

TOWN OF STONY PLAIN  
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
STRATEGY + ACTION PLAN  
2024-2029**



TOWN OF  
**STONY  
PLAIN**

*Economic  
Development*

STRATEGY + ACTION PLAN

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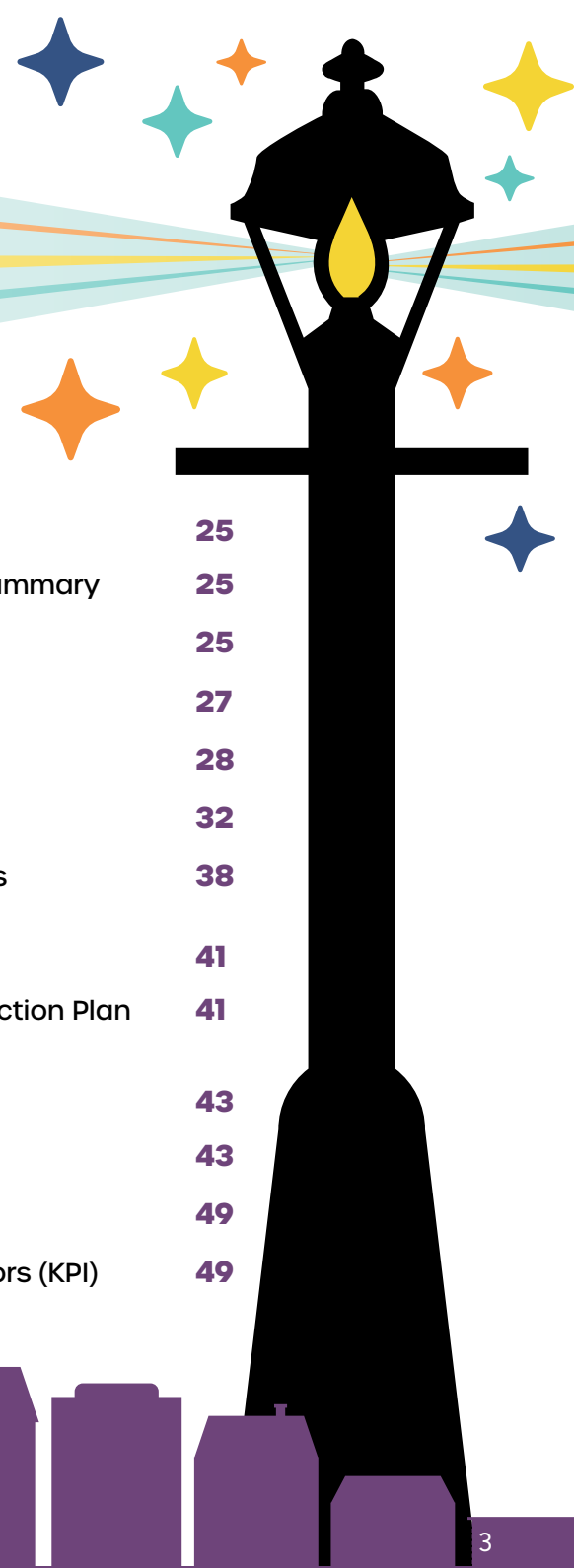


## INDIGENOUS LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Stony Plain is located on Treaty 6 territory, the traditional meeting grounds, gathering space, and travel route of the Cree, Saulteaux, Blackfoot, Dene, and Nakota Sioux and the homeland of the Métis Nation. The Town of Stony Plain respectfully acknowledges the many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities whose footsteps have marked this landscape since time immemorial.

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# KEY TAKEAWAYS

**1.** The 2024-2029 Town of Stony Plain Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan presents a planning framework of the Strategic Priorities, Objectives and Supporting Actions for the Town and its key partners and collaborators to implement and guide its work. It encompasses a broad range of assets and resources that will help ensure its integration into a healthy business ecosystem.

**2. Project Goals:** Through research and consultation, the Town has developed and updated the Economic Development Strategy to focus on responding to emerging trends, diversifying economic development opportunities and sectors, and outlining key initiatives to support businesses and community members.

Stony Plain's Economic Development Strategy & Action Plan project has been a nine-month process of research, community engagement and formulation to chart a course for the town's economic development future. Engagement activities included:

- Growth and Commerce Committee (GCC) Session  
*3 Councillors engaged/40+ comments received*

- Internal Town Staff Workshop  
*8 staff members/90+ comments received*
- One-on-one Stakeholder Interviews (with existing businesses and one staff member)  
*9 participants/172+ comments*
- Industry Focus Group (Government Partners, Industry Partners, Academic Institutions)  
*21 participants/~282 data points*
- Community Forum  
*14 participants/~216 data points*
- Midsummer Thursday Sounding Boards  
*16+ comments*

**3.** Overall, key themes we heard across all engagement activities were:

- **Economic Development in Stony Plain would benefit from increased presence to pursue economic opportunities.**
- **There is a need to enhance investment readiness and attraction that accounts for both new businesses as well as the needed labour and talent pool associated**

**with running and operating said new businesses (economic development linked to quality of life and other functions in the Town including arts and culture and planning).**

- **There is a need to clearly articulate Stony Plain's competitive advantage for investment attraction including a clear marketing angle and improved communications.**
- **There is a need to improve data collection and analysis functions internally in the Town to inform economic development decision-making (alongside potential benefits to make data-driven decision-making for other functions at the Town).**
- **There is an opportunity to improve business relationships and support additional investment into the municipality through increased capacity within the Economic Development Business Unit.**
- **Economic development is a valued component to community building and quality of life.**

Read more about engagement on page 32.

4. The Strategic Priorities build-off of the key emerging themes from the analysis phase of the process and reflect what was learned in the Context Setting Report. These priorities are realized through Supporting Actions and will guide the Town’s economic development activities over the next five years. Each of the Strategic Priorities is of equal value and is not priority ranked.

- **Strategic Priority 1:** Create an attractive, investment, and future-ready community
- **Strategic Priority 2:** Bolster strategic partnerships and collaborations
- **Strategic Priority 3:** Enhance the local business ecosystem
- **Strategic Priority 4:** Optimize municipal services

5. The role of Economic Development in Stony Plain is to grow non-residential development and increase jobs by continuously advocating to improve the Town’s development readiness, telling the world about Stony Plain, and supporting the local business ecosystem. We aim to achieve this through our vision of: ***Stony Plain is an equitable and attractive destination, where everyone actively enjoys the rewards of economic opportunities, creating a thriving and inclusive community.***

6. The Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan is guided by the following values as we create new opportunities for Stony Plain:

- Be future-ready
- Be unforgettable
- Be bold
- Be agile
- Be a trusted partner
- Be resilient

7. **Going forward:** The Town of Stony Plain Economic Development Strategy is a “living document” and will be supported by an updated annual implementation schedule and budget outlining:

- Supporting Actions prioritized into recommended phases
- Partners; and the opportunity for further collaboration;
- Measures of Expected Outcomes and Benefits with success indicators (KPIs) as a way to monitor progress; and
- Resource considerations for each action.

The Action Plan will provide a guide for detailed tactical implementations. It will be a roadmap for the Town’s decision-making and investment over the next five years.



## SECTION 1 VISION AND VALUES

The role of Economic Development in Stony Plain is to grow non-residential development and increase jobs by continuously advocating to improve the Town's development readiness, telling the world about Stony Plain, and supporting the local business ecosystem. We aim to achieve this through our vision of:

***Stony Plain is an equitable and attractive destination, where everyone actively enjoys the rewards of economic opportunities, creating a thriving and inclusive community.***



In addition to the organization’s Leadership Principles, the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan are guided by the following values as we create new opportunities for Stony Plain:

- ◆ **Be future-ready:** we stay on top of the latest trends and practices to serve the changing needs of the local economy and ensure a bright future for future generations.
- ◆ **Be agile:** we know our priorities, respond quickly, and pivot to access relevant opportunities.
- ◆ **Be unforgettable:** we stay true to our roots and identity as a charming town with amenities, attractions, and big city options nearby.
- ◆ **Be a trusted partner:** we deeply value the relationships we’ve formed and the new ones we will make. We’ll be intentional and accountable in our work with our partners and collaborators.
- ◆ **Be bold:** we’re confident, innovative thinkers and set our sights high, aiming for ambitious goals for the betterment of the community ensuring transformative and positive outcomes.
- ◆ **Be resilient:** we always remain optimistic and committed to ensuring a sustainable future.



## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Strategic Priorities presented below build off of the key emerging themes from the analysis phase of the process and reflect what was learned in the Context Setting Report. The strategic directions realized through *Supporting Actions* will guide the Town's economic development activities over the next five years. Each of the Strategic Priorities is of equal value and is not priority-ranked.

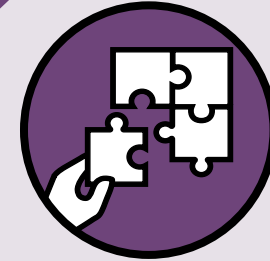
- ✦ **Strategic Priorities:** reflect the key focus areas and desired outcomes that emerged from the strategic planning process.
- ✦ **Objectives:** are outcome-driven and present how these goals will be achieved and what is expected to be accomplished in the next five years.
- ✦ **Supporting Actions:** are the specific activities the Town and its stakeholders will undertake to achieve each objective.
- ✦ **Key Performance Indicators:** are the key measurements that will demonstrate successful results from implementing the Supporting Actions.



# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



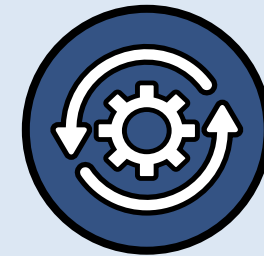
1 Create an attractive, investment, and future-ready community



2 Bolster strategic partnerships and collaborations



3 Enhance the local business ecosystem



4 Optimize municipal services



## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1



**Create an attractive,  
investment, and  
future-ready community**

Stony Plain is at the crossroads of growth and aspires to become one of the most investment-friendly municipalities in Alberta. Recognizing the competitive landscape for investment across the region and province, Stony Plain aims to leverage and build on its strengths, unique qualities, and attractiveness as a growing town to become the standout destination for investment in the Edmonton Metropolitan Region.

Ensuring Stony Plain is 'development ready' is fundamental to the success of the Strategy. At its core, development readiness means having land and buildings where businesses can establish themselves and grow. This, in turn, requires a diverse land and building inventory and modern land use regulations with consistent and transparent building development processes and clear development criteria to increase investment confidence. Development readiness also includes having regular engagement with the business community and ongoing connections with stakeholders (see further Strategic Priority areas).

## OBJECTIVE 1.1

**A one-year supply of strategically managed, development-ready non-residential land in Stony Plain.**

### SUPPORTING ACTIONS

1. Create and maintain a comprehensive database of non-residential land inventory by developing an infrastructure and readiness plan and exploring opportunities to enhance the competitiveness and readiness of high-impact lands for development through municipal support.
2. Explore public-private partnerships to expedite development and create investment-ready properties.
3. Pilot incentive programs for end-users to drive site development and increase land value.
4. Conduct a cost analysis for broadband installation, aligning with the Broadband Strategy.
5. Advocate that landowners develop area structure plans for the lands identified in the Highway Development Strategy.

## OBJECTIVE 1.2

**Elevate the Stony Plain brand locally, provincially, and nationally through strategic online and offline initiatives.**

### SUPPORTING ACTIONS

6. Invest in local data collection to substantiate the Town's story and continuously update marketing assets with current information as required.
7. Develop a comprehensive and cohesive Economic Development Marketing and Communications Plan aligned with data-driven storytelling and strategic partner efforts that establish key performance indicators for monitoring and adjusting performance and include other Supporting Actions noted in the present Strategy.

## OBJECTIVE 1.3

**Economic development is at the forefront of strategic initiatives and opportunities.**

### SUPPORTING ACTIONS

8. Champion upgrades and expansions to Highway 16A and Highway 628 to Highway 60 to enhance connectivity, improve route capacity, and make Stony Plain a more accessible and desirable location per the Highway Development Strategy.
9. Profile the economic benefits created by projects like the Community Recreation Centre, Old Town South Redevelopment, and other key projects to enhance their attractiveness to audiences.

## OBJECTIVE 1.4

**Market and communicate Stony Plain’s target sectors through strategic initiatives.**

### SUPPORTING ACTIONS

10. Develop a Stakeholder Relations Plan to maintain active communications and relationships with sector leads.
11. Develop and execute an annual sector-specific marketing campaign, aligning with the Highway Development Strategy recommendations.
12. Establish key sources of economic information and circulate the data for the Town that is relevant and credible.

## OBJECTIVE 1.5

**Attract and retain talent.**

### SUPPORTING ACTIONS

13. Collaborate with stakeholders, including local businesses and educational institutions, to develop professional development programs, workshops, internships, an annual job fair and training opportunities to enhance the local workforce’s skills and provide opportunities for students and young professionals.
14. Forge partnerships with industry associations related to target sectors to tap into broader networks and resources for talent attraction.
15. Consider transit incentives as a strategy to attract and retain talent in the community.
16. Seek opportunities to align with federal and provincial funding programs that attract newcomer jobs.
17. Collaborate with post-secondary institutions to create opportunities for target sector businesses to access skilled talent.

## OBJECTIVE 1.6

**Grow target sectors.**

### SUPPORTING ACTIONS

18. Consider target sector working groups to enhance connections, identify strategic opportunities, innovate sector efficiencies, and harmonize advocacy efforts with government entities.
19. Consider a Revitalization Tax Incentive to incentivize the redevelopment and relocation of target sector operations to Stony Plain.
20. Conduct business visits as a component of a Business Retention and Expansion program, concentrating efforts on supporting and growing target sector businesses.
21. Leverage agribusiness sector growth in the North Business Park by developing innovative concepts.

## OBJECTIVE 1.7

**Continue to work on place-making qualities.**

### SUPPORTING ACTIONS

22. Support the Facade Improvement Program in Old Town South.
23. Enhance downtown as a destination (ex., consistent business hours) and encourage a diverse mix of experiential-based businesses downtown.

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

### Quantitative

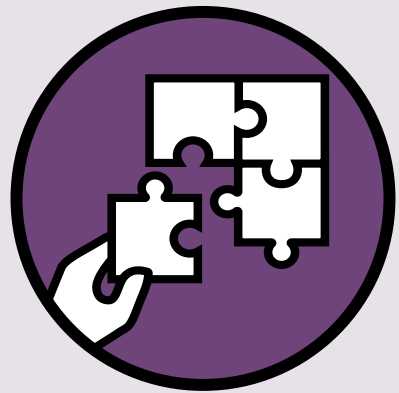
- ◆ Non-residential tax assessment (total increase per annum)
- ◆ Total businesses (annual)
- ◆ Total of local industries (annual)
- ◆ Total target sector industries (annual)
- ◆ The absorption rate of employment lands and by type (industrial, commercial-retail, commercial-office)
- ◆ Total inquiries and leads received for new employment lands
- ◆ Level of engagement with the business community
- ◆ Website traffic, time spent, new and repeat visitors, and conversions.
- ◆ Digital engagement and conversions

### Qualitative

- ◆ Assignment of supporting actions
- ◆ Reputation as a good location for business growth
- ◆ National, provincial, and regional awareness of Stony Plain's potential
- ◆ Recognition of Stony Plain as an investment destination



## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2



### **Bolster strategic partnerships and collaborations**

At the core of Stony Plain's economic development journey is the recognition that we can't do this work alone. We acknowledge that achieving our goals requires strong partnerships and strategic collaborations. Strategic Priority 2 is dedicated to strengthening the Town's relationships within the economic development landscape and fostering stronger ties with industry and collaborators. This Priority aims to elevate awareness of Stony Plain's available lands and its development readiness, including ongoing projects, target sectors, and other relevant initiatives. It also focuses on collaborations with clear objectives and mutual benefit alignment to maximize impact and return on investment. Stony Plain's success is intertwined with growth relationships that share a similar vision, such as our strategic partnership with Edmonton Global and the new and growing relationships with post-secondary institutions that contribute to our shared future.

## OBJECTIVE 2.1

**Cultivate, establish, and maintain key stakeholder partnerships to strengthen Stony Plain's economic development.**

### SUPPORTING ACTIONS

24. Explore opportunities for joint investment in infrastructure or other measures with member municipalities to drive significant economic development through Community Economic Development (CED).
25. Champion through the Town's established Advocacy Plan for continued alignment with ministerial mandates that advocate for key projects (ex., Highway 628 expansion) that enhance development readiness.

## OBJECTIVE 2.2

**Strategic partners support our target sector investment attraction and business development.**

### SUPPORTING ACTIONS

26. Enhance Stony Plain's presence at target sector industry events and conferences to stay informed about trends and opportunities.
27. Introduce target sector partners to key forums like Growth and Commerce Committee meetings, providing learning opportunities and gaining insights into their experiences.
28. Collect and utilize industry intelligence in order to make connections that advance sector development.

## OBJECTIVE 2.3

**Economic reconciliation pathways are identified and guided by Indigenous peoples.**

### SUPPORTING ACTIONS

29. Initiate collaborative dialogue with local Indigenous communities to understand their economic reconciliation goals and co-create pathways that align with their vision.
30. Collaborate with Indigenous communities to source and identify further actions that contribute to economic reconciliation, emphasizing partnership and community-driven initiatives.

## OBJECTIVE 2.4

**Stony Plain continues to be a strategic collaborator within the Tri-Municipal Region with distinct and competitive positioning.**

### SUPPORTING ACTIONS

31. Improve and enhance intermunicipal services, ensuring streamlined processes and collaboration for more effective economic development (ex., Business Licencing).

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

### Quantitative

- ◆ New strategic relationships established
- ◆ Event turnout (established in event plans)
- ◆ Participation in regional economic development initiatives
- ◆ Number of existing relationships nurtured and new ones established
- ◆ Number of face-to-face meetings with First Nation counterparts, entrepreneurs, and community leaders
- ◆ Number of staff hours dedicated

### Qualitative

- ◆ Reputation as a cooperative and bold municipality
- ◆ Improved perceptions of Stony Plain's regional positioning and influence
- ◆ Enhanced alignment with the mandates and priorities of partnering organizations
- ◆ Success stories demonstrating positive outcomes from strategic partnerships





## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3



### Enhance the local business ecosystem

Striking a balance between attracting new investments and nurturing the growth of Stony Plain's local businesses requires purposeful and well-defined actions to ensure the Town's economic development function operates efficiently and is able to meet its mandate. Equally important is the commitment to engaging and inspiring local entrepreneurs to participate and invest in our community's economic success. Strategic Priority 3 and its Supporting Actions contribute to a thriving local business ecosystem by fostering sustainability, collaboration, and continuous improvement.

