

NIGHTTIME ECONOMY STRATEGY - EVALUATION FRAMEWORK AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Recommendation

That the April 10, 2024, Urban Planning and Economy Report UPE01388, be received for information.

Requested Action	Information Only		
ConnectEdmonton's Guiding Principle	ConnectEdmonton Strategic Goals		
CONNECTED This unifies our work to achieve our strategic goals.	Regional Prosperity		
City Plan Values	THRIVE		
City Plan Big City Move(s)	Catalyze and Converge	Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities	Economic Growth
Corporate Business Plan	Transforming for the Future		
Council Policy, Program or Project Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic Action Plan Downtown Vibrancy Strategy 		
Related Council Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> October 26, 2023 City Operations report CO01974 Opportunities to Enhance Transit Safety and Security - Further Information and Plan June 29, 2022, Urban Planning and Economy report UPE00976 Position to Foster Safe and Activated Environments June 11, 2019, Urban Form and Corporate Strategic Development report CR_6992 Economy of Edmonton's Night Life (S. McKeen) 		

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the July 4, 2022, City Council meeting, the following motion was passed:

That Administration collaborate with Explore Edmonton to develop a night-time economy strategy and return to Committee with a report, including an evaluation framework with outcomes and performance measures.

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Executive Summary

- Explore Edmonton, through hiring a consultant with federal funding and with collaboration from Administration, developed a Nighttime Economy Strategy.
- Strategy development involved seeking advice from a steering committee of stakeholders in the nighttime economy, data collection, perception surveys, document reviews, workshops, interviews and an in-person audit of Edmonton's nighttime economy.
- Administration requires Council direction and a funding source to initiate implementing the strategy by establishing a Nighttime Economy Lead role and creating a Nighttime Economy Alliance (NEA). This alliance would play a crucial role in shaping the priorities and actions required to foster growth in Edmonton's nighttime economy.

REPORT

Since 2019, Administration has assessed the most effective and impactful methods to support the nighttime economy in Edmonton. Through Responsible Hospitality Edmonton (a previous initiative that combined public safety and compliance with local economy programming), the City took an integrated corporate approach to working with businesses and Business Improvement Areas to support economic prosperity and vibrant, thriving commercial districts and streets.

During the November 30, 2021, City Council Budget Public Hearing, members of industry and Business Improvement Area associations shared their perspectives regarding the state of the nighttime economy following the COVID-19 pandemic. Council directed Administration to explore resources to collaborate with the Business Improvement Areas, the business community and event organizers to foster safe and activated environments in business and entertainment areas. This led to the creation of an industry action plan in 2022.

The Economic Action Plan contributes to The City Plan implementation and is a 10-year roadmap to building a vibrant, inclusive and sustainable economy. Supporting the growth, safety and vibrancy of the nighttime economy advances Economic Action Plan Actions 19 (Develop and implement an integrated place brand strategy) and 24 (Utilize and coordinate the City of Edmonton's event strategy and Explore Edmonton Tourism Master Plan as tools to support investment by creating awareness about local opportunities for businesses and people).

Explore Edmonton's Tourism Master Plan

A nighttime economy vision and direction is a key strategic pillar of Explore Edmonton's Tourism Master Plan¹. The Tourism Master Plan provides "a vision for a visitor economy which not only creates jobs and generates revenues, but also drives awareness to our amazing city, and in turn, contributes to our city's local economic vibrancy, future and quality of life." As the responsible party for destination marketing for the City of Edmonton, Explore Edmonton sees a nighttime strategy as a tool to help attract visitors and residents to Edmonton.

Through the work described in this report, a Nighttime Economy Strategy has been created, focusing on evening and nighttime businesses and stakeholders in entertainment, arts, culture,

¹ Explore Edmonton. "Explore Edmonton Tourism Master Plan 2021-2030." (2021).

