

Update: Emerging Economy

Initiative Title: Emerging Economy
City Council Lead(s): Councillor M. Oshry
Department Lead(s): Sustainable Development, Gary Klassen/Paul Ross

Recommendation - Conclude Initiative

Objective:

The initiative aims to create a support system of services and infrastructure to facilitate entrepreneurial growth. City Administration and its economic development partners, including Edmonton Economic Development Corporation and the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce, are working together to facilitate startups and new business growth opportunities by creating and leading strategies that support new and existing generations of entrepreneurs and innovators.

Key outcomes, projects or activities and their status as of April 2017:

A committee was established by Councillor M. Oshry and Councillor M. Walters to define the scope of work and identify a committee framework. Committee members include representatives from Edmonton Economic Development Corporation, industry sectors (including media, development, financial institution, business associations, construction, etc.). The committee met three times and finalized both the scope and framework.

Emerging Economy Committee: The committee members added valuable insight into the needs of the entrepreneurs resulting in the Edmonton Made and Small Business Open Window projects. The Edmonton Economic Development Corporation and the City of Edmonton continues evolve these projects and drive value to an emerging entrepreneur eco-system.

“Edmonton Made” project: Edmonton Made is a program and a platform that helps promote local businesses by telling their stories, promoting their products, and helping to connect them to the resources they need to grow their businesses. Edmonton Made officially launched in September 2016 through a partnership between the City of Edmonton and the Edmonton Economic Development Corporation. Edmonton Made is now directly managed by the Edmonton Economic Development Corporation and is committed to building an engaged community of entrepreneurs benefiting from the program's marketing initiatives while being directly connected to small business service providers. Since launching in late 2016, 625 individuals & businesses have signed up to be a part of the Edmonton Made community.

Small Business Open Window and Pop Up Retail: The Economic & Environmental Sustainability and Development Services Branches are collaborating to offer small business owners access to dedicated resources to support growth and development.

Through an appointment based service, small business owners can consult with staff on options for site specific business operating opportunities, navigate through development, building and business licence permit applications in a timely manner and with access to customer process support. To date the Small Business Open Window program has served over 570 small businesses. The latest data collected (April 2017) demonstrates that the Small Business Open Window Program served 46 clients of which 88% were at the pre-application phase allowing staff to provide a more positive and timely permitting experience. As well, pop up retail applicants can access a separate process that streamlines steps to host short term, temporary retail shops for local vendors. This process remains available with existing resources. Both services provide early-on support prior to the permitting process so that applicants understand and meet regulatory requirements in order to decrease timelines and allow efficient flow through City processes.

Future Steps:

- The Edmonton Made program will drive program growth and participation while also working to make Edmontonmade.com the platform-of-choice for local entrepreneurs.
- The Economic & Environmental Sustainability and Development Services Branches will continue to seek opportunities to enhance process efficiency and evolve small business services like Small Business Open Window to meet the changing needs of this business community.

Evaluation

The Emerging Economy Initiative provided an opportunity for Councillors, Administration, external organizations and industry partners to identify challenges of entrepreneurs and prioritize responsive actions. The resulting programs and services have been resourced by the Urban Economy division of Edmonton Economic Development Corporation and the Small Business and Local Economy section of Sustainable Development, City of Edmonton. These ongoing services and infrastructure created meet the intent of the Emerging Economy Initiative to support new and growing entrepreneurs.

The deliverables identified by the Emerging Economy Committee have been met and the Initiative is concluded. Collaboration between the two organizations and their networks continues to be key in advancing support to entrepreneurs.