

# CONNECTIONS & EXCHANGES:

A 10-Year Plan  
To Transform  
Arts and Heritage  
In Edmonton

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On the Cover: *Autumn in the Valley*.  
Credit: Leanne Schnierer, artist

Left: *Talus Dome* by Ball Noguees Studio.  
Credit: Laughing Dog Photography

The Edmonton Arts Council, the Edmonton Heritage Council, and Arts Habitat Edmonton recognize our relationships to Treaty 6 and the peoples and territories it weaves together. In doing so, we renew our commitment to continuing our collective journey toward the ideals of peace, friendship, and understanding at the core of that agreement.

#### A POET'S PERSPECTIVE

**I come from the people  
who stand in the face  
of adversity and  
keep telling their story—  
our story**

**I come from the artists,  
and the every day Edmontonians  
who refuse to stop creating.**

**—Mary Pinkoski,  
from My City Is A Body**



# Introduction

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Edmonton isn't a finished city. That's its greatest asset. It's this notion that drives everything this city does. There is always room to get involved and get something done. Every day, the desire and opportunity to create impactful, dynamic change in this city grows stronger. The productive, kinetic energy in the people, organizations and institutions of this city has—over the last decade—provided direction and guidance to make Edmonton a place of transformative change. You can see it every day—not just in the cranes that dot the sky, but in the eager people that arrive here daily; the ideas and effort that has been put into our communities, the careful investments of time and capital; or simply in the healthy debate around our evolving civic identity. We are a city collectively striving to create something new and distinguish itself to the world. This potent and vibrant energy of change is what makes Edmonton such an extraordinary place to live—it isn't perfect, but everyone is welcome to make it better, and everyone can play a part in the collective project of shaping and transforming this city.



Getting up close with Edmonton's heritage on an Edmonton City as Museum Curiosities Tour. Credit: Adam Goudreau

Arts and heritage are critical to Edmonton's transformative change—in fact, they are both a driver and reflector of transformation. We don't

often realize it, but wherever you see arts and heritage, you see a marker of change. We use it to celebrate important occasions and agreements. It provides the finishing touches on major projects. We consider it in our decision-making. We point to it as progress. We use it to engage with history, so that history can inform our future. Arts and heritage are the bold, external expression of change.

**Like no other force in our civic life, arts and heritage create the conditions for the meaningful connections and exchanges that fuel the desire and direction of change.** They provide the space to challenge assumptions; beckon talented new people; give us the tools to assess and understand our past; guide us to understanding our relationship with the land; and help us discover new ideas or revive old ideas. Art and heritage allow us to claim civic pride; they can motivate the conversion of shame into positive impact; buttress our reputation outside the city; or simply inspire us to revel in flashes of joy that become lifelong memories. We manifest these vital moments of change under the lights of our stages, on the walls of our galleries, in the quiet of our archives, in front of the sculptures on our streets, in the energy of our museums, with the studio space we covet, through our crowded festival grounds, on the plaques on our buildings, through the myriad celebrations of our diverse cultural origins and intersectional identities, and all the spaces in between where we discuss, debate, and inspire each other. These are the moments that spark ideas that motivate Edmontonians to create transformative change.

In order to keep up with Edmonton's rapid and transformative change, we need a deliberate, collaborative and strategic plan to maintain and encourage these connections and exchanges bestowed to us through arts and heritage.

This is our plan.



## The Elevator Pitch

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*Connections & Exchanges* is Edmonton's 10-year arts and heritage plan. It seeks to infuse culture, arts and heritage into every aspect of Edmonton's civic fabric, support cultural makers and interpreters, and grow Edmonton's arts and heritage audiences. Through the **ambitions** that we strive towards, the **aims** we use to chart progress, the **actions** that define our approach, and the measurement framework that validates it all, this plan guides the development of Edmonton's arts and heritage landscape through extraordinary transformation for the next decade.

## The Potential Of This Plan

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The **ambitions, aims** and **actions** that form this plan will chart the change we'll see in arts and heritage in Edmonton. This plan is more than a guide for organizations and policy makers. It asks key questions about what this means for artists, heritage practitioners and the people of Edmonton. What will the next 10 years look like? What does this mean for the people who work in arts and heritage and their ability to contribute to our changing city? How will they make a living? How will arts and heritage play a role in the lives of individuals? How will the next generations' outlook towards arts and heritage change?

# How Will It Be Different From Today?

## 2020

Grier is a new parent. While she and her partner read as much as they could about what life would be like after their baby, she wasn't prepared for how lonely she would feel, especially compared to her previous lifestyle. Every day, she takes the baby for walks and spends time in parks where there are other people. Still, it is hard to make friends and all her old friends go to work during the day. One day, while walking near a community strip mall, she notices a truck loading pottery equipment and easels into a long-vacant storefront. A week later, she notices a sign on the storefront: "Art Classes and Studio Space—Coming Soon." Looking through the window, she sees a proud, but exhausted, woman setting up. Grier knocks on the window to get her attention and learns they are offering not only drop-in studio space for artists, but a chance for those artists to teach courses. When the space opens, Grier signs up for a "Parent and Baby" pottery class that gives her two hours each week to meet and talk with other parents in her neighbourhood.



First FAVA Youth Film Fair.  
Credit: Katrina Beatty

## 2021

Jung Ja takes down her calendar and flips through to March. She's looking to find two days to volunteer for a new festival before her grandchildren's spring break. She has been a fixture at many of Edmonton's festivals since a colleague suggested that she put one of her three languages to use and assist with a walking tour, despite needing a motorized scooter to make most trips. She loves gathering with Edmontonians under the blue prairie sky or in dark chattering venues. She feels an incredible sense of pride contributing to such a vibrant part of Edmonton's life, while making new friends and new memories. Her children and grandchildren listen with rapt attention as she relays her adventures at Edmonton's festivals and events. They are bemused to hear she has been a parade marshal and has worked the beer garden. Jung Ja wasn't sure at first, as she did not have use of her left leg. But each event and festival she signed up for was reassuring and welcomed her language skills and enthusiasm, and had made the effort to ensure that access wouldn't be an issue for any volunteer, audience member, artist or heritage practitioner. This year, Jung Ja will find joy and purpose with 10 festivals—three new ones and seven that know her well.

## 2023

While out for a dawn jog along a multi-use trail, Erika comes across a recently completed station from an LRT expansion in her area. Stopping for a break, she pulls out her phone to take a photo of the sunrise as it crests over the horizon behind the station. Just before she takes the shot, she notices a large, recently installed sculpture in the corner of her screen. While Erika is fond of public art, she has always considered it a "downtown thing." She looks carefully at the sculpture, lost for a moment in her own internal debate about what it means to her. She adjusts her angle to fully capture the sculpture in the foreground with the sunrise adding colour and texture in the background. She posts the photo to her social media account with the hashtag #yegarts and pins the location, which has the name of the sculpture. To her surprise, she spends the next 48 hours responding to comments and talking about the new public art with strangers, including the sculptor.



## 2024

Terry and his daughter turn the corner to find a bustling and vibrant crowd on the field next to their community hall. It's the main site of their Neighbourhood Museum Day. With pop-up exhibits throughout the grounds featuring a collection of archival research, maps and photos, everyone was encouraged to contribute their own memories of the neighbourhood and ideas for its future. Throughout the day there are games, delicious food from the nearby Filipino church and Sikh gurdwara, home tours, lively speakers and even an urban farming booth where you could make your own bee hotel. There were fun ways to learn about the neighbourhood history and discuss some of the issues facing the future of the community, like sustainability, historical preservation and the emerging needs of residents. Everything was designed to gather the residents to consider these collective issues together. As he walked home with his daughter, clutching her bee hotel with pride and talking about the new friend she made, he realized they had both spent a day connecting with their community in a different way. He had been to museums before, but he hadn't ever thought about his city as a museum—the people, stories, objects and landscape all seemed a little richer than they had the day before.

