



For the Love of Winter

Strategy for Transforming Edmonton into a World-Leading Winter City

TRANSFORMING **EDMONTON**
BRINGING OUR CITY VISION TO LIFE

wintercity
strategy

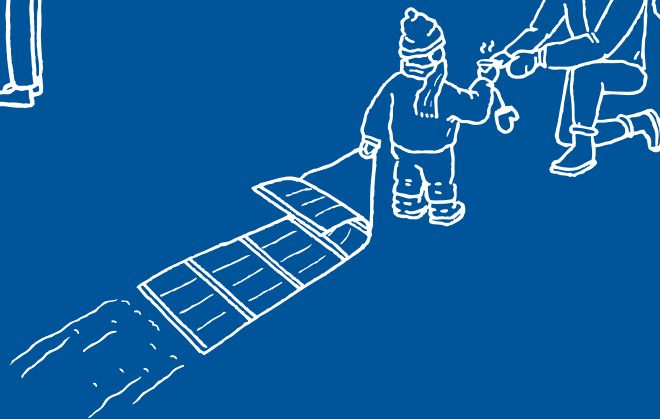
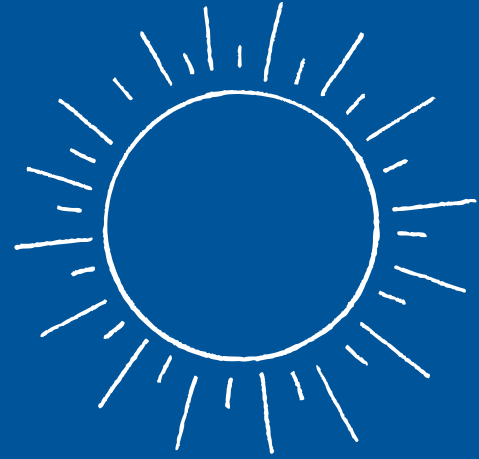


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Several other Edmontonians also provided valuable input into this strategy, though were not members of the WinterCity Think Tank:

Brian Hodgson | Sergeant-at-Arms, Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Debby Kronewitt-Martin

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Jamie Post | Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues

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Michael Powell

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The 10 WinterCity Strategy Goals

WINTER LIFE

GOAL 1 | Make It Easier to “Go Play Outside”: Provide More Opportunities for Outdoor Activity

GOAL 2 | Improve Winter Transportation for Pedestrians, Cyclists and Public Transit Users

WINTER DESIGN

GOAL 3 | Design Our Communities for Winter Safety and Comfort

GOAL 4 | Incorporate Urban Design Elements for Winter Fun, Activity, Beauty and Interest

WINTER ECONOMY

GOAL 5 | Increase the Capacity and Sustainability of Edmonton’s Winter Festivals

GOAL 6 | Develop a Four-Seasons Patio Culture

GOAL 7 | Become a World Leader in Innovative Winter-Related Business/Industry

OUR WINTER STORY

GOAL 8 | Celebrate the Season and Embrace Daily Living in a Cold Climate

GOAL 9 | Promote Edmonton’s Great Northern Story Locally, Nationally and Internationally

GOAL 10 | Kick Start and Lead Implementation of Edmonton’s WinterCity Strategy:
Apply a ‘Winter Lens’ to Our City

**The numbering does not represent priority among the goals.*

Executive Summary

A Blizzard of Ideas

“Edmonton is a very special place where people are eager to get out year-round to enjoy all the city has to offer. We have great winter festivals, downhill and cross-country skiing, skating, tobogganing and many other activities. As the most northerly large city on the continent, it only makes sense that Edmonton becomes a world renowned winter city. The WinterCity Strategy will be our blueprint for getting there.”

Stephen Mandel | Mayor of Edmonton

“The key constraint on Edmonton’s growth is people. Our city has to up its game when it comes to attracting and retaining the highly skilled individuals our economy needs to meet its full potential. We need to recognize that the quality of life Edmonton offers is as important as the outstanding quality of employment opportunities our business community provides. By adopting the WinterCity Strategy, we can improve Edmonton’s liveability and further our capacity to grow and advance our economy. Our continued prosperity depends on taking these initiatives.”


John Rose | Chief Economist, City of Edmonton

FALLING IN LOVE WITH WINTER IN EDMONTON

Ask an Edmontonian what they think about our city and you’ll definitely hear an idea or two. Ask what they think about winter here—and what they would do to make it more fun—and you’ll get a blizzard of ideas. That blizzard is at the heart of this WinterCity Strategy. Edmontonians of all ages, from all walks of life, told us what would make them fall in love with winter in Edmonton. Many of their ideas can be implemented by communities: street hockey tournaments; winter gardens in bloom; developing a signature winter drink or food. Others will require leadership from the City of Edmonton or local organizations and businesses.

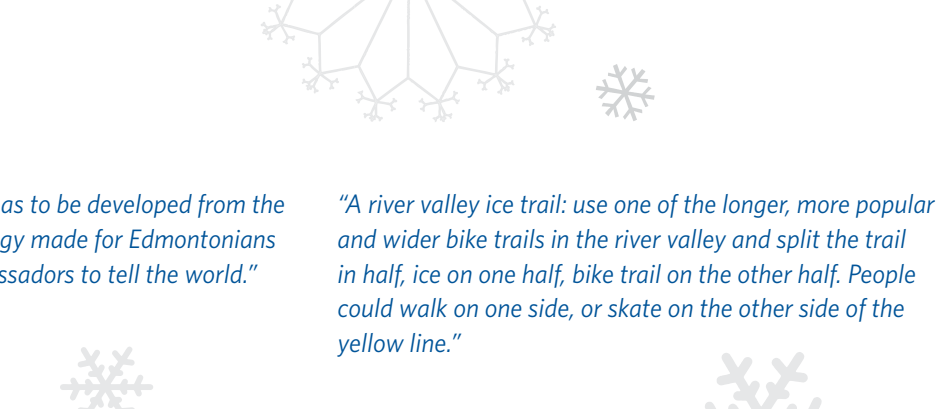
TRANSFORMING OUR CITY

The WinterCity Strategy is bold and visionary. It’s about taking advantage of our northerness; transforming Edmonton into a more inviting, vibrant and prosperous place for residents, business, industry and tourists throughout the winter months. This requires a cultural shift; changing how we think and talk about, and deal with winter. Viewing the season as a time to shut things down and stay inside squanders huge potential. Winter is an asset offering great social and economic value to our city. Streets and public gathering places



“Let’s look at winter from a kid’s perspective and find the joy in snow again.”

“Edmonton as a WinterCity has to be developed from the grassroots up. This is a Strategy made for Edmontonians first. Then let us be the ambassadors to tell the world.”



“A river valley ice trail: use one of the longer, more popular and wider bike trails in the river valley and split the trail in half, ice on one half, bike trail on the other half. People could walk on one side, or skate on the other side of the yellow line.”

designed to capture sunlight and block the wind, walkways that are easy to navigate and playful lighting illuminating our long winter nights will make it easier and more enjoyable to stay outside, even when it’s very cold. With more people outside on the streets the city feels more alive and attractive; a place both locals and tourists want to be part of and experience.

AUTHENTICALLY EDMONTON

There are several northern cities around the world already working to embrace winter. In Copenhagen, outdoor patios are now open year-round with blankets and heaters to keep patrons warm in winter. Kemi and Oulu, both in northern Finland, plow the snow from bike paths before roads and Oulu commits to clearing bike paths by 6 a.m. after a snow fall. In Oslo, outdoor artificial turf fields are heated and kept clean of snow, so sports like soccer and lacrosse are played year-round. What makes Edmonton’s WinterCity Strategy stand apart is its holistic approach. The strategy’s 10 goals call for social, cultural and economic change in our city; change based on best practices from around the world and most importantly, on recommendations and ideas from Edmontonians.

THE WINTERCITY THINK TANK

This strategy was developed by the WinterCity Think Tank, a volunteer group of Edmontonians with a wide variety of backgrounds. Their inspiration was gleaned through extensive public consultations and ideas, the learnings and success of Edmonton’s major winter festivals, international best practices and expertise within the Think Tank itself. Perhaps most encouraging was the enthusiasm shown by Edmontonians from the start of this initiative. In the words of Think Tank member Carol Neuman, “Our collective icy stare is starting to melt”.

LEARNINGS

Most Edmontonians recognize it makes sense to work with our climate, instead of trying to hide from it. So while tunnels and pedways do provide shelter on the most bitter of winter days, people want activity outside, on the streets, throughout the winter months: outdoor cafés and public spaces that make the most of the sunshine and block the wind and walkways and bike paths that are relatively easy to navigate twelve months of the year. People also want to know more about winter in our city, from festivals to our heritage to where to find inexpensive skates or skis to rent. And there’s desire for rules and regulations to be lifted

somewhat, allowing greater creativity on our streets: fire pits in public places, snow slides and mounds to play on.

OTHER COMMON THEMES EMERGING FROM PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS:

- Making Edmonton a better winter city will make us a better year-round city.
- Not all activities should be downtown and it should be easier to get to activities.
- Many people don’t know how to properly dress for winter, and taking that a step further, there is opportunity for Edmonton to become a winter fashion hub.

"Being able to cross-country ski through the river valley to work."

"Hot chocolate carts, food trucks, fire barrels around LRT stops during peak hours. Hot chocolate on the walk home!"

The 10 WinterCity Strategy Goals

"Winter is fun, beautiful, safe and liberating."

John Mahon | Edmonton Arts Council

The WinterCity Strategy goals fall under four pillars: Winter Life, Winter Design, Winter Economy and Our Winter Story.



A WORLD RENOWNED NORTHERN CITY

While all 10 WinterCity Strategy goals and actions speak directly to winter, their implementation will positively impact the quality of life in our city throughout the year. Implementing this WinterCity Strategy is one element, that when combined with strategic plans from the City of Edmonton, the Chamber of Commerce, Edmonton Economic Development Corporation (EEDC) and other organizations and businesses, will lead to Edmonton becoming a truly great northern city.

WINTER LIFE

The two winter life goals speak directly to making it easier and more fun to be outside in our city during the winter months. This means many things, including making the river valley more easily accessible in winter months, and once people are there providing more places to stop, warm up and linger a bit. It means making some changes so that people can get around outside more comfortably and conveniently in winter, whether they're walking, biking or catching a bus or the LRT.

WINTER DESIGN

There are two goals under this pillar—both are aimed at fundamentally changing how planners, designers and developers approach work in Edmonton. Innovative northern urban design overcomes the challenges of the winter season, making the most of opportunities to stay outdoors by capturing the sun's warmth, protecting from the wind and making the city more accessible, safer and more enjoyable year-round.



"City-wide snowman and snow fort competition."

"We need to be told the risks and then, rather than be told 'no', be allowed to make informed decisions."



WINTER ECONOMY

Our northern climate brings with it many opportunities: for a winter festival season unmatched in the world, for developing a unique outdoor winter patio culture, and for developing specialized businesses and industries directly related to winter. In the words of Edmonton's Historian Laureate and WinterCity Think Tank member Shirley Lowe, "We need to be the place Finland comes to for expertise in cold weather industry."

The three goals under this pillar focus on building strong foundations upon which our city can grow and prosper, taking full advantage of winter's assets.

OUR WINTER STORY

The more Edmontonians know about winter in our city; about all there is to do and see, how to dress comfortably and fashionably and still stay warm, and our cultural and natural heritage, the more we'll start telling new stories about Edmonton. These will celebrate the season, capturing our northern resilience and playful spirit. Two of the goals in this section aspire to helping Edmontonians discover our new winter narrative. The third goal speaks to a topic that arose repeatedly in the WinterCity public consultations around who will be responsible for making this all happen. This goal recommends a WinterCity Coordinator and a WinterCity

Advisory Council (envisioned as a group with expertise in a wide range of fields). Together they will work to ensure a winter lens is applied to all that's done in our city including urban design and planning, policy development, event planning and marketing Edmonton locally, nationally and internationally. These positions are intended to be transitional. We envision that with sustained effort, applying a winter lens will become part of our city culture, something we all do naturally.

"Winter lights in key downtown areas. Educate newcomers about winter. More winter events like concerts and festivals and outdoor installations. Better snow removal system."

"Instead of making it more and more convenient to speed through the city, perhaps the city should develop into walkable, livable chunks that can be accessed by all and enjoyed in all seasons."

Message from Councillor Ben Henderson | WinterCity Think Tank Co-Chair

THE MOST STRIKING REVELATIONS IN WORKING ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS STRATEGY CAME BACK IN 2010, AT OUR VERY FIRST INFORMAL GATHERING. WE WERE DISCUSSING HOW TO ADDRESS OURSELVES AS A WINTER CITY, WHEN WE REALIZED THAT ALL OF OUR FAVOURITE CHILDHOOD MEMORIES WERE WINTER MEMORIES. SO HOW, AS ADULTS, HOW HAD WE MANAGED TO FALL OUT OF LOVE WITH WINTER?

It happened, I think, through city planning that aimed to beat winter; triumphing over what we increasingly saw as its harsh effects, creating a world of never-ending climate control. In doing so we severed ourselves from daily life outside and all the joys that brings. Once we had little or no real contact with the daily wonders of winter, the myth of its harshness, hostility and darkness began to amplify in our imaginations.

There are just as many bad weather days in summer as there are in winter. But somehow in summer that doesn't stop us from enjoying, talking about and treasuring the glorious days. Sunlight, fresh air and activity are equally important year-round, yet in winter we close ourselves away from the elements. Then we wonder why we get the winter blahs.

First and foremost the challenge of a winter strategy for Edmonton means reclaiming our childhood joy in the season, defeating the myths that have recently formed our thinking of what winter truly is.

Thirty years ago, our city decided to invest in summer. The result? Our summer long parade of internationally recognized festivals, and a park system second to none. It's now time to do the same for winter; to stop seeing it as the black sheep of the family and revel in this season that not only defines us, but makes us special as a city. We need to focus on urban design that takes advantage of all that winter offers, embrace the opportunity of its activities and create a city that flourishes through the unique beauty of our northern landscape.

We have been met by a remarkable enthusiasm and excitement from Edmontonians as we have worked on Edmonton's WinterCity Strategy. People are definitely ready to fall back in love with winter in this city. The goal of this strategy is to be the matchmaker.