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hospitality and tourism. The action plan within the strategy intends to create a more vibrant and safe nighttime environment as part of new investments and contributions to the overall growth of Edmonton's economy. It aims to achieve this by bringing together key stakeholders in the nightlife and cultural sectors, coordinating business services, ensuring effective governance between different levels of government, promoting the experiences on offer and creating a platform for the industry to seek support through a collective voice.

This strategy is grounded in the objective of fostering and facilitating fair and inclusive coordination functions for Edmonton's nighttime economy. Its core aim is to empower both artists and entrepreneurs, offering them a platform to unleash their potential within the city fully. In tandem, the strategy was crafted to elevate the overall quality of life for all residents, irrespective of whether they adhere to traditional working hours.

This strategy positions Edmonton to compete with peer cities as a destination and a place of residence, attracting residents and businesses, thereby boosting the tax base and elevating the city's reputation in the broader landscape. The nightlife of a city is a major contributor to attracting people. Following the criteria in the World's Best Cities Report², nightlife ranks eighth for attracting people to a municipality and it ranks first for attracting startups³.

Jurisdictional Scan

Municipalities such as Toronto and Ottawa have approved an action plan to support the nighttime economy in their jurisdictions. The City of Ottawa plans to hire a Night Mayor, while the City of Toronto has formed the Night Economy Internal Working Group, which comprises senior representatives from its administration. Other Canadian cities, such as Vancouver and Calgary, continue to explore the ideal nighttime economy support model. Many cities in the United States have a nighttime economy office consisting of a Night Mayor or "24 Hour Economy Ambassador" that primarily supports nighttime businesses. Details on the work of other jurisdictions are found in Attachment 1.

Development of the Strategy

The development of the Nighttime Economy Strategy was led by Explore Edmonton with support and participation by Administration. Explore Edmonton secured federal funding to hire an expert consultant to craft the strategy. After a selection process overseen by a committee composed of representatives from Explore Edmonton and Administration, Night Time Economy Solutions (NTES) was chosen to undertake this project.

The approach adopted by NTES for developing Edmonton's Nighttime Economy Strategy was comprehensive. It included gathering insights from residents and stakeholders in Edmonton's

² World's Best Cities Report 2024. Resonance Consultancy Ltd.: 2023. Methodology includes assessing cities on 24 factors to determine the livability, lovability and prosperity of over 270 global cities. <https://www.worldsbestcities.com/rankings/worlds-best-cities/>

³ As commented by the CEO of Resonance Consultancy, the organization responsible for the World's Best Cities Report, at the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board's 2023 Re-envision Housing Symposium held on November 2, 2023, in Edmonton.

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nighttime economy through surveys involving 3,301 residents, 253 businesses and 851 post-secondary students. Additionally, NTES conducted 63 phone interviews with industry stakeholders and organized focus groups attended by 92 individuals representing various sectors and interests.

Industry and community input was provided by a steering committee throughout the strategy development timeline. The committee was made up of members from various organizations involved in the nighttime economy: Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis, Edmonton Police Service, Edmonton Downtown Business Association, Old Strathcona Business Association, Edmonton Arts Council, REACH Edmonton, Concert Works, The Common, AKSIS/Insync Consulting, and Starlite Room all provided their time and insight to the project team. Their input ensured the consultants had access to first-hand Edmonton experiences and perspectives.

NTES held a week-long in-person audit of Edmonton's nighttime economy February 15 - 22, 2023. This audit was an immersive experience where the consultants physically visited Edmonton, allowing them to engage with and observe the nighttime scene directly. During this audit, the consultants utilized various modes of transportation, including walking, rideshare and public transit, to ensure an authentic experience.

The audit examined the nighttime economy from different perspectives, including reviewing regulatory aspects, considering the consumer experience, transit service and evaluating policing and safety measures. Explore Edmonton and Administration accompanied the consultants throughout the audit to provide guidance and context.