Collecting stories of the newcomer experience at the launch of the Edmonton Living Rooms exhibit at La Cité Francophone.  
Credit: Edmonton Heritage Council



## 2026

Emad walks into the gallery with a pride he hasn't felt since he was a boy. The crowd, well dressed and ready to celebrate, is here for him. His first gallery showing in Edmonton. Seven years ago, he arrived as a Syrian refugee in Edmonton with only what he could carry with him. A video artist in his home country, his sponsor family encouraged him to take it up as a way to practice his English skills and meet other people. Not knowing where to begin, Emad is connected to an industrial design program at the university that looks for cross-cultural partners for thesis projects. He meets Jaime—a student interested in large wall projections—who listens carefully to Emad's stories from his days as a young artist. Emad begins to realize that he has an opportunity to start his artistic practice again. He works with Jaime to help him complete his thesis project, while also setting aside time to create new projection projects inspired by his immigration journey. Gradually, encouraged by other artists, his cultural community, Jaime, and with the help of the occasional small grant, Emad is able to put on the occasional public exhibit in community halls and late night winter festivals. Eventually, one of his best works catches the eye of a gallery owner, who asks him if he'd like to be featured in his southside gallery.

## 2028

Dan is waiting. Waiting on a downtown street for someone who is more than 10 minutes late. Looking to occupy himself, he takes a careful look at the building in front of him. It's an old building. He remembers seeing a story on the news about how a bakery moved in a few months ago and about a mural project nearby. On a pillar, he notices an augmented reality marker on a small plaque. Intrigued, he uses his phone to scan the marker and is taken to an app that shows him archival images of the old building and the streetscape around him. A community leader tells the story of the neighbourhood and its significance to the development of Edmonton's Pride Parade and Festival. As his late party arrives, Dan takes a moment to leave a comment on the location and share his discovery with his friend. In the weeks that follow, he starts to notice these markers all around the city, and often sees people looking delighted as they learn about the shared history of Edmonton.





Ballet Edmonton performs during Alberta Culture Days.  
Credit: Tracy Kolenchuk

## 2029

Digging into her pocket to grab her phone, Maya gets an alert—a local contemporary dance company has just announced a performance. She’s excited. She’s only recently started discovering contemporary dance, but she can’t get enough of it. She’s been able to make this connection through an app that a local startup has created. This app contains powerful search and machine-learning algorithms that scan hundreds of websites and tens of thousands of social media accounts to pull all of Edmonton’s cultural performances and events into one place. Scanning the habits and preferences of its users, it suggests performances and even allows patrons to buy tickets with one single click. It also allows artists and event planners to understand their audiences better, promote performances and reward loyal audience members.

## On the Cusp

By Jacquelyn Cardinal and Hunter Cardinal

### THE BEGINNING: 17 YEARS OLD

The rumbling chatter of your classmates rises with the house lights of the theatre.

You return to your body, startled to find yourself still sitting among the students from your Grade 12 English class. You look around. You are in a small black box theatre in Strathcona. It comes back to you bit by bit. There had been a moment between two characters towards the end of the play that made you forget it wasn’t real, that it had been two strangers acting, and not an echo of the last conversation you had with your *khokhom* before you moved to the city.

“Promise me you won’t forget who you are.”

“How could I?”

You wait in the lobby for the buses to arrive while most of your class buzzes about daily things. Your head keeps being pulled back into the play. You spot your teacher near the stairs, so you make your way over and speak with her quietly until you gain the courage to eventually ask: “So, if I wanted to do that—do acting like that—how would I start?”

Two actors emerge noisily from the stage doors behind the teacher. She winks and says, “Why don’t we find out?”

You step behind her as she stops the two actors, complimenting them on the show and saying just how great it is to see them again. She brings their attention to you with a nudge. “Now, I was just speaking with Alexan here and she’s interested in getting into acting. Can you tell her a little about how you both got started?”

One of them tells their story of high school drama class and theatre school and joining an actors union. She says that if she was seventeen again, she would be seeing as much work as she could, find good mentors, and trying to get the best training possible.

The other actor looks at you, nodding in agreement and says simply: “Honestly, you’re in Edmonton. You’re in great hands.”





Rapid Fire Theatre's Improvaganza Festival.  
Credit: Billy Wong

## The Story of This Plan

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How do you create a plan designed to shape arts and heritage in a rapidly transforming city for the next 10 years? The *Connections & Exchanges* plan will be laid out in detail in the other books accompanying this plan, but it is important that the processes and approaches of this plan are explained.

Developing this plan took more than a year, with a project team of more than 12, talking to thousands of Edmontonians and applying robust best practices and measurement tools to ensure the plan is solid. There is detail around the context, methodology and outcomes of this plan throughout this document and the three accompanying books lay out each ambition. But before you dig deep, invest some time to understand the journey of this process.





Ahmed Ali, Poet Laureate, reading for City Council.  
Credit: Nicholas Yee

## 2008–2018 The Art of Living

Culture in Edmonton was shaped by *The Art of Living: A Plan For Securing The Future of Arts and Heritage in the City of Edmonton (2008–2018)*, the predecessor to this plan. It laid out an ambitious set of 28 recommendations (17 arts and 11 heritage) to complete over 10 years. It has served the City of Edmonton well, but at the end of 10 years, it was apparent that a new plan would be required to deal with the next 10 years of change.

## Spring 2017 Council Commissions a New 10-Year Plan

In the spring of 2017, Edmonton City Council approved the development of a 2019–2029 arts and heritage plan to ultimately guide the implementation plans for the three organizations responsible for arts and heritage in Edmonton:

### EDMONTON ARTS COUNCIL (EAC)

The Edmonton Arts Council is a non-profit, member-driven society and charitable organization that supports and promotes the arts in Edmonton. The EAC works to nurture arts and cultural activities that reflect Edmonton’s diversity.

#### VISION

A city where arts and culture are integrated in all aspects of our community life and where both individual artists and arts organizations are valued and supported in their endeavours to create, communicate and contribute.

### EDMONTON HERITAGE COUNCIL (EHC)

The Edmonton Heritage Council connects citizens with the stories of their city. Our commitment is to provide leadership, support, and programs to help Edmontonians research, preserve, interpret, and advocate for their shared and diverse heritage.

#### VISION

An Edmonton that embraces its diverse heritage, inclusive of all people, communities, and cultures on Treaty 6 territory.

### ARTS HABITAT EDMONTON (ARTSHAB)

Arts Habitat is a non-profit entity mandated to work with the arts community on space issues. The core purpose of Arts Habitat is to identify, develop, and manage space for all mediums of art—from audio-visual and interactive media, to written and published works, visual and applied arts, sound recording, and live performance.

#### VISION

Our vision is to make Edmonton a hub of dynamic, sustainable, and entrepreneurial artistic communities.

The Edmonton Arts Council was given the responsibility of building a project team, developing the methodology, creating the plan, and presenting it to City Council approximately a year later. Throughout the process, the EAC worked closely with its partner organizations, the Edmonton Heritage Council (a product of the *Art of Living*) and Arts Habitat Edmonton.



