

Complete List of Options and Actions Identified Through Engagement

Administration has compiled this list to provide Council with a fulsome overview of the options and actions that Edmonton Research Park stakeholders suggested could drive economic development. Administration's analysis was limited to identifying who could be responsible to implement an option/action, what the priority of each option/action is according to stakeholders and the estimated magnitude.

Option/Action	Potentially Responsible	Priority	Resources required	Rationale
Advocacy & Partnership				
Convene an advisory group who would inform programs, supports and other decisions on ERP. This group should include members of post-secondaries, ERP stakeholders and economic development organizations.	City of Edmonton	High	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several economic development partners such as the University of Alberta, Edmonton Global, AKSIS, Edmonton Unlimited and Health Cities have expressed interest in becoming a part of the ERP Advisory Group.
Create a communication strategy that raises the profile of the Edmonton Research Park locally and globally. The strategy could leverage the City's Place Brand Strategy by profiling entrepreneurs in the ERP and could support investment attraction by advertising the strengths and investment opportunities of the ERP.	City of Edmonton	High	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An overall theme discovered through engagement is the need to build awareness of the Edmonton Research Park locally, and globally. The use of stories of the businesses in the Edmonton Research Park can be shared under the City's Place Brand Strategy to attract new companies, build community, and inspire.

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<p>Create a banquet or event room/space at the ERP for stakeholders to use for events and networking sessions to create a meeting place for life sciences and tech in the City.</p>	<p>Private Sector</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having event space(s) on site would create networking opportunities among ERP building owners, tenants, post secondary institutions and economic development partners. • Private industry would be the creators of event or banquet spaces. Such spaces may exist currently within the park, and the Advisory Committee could help to coordinate the use of these spaces for networking or events.
<p>Create events and networking opportunities for businesses within the ERP to support community development and innovation.</p>	<p>Advisory Committee / Private Sector</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Low - Medium</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback shows increased programming, panel conversations, events and job fairs would be well received by ERP stakeholders and would create economic development opportunities. • Administration heard events on-site are preferred, but events off-site would also be beneficial. • Economic development partners have expressed interest in becoming involved with events held within the Edmonton Research Park. • The Advisory Committee could be well positioned to coordinate events and find event space. • The private sector also plays a role in creating and organizing events and networking opportunities.

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<p>Create opportunities for economic development organizations to have an onsite present in the ERP to provide services directly to businesses.</p>	<p>Economic Development Partners / Advisory Committee</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Low</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an opportunity to complete this action through events and networking opportunities. • This would be the responsibility of economic development organizations to decide if and how to implement. The Advisory Committee could play a role in coordinating this work.
<p>Identify opportunities to create outdoor amenities such as gathering spaces.</p>	<p>Advisory Committee / Private Industry</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor amenity spaces are an important factor in creating community, and are often hard to come by. • By having an outdoor event space, the ERP would be able to create a hub for networking and innovation that would typically take place downtown. • The advisory group would be well positioned to identify what investments would result in the greatest value for ERP stakeholders and prospective investors. • Property owners in ERP also play a role in this suggested action as they can invest in outdoor amenities located within their property.
<p>Establish an equity, diversity and inclusion committee which could help to improve the understanding of equity in the ERP, receive concerns related to inclusion in the ERP and advise on the vision, strategy and program development in the ERP.</p>	<p>Advisory Committee</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Low</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While feedback shows many groups feel welcome and comfortable in the ERP, unconscious bias may be at play when stakeholders connect and collaborate. Including community organizations that serve equity-deserving groups in the Advisory Committee will help to ensure an equity, diversity and inclusion lens would be applied to any recommendations made.

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<p>Increase awareness of the ERP with more diverse groups of people, specifically women, by engaging with economic development organizations or industry groups who work with entrepreneurs from equity deserving groups.</p>	<p>City of Edmonton / Advisory Committee</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Low</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In order to bring awareness of opportunities in the Edmonton Research Park to equity deserving groups, the Advisory Committee could engage with economic development partners who work with these groups. ● The City could also engage with Economic Development partners who work with these groups to raise awareness of the opportunities at ERP.
<p>Designate an ERP steward who is responsible for implementing programming and supports for ERP businesses.</p>	<p>City of Edmonton / Advisory Committee</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● According to the restrictive covenant, the Park Authority (currently the City of Edmonton) is responsible for marketing and management of research parks in Edmonton, including supporting research and advanced technology enterprises in the city. ● The City, in partnership with the Advisory Committee, would be best situated to determine how the above roles and responsibilities are distributed.
<p>Create opportunities for further development and redevelopment in the Edmonton Research Park.</p>	<p>City of Edmonton / Advisory Committee / Private Sector</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unlocking undeveloped land for development will enhance economic development and opportunities for expansion within the park. This can take place through zoning changes and working with land owners who have under-developed or undeveloped land (all buildings in the ERP are not developed to the levels permitted by the current regulations). ● Land owners in ERP would initiate any development or redevelopment of land and existing assets.

Infrastructure				
Create a transit route between the University of Alberta and the ERP.	City of Edmonton	Not recommended	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An on demand transit route or rideshare apps would likely be more effective than a dedicated transit route to the Edmonton Research Park. Engagement results suggested transit options to and from ERP are adequate.
Invest in physical assets of the Edmonton Research Park (ERP) such as walking paths, bike paths, roads, signage, landscaping and outdoor amenities such as gathering spaces and natural areas.	City of Edmonton / Private Sector	Low	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback suggested the City find ways to diversify transportation options between buildings, such as improving active transportation options or introducing e-scooter/bike providers to the park. Administration heard mixed feedback related to the types of investments to make. Some stakeholders suggested money be invested in outdoor gathering areas while others prioritized bike and walking trails. Investments could be made either by the City or the private sector and would depend on if the investments are being made on private or public land.

