an energy powerhouse for the foreseeable future. As the province advances in developing its natural resources in responsible and sustainable ways, achievements in environmental stewardship, carbon capture and storage technology, and other innovative areas can be promoted to international audiences.

Increase access to quality health care and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of health care service delivery.

A key aspect of increased access to health care is building the health workforce. EXPO could be strategically leveraged to attract a greater number of health professionals to Alberta. Thousands of visitors from outside Alberta would come to the EXPO. This exposure could be used to promote Alberta's world-class, state-of-the-art health research and treatment facilities, including the Mazankowski Alberta Heart Institute, the Stollery Children's Hospital, and the Edmonton Clinic.

Promote strong and vibrant communities and reduce crime so Albertans feel safe.

A variety of mandates under this priority would be served by EXPO 2017, including those relating to culture, affordable housing, and building safe, vibrant communities.

An EXPO can serve as a catalyst for community spirit, increased volunteerism, and cultural renewal in Alberta, reflecting the goals of The Spirit of Alberta cultural policy. An EXPO involves not only the sharing of knowledge and perspectives, but a sharing of heritage, artistry, history, and language. Hosting an EXPO would enable Alberta and all of Canada the chance to showcase cultures and customs. It would offer participants, visitors, and all Albertans access to a wide range of experiences and opportunities. It would encourage excellence in Alberta's artistic and cultural professionals. And it would foster long-term growth in Alberta's arts and culture sector, bringing visitor spending and new investment.

EXPO 2017 could also be used to further the Alberta government's goals relating to housing. A considerable number of spaces would need to be created to accommodate EXPO participants and visitors. With proper planning, these could be converted into affordable housing (across a range of income groups) for Albertans once the EXPO is complete.

Finally, hosting EXPO 2017 would build a more vibrant Capital City for Alberta. Albertans deserve a capital that stands as a symbol of the progress and potential of this great province. The architectural, cultural and civic legacies created by an EXPO would strengthen the entire Capital Region and bring lasting benefits to all Albertans.

Enhance value-added activity, increase innovation, and build a skilled workforce to improve the long-run sustainability of Alberta's economy.

Hosting EXPO 2017 can foster new business linkages between Alberta and international markets. Visitors from around the globe would experience Alberta's infectious energy, robust economy and high quality of life. Taking full advantage of EXPO could help Alberta attract greater investment in value-added resource opportunities and new technologies from its research parks. It could also encourage increased migration and immigration to Alberta, resulting in an expansion of Alberta's skilled

labour force. The knowledge and innovation shared at an EXPO would also generate new ideas and practices, potentially leading to new businesses and industries.

Provide the roads, schools, hospitals and other public infrastructure to meet the needs of a growing economy and population.

The infrastructure and transportation requirements associated with an EXPO would be significant. With appropriate integrated planning and creativity, the infrastructure investments made in preparing for EXPO 2017 provide opportunities to pay long-term dividends in Alberta, especially in the Edmonton Region. The site and facilities developed for EXPO might become new parks and recreation spaces, cultural attractions, or public facilities.

ALIGNMENT WITH CANADA'S OBJECTIVES

The Ministry of Canadian Heritage is responsible for Canada's participation in EXPO. In its work to promote arts, culture, multiculturalism and cultural heritage, Canadian Heritage pursues two strategic outcomes:

Strategic Outcome 1: Canadians express and share their diverse cultural experiences with each other and the world

Strategic Outcome 2: Canada is an inclusive society built on intercultural understanding and citizen participation

The cultural exchanges that are inherent in an EXPO, make it easy to see how hosting EXPO 2017 in Canada would clearly advance these outcomes.

Hosting EXPO 2017 in Canada would also advance the national objectives and priorities pursued by other federal government ministries. These include:

- Promoting greater economic growth and international trade
- Increasing tourism and small business development
- Encouraging ongoing improvement of the environment
- Fostering cultural and diplomatic relations between nations
- Representing and building a positive international image for Canada
- Investing in infrastructure to build a stronger Canada
- Sharing knowledge, information, research and innovation

But most importantly, 2017 offers promise as the 150th anniversary of Canada. Montreal was the site of the 1967 EXPO and celebrated Canada's centennial to great acclaim. Fifty years later, an EXPO could again be hosted on Canadian soil, during yet another major year for our country.

EXPO 2017 would provide numerous opportunities to celebrate and promote Canada and Canadian heritage and culture. An appropriate theme could have special significance for Canada's past, present and future, its people, its heritage, its achievements, and its place in the world.

Artistic and cultural exhibits, pavilions, and entertainers could be given centre stage, reflecting the diverse and multicultural fabric of the country. Special sesquicentennial monuments and facilities could be constructed in Canada's honour. Dignitaries and royalty from around the world could be invited to partake in special events celebrating Canada's international contributions.

And, since an Edmonton EXPO would likely be held from June through September, Canada Day itself would undoubtedly involve spectacular celebrations and events befitting the landmark anniversary of the country.

Edmontonians and Albertans are proud Canadians. Welcoming the world to celebrate Canada's 150th birthday at a well-planned, well-executed, 21st century EXPO would be a distinct and memorable privilege. Having had recent experience with our own centennial celebrations, Edmonton and Alberta would be well positioned to throw a party that would do justice to the patriotic spirit of all Canadians.