## OBJECTIVE 3.1

**Implement comprehensive Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) programming.**

### SUPPORTING ACTIONS

32. Activate an engagement program that collects data and input to help the Town understand the needs, challenges, and opportunities of existing local businesses, forming the basis for targeted support.
33. Establish a feedback mechanism within the BRE program to continuously evaluate its effectiveness, incorporating insights from businesses to refine and improve support initiatives.
34. Provide specialized services to businesses considering expansion, including assistance with site selection, navigating regulatory processes, and accessing financial incentives.
35. Showcase success stories of businesses that thrive in Stony Plain, inspiring confidence and encouraging broad ecosystem participation.

## OBJECTIVE 3.2

**Strengthen local business collaboration and enhance support services.**

### SUPPORTING ACTIONS

36. Establish regular consultation with Chamber leaders to collaboratively offer tailored support services and various networking opportunities for established and aspiring business owners and leaders to foster collaboration, build relationships, and facilitate knowledge exchange and partnerships within the local business community.
37. Facilitate joint initiatives encompassing training sessions, workshops, and informative events to enhance collaboration, educate businesses on available resources, and provide practical guidance for navigating third-party supports effectively.
38. Establish leadership development programs to nurture emerging leaders within the community and empower them for future success.
39. Explore a partnership that develops a centralized resource hub for local businesses, serving as a one-stop shop for information on available support services, grants, and training opportunities.
40. Implement a structured feedback mechanism to continually assess the effectiveness of town-funded initiatives, ensuring they directly address local businesses' real and evolving needs.

### OBJECTIVE 3.3

There is active local business leadership and engagement.

#### SUPPORTING ACTIONS

41. Create regular forums, such as roundtable discussions and town hall meetings as needed, to foster direct engagement between local business leaders, municipal officials, and key stakeholders.
42. Celebrate and acknowledge local business achievements and leadership through an annual awards program or other opportunities.

### OBJECTIVE 3.4

Support transition to the next generation of business owners and investors.

#### SUPPORTING ACTIONS

43. Collaborate with business associations to organize workshops on succession planning, providing guidance and resources for businesses planning transitions.
44. Work with financial institutions and economic development agencies to ensure the availability of financial resources for new and transitioning business owners.

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

### Quantitative

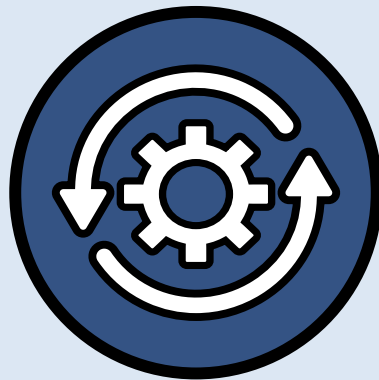
- ◆ Total meetings with businesses completed
- ◆ Inputs collected
- ◆ Number of services and/or supports provided to businesses/entrepreneurs
- ◆ Number of staff hours dedicated
- ◆ Number of businesses identified considering expansion or growth

### Qualitative

- ◆ Reputation as a business-friendly municipality
- ◆ Testimonials and feedback from local businesses on the impact of collaborative initiatives
- ◆ Visibility of local businesses in the community and beyond
- ◆ Collaboration and cooperation among local businesses
- ◆ Local confidence in Stony Plain's businesses



## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4



### Optimize municipal services

Despite Stony Plain’s economic development journey still being in its early stages, there has been significant strides in setting the function up for success. Initial resourcing towards economic development includes two full-time employees, primarily focused on servicing external investment opportunities and facilitating them through the Town’s internal processes. Strategic Priority 4 is driven by aligning and balancing growing external demands with an internal capacity that fits within a well-defined role, function, and mandate within the Town. Still healing from the impacts of the pandemic, the organization is committed to bolstering its internal communications and continuously improving cross-department collaboration. The Town recognizes that its measured investment in its economic development staff and resources, compared against similar-sized jurisdictions and considering the conditions inherent to being located within one of Canada’s fastest-growing metropolitan regions, will result in increased non-residential assessment, which is essential to ensuring the Town is well-equipped to support its needs and priorities as it grows to 30,000 residents.

## OBJECTIVE 4.1

**Internal conditions are further developed and enhanced to help economic development flourish.**

### SUPPORTING ACTIONS

- 45. Build organizational capacity to strengthen economic development.
- 46. Acquire a Customer Relationship Management tool to support high-level customer service, responsiveness, and efficient communication for business retention and expansion and investment attraction processes.

## OBJECTIVE 4.2

**Organizational practices, capacity, and workload are optimized.**

### SUPPORTING ACTIONS

- 47. Create and implement a one-stop-shop concierge service, soft-landing support, and site certification for investors to provide investment information, site selection assistance and support project implementation.
- 48. Establish standards and processes to promote and support local events, improving coordination and effectiveness.
- 49. Support enhanced communication standards to ensure local businesses are well-informed of Town operations impacting business in a timely manner (ex., road closures).
- 50. Allocate financial and human resources to implement the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan, leveraging resources from partner organizations whenever possible.

## OBJECTIVE 4.3

**Enhance and clearly communicate Stony Plain's development requirements to prospective industry.**

### Supporting Actions

- 51. Create accessible and user-friendly web resources and pathways to support investment and development.
- 52. Facilitate builder and developer industry engagement and information exchange.
- 53. Support the implementation of online permitting.
- 54. Enhance permitting processing standards to be 'best in class' in the region.



## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

### Quantitative

- ◆ Number of businesses in the Customer Relationship Management tool
- ◆ Response times and issue resolution periods
- ◆ Building and development timelines
- ◆ Progress monitoring and reporting on the Economic Development Strategy
- ◆ New investment in the Economic Development business unit

### Qualitative

- ◆ Economic development is infused in the organization's culture
- ◆ Improved perceptions of the ease of doing business in Stony Plain
- ◆ Positive feedback from businesses on the responsiveness and efficiency of municipal services
- ◆ Positive testimonials on the impact of municipal-led initiatives on business success
- ◆ Positive feedback on the availability of information relevant to doing business
- ◆ Successful communication of development processes and requirements on the Town's websites

# CURRENT OPERATIONS— SERVICE COMMITMENTS

The project highlighted key priorities and ongoing programs and services integral to Stony Plain’s Economic Development Team’s regular operations and crucial for propelling economic growth in the community. While these programs and services are not reflected in the above supporting actions, they are provided in this summary to underscore their continued importance alongside implementing the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan.

To ensure alignment with the strategic priorities and the availability of the resources required for implementation, the Town should continue to monitor and evaluate programs and services closely and transition away from time-consuming tasks that do not align with the current focus. Doing so will ensure streamlined service delivery, optimal resource allocation, and the successful execution of this Strategy.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

### **Create an attractive, investment, and future-ready community**

#### ONGOING ACTIVITIES

- Actively participate as a shareholder of Edmonton Global.
- Actively participate in Community Economic Development (CED).
- Work on lead generation to enable target sector cluster development.
- Participate in the International Council Shopping Centres (ICSC) events to bolster investment attraction.
- Conduct annual Invest Stony Plain website maintenance to enhance user experiences.
- Implement focused Search Engine Optimization (SEO) improvements for the Invest Stony Plain website to increase online visibility.
- Support developing green spaces and recreational facilities to contribute to a healthy and active lifestyle.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

### Bolster strategic partnerships and collaborations

#### ONGOING ACTIVITIES

- Collaborate with key economic influencers, keeping them engaged and informed on Stony Plain’s economic development initiatives, focusing on cross-collaboration potential (ex., Sector Profiles, GEEDT).
- Foster a strong relationship with the Greater Parkland Regional Chamber of Commerce and deliver collaborative programming such as business grand openings.
- Foster relationships and leverage the local ecosystem to support and influence target sectors.
- Support and leverage the implementation of the Town’s Strategic Plans and various Master Plans (ex., Housing Strategy and Tourism Master Plan and Arts, Culture, and Heritage Action Plans) that align with economic development.
- Support and nurture programs exposing young individuals to entrepreneurship.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

### Enhance the local business ecosystem

#### ONGOING ACTIVITIES

- Respond in a timely manner to support business inquiries as they are received.
- Support local events that create opportunities for local businesses.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

### Optimize municipal services

#### ONGOING ACTIVITIES

- Align the economic development budget and resources with the Strategy through the organization’s annual corporate planning processes.
- Monitor and maintain market data to stay informed about economic trends and opportunities.
- Ensure the organization’s statutory and strategic plans, bylaws, and policies reflect economic development priorities and actively participate in their reviews and updates.
- Leverage the Growth and Commerce Committee to inform Strategy implementation.
- Define key metrics for all economic development activities to measure success and identify areas for improvement.
- Monitor available grant programs to support and bolster economic development innovation and expansion.





