Stakeholder Feedback

Please note that the wording of the actions featured in the final version of the Action Plan may not reflect the language of the actions that were provided to stakeholders for review. Actions may have been edited based on the stakeholder feedback received. Additionally, actions for which little to no feedback was provided are not included in these summaries of feedback.

General Feedback on the Action Plan	
Theme	**Comments**
Linking Actions to Outcomes	- The Action Plan highlights strategies which can be used to produce tangible outcomes. - The actions included identify the opportunity Edmonton has to innovate its economy. - Timelines and specific deliverables should be well communicated on an ongoing basis as this plan is implemented.
Accessibility/ Inclusiveness	- Simple language is used throughout the Action Plan, making it accessible to a wide variety of audiences - Breaking the plan down into multiple actions makes the goals of the Action Plan clear. - Inclusive language is used throughout the Action Plan.
Importance of Strong Implementation	- Efficient execution of the Action Plan is critical. - Strong decision-making frameworks must be developed to ensure that desired outcomes are carried into the future, past the effective duration of the Action Plan. - Emerging industries must be accounted for as municipal policies can strongly enable their prevalence in the local economy. - Building resilience in the local economy must be a key focus. - Proper implementation of this strategy will require a shift in culture, in addition to processes, etc..

ACTION 1: Leverage projects designed to improve Edmonton's regulatory processes and reduce red tape so that we are agile	
Theme	**Comments**
Streamlining Timelines Surrounding Development	● Reducing red tape in the permitting process better positions Edmonton as a hub for investment-readiness. ● A focus on the user experience should be better emphasized in the production of development-related policies.
Improving Access for Marginalized Groups	● Newcomers, including international students, often face barriers in regulatory processes. These need to be addressed in order to promote Edmonton as a business hub for these groups. ● Must define 'access'

ACTION 2: Align relevant economic development activities, reporting metrics, funding agreements, and grants to ensure we're working together as effectively as possible	
Theme	**Comments**
Current Building Grant Programs	● The grant programs targeted to the Business Improvement Area have been developed and managed well to this point. ● Incentives to high return developments, and other mechanisms which attract business in general, must be established.
Improved Coordination and Communication Surrounding Reporting	● Reports on Economic Development should be brought to Council/Committee on the same day to ensure proper coordination. ● Effective communication with stakeholders surrounding the timing of reports is crucial.

Report: UFCSD00208

ACTION 3: Support building capacity and access to resources for entrepreneurs from marginalized communities, such as racialized entrepreneurs, and newcomers	
Theme	**Comments**
Solutions Required for Gaps in Data	- More data needs to be collected and analyzed in order to understand the challenges faced by marginalized members of the business community. - Partnerships should be leveraged in order to build a strong foundation of data surrounding inclusivity. - Building robust data sources helps inform just how much change can be affected.
Equitable Access and Inclusivity	- The importance of understanding the specific needs of each marginalized community cannot be understated. This includes understanding which and how communities are over-represented or under-represented in a given industry. - The City must continue to work with partners in the business community to help them understand how fair access to programs and services can be achieved. This applies to adjusting the City's own offerings and influencing those of other organizations where possible. - Members of marginalized communities need to have improved opportunities to connect into the supply chain. - Explicit inclusion of black entrepreneurs should be considered as many strategies such as this group them in with other marginalized groups, leading to their specific needs being left unaddressed. - Newcomers need to be able to earn credentials more easily.
Establishing Frameworks That Are Carried Into Future Strategies	This action is a good start, but there needs to be a "next level". A focus on how to keep strengthening and building out decision making frameworks past the effective life of the Action plan must be maintained.
Partnership Opportunities	- Post-secondary institutions can be leveraged to provide education programs on inclusivity to those working in the economic development space. It would be prudent to lean on these institutions, rather than hiring consultants, due to their existing infrastructure. - Partnerships with entities that do not have an economic development mandate (ie. social profit, human services, etc.) may also be beneficial.

ACTION 4: Prioritize local and equitable procurement through a local procurement policy	
Theme	**Comments**
Limitations on Prioritizing Local Procurement	● It is prudent to be aware of limitations from overarching national and international trade agreements when making policies that incentivize preference towards local procurement.
Equitable Procurement	● Indigenous businesses and entrepreneurs must be given a fair opportunity to connect with procurement opportunities. ● Better explanations of how to work with the City, and what the City does in house as compared to what it contracts out, are needed in order to reduce barriers to businesses.
Procurement as a Non-Monetary Incentive	● The use of procurement policy tools as non-monetary incentives should be explored.