Ben Henderson
Councillor, Ward 8, City of Edmonton

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ben' followed by a stylized flourish.

"If you're out of the wind, with the sun shining on your face and a blanket to keep you warm, it's not so difficult to imagine enjoying a hot chocolate or hot apple cider at an outdoor café on a winter day."

"An outdoor winter market in Churchill Square once a month—with not just food vendors, but musicians, fashion walks, ice sculptures, horse & wagon rides, a bonfire, maple syrup troughs as of February or so, and skating in front of city hall."

Message from Simon O'Byrne | WinterCity Think Tank Co-Chair

IT WAS A FRIGIDLY COLD, SNOWY NIGHT IN JANUARY— THE KIND OF NIGHT WHEN YOU'D EXPECT PEOPLE TO STAY WARM AT HOME—WHEN WE LAUNCHED THE WINTERCITY STRATEGY INITIATIVE. BUT IN TRUE EDMONTON SPIRIT—THE NORTHERN SPIRIT—HUNDREDS TURNED OUT TO EDMONTON'S CITY HALL FOR OUR WINTERCITY STRATEGY 'KICK OFF', TO SUPPORT AND SET THE STAGE FOR CELEBRATING WHAT WE HOPE WILL BECOME ONE OF OUR CITY'S GREATEST ASSETS: WINTER.

What great potential we have at our doorsteps every year. Winter's long, dark days provide the ideal palette of darkness needed to become a city of light; a place that's known worldwide for brilliant, whimsical night-scaping that playfully illuminates our buildings, public spaces and infrastructure. We can transform the darkness into something beautiful and fun.

And then there's our remarkable winter sunshine. Of the 154 days between the start of November until the end of March, 121 are sun-filled. This WinterCity Strategy outlines the foundations for developing gathering places that take advantage of the sun and block the wind; creating intimate, human-scaled and pleasurable street environments.

Making the most of the winter season requires thinking differently. As we developed this strategy, it became apparent that Edmontonians are ready to make the culture shift, no longer viewing winter as something to escape from, but instead as a unique and magical season.

It's been my great privilege to co-chair Edmonton's WinterCity Think Tank; to work with a very talented and dedicated group of Edmontonians who volunteered to be part of the Think Tank, and with Mayor Mandel, Councillor Henderson and other civic leaders. Together we share the vision of transforming Edmonton into one of the world's greatest northern cities.



Simon O'Byrne

Wintercity Strategy Think Tank Co-chair, Vice President and Practice Leader—Urban Planning, Stantec

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Simon O'Byrne".

Winter: MAKING THE MOST OF OUR UNTAPPED RESOURCE

"Winter parades, heated sidewalks, an ice palace and a snow park."


"Ensure sidewalks and roads are well maintained by plowing sooner after snowfall or salting streets more thoroughly—to make travelling less slippery/dangerous."




Edmonton's Hawrelak Park

We love it, we dread it. It invigorates us and at times feels like it will never end. It's winter: the season that perhaps more than any other evokes strong opinions and great stories. Many of us delight in the first snowfall; its soft beauty gently blanketing our city. We eagerly await the first skate, ski or winter walk on a brilliantly sunny day. Our northerness undeniably shapes our character as Edmontonians; our resilient spirit, our 'can-do' attitude and good dose of self-deprecating humour. But in all honesty winter also makes many of us want to hibernate, hiding from the short days, cold winds and snowy streets that can make everyday life challenging.


Whichever way you feel (and most of us feel a bit of both), with ours being the northern-most major city on the continent, winter will always play a starring role in our Edmonton story. And we would be remiss if we didn't recognize the huge opportunity it offers: economically, socially and culturally. Other northern cities have already done so. Copenhagen has transformed itself with things like year-round bicycling lanes, outdoor patios, markets and other business opportunities—all things that didn't exist there 30 years ago. Quebec City has an international reputation as an exciting winter destination, especially during Carnival. Edmonton's WinterCity Strategy aims to make the most of winter's full spectrum of offerings. But it goes further, creating a culture shift so that 30 years from now young Edmontonians will take for granted that our city is considered one of best places to live, work and play in winter and year-round.



“High Level Bridge Ice Climb—build an ice climbing wall on the side of the High Level Bridge allowing ice climbers the chance to climb the tallest city waterfall in the world (?). This would surely bring spectators and international attention.”



“Let’s turn the sides of downtown buildings into the largest local Art Gallery ever. Using projectors, each building could become the gallery of one artist, and selected pieces of their work could be rotated gradually throughout every evening during the show.”



“To have cool things happen outside in winter, all you have to do is spend time with some 7 year olds.”

RETHINKING OUR APPROACH TO WINTER

Our lifestyles—what we do for fun, how we get where we need to go—don’t need to change dramatically just because it’s winter. The cold months shouldn’t be the time to stop activities we do in other seasons, to shut places down because they won’t be used, or to save money. Edmontonians want to walk, bike and socialize outside year-round, as long as they can do so with relative ease and comfort. It only makes sense to plan and design our city for winter as much as we do for summer.

“Our perpetual summer state of mind has been a serious impediment to the development of meaningful solutions for comfortable winter living,” writes Norman Pressman, a founder of the international Winter Cities movement. “We must rediscover a ‘sense of place’ with climate being one of the primary sources of inspiration in the decision-making process.”¹

If Edmonton is to reach its full potential as a vibrant, smart and livable city, we need to do more to work with the climate and transform winter into an asset.

¹ Pressman, Norman (2004). *Shaping Cities for Winter: Climatic Comfort and Sustainable Design*. Prince George, BC: Winter Cities Association. p.6.

CREATING A NEW ‘EDMONTON IN WINTER’ STORY

Take a moment to think about your favourite winter memory. It probably comes from your childhood—that huge snow fort in your back yard, a shinny game on the street or lying on your back catching snowflakes on your tongue. Imagine the possibilities for our city if we could recapture the winter wonder we felt as children. During the development of this WinterCity Strategy we heard from Edmontonians a true desire to change how we collectively think about and approach winter: no longer as a time to endure but as a time to celebrate and embrace.

This is transformational change, which begins with telling a new Edmonton story about what it’s like to live in this northern city during winter months. It needs to acknowledge that one word—winter—doesn’t begin to describe all that happens between November and March.

In Cree, more than thirty words can be used to describe different types of snow. *Paskâkonakâw* means freshly fallen snow which makes for good tracking; *yoskâkonakâw* means the snow is soft; *sâhkweyaw* means the snow grinds underfoot. “There’s a reason we have winter in this part of the world.” Leona Carter is director of Edmonton’s Aboriginal Relations Office. “We accept it and embrace it. Mother Earth wears a white blanket in wintertime; it’s her time to cleanse, renew and regenerate.

Winter is the storytelling time, the time when you teach your children the traditions and legends.”

Consider as well the ‘seasons of winter’: perhaps the first snowfall season, the holiday season, deep winter (the long, colder days of January and February) which could also be called festival season, then maybe solstice season. Each of these seasons brings opportunity to celebrate, to enjoy.

WORDS ALONE AREN’T ENOUGH

This new story must be accompanied by action: changing the actual experience of living in Edmonton in winter. Edmontonians have hundreds of ideas for how to do all of this, including how we design and build our city, care for people who are vulnerable, become more risk tolerant, clear snow differently, and create delightful, intimate and comfortable outdoor public spaces where everyone is welcome to gather.

Living in a northern climate will always present challenges, at all times of the year. This WinterCity Strategy lays the groundwork for thinking and working differently. The goals and actions, when implemented, will minimize winter’s negatives and create a more livable city, where the realities of our northernness—snow, ice, sunshine and dark—are resources we use both to make it easier and more fun to go play outside, and to transform Edmonton into a world-leading winter city.

The WinterCity Strategy Vision

IMAGINE EDMONTON BEING WORLD-RENOUNDED FOR CELEBRATING OUR NORTHERN CLIMATE. A CITY WHERE PEOPLE LIKE COMING OUT TO PUBLIC SPACES EVEN ON THE DARKEST, COLD DAYS OF WINTER. A CITY WHERE STREETS AND BUILDINGS ARE DESIGNED WITH OUR CLIMATE IN MIND, WHERE LIGHT IS USED TO CREATE WARMTH AND LUMINESCENCE DURING LONG WINTER DAYS, A PLACE WHERE SNOW AND ICE ARE CONSIDERED VALUABLE RESOURCES. THIS IS WHAT EDMONTON'S WINTERCITY STRATEGY IS ALL ABOUT: CREATING A CITY THAT'S INVITING, VIBRANT AND EXCITING FOR RESIDENTS AND TOURISTS, THROUGHOUT THE WINTER MONTHS.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Our three principles were developed through public consultation. They became the key criteria in evaluating all the ideas and recommendations and developing the 10 WinterCity Strategy goals.

AUTHENTIC

We've created a strategy that's uniquely Edmonton. It's a community creation, built from the ground up with the help of ideas, advice and recommendations from a wide variety of Edmontonians. It reflects our heritage and our city's connection to nature and the environment. It will enhance daily life for Edmontonians and people living in the region, not just in winter months, but year-round.

ATTITUDE-CHANGING

This strategy is a call to action: it's time to change our collective story, the narrative we weave into how we talk about our everyday lives as Edmontonians. It applies innovative, fun and interesting approaches to challenge existing stereotypes of winter as cold, dull and dangerous.

SUSTAINABLE

Winter is experienced differently by everyone, so this strategy is accessible, multigenerational and speaks to our urban and natural areas. Its design principles, approaches and aesthetics will enhance our city's quality of life in winter, and year-round, helping Edmontonians feel even more proud to live here. This in turn will lead to sustained demand that we consider winter in all aspects of our city's life.

The 10 WinterCity Strategy Goals

This strategy is a coming together of Edmontonians' ideas and suggestions, combined with a strong body of urban design expertise, best practices from other well-known winter cities and the experience and success of our existing winter festivals. It also draws heavily on the expertise of the WinterCity Think Tank; a volunteer group of Edmontonians who spent almost a year developing and fine-tuning this strategy. The WinterCity Strategy goals are numbered 1-10, but these numbers don't represent any priority. The goals fall under four pillars:

Winter Life

Goals 1 & 2

Winter Design

Goals 3 & 4

Winter Economy

Goals 5, 6 & 7

Our Winter Story

Goals 8, 9 & 10

Each goal is bold and visionary, accompanied by ambitious actions, some of which we recognize will have implications on budgets and resources. Successful implementation will depend upon shared responsibility. Neighbourhoods, developers and builders, programmers, businesses, policy makers: we all have a role in transforming our city.



Winter Life

WE THINK WINTER HAS BEEN MISCAST AS BEING DANGEROUS, DARK, LONELY AND BORING. WE MAKE THIS CLAIM BECAUSE ONE OF THE MOST COMMON REACTIONS FROM EDMONTONIANS WHEN ASKED ABOUT THEIR BEST MEMORIES OF WINTER IS HOW MUCH THEY LOVED THE FREEDOM, BEAUTY AND FUN OF WINTER WHEN THEY WERE YOUNG.

Our winter life group talked about this and concentrated on how we have, as a community, lost these memories and allowed barriers, of attitude and life-style, to reduce winter to a drab stereotype in our glorious northern climate.

While a healthy, exciting vision is a good starting point for conversation and planning, there are real, practical considerations in recreating Edmonton as a place where the joys and interest of a winter life-style successfully balances our other three seasons. The weather from November to March can be cold. Transportation, safety and isolation issues must be addressed in a successful winter city strategy. The recommendations in the winter life section of this report are both visionary and immediately implementable. Finally, and arguably most importantly, we consistently emphasized that in all of

this we must consider the perspective of our most vulnerable citizens—the homeless, seniors, newcomers from places where winter is different—and plan accordingly.

By finding ways to improve our ability to manage the pragmatic realities of day-to-day life in weather that can be challenging, while enjoying the joyful and non-universal opportunities that winter offers, winter life in Edmonton can be something to look forward to.

John Mahon | Executive Director, Edmonton Arts Council | Winter Life Hub Co-Chair

Tammy Fallowfield | Edmonton Economic Development Corporation | Winter Life Hub Co-Chair

Winter Life: GOAL #1

Make It Easier To 'Go Play Outside': Provide More Opportunities For Outdoor Activity



Edmonton's Illuminations Festival, a Winter Light project | Epic Photography

During the WinterCity consultations, a common theme was make it easier to 'play' outside: downtown, in the river valley and in all other parts of our city.

'Playing outside' means different things for different people: for some it might be knowing they can take a short walk through the river valley's winter beauty to a tea house for a cup of hot cider. Others would love to cross-country ski from one end of the river valley to the other. Others would like to enjoy a neighbourhood winter celebration with games for kids and socializing for adults, perhaps at their community league. We can do more in Edmonton to help rekindle this childlike joy, so people of almost any age can take advantage of everything winter has to offer.



Warming hut in Winnipeg | WarmingHuts.com



Silver Skate snow slide in Edmonton's Hawrelak Park

Action 1.1: Pilot several creative projects throughout the city that use snow and ice as a resource that is fun, beautiful and interesting. Minimize the need for moving snow to a different location after clearing it.

- Use snow in public places (e.g., Churchill Square) to build snow forts, slides, sculptures and climbing mounds.
- Build a city ice climbing wall.
- Encourage community leagues to be creative around using snow as a recreational opportunity.
- Use snow to build wind barriers.

Recommended lead: WinterCity Coordinator(see Goal 10), Transportation Services Department, Community Services Department

Potential partners: community groups, BRZ's, Civic Precinct, Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues (EFCL), sports organizations, post-secondary faculties of physical education and recreation

Action 1.2: Provide free skate use at City Hall skating rink and low-cost, easy-to-access winter equipment rentals at other venues (e.g., skates at public rinks, skis near river valley trails).

Recommended lead: Community Services Department

Potential partners: EFCL, community leagues, businesses

Action 1.3: Open public places that are generally closed in the winter and winterize existing facilities (e.g., Fort Edmonton, and fire pits in Hawrelak Park.)

Recommended lead: Community Services Department

Action 1.4: Encourage development of new anchor points throughout the river valley and in other public places (e.g., along bike routes) that offer people a place to linger, warm up and enjoy. Amend applicable City of Edmonton regulations, policies, guidelines and bylaws to allow for development of these anchor points.

- Create temporary and/or permanent warming huts.
- Build fire pits.
- Encourage cafés, restaurants and food trucks: places to find food and drink.
- Install more washrooms that are open year-round.