## SECTION 2

# PLANNING CONTEXT AND ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

## How We Got Here: Process and Findings Informing the Strategy

### PROJECT BACKGROUND

Through research and consultation, the Town of Stony Plain has developed an updated Economic Development Strategy & Action Plan focused on responding to emerging trends, diversifying economic development opportunities and sectors, and outlining key initiatives to support businesses and community members.

### Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan Project Goals

- ✦ Bolster economic growth and the diversification of Stony Plain's economy including creating jobs for current and future residents.
- ✦ Improve Stony Plain's investment readiness and regional competitiveness.
- ✦ Improve Stony Plain's economic development service delivery.
- ✦ Align economic development initiatives with leading municipal economic development best practices.
- ✦ Align economic development initiatives with the Town's Municipal Development Plan (MDP) including balancing residential and non-residential development projections as well as responding to the recently completed Highway Development Strategy.
- ✦ Create a strategy development process rooted in stakeholder engagement and in-depth analysis.



Economic development<sup>1</sup> in Stony Plain is in a state of transformation. This includes grappling with a shift in economic development priorities that involves diversifying economic streams and adapting to transformations in the energy sector. The last Stony Plain Economic Development Strategy (2019 update) identified Stony Plain's emerging competitive position. It prioritized diverse economic development opportunities in Agrifood, Professional Services, Life Sciences, and Shopping, Dining & Art sectors while supporting historical economic opportunities within the Energy & Support Services sector when possible and appropriate.

The general strategy development process and context-setting, aligns with Stony Plain's Council Strategic Plan<sup>2</sup> linking to the identified economic opportunities brought forth by Council including downtown and tourism enhancements, further developing the North Business Park and high commercial areas, connecting with the business community and regional partners (e.g., Edmonton Global and Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Board (EMRB), and improving the digital infrastructure gaps to meet a growing community.

With the goal of growing to 30,000 people by 2030, the change of work including the COVID-19 pandemic and its social impacts, the rise of the gig economy, and now innovations in artificial intelligence and technology, Stony Plain is leading a pre-emptive process to develop a new Economic Development Strategy & Action Plan that responds to emerging trends and forecast key actions and initiatives into the future.

<sup>1</sup> Also referred to herein as "EcDev"—the common usage terminology.  
<sup>2</sup> [stonyplain.com/en/town-hall/resources/2023\\_StrategicPlan.pdf](https://stonyplain.com/en/town-hall/resources/2023_StrategicPlan.pdf)

# APPROACH AND TIMELINE

Stony Plain’s Economic Development Strategy & Action Plan project has been a nine-month process of research, community engagement and formulation to chart a course for the town’s economic development future.

## Timeline

The process was divided into five phases, with the completion of the Plan and associated documents in Winter 2024.



The planning process is being carried out by a project team of consultants and the Town’s Economic Development Business Unit.

## Alignment with the Highway Development Strategy

The approach is informed by and intrinsically linked with the Highway Development Strategy (HDS) that was completed in 2023. The HDS provides a primary data analytics source for the development of the Economic Development Strategy enabling the process to be rooted in data collection and analysis. A link to the HDS can be found here: [stonyplain.com/hds](http://stonyplain.com/hds).

# Engagement Approach

The Project Team has aligned the engagement objectives and activities with the Town of Stony Plain’s *Public Participation Policy (C-CAO-057)*. Each engagement activity outlined in this document was categorized based on the above categories and associated objectives. Engagement activities were preempted by context-setting activities including reviewing key documents; media scans to determine economic forecasts and major trends and context considerations; identifying linkages to other key planning initiatives; demographics research and case study development. From there, stakeholder input is gleaned and coded for key themes which once synthesized and validated by further engagement, become draft strategic focus areas.



Figure 1. Engagement Approach. Source: Patricia Huntsman Culture and Communication in partnership with Nordicity (2018)

# PLANNING CONTEXT

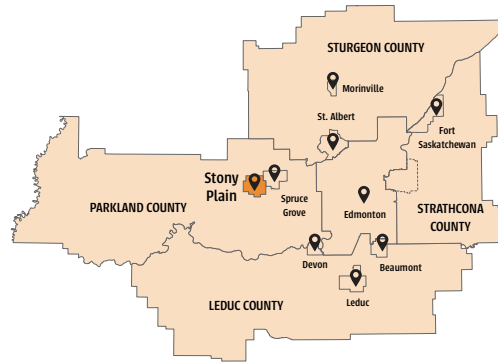
## Community and Regional Profile

Stony Plain is part of the Tri-Municipal Region, which also includes Parkland County and Spruce, and is also part of the Edmonton Metropolitan Region (EMR), which is made up of 15 municipalities that also pursue economic development.

### Town of Stony Plain

Within the Town of Stony Plain's 2022 Community Profile<sup>3</sup>, the key features of the town in relation to growth and economic development include:

- Stony Plain is situated along the Trans-Canada Highway, making it part of a provincial transportation corridor with easy access to air, rail, pipelines, and roadways.
- Stony Plain's population is quickly multiplying with the current populous hovering near 20,000 with a population projection of 27,000 by 2037.
- Stony Plain is located near Alberta's education hub. Combined with a high quality of life, the town attracts and retains talented, diverse, and educated individuals.
- Stony Plain's Council is committed to making the municipality an attractive and easy place to develop and grow a business.



### Tri-Municipal Region

Stony Plain is located in a Tri-Municipal Region including Parkland County and Spruce Grove. The region's 2021 snapshot includes a population size of 87,000 with over 8,500 business establishments. The current labour force is approximated at 35,000 with anticipated growth of 8% to 38,288 by 2029<sup>4</sup>.

The region in recent years has focused on a more strategic and collaborative nature across jurisdictions to create transformative positive change across all areas. This includes the Tri-Municipal Regional Plan (2021)<sup>5</sup> with a relationship to economic development such as the development of a regional Economic Development Strategy, a regional lens on broadband and technological investments as well as streamlining development and permitting processes across the different jurisdictions. The region's economic development activity is also supported by the Greater Parkland Regional Chamber.

### Edmonton Metropolitan Region (EMR)

Stony Plain and the Tri-Municipal Region is also situated in the Edmonton Metropolitan Region with an approximate population of ~1.3 million. The EMR guided by a regional 30-year vision Growth Plan that came to effect October 2017<sup>6</sup> stewarded by the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board (EMRB). Stony Plain is situated within the Growth Plan's Metropolitan area described as both county lands and urban communities. The Growth Plan sees this area as the place for highest concentration of future urban development in the Region.

<sup>3</sup> [stonyplain.com/en/invest/community-profile.aspx](https://stonyplain.com/en/invest/community-profile.aspx)

<sup>4</sup> [stonyplain.com/en/invest/tri-region.aspx](https://stonyplain.com/en/invest/tri-region.aspx)

<sup>5</sup> [parklandcounty.com/en/country-office/resources/projects-plans/Tri-Municipal-Regional-Plan/Tri-Municipal\\_Regional\\_Plan\\_IntegratedReport\\_Web.pdf](https://parklandcounty.com/en/country-office/resources/projects-plans/Tri-Municipal-Regional-Plan/Tri-Municipal_Regional_Plan_IntegratedReport_Web.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> [emrb.ca/growth-plan](https://emrb.ca/growth-plan)

One of the Growth Plan's regional policy areas include economic competitiveness and employment that identified four objectives:

1. Promote global economic competitiveness and diversification of the regional economy.
2. Promote job growth and the competitiveness of the Region's employment base.
3. Enhance competitiveness through the efficient movement of people, goods, and services to, from and within the Region.
4. Promote the livability and prosperity of the Region and plan for the needs of a changing population and workforce.

EMR municipalities collaborate on economic development for the collective betterment of the EMR. However, a drawback is that all municipalities are in competition with one another. Each EMR municipality supports and utilizes Edmonton Global to aid investment attraction efforts. By 2044, the EMRB anticipates a drastic increase in regional population growth to 2.2 million people and will sustain 1.2 million jobs.



## Strategy Linkages

To align planning efforts with parallel and intersecting strategic initiatives at the Town, the report identifies key plans, strategies, and studies to inform strategic directions for the Economic Development Strategy. Each review of an initiative identifies opportunities or challenges related to economic development in Stony Plain.

