

THE CHANGING FIELD OF PLAY

THE CITIZENS' PANEL ON
MAJOR EVENTS SPORTS



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SPORTS**

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FOREWORD

From the Commonwealth Games to the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) World Championships in Athletics to the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) Women's World Cup, Edmonton has demonstrated its ability to plan and execute sports events that are second to none, and the world is taking notice. Earlier this year, the global sports market intelligence firm Sportcal named Edmonton one of the top 20 hosting cities in the world. No other Canadian city even came close. But while our city may be leading the way, that does not mean we are immune to the pressures and challenges arising from the "changing field of play."

The sports event landscape has changed considerably in recent decades, and it continues to evolve. Compared to even ten years ago, there are more major events devoted to an ever-greater number of sports. For Edmonton and other cities, hosting a major event is not as simple anymore as "let's just do it." Not only are there more sports event options than ever before to consider, but aspiring hosts also face significant hosting/sanctioning fees, infrastructure and security costs, operational risks, and post-event sustainability challenges. For many cities, the reality of hosting an event falls well short of expectations, with the financial costs not paying off in terms of an enhanced global reputation and long-term economic, infrastructure, and social benefits. As a result, more and more cities are weighing the potential pros and cons before committing to bid on large-scale events.

Around the world – but particularly in North America, Europe, and Oceania – cities have begun employing a more strategic approach to event bids and hosting. Before placing a bid, they are asking a series of critical questions. Does a particular event fit with the city's civic culture? Does the event leverage existing programs, infrastructure, and partnerships? Is the event well positioned to advance the city's long-term goals? For these cities, the days of making bids for the sake of local "ego" are coming to an end. Instead, they are building on their current assets and opportunities with the goal of securing longer-lasting social and economic benefits.

Thanks to the leadership of Edmonton Events – a strategic partnership between the City of Edmonton and Edmonton Tourism to attract, develop, and support sports and cultural events – our city has begun to think more strategically along these lines in recent years, including:

- aligning venues, hosting experience, sports expertise, and spectator interest around key sports
- targeting events that enable Edmonton to build the capacities needed to host larger events
- strengthening existing as well as forging new relationships with sports federations and key players in the event hosting industry from around the world

The serious work has begun, and now is the time to take the next step. Hosting world-class sports events has been who we are and what we do as a city, and looking forward, it is important that Edmonton continues to do so. In order to realize the greatest range of benefits possible from hosting sports events, however, the City needs to expand and formalize the process Edmonton Events has begun to piece together. The aim of this report is to provide the City with the tools necessary to develop a truly strategic approach to selecting which events to bid on.

THE CITIZENS' PANEL ON MAJOR EVENTS *SPORTS*

In the fall of 2016, the City of Edmonton, in partnership with Edmonton Tourism, launched an initiative to develop a comprehensive event hosting strategy covering sports events, major conventions, festivals, and trade shows. Edmonton City Council subsequently passed a motion instructing the City Manager to task a group of Edmontonians to “explore the pros and cons of Edmonton actively pursuing future Class A events which may include a Regional Winter Olympic Games, Regional FIFA Men’s World Cup, or Commonwealth Games (2026 or 2030).” Acting on City Council’s direction, the City Manager struck a community-led panel to develop a strategic sports event framework to support and help frame Edmonton’s larger overall event strategy.

The result was the Citizens’ Panel on Major Events (Sports) comprising nine community, business, and sports leaders from Edmonton and the greater Edmonton Metro Region – many with extensive experience with large-scale events and all recognized community builders – as well as three ex-officio members from the City of Edmonton, Edmonton Tourism, and the City of Leduc.

MANDATE

The City Manager asked the Panel to develop a strategic framework to assist the City in determining which sports events to bid on. She requested that the Panel make its proposals with an understanding that major sports events have the potential to:

- align and build on the City’s aspirations for the future
- provide measurable economic benefits
- realize legacy opportunities through investments in infrastructure, community development, and cultural and social advancement that align with the City’s strategic plans
- advance sport development and leadership
- foster civic pride
- build Edmonton’s reputation nationally and internationally

The City Manager further requested that the Panel consider long-term, strategic issues and opportunities with an integrated perspective, while also representing specific sectors, communities, and viewpoints.

PROCESS

Between February 7 and June 13, 2017, the Panel met seven times. The panelists reviewed research papers and other studies, listened to presentations from various experts, evaluated the experience of comparable jurisdictions, and discussed how these lessons could inform a sports events strategy for Edmonton. The Panel’s report was developed through discussion and by consensus, and was presented to the City Manager on June 21, 2017.

PURPOSE

Through its principles, recommendations, and key components, The Changing Field of Play provides a suggested framework to guide strategic decisions on future major sports events bids. To be clear, The Changing Field of Play is not meant to serve as the City’s sports events strategy. Rather, the document’s purpose is to inform the direction of such a strategy and what it should achieve.



