



Urban Development  
Institute  
Edmonton Metro

# Strategic Plan



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# Strategic Plan

2022-2026



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**Urban Development Institute – Edmonton Metro respectfully acknowledges that we are located within Treaty 6 territory, and Métis Nation of Alberta Region 4. We acknowledge this land as the traditional home for many Indigenous Peoples including the Cree, Blackfoot, Métis, Nakota Sioux, Dene, Saulteaux, Anishinaabe, Inuit and many others whose histories, languages, and cultures continue to influence our vibrant community.**



Our industry is dynamic and evolving, and so too are our companies and the communities we serve. It's an honour to serve as chair of UDI at such a critical moment in our history as Edmonton's premier real estate development association. I am proud that our association and its membership is dedicated to advancing new opportunities for businesses, residents, and investors in the Edmonton Metropolitan region. The complexity of our business is increasing, and so is our level of sophistication and commitment to match the moment and lead with confidence. By working together, strategically, we can advocate for better community building that enables a broad diversity of choice, maintains our affordability advantage, and actively attracts talent and investment to our region. We have partnerships to expand and many stories to tell, and our new five-year Strategic Plan clearly describes the actions that we take to be the trusted voice and champion of Edmonton Metro as well as an influential partner within the province and country. Thank you to all our members who work tirelessly to advocate for better cities and towns, and who collaborate to see positive change through. Your efforts and ongoing commitment create an exceptional association that benefits industry and serves the interests of the Edmonton and the metropolitan region well. As we recover from the pandemic and return to normalcy, in person, it's also a key priority in this plan to expand our member services – from educational opportunities to networking events – and to broaden our membership through engaging all generations and sectors in our industry. **Thank you for your trust and support. I look forward to working together.**



This is an exciting time to be the Executive Director of UDI, and I'm humbled to be entrusted with representing your voice and interests across the region. From one of Canada's biggest cities to the many mid-sized and smaller communities that serve urban and rural needs alike, our industry works hard to build a competitive and sustainable Edmonton Metro that contributes mightily to the economy of our province. This Strategic Plan is ambitious, focused, and will require smart leadership and dedicated contributions from your UDI office team as well as our many members to bring this vision to life. It charts a new course for our collective efforts as an industry and sets a high bar for what we aim to achieve. Our members are active in every sector of the land development business as they expertly build new neighbourhoods, ambitiously redevelop our urban core, develop commercial and industrial areas that enable new business opportunities, and create the parks and open spaces treasured by residents and visitors. The passion that drives our members to make a lasting contribution also extends to generous private sector support for community initiatives, collaboration with post-secondary institutions, and a commitment to ongoing innovation and improvement to develop the best products that meet diverse needs within the market. Over the coming years, as this Strategic Plan is operationalized, I look forward to working with you to shape our advocacy and policy objectives and to collaborating with partners both within and outside the real estate sector to promote the successful and competitive development of Alberta's capital city and region.

**The Urban Development Institute-Edmonton Metro is a non-profit, member-driven organization representing leaders in the land development industry in all communities throughout the Edmonton Metropolitan region. Our members are development companies and the professionals involved in our industry, including planners, surveyors, landscape architects, engineers, contractors, finance managers and others. Together with municipalities who regulate and set policy related to land use, we are important City Builders. We build the communities where people live, the roads they travel, the buildings they work in, and the parks where families gather.**

### Emerging from the pandemic

As our industry looks ahead to 2022 and beyond, we face a bit of a paradox. On one hand we have decades of stability, growth, and history that shapes who we are and what we seek to achieve. On the other hand, the post-pandemic world and our rapidly changing political, economic, and environmental norms require us to think differently about our industry and the role we play in the communities we serve.

While we can anticipate some degree of disruption in the years ahead, we have reason to be optimistic about our industry and our industry association.

We have many established and successful companies. We have many outstanding partnerships. We have a significant level of technical and real-life expertise to offer policy and decision makers in each of the communities we serve.

It also important to reflect on the ways we can adapt and improve. As an industry association, we need to take an even more proactive approach to shaping the municipal policy and regulatory environments that affect our business. So too can we set the agenda that we would like to see advanced to support our economy, growth, and investment climate.

The best thing about our industry is the people. It is now more important than ever to utilize this resource and all its associated vision, competencies and passion to define the future of the Edmonton Metropolitan region through a new approach to collaboration, economic development and climate action.

It is time for us to unite with others, especially those we have not deliberately partnered with before, as we continue to provide housing for everyone who chooses to live in the outstanding communities throughout the Edmonton Metropolitan region.

It is time for us to recognize ourselves as a major driver of economic development in our region, and as innovators and climate leaders.

It is time to think bigger and elevate our important role as city and community builders.

Core Values

Past boards have done an excellent job of identifying important values for our organization. These values hold true today. They are the reason we do what we do – they provide a sound foundation for the work we do each day, and they remain important benchmarks for how we conduct our business.