Caitlin Bodewitz and Jordan Blackburn with *The Locals* mural.  
Credit: Photo supplied by the artists

## Fall 2017

### The Project Team

In addition to the EAC, EHC and ArtsHab, the project team assembled to take on this work was comprised of consulting advisors acting as a consortium:

- A public engagement and marketing team to carry out the bulk of the public engagement;
- An Indigenous consultancy to hold sessions with Indigenous communities and to shape the overall public engagement design so that it would reflect Indigenous treaty principles;
- A team of heritage advisors and specialists to address the specific needs of the heritage sector in Edmonton;
- Cultural planning specialists to carry out research to validate consultations and inform the ultimate end result of the plan;
- A cultural measurement expert to apply a measurement framework to the final product.

## Fall 2017

### The Advisory Group

Given the scale of the intended plan, the Project Team struck up an Advisory Group made up of a broad range of heritage practitioners, artists and administrators to provide oversight and to act as a sounding board for the EAC, EHC, ArtsHab, and the consultants. This group provided feedback at key stages of the process.

## Late Fall 2017 Methodology Development

Before the public or the arts and heritage sector were approached, a methodology for the project was discussed. The methodology was developed to address the realities of today's Edmonton to reflect and project the needs of the arts and heritage landscape in 10 years. Overall, the approach to the development of the plan was based on six pillars:

- While the views of artists and heritage practitioners were very important, the public consultation needed to reflect that this plan would be driven by people—all Edmontonians would be welcome;
- The commitments made by the City of Edmonton in its relationship with Indigenous peoples needed to be reflected early in the process and in a meaningful way throughout;
- There needed to be a more in-depth examination of the heritage sector;
- The plan needed to have assurances that, while uniquely Edmonton in its approach, it reflected the best practices in the sector;
- Given that the development of this plan would be active at the same time as the City of Edmonton's new strategic plan, it was determined that the plan should align with and advance the direction approved by City Council;
- This plan would need to have a rigorous measurement, evaluation and learning framework in order to demonstrate that any investment made in this plan could be scrutinized and optimized.

## Winter 2018

### Engagement

Throughout the first 10 weeks of 2018, the plan got underway in earnest with the start of all engagement streams. The engagement streams were designed to give as many people as many opportunities to participate as possible:

- Sessions with Indigenous artists, youth, elders and seniors;
- An interactive online “map” to share arts and heritage memories;
- Nearly two dozen arts and heritage sector-specific facilitated sessions;
- Interviews with heritage practitioners and community leaders;
- Public pop-up sessions across the city in all 12 wards;
- A City of Edmonton Insight Community Survey;
- An opt-in community engagement survey.

## Spring 2018

### Research Validation

After collecting and coding all of the data, the results of the engagement were submitted for research validation and were reviewed against national and international plans, policies, reports and theories of change from cities, foundations, and organizations. The research team brought the findings back, noting that the outcomes outlined in Edmonton’s plan and its structure aligns with new thinking and contemporary cultural planning.

## Spring 2018

### Creating a Measurement, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework

In order for the plan to be as accountable and optimized as possible over its 10-year lifespan, a MEL framework was developed not only to serve the plan over the next decade, but to ensure that the plan would be measurable from the outset, rather than waiting well into the plan to determine if it is working as effectively as possible. This holds the implementing organizations accountable to the public and stakeholders.



Equity workshop with ALIF Partners.  
Credit: Kristina De Guzman

## Spring 2018

### Crafting the Plan

With the engagement done, all the data validated, and the MEL framework in place, the project team began to craft the plan itself. During this process of developing the actual plan, it was determined that the plan would require a guiding principle that would help the EAC, EHC, and ArtsHab consider the needs and context of Indigenous communities while the organizations develop their implementation plans.

## Summer 2018

### External Presentation

As a manner of testing the initial draft of the strategy, presentations were made to key committees at the City of Edmonton, including the Corporate Leadership Team (chaired by the City Manager) and a group of Branch Managers in the planning department. Feedback from those initial sessions was incorporated into the final design of the plan.

## Fall 2018

### Approval of the Plan

*Connections & Exchanges*, the finalized arts and heritage 10-year plan, was presented to the Community and Public Services Committee on October 17, 2018, who unanimously recommended it to Edmonton City Council. On October 23, 2018, *Connections & Exchanges* was approved unanimously by Edmonton City Council.



## On the Cusp

### YEAR 1: 18 YEARS OLD

You inhale sharply as you step off the bus into the cold northern air. You're home. Or ten minutes away from home, if your cousins were on time to pick you up from the bus stop.

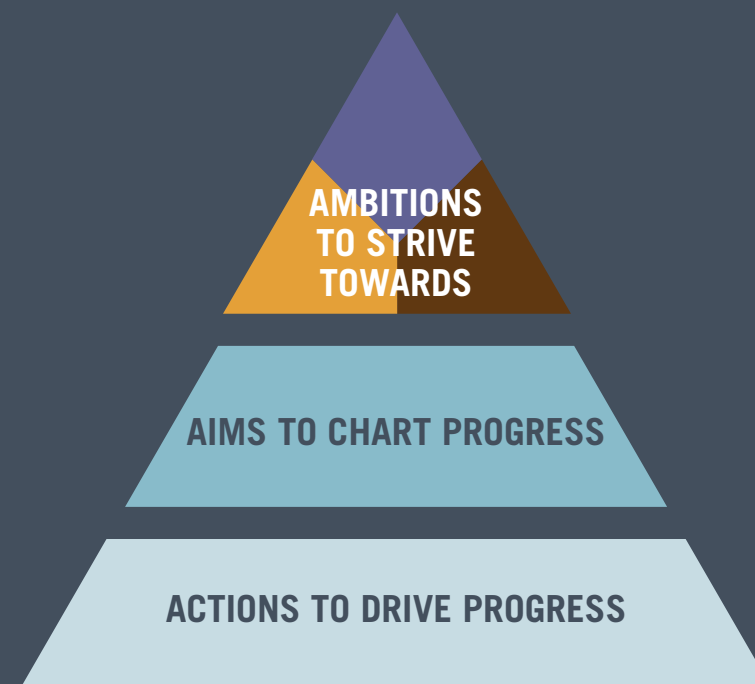
You heft your backpack on to one shoulder while you stretch the muscles that hadn't been used during the five-hour ride north. The backpack bulges with the fruits of your first semester at theatre school: wrinkled scripts held together with bulldog clips, dog-eared poetry anthologies, and notes. But the most prized item of all is your journal. It bursts with nearly every idea, every tip, every technique you worried you might forget. You're excited beyond measure to share it all with your extended family over the winter break.

You let out a deep breath and allow your eyes to follow the rush of the mist upwards.

It's funny, you think, but no matter how short a time you've been away in the city, you seem to forget just how much brighter the stars are out here on the rez. Above the bend in the road that you know is there even in the dark, you spot *keewatin atchakos*—the going home star.

Two blasts of a horn bring your attention back to earth. You recognize your cousins' truck idling nearby. You smile, grab your suitcase from the cargo hold, and try to pick which story you'll tell them first.

## The Connections & Exchanges Plan





# The Connections & Exchanges Plan

After input from thousands of stakeholders, a series of research and measurement filters, and hours of debate by the project team, the end result is a three-tiered strategy, comprised of **ambitions, aims** and **actions**:

## THE AMBITIONS

A set of three “north star” vision statements that look to a long-term future for arts and heritage in Edmonton. These are the motivating statements that give the arts and heritage sector a strong direction of what the future will look like.

### ALIVE WITH ARTS AND HERITAGE

Arts and heritage are fundamental, essential elements of any operational, infrastructural public project—from refurbishments, to civic planning, to new transportation projects. Private and non-profit enterprises understand and constantly activate and rely on the arts and heritage sector as an essential part of their own endeavours. Edmonton’s support and integration of arts and heritage in everything it does will be a foundational part of our civic identity.