TYPES OF EVENTS

While specifically tasked to develop a framework for “major” sports events, our Panel contends there is a wide range of events that could be described as “major” but which vary greatly in terms of scope, frequency, and focus. Cities around the world use different terms to categorize the levels of sports events within their event strategies. Based on our research, and the definitions already in use by the City of Edmonton and Edmonton Tourism, our Panel identified the following five categories:

MEGA EVENTS

These are large-scale multi-sport (or in some cases single sport) international events that generate significant global interest, and which would be expected to deliver significant benefits to Edmonton, Alberta, and Canada. Mega events can be divided into “prestige” and “infrastructure” events depending on their primary long-term benefits to the host jurisdiction. For instance, a city looking to bolster its global image would be better off hosting the FIFA World Cup over the Commonwealth Games. A city looking to enhance its sporting infrastructure, on the other hand, would be better served by hosting the latter over the former. Regardless of whether it is a “prestige” or “infrastructure” mega event, such events involve a major bidding effort and require a high degree of investment, both capital and operating, from all orders of government. They are normally preceded by large-scale capital projects, including the construction of new venues, upgrades to existing sites, and other supporting infrastructure. A stand-alone organization, with a dedicated budget, is established to design, develop, and manage the entire event from start to finish. Because of their global profile, the security requirements for mega events are significant, and – given the current global climate – are becoming ever-more complex and expensive. In addition to the World Cup and Commonwealth Games, other examples include the Olympics, the IAAF World Championships, the Pan American Games, and Universiade.

MAJOR EVENTS

Similar to mega events, major events can be either multi-sport or single-sport events that would be expected to deliver benefits to the city, province, and country, as well as attract international attention. Where they differ from mega events, however, is the intensity of their global reach and appeal. Examples of major events include the World Masters, the International Triathlon Union (ITU) Grand Final, FIFA Women's World Cup, World Junior Hockey Championships, Red Bull Crashed Ice, the Ford Men's World Curling Championships, and the Brier/Scotties Canadian Curling Championships.

SIGNATURE EVENTS

Signature events, unlike mega and major events, are recurring events. While they can have an international profile, these events are generally regional, provincial, or national in their appeal. These events would provide economic benefits for Edmonton and Alberta, as well as enhance their respective sport's profile nationally (and potentially internationally). Examples include Canadian Finals Rodeo, Edmonton Grads International (Basketball), Track Town Classic, ITU World Series, and the Tour of Alberta.

GROWTH EVENTS

Typically, these are newer events, whose footprints can range from local, regional, or provincial to national or international in nature (although there are more of the former than the latter). What makes growth events different is their potential to evolve into major or signature events. They also provide opportunities to increase the capacity, experience, and credibility of Edmonton as a host, and can create and nurture homegrown events that enhance the sustainability of the events industry. As these events evolve and mature, they can offer an important test opportunity for the hosting of major events. Growth events can bolster community engagement and development, advance hosting skills in the community, and improve citizen participation. Examples include the Servus Edmonton Marathon and FISE (Festival International des Sports Extrêmes).

NATIONAL/PROVINCIAL EVENTS

While these national and provincial-level championships and competitions may involve a bid, organizers are starting to negotiate with cities directly. National/provincial events rely on pre-existing venues and do not require significant capital investments. These events can be used to build strategic relationships and reputation prior to bidding for a major event, or if a major international event has been secured, provide an opportunity to test the organization

for the larger event. These events would be expected to have a significant economic impact on Edmonton and build the city's reputation nationally. Examples include Skate Canada, Volleyball Super Nationals, and the Pan American Judo Championships.

While our Panel understands the City of Edmonton will likely bid on sports events at all these levels, this report is directed at the larger, more complex events, namely mega, major, and signature events.



Photography: Andy Devlin, Oilers Entertainment Group.

PRINCIPLES

Our Panel's recommendations and key components for a sports event strategy are rooted in the following seven principles:

- **Building on What We Have to Secure the Future We Want:** Edmonton needs to host events that will help propel it towards its vision and policy goals. Through its work on such long-term strategies as *The Way Ahead* and *Live Active*, the municipal government has begun to sketch out a vision for Edmonton's future. This is important. For a sports event strategy to be truly successful, the City needs to be clear on what it wants to accomplish in the longer term. What sort of Edmonton is it trying to build? Once a clear vision for the city's future has been articulated, it should guide event-hosting decisions the City makes. This principle assumes Edmonton should leverage its existing strengths, including certain infrastructure, amenities, and hosting experience in a multiplicity of sports, ranging from basketball and hockey to track and field, aquatics, and cycling.
- **A Future Focus:** Attention must be given to the rapidly evolving event hosting landscape. When evaluating hosting opportunities, consideration needs to extend beyond what interests people today, to what they will want to watch in the future and how they are likely going to watch it. The City should scan the sports events horizon with an eye to where the current and emerging opportunities lie, and choose events accordingly.
- **A Regional Approach:** Edmonton's appeal as a potential event host does not end at its municipal boundary. The city is the urban core of a larger, dynamic region whose strength lies in the diversity of its people, its varied landscapes, its range of amenities, and wealth of economic opportunities. When contemplating potential bids, Edmonton should look for opportunities to partner with other municipalities to leverage the region's collective strengths.
- **Collaboration:** The experiences of successful event hosts share a common thread: strong partnerships. Given the scope and complexity of today's events, bids must be supported by a team of community, public, and private players who can work skillfully together to achieve clearly defined goals.
- **Financial Sustainability:** Governments do not have unlimited resources, so every effort must be made to ensure that staging a sports event does not become an undue financial burden. For every bid that is made, there must be clarity on how operating and capital costs – for both the event itself and the legacy period that follows – will be funded. By building and clearly articulating viable funding partnerships, Edmonton can ensure event hosting is considered a priority, even in challenging economic times.
- **Securing Legacies:** Long after the cameras have been turned off and the visitors have gone home, sports events must continue to deliver a range of benefits to Edmonton.
- **Inclusion:** Canadians have made tremendous progress in building more inclusive communities in recent decades. Any bid must build on these advancements to ensure that everyone – including Indigenous peoples, new Canadians, the LGBTQ community, and those with disabilities – are made to feel welcome and valued whether as spectators, participants, or volunteers.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN OF FUTURE MEGA AND MAJOR EVENTS OF INTEREST TO EDMONTON

Our Panel feels there is value in providing context for some mega and major events for which the City may contemplate bids in the near future. As previously noted, the events landscape, both in Canada and globally, is changing rapidly, therefore, the information below was the best available at the time of writing.