Recommended lead: WinterCity Coordinator, Sustainable Development Department

Potential partners: River Valley Alliance, Edmonton Nordic Ski Club, Alberta Restaurants and Foodservices Association, hospitality industry

Action 1.5: Develop easier access points into the river valley, particularly from the downtown area, during winter months.

Recommended lead: Community Services Department

Potential partners: River Valley Alliance, Edmonton Nordic Ski Club, Edmonton Tourism, Transportation Services Department

Action 1.6: Support Edmonton main streets, communities, business and hospitality groups to identify and develop outdoor winter gathering spaces and program activities there.

- Work with partners to identify possible spaces and how these could be used for activities.
- Focus on winter activities for all age groups.
- Help community/business and other groups to develop new winter activities, including local festivals.
- Consider community/neighbourhood winter festivals to coincide with Edmonton's larger winter festivals.
- Link to Communities in Bloom initiatives.

Recommended lead: Community Services Department

Potential partners: EFCL, community leagues, Business Revitalization Zones (BRZs), Winter Festival Producers, Edmonton Arts Council, Communities in Bloom

“Our emerging shared vision as Edmontonians is that our city will be THE WinterCity in North America. It will be a wonderful place to live in to enjoy a healthy, active and engaged lifestyle that celebrates winter.

There will be many fantastic and varied daily opportunities for active outdoor recreation (e.g., walking, skating, cross-country skiing, downhill skiing, sledding, cycling), as well as for reflection in and connection to the quiet wonders of nature in winter. Edmonton will be the top-of-mind destination for visitors who want to experience winter done right; through attendance at one of our outstanding festivals and through interacting with the joyful, vital people who live here and embrace this special season.”

Glenda Hanna | General Manager, Canadian Birkebeiner Society



fig 1.8 | End-to-end ski trail, skating on the North Saskatchewan River

Action 1.7: Update City of Edmonton risk management policies, procedures and practices to provide for greater risk tolerance in general. Further develop a culture of shared responsibility for safety and security that supports active, engaged winter lifestyles and appropriate risk taking, with a coherent approach to communication, implementation and evaluation.

- Ensure the public has a clear understanding of Edmonton's risk management philosophy: inform and educate the public about the risks related to various activities and environments and things the individual should do to manage these.
- Facilitate reasonably safe participation in winter activities by ensuring sustained adequate resources for the City of Edmonton and/or partners who play a role in managing trails and ski trails, parks and other public spaces.
- Develop a written reference document outlining the procedures and front-line practices with respect to risk management, safety education and incident management for winter programs and festivals.

Recommended lead: City of Edmonton, WinterCity Coordinator, Corporate Services Department (law branch)

Potential partners: Community Services Department, Transportation Services Department, Winter Festival Producers, outdoor activity/environment risk management specialists, EFCL, BRZs

Action 1.8: Work with Edmonton Nordic Ski Club to develop its 'End to End' ski proposal: a continuous cross-country ski trail through the river valley.

Recommended lead: Community Services Department

Potential partners: Edmonton Nordic Ski Club

Action 1.9: Further develop opportunities for outdoor skating.

- Consider developing one outdoor refrigerated skating track to ensure winter skating is available.
- Study development of skating trails in the river valley, including safe skating areas on the river itself.

Recommended lead: Community Services Department

Potential partners: Edmonton Speed Skating Association

Goal#1: Where it's already working

In Saskatoon a portion of the paths in the Kinsman Park children's play area will be flooded and frozen to create a unique skating trail.

Oak Park, near Chicago, has heated sidewalks and Klamath Falls, Oregon has a geothermal snowmelt system for downtown sidewalks and bridges.

Many Norwegian cities provide places for people to check skis while they shop, visit or work. Buses carry skis, and cross-country ski trails are an integral part of almost every community's urban fabric. In Tromso, there are white-of-ways paralleling main roads, making it as easy to get somewhere by skis or kicksled as it is to do so by car.

At the Plains of Abraham in Quebec City, people can rent skis, use the ski wax room and take breaks in one of two heated rest areas.

Winter Life: GOAL #2

Improve Winter Transportation for Pedestrians, Cyclists and Public Transit Users



Downtown Edmonton | Edmonton Bicycle Commuters' Society

One of the most commonly heard comments during the WinterCity consultations was 'make it easier to get around outside in the wintertime'. People were referring not only to themselves, but also to vulnerable and at risk populations. People also want snow removal strategies to align with "The Way We Green", Edmonton's Environmental Strategic Plan.

The City of Edmonton has already focused on vehicles and removing snow from roads. Building on this good work, let's further rethink transportation to increase the focus on pedestrians, cyclists, public transportation users and even skiers. Viewing all of these as ways of commuting throughout our city, we need to implement best winter snow removal and transportation practices and explore innovative, barrier-free ideas to ease the challenges, inconveniences and dangers of winter mobility.

Action 2.1: Develop “winter weather” accommodations for jaywalking and street crossing bylaws, so pedestrians can exercise discretion in crossing lower speed roads after yielding to traffic.

Recommended lead: WinterCity Coordinator, Transportation Services Department

Potential partners: Edmonton Police Service

Action 2.2: Ensure city snow removal policy is aligned so that snow is not plowed off streets onto walkways/bike routes. Prioritize snow clearing (to edge of road on roadways) on bicycle routes, predictably and consistently.

Recommended lead: WinterCity Coordinator, Transportation Services Department

Action 2.3: Develop better sidewalk snow removal strategies in Business Revitalization Zones so that commercial public sidewalks are cleared within a reasonable, designated time.

- Consider sharing snow removal equipment between the City of Edmonton and BRZs.
- Pilot cost-effective and environmentally sensitive heated sidewalks in designated BRZs.

Recommended lead: WinterCity Coordinator, Transportation Services Department

Potential partners: Business Associations, Sustainable Development Department, Community Services Department



fig 2.4 | Heated bus shelter

Action 2.4: Create ‘winter friendly transit’ pilot projects:

- Pilot heated bus stop benches and/or heated bus shelters that are activated by users and work on a timer;
- Explore feasibility of free public transit below a certain temperature;
- Develop winter ‘flagging’ and ‘drop off’ plans that kick in at certain temperatures (so people can get on and off buses not necessarily at bus stops).

Recommended lead: Transportation Services Department

Action 2.5: Pilot a project in which the City of Edmonton is responsible for residential sidewalk snow-clearing in a higher density residential/transit oriented development area.

Recommended lead: WinterCity Coordinator/Transportation Services Department

Potential partners: community leagues and business associations affected by the action

Action 2.6: Continue and broaden the City of Edmonton partnership with local post-secondary institutions and industry to develop a pilot project for incorporating cutting-edge technology and standards for snow removal.

- Limit use of chemical de-icers which have a negative impact on the environment, foot wear, bicycles and mobility aids.

Recommended lead: Transportation Services Department

Potential partners: post secondary institutions, local businesses and industry

Action 2.7: Support NGO's to enhance shuttle-type transit for vulnerable street populations, to make sure people have easy access to warming shelters.

Recommended lead: WinterCity Coordinator, Community Services Department, Transportation Services Department

Potential partners: Homeward Trust Community Plan Committee, inner city agencies



Edmonton's river valley

“Strategies that make it easier and safer for seniors to get around in winter will help them to get out more and increase their participation as active community members, contributing to a better quality of life in our city.”

Roger E. Laing | Executive Director, SAGE

Action 2.8: Create and map 'white-of-ways' (where snow cover is kept on parts of sidewalks and other routes, for the use of sleds, skis, kick sleds) for snow-assisted mobility. Pilot this in one community, with the goal being to implement in all new neighbourhoods and retrofit established neighbourhoods using alleys as needed for snow-assisted mobility.

Recommended lead: WinterCity Coordinator, Transportation Services Department

Potential partners: community leagues affected by the action

Action 2.9: Provide publicly accessible information/mapping on key routes for pedestrians and cyclists, skiers and kick-sledders (including white-of-ways, trails and on roadways) which are maintained year-round or specifically in winter.

- Ensure that winter maintenance information is created and maintained as a class of information in geospatial data, making it available for paper and web mapping.

Recommended lead: Transportation Services Department, Community Services Department

Potential partners: Walkable Edmonton, community leagues

"Everyone, whether in a stroller or a wheelchair, walking, cycling or taking the bus, should be able to enjoy our city through the winter. I can actively participate in my community, and enjoy everything Edmonton has to offer, inside and out, only when winter mobility challenges are addressed with people first in mind."

Christopher Chan | Executive Director, Edmonton Bicycle Commuters' Society



fig 2.8 | White-of-Way



Edmonton's Deep Freeze Festival Freezer Race

Action 2.10: Ensure people and families can get around the city, easily and inexpensively, to winter events and activities.

- Develop transportation alternatives specifically for winter special events. For example: shuttles from Churchill Square into the river valley, Hawrelak Park, Edmonton Valley Zoo, Fort Edmonton; sleigh rides on select weekends between Churchill Square and the Alberta Legislature (with a winter market in the Square and skating at the Legislature grounds); year-round streetcar between Whyte Avenue, the Alberta Legislature, Churchill Square; 'Winter Wonderland' bus that runs from Churchill Square (or selected transit stops) to special destinations or events.

Recommended lead: WinterCity Coordinator, Transportation Services Department, Community Services Department

Potential partners: EEDC, Edmonton Tourism, Legislative Assembly of Alberta, Edmonton Radial Rail Society, Fort Edmonton Park

Goal#2: Where it's already working

Cities in Norway place high priority on active winter transportation. Many provide places to leave skis in the city centre and buses that carry skis (so people can do part of their commute by ski). Cross-country ski trails are an integral part of almost every community's urban fabric.

In Copenhagen, sidewalks and bicycle lanes are cleared of snow first, before the roads are cleared.

Winter Design

WHEN WE BEGAN WORK ON THIS PROJECT, ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS WE TALKED ABOUT IS THAT MOST PEOPLE IN THE WORLD DON'T REALLY KNOW WHAT WINTER IS—THEY DON'T LIVE WITH IT. FOR THEM, SNOW, ICE AND COLD ARE KIND OF EXCITING—EVOKING FEELINGS OF WONDER AND PLAYFULNESS. IT'S EASY TO VIEW WINTER THIS WAY WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE TO DEAL WITH THE DAILY CHALLENGES INHERENT IN THE SEASON!

We may feel a bit differently about our reality. But we don't have to stay mired in that reality. There's a lot we can do to dramatically improve our quality of winter life. First of all we have lots of sunshine to play with. Sun-filled days far outnumber cloudy days during winter here. And even at -20, sunshine on your face feels great. Thoughtful, innovative winter design will put people in the sun, get the wind away from them and create intimate, delightful environments.

If we plan our public spaces with the aim of enjoying winter, the outside can become inviting for everyone—not just those who love outdoor winter sports. This means allowing places for kids and adults to play in the snow; providing outdoor patios with blankets, heaters and great views

for people watching. We need to make the most of winter's darkness, illuminating our infrastructure, architectural accents on buildings and public spaces with eye-catching, playful nightscaping.

There is so much to be proud of in Edmonton already. Great urban design that showcases and takes advantage of our unique climate and geography will make our city an even better place to live, play and to visit.

Dianne Johnstone | Alberta Association of Architects, Urban Design Hub Co-chair

Simon O'Byrne | Stantec, Urban Design Hub Co-Chair



Winter Design: GOAL #3

Design our Communities for Winter Safety and Comfort

With much already known about how to plan and design winter cities, the key now is to implement best practices consistently in our city's developments and redevelopments. And further, we should encourage the design community to increase experimentation with innovative, climate-oriented urban design.

"It's as much about attitude as it is about latitude. Winter cities have found ways of embracing and falling in love with winter. They use winter as an inspiration for designing public spaces and buildings, as a motivation for recreation and celebrations; they're cities that share the wonders of winter with the world."

Carol Neuman | Alberta Students' Executive Council



Downtown Edmonton | Joelle Normandeau

Action 3.1: Promote and foster a greater understanding of the importance of compact city design for being a great winter city.

Recommended lead: WinterCity Coordinator, Sustainable Development, WinterCity Advisory Council (see Goal 10)

Potential partners: Transportation Services Department, EFCL, BRZs, Winter Festival Producers, Edmonton Arts Council, Next Gen, M.A.D.E (Media Art Design Exposed in Edmonton), University of Alberta

Action 3.2: Design and maintain walkways and bike routes to make it easier to get around in winter.

- Construct sidewalk ramps which do not collect ice.
- Pilot raised crosswalks at street intersections in areas where transit and emergency response services will not be significantly impacted.
- Pilot heated walking surfaces in a public gathering place (e.g., Churchill Square).
- Pilot mid-block crossings on major streets that connect main building entrances.

Recommended lead: Transportation Services Department

Potential partners: Edmonton Design Committee, NAIT, University of Alberta, MacEwan University, Walkable Edmonton

Action 3.3: Strive to incorporate boulevards into design of new and redeveloped roadways for cost savings, ease of snow storage and to separate pedestrians from roadways offering more protection from passing vehicles.

Recommended lead: Transportation Services Department, Sustainable Development Department

Potential partners: UDI (Urban Development Institute)

Action 3.4: Ensure new City of Edmonton developments and redevelopments incorporate design elements to protect pedestrians from cold, wind and ice and make streetscapes and public spaces inviting year-round.

- Build wind blocks and design for solar access to create sun traps.
- Create sheltered rest areas.
- Utilize colour and creative lighting.
- Provide permanent thermal comfort amenities such as heat lamps and fire pits.
- Create guidelines for thermal comfort amenities such as fire pits, heat lamps for all public spaces to ensure year-round use. Provide these amenities in public spaces.

Recommended lead: WinterCity Coordinator, WinterCity Advisory Council, Sustainable Development Department

Potential partners: University of Alberta, developers affected by the action

Action 3.5: Develop winter design guidelines that outline performance standards for safe and comfortable winter design, to create more livable outdoor micro-climates and design elements to protect pedestrians from cold, wind and ice and make streetscapes/public spaces inviting year-round. Performance standards should include:

- Design for solar access, to create sun traps.
- Minimize floor plates of tall buildings to minimize the casting of shadows.
- Encourage design of lower scale buildings (that still achieve desired high density) that allow sun penetration and minimize wind tunnels.
- Encourage canopies, gallerias, colonnades and/or arcades where there is high pedestrian traffic in one particular site, or as a connector between two sites.
- Require solar access, shadow, wind and snowdrift impact analyses for all major developments in the City of Edmonton.