The first-hand experiences and observations gathered during this audit shaped the strategy and its accompanying objectives and recommended actions. It provided valuable insights into Edmonton's nighttime economy's unique characteristics, opportunities and challenges, allowing for a more informed and tailored strategy development process.

This process was complemented by an evaluation of all relevant strategies, such as The City Plan, the Downtown Vibrancy Strategy and the Winter City Strategy, as well as an analysis of various databases, reports and program information. All the information gathered contributed to shaping the development of Edmonton's Nighttime Economy Strategy (Attachment 2)⁴, which was received on June 22, 2023.

Strategy Approach

There are seven overarching recommendations within the Nighttime Economy Strategy prepared by the consultant NTES:

- A. Establish and implement a framework for a Nighttime Economy Lead and accompanying Nighttime Economy Alliance.
- B. Create a nighttime inventory.
- C. Create a citywide culture and creativity action plan.

⁴ The strategy references Evening and Night Time Economy as ENTE.

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- D. Create a robust engagement strategy for sustainable access to the Nighttime Economy and information sharing with new initiatives.
- E. Develop a public realm master plan for Edmonton.
- F. Develop a night safety and welfare strategy.
- G. Develop a transportation improvement strategy and activation plan.

Each overarching recommendation provided by NTES to Explore Edmonton includes an associated set of actions. Based on analysis of the strategy, 34 (58 per cent) of these actions involve work underway and in alignment with existing City priorities and activities, and 25 (42 per cent) of these actions are not yet contemplated in current City of Edmonton actions.

Should Council direct Administration, Recommendation A, as detailed in the Strategy, would be implemented and serve as the foundation for the potential implementation of the remaining recommendations in the strategy and their accompanying actions. The full strategy, as written, is estimated to take three to five years to implement. This does not account for work already underway or completed by the City and partners.

Assessment and implementation of all or parts of the remaining recommendations not currently underway would be guided by work undertaken within Recommendation A, integrating with the City's service areas and considering the priority needs identified by the Nighttime Economy Alliance. This staged approach would be designed so that the most impactful recommendations and actions are identified for implementation and alignment with existing City priorities and activities, and allow for emerging opportunities or challenges to be considered in the rollout of any actions.

While the suite of recommendations and actions provided by the consultant to Explore Edmonton are thorough and based on comprehensive engagement and experience, they are written at a point in time. Edmonton's economic and social landscape continues to evolve, and work by the City, its social and economic development partners, as well as other orders of government, has been underway since before the strategy was developed. Therefore, beginning with Recommendation A allows for continued integration of actions, assessment and prioritization of remaining recommendations and actions, and a mechanism to incorporate emerging priorities identified by industry and community.

If directed by Council to implement strategy Recommendation A, there are two key actions that could be undertaken.

Action 1: Appointment of a Nighttime Economy Lead for the City of Edmonton.

A Nighttime Economy Lead would:

- Represent the City in conversations, engagement and activities related to Edmonton's nighttime economy and implementation of the strategy. This would include actions such as speaking directly with and visiting nightlife operators (business owners, street performers, nighttime staff, entertainers, artists, service providers, patrons, etc.).

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- Convene and chair a Nighttime Economy Alliance comprising municipal participants, City agencies as appropriate, industry stakeholders, workers, business districts, patrons and residents. This would include involvement of other public facing agencies such as Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis (AGLC), Edmonton Police Service and other social agencies.
- Promote economic opportunities by facilitating access to government support, resources, best practices and, where available, funds for nightlife businesses, organizations and workers.
- Encourage new investment in nighttime businesses and venues, including support for expansion of current businesses and attraction of new businesses.
- Function in a tactical and operational manner, facilitating connections across Administration to actively promote and bolster the nighttime economy by delivering City services, including regulatory functions.
- Champion the concerns of nightlife and the creative economy in public policy decisions, particularly prioritizing the well-being of the nighttime workforce and marginalized communities.
- Provide input on planning and licensing decisions that have a direct impact on nightlife economic activity.
- Engage with the public and industry stakeholders and provide outreach, mediation and assistance with navigating issues or tensions between the groups.
- Facilitate dialogue to resolve complaints and regulatory issues, enhancing the quality of life for residents, business owners and staff.
- Monitor and measure implementation of the strategy, including any future updates.
- Support understanding of the economic impact of Edmonton's nighttime economy with a focus on entertainment, arts, culture, music and tourism.
- Encourage and support the implementation of optimal harm reduction approaches in venue management, addressing substance abuse, mental health, sexual harassment, and disruptive patron behavior through collaboration with public health authorities and non-profit organizations.
- Continuously gather and analyze data concerning nighttime activities and the nighttime arts and culture sector within the city, serving as valuable insights to guide the operations of the Nighttime Economy Alliance.