MEGA EVENTS

FIFA 2026

FIFA Council has agreed to fast track a proposal put forth by the United States to announce the host for the 2026 FIFA World Cup prior to the 2018 competition. Canada is part of a tri-country bid with the U.S. and Mexico to host the 2026 event. Countries have until August 11, 2017 to challenge the bid. Since Russia and Qatar are hosting, respectively, the 2018 and 2022 World Cups, neither Europe nor Asia can bid on the 2026 event. Of the three other continents eligible to bid, Oceania and South America have previously publicly declared their support for the U.S./Canada/Mexico bid, leaving only Africa as a possible contender. Bids will be presented in March 2018 and the tournament being awarded the following month.

If this tri-country bid is successful, it is anticipated that Canada would host 10 games. A process for selecting host cities has not yet been announced. It was recently reported, however, that Canada Soccer would like to host World Cup games in as many as four Canadian cities. Guidelines were expected to be released this spring, however, nothing has been issued to date. FIFA requires men's tournaments to be played on natural grass in stadiums with at least 40,000 seats.

The 2026 World Cup will be the first to include 48 teams, up from the current 32, following the January 2017 motion that approved the expansion.

2026 Winter Olympics

The Calgary Bid Exploration Committee released information on June 19, 2017 that indicated the 2026 Winter Olympics in Calgary could be staged for \$4.6 billion. This would be offset by an estimated \$2.2 billion in revenue. A final recommendation is expected to be made to City Council by the Committee on July 24, 2017.

Through its Agenda 2020 (released in 2014), the International Olympic Committee (IOC) outlined the ability of broader regions to host the Games in addition to single cities. At one point in the discussion, the possibility of a joint bid Calgary/Edmonton was raised. To the best of our knowledge, there have not been any formal discussions on such a proposal.

If the Canadian Olympic Committee decides to put a city forward for the 2026 Olympics, it is expected to announce its selection process in late February following the observer program during the 2018 Games. The IOC will announce the winter host city in late 2019.



2022 Commonwealth Games

Following the removal of Durban as host, countries had until April 28, 2017 to declare their interest in hosting the 2022 Commonwealth Games. Canada was among those who stepped forward, and Toronto and Victoria subsequently expressed their interest in hosting these Games. At this point, Toronto's bid looks in doubt after its Economic Development Committee adopted a City staff report in late May 2017 arguing that the Games would be too expensive and pose too much of a risk. The Victoria Commonwealth Games Committee, on the other hand, announced on June 8, 2017 that the B.C. capital will compete to host the Games. Other cities that have expressed interest include Birmingham and Liverpool (U.K.), Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), and Adelaide, Melbourne, Perth, and Sydney (Australia).

2026 Commonwealth Games

It is anticipated that the removal of Durban as the host of the 2022 Commonwealth Games and the search for a new host city will delay the candidacy process for the 2026 Games until after the 2018 Games in the Gold Coast (Australia).

MAJOR EVENTS

2020 ITU World Triathlon Grand Final

Although Edmonton's bid for the 2019 ITU World Triathlon Grand Final was unsuccessful, it won the right to hold the 2020 event late last year. Planning for the event is underway. Edmonton last hosted the event in 2014.

2020 IAAF World U-20 Championships

Hoping to build on the success of the 2015 Pan American Juniors, Edmonton intends to submit a bid to host the 2020 World Junior Track and Field Championships. Preliminary bids are to be submitted by the end of June 2017.

2021 World Junior Hockey Championships

Edmonton submitted a bid to host the 2019 World Junior Hockey Championships, but the event was awarded to Vancouver and Victoria. The process to select a host for the 2021 World Juniors will likely begin in late 2018.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Our Panel recommends four specific instruments and one overarching guideline to realize a coherent, comprehensive, and deliberate approach to determining which sports events to bid on.

Recommendation #1 – The City should adopt a sports event policy.

This concise, high-level document should encapsulate core principles, guidelines, and key performance indicators (KPIs). The purpose of the policy should be two-fold. First, it should act as a guidebook, helping the City – and its regional partners if they choose – to make important decisions and provide clarity on overall direction. Second, it should serve as a commitment statement, clearly declaring Edmonton's desire to be recognized both nationally and internationally as a sports events host (this commitment statement should align with the City's vision statement). Where at all possible, the policy should also align with federal and provincial event hosting policies and guidelines. Unlike the strategy (discussed below), the policy should remain fixed over a long period of time and be consistently applied to provide steady, considered direction and avoid confusion.

Recommendation #2 – The City should devise a strategic sports event roadmap.