Recommended lead: Sustainable Development Department

Potential partners: BOMA (Building Owners and Managers Association), Urban Development Institute, Alberta Association of Architects, Alberta Association of Landscape Architects, M.A.D.E.

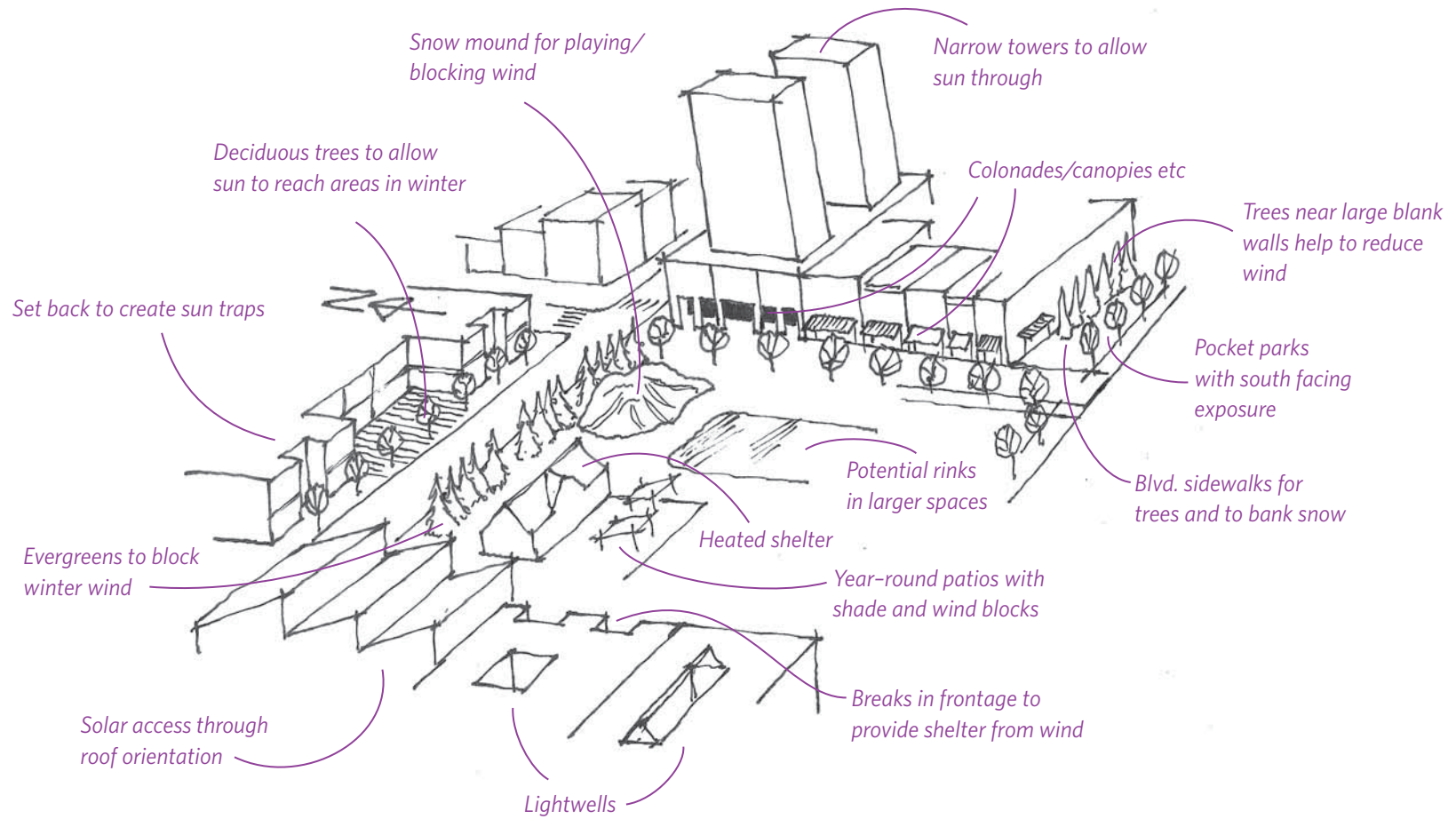


fig 3.5 | Urban design element: Shelter from wind that captures sun

Action 3.6: Create guidelines for fire pit usage for both public and private property.

- Provide gas hook-ups on public plazas for large, portable fire pits.

Recommended lead: WinterCity Coordinator, Community Services Department

Potential partners: Winter Festival Producers, The Works, BOMA

Action 3.7: Create a new City of Edmonton policy, similar to the Edmonton's Sustainable Building Policy, which will ensure all city owned new facilities and major renovations are designed and constructed to support the vision of Edmonton's WinterCity Strategy.

Recommended lead: City of Edmonton, WinterCity Coordinator

Goal#3: Where it's already working

In Copenhagen, high-rise buildings are discouraged in order to allow for more sunshine on streets and to minimize wind turbulence at the base of buildings.

In Reykjavik, Iceland, the negative effects of wind on major pedestrian areas, transit nodes, and public meeting spaces are mitigated using building layout and design, as well as landscaping.



Edmonton's Illuminations Festival, a Winter Light project | Edie McIntyre

“WinterCity is for Life. It draws from our existing great outdoor assets already alive with winter activity in the river valley, parks, and festivals, and extends this vibrancy of the public domain and people places to our city streets, squares, and inner urban events. It is a continually growing catalyst with great global precedent that enhances life through design and the core of community which is to thrive through a humane urbanity.”

Vaughan Hoy | Architect, Kasian

Winter Design: GOAL #4

Incorporate Urban Design Elements for Winter Fun, Activity, Beauty and Interest



Edmonton's Winter Light Gala Opening | Epic Photography

Vibrant, interesting and welcoming public spaces are a critical element of quality urban life in every city. But particular attention needs to be paid in our northern climate to ensure these spaces are inviting year-round. They require specific infrastructure, such as water for snow making, gas lines for fire pits, refrigeration units for skating rinks. And a change in thinking: for example no longer viewing winter as the 'off season' when places can be closed as a cost saving measure.

Most importantly, we need to ensure the City of Edmonton, developers, community leagues and businesses work together to develop winter friendly public spaces for all age groups. True collaborative planning and decision-making will result in vibrant public spaces that work for the community in every season; increasing our quality of life and influencing the stories we tell ourselves and the world about our great northern city.

Action 4.1: Apply the winter design guidelines to developments and redevelopments in Edmonton. Amend applicable City of Edmonton regulations, policies, guidelines and bylaws as opportunities arise to ensure this and incorporate this into new City of Edmonton regulations, policies, guidelines and bylaws.

- Incorporate winter design elements and streetscapes into Area Structure Plan and Neighbourhood Structure Plan Development Guidelines.
- Encourage the strengthening of inside-outside relationships through sensitive design of all City capital projects and major developments, creating intermediary zones of transition that mediate between hot and cold.
- Encourage incorporation of winter infrastructure in public spaces (e.g., refrigeration units for outdoor skating rinks, water supplies, gas lines for fireplaces, fire pits and barbecues).

Recommended lead: WinterCity Coordinator, Sustainable Development Department

Potential partners: BOMA, Urban Development Institute, Alberta Association of Architects, Alberta Association of Landscape Architects

Action 4.2: Make greater use of colour in outdoor design to enliven the cityscape. Amend existing City of Edmonton regulations, policies, guidelines and bylaws as opportunities arise and ensure consideration of this is incorporated into new City of Edmonton regulations, policies, guidelines and bylaws.

- Educate developers, builders and property owners on greater use of colour in outdoor design.

Recommended lead: Sustainable Development Department

Potential partners: Urban Development Institute, Alberta Association of Architects, M.A.D.E, Edmonton Design Committee



Edmonton's Mill Creek Adventure Walk | Epic Photography

Action 4.3: Encourage and foster the creative use of light and dark in winter that is mindful of density, spread and colour.

- Develop and implement an outdoor winter lighting strategy that aligns with the City of Edmonton light strategy. Emphasize the need for nightscaping where light accents architectural details and impacts by way of contrast and design.
- Pilot creative lighting projects, for example at heritage resources, bridges, and civic buildings.
- Provide creative lighting workshops for communities, developers, property owners, Urban Development Institute, Business Revitalizations Zones, BOMA, Alberta Association of Architects and other interested organizations.
- Create dark zones specifically for sky watching.

Recommended lead: WinterCity Coordinator, WinterCity Advisory Council

Potential partners: Sustainable Development Department, Urban Development Institute, Business Associations, EFCL, Light Efficient Community Coalition, BOMA, Alberta Association of Architects and other interested organizations, property managers of individual buildings, Edmonton Police Service, Edmonton Arts Council



Edmonton's Illuminations Festival | Edie McIntyre

Action 4.4: Encourage and support the Edmonton Design Committee in continuing to provide an emphasis on designing buildings and public spaces for winter.

Recommended lead: WinterCity Coordinator, WinterCity Advisory Council, Sustainable Development Department

Potential partners: Edmonton Design Committee, Alberta Association of Architects

Action 4.5: Develop an incentive program for developers whose projects (e.g., buildings, new communities) incorporate winter-friendly features.

Recommended lead: Sustainable Development Department

Potential partners: Urban Development Institute, Alberta Association of Architects, EFCL

“It’s essential that we recognize all the potential in our cold climate. Lively gathering spaces and an enthused winter festival series funded by extraordinary public/private partnerships will attract new business and enhance existing business in our great city. Drawing on rich ideas of artists, architects, landscape designers and innovative entrepreneurs, we can create and seize new opportunities and compete in today’s local and global economy.”

Christy Morin | Executive Director, Arts on the Ave

Goal#4: Where it’s already working

Longyearbyen, Sweden is snow covered most of the year, so the town adopted a colour master plan for all buildings. It’s designed to balance chaos against monotony, while not creating an overly complex colour environment.

In Toronto’s Distillery District, there’s an outdoor Christmas market every December. German-style outdoor market huts provide shelter for vendors and there are outdoor fireplaces, couches and heaters so people can linger comfortably.

Winter Economy



THE WINTER ECONOMY IN EDMONTON HAS A VAST AND LARGELY UNTAPPED POTENTIAL. IN ALL ASPECTS, RANGING FROM TOURISM TO COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY AND MANUFACTURING, THE POSSIBILITIES OF WINTER REQUIRE A THOROUGH EXPLORATION. OUR MOST SIGNIFICANT SEASON MAY ALSO BE ONE OF OUR MOST IMPORTANT RESOURCES. IMAGINE EDMONTON AS A WORLD LEADER IN WINTER DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING, TECHNOLOGY, SERVICES AND CELEBRATIONS.

There is much that can be done to lure people outdoors, to increase activity on the streets and to create safe and enticing winter gathering places. Streets that are deserted, shops and restaurants that suffer for sales, celebrations that struggle with funding models and infrastructure built for summer can become more vibrant and successful if winter is embraced. Currently, January to March is a time when many retail and service businesses struggle. Business and leisure travelers look to engage with Edmontonians. They search for local experiences. For many Edmontonians and visitors, winter is a time of less interaction and decreased physical activity. Winter festivals, outdoor socializing on our main streets, winter sports, activity in the river valley are all ways to engage the citizens of Edmonton and to enhance the tourism experience.

A focus on winter business and industry could take advantage of our natural environment to diversify our local economy and to produce, attract and retain innovative business leaders, professionals and workers. Edmonton has a strong winter construction industry, world class post-secondary education and research facilities and both large and small winter focused niche industries. These could be catalogued, marketed and utilized as a foundation to expand and grow a robust “Edmonton Winter Economy”.

Shirley Lowe | Business Revitalization Zone Consultant, Winter Economy Hub Co-Chair

Ken Fiske | Edmonton Economic Development Corporation, Winter Economy Hub Co-Chair

Winter Economy: GOAL #5

Increase the Capacity and Sustainability of Edmonton's Winter Festivals

Edmonton's winter festivals are a success story waiting to be discovered. Attendance continues to grow and despite the extraordinary challenges of staging large, outdoor public events in the winter (higher costs because of the season, lack of snow, unseasonable warm weather that melts ice sculptures) festival managers, staff and volunteers continue to stage celebrations that are attracting international attention. But more can be done to help winter festivals overcome challenges; in particular capacity and sustainability.

"Most importantly we want Edmontonians and the world to know more about the all the different things to do in our city in winter—fun and inexpensive events for people of all ages. We can also do more to maximize efficiencies of our winter festivals; creating new partnerships to deal with infrastructure requirements and in particular our needs for snow and ice."

Wanda Bornn | Producer, Ice on Whyte Festival



Edmonton's Ice on Whyte Festival

Action 5.1: Create a Winter Festival Coordinating Body, removed from the City of Edmonton, to work with existing festivals on shared resources, collective purchasing, shared infrastructure, transportation, sustainable funding and shared marketing, particularly of Edmonton's 'winter festival' product as a whole. This body should:

- work with existing major festival producers to align and coordinate existing events and assets, in order to maximize the synergies;
- develop and implement sustainable funding that meets industry standards for festival production staff;
- develop an asset requirement list and inventory of collective assets for winter events;
- develop reasonable pricing available to festivals for infrastructure, transit, traffic and other services;
- align the Edmonton Winter Festival marketing strategy with City of Edmonton, Edmonton Tourism, Edmonton Festival group and Travel Alberta;
- explore the ability to source ice needed for winter festivals from a local provider;
- work with inner city agencies to offer support with festival planning and to explore opportunities for vulnerable populations to be more involved in Edmonton's major winter festivals.

Recommended lead: Winter Festival Producers, City of Edmonton

Potential partners: Northlands, WinterCity Coordinator, WinterCity Advisory Council, EEDC, Edmonton Tourism, Travel Alberta, ETS, Snow Valley, local media

“With continued and enhanced civic support Edmonton will become a world class winter destination. It is already happening as is evident in the testimonial below, by an international snow sculptor who participated at the Silver Skate festival: *What can I say about Hawrelak Park? “Gorgeous”. It might be the most beautiful site I have ever worked in. You have a real gem there. My biggest compliment is to the people and the City of Edmonton. We were captivated by the amount of interest they had in what we were doing. The sight of hundreds of families out skating was beautiful and touched us, being family men ourselves with little children at home.*”

Ritchie Velthuis | Executive Director, Silver Skate Festival



Canadian Birkebeiner Ski Festival, Edmonton

Winter Economy: GOAL #6

Develop a Four-Seasons Patio Culture

“Hibernation is best left to the bears; perhaps it is time for us to re-imagine what shoulder season or winter patios could be... instead of how about a ‘cold one’, think about the possibilities of ‘how about a warm one’”.

