

## Recognition of Edmonton as a Top 7 Intelligent Community (2017)

In February 2017, the Intelligent Community Forum selected Edmonton as one of the world's Top 7 Intelligent Communities for 2017. This designation recognizes Edmonton's successful engagement with its residents, business community and institutions in the translation of infrastructure investment into a new source of prosperity. This global distinction is an honour and an unmistakable sign that the work of the corporate re-organization is making an impact.

Edmonton has charted a new path of fostering collaboration and prosperity between government, residents, business and academic institutions. Here are some examples:

### Closing the Digital Divide

In Edmonton, broadband speed and coverage were driven solely by telecommunications providers, leaving underserved pockets and creating a digital divide. To combat this issue, the City created the Open Access Initiative, which commits Edmonton to partner with providers through partnerships to spread broadband access throughout the city.

As of 2016, the City is working with Shaw to install Shaw Go WiFi service in City facilities and libraries for public use, with 37 facilities and 17 libraries already completed. Edmonton also provides wireless access points around the city for citizens to use free of charge as part of the Open City Wi-Fi service, with 83 access points currently installed. Fifteen of these access points have been installed on LRT platforms, including the entire Capital Line, to ensure that citizens have access to wireless networks.

Edmonton is also working to expand fiber-optic access by supporting TELUS in its one billion network expansion within the city. The first phase of the expansion was completed in 2015, making fiber connections available to more than 25,000 locations. TELUS also worked with the City and the Edmonton Eskimo Football Club to install equipment and infrastructure for publicly accessible WiFi at Commonwealth Stadium. Beyond the City's cooperation with TELUS, Edmonton has partnered with Cybera (a not-for-profit technical agency) to build a fiber optic network utilizing space in the new LRT tunnels under the city.

### Borrowing Books and Wi-Fi

While the City works to spread permanent broadband and Wi-Fi access to all of its citizens, the Edmonton Public library is loaning access to fill the gaps. The library began in July 2016 to loan portable Wi-Fi hotspots with unlimited data to adult library cardholders as part of a two-year pilot program. Forty hotspots enable cardholders to access the internet anywhere they take the device. Many

Edmontonians don't have home internet access, and Edmonton Public Library is committed to providing people the skills and support to participate in the digital world. Edmonton Public Library cardholders logged nearly 1.4 million public internet hours in 2015.

### Preparing the Future Workforce

Edmonton is encouraging an energy transition among its residents and businesses to avoid the worst outcomes of global warming. To help with this transition, Northern Alberta Institute of Technology has invested heavily in its Alternative Energy Technology program, which provides training and research in energy technology such as solar, geothermal, wind, and biofuels. The program often partners with the City of Edmonton, including a venture in which NAIT and the City jointly installed solar panels on campus to test the effects of solar panel angle and snow cover on energy capture efficiency. The data collected by this project is streamed to Edmonton's Open Data Catalogue, while the energy gathered by the panels is used onsite.

### The EndPovertyEdmonton Strategy

While Edmonton has grown far more quickly in the new millennium than most Canadian cities, the most recent data from 2012 finds that one in eight residents live in poverty. To combat this, the city turned to residents for recommendations and ideas. The EndPovertyEdmonton Strategy began in September 2014 with 200 Edmonton residents from diverse backgrounds and sectors divided into seven working groups to analyze poverty issues and develop recommendations for action. In autumn of 2015, EndPovertyEdmonton sought input from thousands of Edmontonians through in-person engagement sessions and an online survey to refine the recommendations from the Working Groups.

The EndPovertyEdmonton Strategy was unanimously approved by Edmonton City Council in December 2015. Shortly after its approval, the organization developed an Implementation Road Map to provide specific direction for combating poverty over the next five years, including making all Edmontonians aware of the realities of poverty in the city and what steps they can take to help in the immediate future and in the long term. The EndPovertyEdmonton Strategy also partnered with the Canadian Mental Health Association-Edmonton Region and BetaCityYeg (the region's volunteer civic technology meetup) to create the LinkYEG web app. LinkYEG.ca provides real time information on nearby community resources, allowing users to search for available clothing and essentials, health and medical assistance, legal help, and family services.

Source: [http://www.intelligentcommunity.org/edmonton\\_alberta](http://www.intelligentcommunity.org/edmonton_alberta)