This planning tool should be a rolling eight-year plan detailing the specific mega, major, and signature events the City has or intends to bid on. The roadmap should be shared with City Council so that it can take Edmonton's event hosting plans into account when developing the municipal budget. Care should be taken to minimize times when events conflict with one another in order to ensure adequate capacity to deliver quality civic services, maintain spectator interest, and guard against volunteer fatigue. Depending on the extent of the City's ambitions, certain events may take

place concurrently. In conjunction with the strategy, the roadmap should detail measures to drive synergies and mitigate potential challenges of overlapping events. In cases where scheduling conflicts are unavoidable, the municipal government needs to devise solutions so that events complement one another (e.g. when ITU and the Tour of Alberta took place during the same timeframe, the City branded it as "Race Week").

Understanding that not every bid translates into an event (e.g. Edmonton lost its bids for Universiade 2015 and the 2019 ITU World Triathlon Grand Final), the City needs to be prepared to bid on many in order to win a few. Furthermore, the City should aim to treat unsuccessful bids as learning opportunities, taking the insights gained to build capacity for future bids.

Recommendation #3 – The City should focus on specific types of events, namely major and signature events.

The City should be ambitious in the number of events it targets while still being realistic. Our Panel believes Edmonton should aim for the following:

- one mega event every 20 to 30 years
- at least six major events every 12 years
- three recurring (i.e. signature) events annually, but allowing for other opportunities if they arise

It is not our Panel's place to decide which specific events the City should bid on. Those decisions rest with City Council (and the city administration that supports them). Event hosting should be approached as a building exercise, with the City planning to host smaller events in order to build the capacity needed to host larger events in the same field (e.g. cycling, athletics, etc.).

Focusing on major and signature events is also the path to securing a mega event in the future. At present, Edmonton has limits on its ability to host mega events. The most prudent action, in our Panel's opinion, is to build the necessary experience, expertise, and infrastructure (sports facilities and otherwise) by focusing on events such as the Ford World Men's Curling Championship and the ITU World Triathlon Grand Final. If Edmonton continues to be successful at hosting these events, it will be well placed farther down the road to win a bid for a mega event, most likely in conjunction with at least one other municipality.

While mega events such as the Olympics and World Cup are peerless in their profile, our Panel believes the greatest return on investment lies in signature events. Just as Melbourne has done with the Australian Open and the Australian Grand Prix, these recurring events can become synonymous with the host city, and become a valuable component of its brand. In no small part, events are about obtaining rights to host that specific event. If Edmonton could obtain the rights for a particular signature event and grow it into a national or international brand, this could become an important, and potentially lucrative, sports hosting base. Our Panel strongly recommends that the City – as part of its overall strategy – develop a plan to target these events. We believe Edmonton should host three signature events annually, while allowing for other opportunities if they arise. As part of its strategy, the City needs to pay attention to growth events, and determine which hold the greatest potential to mature into signature events. In doing so, Edmonton could help transform a hitherto largely unknown event into one with a strong national or international following.

Recommendation #4 – The City should implement an evaluation process for bids on mega and major events.

Edmonton should not seek to host events simply because it can; it needs to do so with larger end goals in mind, which is why every potential bid must be put through a comprehensive evaluation process to determine whether the event would ultimately be in Edmonton's best interests. To this end, the City should develop a defined evaluation process for mega and major event bids. While the considerations outlined in this report should also inform decisions on signature events, the shorter lead-up times for signature events make it difficult to subject these bids to a comprehensive evaluation process. Even for some major and (although far less likely) mega events, there may be instances where the City is faced with a compressed timeline to make a decision. The City needs to be flexible in these cases so as not to miss out on opportunities. The City should aim, therefore, to be as comprehensive as possible yet as nimble as needed.

A successful bid will ultimately go through three stages. While our Panel has sketched out what we think the formal pre-bid and post-bid award processes should look like, this report is concerned with the bid consideration process. Under our Panel's proposed process, a body known as the bid facilitator would coordinate and support all bids as they are being considered and evaluated. (While the determination lies with the City on where the bid facilitator function should be established, our Panel recommends Edmonton Events continue in this role for now, as it is currently doing that job, and has the knowledge and experience.)

The process would begin with a bid proponent bringing a proposal to the bid facilitator. Proposals could come from many sources – the City of Edmonton, a group of individuals with knowledge of sports events, or from international, national, or provincial sports organizations. The bid facilitator would evaluate the proposal against the City's sports event roadmap and review the proposed bid partnership (i.e. the players who would be responsible for the event if Edmonton were selected) pitched by the proponent. In instances where the proposed partnership is deemed inviable, the event facilitator should have the ability to propose alternative partners.