### A HUB FOR EXTRAORDINARY CREATION AND REPUTATION

Edmonton is a beacon for cultural expression; a place that invites and supports new models of working together; encourages boldness in the production of work; champions opportunities to challenge assumptions and the status quo; fosters a productive connectedness between practitioners; and lifts artists, practitioners and organizations to a level that best meets their abilities. It is an exciting ecology of creation, expression, reflection and disruption that is unique amongst cultural landscapes.

### A THRIVING AND WELL-FUNDED ARTS AND HERITAGE ECOSYSTEM

Edmonton is a city that supports its cultural ecosystem with purpose, vision and flexibility. Funding models and strategies focus on fostering, attracting and retaining artists and heritage practitioners, and creating cascading, long-term impacts for the cultural ecosystem, and therefore Edmonton as a whole.

Left: “The Call” concert hosted by Sangea.  
Credit: Soft Touch Photography



## THE AIMS

The **aims** are a series of eight statements that are assigned to an **ambition** and are designed to be achievable by the end of the plan. These statements are what this plan will monitor for meaningful, transformational change over the course of the plan. They seek to create a sustainable arts and heritage ecosystem with engaged artists and heritage practitioners, and a diversity of opportunities for audiences to connect with arts and heritage through regular daily interaction and increasing access.

## THE ACTIONS

These are a set of 55 specific **actions**, assigned to a particular organization and in service of a particular **aim**. These are interventions, initiatives, programs and activities that will come alive through the implementation plans of the EAC, EHC and ArtsHab that will drive the progress of the plan in the short and medium term.

### **INDIGENOUS IMPLEMENTATION PRINCIPLE:**

This plan provides an opportunity to align with the City of Edmonton's commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), while looking beyond the paradigm of the TRC to consider how this plan can support Indigenous communities in their self-determination. This principle will guide the implementation plans developed by the EAC, EHC and ArtsHab as they take direction from this plan.

**The full plan is available in the three books that accompany this one. You can learn more about the ambitions, aims and actions on page 55.**

Right: *Trees II*, by Candace Makowichuk, produced during the Cemetery Artist-in-Residence project.  
Credit: Photo supplied by artist







## The Place And The Path

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We plan on the basis of what we know and what we can see—what we have learned from and what we hope to achieve. When planning the methodology and goals to build this plan, we considered the context of where we’ve come from, where we are today, and how we need to think about the future. That context molded every aspect of this plan.

### OUR PAST

It is impossible to talk about this plan without talking about its predecessor, *The Art of Living: A Plan For Securing The Future of Arts and Heritage in the City of Edmonton (2008–2018)*. *The Art of Living* was not the City of Edmonton’s first cultural plan, but it provided the uniquely ambitious and unified vision that Edmonton needed at the right moment in its development.

In the early 2000s, Edmonton was a place of both metropolitan growth and cosmopolitan evolution. In almost every area of urban life, the potential for extraordinary growth and possibility was palpable. Taking advantage of the pent-up energy and impatience among Edmonton’s community builders and decision-makers, as well as the energetic cultural community, *The Art of Living* outlined 17 arts recommendations and 11 heritage recommendations. These recommendations—both visionary and pragmatic—created a plan designed to adapt the cultural landscape to the economic conditions at the time; urged a dedicated focus on the development of heritage; built on the

Left: Photolithography class with Marc Siegner in the SNAP printshop.  
Credit: Leanne Olson

strengths of the cultural sector that Edmontonians were already so proud of; and addressed the emerging complexity of arts and heritage practitioners in the city.

With 10 years of work behind it, the results of *The Art of Living* speak for themselves. Many recommendations are fully realized, and significant progress has been made on others. The plan successfully created the Edmonton Heritage Council and secured renewed support for Arts Habitat Edmonton, as well as producing a litany of other accomplishments in programming and cultural capacity building. But perhaps most importantly, its recommendations have led to changes in the everyday life of Edmontonians, where the plan's impact is most tangible.

Ten years ago, what Edmontonian could have predicted a neighbourhood named after a festival founder? That Edmonton's cemeteries and landfill would host an artist-in-residence? A surge in multimedia works recording and disseminating untold heritage stories? That businesses would give out their exterior walls to some of the world's best street artists? That libraries and health centres would be home to exhibitions on newcomer experiences? That Edmonton could host an all-night arts festival attended by nearly 50,000 people? That the theatre and Deaf communities of Edmonton would come together to showcase performances by Deaf artists? Or an enormous mosaic masterpiece as the breathtaking focal point of a celebrated new arena?

Above all else—*The Art of Living* gave Edmonton cultural momentum. It allowed this document, *Connections & Exchanges*, to develop a new 10-year plan with new arts and heritage capacity, a solid infrastructure, and an incredible sense of excitement in place. It laid a groundwork that could be scarcely imagined

10 years ago and imbued the entire cultural sector with a bold confidence—ready to build, ready to collaborate, ready to see what Edmonton can do.

## OUR PRESENT

A changing city can be an uncomfortable place to be—even for a city in the midst of its ascendancy. The process of growing and realizing a vision for a city is not a simple and straightforward exercise. Projects of great promise take time and progress with stops and starts; new choices and opportunities often make people uncertain or uncomfortable; and the disruptive nature of a civic renaissance exposes a spectrum in our collective tolerance for change.

While we negotiate that change, we are looking towards the next 10 years and feel on the verge of civic transformation. Edmonton continues to have an inflow of people from across the country and around the world. Our urban Indigenous population continues to expand, and will soon be the largest in the country. Investment and employment continue to increase. The number of languages spoken in our schools and public spaces reflects an ever-increasing linguistic and cultural diversity. In planning discussions, the City of Edmonton no longer talks about being a city of one million people—they talk about a future with two million people. While this current pace of change feels strong, what's directly ahead of us represents something much more profound—the opportunity to reimagine what kind of city we will be.

After 10 years of inspired progress under *The Art of Living*, Edmonton's present cultural landscape finds itself in a similar position. As the city grows and develops, so too do the arts and heritage sectors, resulting in rapid expansion and change. An evolving attitude about the importance of preserving and exploring the past has fueled a simmering demand for the protection of heritage material and for new ways to reflect on community histories. Emerging technologies and ways of understanding history and culture allow new

## On the Cusp

### YEAR 4: 21 YEARS OLD

It's surreal.

A year out of theatre school, and here you are sitting in the glow of the makeup light in the dressing room of your first professional show. Opening night had gone well. So well, in fact, that your cast mates have already changed out of costume and are on the way to the lobby to celebrate.

You linger, hesitant to test the limits of what you're sure must be a dream. You think about the different artists you've been able to work with, and the mentors who have become colleagues and friends. Then it hits you: in a month's time the show will travel to Charlottetown for a run at the Confederation Centre. You dream.

Distant laughter brings you back to the dressing room. Your makeup has started to feel waxy and hot. You turn off the light and sit back in the silent darkness, feeling at once like you've arrived and yet knowing you still have so much farther to go.

generations to reclaim stories and share them with broader audiences. In our arts sector, growth in capacity, changes in cultural tastes, civic expectations, funding realities, and even emerging artistic practices have significantly shifted our cultural landscape. There are certain tensions between established and emerging artistic cohorts, but there is also an emphasis on mentoring and succession planning. There is a shortage of appropriate rehearsal, studio and venue space, but there is also an appetite to collaborate and share experiences and resources. There is a greater diversity of practice in arts and heritage than there has ever been, yet there is a strong desire to connect our stories and put them into the world. Because of the broadening complexity of the current arts and heritage sector, the list of conflicts and opportunities is nearly endless.