Ian O'Donnell | Downtown Edmonton Community League



Edmonton's Illuminations 2011 | Edie McIntyre

Edmonton's many bright, sunny winter days provide an excellent opportunity for outdoor socializing—one that can be embraced not just by community groups and festivals staging special events, but also by small businesses who could offer much to enhance daily life on the streets of our northern city. These businesses need encouragement to ‘think outside the box’ when it comes to attracting outdoor patrons; this in turn requires the relaxing of rules and regulations that protect the city from certain liabilities.

Action 6.1: Remove regulatory barriers for small businesses to make year-round use of outdoor space for patios, including temporary winter patios at festivals, events and on sidewalks.

- Reduce insurance requirements (related to right of way occupation) and provide incentives such as lower fees for participating establishments.
- Streamline and shorten the permitting process for patios.
- Permit use of curb side parallel parking spaces for ‘café pallets’ to provide sidewalk patio space where otherwise too narrow.

- Change Zoning Bylaw section on parking requirements so food establishments can have more flexibility with seating numbers.
- Allow the use of heaters and encourage the use of blankets to enhance outdoor comfort for patio patrons.

Recommended lead: WinterCity Coordinator, WinterCity Advisory Council, Transportation Services Department, Sustainable Development

Potential partners: EEDC, Chamber of Commerce, COE, BRZs, hospitality industry

Action 6.2: Work with other Alberta municipalities to review and amend provincial restrictions around the way alcohol can be served to patrons at outdoor patios, public spaces, festivals and events.

- Allow more flexibility around access and location of licensed outdoor patios.
- Loosen restrictions use of railings and fences to delineate the licensed area, and the use of gas heaters and combustible materials in the area.

Recommended lead: WinterCity Coordinator, City of Edmonton

Potential partners: Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission, City of Calgary and other municipalities, Edmonton Police Service, Corporate Security

Action 6.3: Launch a marketing campaign aimed at businesses to encourage participation in outdoor patios. This campaign should include information on how to ensure thermal comfort for patrons (e.g., blankets, exterior patio heat lamps).

- Work with BRZs to coordinate the application process for businesses within BRZ areas.
- Encourage businesses within City of Edmonton owned facilities to participate with this initiative.

Recommended lead: WinterCity Coordinator, WinterCity Advisory Council

Potential partners: EEDC, Chamber of Commerce, Business Associations

Action 6.4: Create a city-wide, annual winter one-day outdoor patio event.

Recommended lead: WinterCity Coordinator, WinterCity Advisory Council

Potential partners: EEDC, Chamber of Commerce, Business Associations, City of Edmonton hospitality industry, Alberta Restaurants and Foodservices Association



Outdoor Café, Baltic Sea

“Providing and promoting four season patios encourage outdoor social gathering will take Edmonton to another level that would be admired and embraced by all municipalities.”

Diane Kereluk | Executive Director, Stony Plain Road and Area Business Association

Winter Economy: GOAL #7

Become A World Leader in Innovative Winter Related Business & Industry



Double layer mittens



Wool toque



Wool scarf



Moisturizer for dry skin



Super-warm boots



Down-filled parka



SPF 15 lip balm

Our climate offers great potential, as noted above. Rather than viewing the winter months as a time to slow or shut things down, we need to encourage entrepreneurial innovation and emerging industries to seize the opportunity our climate affords. Goal 7 aligns with the City of Edmonton's economic development strategy, *The Way We Prosper*, which envisions an economic future for our city that is diverse, competitive and sustainable.

"More than 50 years ago, a unique method of wrapping construction projects to enable year round construction was pioneered in Edmonton. It ushered in an era of unprecedented construction throughout western Canada and the North. Fifty years later people take Cold Climate Construction for granted. The resource development and sustainability of the Canadian economy owe a lot to the creative spirit of the construction industry in Edmonton."

Giuseppe Albi, General Manager | Events Edmonton producers of METROPOLIS Edmonton Winter Festival

Action 7.1: Develop a strategy for discovery, creation and promotion of winter businesses in various sectors: manufacturing, technology, products and services.

- Create a directory/repository of winter-related businesses for information purposes and promotion/marketing.
- Support the further development of Edmonton's winter fashion industry.
- Work with partners to encourage development of new businesses to further the development of Edmonton winter industries.
- Showcase Edmonton winter businesses at trade-shows and other events around the world.

Recommended lead: WinterCity Coordinator

Potential partners: EEDC, Chamber of Commerce, Business Associations, post secondary institutions, Consulting Engineers of Alberta, Alberta Architects Association

Action 7.2: Work with international cities as a way to share ideas, learn, network and seek new leading practices to advance our winter business and industries.

- Work with partner cities on joint initiatives regarding winter businesses and industries.
- Showcase Edmonton winter businesses at tradeshow and other events around the world.
- Continue our work as a founding member of the World Cities Ice and Snow Council with our sister city, Harbin.
- Work towards hosting the second World Cities Ice and Snow Tourism Congress in Edmonton in 2014 or 2015.

Recommended lead: WinterCity Coordinator, City Manager's Office

Potential partners: Chamber of Commerce, Business Associations, post-secondary institutions, northern cities and other partners

Action 7.3: Support outdoor winter markets throughout the city.

- Explore the further development of appropriate infrastructure and resources to enable outdoor stalls/facilities to be built.

Recommended lead: WinterCity Coordinator

Potential partners: Chamber of Commerce, local vendors, construction association and industry

“In order to become a great year-round city, the local community, the rest of Canada and the world must know we're open for business 365 days a year. It's not enough to say that Edmonton is a great place to spend the winter months, we must work to encourage and embrace business innovation and entrepreneurship year-round, while looking for ways to celebrate our unique winter heritage.”

Loren Miller | MBA, Alberta School of Business, University of Alberta



Winter Market, Toronto's Distillery District

Our Winter Story: GOAL #8

Celebrate the Season and Embrace Daily Living in a Cold Climate



Edmonton's Winter Light Snow Daze at Gallagher Hill | Epic Photography

The more informed people are about winter, the more prepared and able they'll be to enjoy the season. Special attention needs to be paid to newcomers to our city, to help them adapt as quickly as possible to the realities and possibilities of our northern climate. And we could have a little fun here too: imagine an annual December reverse-strip tease in Churchill Square, teaching people the value of dressing in layers...

"Edmonton's combination of climate and urban landscape is quite rare, and Winter Light wanted to explore our winter city in lively and interesting ways. We found that people want to be activated; they want to be invigorated by winter experience. So we invited people to walk beautiful park trails, to be dazzled by light in the dark, and simply enjoy getting together with other people in the outdoor environment. I think everyone recognized there's a character building aspect to winter, and when audiences put their boots on, they're celebrating winter community."

Pamela Anthony, Winter Light Festival Producer—on the process used to create Winter Light.

Action 8.1: Educate people about winter by creating broadly distributed, easily accessible information.

- Further develop a Winter 101 program (leveraging existing 'winter 101' information) that covers a wide variety of topics and can be used by all Edmontonians.
- Bust the myths about winter in our city: e.g., winter is a six month deep freeze. In reality Edmonton only averages 4 days a year below minus 30, with an average 63 days of snowfall (nowhere near 6 months!).
- Create easily accessible information about all there is to do in Edmonton during the winter months including festivals and other events and activities.
- Include information on where activities are located and how to get to them from different parts of the city.
- Distribute this through a wide variety of sources including social media, a WinterCity Website, brochures Winter 101 program, Winter 101 app.
- Work with Edmonton's fashion industry to promote smart winter dressing that can also be fashionable (e.g., outdoor winter fashion shows, social media campaigns).
- Establish a 'winter mentor' program for newcomers.

Recommended lead: WinterCity Coordinator, City of Edmonton

Potential partners: Community Services Department, Rotary Club of Edmonton, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Boys and Girls Club, Millwoods Welcome Centre, African Centre, Multicultural Health Brokers, EMCN, ECVO, fashion community, ShareEdmonton, post secondary institutions, local school boards, EFCL, service organizations

Action 8.2: Work collaboratively with Communities in Bloom and their partners to develop an Edmonton winter beautification program.

Recommended lead: WinterCity Coordinator, Community Services Department

Potential Partners: Communities in Bloom, EFCL, Edmonton Horticultural Society

Action 8.3: Increase awareness, appreciation and integration of our winter heritage and culture.

- Gather and share the stories of how people have survived and prospered in our northern climate.
- Explore opportunities to increase Edmontonians' awareness and involvement with Aboriginal culture and events that happen in winter, and explore options for new events that build on traditions.
- Develop a multifaceted menu of outreach programs (using social media, workshops, campaigns, learn at lunches) to engage and educate people about the most current thinking on improving quality of life in a northern city. Use these opportunities to gather innovative ideas from the community about how to change our attitude toward winter.

Recommended lead: WinterCity Coordinator, WinterCity Advisory Council

Potential partners: Aboriginal community, Aboriginal serving agencies, City of Edmonton Aboriginal Relations Office, Community Services Department, REACH, Royal Alberta Museum, other local heritage groups and organizations, Communities in Bloom



Olympic Torch Relay in Edmonton

Action 8.4: Recognize and encourage appropriate use of our city's natural areas by creating an 'Edmonton in Winter' website or app. This could include:

- field guides to urban flora and fauna (monthly list of what's migrating, hibernating, mating, birthing);
- scientific facts and legendary lore of common plants, animals and birds native to Edmonton;
- live cams with natural environments or events (northern lights, beaver building a dam, bohemian waxwing arrival);
- links to websites and apps of natural history oriented sites, clubs and organizations in Edmonton (e.g., John Janzen Nature Centre, astronomy clubs, birding groups).

Recommended lead: WinterCity Coordinator

Potential partners: Edmonton Nature Club, Edmonton Naturalization Group, Friends of Elk Island Society, Birdingpals, Alberta Education, River Valley Alliance, John Janzen Nature Centre, post secondary institutions, Communities in Bloom

Action 8.5: Work with local media (hosts, anchors, meteorologists) and thought leaders so they start to talk differently, more positively, about winter weather in Edmonton.

Recommended lead: WinterCity Coordinator

Potential partners: Edmonton media outlets, Environment Canada, colleges & universities, EEDC, Chamber of Commerce

Action 8.6: Work with school boards to integrate enjoyment of winter into daily life.

- Encourage rethinking of 'indoor recess' policy.
- Use Winter 101 materials and WinterCity website to help students and educators think and talk more positively about winter, develop a greater appreciation for the season, and play outside often.
- Encourage winter outdoor activities as part of physical education curriculum.

Recommended lead: WinterCity Coordinator

Potential partners: Edmonton Public School Board, Edmonton Catholic School Division, Conseil Scolaire Centre-Nord, Alberta Education, Post-Secondary Institutions



Edmonton's river valley

Goal#8: Where it's already working

Newcomers in Montreal can take winter sports courses—aimed at teaching more than just sports. People learn how to dress appropriately, what to expect from winter activities and generally how to enjoy winter outdoors.

In Maine, USA, WinterKids Welcome to Winter targets schools and communities with large immigrant, refugee and low-income populations, helping people learn to navigate winters, get involved in a wide variety of outdoor winter activities and develop health living habits.



Outdoor birthday party at Edmonton's Hawrelak Park

Our Winter Story: GOAL #9

Promote Edmonton's Great Northern Story Locally, Nationally and Internationally



Skiing through Edmonton

“Let’s reinvent the chill and prove to the world that it’s cool in the cold.”

Bob Black | Executive Vice President, Edmonton Arena Corp.

Edmonton’s winter story needs to come alive with a sense of adventure, magic, mystery and humour. It needs to reflect our natural and human heritage and newcomers to our city, the river valley. Ours is a city of extremes: light and dark, hot and cold. And we’re a people that pitch in: to volunteer, to support our sports teams and great cultural scene. If we build our WinterCity message from the inside out, if it’s authentic to Edmontonians, then it will work beyond our city borders.

“Not everyone can live in Edmonton —only those who choose to!”

John Prusakowski | Vice President, Edmonton Refinery, Suncor



Edmonton's Silver Skate Festival | Marc Chalifoux

Action 9.1: Develop a winter brand for Edmonton aimed at invigorating Edmontonians. It should speak to our city's extremes: light and dark, hot and cold, wild and cozy, and should play up on our classic, Edmonton self-deprecating humour.

- Create new tools to promote this brand.

Recommended lead: WinterCity Coordinator, Winter-City Advisory Council

Potential partners: Chamber of Commerce, EEDC, Winter Festival Producers, EFCL, communications/marketing professionals, Edmonton Design Committee

Action 9.2: Launch a marketing campaign for Edmontonians and by Edmontonians that focuses on our humour, resilience and pride in being a great northern city, and busts the myths around ugly winter clothing.

- Tie this campaign to Edmonton's winter brand and align with work being done by organizations including EEDC, the Edmonton Oilers, Northlands and the Edmonton Arts Council.
- This campaign should celebrate the stages of winter (i.e., early winter in November, festive winter in December, dark winter in January, equinox winter and return of the light later in the winter season).

Recommended lead: WinterCity Coordinator, Winter-City Advisory Council

Potential partners: Edmonton Arts Council, EEDC, Edmonton Oilers, Northlands, Chamber of Commerce, fashion industry

Action 9.3: Incorporate images and video of Edmonton in winter into City of Edmonton marketing materials, reports, publications and other materials.

- Develop creative methods of gathering 'winter in Edmonton' photos taken by members of the public and permission for the City of Edmonton to use these photos.

Recommended lead: City Manager's Office



Action 9.4: Work collaboratively with Edmonton Tourism, regional tourism partners and Travel Alberta to develop an Edmonton Arts/Culture/Recreation "Winter Product" package.

Develop a consistent way to get WinterCity website and tourism products information to frontline hotel staff, to help them promote all there is to do in Edmonton during the winter.

