

EXPLORE EDMONTON FACILITY MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION OPTIONS

Recommendation

1. That the June 18, 2025, City Operations report CO02824, be received for information.
2. That Attachments 1 and 2 of the June 18, 2025, City Operations report CO02824, remain private pursuant to sections 16 (disclosure harmful to business interests of a third party) and 27 (privileged information) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Requested Action		Information only	
ConnectEdmonton's Guiding Principle		ConnectEdmonton Strategic Goals	
CONNECTED This unifies our work to achieve our strategic goals.		Urban Places	
City Plan Values	THRIVE		
City Plan Big City Move(s)	Catalyze and converge	Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities	Conditions for service success
Corporate Business Plan	Managing the corporation		
Council Policy, Program or Project Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A1403A - Maintenance of City Owned Facilities		
Related Council Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">September 16, 2025, Urban Planning and Economy report UPE02815, Edmonton's Economic Development Agency ReviewJune 18, 2025, Financial and Corporate Services report FCS02825, External Agencies Shared Services ReviewFebruary 27, 2024, Integrated Infrastructure Services report IIS02148, Implementing Edmonton's District Strategy		

EXPLORE EDMONTON FACILITY MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION OPTIONS

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the December 2, 2024, City Council meeting the following motion was passed:

That Administration provide a report summarizing an analysis of incorporating Explore Edmonton's building operating and maintenance work into city-wide budgets, including an analysis on current asset condition, costs and impacts to absorbing building maintenance and renewal budgets in order to perform that work.

Executive Summary

- The Edmonton Convention Centre and the EXPO Centre are owned by the City of Edmonton and leased to Explore Edmonton. Under the lease terms, Explore Edmonton is responsible for the operations and maintenance of the facilities and the City of Edmonton is responsible for capital renewal.
- Administration recently performed site visits at both the Edmonton Convention Centre and the EXPO Centre with Explore Edmonton to better understand the maintenance work performed by Explore Edmonton and the current condition of the facilities.
- Administration's site visits and analysis indicate that Explore Edmonton is maintaining the facilities well and at costs that are in line with City estimates. The overall physical condition of the Edmonton Convention Centre is Good (B), bordering on Fair (C) condition and the EXPO Centre was determined to be Good (B) condition.
- The City is unable to absorb the operating and maintenance work into existing city-wide budgets without impacting service levels to existing facilities.
- The unique operational requirements of these facilities, including their reliance on extended hours, rapid service turnaround and event-specific infrastructure, position Explore Edmonton as the recommended maintenance service provider.
- Opportunities exist for enhanced collaboration, such as exploring shared contract use, implementing third-party reviews of maintenance plans and addressing inflationary cost pressures.

REPORT

Background

In April 2025, Administration toured both the Edmonton Convention Centre and the EXPO Centre in collaboration with Explore Edmonton. The tour provided insight into real-time event operations and asset management practices at each location.

Edmonton Convention Centre

The Edmonton Convention Centre, constructed in 1983 and encompassing 450,000 square feet over five levels, is a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified venue built into Edmonton's River Valley. It is Advancing Standards Transforming Markets (ASTM) International and Green Key Level Five certified, emphasizing sustainable design and

EXPLORE EDMONTON FACILITY MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION OPTIONS

environmental performance. The facility regularly hosts conferences, trade shows, galas and large public events throughout the week, including evenings and weekends.

Explore Edmonton currently manages all day-to-day maintenance responsibilities for the Edmonton Convention Centre and the City of Edmonton is responsible for the capital renewal of the facility. The Explore Edmonton maintenance team has 15 full-time staff, including HVAC operators, electricians, carpenters, landscapers and security. Explore Edmonton augments its services with external contractors for large-scale needs such as major snow removal. The City of Edmonton is in the final stages of a significant multi-year \$48 million capital renewal expected to be complete in 2025.