In *The Art of Living* there is a prescient quote: "As much as Edmonton is a city of great cultural vitality, it has reached but a fraction of its potential." Despite the profound progress *The Art of Living* has made in 10 years, the pace of change in our city has made this quote perhaps more true today than it was then.

#### THINKING LONG TERM

These plans, however long they are generated for, exist in a continuum. We reflect on where we just came from and use our current context to define our next great era, but it is also the duty of those setting our direction to consider the long-term impact of our planning. What we do now does not end with the conclusion of our plan. The vision we have set looks well beyond the scope of the plan, demanding that we focus on a time beyond our own. *Connections & Exchanges* does not just set out our direction for the next 10 years. It will indelibly shape our path for decades and generations long after the end of this plan.



*Su Jiao Shi* by Yong Fei Guan on display at The Works Art & Design Festival.  
Credit: Jenna Turner

## The Process Of The Plan

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The approach to developing this plan reflected the new realities that Edmonton has seen emerge in the last 10 years. As a city aspiring to reach its greater potential, public engagement practices have become more robust by actively seeking out an increasingly diverse set of voices and communities to shape this city. In addition, both in a reaction to technological innovation and to increasing demands on scarce resources, there is a need for more data-driven decision-making and an emphasis on measurement and performance in the City's affairs. A flourishing urban Indigenous population in Edmonton has caused organizations and the City itself to examine its approach to Indigenous affairs. Refugee settlement, immigration and migration have affected not only the number of people living in Edmonton and the cultural makeup of the city, but has also precipitated changes to how services are delivered, how people use city infrastructure, and has augmented the supply of talents and perspectives available to benefit the economy and our political and social systems. These changes drive new ways of doing business in Edmonton, and will continue to shape the city.

As a result, the process to develop *Connections & Exchanges* focused on six pillars across two stages:

- A deeper level of **engagement** with both the cultural sector and the public;
- Best-practice **research** to validate the findings;
- A **heritage ecology assessment** to better understand the needs of the heritage sector;
- The development of a **measurement, evaluation and learning** framework to evaluate the plan;
- An imperative to incorporate **Indigenous** process into the engagement design and into framing of the plan itself;
- Alignment with **City of Edmonton Council’s Strategic Plan**.

STAGE 1: PRIMARY RESEARCH	STAGE 2: PLAN DESIGN
Public & Sector Engagement	Measurement, Evaluation and Learning Framework
Research Validation Indigenous Design Approaches	
	Alignment with City of Edmonton Council’s Strategic Plan

## On the Cusp YEAR 6: 23 YEARS OLD

You look at the group of artists around you—actors, musicians, and fibre artists. You’re all focussed on developing a new piece—weaving together different disciplines. It seems as though you have a world of experience around you, when one of the group gives voice to what you’ve been feeling for the last half hour: “I think we’re stuck, guys.”

An exhausted fibre artist who’s been working in her field longer than you’ve been alive peels her banana and says commandingly from the corner, “Let’s take 10.”

When you allow your mind to wander it returns to the part of the show that didn’t quite feel right. You are reluctant to speak, but are too tired to stop your mouth from staying closed like it has been for the past two hours.

You tumble through a story *khokhom* had told you many years ago, one she had heard from hers. That one about the first spirits that laid themselves down to become stone, their singing and movement turning into loving, silent solidness.

When your sentence falters because of a forgotten word in *nēbiyawēwin*, you realize that half the room is staring at you. The other half looks like they’re in a trance.

Like it was planned, they all rise to their feet, bursting with energy to fit your words into the story. Twice you sheepishly try to tell them that they don’t need to use your suggestion, but both times a chorus of earnest replies acknowledges your words, your *khokhom’s* words, as the heart of the story.

You truly listen to your words coming out of someone else’s mouth, watch your feelings on someone else’s face, and you begin to admit that it does feel like a key sliding into place.

When the piece ends, the fibre artist leans sideways and asks, “Are you working on anything else?”

# Engagement

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The primary research that informed the plan was an engagement design made up of multiple engagement methods to capture the opinions and perspectives of as many Edmontonians as possible, not only demographically, but also geographically. The public and sector-specific engagements took place in every corner and major representative area of the city, using a variety of approaches to not only collect input from Edmontonians, but also to provide them with information. It is important to note that during this process, many participants identified themselves as having multiple roles in the sector, or as representing multiple communities. They emphasized the value of reflecting these multiplicities in the development of the plan.

While each engagement method was slightly different, they all framed the input by asking those engaged to reflect on the same four high-level principles when thinking about the future of arts and heritage in Edmonton. These strategies for engagement provided the plan with a forward-looking base that includes:

- Inclusivity that reflects the diverse values of the communities in Edmonton;
- Leadership, excellence and innovation in the arts and heritage communities;
- A collective civic responsibility for arts and heritage;
- Strengthened economic security for arts and heritage.

These four principles were the priorities that had to be addressed in developing a cultural plan. They made the engagement design as inclusive and comprehensive as possible, and ensured the collection of input from equity-seeking groups and communities.



Street performer Kim-Possible at the  
Edmonton International Street Performers Festival.  
Credit: Breanna Mroczek

The engagement design consisted of:

- **YEG Culture Map Website**—A resource where the public and sector participants alike could share their arts and heritage memories or vision for the future of Edmonton, placed as stories on a map. Throughout the course of the engagement, the website hosted 103 stories read by more than 6,100 Edmontonians before the plan was implemented. *See: [yegculturemap.ca](http://yegculturemap.ca)*
- **Arts Sector Facilitations**—Over 21 sector-based facilitations (with an approximate total attendance of 370) were held on a variety of topics and disciplines, and involved heritage practitioners, writers, visual artists, screen industries, public art, festivals, music, city planners, performing arts, dance, and many others. Two sessions with Arts and Cultural Management students were also incorporated into the input.



# Measurement, Evaluation And Learning Framework (MEL)

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- **Indigenous Community Facilitations**—A dedicated consultation process with a distinct design and Indigenous facilitators was developed, focusing on the Indigenous population, including youth. There were five sessions in all, with approximately 50 participants, representing approximately a dozen nations or communities.
- **Heritage Sector Facilitations**—Two workshop sessions relating to heritage-specific questions and strategy development were held for heritage practitioners. There were approximately 45 attendees across the two sessions.
- **Heritage Sector Interviews**—Approximately 23 people working in heritage, or in other sectors but using heritage in their work, participated in hour-long interviews. These practitioners represented a wide range of different career points, organizations and communities.
- **Ward-by-Ward Pop-up Sessions**—Pop-up consultations were held for the general public in high-traffic locations (such as libraries and recreation centres) to engage in conversations around arts and heritage. At least one event was held in each of Edmonton’s 12 wards, and yielded around 80 conversations.
- **Insight Community Survey**—A short survey soliciting high-level input on arts and heritage was incorporated into a City of Edmonton omnibus survey. Questions focused on the future of arts and heritage and their importance to Edmonton as a developing city. Over 2,200 Edmontonians completed the survey.
- **Rolling Engagement Community “One Idea” Survey Series**—For anyone who wanted to continue to provide input throughout the process, a series of weekly questions was made available to anyone who signed up through the website. These questions changed every week and reflected the input received throughout the process. Approximately 30 respondents regularly participated in this process.

A key feature of the *Connections & Exchanges* plan is the development of an MEL framework that took effect from the start of the plan design. While the need for a mechanism to measure the progress of work in a 10-year plan may seem obvious, the EAC, EHC and ArtsHab are leading the sector by including a measurement framework as part of a long-term cultural plan.