Pricing & Incentives				
<p>Introduce incentives or programming tailored to businesses and landowners within the ERP, or to attract potential investors. Incentives could include reduced property taxes, reduced rents, deferred tax payments, grants, business support programs, etc.</p>	<p>City of Edmonton / Advisory Committee</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>To be determined</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programming tailored to the ERP was previously planned and delivered by the Edmonton Economic Development Corporation. Additionally, the current biotech lease program is 96% subscribed. The biotech lease program continues to be offered on remaining City owned parcels which provides an opportunity for land to be leased at a nominal rate for a 10 year period to incentivize development. • The Advisory Committee would be best situated to make recommendations on whether programs or incentives would be required, and if so, what those could be. • Considerations for this action / option include adherence to a modernized vision statement for ERP, scanning all available programs and incentives ERP stakeholders could access and what guidance a strategy for maximizing land use in the ERP would provide.
Policy				
<p>Re-evaluate and clearly communicate the vision for the ERP.</p>	<p>Advisory Committee</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of stakeholders identified the need for the Edmonton Research Park to be modernized. Creating a vision in line with this would set clear direction for the implementation of all other options and actions identified.

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<p>Create a communications plan for the restrictive covenant to ensure stakeholders and prospective investors clearly understand its regulations and how they are enforced. Specifically, the City needs to clarify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what is meant by the 15 per cent research requirement and how it is validated, • what happens if a company stops doing research and moves into product commercialization or manufacturing, and • the role of the Park Authority. 	<p>City of Edmonton</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Low</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement highlighted that the restrictive covenant is not well understood and has low awareness amongst stakeholders. Raising awareness and creating a clear understanding of the Restrictive Covenant is critical to informing private sector investment and activity in the research park.
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Suggested Restrictive Covenant Amendments				
<p>Some ERP stakeholders have suggested amendments to the restrictive covenant registered against Research Park properties. (See text below) However, Administration has determined that pursuing amendments to the restrictive covenant would require a substantial amount of resourcing and may not be possible if existing property owners do not agree to the amendments. While these amendments would fall within the City's jurisdiction they are not feasible to pursue.</p>				
<p>Keep the restrictive covenant and enhance the enforcement of the regulations.</p>	<p>City of Edmonton / Land Owners</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement suggested the current restrictive covenant is not business-friendly. Increasing the enforcement of regulations may result in the park being perceived as less than business-friendly, especially when there is low awareness and understanding of the regulations.
<p>Keep the restrictive covenant and increase the research requirement from 15 to 50 per cent</p>	<p>City of Edmonton / Land Owners</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement suggested the current restrictive covenant is not business-friendly. Increasing the research requirement may result in the park being perceived as less than business-friendly. Businesses conducting 50 per cent R&D or greater are likely to have low revenue and may be challenged to pay market rates for space in the ERP.
<p>Don't take any further action and keep the restrictive covenant as is. This is essential for supporting the original vision of the area as a research park.</p>	<p>City of Edmonton / Land Owners</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While some stakeholders suggested the restrictive covenant does not need to be amended, most feedback highlighted the need to amend the restrictive covenant to reflect the current trends and direction of the economy.

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<p>Update restrictive covenant to increase the developable land within the ERP. Some key considerations include reducing the building setbacks and enabling higher-density development. These changes would support more businesses in the ERP and would provide for sufficient manufacturing space.</p>	<p>City of Edmonton / Land Owners</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The majority of stakeholders noted that the covenant has to be more modernized, more aligned with The City Plan, and allow more land uses than what is currently allowed. ● Engagement suggested updating the restrictive covenant to be more business-friendly, while still maintaining a minimum amount of control over requiring research activities in the park would be an ideal change. ● Other options to update would include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ maintaining a research requirement, and reverting all design and development guidelines to be aligned with current zoning rules. Upon completion of the Zoning Bylaw Renewal, the ERP would be zoned as a 'Business Employment' zone - enabling greater density and land use intensity. ○ Address the ambiguity of the language so it is more investment friendly. Property owners noted the current document provides too much ambiguity and this impacts their ability to attract tenants or secure financing. ○ Promote unique or innovative building designs to make the ERP more of a destination. ○ Revisit the language around research so it more closely aligns with innovation. This would then capture applied and practical research that is product or service oriented, scientific research, market research and innovative product design.
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<p>Remove the restrictive covenant and ensure the area is zoned to achieve the highest and best land use.</p>	<p>City of Edmonton / Land Owners</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Some engagement suggests this would be the most business-friendly option as it completely eliminates any additional red-tape created by the covenant. ● Any future development or redevelopment of the research park would be at the discretion of the private sector. ● Other engagement suggests this option would result in ERP being diluted with non-research or research supporting businesses and no longer considered a research park.
<p>Remove the restrictive covenant and replace it with incentives that attract businesses and entrepreneurs to the ERP in alignment with the ERP's vision. Incentives could include reduced property taxes, reduced rents, deferred tax payments, grants, business support programs, etc.</p>	<p>City of Edmonton / Land Owners / Advisory Committee</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This option removes the regulations that require businesses to conduct research and related activities in the park. ● Stakeholders identified this could create a risk of ERP becoming diluted with non-research or research supporting businesses. ● Administration's jurisdictional scan indicates not many other research parks are governed by a restrictive covenant. ● Administration heard the majority of stakeholders would like to maintain a research requirement.