ACTION 5: Support projects aimed to strengthen or eliminate gaps within existing local supply chain networks	
Theme	**Comments**
Misconceptions on Import Activities	● Notions that import activity/supply chains do not "support local" are not entirely true. This must be accounted for when establishing policies/programs that strengthen local supply chains.
Procurement Opportunities	● Newcomers, including international students, and other marginalized groups often face barriers in regulatory processes. ● Targets, similar to those featured in the Federal government's indigenous procurement strategy, should be considered when developing policies.
Tools to Strengthen the Local Supply Chain	● Partnerships with the private sector could be explored to develop tools such as local goods and services directories.

ACTION 6: Leverage Edmonton's digital infrastructure, including Open Data, fibre optic network and the innovation corridor, to link research, educational and technology organizations	
Theme	**Comments**
Increased Data Accessibility for Marginalized Groups	● Capacity building initiatives should be undertaken to increase the ability of marginalized groups to effectively leverage Open Data resources.
Capacity-Building on Opportunities Within the Innovation Space	● Tailored support to entrepreneurs looking to seize opportunities within the innovation space should be provided in order to decrease barriers to access.
Partnership Opportunities	● Edmonton's local A.I. and Machine Learning talent, and the post secondary institutions that help develop it, can be leveraged in order to find innovation in how data is used in the decision-making process. ● Developing partnerships to promote data and insight sharing would be beneficial to the City in both the short and long term. Partnerships with municipalities and non-governmental organizations should be better explored. ● Post secondary institutions need to be at the table for policy discussions surrounding the innovation corridor.
Thinking Beyond Sector-Based Innovation	● Rather than focussing on innovation within specific sectors, connections between post-secondary institutions, job creation, investment, innovation, and economic activity should be prioritized.

ACTION 7: Align outstanding City of Edmonton Industrial Action Plan actions to other work currently occurring, and prioritize key outstanding activities related to funding tools	
Theme	**Comments**

Incentivize High Return Developments	● Incentives within the Industrial Action Plan should target high return developments.

ACTION 10: Develop tools and strategies to attract commercial, residential and mixed-use development in nodes and corridors	
Theme	**Comments**
Importance of Attracting Development in Nodes and Corridors	● Multiple partners recognized Edmonton's Nodes and Corridors as being high opportunity areas for new development.
Public Pushback on Development Opportunities	● In order to effectively implement this action, work needs to be done to stem roadblocks from anti-development ideologies (eg. "NIMBY").

ACTION 12: Develop tools to facilitate growth in green economic sectors	
Theme	**Comments**
Partnership Opportunities	● Post secondary institutions can be leveraged when developing capacity-building initiatives in the green economic sectors.
Cost Escalation Risk	● Cost escalation could become a reality when implementing this action and those found within the Community Energy Transition Strategy and Action Plan.
Appeal to Youth	● Growth in green economic sectors is becoming increasingly important to the 18-40 demographic.
Knowledge Sharing With Invest Alberta	● Administration is encouraged to engage with Invest Alberta, the Provincial government's investment attraction Crown corporation, when developing strategies surrounding this action. This entity holds expertise and a focus on Public Private Partnership (P3), in addition to other alternative financing models.

ACTION 13: Work together to support emerging made-in-Edmonton technology solutions	
Theme	**Comments**
Partnership Opportunities	● Opportunities for partnerships can be leveraged in order to position Edmonton as a beta testing ground for, as opposed to a late adopter of, emerging technology solutions. This could include the sharing of identity credentials with "smart campuses" in order to create a "smart city".

ACTION 14: Support emerging off-shoots of the energy sector	
Theme	**Comments**
Diversification Targets	● This action should focus on diversification within and outside of the energy sector. ● The key performance indicators of this work will be the variety of products created as well as how many that are created.

ACTION 15: Advance a coordinated approach to growing the local food economy	
Theme	**Comments**
Focus on Outcomes	● It is critical that this action is future-oriented, and not just focussed on maintaining the status quo. ● The target outcomes should be built upon the "close to the plate", "whole table", and "production to table" ideologies.