The MEL framework goes beyond measuring performance. It emphasizes the value of data-driven and data-informed decision-making to learn, adapt and inform both the 10-year plan itself and the implementation plans EAC, EHC, and ArtsHab will create as a result. The MEL:

- Serves as a check to ensure that the objectives of the plan are realistic, measurable and representative of the input received;
- Commits the EAC, EHC and ArtsHab to a process of gathering data from different sources and then applying it to inform next steps and build the field;
- Provides a high degree of openness, transparency and accountability to stakeholders, the public and the arts and heritage sectors;
- Measures the ongoing impact of the plan as it is implemented, and encourages specific adjustments.

## COMMITMENT TO DEFINED MEASUREMENT

In the development of their implementation plans based on this strategy, each organization commits to following the MEL framework in two distinct ways to ensure a high standard of measurement, assessment and adjustment: adhering to five defined pillars for measurement and using three practical approaches to carry it out.



Sharing stories of the newcomer experience at the launch of the Edmonton Living Rooms exhibit at La Cité Francophone.  
Credit:Edmonton Heritage Council

The five pillars that define how the MEL Framework will be carried out are:

- *Validity and Standardization:* Using existing and peer reviewed indicators and tools as much as possible;
- *Participation:* As with the primary research, this plan is a community-driven one—this principle must be reflected in the ongoing measurement;
- *Data Minimization:* Data collected will only be the most impactful and important;
- *Streamlining and Simplification:* Data collection needs to reflect the importance and scale of what is being measured and the ability for the organization to measure it;
- *Mixed-Methods:* As many methods as possible should be considered, including experimental and community-driven methods.

With these pillars in mind, organizations will follow these three approaches to guide the actual practice of measurement:

### **OUTCOME MEASUREMENT**

Measurement will involve the development of reliable qualitative and quantitative approaches to paint a comprehensive picture of the impact *Connections & Exchanges* will have on the City of Edmonton, its people, its arts communities, and other stakeholders. When collecting data, it will be done in such a way that it can be identified and shared, and so that it may help identify any adverse effects the plan may produce. When collecting qualitative data, two surveys will be developed: a Participant Engagement and Equity Survey; and a Practitioner Survey.

### **PERFORMANCE REPORTING**

Clear indicators, targets and process measures will be determined immediately following the initial implementation planning by the three organizations. This will allow the organizations and their stakeholders to ensure everything is on track as the plan progresses. Internal reporting will happen every quarter and public reporting will happen every year. Each implementation plan will follow a four-year cycle that is synchronized with the city's budget.

### **LEARNING AND GROWTH**

Recognizing that the path to fulfilling this plan will not be a linear one, the MEL framework includes a learning approach that will allow implementing organizations the flexibility to continue optimizing the plan over its lifespan. It encourages a practice of asking the right questions, at the right time, of the people affected by the plan, and feeds the resulting insights and needed adjustments back to the organizations.

Overall, the MEL framework incorporated into this plan allows for modern cultural planning that is increasingly accountable and open to stakeholders, practitioners and audiences alike; that is realistic without curbing the ambition necessary for a plan in a city like Edmonton; and that allows the plan to continuously improve in reaction to relevant conditions. It allows the responsible organizations to stand behind the progress of their plan, and provides stakeholders with assurances as well.

## On the Cusp

### YEAR 8: 25 YEARS OLD

You nervously adjust your highlighter, pencil, and pen to the right of the stack of papers in front of you as everyone moves to find their seats. When the scraping of chairs ends and the scripts are being opened, the director welcomes everyone to the first day of rehearsal and the first read of this new work. Your new work.

You inhale, hold your breath, and close your eyes for a moment. The journey of putting together this work was a long one, full of late nights and early mornings, and seemingly endless tears and laughter. It all comes down to this moment. It feels like crouching to leap from a plane, readying yourself to finally use the parachute that you had made yourself.

When you open your eyes, your colleagues come into focus: actors, stage managers, designers, mentors, and friends. You release the tension in your shoulders by remembering that it had been with their helping hands, hearts, and minds that you had received your first grant, had found rehearsal and performance space, and had workshopped the piece until it was ready for today.

And as everyone leans in, not jumping for you, but jumping beside you, you leap.

“I’ll be reading the stage directions. Let’s begin.”

## Incorporating Indigenous Input

The process for this plan began with a recognition that *Connections & Exchanges* should advance the building of a particular type of relationship with Indigenous communities in Edmonton, one that is inspired by the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the long tradition of treaty-making in this ancient gathering place.

To achieve this, the design of the public and sector engagement was developed in collaboration with Indigenous advisors and reflected ongoing input from the consultations that took place with members of Indigenous communities.

The approach to incorporating Indigenous perspectives into *Connections & Exchanges* became clear after hearing the words of local Métis artist Molly Swain at one of the Indigenous consultations. She described a future for herself as a journey independently driven as a culturally sovereign person, but whose work would ultimately be welcomed by the broader community as part of a greater story. It was this ideal that led the project’s Indigenous advisors to relate a visual metaphor represented in the Two Row Wampum treaty made between the Haudenosaunee and the Dutch in 1613:

“A ship and a canoe travel down a river. They navigate the water in parallel, moving next to one another—synchronized, but independent. Each in control of their chosen destination.”

This metaphor of the ship and the canoe demonstrates that we are not necessarily going to the same destination even as we find ourselves moving in the same direction. It highlights the importance of recognizing the complementary strengths of both vessels, of a relationship between them that becomes richer because of their joint presence on the river. It allows the understanding that the unfolding relationship is dynamic and ensures the desired future for both vessels, while allowing those aboard each vessel to share tools



# Heritage Ecology Assessment

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and knowledge in the hopes of ensuring a safe passage for all. With this understanding, the underlying principles and values for incorporating Indigenous input crystallized as a “Treaty Framework” which helped shine light on the need for cultural organizations to understand their role in making strong commitments to renewing relationships with Indigenous peoples. These relationships should recognize that in order for vibrant and diverse Indigenous communities to thrive, cultural organizations need to support making space for Indigenous peoples to exercise autonomy.

This approach enriched the process of developing *Connections & Exchanges*. It led to the inclusion of Indigenous concepts in the public consultation design and materials, as well as to the use of Indigenous facilitators at as many of the public pop-up sessions as possible. A dedicated set of consultations with Indigenous audiences were designed and run by Indigenous facilitators, during which a diversity of Indigenous peoples discussed their immediate as well as long-term priorities. It led to the development of a distinct component of the MEL framework that specifically addresses cultural safety and continuity, and acknowledges that measurement of outcomes impacting Indigenous peoples must be led by Indigenous knowledge and expertise, be transparent and recognize and articulate power imbalances. Ultimately, this approach was captured in an implementation principle developed to guide future planning and implementation for EAC, EHC and ArtsHab:

*Indigenous peoples have agency in their journeys of revitalizing and participating in traditional, contemporary and future manifestations of their culture.*

This principle reflects the autonomy and development of Indigenous cultures and peoples as reflected in the metaphor of the ship and the canoe, and must be considered by any of the three organizations as they develop their implementation plans under the guidance of *Connections & Exchanges*.

An assessment of Edmonton’s heritage ecology was undertaken to inform the engagement and research strategies, thus providing an up-to-date understanding of the needs of the heritage sector developed directly from community input. Over the last 10 years, an increase in programs, services and funding has transformed the landscape of heritage work in Edmonton. There are new opportunities for heritage practitioners to connect, and every year new organizations and individuals take advantage of the supports to amplify their stories. This new heritage work better reflects the city’s cultural and community diversity.