Action 2: The Nighttime Economy Lead would facilitate the establishment of a Nighttime Economy Alliance (NEA) for the City of Edmonton to set priorities and to take action on growing Edmonton's nighttime economy.

A Nighttime Economy Alliance for Edmonton would:

- Meet regularly as determined by the group (at least quarterly).
- Identify and prioritize actions included in the strategy and emerging opportunities to support the nighttime economy.
- Provide feedback to inform policies and regulations that affect the nighttime economy.
- Provide input on planning and licensing decisions that have a direct impact on nightlife economic activity.

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- Promote economic opportunities by facilitating access to government support, resources, best practices and, where available, funds for nightlife businesses, organizations and workers.
- Coordinate and identify the most appropriate leads to implement actions in the strategy.
- Identify and recommend performance measures to evaluate strategy implementation.
- Function as an expert resource, facilitator, promoter and convenor.
- The NEA would be made up of a representative from at least each of the following groups:
 - Hospitality workers, artists and performers, Business Improvement Area associations, venue owners and operators, industry entrepreneurs, post secondary representatives including students, provincial regulators (AGLC), City Administration, Explore Edmonton, hotel and hospitality businesses, the music industry, Edmonton Arts Council, LGBTQIA2S+ organizations, policing agencies (Edmonton Police Service) and Edmontonians and patrons.
 - NEA members would serve a defined term and rotate in membership to ensure diverse opinions and voices are included in the NEA.

The Nighttime Economy Lead and the NEA would assess the recommendations outlined in the strategy that are not already underway for feasibility and alignment with City priorities. They would take into account the specific conditions and the social and economic climate in Edmonton. Not all of the recommendations and associated actions may be required, and emerging priorities may be identified as the work progresses.

Performance Measures

As part of developing the strategy, NTES proposed success indicators for each recommendation, as outlined in Attachment 3 (the timescale noted in this attachment is hypothetical and intended to reflect orders of magnitude). The dynamic nature of the economy and evolving industry priorities may render some of these indicators obsolete or more appropriate measures may be identified by the NEA. By reviewing the success indicators provided as part of the strategy, the NEA would revalidate existing measures or identify and recommend new measures that are appropriate to evaluate strategy implementation. Therefore, the most applicable performance measures would be identified by the NEA as the various elements of the strategy are implemented, as available data sets are identified, developed or discovered, and as priorities are determined.

Work Underway

The strategy has a heavy emphasis on safety and creating the conditions for vibrancy where patrons, businesses, staff and supporting organizations feel secure. The ongoing implementation of the various safety and strategy plans such as, the Community Safety and Well-being Strategy, the Downtown Core and Enhanced Transit Safety Plan, the Anti Racism Strategy and other safety and wellbeing initiatives have built a foundation for the Nighttime Economy Strategy. Many existing City initiatives are already contributing to the safety of both the daytime and nighttime economies. Attachment 4 captures the current state of many City actions underway in relation to the strategy's recommendations.

The Nighttime Economy Lead and the NEA would collaborate with the relevant internal teams responsible for the projects and programs related to the strategy recommendations. This

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approach intends an efficient use of City resources, foster alignment and provide a coordinated effort to implement the strategy.