Edmonton EXPO Centre

The Edmonton EXPO Centre, constructed in 1984 with expansions in 2009, encompasses 1.9 million square feet and is one of the largest in Western Canada. Serving over 1.3 million visitors annually across more than 400 events, the facility includes seven exhibition halls, a mid-sized arena, ballroom and conference venues, offices and supporting infrastructure, as well as an operations shop, utility building and the Klondike Park grounds.

Explore Edmonton is responsible for all maintenance and operational support, and the City of Edmonton is responsible for the capital renewal. The operations team includes 30 full-time and approximately 250 part-time staff. Core maintenance trade roles include HVAC operators, electricians, refrigeration specialists, a locksmith and landscape support. Custodial, pest control, AV technical services and some security functions are externally contracted. The City of Edmonton is in the final stages of a significant multi-year \$103.7 million capital renewal expected to be complete in 2025.

Assessment of Existing Maintenance and Operating Models

The tours conducted with Explore Edmonton of the Edmonton Convention Centre and the Edmonton EXPO Centre provided insight into real-time event operations and asset management practices.

General

Both sites were observed with active event setup, takedown and live programming. The level of coordination between departments, including temporary infrastructure, space conversions, logistics and catering, demonstrated the complexity of facility operations and the tight integration of maintenance within event delivery models. These venues operate with a high degree of scheduling variability, requiring maintenance support during extended hours, weekends and live event windows. Explore Edmonton maintains flexible shift-based scheduling that aligns with these operational demands.

Custodial

Administration completed a visual inspection and reviewed Explore Edmonton's custodial arrangements. Both facilities were found to be in clean and well-maintained condition. Explore Edmonton's agreements with vendors were found to be competitive with industry standards.

EXPLORE EDMONTON FACILITY MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION OPTIONS

Explore Edmonton employs an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategy supported by biweekly contracted service. The model reflects a proactive and sustainable approach to pest control, balancing health, safety and environmental considerations.

Compatibility of Building Systems

Several building systems currently in use are not compatible with City corporate standards, including fire alarms, access control, security systems and the incline elevator. Significant investment or contractual alternatives would be required to integrate or manage these systems under City standards. Other venue-specific systems such as audiovisual infrastructure, commercial kitchens, livestock-compatible surfaces and public address systems fall outside the standard scope of work maintained by the City.

Service Delivery Model

If the City of Edmonton were to take on maintenance responsibilities for these venues in the future, several important considerations would emerge.

The unique operational requirements of these facilities, including their reliance on extended hours, rapid service turnaround and event-specific infrastructure, would challenge the City's existing facility maintenance model. Explore Edmonton's model of maintaining an in-house team for maintenance and repair offers advantages in terms of communication and oversight for event delivery. Any comparable service approach would likely require expanded shift coverage, overtime and additional resources, resulting in increased operational costs and complexity.

The broad scope of services currently supported by Explore Edmonton spans multiple functional areas, such as landscaping, snow removal, parking, security, custodial, Audio Visual systems, pest control and kitchen equipment maintenance. Coordinating these services under City oversight would introduce administrative overhead and require dedicated contract management for elements not currently maintained within standard City operations.

Analysis

Maintenance

The current state of facility maintenance at the Edmonton Convention Centre and the Edmonton EXPO Centre, both of which are operated and maintained by Explore Edmonton are delivered through a responsive, shift-based model aligned to the facilities' dynamic event schedules.

Based on the tour and a review of the annual operating costs, Explore Edmonton is maintaining the facilities well and at costs that are in line with City estimates.

If the City were to take on maintenance responsibilities in the future, several operational and financial challenges would arise, including extended service hours and specialized systems integration. These facilities require service levels and vendor arrangements that fall outside the City's current delivery model.

Administration identified several opportunities to enhance collaboration, such as shared contract use, third-party reviews of maintenance plans and addressing inflationary cost pressures.

EXPLORE EDMONTON FACILITY MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION OPTIONS

Physical Condition

Based on the site visit and visual inspections, it has been determined that the EXPO Centre is in Good (B) overall physical condition and the Edmonton Convention Centre is in Good (B), bordering on Fair (C) condition.