To ensure this transformed landscape was reflected in *Connections & Exchanges*, a team of advisors with wide-ranging experience working in heritage and with cultural communities in Edmonton and beyond undertook a review of Edmonton’s heritage ecology. Aside from the previously mentioned facilitated sessions and interviews, the heritage review was comprised of three additional elements:

- **Heritage Literature Review**—A review to outline the trends and issues that impact the work of the heritage sector locally, nationally and internationally, focusing on the role of heritage in communities;
- **Heritage Issue Identification**—Applying a heritage lens to the findings of the validating research and community engagement input;
- **Strategic Issues Review**—An assessment to understand how the developing **ambitions, aims** and **actions** might affect heritage practitioners.

# Validating Research

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In order for the final *Connections & Exchanges* plan to be as robust and reflective of modern cultural planning as possible, a two-step validation process was used, both in the primary research and engagement stage, and in developing the final recommendations (**ambitions**, **aims** and **actions**) captured in *Connections & Exchanges*.

In the primary research stage, the research validated not only the engagement process, but also the coded results, filtering and solidifying the themes that would bridge the gap between the raw input from the public and the cultural sector and the eventual recommendations put forth in the plan.

In the design of the final plan, the research validated the strategy by comparing the recommendations against recent and generally accepted thinking about how to advance culture. This ensured that the plan will be aligned with the leading edge of best practice in cultural planning for as long as possible over its lifespan.

This research, carried out by experienced cultural planning specialists, is particularly important to this process because of the long-term nature of the plan. The approach in the plan cannot simply serve what currently is in Edmonton—it needs to anticipate where arts and heritage might be going.

## On the Cusp

### YEAR 9: 26 YEARS OLD

From the place by your gate you watch a plane approach the runway as you wait for your emails to load. You skim the list of messages until your eye catches a familiar name, and open the email with curiosity.

It is from an artistic director in Chicago that you've admired since your days in theatre school. They are writing to congratulate you on the award you received last night for Outstanding New Play at the Doras—Toronto's performing arts awards. She wants to find a time to talk about producing your show for her theatre company's upcoming season. You blink, sure that there must be a mistake, while continuing to drink in the words. She ends her email with calling your work, "at once quintessentially Edmontonian, but with the promise of something new."

You are flattered, but you wonder seriously about whether or not you are ready for an opportunity like this, in a larger theatre and even further away from home.

When you had committed to a short run of your play in a small theatre in Toronto this last spring, you hadn't understood that it also meant becoming the representative of the communities that had supported you along the way. Just as your work had transformed into something that the cast and crew owned as well, you yourself had become more and more a part of Edmonton, and Edmonton more a part of you.

You look up and search for the plane you had watched earlier, and follow its progress across the pavement and into the sky. With a smile, and only slightly hesitant fingers, you begin to type your reply.

# Alignment with Council's Strategic Plan



"mamohkamatowin" (Helping Each Other) by Jerry Whitehead  
in  $\Delta\sigma\circ$  (INIW) River Lot 11 $\infty$ .  
Credit: Brad Crowfoot

*Connections & Exchanges* was developed at the same time as the City of Edmonton's new strategic plan. The **ambitions**, **aims** and **actions** that make up *Connections & Exchanges* were influenced by, and are purposefully aligned with, the vision, principle and goals emerging from that process. In fact, in the context of Council's Strategic Plan, *Connections & Exchanges* is designed to play a critical role in city-building by delivering necessary cultural development. In order to be effective in the long term, this plan needs to work hand-in-glove with the planned direction the city is taking. *Connections & Exchanges* seeks to be a steady and long-standing companion to the City's strategic plan.

For more information on City of Edmonton Council's Strategic Plan please refer to page 62.

## How to Read This Plan

*Connections & Exchanges* breaks down into three hierarchical components:

**3 AMBITIONS**  
**Ambitions** paint a long-term view of the population, system and sector-wide changes that should occur as a result of the plan's success. The aggregate of the **ambitions** contributes to a desired change in Edmonton that goes beyond the arts and heritage sector and speaks to a bigger impact.

**8 AIMS**  
**Aims** describe medium-to-long-term measurable changes in status, condition or behaviour as a result of the successful implementation of the plan's **actions**. **Aims** are measured through a purposeful mix of qualitative, quantitative, emergent and community-based evaluation and learning approaches.

**55 ACTIONS**  
**Actions** are the interventions, initiatives, programs or activities we undertake to achieve the desired **aims**. **Actions** are set in the short- to medium-term and come alive through implementation plans. **Actions** are measured on an ongoing basis with clear and predetermined key performance indicators, process and progress metrics.

The plan is contained in three separate books, one for each **ambition**. Each book describes the structure of the plan and includes:

- The name of the **ambition** and the vision it imagines for Edmonton in 10 years;
- Which of Council's Strategic Plan goals the **ambition** aligns with;
- The **aims** required to realize the **ambition**;
- The **actions** that drive the completion of each **aim**;
- An indication of the organization responsible for each specific **action**.



Alongside the **actions** and under each **aim** is the way the Measurement, Evaluation and Learning framework will be applied (“How We Will Measure Progress”). These sections will also indicate the chosen measurement indicators, the determined approach to measure that indicator, and the frequency of that measurement.

AMBITION BOOK	AIMS	ALIGNMENT WITH COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN
Book 2: Alive With Arts and Heritage	<p>Edmonton's neighbourhoods come alive with meaningful and relevant opportunities for participation and engagement.</p> <p>Edmontonians feel a sense of belonging and connectedness to peoples, places and stories.</p> <p>Arts and Heritage leaders are actively engaged in civic planning and implementation.</p> <p>Conditions are in place to remove barriers for all Edmontonians to participate in cultural experiences.</p>	<p>Healthy City</p> <p>Urban Places</p>
Book 3: A Hub for Extraordinary Creation and Reputation	<p>Dynamic exchanges of ideas and expertise occur between Edmonton's arts and heritage sector and the world.</p> <p>Diverse platforms for collaboration exist within Edmonton that allow artistic and heritage communities to connect, create and collaborate.</p>	<p>Healthy City</p> <p>Regional Prosperity</p> <p>Climate Resilience</p>
Book 4: A Thriving and Well-Funded Arts and Heritage Ecosystem	<p>Arts and heritage practitioners are economically resilient.</p> <p>New and existing arts and heritage organizational capacity enables innovation and builds resilience in the sector.</p>	<p>Healthy City</p> <p>Regional Prosperity</p>

## On the Cusp YEAR 10: 27 YEARS OLD

You're in the lobby of the theatre after a performance of your play for a high school matinee. You've been asked to stay around after the show to answer some questions that the students may have about theatre or writing, and you've done so with verve.

As you head for the doors outside you hear a familiar voice call your name. You turn around and greet your high school English teacher.

For a few moments she expresses her excitement about the play and her joy in watching your successes. You smile, brushing off her praise, before saying, “Well, I wouldn't have been able to do it without you.”

She shakes her head, smiles and says, “You're welcome for whatever small part I might have played. But sincerely, Alexan, you're doing really incredible work. I am very proud of you.”

Before she departs, she beckons one of her students, introduces him, and says, “I was telling Marc here how you got your start—but could you share a bit more? He's also interested in writing.”

With excitement you tell him about all of your training, some of the small writing tips you picked up from various shows, and even some of the best books to read for inspiration. You emphasize how important it was for you to not forget who you are and where you came from, and that he shouldn't either.

And finally, “Honestly—you're in Edmonton. You're in great hands.”

