

## WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

### IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS ENGAGEMENT - APRIL 2025

In April 2025, the City held two external engagement sessions to review progress, gather feedback and obtain input on the implementation of the Industrial Investment Action Plan (IIAP). Two presentation/engagement sessions were held with a mix of external and internal implementation partners.

- The April 3 session reviewed the progress on all nine actions of the IIAP, discussed next steps and offered the opportunity to provide comments and feedback.
- The session on April 8 was more focused, seeking detailed feedback on sub-actions: *2.1: Review Area Structure Plans, climate considerations and identify growth areas for each target sector* and *9.1: Define key metrics, establish targets, conduct an assessment and monitor the success of the Action Plan.*

Overall feedback was positive and indicated that the IIAP is moving in the right direction. In particular, the session on April 8 successfully captured industry perspectives and affirmed that the draft key performance metrics are relevant and will likely be effective. Following the sessions, Administration received additional feedback via email, which has since been incorporated into this report.

### SESSION PARTICIPANTS<sup>1</sup>

April 3, 2025

#### ORGANIZATIONS

Alberta Industrial Heartland Association	Edmonton Chamber of Commerce
ATCO	EPCOR
Northwest Industrial Business Association (BIA)	MacEwan University
BILD Edmonton	Métis Nation Of Alberta
BOMA	NAIOP
Cameron Development Corporation	Remington Development Corporation

<sup>1</sup> This reflects who was in attendance and not those who were invited but were unavailable to attend.

April 8, 2025

## ORGANIZATIONS

Alberta Industrial Heartland Association	NAIOP
ATCO	Panattoni Development Company
BILD Edmonton	Remington Development Corporation

## KEY THEMES

The following key themes emerged from the implementation partner feedback:

### **The City's Area Structure Plans (ASPs) and District Plans require comprehensive reviews on industrial policies and information.**

- Implementation partners indicated that changes to Area Structure Plans (ASPs), even minor ones, often require council approval, which can be time-consuming. Implementation partners would like to see the City be proactive in reviewing and initiating plan amendments, instead of waiting for the development community to bring forward amendment requests. They believe this would help streamline development opportunities in Edmonton.
- It was identified that too much specificity in ASPs can be restrictive and require council approval for small changes, whereas minimal detail can lead to ambiguity and become delayed with Administration.
- Implementation partners requested more certainty in Edmonton's Plans and Policies in order to support their financial investments when submitting development applications, while also having flexibility in design decisions.
- Implementation partners noted challenges regarding reviewing of ASPs at the development application stage, as reviews are completed by specific departments that look at specific items, rather than looking at the application as a whole.
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- It was identified that the existing policy and regulatory framework can at times be difficult to navigate, potentially resulting in additional time, resources and Council approvals, which impacts the ability to realize project outcomes.
- It was noted that there would be benefit in reviewing and updating statutory industrial-area plans to ensure they reflect the most current policy direction consistent with the City Plan, in order to provide more certainty and predictability through the development approvals process.
- Implementation partners pointed out that several existing ASPs in industrial infill areas require updates (i.e. Maple Ridge, Mistatim(repealed), Winterburn and Aurum).
- Implementation partners noted that many plans have industrial development as their last planned stage, which creates challenges when planning infrastructure in the area.

### **Incentives and access to funding is an important part of the growth of industrial development.**

- Implementation partners stated they are interested in taking advantage of incentives in Edmonton and within the region, while also working to access funding from the City, such as capital funding for industrial projects.

- It was noted that working with other levels of government to make larger projects viable is necessary and it is critical for Edmonton to be a part of those conversations.
- Implementation partners shared examples of other municipalities in the region providing incentives where a municipality is upfront on infrastructure costs that are then transferred to a development levy, which helps speed up investment. This approach of offering incentives was identified as desirable for developers and implementation partners.

#### **The City needs to work to protect and retain industrial development.**

- Implementation partners requested clarity about where the City is trying to encourage industrial development in the new District Plans and along the city's border.
- Implementation partners agreed that some of the City's bylaws, plans and policies do not provide enough heavy and medium industrial lands and are supportive of Administration making recommendations to preserve and protect industrial lands.

#### **The City should look to the Region to compare what other jurisdictions are doing to make industrial development easier.**

- Implementation partners shared how other organizations (NAIOP Vancouver) do systematic comparisons between jurisdictions on data such as performance indicators to understand how they are compared to other municipalities. Implementation partners suggested that Edmonton should collect and compare similar data to better understand how they compare to other municipalities in the region.

#### **Reviewing policies on Municipal Reserves.**

- Implementation partners talked about their preferences for providing the required municipal reserve<sup>2</sup> dedication to the City as land versus cash-in-lieu of land. The preferred option often depends on financial considerations and the City's specific land acquisition needs.
- One participant identified the importance of municipal reserves and how this is necessary for providing recreational opportunities for workers in these industrial areas. They suggested the City re-think municipal reserve policies that require cash-in-lieu in industrial neighbourhoods and that the City should consider how lands are taken for reserves, particularly around watercourses and wildlife corridors.

#### **Key metrics established meet the needs of industry.**

- Implementation partners commented that the definition of "shovel-ready" land as defined in the KPIs might be too prescriptive. Other metrics like "development-ready" and "zoned land" were suggested as alternatives to tracking parcels that are ready for development.

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<sup>2</sup> Province of Alberta. MGA Review Discussion Paper. December 2013. Municipal reserve, school reserve, municipal and school reserves – These types of reserves can be used for a public park, recreation area, school board purposes or to separate lands that are used for different purposes (e.g., as a buffer). At the time of subdivision, a total of 10 per cent of the original parcel (less the amount taken for environmental reserve) can be taken as these types of reserves. In specific circumstances, an additional five per cent may be requested. Rather than asking for land, a municipality may require money in place of reserve land or choose to defer receiving the reserve land until a future subdivision occurs on the land. Calculation of money in place of reserve land is based upon either market value appraisal of the land or a value that is agreed upon between the developer and the subdivision authority. .

- Implementation partners are interested in the metrics the City tracks and reports on and how they compare to surrounding municipalities. Permit timelines and capital investment are also important KPIs for organizations.
- Implementation partners identified that tracking and publicly reporting on permitting timelines is imperative to the development community.

## NEXT STEPS

This input will be considered in IIAP implementation. Additional engagement sessions will be held throughout the year to continue seeking feedback from Implementation partners and adjusting implementation accordingly. Results from these sessions will be presented to Council in a future progress report update.