<b>PLAN LINKAGES: KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES</b>	
<b>Policy, Plan, Bylaw</b>	<b>Key Finding (Opportunity or Challenge)</b>
<b>Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan (2019 Update)</b>	<p>The previous version sets the stage for this project. The 2019 update provides a general direction to the target sectors for economic development in Stony Plain including: Health &amp; Education, Professional Services, Agrifood &amp; Services, Cultural Industries, Tourism, and Oil &amp; Gas Support. The 2019 Strategy included four key streams of thought/key takeaways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of diversifying the economy and business base</li> <li>• Support for knowledge-based economic growth</li> <li>• Importance of downtown as a destination</li> <li>• Telling the world about Stony Plain</li> </ul>
<b>Uniquely Stony Plain Municipal Development Plan (MDP) (2020)</b>	<p>Economic Opportunity is a key theme in the MDP linking to the policy section supporting the local economy and economic development. The MDP sees supporting the economic development of Stony Plain through: (1) local planning, (2) having a business-friendly attitude towards business attraction and retention, (3) maintaining an inventory of commercial and employment lands. (4) enhancing the vibrancy of downtown, and (5) diversifying marketing strategies, with an emphasis on culture and tourism. Economic development policy within the MDP focuses on (a) diversifying the Town’s economic base to explore home-based businesses, eco-industry, creative industries, and health and wellness, (b) strategic communications and marketing, and (c) supporting a vibrant downtown with unique, small-scale commercial experiences and local events.</p>
<b>Stony Plain Tourism Master Plan (2021)</b>	<p>The Tourism Master Plan focuses on creating anchor events and attractions to leverage great underutilized spaces like the Pioneer Museum, Multicultural Heritage Centre, and the downtown streetscape. In alignment with economic development, a key takeaway is to prioritize creating a unique marketing position and brand for Stony Plain to attract events and festival organizers as well as in-Town and nearby visitors.</p>
<b>Stony Plain Arts, Culture &amp; Heritage Action Plan (2020)</b>	<p>The Action Plan prioritizes creating a sense of place and activation through public art (e.g., murals), creative place-making (creation of a ‘cultural corridor’), and encouraging expansion of Summer Sessions and other programming. In alignment with other planning documents, the Action Plan identifies collaboration as a key tool to move forward. The Action Plan complements the Tourism Master Plan by identifying the opportunity for creating Stony Plain as a destination for cultural and economic activity in the Tri-Municipal Region.</p>

<p><b>Stony Plain Old Town Community Plan (2019)</b></p>	<p>One of the key purposes of the Old Town Community Plan (OTCP) is to continue to promote and align economic development with the Town’s economic development goals. The OTCP identifies existing economic sectors in the area including the following driver industries (expanding and growing industries within the existing portfolio) (1) Arts and Cultural Industries, (2) Local Food and Food Processing, (3) Health Services, (4) Agriculture Support, (5) Construction/Transportation and Warehousing, (6) Support Activities for Energy and Extraction, and (7) Business and Professional Services. To align with the MDP’s theme of “Economic Opportunity”, the OTCP creates a development concept identifying the area with high economic development opportunity through commercial, commercial mixed-use and institutional land use map with two commercial corridors and a number of institutional parcels.</p>
<p><b>Town of Stony Plain Population &amp; Employment Forecast Report (2022)</b></p>	<p>The Population &amp; Employment Forecast report identifies three growth scenarios of low, expected, and ‘optimistic’ economic growth from COVID-19 economic recovery. From the economic drivers also identified in the OCTP, the report forecasts potential growth in these key sectors. (1) Health Services, (2) local Food &amp; Food Processing, (3) Arts, Culture, Tourism, are the top three productive and stable sectors to expand across all three growth scenarios. (4) Agricultural Support and (5) Construction/Transportation Warehousing are also productive but more unstable in the low-growth scenario.</p>
<p><b>Highway Development Strategy (2023)</b></p>	<p>The Highway Development Strategy focuses on economic opportunity along highways 16A and 628. To do this, the strategy identifies three goals including (1) investment readiness, (2) land use and infrastructure, and (3) investment attraction. The goals outline a number of actions with the focus of creating dynamic, investment ready parcels along the highway corridors that transforms statutory planning framework to attract target sectors (e.g., advanced manufacturing, agriculture and agri-tech, professional services, and back-office operations) and develop innovation hubs (e.g., tech innovation, business accelerators, maker spaces for target sectors).</p>
<p><b>Stony Plain Strategic Plan (2023-2026)</b></p>	<p>Economic Opportunity is identified as one of the pillars for the Stony Plain Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan commits to this by identifying key actions including (1) creating opportunities for a more prosperous climate and job creation, (2) enhance downtown and tourism offerings through destination marketing, events, and programming in collaboration with partners and businesses, (3) improve the digital infrastructure gaps, (4) explore partnerships and strengthen the role of Edmonton Global and the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board, (5) foster development in the North Business Park and highway corridors.</p>
<p><b>Stony Plain Corporate Plan (2023-2025)</b></p>	<p>Stemming from the MDP, Stony Plain’s Corporate Plan outlines key actions to advance ‘economic opportunity’ including increased business, investor, developer, and stakeholder engagement for economic development, continued exploration of a prominent tourism destination marketing strategy, economic growth monitoring and profiling of key business sectors, and the development of a Broadband Strategy. These actions are complemented by a strategic focus on the North Business Park, Highways 16A &amp; 628 corridors, and continued support of Edmonton Global and the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board.</p>

# ENGAGEMENT

## Engagement Framework

The consultant team, with support from Stony Plain’s Economic Development Team developed an Engagement Framework to guide the entire engagement process and outline objectives. This framework was shared with the Growth and Commerce Committee and senior staff for feedback prior to conducting public engagement activities. The Engagement Framework aligns with IAP2 guidelines and leading engagement practice that moves beyond the traditional (and declining) open house and survey formula.

## Engagement Objectives

The Engagement Framework aligns engagement objectives and approach with the Town of Stony Plain’s *Public Participation Policy (C-CAO-057)*. This includes using the following “Categories of Public Participation” to outline engagement objectives per category.

- **Connect:** The Town will keep residents informed, listen to feedback, and consider the information gathered in the decision-making process.
- **Involve:** The Town will work with residents to ensure all viewpoints are heard and considered in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how the input influenced the decision.
- **Partner:** The Town will put together teams of residents and Stakeholders who will form recommendations that will be directly considered in the decision-making process.
- **Empower:** The Town will provide tools for the decision-making process to be directly in the hands of the Public.

Based on the approved Engagement Framework, the approach focuses on ‘partnering’ and ‘involving’ internal stakeholders (GCC, staff) and Industry contacts (Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation, Alberta Jobs, Economy & Trade, Edmonton Global, Invest Alberta, Greater Parkland Regional Chamber of Commerce, Community Futures, Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, University of Alberta, existing businesses) as subject matter experts to guide the plan’s development. Engagement with the broader public focused on ‘connecting’, vis-a-vis sharing information and getting high-level feedback.

## Overarching Engagement Questions

To frame our discussion with stakeholders, the engagement process was led with the following engagement questions in mind:

- What/who is resistant versus open to change?
- What/who is hindering versus helping economic development?
- Who are our champions? Who might be our new champions?
- What is the Town’s role? What are the expectations? Ex. Investor, Convener, Facilitator, Knowledge Sharer
- Do you have any big ideas for economic development in Stony Plain?
- What is happening in your world (either as a resident or business owner)?
- What are your key issues and challenges as a business owner or resident in Stony Plain?
- Do you have any big ideas for economic development in Stony Plain?

## Stakeholders

The Project Team conducted a preliminary stakeholder mapping exercise with the Client and have identified the following stakeholder groupings, stakeholders, engagement intention, and general “Category of Public Participation.”



STAKEHOLDER GROUP	STAKEHOLDER LIST	ENGAGEMENT INTENTION	Policy C-CAO-057 Category
Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth and Commerce Committee (aka Project Steering Committee)</li> <li>• Planning and Development</li> <li>• Corporate Communications (Senior Officer)</li> <li>• CPO</li> <li>• Culture and Tourism Development (Officer)</li> <li>• Strategic Services (General Manager)</li> <li>• Community and Social Development</li> <li>• Corporate Services, Finance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate on solutions for complex and interdepartmental economic development objectives and opportunities</li> <li>• Gather recommendations for external stakeholders</li> <li>• Input and collaboration on the planning process</li> <li>• Keeping interdependent divisions informed and sharing knowledge</li> </ul>	Partner
Peer Government Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local First Nations<sup>7</sup></li> <li>• Alberta Agriculture &amp; Irrigation</li> <li>• Alberta Jobs, Economy &amp; Trade</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify potential opportunities for collaboration, resourcing, capacity building, and funding</li> <li>• Understand existing programming and strategies for economic development at a Provincial level</li> </ul> <p><i>Note: First Nations engagement is to be initiated first on a government-to-government level establishing relationships before specific questions on economic development.</i></p>	Involve
Peer Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater Parkland Regional Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• Edmonton Global (Town is funder)</li> <li>• Invest Alberta</li> <li>• University of Alberta</li> <li>• Norquest College</li> <li>• North Alberta Institute of Technology</li> <li>• MacEwan University</li> <li>• Community Futures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify potential opportunities for collaboration, resourcing, capacity building, and funding</li> <li>• Understanding local trends including opportunities and challenges in economic development</li> </ul>	Connect

<sup>7</sup> Letters with information about the project has been sent to First Nations groups and we have not received a response in the timeframe of this project. There is a need to develop a nation-to-nation relationship including protocols to support meaningful engagement in processes like these moving forward.