Recommended lead: WinterCity Coordinator and WinterCity Advisory Council

Potential partners: EEDC, regional tourism partners, Travel Alberta, Community Services Department

Action 9.5: Encourage allocating a portion of the existing Destination Marketing Fee to support winter partnerships and tourism initiatives. (The current Destination Marketing Fee is collected by EEDC, from participating hotels and motels. The funds are use to support marketing the Edmonton Region around the world.)

Recommended lead: EEDC

Potential partners: Alberta Hotel and Lodging Association, Association of Edmonton Convention Hotels



Speaking with the media at illumiNITE | Tim Schneider

Our Winter Story: GOAL #10

Kick Start and Lead Implementation of Edmonton's WinterCity Strategy: Apply a 'Winter Lens' To Our City



Edmonton's Connors Hill | EEDC

“Celebrating winter and embracing the outdoor winter lifestyle will require strong involvement from each Edmontonian including the City staff. True change will happen only if each neighbourhood celebrates winter in their own backyard on local streets, parks, and front yards with simple gestures such as front yard lighting, winter sculptures and outdoor get-togethers. With the WinterCity Advisory Council and Coordinator to guide the vision and implementation, action items identified in the Strategy will remain key priorities for various municipal departments in their annual work plans.”

Dnyanesh Deshpande | Senior Planner / Urban Designer, Edmonton Office Lead, planningAlliance

Transforming Edmonton into a great northern city will require applying a 'winter lens' to all we do: programming, planning, design, development and marketing. This goal is foundational to success in going forward with this strategy; it is, essentially, the recommendation for 'next steps'. Goal 10 contains two key parts: a community-led leadership body and a staffing commitment. Both will have the responsibility to guide implementation, sustain and grow the WinterCity Strategy, and ensure appropriate terms of reference, mandates and metrics are applied in order to produce measurable outcomes. Neither is intended to be permanent, but rather transitional over a period of 10-15 years. By then we envision that applying a winter lens will have become part of the culture here in Edmonton; something we just do naturally.

Action 10.1: Create a multi-sector WinterCity Advisory Council to champion, lead and oversee implementation of the WinterCity Strategy. This Council should:

- be composed of key stakeholders from a variety of communities including business, tourism, festivals, arts, community and sports, First Nations, City of Edmonton, urban planners, newcomers, youth and others who share a common vision of Edmonton as a world class northern city;
- update City Council annually on progress made implementing the WinterCity Strategy;
- periodically review and update (if necessary) WinterCity goals and implementation plans.

Recommended lead: City Council

Potential partners: City of Edmonton, WinterCity Think Tank members, EEDC, Edmonton Arts Council, Winter Festivals, EFCL, Next Gen, Aboriginal and newcomer communities, social agencies, City of Edmonton, business community, post secondary institutions, sports organizations

Action 10.2: Create or identify a WinterCity Coordinator position to support the work of the WinterCity Advisory Council. Implement an innovative staffing model for this position which reflects the One City principle. This position will:

- promote the application of a winter lens to planning, design, development and redevelopment work in Edmonton;
- ensure integration of the WinterCity Strategy into all City of Edmonton planning documents;
- become the go-to hub for information, expertise and resources around what makes a successful northern city;
- encourage collaboration, working with partners outside the City of Edmonton to manage the initiatives of the WinterCity Strategy;
- advocate for winter city design to be included in the University of Alberta Community Planning Program and the Urban Design elective of the City's Planning Academy.

Recommended lead: City Manager/Corporate Leadership Team (General Mgrs of City Departments), City Council, EEDC

Potential partners: Community Services Department, Sustainable Development Department, Edmonton Design Committee, post secondary institutions

Action 10.3: Develop a 10-year WinterCity Implementation Plan which will identify priorities, quick wins, partners, indicators of success and resources needed to implement the WinterCity Strategy. This plan will outline how to engage Edmontonians in shifting attitudes to winter as well as sharing and promoting Edmonton's great northern story.

Recommended lead: WinterCity Coordinator, WinterCity Advisory Council

Potential partners: City Departments, EEDC, EFCL, and all consulted and or affected by this action



Edmonton's Whyte Avenue | EEDC

Next Steps

SEIZING THE MOMENTUM

“WE ARE NORTH AMERICA’S NORTHERN MOST CITY OF A MILLION PEOPLE. HOW CAN WE NOT ROCK THIS?!”

Brent Beatty, Senior Manager, Meetings and Conventions, Edmonton Tourism, EEDC

Edmonton is poised to become a truly great northern city. Our collective energy, innovative spirit and readiness to make the most of opportunity provide just the right mix for transforming our city.

Other northern cities are already embracing winter—through urban design or celebratory activities. But Edmonton’s WinterCity Strategy stands out: encompassing all aspects of the season, including what we do in our city, how and where we do it. It considers and celebrates our history and culture, our vulnerable populations; it addresses urban design and planning and the business of winter. During the development of this strategy, we heard repeatedly the importance of making this happen from the ground up. If it works for Edmontonians; if we feel proud of our city as a great place to be in winter, then it will work internationally. Edmonton can become a world class winter tourist destination.

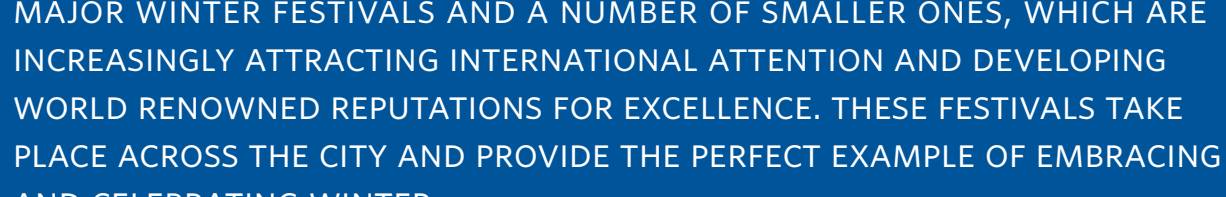
“This will be as great as you want it to be. The magic is in the effort,” VANOC CEO John Furlong (johnfurlong.ca) told the WinterCity Kickoff Symposium crowd back in January. “The great cities of the world are not places you reside in, but places you live in, and fully experience every day. I commend you for trying to unravel the mystery of what the Edmonton of tomorrow and the future is going to be.”

Focus and persistence are needed now to continue building on the work already done, and on the public enthusiasm and desire for this initiative to work. Success will depend not just on the City of Edmonton developing a plan for and ensuring implementation, but on collaboration, imagination and a strong desire to rethink winter. It will involve urban planners and designers, policy makers, the business and tourism community, politicians and most importantly Edmontonians. This WinterCity vision of Edmonton belongs to all of us; working together we can make our city the best it can be.

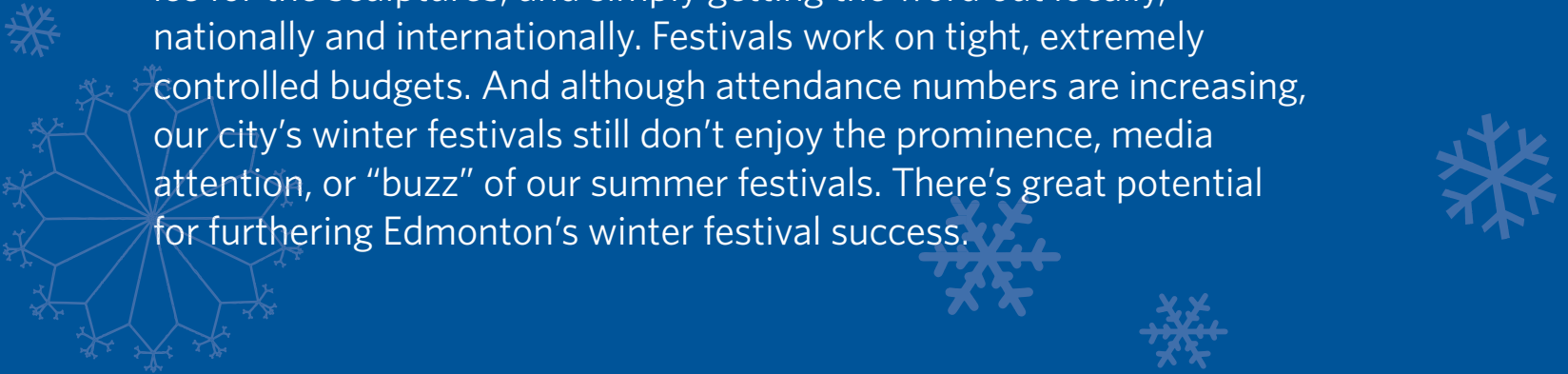




Edmonton's Winter Festivals: Success Stories to Build On



EVERY WINTER, TENS OF THOUSANDS OF EDMONTONIANS ARE ALREADY TURNING OUT TO CELEBRATE THE SEASON. EDMONTON IS HOME TO FIVE MAJOR WINTER FESTIVALS AND A NUMBER OF SMALLER ONES, WHICH ARE INCREASINGLY ATTRACTING INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION AND DEVELOPING WORLD RENOWNED REPUTATIONS FOR EXCELLENCE. THESE FESTIVALS TAKE PLACE ACROSS THE CITY AND PROVIDE THE PERFECT EXAMPLE OF EMBRACING AND CELEBRATING WINTER.



But staging a winter festival has unique challenges: finding water sources to make snow, the cost of purchasing the snowmaking equipment and hiring staff to operate the machines, ensuring equipment keeps working if temperatures plunge, sourcing enough ice for the sculptures, and simply getting the word out locally, nationally and internationally. Festivals work on tight, extremely controlled budgets. And although attendance numbers are increasing, our city's winter festivals still don't enjoy the prominence, media attention, or "buzz" of our summer festivals. There's great potential for furthering Edmonton's winter festival success.

Edmonton's Winter Festivals



Mill Creek Adventure Walk is a magical, almost mysterious event in January winding mysteriously through the Mill Creek ravine with shimmering lights, fire, music and wild characters.

Silver Skate Festival, held in February, is the longest running winter festival in Edmonton. It's a dazzling extravaganza of art and culture, recreation and sports programming.

Ice on Whyte Festival, held in January, features an ice carving competition that draws international competitors, an interactive play area and giant slide, and many other activities for people of all ages.



Deep Freeze Winter Festival in January brings together Ukrainian, Franco-Albertan, Franco-African, First Nations and South American communities in Edmonton to revel in the magic and beauty of winter with great food, music, dance and other outdoor activities.

Canadian Birkebeiner Ski Festival, held in February, is Canada's largest classical-format cross-country ski festival. There are five ski events—from the 55 km Birkie with pack to the 2.5 or 4 km Ole's Tour for kids and novices—as well as other activities including the Vikings' Feast.

illumiNITE lit up a downtown Edmonton back alley from sundown on a Saturday in February 'till sundown the next day. illumiNITE's goal is to get people talking about 'what makes a great city'.

Winter in Edmonton ALREADY LOTS TO DO!

There are other smaller winter festivals put on by communities throughout the city. As well, when there's not an official festival going on, there's a multitude of winter activities to take part in. Churchill Square celebrations draw hundreds of Edmontonians outside to celebrate the holiday season (Light Up the Square), New Years Eve and Family Day. People can walk, run, snowshoe, cycle and cross-country ski on cleared and groomed trails through the river valley. Edmonton has toboggan hills, skating rinks and two ski hills.

Several city attractions open periodically during the winter months including Fort Edmonton Park and the Edmonton Valley Zoo. As well, many of our city's more than 150 community leagues have outdoor skating rinks, and some community leagues partner with the City to offer Snow Shacks in playgrounds, with free drop-in programs for 6-12 year olds.

The City of Edmonton's Snow Angel program encourages and recognizes people who lend a hand to a neighbour, particularly a senior, to help clear snow. And the city also provides free sand at community leagues, for people to sprinkle on icy walkways.

A Blizzard of Ideas

"The only thing that is wrong with Edmonton is that many of us who live here don't know how good it really is."

Richard Andersen | President and CEO, Northlands



Edmonton's Snow Valley Ski Club | SeekersMedia



EFCL's Winter Carnival Workshop



Edmonton's river valley

On Becoming a World-Leading WinterCity

WHAT WE HEARD AND LEARNED

"A mass 'snowball' fight! Obviously using snowballs might be a safety issue so just using balls would be fun. There could be snow blowers sprinkling snow over the contestants to give a winter feeling. Making this a 2000–3000 person event outside would encourage exercise and group involvement. There could be corporate, neighborhood and friend teams. Know I would go!"



Edmonton's City Hall

AS WE DEVELOPED THIS STRATEGY, SEVERAL THEMES EMERGED AROUND WHAT WILL MAKE IT BOTH SUSTAINABLE AND AUTHENTIC TO EDMONTON.

A SMART WINTER CITY IS A GREAT CITY YEAR-ROUND

Many elements that go into creating a great winter city reflect current thinking around smart growth for cities in general.

- Compact design and mixed-use neighbourhoods: the more spread out cities are, the more we lose that critical mass of activities—people walking between home, shops, schools, work, cafés—streets that are alive. This type of design is already evident in parts of our city, such as 104th Street downtown, Whyte Avenue and 124th Street.
- A variety of transportation choices year-round: people want to walk, cycle, use public transit, drive, and perhaps cross-country ski to get where they're going.

Smart winter cities allow this to happen with relative comfort. Bus stops are protected from the wind, with seats made of wood or even heated seats. Walkways are cleared for pedestrians, cyclists and those with mobility challenges. Street crossings are designed to keep people's feet dry, out of the slush. In high people-traffic areas, distances between destinations are kept short—with lots of places to stop in and warm up if necessary.

- Clear identification of 'winter challenges' followed by creative and innovative approaches throughout the city that minimize the negatives of winter and emphasize the positives and beneficial aspects. For example: reducing the wind chill in public places with wind barriers, increasing exposure to the sun and creating sun-pockets (microclimates where people can gather outside in comfort).

“Let’s open up an outdoor pool, like the Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge, for some swimming during the winter months.”

“There is a punitive attitude in our culture. We are taking away benches instead of addressing the needs of vulnerable people. We can’t just Febreeze away the people we don’t want to deal with. All people are citizens.”

“Winter in Edmonton isn’t fun for adults. Winter should be more than ‘play’. If you are not engaged in a sport, then there is nothing for adults. Outdoor cafés would be fun. An outdoor farmers market. That would be fun.”