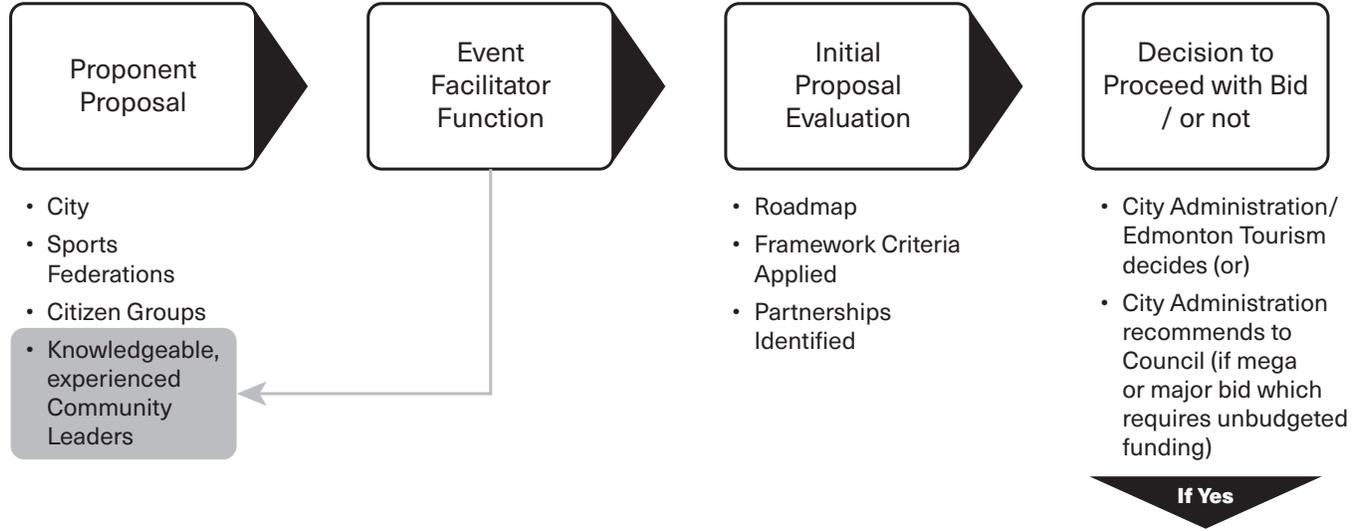
The bid facilitator would then apply the framework criteria (our Panel provides a proposed framework later in the report). This is the most critical step, as it gives those making recommendations a clear idea as to the potential benefits and drawbacks of hosting a particular event. Based on this evaluation, the City administration, with the support of the bid proponent and the bid facilitator, would make its recommendation to City Council.

If City Council chose to proceed, the second stage would kick in, and the bid would be turned over to a Formal Bid Process Partnership Committee, a body made up of representatives with knowledge of the event, major stakeholders, and major funders. Supported by the bid facilitator, this committee would be responsible for developing the bid documents and making the bid to the governing body responsible for the proposed event. If the bid is successful, the final stage of the process would begin, and representatives of the major funders, sponsors, proponents and the relevant sport organization would form an organizing committee to deliver the event as proposed in the bid.

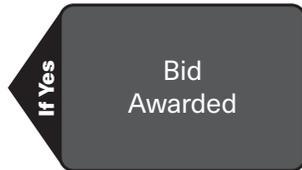
At any point during the bid consideration process, the bid facilitator would be able to invite knowledgeable, skilled people who have previously worked on similar events to support and reinforce the work of the bid proponent. Likewise, the bid facilitator would be able to call upon this experience and expertise to provide input on how potential bids measure up against the framework criteria. Moving forward, the City needs to encourage and support more Edmontonians to acquire this valuable expertise and experience by joining the executive boards of provincial, national, and international sports federations and organizations. One way the City could do this is by working with the Canadian Olympic Committee, which has undertaken a similar initiative.

BID CONSIDERATION PROCESS

(Subject of this report)



POST BID AWARD



FORMAL BID PROCESS





Recommendation #5 – The City should develop a sports event strategy.

The strategy is the document that will help the City live up to its sports event policy. It is the comprehensive action plan detailing the steps necessary to realize the City's key goals and objectives, and the measures by which success (or failure) will be determined, and it should be in place to guide the roadmap outlined in recommendation #2. The strategy should be updated regularly to reflect the ever-changing event-hosting

landscape (our Panel recommends a timeframe of every three to five years). Through our research and discussions with experts, our Panel has distilled nine key learnings (many of which Edmonton Events has already incorporated into its strategies). In many cases, these key learnings reinforce and expand on the principles outlined earlier in the report. We believe these are the building blocks for a comprehensive strategy capable of realizing the greatest range of benefits possible by selecting the right events for Edmonton.

KEY COMPONENTS FOR A SPORTS EVENTS STRATEGY

Stay Ahead of the Curve: Nothing is static in the world of sports event bidding and hosting. Where the landscape once consisted of the Olympics, World Expos, FIFA World Cup, and a handful of regional events, it has grown to include events such as the X Games, FISE, and Red Bull Crashed Ice. Interest in supposed mainstays can wane while the viewership for sports that did not even exist two decades ago skyrockets. Advances in digital technology are also transforming the at-home viewing experience, while social media and other platforms are offering more ways to watch sports events. With all the costs (and unfortunately, growing security concerns) involved with attending a large-scale sports event, more and more people may decide that the benefits of watching from home, or wherever else they choose, outweigh the experience of personally attending an event.

Another major development is the growing influence of sports marketing companies, which increasingly own the media and/or marketing rights for sports events. The Swiss-based, Chinese-owned Infront Sports & Media, for instance, handles the media and marketing rights and provides sports services (e.g. advertising, sponsorship, and hospitality) for a range of clients, including all seven Winter Olympic sports federations, the Ironman events, and the Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) Road World Championships. Edmonton Events and City administrators should have a clear understanding of how these companies work and how their operations are evolving. In short, a successful sports event strategy needs to treat events as “products” and provide the necessary flexibility to adapt to market changes.