<b>Targeted/ New Industry Representatives (to attract)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agribusiness (key sector)</li> <li>• Manufacturing</li> <li>• Retail &amp; Tourism</li> <li>• Logistics</li> <li>• Professional Services</li> <li>• Creative Workforce</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand opportunities to attract new business</li> <li>• Identify potential Town-led initiatives and strategies for business attraction and retention</li> <li>• Identify resources needed for new sectors to thrive in Stony Plain</li> </ul>	Involve
<b>Existing Primary Industry Representatives (to retain)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction</li> <li>• Agri-Business</li> <li>• Retail, food, beverage</li> <li>• Home based businesses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand opportunities to retain existing businesses</li> <li>• Identify potential Town-led initiatives and strategies for business attraction and retention</li> <li>• Identify issues and challenges for current businesses</li> </ul>	Involve
<b>Supporters</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Real Estate Sector</li> <li>• Economic Development and Business Sector Influencers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify potential opportunities for collaboration, resourcing, capacity building, and funding</li> <li>• Identify interdependent considerations for economic development (real estate, resources, logistics, etc.)</li> <li>• Assess and gain input as to what they see as the role of Ec Dev in the community.</li> </ul>	Connect
<b>General Public</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform the general public on the plan development process</li> <li>• Create literacy on the role of economic development at the Town of Stony Plain</li> <li>• Explore and validate an emerging vision for economic development</li> </ul>	Connect
<b>Local Media</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edmonton media</li> <li>• 88.1 FM/The One</li> <li>• Stony Plain Reporter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform media on the plan development process</li> <li>• Integrate media perspectives on storytelling</li> </ul>	Connect

## How We Engaged

Guided by the engagement questions and engagement framework, engagement activities were designed and delivered for focused and targeted engagement with key informants including government, industry, and academic partners, internal staff, and existing businesses. Engagement opportunities for the broader community were also created to create a picture of both expert and general perspectives on economic development in Stony Plain. The intention for engagement was to test early themes derived from early project conversations and a session with the Growth and Commerce Committee before testing themes with external groups. Engagement activities include:

- Growth and Commerce Committee (GCC) Session
- Internal Town Staff Workshop
- One-on-one Stakeholder Interviews (with existing businesses and one staff member)
- Industry Focus Group (Government Partners, Industry Partners, Academic Institutions)
- Community Forum
- Midsummer Thursday Sounding Boards



## ENGAGEMENT BY THE NUMBERS



### GCC Presentation

3 Councillors engaged  
(2 in-person; 1 virtual)  
40+ comments<sup>8</sup> received



### Town Staff

8 staff members  
90+ comments received



### One-on-one Stakeholder Interviews

9 participants\*  
172+ comments



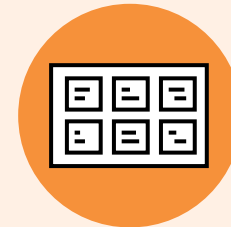
### Industry Focus Group

21 participants\*\*  
~282 data points



### Community Forum

14 participants  
~216 data points



### Midsummer Thursdays Sounding Boards

16+ comments

\*Interviews conducted with Crystal Culture, Kick Ass Caramels, Earth Apples, Sunrise Vista Enterprises, Stellar Construction/Homes, JLL, Decker Property Management, Councillor Lyons (in lieu of participation of GCC session), Staff (additional conversation from staff session)

\*\*Representation includes Edmonton Global, the Greater Parkland Regional Chamber of Commerce, Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, University of Alberta, Invest Alberta, Community Futures, Alberta Agriculture & Irrigation, Alberta Jobs, Economy & Trade

<sup>8</sup> Data points refers to all types of input received including up-voting and dot-mocracy, whereas comments can be verbal or written.



## Meeting Engagement Objectives

The results from engagement fulfill the objectives outlined in the engagement framework as well as desired engagement levels per stakeholder groups. An additional consideration is the low participant turnout for the Community Forum. Impacts from the low turnout were remedied by adding additional asynchronous Sounding Boards for engagement at a Midsummer Thursdays session.

## Analyzing Engagement Data for Key Themes

With the sizable amount of engagement inputs, the Consultant Team analyzed data and generated key themes through the following ways:

- Creating engagement questions, process, and design based on identified themes to help direct and focus participant discussions
- Testing early themes with clients and key stakeholders to understand the right frame and suite of engagement questions and process design

- Once input was received, all comments were grouped for similar content and reported back to participants at sessions
- Larger sessions (e.g., the focus group and community forum) used a “dot-mocracy” exercise prioritized input by participants. This means we asked participants to upvote resonating ideas/themes to identify priorities and strategic directions
- All data was transcribed and coded to key themes and was subject to project team discussion, sensemaking, validation, and synthesis

A complete inventory of engagement data is available for review in Appendix B.

## WHAT WE HEARD: ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

The following summarizes key themes from the engagement activities informing Stony Plain's Economic Development Strategy & Action Plan. These inform and shape the draft strategic directions for the new strategy.

### Overall Key Themes Across All Engagement Activities

- Economic Development in Stony Plain would benefit from increased presence to pursue economic opportunities.
- There is a need to enhance investment readiness and attraction that accounts for both new businesses as well as the needed labour and talent pool associated with running and operating said new businesses (economic development linked to quality of life and other functions in the Town including arts and culture and planning).
- There is a need to clearly articulate Stony Plain's competitive advantage for investment attraction including a clear marketing angle and improved communications.
- There is a need to improve data collection and analysis functions internally in the Town to inform economic development decision-making (alongside potential benefits to make data-driven decision-making for other functions at the Town).
- Business Engagement & Retention is limited based on the resources and capacity available. There is an opportunity to improve business relationships and support additional investment into the municipality through increased capacity within the Economic Development Business Unit.

- Economic development is a valued component to community building and quality of life.

### Growth & Commerce Committee Key Themes

- Ensuring economic development is fully considered for strategic decisions that impact the municipality's economic opportunities, value proposition, and ultimately, the business unit ('seat at the table').
- Increase the Economic Development Business Unit's capacity to support existing business and business attraction.
- Improve understanding and communication of metrics, data, and evaluation of town's economic performance and impact— increase data analysis capacity.
- Streamline the Economic Development Business Unit's focus and restructure responsibilities – focus on business engagement and retention as well as investment attraction and readiness.

### Internal Staff Session Key Themes

- There is an opportunity to improve internal culture, understanding, and collaborative effort for economic development broadly.
- There is an opportunity to review the Economic Development Business Unit's current workload, processes, and activities to redistribute responsibilities that do not yield value or contribute to their focus of business engagement and retention and/or investment attraction and readiness.
- There is a need for local data, evaluation and metrics to understanding the Town's economic performance, attractiveness, and competitiveness.

- There is a need to make a more strategic case for investment to help with business attraction.
- Possibility to reset and right-size economic development resources.
- There is a need to align this strategy and action plan with the organization’s strategic and corporate plans.
- Acknowledgement that slowly increasing budget incrementally over time limits opportunities for growth.

### **Industry Focus Group Key Themes**

- Align with economic development best practices and standards.
- Differentiation from competitors is key for investment attraction.
- Prioritize business attraction and competitiveness compared to neighbouring municipalities.
- Streamline processes across the tri-municipal region to incentivize more business.
- Improve processes for permitting and development (e.g., E-permitting is essential).
- Align with post-secondary opportunities (education to employment pipeline, potential college campuses in town).

### **Community Forum Key Themes**

- Community input focused on parallel community amenities and livability considerations to attract and retain businesses and workers

- Business to attract along highway corridors
- Strategy to retain residents (particularly youth and young adults)
- Consistent wayfinding/signage
- More restaurants
- Big ideas for business/institutions include distilleries, local college or large grocery store.
- Prioritize telling the “Story of Stony Plain” to attract new businesses and residents.

### **One-on-one Interviews Key Themes**

- Many established businesses feel listened to and supported by economic development team, however, there is a need to ensure the same level of service to new and emerging businesses.
- Businesses owners are feeling the squeeze of increase costs to operate business.
- The Town can improve marketing and positioning for business attraction.
- References to labour shortages—identifies opportunities in foreign workers or school-to-employment transition opportunities.
- Business attraction would benefit from “shovel-ready” sites and streamlining/support from local government.
- Reduce “red tape” for existing businesses (e.g., new initiatives, permitting, licensing, ideas, etc.).



## Sounding Board Interesting Ideas

Community feedback focused on individual issues, community amenities, and livability that are parallel topics to economic development. Due to the limited volume of feedback from the sounding boards, the following ideas are reported as suggestions and not core integral pieces of strategic plan development.

- Interest in diversifying retail and service businesses: bowling alley, clothing stores, video games store, toy store, tap room, specialty goods
- Encourage late-night shopping to liven main street area
- Fill in existing building stock before creating new developments
- Increase seniors social housing





## SECTION 3

# GOING FORWARD: IMPLEMENTATION AND ACTION PLAN

The 2024-2029 Town of Stony Plain Economic Development Strategy presents a planning framework of the Strategic Priorities, Objectives and Supporting Actions for the Town and its key partners and collaborators to implement and guide its work. It encompasses a broad range of assets and resources that will help ensure its integration into a healthy business ecosystem.

The Town leads the Strategy’s implementation, however connections and relationships with others in the business community and with industry stakeholders also play an important role in the Plan’s implementation.