Edmonton Journal

TRANSPORTATION

Getting around in winter, whether by foot, bike, bus or car, was one of the top concerns heard in all WinterCity discussions. This speaks to several issues.

- Dealing with snow and ice—when and where we remove it, the type of sand or other de-icers we use, whether to scrape down to the sidewalk or leave a few inches of packed snow, the debate over strategies for shoveling storefronts. Public transit—the need for more flexibility in dropping off and picking up passengers on very cold days, more frequent buses in colder weather, warmer bus shelters.
- Pedestrian issues—being able to jaywalk, or cross corners on red lights (if it’s safe) on cold days without the risk of being ticketed.

There was also discussion around Edmonton’s pedway system. Many agreed pedways make it more comfortable to walk between buildings on harsh winter days. However many people also feel pedways take the life off of our streets all year-round, detracting from the work towards creating a more vibrant and lively downtown.

EDMONTON’S RIVER VALLEY

‘A precious resource that’s underutilized in winter months’ was a common theme around our city’s river valley. People want it to be easier to get there in winter (make it more accessible) and once there they want more amenities to support their enjoyment. Things like more easily accessible washrooms and water, warming huts and equipment rentals, cafés, tea houses or small restaurants.

ENJOYING WINTER CITY-WIDE

Edmontonians want winter design, activities and events to happen throughout the city; not to be centered downtown. Newcomers in particular emphasized the need for activities in their local communities. There was much discussion around neighbourhood participation: a desire for increased involvement by community leagues and the EFCL to engage in and celebrate the winter season.

“Our suggestion for making Edmonton a better winter city is to make a miniature Rideau Canal that would run in the city centre—you could build a ditch along this canal and pump water from the river into this canal—then have kiosks set up on the canal.”

“The City of Edmonton should be encouraging and helping business owners to put tables out on sidewalks.”

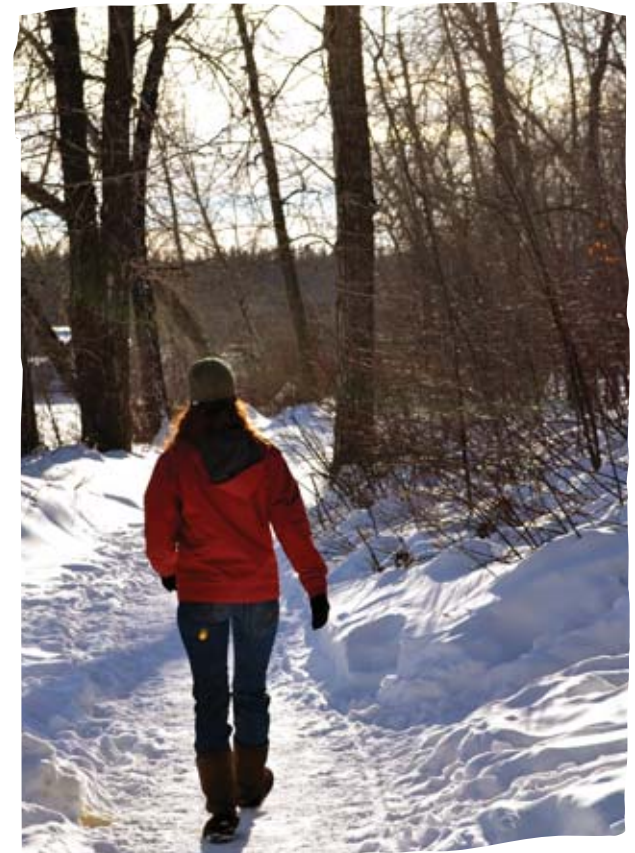
“Stop making it so difficult to have fun. In our community we wanted to use snow scraped from the local arena, for kids to climb and play. We were told that wouldn’t be allowed—the snow might be contaminated because a hockey player might have spat on the ice in the arena, which would then have been scraped up by the zamboni and dumped in the snow pile outside. Ridiculous.”

WINTER AND VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

There’s no doubt that winter months present even more challenges for particular groups of people. For seniors, people with mobility challenges, newcomers without supports, people living in poverty and those experiencing homelessness, winter can be a dangerous time. Many in the WinterCity public consultations said we must ensure winter is safe and warm for everyone.

There’s already much being done in Edmonton to meet the needs of people living rough, including the tremendous work to end homelessness in our city. But for many vulnerable people, it can be challenging to find a place to stay inside on cold days; to get warm, use a bathroom, get a coffee or even dry their socks. Ideally facilities should be located in different areas of the city, not just downtown. Support might be required from the City to make indoor public space more tolerant and welcoming: in consultations, people suggested a social worker on site for the coldest days to work with people at risk.

Everyone, no matter what their situation, needs to have some fun—particularly when things get tough in the winter months. Every year Mustard Seed holds a Reindeer Festival and a New Years’ celebration, as well as weekly indoor viewings of Hockey Night in Canada. Boyle Street Community Services hosts a ‘Homeless Games’ every March, with police officers joining in competitions such as shopping cart races, ‘set up your tent’, and ‘find the fence across the street (while blindfolded)’. There’s an edge to this event, a sarcastic quality, but it’s fun and it raises awareness about homelessness. These smaller festivals and celebrations could certainly use more support in planning and staging their events. There’s also opportunity in making formal connections between clients of inner city agencies and the city’s major festivals, because many of those clients need work, and there are temporary jobs at the festivals.



Edmonton’s river valley



“People camp in our river valley in the summer and in the winter. If we had warming huts available for recreational use, it may serve as a transition point out of homelessness.”

“Illuminated ski trails for the cross-country skiers. There are many trails that would get more use if they were lit up.”



Edmonton's Illuminations Festival, a Winter Light project | Epic Photography

CONNECTING THE DOTS: LINKS TO OTHER CITY OF EDMONTON INITIATIVES

The WinterCity Strategy has potential to and indeed should connect with many city initiatives.

Specifically, The Way We Live: Edmonton's People Plan identifies a winter city strategy as a major corporate initiative, to be led by Community Services but to involve all City departments and community partners. This strategy is also an element of Edmonton's Arts and Cultural Initiative. And broadly speaking, this strategy contains elements that link to other City of Edmonton strategic documents: The Way We Grow, The Way We Move, The Way We Prosper, The Way We Finance, and The Way We Green. For example, synergies between the WinterCity Strategy and The Way We Green include:

- utilizing snow/ice onsite, to minimize trucking it away;
- connection to nature, and being resilient in dealing with our climate;
- smart urban design that takes advantage of the sun.

Work on the WinterCity Strategy is concurrent with support for work of the Edmonton Arts Council and the City's Civic Precinct project. A strong WinterCity Strategy can be linked to City Council's Northern/Circumpolar Initiative.

CELEBRATING THE 'WINTER SEASON'

Many people expressed their 'Edmonton in winter' vision, by comparing it to how they feel about the city during the summer months. From June through to September, there's a sense of connectedness; it feels like a 'festival season'. Even though the summer festivals are different, it still feels like 'a festival season'. People want that feeling in the winter as well—not just with festivals, but with all types of activities and events. They want to feel there's a 'winter season' of celebration.

"I've been in Edmonton for 9 years, but don't know anything about Aboriginal and Métis cultures. There's a strong interest in newcomer communities to learn about these."

As well, Edmonton's Outdoor Aquatic Policy and Strategy opens the door to all season use of facilities. Some outdoor aquatic facilities can be adapted for the winter season, incorporating ice skating, ice climbing, icicle curtains, ice mazes or ice sculptures. (Section 2.6.7 of Edmonton's Outdoor Aquatic Strategy 2008-2017.) Several people involved in the WinterCity public consultations brought up the idea of having one outdoor city pool stay open during the winter months.

Also during consultations, the Alberta Centre for Active Living suggested aligning the WinterCity Strategy with the new Active Alberta policy, and suggested considering a partnership with ParticipACTION. Clearly there are many opportunities for Edmonton's WinterCity Strategy to become a key element in a variety of strategic initiatives, all aimed at enhancing our city's livability.

OUR HERITAGE

Participants in many different consultations expressed the desire for more recognition and celebration of Aboriginal culture, including winter survival skills taught to European settlers. They also talked about the need for Edmonton's winter story to speak to our history of resilience, building and surviving the elements.

"A Christmas market downtown. Small booths selling Christmas treats, hot drinks, freshly baked bread and other such items. They are all over the place in Europe and very popular."

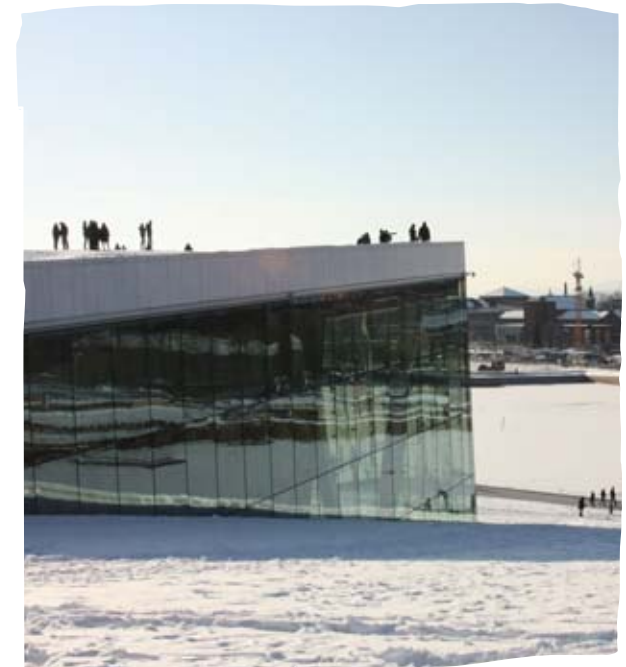
MORE THAN WINTER SPORTS

'Going outside to play' means more than going for a walk, a ski or skate. People want to enjoy the season in many ways—some more sedentary than others. Being able to sit outside at a café with the winter sun shining on your face is equally, if not more, appealing for many as is a long ski in the river valley.

RISK AVERSION

While there is an understanding of the need to ensure safety and recognize liability issues, risk aversion can at times limit our ability to play outside.² Edmontonians involved in the development of this strategy overwhelmingly asked for a loosening of rules and regulations; an increased risk tolerance giving them more freedom to choose how they engage in active winter lifestyles. There was strong feeling that if we don't accept a certain level of risk our city could become very sterile. Risk management policies should establish a greater culture of shared responsibility for risk taking, and clearly communicate this with the public in an ongoing manner.

² The City of Edmonton's current risk management philosophy identifies risks as also being opportunities, while recognizing that in order to successfully take advantage of these opportunities, it is prudent to identify and mitigate risks which pose the greatest chance of derailing success.



Oslo Opera House

"We need to create pods of areas to connect the river valley to communities and areas within the river valley itself. We should offer incentives to small businesses to set up kiosks in winter to rent skis, sell coffee, etc."

"I would fall in love with Edmonton's winter if every bus station in the city had a heater. When you have to wait for transportation in the winter, in a very low temperature it is not fun and makes me not want to go out of my house."

NEWCOMERS TO EDMONTON

Winter can be particularly challenging for people who've just moved here, particularly when they've come from warmer countries. While work is already being done in this area by the City of Edmonton, newcomers' agencies, EFCL and others, there are still barriers to be overcome. Isolation is a big concern; people repeated the importance of connecting with newcomers during their first winter here. Finding events that are accessible (many are too far away from home and the cost of getting there is prohibitive) and finding inexpensive winter equipment can be difficult. People also talked about not seeing themselves reflected (e.g., by photos) in established festivities, events and organizations.

MORE POSITIVE SPINOFFS

Many people we spoke to during public consultations pointed to both the health and economic benefits of becoming a great northern city. Some wondered why more isn't being done to encourage 'winter businesses': cold weather technologies and design, innovative snow/ice removal techniques, and winter fashion industry to name a few. On the health front, it's not difficult to imagine how in a smart winter city, people can continue being active outside, even in the snow and cold. Imagine taking a winter walk through the river valley, stopping along the way for a cup of hot cider at a café with warm, sunny patio. Think about sidewalks that are designed with winter weather in mind, snow that's removed efficiently and used creatively, public outdoor places protected from cold winds. If it becomes easier to find a pair of skis or skates and a place to use them, people will take advantage of the opportunity and become more active, more engaged with the outdoors. Apart from physical health, walking through one's community fosters a sense of place, helping people feel more ownership and belonging which results in healthier communities.



Developing the WinterCity Strategy

A UNIQUELY EDMONTON INITIATIVE

Our winter city story begins back in the 1980's when Edmonton became intensely involved with an international Winter Cities movement. In 1986 and 1988 our city hosted international events drawing participants from around the world to discuss common northern city issues such as planning, winter transportation and snow removal. As a result, here in Edmonton we began experimenting with snow removal techniques (reducing the use of salt and certain chemicals as de-icers) and using more colour in architecture, a prime example being the Butterdome. However during the 1990's, the decade when many hoped Edmonton would become the winter capital of the world, momentum flagged. An economic downturn meant budget cuts, and winter initiatives became a low priority.

Like many really good ideas, this one didn't go away. In 2007, a 'winter-focus' was put back on the city's agenda, resulting in the creation of Winter Light, a pilot project to develop and produce unique winter festivals in Edmonton. In 2010, The Way We Live, Edmonton's strategic plan for creating a more livable city, called for promoting and celebrating winter and Edmonton's status as a winter city. The City's Community Services Department was charged with developing a plan to recast Edmonton as a great winter city.

The strategy's initial objectives were to:

- encourage discussion and feedback from Edmontonians;
- promote Edmonton's wintertime programs, services and experiences;
- identify challenges and opportunities for developing a sustainable and resilient winter city;
- suggest policy directions for Edmontonians and City Council to consider as part of a ten year winter city strategy and implementation plan.



Only in Edmonton you say?

Participants in consultations were asked what they thought makes Edmonton unique. Several points that emerged repeatedly around this topic:

- our climate—dry cold, warmer periods, shorter days (more darkness) but lots of sunshine;
- our river valley;
- the pride we take in being resilient northerners;
- Edmonton's large urban Aboriginal population;
- our festivals;
- our city's vibrant retail sector;
- our vibrant arts/theatre community;
- our community-based mindset and the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues;
- Edmonton's geographical location as the northern most major city on the continent.

