

Industrial Investment Action Plan - Relevance to Investment Readiness

In 2016, to further support new and existing industrial investments and maintain and increase the City's non-residential tax base, the City of Edmonton developed an Industrial Investment Action Plan. The plan, introduced in the June 21, 2016 Executive Committee Report CR_3019; the "Industrial Transformation Roadmap Implementation Plan", contains nine key actions. This report will examine how these actions influence or affect the investment readiness of industrial land in Edmonton

Each of the nine actions were addressed collaboratively across the Corporation as well as through ongoing engagements with external stakeholders. Some of the actions are finite with fixed deliverables and end dates, while others are ongoing activities that will continue to develop and expand to meet the needs of the industrial market. The nine actions and their relationship to investment readiness are outlined below:

ACTION 1 - IMPROVE Image, Reputation, Engagements & Communication **Background**

Administration will increase engagement with government economic agencies and collaboration with regional economic development associations and industrial businesses.

Relevance to Investment Readiness: *Awareness, Alignment*

Engagement activities and a variety of new communication tools support investment readiness with the development and real estate industry. This strengthens the City's awareness of market issues and economic conditions, new products, programs and services to support economic development. The use of communication tools such as the dedicated industrial investment website and an interactive industrial site locator tool for realtors and developers provides information on Edmonton's industrial land investment land opportunities for lease or sale.

ACTION 2 - IMPLEMENT Flexible Design Standards **Background**

Administration collaborated with Transportation Planning on updating the comprehensive Complete Streets Standards with increased options and flexibility for industrial neighbourhood development.

Relevance to Investment Readiness: *Alignment, Competitiveness*

Flexible Standards increase competitiveness with neighbouring municipalities by offering similar development standard options and competitive land development costs.

ACTION 3 - EXPLORE Alternative Funding Model

Background

Administration developed a tax uplift cost sharing model to assist front-end developer in recovering oversized infrastructure costs, and lessen the burden of development levies experienced by subsequent developers and businesses. The Policy is named Industrial Infrastructure Cost Sharing Program, and it is available online as **City Policy C592**.

Relevance to Investment Readiness: *Alignment, Competitiveness*

This program was developed to mitigate the effects of high front-end costs and development levies for developers. This model increases competitiveness by reducing financial risks, to increase the inventory of shovel ready land.

ACTION 4 - INTRODUCE Revised Capital Project Prioritization Framework

Background

The Capital Growth Profile Prioritization Framework was reviewed and updated to include economic impacts as part of the evaluation criteria for Capital prioritization.

Relevance to Investment Readiness: *Availability, Alignment*

Capital profile prioritization was developed to consider economic impacts in capital profiles, increasing the necessary infrastructure to increase industrial shovel ready serviced lands.

ACTION 5 - INCREASE Speed to Market Development

Background

To be more competitive in attracting new investment and expanding current businesses, Administration is working with other City departments to ensure that it provides timely approvals and improved processes to potential industrial development investors.

Relevance to Investment Readiness: *Alignment, Competitiveness*

To advance unserviced land to a level of being shovel ready within acceptable timelines is a critical component of investment readiness. It is also a component of competitiveness since timelines are often a key component of investment decisions. Administration is currently collaborating with the Urban Form Business

Transformation project which places a priority on developing processes and timelines that are responsive to industry needs. The Project has two relevant components:

- setting timelines for select industrial development and building permits (to be launched in fall 2019)
- to create and implement a service (as part of the Client Liaison Team) that applies a project management approach to navigate select commercial and industrial projects through the City's multiple planning and development processes

ACTION 6 - LEVERAGE Industrial Business Facilitation and Retention Program

Background

Edmonton's Business Facilitation and Retention Program team works directly with existing businesses, new investors, developers, and landowners starting at the pre-investment stage. It is estimated that 60 to 80 percent of industrial expansion and growth comes from existing businesses.

Relevance to Investment Readiness: *Awareness, Alignment*

Understanding the needs of investors is a critical component of developing policies and practices to serve the industrial investment market. The Business Facilitation and Retention Program connects City staff with existing businesses across a range of industries to better understand the issues and challenges to develop inputs to improve processes and services. This enables Administration to align regulatory processes that meets the needs of the industrial marketplace.

ACTION 7 - INCREASE Investment Readiness - Edmonton Energy & Technology Park

Background

Administration is working to ensure the EETP Area Structure Plan is relevant and up to date to implement efficient infrastructure solutions that provide effective industrial development.

The Watson Report noted that:

“The [Edmonton Energy and Technology Park] is competitive with respect to a broad range of light, medium and heavy industrial development and is expected to become an increasingly important component of Edmonton's industrial lands portfolio over the coming decades.”

Relevance to Investment Readiness: *Awareness, Competitiveness, Alignment*

Administration has improved a number of development components in the Edmonton Energy and Technology Park including:

- Redesigned road network to increase efficiency and reduce costs
- Simplified land use zones with increased number of permitted uses.
- Development of flexible design standards
- Initiated several technical studies to reduce developer requirements
- Marketing and promotion of the area.

ACTION 8 - IMPLEMENT Eco-industrial Principles (Timing: Requires active market to implement changes)

Background

Administration initiated a process to determine how eco-industrial standards can best be defined and implemented in both the Edmonton Energy and Technology Park and other existing industrial neighbourhoods.

Relevance to Investment Readiness: *Competitiveness*

Eco-Industrial development requirements support a number of the City's environmental and sustainability objectives. Through engagement and flexible standards, the City is finding ways to implement Eco-industrial principles into industrial developments and cognizant of its impact on competitiveness.

ACTION 9 - PRIORITIZE Industrial Infrastructure Projects – Winterburn

Background

Edmonton's industrial neighbourhoods such as Winterburn Industrial, Mistatim and Maple Ridge were annexed by Edmonton with gravel roads and ditch cross sections. These areas contain large industrial operations on unserviced sites with large trucks and heavy equipment that routinely damage the integrity of the road structure and require constant repair by the City.

Relevance to Investment Readiness: *Availability, Competitiveness*

The Winterburn Pilot Project was an initiative designed to improve servicing levels to the inventory of available serviced lands. Improved infrastructure has the potential to introduce City services such as road maintenance and transit services to more under serviced industrial areas to help the neighbourhoods become more competitive.