Consider Regional Potential: Edmonton and its neighbours in the region are moving towards a new regional reality. While cooperative initiatives have come and gone in the past, the region’s municipalities – first through the Metro Mayors Alliance and now through the provincially mandated Edmonton Metro Region Growth Management Board – are taking steps to create inter-municipal systems in such key areas as economic development and land use and infrastructure. Work on mechanisms for cooperation is underway, and the end goal shared by the region’s municipalities is clear: working together to benefit together. This same mindset should be applied to the City’s sports event strategy. Every potential bid should be viewed through a regional lens to determine its regional potential. In certain cases, a municipality may have a facility or other amenity that Edmonton lacks. In other cases, it may be more cost effective to build a facility elsewhere in the region. Toronto employed a regional approach to great effect during the 2015 Pan Am/Parapan Games, where 14 regional municipalities joined with the city in hosting events. As a result, many of the infrastructure legacies of the Games – including Tim Hortons Field (formerly CIBC Hamilton Pan Am Soccer Stadium) – continue to enrich the greater region. It may not always be possible to incorporate a regional component into a bid, but that determination should only be made following a thoughtful evaluation process.

Support the City's Long-Term Planning Objectives:

The City has already done some important work in developing a vision for Edmonton to 2040, envisioning an energy hub and a continental link to the North and Asia, a centre for the arts and recreation, and an inclusive city of many cultures, educational, and economic opportunities. In order to realize these long-term ambitions, the City has developed a series of strategic plans covering city building from urban form and transportation, to livability and the environment, to financial sustainability and the economy, to recreation and sport. It also recently approved a new strategic framework for encouraging Edmontonians to live healthier, more active lives called Live Active. Any event bidding and hosting approach, therefore, should align with the City's long-term vision and supporting strategic plans.

Leverage Strengths and Mitigate Disadvantages:

Edmonton's advantages are real and undeniable, and our event bidding and hosting strategies should place them front and centre. In order to best leverage these strengths, the City needs to clearly understand what they are. To this end, the City should identify four types of pre-existing amenities. "Constructed" amenities would encompass sporting infrastructure (e.g. Commonwealth Stadium) and such things as hotel rooms and parking spaces. The list would also include "natural" amenities (e.g. the River Valley), "socio-economic" amenities (e.g. Edmonton's vibrant arts and culture scene and its strong and diversified economy), and "values" amenities such as the region's openness and reputation for welcoming and respecting diversity. Like all cities, Edmonton also has its share of challenges (e.g. a small media market and distance from major centres). A successful strategy, therefore, should also acknowledge and address these disadvantages.

Build Capacity: Hosting sports events can help to build capacity in areas ranging from volunteer networks, to hosting expertise, to sports, transportation, and other forms of infrastructure. In selecting which events to bid on, the City should assess its capacity needs – social, economic, infrastructure, and otherwise – and choose those that will help to fill these gaps. That said, our Panel warns against viewing sports events as a fast and easy way to get big-ticket infrastructure projects built. Welcoming the world can undoubtedly fast-track infrastructure investments, but this should not be the primary motivating factor for submitting a bid. There are other ways to secure money for such projects that do not involve hosting costly events that otherwise do not serve Edmonton's long-term interests.

Foster and Employ Community Leadership and Partnership Models:

The roles and responsibilities of all the relevant players need to be clearly defined and agreed to before a bid is made. While these roles and responsibilities can shift depending on the event, the organizing committee is usually responsible for planning, organizing, funding, and staging the event, while the private sector is relied upon to provide sponsorship support in return for various levels of recognition and participation in the event. Local, provincial, and national sport organizations often offer valuable technical advice, assistance, and volunteers for the event, while the various orders of government provide funding and other necessities such as security, transportation, visas, and other supports to international athletes.

Serious consideration also needs to be given to the role the larger community will play.

Community buy-in and community leadership are necessities for any bid. If residents are not supportive and enthusiastic, success is at risk. For larger, more complex events (i.e. mega and major events), our Panel strongly suggests that these roles and responsibilities be formalized in a partnership agreement. All bids should be treated equally, regardless of who the driving force behind them is. In instances where a community-led group is behind a bid, policies and procedures should be in place to connect the group with the relevant municipal agencies and resources.

Finally, the City should also be open to partnering with municipalities outside of the Edmonton Metro Region to host sports events. There may be instances where doing so would enhance Edmonton's chances of being awarded a particular event. What is more, replacing competition with coordination could help to keep rights fees lower.

Assess the Range of Legacies and Plan Accordingly:

Hosting an event can deliver a wide-range of long-term benefits. Before deciding to bid on an event, the City should assess the range of possible social, economic, and infrastructure legacies and prioritize which to focus on. Sought-after benefits would include:

- enhancing economic development, including increasing tourism, investment, and trade links
- raising Edmonton's global profile as a desirable city to live, work, and play
- promoting local pride, bringing disparate communities together, and expanding volunteer networks
- enabling youth and adults alike to become more physically active
- inspiring a new generation to pursue sporting excellence at the highest levels
- becoming a recognized training centre for Canadian and international elite-level athletes

Legacy planning cannot be an afterthought. It has to be a key consideration from the outset. It requires a clear vision, strong leadership, and long-term commitment supported by a comprehensive, actionable plan to realize the goals necessary to help build a stronger, healthier, more prosperous Edmonton in the coming decades.

Develop Pragmatic After-Use Strategies for Event Infrastructure:

Careful planning needs to be in place for legacy use of event venues, especially as the costs for such facilities are increasing as the technical requirements for sports continue to evolve. When considering a bid, the City needs to have a clear idea as to how facilities will be repurposed (e.g. a training facility, a recreation centre, or something else altogether). While cautionary tales abound from previous large-scale events, the legacy of the Calgary '88 Games is an example of getting it right. Canada Olympic Park, the Canmore Nordic Centre, and the Olympic Oval today serve as training centres and popular family destinations. Temporary facilities should not be discounted out of hand from a legacy standpoint as they may deliver long-term benefits in less tangible forms.