**Land** Members of UDI-Edmonton Metro recognize that the land they develop is valuable, unique, and irreplaceable. We recognize that each individual site is but one piece of the larger environment.

**The Consumer** In order to protect the consumer, members strive to provide quality and value by following accepted construction practices only. Members should hold the safety, health and welfare of the public paramount. Members should always endeavor to promote public understanding of the development process, and to preserve the public's confidence and trust in the development of land.

**Equal Opportunity** Members support the private enterprise system, providing a reasonable latitude of equality to promote opportunity, creativity and innovation.

**Our Industry** Members support UDI-Edmonton Metro's continuing efforts to create sound land use and development practices and to disseminate knowledge through its research and educational programs. Members should advise UDI-Edmonton Metro of any practice by a member of the association that they believe to be contrary to this code of conduct.

**The Future** Recognizing that change is inevitable, members strive to take a leadership role in innovation within our industry and strive for enhanced practices. As younger generations will become the leaders of tomorrow, members should make every attempt to encourage and educate them to become professionals in the development industry.

**Integrity** Members observe the highest standards of integrity, proficiency, and honesty in their professional and personal dealings.

Principles

**Leadership Development**

UDI-EM advances the land development industry through relationships and communication with municipal and provincial governments, strategic partners and organizations.

**Advocacy** UDI-EM will be influential in encouraging regulations and standards that promote efficient, cost effective and smartly planned development throughout the Edmonton Metropolitan Region.

**Collaboration** UDI-EM seeks opportunities to work collaboratively with municipal and elected officials as well as affiliated organizations and other important community partners.

**Accountability** UDI-EM is accountable to its membership for the programs it provides, their effectiveness and their costs.

**Communication** UDI-EM communicates to members and key stakeholders through mediums such as the website, social media, membership directory, monthly newsletters, monthly market watch reports and timely messages from the Chair of the Board in addition to time specific information and advocacy.

**Innovation** UDI-EM is at the forefront of innovation to promote effective, efficient, inclusive and climate-friendly urban growth.

**Engagement** UDI-EM delivers programs and services to its members that provide opportunities for professional development, mentorship and networking

**As city builders,  
we are united as  
champions of  
economic growth  
and are trusted,  
expert leaders  
in real estate  
development.**

**We support business by proactively using our extensive city building expertise to expand our partnerships, shape policy, celebrate innovation, and actively attract investment and talent to the Edmonton Metropolitan region.**

Economic Impact of the  
Land Development Industry

Our members are actively building new communities in Edmonton's developing and redeveloping areas, and are working to expand into future growth areas over the coming years as our population expands. Our industry develops and services the land by building the water, wastewater and sewer pipes, constructing the roads, pathways and sidewalks, installing shallow utilities and planning for new amenities like parks and schools required to support the commercial and cultural spaces that defines complete communities.

UDI-EM represents over 160 companies in the real estate sector. Our members collectively are the most significant contributors to the Edmonton Metropolitan region's economy. Our industry represent the largest GDP share of our regional economy and is consistently a major source of employment.

The collective efforts of the residential construction industry contributes over \$4.3 billion in private investment annually, and homeownership represents the largest single wealth-builder for many individuals and families. Through this work, tens of thousands of individuals and businesses of all sizes are supported and employed, and over \$2.7 billion in local wages are created each year. Residential construction alone creates 36,878 on and off-site jobs. By supporting the private sector to grow the economy and create new jobs and opportunities, businesses and residents will thrive, and our communities will continue to grow and succeed. Our industry plays an integral role in the Edmonton Metropolitan region's success and in the investments and livelihoods of all who live, work, visit and invest here.

The Edmonton Metropolitan  
Region Growth Plan

The approval of the *Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan* was a watershed moment for our region and the development industry in 2016. For the first time ever, our region and industry had a comprehensive, well-integrated guidebook. This plan is a broad-based regional plan that gives every municipality a part to play in growth and prosperity. It provides guidance to build compact, contiguous communities, and offers a vision for a multi modal transportation network. It also aims to preserve important natural living systems, strategically grow our agricultural sector, provide housing choices, and grow our economic prosperity.

We expect the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board to begin work on the five-year growth plan update in 2022. It will be important for UDI-Edmonton Metro to be proactively engaged in this work as a committed and productive partner.

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## The City Plan

Edmonton is proactively planning to grow. In fact, it has a clear strategy to grow from 1 to 2 million people, and to add an additional 520,000 jobs to reach 1.1 million jobs within the city over the next 40 years. The work to build Edmonton together starts with our community's blueprint for change: the City Plan. This plan creates the context for expanding new suburban communities, developing parks and open space, enabling job creation and commercial expansion, and significantly increasing infill redevelopment and public infrastructure reinvestment city-wide. The land development industry is at the forefront of all these ideas and activities, and our over 160 member companies invest hundreds of millions of dollars annually to build the spaces that Edmontonians cherish today, as well as the places that one million more will call home tomorrow.