## Considering Indigenous Cultural Independence

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As reflected in the treaty relationship acknowledgement in this report, this plan makes a commitment to the Indigenous peoples of this territory. Accordingly, in the course of developing and carrying out implementation plans, the EAC, EHC and ArtsHab have committed to the following implementation principle throughout this 10-Year Plan:

Indigenous peoples have agency in their journeys of revitalizing and participating in traditional, contemporary and future manifestations of their culture.

This principle, when followed, allows for the autonomy and development of Indigenous cultures and individuals as reflected in the ship and canoe metaphor, and must be considered by any of the three organizations as they develop their implementation plans under the guidance of *Connections & Exchanges*.

*Reign* by Mary Anne Barkhouse in ᐃᑦᑦ (ĪNĪW) River Lot 11∞.

Credit: Brad Crowfoot



# Moving the Plan Forward



Cellist Silvia Buttiglione of Vaughan String Quartet.  
Credit: Still from *Becoming Edmonton* video by Jason Gondziola

This plan is a starting point. As we use the plan as the definitive direction to carry out our transformative change over the next decade, it is essential that it remains responsive to the real-time evolution of the city and adapt to the changing arts and heritage landscape. For the plan to succeed, the EAC, EHC and ArtsHab will continue to engage in ongoing conversations and consultations with the community and the arts and heritage sector throughout the lifetime of this plan.

The next 10 years begins now.

# Acknowledgements

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	Edmonton Arts Council	University of Alberta
	Board of Directors	University of Alberta
	Edmonton Arts Council Staff	Students' Union

*And to the many Edmontonians who generously provided their input, insight and wisdom.*



# Appendix

## The City of Edmonton Council's Strategic Plan

*As of Fall 2018, the City of Edmonton Council's Strategic Plan read:*

In June 2018, Council approved components of the strategic plan for 2019–2028. These included an aspirational vision for Edmonton in 2050, a 10-year principle that is the lens to guide decision-making for the term of the plan, and four 10-year strategic goals to facilitate progress towards the vision. The approved vision, principle and strategic goals are listed below.

### 2050 VISION

It's 2050 and Edmonton's creativity and community spirit are lights to the world. The city's heart is our people. They make everything possible. We work together to create livability for all, where everyone has what they need to succeed. We are inspired by and grateful for our collective ancestors who continue to guide our way.

They inspire us to learn, steward this shared place and build the meaning of our lives. We plant ideas. We grow business. We get stuff done here. Edmontonians see their efforts and ideals reflected back to them in a city that was built to connect. This commitment turns new ideas into solutions for our communities, which we take to the world. Edmonton has come to mean a community where it makes sense to plan our future together. We spark an energy seen worldwide: a light in the northern sky.

### PRINCIPLE

#### CONNECTED

- We create as a community to connect people to what matters to them;
- We care about the impact of our actions on our social, economic, cultural, spiritual and environmental systems;
- We serve those here today and those who come after us.

### GOALS

**HEALTHY CITY:** Edmonton is a neighbourly city with community and personal wellness that embodies and promotes equity for all Edmontonians.

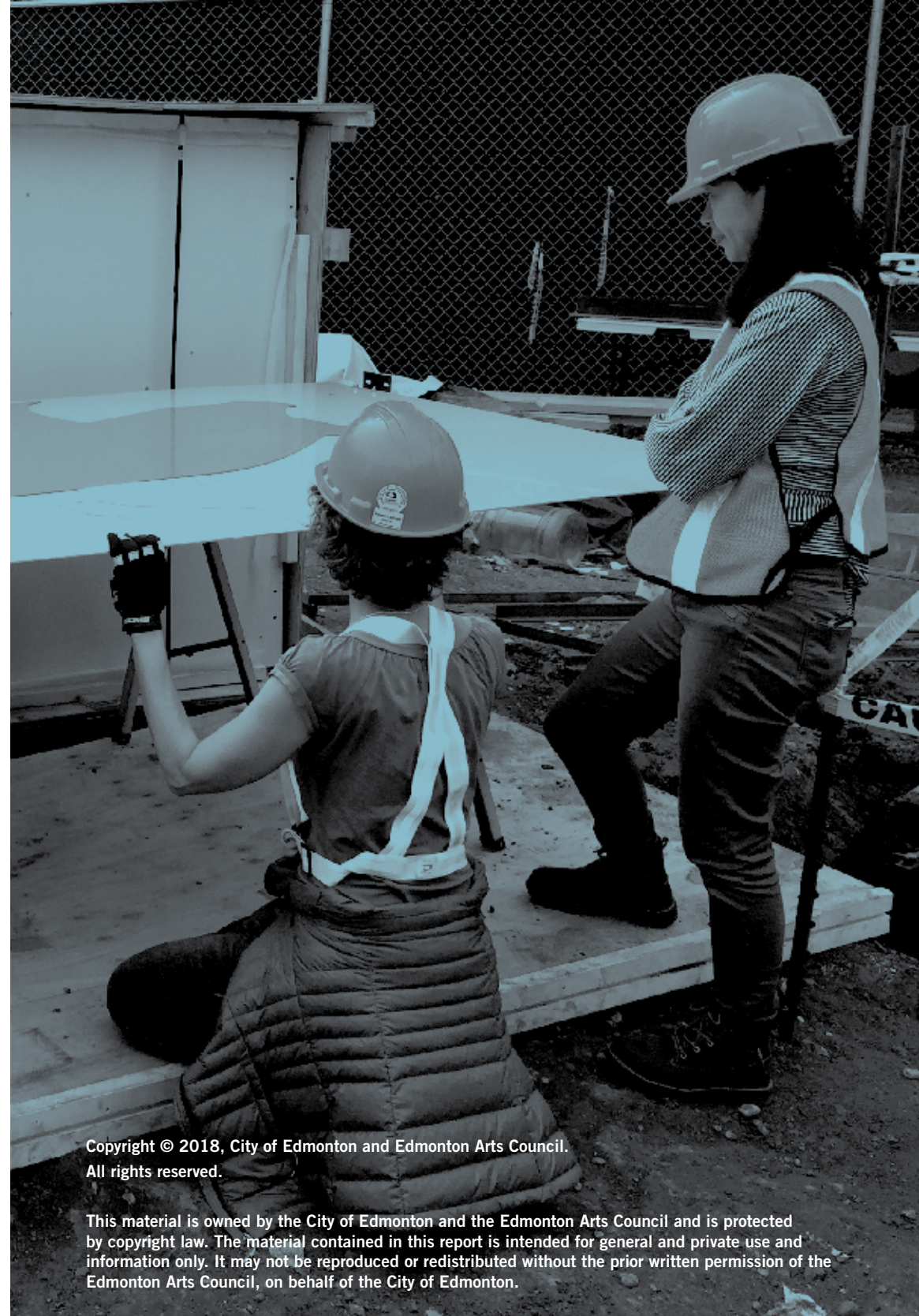
**URBAN PLACES:** Edmonton neighbourhoods are more vibrant as density increases, where people and businesses thrive and where housing and mobility options are plentiful.

**REGIONAL PROSPERITY:** Edmonton grows prosperity for our Metro Region by driving innovation, competitiveness and relevance for our businesses at the local and global level.

**CLIMATE RESILIENCE:** Edmonton is a city transitioning to a lowcarbon future, has clean air and water and is adapting to a changing climate.

*As the City of Edmonton Council's Strategic Plan may adapt over 10 years, so will the implementation approach of the EAC, EHC, and ArtsHab.*

*Right: Installation of *Animal Family* by LeuWebb Projects at Edmonton Valley Zoo.  
Credit: Grace Law*



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# CONNECTIONS & EXCHANGES:

A 10-Year Plan  
To Transform  
Arts and Heritage  
In Edmonton

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edmonton  
arts  
council



Arts  
Habitat  
Edmonton