Facilities do not last forever. Minor upgrades and repairs can keep a venue up and running for only so long. Eventually the time will arrive when a facility reaches the end of its life-cycle and a far more significant overhaul is required. Bid sponsors need to be mindful of the capital and operating costs required long after the event has ended. From where and how will these operating funds be sourced? Will the funds be endowed? What sort of governance structure should administer this fund? These critical questions must be considered when contemplating a bid for a large-scale event requiring new facilities.

Calgary's Olympic experience provides an instructive example. WinSport, formerly the Calgary Olympic Development Association, maintains many of facilities built for the 1988 Games, including Canada Olympic Park (COP). The non-profit organization, led by a board of Calgary business and community leaders, oversees a multi-million-dollar endowment fund from which it funds the bulk of its operations, relying on government and fundraising efforts to cover its capital costs. Not only has WinSport maintained and rejuvenated many of the original facilities (e.g. after 30 years and a quarter of a million bobsled, luge, and skeleton runs, the bobsled track will soon undergo a \$20-million renovation), it has enhanced the legacy of the '88 Games by building a number of new facilities that are helping a new generation of Calgarians to embrace a more live active lifestyle. WinSport has succeeded in maintaining COP as a valuable training venue for elite athletes and as a popular recreation destination for the public. As there is not a self-sustaining funding model for such facilities as bobsled tracks and ski jumps, WinSport has also successfully diversified into other complementary activities (e.g. facility rentals) to bring in revenue.

Align with Federal and Provincial Strategies, Priorities, and Policies: The complexity and scope of today's events necessitate the participation of all three orders of government. It is highly unlikely that Edmonton would be selected to host a mega or major (or likely even a signature) event, or even make it to the submission stage, without significant federal and provincial support. To this end, the City must ensure its sports event strategy aligns with federal and provincial strategies, priorities, and policies, particularly funding guidelines. The municipal government must have the flexibility to update its own strategies and policies to reflect any changes that result from changes in priorities or approaches at the federal or provincial level. In instances where federal and provincial strategies, priorities, and policies are vague, and/or dated, the City of Edmonton should look for ways to help drive the development of clearer, more effective approaches.



BID EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

KEY QUESTIONS

- Does the proposed event leverage Edmonton's strengths (e.g. existing facilities, infrastructure, and expertise?)
- Does the proposed event leverage Edmonton's range of assets and amenities?
- Does the event fit within the sequencing of events contained in the Sport Event Hosting Roadmap?

PARTNERSHIPS

- Is the bid supported by a team of stakeholders?
- What roles and responsibilities would be assigned to each of these stakeholders?
- Does the relevant national sports organization support the bid? What type of expertise and support is it willing to offer?
- What does the bid/event need to succeed?

PUBLIC SUPPORT

- Is the event of interest to Edmontonians and other residents of the Edmonton Metro Region?
- Has the bid proponent gauged public support? If so, is the public generally supportive? If not, are there avenues to address and resolve the public's concerns?
- What other plans does the bid proponent have to secure community "buy in" for the proposed event?

FUNDING

- How much will the event cost to host?
How much of that will be capital costs?
Operations costs?
- What does it cost to prepare and submit a bid for the event? What is the cycle of the bid and selection process?
- What sort of funding partnership does the bid proponent propose for the bid itself, and the event?
- How would the event costs be divided among the funding partners?
- How would effective cost controls be put in place?
- Does the proposed bid align with existing federal and provincial funding guidelines?
- Is the event likely to garner significant support from the private sector? What form is this support likely to take? Sponsorships? In-kind contributions? Other supports? Does the bid proponent already have private sector partners identified and/or committed?
- What sort of revenues is the event likely to generate (e.g. broadcast, sponsorship, ticketing, and licensing)? Have estimates been developed?

FACILITIES

- What facilities would the proposed event require, and how many currently exist in Edmonton?
- Would these facilities be available at the required times?
- Do these facilities meet the minimum necessary technical and seating capacity requirements? Or would upgrades be required?
- Are these facilities accessible from public transit?
- Are these facilities easy to access for people with special needs?
- Which of these facilities would need to be constructed?
- Which of the proposed facilities could be repurposed for public use after the event?
- How much would it cost to repurpose these facilities?
- How much will it cost to fund the operating and capital costs of these facilities over the next 20 years?
- Where would these funds come from? Have the other orders of government agreed to step forward?

ENGAGING THE REGION

- If the event is significant enough to impact other municipalities in the Edmonton Metro Region, has the bid proponent gauged the support of those likely to be affected?
- Is there an opportunity to bring one or more of these municipalities on as event partners?
- If so, what facilities or other event resources would the partner municipalities have that would contribute to the bid?

VIEWERSHIP AND TECHNOLOGY

- Does the proposed event have a significant and growing viewership?
- If the event is not popular in North America, in which countries/regions does it have a strong following? Would Edmonton benefit from enhancing its image in these markets?
- Will the event present well on emerging viewing platforms?
- What technological advancements/investments will be realized if the event is hosted? What are the short-term costs? The long-term benefits?
- What sort of national and/or international broadcast interest would the proposed event be expected to generate?
- What sort of media coverage is the event likely to generate? Would interest be limited to established media outlets, or would less traditional outlets also be interested?
- How many TV viewers could be expected?
- How many viewers on digital and other broadcast platforms?
- Who owns the broadcast rights for the event(s) – the governing body or the local organizing committee?