The City Plan was created by community and approved by Council in late 2020. It will largely be implemented through the private actions, investments and activities of individuals, NGOs and businesses – most notably Edmonton's real estate community. It is through this momentum that the Plan's city-building vision will come to fruition.

To successfully welcome one million more Edmontonians, and the businesses that will employ them to make this growth possible, we need to maintain housing affordability as a key strategic advantage. The expert view of our industry is that we need responsible and market-driven developments of all kinds – including infill and suburban development – as well as residential and non-residential growth opportunities, to ensure Edmonton's future success.

We cannot take for granted that Edmonton will continue to be an attractive place for people to migrate to from across Canada and around the world, nor for capital investors and job creators to place their big bets. Talent and capital are both extremely mobile, so we need to support the business community to keep investing in Edmonton and provide individual families and businesses of all sizes with confidence and clarity. Cities are in a competitive game, and ours is no exception.

Downtown Edmonton

We've all heard the saying "as our downtown goes so goes our city". It is true now that our downtown needs an all-hands-on deck approach to recovery from the pandemic in 2022 and beyond. A great downtown needs to be the epicentre of excitement, arts, entertainment and culture. It must be safe and welcoming for everyone.

In recent years we have seen tremendous growth and enhanced vibrancy in our downtown. The development of the Ice District and numerous other significant towers, for example, and the City's investments in the new Warehouse District Park, have attracted much needed capital, jobs and important public amenities to a crucial part of our region. Much of our city's capacity and ability to attract new investment and young, talented professionals depends on a downtown that is full of life, renewal, arts and culture, and people most hours of every day. UDI-Edmonton Metro believes that we have role to play in supporting the efforts to make downtown Edmonton as good as it can possibly be, and we will collaborate with meaningful efforts to bring people and new business downtown.

Vibrancy Matters Across the  
Edmonton Metro Region

While downtown Edmonton is a vital and strategic part of the region's approach to investment and talent attraction, vibrancy in each of the communities in the Edmonton Metropolitan region matters a lot.

UDI's members do business in many communities in the region. They work hard every day to contribute to the overall vibrancy for residents through innovative design, support for new business growth, and important partnerships that contribute to the addition of new amenities communities enjoy.

We believe that every municipality in our region deserves safe, walkable and attractive core neighbourhoods and main streets.

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**Strategic Priorities**

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2022 – 2026

**1. Enhanced collaboration and partnerships**

- Articulate and promote the role UDI members and the real estate sector plays in Edmonton's economic future and job growth.
- Create more purposeful partnerships with other associations within the real estate industry.
- Build new partnerships with other local economic development agencies, post-secondary institutions and civil society organizations.

**2. Shift to storytelling-based communications**

- Promote leading edge and sustainable work being done by the industry.
- Build a more strategic and dynamic online presence.
- Develop a proactive media relations strategy.
- Communicate with intent, clarity, and purpose around UDI's advocacy priorities.

**3. Modernize government relations**

- Establish a shared government relations framework with other associations within the real estate industry.
- Establish and advance a proactive UDI and industry-wide policy agenda to support economic growth.
- Support members to be effective advocates for their own companies and projects while maintaining consistent industry messages.

**4. Next level member engagement**

- Conduct intentional membership recruitment and engagement campaigns annually.
- Revitalize membership events and broaden formal and informal networking opportunities
- Provide greater support and focus for member leadership and engagement on UDI committees.

**5. Improve mentorship and education**

- Reinvigorate and broaden the impact and presence of current programs to engage younger members.
- Establish diverse and formal educational opportunities for members and non-members.
- Create additional mentorship opportunities to support younger professionals in the industry.

**6. Vibrancy: making our downtown amazing**

- Focus on advocacy efforts that specifically promote vibrancy downtown to attract investment and support recovery.
- Support safety and security downtown in collaboration with diverse partners.
- Partner to advance new growth, investment, innovation and placemaking opportunities downtown for residents and businesses alike.
- Support strong community vibrancy and places of connection and commerce throughout Edmonton Metro.

To bring our five-year Strategic Plan to life, annual corporate business plans will be prepared and a review of our operations – from staffing to volunteers – will be undertaken regularly. Our members are the lifeblood of the organization and, by working together, we can advocate and communicate for better community building that supports economic growth and diversity. Whether it is social events to connect with each other, supporting working committees to address industry issues and advance needed regulatory changes, or setting out an ambitious advocacy agenda based on our key priorities, the efforts we undertake together make a difference.

Based on the vision, mission and priorities outlined in this Strategic Plan, a new corporate business plan will be completed in Q2 2022 and will include 1–2-year priority actions, a resourcing plan, and key performance indicators. Progress will be reported monthly to the Board and twice annually to the membership. Every two years over the life of this plan we will review and update it to meet our industry needs.

**It's been a tough couple of years for our region and for our industry. Together we can emerge from this pandemic stronger than before. Let's keep on going.**