ACTION 16: Develop Edmonton's competitive advantages as an international logistics hub and hub to Northern Alberta, the North West Territories and beyond	
Theme	**Comments**

Positioning Edmonton as an International Logistics Hub	• Fostering growth in e-commerce, cargo, and logistics is of increasing priority to the federal government. • Edmonton is well-positioned to take advantage of opportunities in "just-in-time" (JIT) logistics.

ACTION 18: Develop an integrated Investment Intake, Business Retention & Expansion and Aftercare Program that supports Edmonton Global and others' efforts to attract foreign direct investment as well as existing and new Edmonton businesses	
Theme	**Comments**
Areas of Focus	• The focus of this action should be on attracting anchor tenants and corporate head offices. • Aftercare is a vital aspect of this action.

ACTION 19: Develop and implement an integrated place brand strategy	
Theme	**Comments**
Downstream Effects	• Place branding is important as it's closely linked to opportunities downstream in the local economy.
Emphasis on Immigration	• Placing greater emphasis immigration is vital in drawing talent to the City. • Getting to a population of 2 million requires the attraction of immigration.
Alignment with Post Secondary Institutions	• The outcomes identified in this action closely align with the strategic goals of the City's post secondary institutions. • Using place branding as a tool to attract international students, and incentivizing them to stay in Edmonton, is crucial.
Highlighting Local Talent	• How can we showcase local talent to further the strategies in this outcome? • We should incorporate local screen/media talent in this showcase.

Tourism	- Under a tourism lens, the City's place brand is being incorporated into regional branding strategies. - Explore Edmonton should be involved in implementing this action as one of its three pillars surrounds the development of place branding.

ACTION 20: Promote and support academic programs that advance the local economy	
Theme	**Comments**
Supporting Relevant Programs	Market research, including consultation with industry partners, should be conducted on an ongoing basis to ensure that relevant academic programs are supported by this action.
Offerings From Non-Educational Sources	Entities other than post-secondary institutions can be leveraged to provide this programming, including unions and industry partners.
Academic Programs	There is a close connection with how we brand Edmonton as a place and the academic programming that it's linked to, specifically in STEM. As an example, artificial intelligence is achieving a halo effect and Edmonton is a global leader in machine learning education.
Post Secondary Institutions	- Edmonton is unique in that its post secondary institutions collaborate well, especially so at the executive level. - Volunteer placement programs would be beneficial to the local economy as a whole. It is important to highlight the opportunities available in Edmonton to new graduates in order to retain them.
International Students	Currently, Edmonton has a growing international student population but it doesn't do well in retaining these individuals after their education is complete.
Barriers to Spin-Off Businesses	Spin-off businesses that stem from academic programming/research face barriers in Edmonton and Alberta as a whole. These barriers relate to intellectual property policies and regionalism (ie. the ability to sell outside of Alberta).

ACTION 21: Expand on existing relationships with the City's Indigenous memoranda partners by improving supports for economic development opportunities	
Theme	**Comments**
Opportunities Available	● Increased opportunities for employment at the City should be made available to these groups. ● Other partnership agreements, from the municipality to the federal level, could be explored.
Explicit Inclusion of the Métis Nation	● This action supports First Nations governments. Consider exploring what a Métis economic zone would look like.

ACTION 22: Coordinate with our regional partners to ensure seamless integration and reduce barriers for businesses and entrepreneurs that work across multiple jurisdictions	
Theme	**Comments**
Coordination With Multiple Levels of Government	● Coordination with other levels of government is key in reducing the burden on businesses when navigating government processes. ● The City's competitiveness in terms of being investment-ready needs to be considered at the provincial, national, and international levels.

Groups Solicited for Feedback

- Alberta Women Entrepreneurs
- Alberta's Industrial Heartland Association*
- Business Improvement Area Council
- Black Canadian Women in Action
- BOMA Edmonton
- Concordia University of Edmonton
- Edmonton Chamber of Commerce
- Edmonton Food Council
- Edmonton Global*
- Edmonton International Airport
- Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers

- Edmonton Screen Industries Office*
- Enoch Cree Nation
- Explore Edmonton*
- Government of Alberta
- Health City*
- Innovate Edmonton*
- Invest Alberta
- The King's University
- MacEwan University
- Metis Nation of Alberta
- NAIOP Edmonton
- NAIT
- NextGen
- NorQuest College
- University of Alberta

* Note: The City of Edmonton has a funding relationship with this organization through agreement or via membership.