The Town of Stony Plain Economic Development Strategy is a “living document” and will be supported by an updated annual implementation schedule and budget outlining:

- **Supporting Actions prioritized into recommended phases (e.g., Phase 1: Years 1-2; Phase 2=Years 3-4; Phase 3=Years 4-5. The latter phasing requires a future state of readiness and capacity);**
- **Partners; and the opportunity for further collaboration;**
- **Resource considerations for each action; and**
- **Measures of success indicators (Key Performance Indicators) as a way to monitor progress.**

The Action Plan will provide a guide for detailed tactical implementations. It will be a roadmap for the Town’s decision-making and investment over the next five years. Integration with Town plans, policy directions and documents, both internal and external, should be a shared and integrated responsibility of Town Staff.

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A: ACTION PLAN

	#	Supporting Actions	Phases 1 = 1-2 years 2 = 3-4 years 3 = 4-5 years	Partners	Resource Considerations \$ to \$\$\$\$
STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1	1	Create and maintain a comprehensive database of non-residential land inventory by developing an infrastructure and readiness plan and exploring opportunities to enhance the competitiveness and readiness of high-impact lands for development through municipal support.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Real estate stakeholders</li> </ul>	\$\$
	2	Explore public-private partnerships to expedite development and create investment-ready properties.	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Target sector representatives</li> <li>Landowners</li> <li>Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board</li> <li>Regional municipalities</li> </ul>	\$
	3	Pilot incentive programs for end-users to drive site development and increase land value.	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Futures</li> <li>Financial institutions</li> </ul>	\$\$\$\$
	4	Conduct a cost analysis for broadband installation, aligning with the Broadband Strategy.	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Telecommunications companies</li> <li>Government of Alberta (Alberta Broadband Fund)</li> </ul>	\$
	5	Advocate that landowners develop area structure plans for the lands identified in the Highway Development Strategy.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local commercial landowners consultations</li> </ul>	\$
	6	Invest in local data collection to substantiate the Town's story and continuously update marketing assets with current information as required.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Software companies</li> <li>Partner organizations (EDA, EDAC, NAIOP)</li> <li>Government of Alberta</li> </ul>	\$
	7	Develop a comprehensive and cohesive Economic Development Marketing and Communications Plan aligned with data-driven storytelling and strategic partner efforts that establish key performance indicators for monitoring and adjusting performance and include other Supporting Actions noted in the present Strategy.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marketing and communications companies</li> <li>Invest Alberta</li> <li>Edmonton Global</li> <li>Growth and Commerce Committee</li> </ul>	\$\$\$\$

	#	Supporting Actions	Phases 1 = 1-2 years 2 = 3-4 years 3 = 4-5 years	Partners	Resource Considerations \$ to \$\$\$\$
<b>STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1</b>	<b>8</b>	Champion upgrades and expansions to Highway 16A and Highway 628 to Highway 60 to enhance connectivity, improve route capacity, and make Stony Plain a more accessible and desirable location per the Highway Development Strategy.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town Council</li> <li>• Growth and Commerce Committee</li> <li>• Alberta Transportation</li> <li>• MLA</li> <li>• MP</li> <li>• Key community leaders</li> <li>• Real estate stakeholders</li> <li>• Developers</li> <li>• Landowners</li> </ul>	\$
	<b>9</b>	Profile the economic benefits created by projects like the Community Recreation Centre, Old Town South Redevelopment, and other key projects to enhance their attractiveness to audiences.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developers</li> <li>• Home Builders</li> <li>• Realtors</li> <li>• Edmonton Global</li> </ul>	\$
	<b>10</b>	Develop a Stakeholder Relations Plan to maintain active communications and relationships with sector leads.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing and communications companies</li> <li>• Invest Alberta</li> <li>• Edmonton Global</li> <li>• Growth and Commerce Committee</li> </ul>	\$
	<b>11</b>	Develop and execute an annual sector-specific marketing campaign, aligning with recommendations from the Highway Development Strategy.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edmonton Global</li> <li>• Invest Alberta</li> <li>• Post-secondary institutions</li> </ul>	\$\$
	<b>12</b>	Establish key sources of economic information and circulate the data for the Town that is relevant and credible.	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sector specific organizations</li> <li>• Edmonton Global</li> </ul>	\$
	<b>13</b>	Collaborate with stakeholders, including local businesses and educational institutions, to develop professional development programs, workshops, internships, an annual job fair and training opportunities to enhance the local workforce skills and provide opportunities for students and young professionals.	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local businesses</li> <li>• Post-secondary institutions</li> <li>• Business Link</li> <li>• Government of Alberta</li> </ul>	\$
	<b>14</b>	Forge partnerships with industry associations related to target sectors to tap into broader networks and resources for talent attraction.	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local businesses</li> <li>• Sector specific organizations</li> <li>• Greater Regional Parkland Chamber</li> </ul>	\$
	<b>15</b>	Consider transit incentives as a strategy to attract and retain talent in the community.	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Spruce Grove</li> <li>• Greater Regional Parkland Chamber</li> </ul>	\$
	<b>16</b>	Seek opportunities to align with federal and provincial funding programs that attract newcomer jobs.	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government of Canada</li> <li>• Government of Alberta</li> </ul>	\$

	#	Supporting Actions	Phases 1 = 1-2 years 2 = 3-4 years 3 = 4-5 years	Partners	Resource Considerations \$ to \$\$\$\$
<b>STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1</b>	17	Collaborate with post-secondary institutions to create opportunities for target sector businesses to access skilled talent.	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Post-secondary institutions</li> <li>Edmonton Global</li> <li>Alberta Innovates</li> </ul>	\$
	18	Consider target sector working groups to enhance connections, identify strategic opportunities, innovate sector efficiencies, and harmonize advocacy efforts with government entities.	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Edmonton Global</li> <li>Post secondary institutions</li> <li>Sector specific organizations</li> </ul>	\$
	19	Consider a Revitalization Tax Incentive to incentivize the redevelopment and relocation of target sector operations to Stony Plain.	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Futures</li> <li>Province of Alberta</li> <li>Invest Alberta</li> <li>Edmonton Global</li> <li>Greater Parkland Regional Chamber of Commerce</li> </ul>	\$\$\$\$
	20	Conduct business visits as a component of a Business Retention and Expansion program, concentrating efforts on supporting and growing target sector businesses.	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Growth and Commerce Committee</li> </ul>	\$\$\$\$
	21	Leverage agribusiness sector growth in the North Business Park by developing innovative concepts.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>North Business Park agribusinesses</li> <li>Edmonton Global</li> </ul>	\$\$
	22	Support the Facade Improvement Program in Old Town South.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local partners</li> </ul>	\$
	23	Enhance downtown as a destination (ex., consistent business hours) and encourage a diverse mix of experiential-based businesses downtown.	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Downtown businesses</li> <li>Greater Parkland Regional Chamber of Commerce</li> </ul>	\$\$
<b>STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2</b>	24	Explore opportunities for joint investment in infrastructure or other measures with member municipalities to drive significant economic development through Community Economic Development (CED).	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Economic Development</li> <li>Regional municipalities</li> </ul>	\$\$
	25	Champion through the Town's established Advocacy Plan for continued alignment with ministerial mandates that advocate for key projects (ex., Highway 628 expansion) that enhance development readiness.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Town Council</li> <li>MLA</li> <li>MP</li> <li>Edmonton Global</li> </ul>	\$\$
	26	Enhance Stony Plain's presence at target sector industry events and conferences to stay informed about trends and opportunities.	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refer to pages 112 to 114 in the Highway Development Strategy<sup>9</sup></li> </ul>	\$\$
	27	Introduce target sector partners to key forums like Growth and Commerce Committee meetings, providing learning opportunities and gaining insights into their experiences.	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Growth and Commerce Committee</li> <li>Sector specific organizations</li> </ul>	\$

9 [stonyplain.com/en/town-hall/highway-development-strategy.aspx](http://stonyplain.com/en/town-hall/highway-development-strategy.aspx)

	#	Supporting Actions	Phases 1 = 1-2 years 2 = 3-4 years 3 = 4-5 years	Partners	Resource Considerations \$ to \$\$\$\$
<b>STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2</b>	<b>28</b>	Collect and utilize industry intelligence in order to make connections that advance sector development.	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sector specific organizations</li> <li>• Edmonton Global</li> </ul>	\$\$
	<b>29</b>	Initiate collaborative dialogue with local Indigenous communities to understand their economic reconciliation goals and co-create pathways that align with their vision.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation</li> <li>• Enoch Cree Nation</li> <li>• Lac St. Anne Métis Community Association</li> <li>• Paul First Nation</li> </ul>	\$\$
	<b>30</b>	Collaborate with Indigenous communities to source and identify further actions that contribute to economic reconciliation, emphasizing partnership and community-driven initiatives.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation</li> <li>• Enoch Cree Nation</li> <li>• Lac St. Anne Métis Community Association</li> <li>• Paul First Nation</li> </ul>	\$\$
	<b>31</b>	Improve and enhance intermunicipal services, ensuring streamlined processes and collaboration for more effective economic development (ex., Business Licencing).	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal departments</li> <li>• Other municipalities</li> <li>• Software companies</li> </ul>	\$\$\$
<b>STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3</b>	<b>32</b>	Activate an engagement program that collects data and input to help the Town understand the needs, challenges, and opportunities of existing local businesses, forming the basis for targeted support.	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth and Commerce Committee</li> <li>• Local businesses</li> </ul>	\$\$\$
	<b>33</b>	Establish a feedback mechanism within the BRE program to continuously evaluate its effectiveness, incorporating insights from businesses to refine and improve support initiatives.	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth and Commerce Committee</li> </ul>	\$\$
	<b>34</b>	Provide specialized services to businesses considering expansion, including assistance with site selection, navigating regulatory processes, and accessing financial incentives.	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth and Commerce Committee</li> <li>• Sector specific organizations</li> </ul>	\$\$
	<b>35</b>	Showcase success stories of businesses that thrive in Stony Plain, inspiring confidence and encouraging broad ecosystem participation.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local businesses</li> <li>• Traditional marketing medium companies (i.e. radio, TV)</li> </ul>	\$
	<b>36</b>	Establish regular consultation with Chamber leaders to collaboratively offer tailored support services and various networking opportunities for established and aspiring business owners and leaders to foster collaboration, build relationships, and facilitate knowledge exchange and partnerships within the local business community.	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater Parkland Regional Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• Town Council</li> </ul>	\$