Options for the Creation of a Nighttime Economy Lead

- 1) Establish a Nighttime Economy Lead role within Administration and subsequently establish the NEA. There is no budget for this position nor for project costs. A funding source would need to be identified by Council.
- 2) Some jurisdictions have a position that is funded, housed inside of, and reporting directly to the Mayor's office. In this instance it is able to advocate for stakeholders and connect to the various resources within Administration, but cannot direct the work of Administration.

Next Steps

Should Council wish to proceed with strategy implementation, identification of a funding source and budget would be required. Recruitment could then begin for the Nighttime Economy Lead position. The NEA would then be initiated through engagement with industry stakeholders and other relevant partners. A terms of reference and other governance documentation will guide the work of the NEA to ensure operational transparency and consistency.

Budget/Financial Implications

Funding for this initiative was not identified in the 2023-2026 operating budget. The estimated costs include \$200,000 ongoing for a Nighttime Economy Lead role (salary and benefits), as well as \$50,000 one-time costs in 2024 for implementation and establishing the NEA. If funding is not identified, implementation of Actions 1 and 2 described above will not proceed.

Community Insight

Administration made dedicated efforts to ensure broad and inclusive stakeholder participation in the strategy's development, and engaged with more than 4,000 stakeholders to gather input. This is in addition to a steering committee made up of community and industry stakeholders that advised the consultants.

The Nighttime Economy Lead role and the function of the NEA are designed to create an inclusive platform where industry and Edmontonians will have the opportunity to contribute to the strategy and shape its future priorities. The overall success of the NEA is dependent upon the active participation of diverse stakeholders who can address the evolving needs of industry, staff and nighttime economy patrons.

Opportunities for ongoing stakeholder engagement will increase if a funding source for the establishment of the Nighttime Economy Lead and NEA is approved. This engagement could occur through industry involvement in the NEA, or through regular interactions with the NEA or the Nighttime Economy Lead, ensuring that their input and insights continue to inform and enrich the Nighttime Economy Strategy.

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GBA+

The nighttime economy in Edmonton is largely made up of businesses in the hospitality and entertainment sectors. A majority of the workforce in this industry are young women. The Alberta Accommodation and Food Services Industry Profiles, 2021 and 2022⁵ indicate that the industry is comprised of 58.3 per cent female-identifying employees, with 44.8 per cent between the ages of 15 to 24. Workforce safety is a heightened concern in a sector that predominantly operates during nighttime hours.

Administration aims to ensure that everyone employed in the hospitality industry experiences improved safety while at work, as well as during their commute to and from the workplace. A dedicated industry resource (e.g. a Nighttime Economy Lead) would implement mechanisms that support the nighttime economy, including the workforce, and could help to address both tangible and perceived inequalities to workers in this sector.

Survey data collected during this project confirmed that patrons tend to feel less safe during nighttime hours. On Friday and Saturday, between 9 p.m. and 12 a.m., 45 per cent of patrons feel unsafe or very unsafe, with this number rising to 59 per cent after midnight. This reiterates the importance of adequate resource allocation and engagement with industry patrons to address their safety and security concerns, supporting the growth of this industry.

Administration will maintain an ongoing dialogue with members of the NEA, Business Improvement Area associations, the Edmonton Independent Hospitality Community, and other public and private sector collaborators. Together, these organizations can identify gaps and offer support to underrepresented groups in the hospitality and entertainment industry, benefiting staff, patrons, and residents or visitors in these hospitality areas.

Attachments

1. Nighttime Economy Jurisdictional Scan
2. Edmonton's Nighttime Economy Strategy
3. Recommendations with Success Indicators
4. NTES Recommendations and Current City Alignment

⁵ Government of Alberta. Ministry of Jobs, Economy and Northern Development. *Accommodation and Food Service Industry Profile 2021 and 2022*. 2023.