ECONOMIC SPINOFFS AND DEVELOPMENT

- How many spectators is the proposed event likely to draw? How many from across Canada? How many international spectators?
- How much tourism-related income can the proposed event be expected to generate?
- Would the proposed event provide other economic opportunities for local businesses?
- Would the nature of the proposed event provide an opportunity for the creation of new businesses?
- How many short-term jobs would the proposed event likely create? Would the labour pool in Edmonton and the Edmonton Metro Region be able to fill these positions? If not, how do the bid proponents propose filling these positions?
- How would hosting the proposed event enhance and advance Edmonton's and potentially the greater Edmonton Metro Region's brand nationally and internationally?
- Is there a plan to capitalize on this heightened visibility to achieve goals in key areas (e.g. attracting businesses, investment, and professionals and skilled workers, enhancing Edmonton's appeal as a tourist destination, etc.)

ALIGNMENT WITH MUNICIPAL PRIORITIES

- Does the proposed event align with the City of Edmonton's vision for the city and as a host city?
- Will the proposed event support the six strategic goals that currently direct the City of Edmonton's long-term planning (i.e. urban form, transportation, liveability, environment, financial sustainability, and economic development) contained in The Way Ahead and related documents?
- Does the proposed event present other opportunities to enhance the region's infrastructure, sporting and otherwise?

COMMUNITY BUILDING

- Has a plan been developed to ensure both social and economic benefits continue to flow long after the proposed event has ended?
- What are the volunteer requirements for the event? Has the bid proponent secured support from existing volunteer networks? Does it plan to build a new volunteer network? If the latter, does it have a plan to maintain this network after the event?
- Can the proposed event be leveraged to enhance Edmonton's – and potentially the Edmonton Metro Region's – ability to serve as a training centre for elite athletes?
- Does the proposed event only allow for the participation of elite athletes? If not, how does the bid proponent propose engaging a wider range of participants?
- Is there an opportunity for people with disabilities to participate?
- Are there other opportunities to engage people with disabilities more broadly with the event?
- Would hosting the proposed event advance social goals such as inclusion and community building?
- Could the proposed event be used to revitalize communities in need of investment?
- Would the proposed event provide opportunities to partner with school and youth organizations to promote sports and active living?
- Would the proposed event provide other opportunities to advance the goals contained in Live Active, the City of Edmonton's plan to get Edmontonians – both young and old – to become more physically active?
- How could the event be leveraged to enhance and strengthen the bonds between communities?
- Would the proposed event provide opportunities to partner with existing festivals or arts and culture organizations through ceremonial requirements, participant events, etc.?

SECURING A LEGACY BEYOND INFRASTRUCTURE

- Other than new facilities, what other legacy opportunities could the proposed event offer?
- What sort of governance structure would administer any endowment funds?
- In addition to sustaining legacy infrastructure, what should the goal(s) of such funds be? Attracting and training elite athletes? Encouraging Edmontonians to lead more active lifestyles? Something else?



CONCLUSION

These are exciting times for Edmonton. We are one of the fastest growing cities in Canada, attracting many of the best and brightest from across the country and around the world with our livable communities and wealth of economic opportunities. We are the province's capital and a city of ideas, energy, and education with an artistic heart. The City has made it clear that it wants to build on these strengths so Edmonton can grow from a great Canadian city to a world-class city.

A sports event strategy can play an important role in realizing this ambition. But for such a strategy to be truly successful, the City needs to be clear on what it wants to accomplish in the longer term. What sort of city is it attempting to build for the future? We know City Council is striving to create a world-class city, but what does that actually look like in Edmonton's case? Whatever the City's goals are, they must be clearly laid out in a vision statement, as this will ultimately determine which events – sports and otherwise – Edmonton should bid on. Every event we host should help propel us towards our chosen destination.

Once this course has been set, our Panel believes the fundamentals of a successful sports event strategy are clear. When evaluating bids, the City will need to look beyond today's realities in the world of sports

and events, and anticipate the future. It will need to evaluate whether an event would build the capacity and infrastructure Edmonton needs to fulfill its own aspirations. It should look for opportunities to partner with other municipalities to leverage the greater region's strengths. It should ensure that any bid is backed by a team of community, public, and private players who are willing to work skillfully together to achieve clearly defined goals. It should place inclusion at the heart of any bid so that everyone benefits from the event experience. And finally, the City should undertake legacy planning to ensure the benefits of the event enrich the community well into the future.

By beginning to view events through a clear strategic lens, the City, through Edmonton Events, has already begun moving in the right direction. This report is the critical next step, providing the elements necessary to develop a comprehensive strategy and roadmap to leverage event hosting from something that delivers excitement and benefits in the here and now to a means towards a more prosperous, confident, healthier Edmonton for generations to come. Now is the time for Edmonton to match intent with action. There is little reason why the new policy governing sports events cannot be in place for the incoming City Council this fall. The pieces are here. What is needed is the political action to pull them together. Because unless Edmonton does so, and soon, it risks missing the opportunity to capitalize on The Changing Field of Play.



Photography: Andy Devlin, Oilers Entertainment Group.