	#	Supporting Actions	Phases 1 = 1-2 years 2 = 3-4 years 3 = 4-5 years	Partners	Resource Considerations \$ to \$\$\$\$
<b>STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3</b>	<b>37</b>	Facilitate joint initiatives encompassing training sessions, workshops, and informative events to enhance collaboration, educate businesses on available resources, and provide practical guidance for navigating third-party supports effectively.	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greater Parkland Regional Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>Community Futures</li> <li>Post secondary institutions</li> </ul>	\$\$
	<b>38</b>	Establish leadership development programs to nurture emerging leaders within the community and empower them for future success.	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Futures</li> <li>Memorial Composite High School</li> </ul>	\$
	<b>39</b>	Explore a partnership that develops a centralized resource hub for local businesses, serving as a one-stop shop for information on available support services, grants, and training opportunities.	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greater Parkland Regional Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>Community Futures</li> </ul>	\$\$
	<b>40</b>	Implement a structured feedback mechanism to continually assess the effectiveness of town-funded initiatives, ensuring they directly address local businesses' real and evolving needs.	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greater Parkland Regional Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>Community Futures</li> </ul>	\$
	<b>41</b>	Create regular forums, such as roundtable discussions and town hall meetings as needed, to foster direct engagement between local business leaders, municipal officials, and key stakeholders.	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Town Council</li> <li>Growth and Commerce Committee</li> <li>MLA</li> <li>MP</li> <li>Greater Parkland Regional Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>Community Futures</li> <li>Local businesses</li> </ul>	\$\$
	<b>42</b>	Celebrate and acknowledge local business achievements and leadership through an annual awards program or other opportunities.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Growth and Commerce Committee</li> <li>Greater Parkland Regional Chamber of Commerce</li> </ul>	\$
	<b>43</b>	Collaborate with business associations to organize workshops on succession planning, providing guidance and resources for businesses planning transitions.	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sector specific organizations</li> <li>Financial institutions</li> </ul>	\$\$
<b>44</b>	Work with financial institutions and economic development agencies to ensure the availability of financial resources for new and transitioning business owners.	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial institutions</li> <li>Community Futures</li> <li>Greater Parkland Regional Chamber</li> </ul>	\$	

	#	Supporting Actions	Phases 1 = 1-2 years 2 = 3-4 years 3 = 4-5 years	Partners	Resource Considerations \$ to \$\$\$\$
STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4	45	Build organizational capacity to strengthen economic development.	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal departments</li> <li>Economic Developers Association of Alberta</li> <li>Economic Developers Association of Canada</li> </ul>	\$\$\$\$
	46	Acquire a Customer Relationship Management tool to support high-level customer service, responsiveness, and efficient communication for business retention and expansion and investment attraction processes.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal departments</li> <li>Software companies</li> </ul>	\$\$
	47	Create and implement a one-stop-shop concierge service, soft-landing support, and site certification for investors to provide investment information, site selection assistance and support project implementation.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Edmonton Global</li> <li>Invest Alberta</li> </ul>	\$\$\$
	48	Establish standards and processes to promote and support local events, improving coordination and effectiveness.	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal departments</li> </ul>	\$
	49	Support enhanced communication standards to ensure local businesses are well-informed of Town operations impacting business in a timely manner (ex., road closures).	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal departments</li> </ul>	\$
	50	Allocate financial and human resources to implement the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan, leveraging resources from partner organizations whenever possible.	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Edmonton Global</li> <li>Greater Parkland Regional Chamber</li> <li>Sector specific organizations</li> </ul>	\$\$\$\$
	51	Create accessible and user-friendly web resources and pathways to support investment and development.	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal departments</li> </ul>	\$\$
	52	Facilitate builder and developer industry engagement and information exchange.	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal departments</li> <li>Homebuilders</li> <li>Developers</li> <li>Sector specific organizations</li> </ul>	\$
	53	Support the implementation of online permitting.	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal departments</li> <li>Other municipalities</li> <li>Software companies</li> </ul>	\$\$\$\$
	54	Enhance permitting processing standards to be 'best in class' in the region.	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal departments</li> <li>Other municipalities</li> <li>UDI</li> <li>CHBA</li> <li>NAIOP</li> </ul>	\$\$



## APPENDIX B: CONTEXT SETTING REPORT

Please view Appendix B at [stonyplain.com/en/invest/resources/Documents/Context-Setting-Report.pdf](https://stonyplain.com/en/invest/resources/Documents/Context-Setting-Report.pdf)

## APPENDIX C: KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPI)

	KPI	Measurement Tool
<b>STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1</b> Create an attractive, investment, and future-ready community	10% increase in non-residential tax assessment (total increase per annum)	Finance reporting
	Total businesses (total)	Business Licence Database, CoStar
	Total of local industries (annual)	Business Licence Database, CoStar
	Total target sector industries (annual)	Business Licence Database, CoStar
	10% absorption rate of employment lands and by type (industrial, commercial-retail, commercial-office)	Vacant land inventory, CoStar
	Total inquiries and leads received for new employment lands	Investment Attraction Files/CRM
	Level of engagement with the business community	Business Satisfaction Survey; Registrations
	10% increase in website traffic:	Google analytics
	• Time spent	Google analytics
	• New visitors	Google analytics
	• Repeat visitors	Google analytics
	• Conversions	Google analytics
	10% increase in digital engagement and conversions	Social media analytics
	Assignment of supporting actions	Annual workplan
	Reputation as a good location for business growth	Business Satisfaction Survey, Business Licence Database, Finance Reporting
National, provincial, and regional awareness of Stony Plain's potential	Perception Survey, Media coverage, Google analytics	
Recognition of Stony Plain as an investment destination	Perception Survey	
<b>STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2</b> Bolster strategic partnerships and collaborations	New strategic relationships established	CRM
	Event turnout (established in event plans)	Registrations, Post Event Survey
	Participation in regional economic development initiatives	Annual workplan
	Number of existing relationships nurtured and new ones established	CRM

	KPI	Measurement Tool
<b>STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2</b> Bolster strategic partnerships and collaborations	Number of face-to-face meetings with Indigenous counterparts, entrepreneurs, and community leaders	CRM
	Number of staff hours dedicated	Annual workplan
	Reputation as a cooperative and bold municipality	Perception Survey, Media coverage, Testimonials
	Improved perceptions of Stony Plain's regional positioning and influence	Perception Survey, Media coverage, Testimonials
	Enhanced alignment with the mandates and priorities of partnering organizations	Annual workplan, Perception Survey
	Success stories demonstrating positive outcomes from strategic partnerships	Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey, Google analytics
<b>STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3</b> Enhance the local business ecosystem	Total meetings with businesses completed	CRM
	Inputs completed	CRM
	Number of services and/or supports provided to businesses/entrepreneurs	Business Satisfaction Survey
	Number of staff hours dedicated	Annual workplan
	Number of businesses identified considering growth and expansion	CRM, Business Satisfaction Survey
	Reputation as a business-friendly municipality	Business Satisfaction Survey
	Testimonials and feedback from local businesses on the impact of collaborative initiatives	Business Satisfaction Survey
	Visibility of local businesses in the community and beyond	Business Satisfaction Survey, Community Survey, Online business audit
	Collaboration and cooperation among local businesses	Chamber Memberships, Event attendance and satisfaction
Local confidence in Stony Plain's businesses	Community Survey, Google Reviews audit	
<b>STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4</b> Optimize municipal services	Number of businesses in the Customer Relationship Management tool	CRM
	Response times and issue resolution periods	Client feedback
	Building and development timelines	CRM, Permit Management Software
	Progress monitoring and reporting on the Economic Development Strategy	Project Management Software, Annual workplan
	New investment in the Economic Development business unit	Corporate Planning
	Economic development is infused in the organization's culture	Annual workplan
	Improved perceptions of the ease of doing business in Stony Plain	Business Satisfaction Survey
	Positive feedback from businesses on the responsiveness and efficiency of municipal services	Business Satisfaction Survey
	Positive testimonials on the impact of municipal-led initiatives on business success	Business Satisfaction Survey
	Positive feedback on the availability of information relevant to doing business	Business Satisfaction Survey
	Successful communication of development processes and requirements on the Town's websites	Business Satisfaction Survey, Google analytics