Next Steps

The City of Edmonton and Explore Edmonton have engaged in constructive and collaborative discussions, grounded in a shared commitment to maintaining high-quality, safe and reliable public facilities. Explore Edmonton has demonstrated strong operational capability in managing the complex and dynamic needs of the Edmonton Convention Centre and the Edmonton EXPO Centre.

While there are opportunities to enhance alignment, including exploring the use of City service contracts and shared planning, the City of Edmonton cannot absorb Explore Edmonton's facility maintenance responsibilities within its existing operating budgets without impacting legislated, preventative and breakdown maintenance of existing City-owned and managed assets. Significant inflationary pressures, aging infrastructure across the City's broader facility portfolio and constrained capital and operating resources mean that any shift in responsibility would require new funding and structural changes that are not currently feasible within approved budgets.

This report confirms that the current service delivery model remains appropriate and outlines areas where ongoing collaboration can continue to strengthen operational coordination and asset management:

- **Continued Collaboration** - Administration will continue to work with Explore Edmonton to identify shared service or contract opportunities where practical efficiencies or economies of scale can be achieved.
- **Alignment on Planning and Standards** - Both organizations will continue dialogue on alignment of maintenance standards, reporting expectations and lifecycle planning to support long-term facility stewardship.
- **Encourage Third-Party Oversight** - Administration will encourage Explore Edmonton to pursue periodic third-party reviews of its maintenance programs and budgets to support transparency, benchmarking and continuous improvement.
- **Monitor Financial Pressures** - The City will continue to monitor inflationary impacts, infrastructure risk and capacity limitations. Administration will engage with Council should any changes in service delivery approach require consideration.

Future updates will be provided to Council as joint work continues and as new risks, efficiencies or operational changes are identified.

Budget/Financial Implications

If the City absorbs Explore Edmonton's building operating and maintenance work, there would be financial impacts to the City. The nature of Explore Edmonton's building operating and

EXPLORE EDMONTON FACILITY MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION OPTIONS

maintenance service model supporting the EXPO Centre and the Edmonton Convention Centre is different from the typical services provided by the City's Facility Maintenance Services.

From an operating budget perspective, the City would not be able to absorb the additional costs related to providing operating and maintenance work for Explore Edmonton in the current budget without impacting the current service level provided to other City facilities. For the City to absorb Explore Edmonton's building and maintenance work without negatively impacting the service provided to other City facilities, a funding source would need to be identified for an operating budget adjustment. Budget details are included in private Attachment 1.

If Council considers funding for Explore Edmonton's building operating and maintenance, a motion would be required to bring this request to a future budget process such as an unfunded service package to the 2025 Fall Supplemental Operating Budget or to the 2027-2030 Budget.

Legal Implications

Legal implications are included in private Attachment 2.

Contract Implications

If the City were to absorb this work, the facility's existing contracts would need to be reviewed as there could be potential limitations in the City's takeover of this work, such as:

- Inability to assign the facility's existing contracts to the City due to contract clauses;
- Exclusivity conflicts between the City's contracts and the facility's existing contracts;
- Addition of Living Wage clauses and renegotiation of rates to comply with Council requirements as the work at a City facility would now be managed by the City;
- Inability to terminate the facility's existing contracts if required; and
- Time and resource constraints for potential procurements.

Community Insight

Administration did not conduct public engagement specific to this report. Administration collaborated with Explore Edmonton through site tours of the Edmonton Convention Centre and the EXPO Centre and participated in meetings to obtain building and operation costs.

GBA+

GBA+ analysis was not conducted as part of this report. The scope of the report was to analyze the current asset condition, costs and impacts to absorbing building maintenance and renewal budgets of Explore Edmonton's building operating and maintenance work into city-wide budgets.

Environment and Climate Review

There will be no material change in environmental or climate impact expected as a result of this report.

Attachments

1. PRIVATE - Budget Details
2. PRIVATE - Legal Implications