OUR APPROACH

There is already a strong body of knowledge, compiled by urban planners, architects, health and quality of life experts from around the world, telling us what makes a successful winter city. Examples include encouraging greater use of outdoor space, designing streets and public spaces to maximize southern exposures and protect against the wind, using light, especially firelight, to create luminescence and warmth, and loosening up rules and regulations in public spaces so people can be more creative (climbing on snow mounds, gathering around fire pits).

In developing this strategy we could have simply recommended applying expertise and international best practices such as these here in Edmonton. But to be truly transformational, to change our 'Edmonton in winter' story, this strategy must be uniquely Edmonton. It must be rooted in what we know to be real and true to this place we call home. And so at its base are the ideas, expertise and dreams of Edmontonians—both those who are experts in urban design, tourism, business, marketing and quality of life, and those who simply know what would make them enjoy winter more.

Fittingly, we've approached this initiative using a version of the iceberg theory of change. At its tip are the events—things we see and do every day. Think of walking or waiting for a bus in the cold, trying to bike in winter, listening to a weather forecast or planning your weekend. Further down are the patterns—multiple events that come together and influence your expectations. Do you stop going out as much in winter? Do you feel more limited, that there are certain things you can't do in the season?

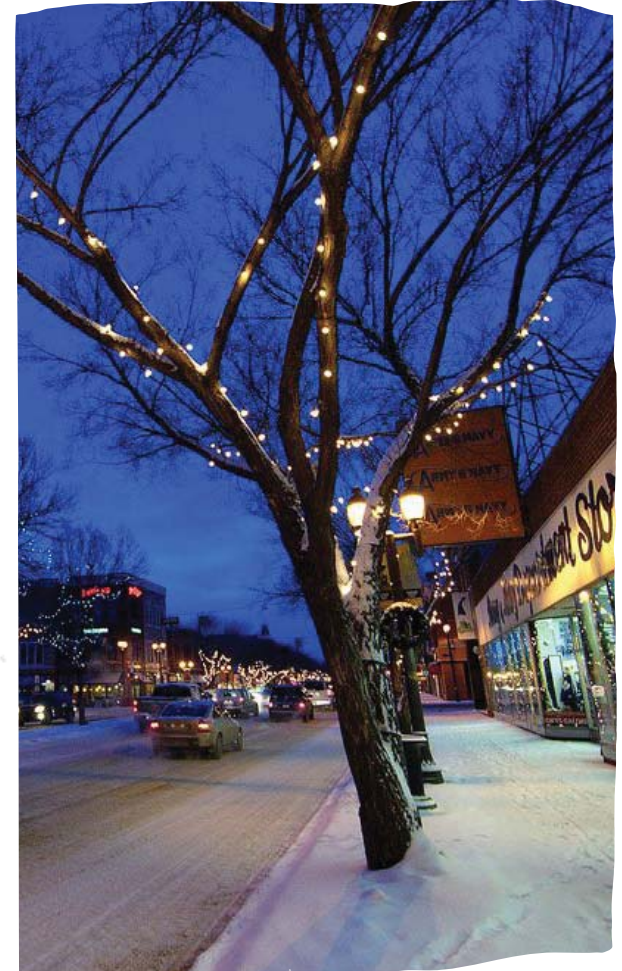
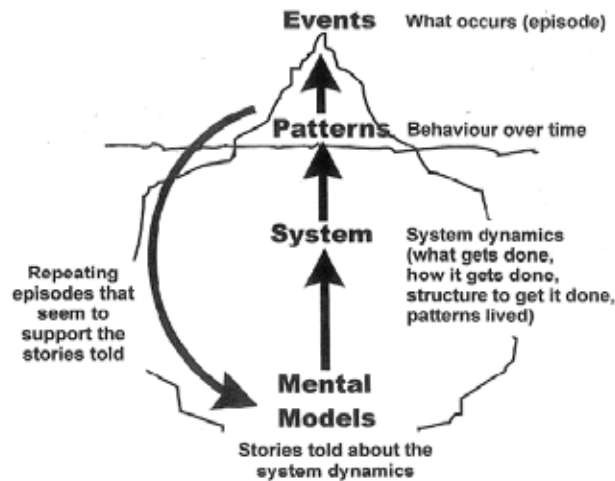
"Take the snow that is hauled away during the winter and pile it up to a HUGE sliding hill and host a Winter Sliding Festival."

"It is not the cold that makes winter so hard. It is the dark. If we could just gently light the darkness..."

Next, below the surface are the elements that make up our systems: our budgets, infrastructure; the way our city is designed, regulated and programmed.

And most critically, at the base of everything are our mental models: the stories we tell about ourselves. Is Edmonton a great place to live—year-round? Are you afraid of the weather? Are you proud of your city?

The WinterCity Strategy is about the whole iceberg: making deep, transformational change right down to our collective mental models.



Edmonton's Whyte Avenue

OUR PROCESS

Exploration Forum June 2010

The first step in creating this strategy took place, somewhat ironically, on a warm, sunny summer day when City Councillor Henderson met with a group of people to gauge support for going forward with this initiative and to get initial direction.

Executive Research Study February 2011

Several months later, City Councillor Ben Henderson and several city administrators undertook an executive research study: a trip to cities in Norway and Finland with international reputations for embracing and celebrating winter. The foundation for shaping this study trip came from internationally acclaimed Danish architect and urban planner Jan Gehl, and his book *Cities for People*. In it, Gehl offers a new approach, focusing on 'planning for people'. Public life is the first planning priority, followed by public space and then buildings. Gehl makes the case that a city's public domain, its streets, squares and parks, are the stage and catalyst for quality urban life—that cities fostering the hustle and bustle of people visiting street-front stores, businesses and cafés are more livable, sustainable and vibrant.³

The City's executive research study team learned much, in particular about creating generous, magnetic and transformative outdoor public spaces. Many of these include public buildings designed to have a positive impact on people who never go in them. For example, visitors to the Oslo Opera House can walk up the outside of the roof for spectacular panoramic views.

"We need more places to go that are warm and they need to be geographically spread—not concentrated only in the inner city."

"Edmonton's problem is not so much 'winter' but rather 'winter in Edmonton'. People are happy to experience winter in places like Jasper, Banff or Whitefish."



Winter Patio in Scandinavia



Winter Market in Scandinavia

The City team also observed a higher risk tolerance in Scandinavian countries. There are no handrails or barriers on the Oslo Opera House roof. In Helsinki, the huge set of steps up to a cathedral isn't cleared of snow—there's just a narrow strip up the side of the steps that's kept clear. But people still go up the middle of the stairs, finding their own path through the snow.

Colour and creative lighting are used more extensively in architecture. And Oslo's subway integrates active transportation with daily life and transit by allowing cross-country skis and bikes on trains.

As a result of this trip, the executive research study team identified several key elements for a successful winter city.

- **Embrace Winter:** market events, make citizens proud of the winter city identity.
- **Authenticity:** the best winter cities celebrate their uniqueness.
- **Accessibility:** successful winter cities tend to focus less on cars and more on clearing walking and biking paths and public transportation routes.
- **Maintenance:** people must be feel they can get around safely in winter.

³ Gehl, Jan (2010). *Cities for People*. Washington: Island Press.

“Fix what is broken. Open what is closed. We have many things that shut down in the winter months or are in disrepair. Maybe we have what we need...we just need to have it in winter.”

“An outdoor curling rink downtown. We should encourage tin can curling, or promote a curling bonspiel like the corporate challenge in order to create a more ‘community’ event in the downtown using the plaza behind the public library.”

- **City Spaces:** people-oriented outdoor public and private spaces that are inviting and comfortable year-round.
- **Light and Art:** lighting up the dark in creative ways and animating public areas add to winter joy and wonder.
- **Snow and Ice:** used creatively as strategic resources for things such as sculptures, slides and wind barriers.

The complete Executive Research Study Findings can be found at edmonton.ca/wintercitystrategy.

WinterCity Think Tank November 2011—fall 2012

A small group from the City’s Community Services Department then took on this initiative, becoming the project team. The team’s first task was to establish the WinterCity Think Tank: a volunteer group of Edmontonians with expertise in urban design, business, tourism, marketing and livability. The Think Tank was tasked with developing the goals for this strategy. To do so, the group was divided into four idea hubs:

- **Urban Design** (public life, spaces and buildings): ensuring development takes into account our winter climate and supports a vibrant public life, using Jan Gehl’s work as a foundation.
- **Hospitality, Tourism and Business:** examining opportunities to strengthen and develop our retail, hospitality and tourism sectors, within the framework of creating a strategy that resonates with Edmontonians first.

- **Public Life, Livability:** identifying what more can be done to improve quality of life in winter months, so that Edmontonians feel more connected to our city.
- **City Branding and Marketing:** rethinking our ‘Edmonton in winter’ story, our civic identity and the image we project, and looking at how we can market that locally and beyond our city’s borders.

There was, predictably, overlap between these hubs. Marketing winter in Edmonton obviously touches public life, tourism and business; the same for transportation, whether by foot, bike, bus or car.

Over the six months between January and May 2012, each hub crafted WinterCity Strategy goals, using research and best practices, their own considerable personal knowledge and experience and very importantly the ideas generated by Edmontonians. Several local experts were brought in to talk at Think Tank meetings, addressing topics such as the history of the winter city movement in Edmonton, urban design and city development, walkability, creative use of light, creative use of snow and active living.

The Think Tank continued work through the summer months, fine-tuning this strategy document and devising creative ways to continue engaging people in making Edmonton a great winter city.



Cycling in Rovaniemi, Finland, near the Arctic Circle

"People walking in the winter need more regular crossing locations on major streets rather than having to walk a full street length to cross the street."

"The Legislature grounds and buildings are amongst the most beautiful in Canada, yet they are cut off from the river valley. We need to find away to connect both of these jewels."

Advice from the January WinterCity Symposium participants

- Think outside the box! Be creative! Take risks!
- Make it 'our WinterCity' first—then people from outside (tourists) will want to come.
- Build on the good things already happening in our city.
- Winter is different for everyone—reflect this.
- Create spaces where we can be spontaneous. Leave snow in cul de sacs so we can play.
- Encourage small-scale business in the river valley—warming places with food and drinks.
- Encourage development of Edmonton as a winter fashion design hub.
- Create snow mobility zones—streets where vehicles aren't allowed.

WinterCity Kickoff & Symposium—January 2012

On a cold, dark winter evening in January, Edmonton City Hall came alive with a winter celebration. We wanted Edmontonians to learn about how and why we were developing this WinterCity Strategy, and to ask for their ideas. Music, skating, activities, food, hot chocolate squads kept people entertained, but the highlight of the evening was guest speaker John Furlong, CEO of the Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic & Paralympic Winter Games.

He regaled the audience with stories—making people laugh and bringing tears to many eyes. He talked of believing in our vision; and making sure that every Edmontonian has a chance to be involved and own that vision. The magic of what we're trying to do, he told us, is in the effort and power of uniting people.

The next morning, 170 people turned out for a half-day working symposium to provide input into developing this strategy. The day began with presentations from winter experts, including world-renowned Danish architect and urban planner Lars Gemzoe and local urban design, tourism, business and quality of life experts. Lars Gemzoe said he often hears people say the design and programming of their cities is constricted by local weather and culture. He pointed out cultures change over time and it's simply wrong to think weather imposes limitations. People ride bikes

in towns along the Arctic Circle. Thirty years ago, Copenhagen didn't have an outdoor café culture in the winter months. Now it's a vibrant part of the winter experience there.

Edmonton's Poet Laureate, Anna Marie Sewell spent the morning listening to people's conversations, using what she heard to write a poem titled "Winterise Me".

More details about the morning can be found at: edmonton.ca/wintercitystrategy.



Edmonton's WinterCity Strategy Kickoff, January 2012

Themes heard in public consultations:

- The things that need to happen to make Edmonton a better winter city will make it a better year-round city.
- Winter not only brings its own challenges, but also exacerbates other problems/challenges that exist year-round in Edmonton.
- People want great coffee in the river valley.
- We are too risk averse.
- We have a great base to build on; there are already lots of great things happening in winter.
- Winter events are more expensive to put on.
- The river valley is under-utilized in winter.
- We need to eliminate rules and regulations that prevent us from creating accessible, attractive and welcoming public spaces.
- Winter is a season of increased awareness for homeless and marginalized people.
- This strategy needs to align with other initiatives aimed at making Edmonton a better place to live.

"We need to create a welcoming winter event for newcomers, as well as reach out to our established cultures like Aboriginal, Metis, Ukrainian, Francophone, etc— maybe consider a Winter Heritage Days."

Public Consultations January—June 2012

As snow and frigid temperatures settled in over the city, the WinterCity project team and Think Tank began a series of more than 20 consultations, which were divided into two categories. Leadership Sessions took place with small groups of specific individuals including: Northlands and the Edmonton Oilers, Inner City Executive Directors and key agency directors, the Chamber of Commerce and the Business Revitalization Zone Council, local media meteorologists, the Canadian Islamic Centre and the Active Transportation Advisory Board to name a few. These sessions tended to be quite focused and in several cases discussions developed around potential partnerships for going forward with this strategy.

The Dialogue Workshops were lengthier, with larger groups representing a broader range of expertise including: urban designers, Aboriginal serving agencies, Business Travel and Events Marketing Committee of EEDC, service providers working with newcomers, civic staff, marketing professionals and the tourism industry.

"How about a Mobile Winter Fun Crew? Deck out a motor home, fill it with equipment, hire some university students with a physical activity background and have them travel to different neighborhoods during the winter season to play winter games with the community kids."

The WinterCity project team also made shorter presentations to twelve groups in the city, including Wicihitowin, M.A.D.E, the Community Services Advisory Board and NextGen. In total, more than 700 people participated in this consultative process. Full reports on the public presentations, consultations and ideas gathered can be found on Edmonton's WinterCity website: edmonton.ca/wintercitystrategy.



WinterCity Strategy Public Consultation

Blizzard of ideas: Global Edmonton WinterCity Contest

Grand Prize winner:

Enabling all the city's community leagues to set up winter events or displays in the communities on an annual basis. The City brings fun and funding to the communities and the communities give back. This could be a 'new' winter game: new world record for..., ice or snow sculpture, silly hockey party, star party, or whatever talent/skill/motivation the community has.

Sherrilyn Jahrig

Runner-Up Prize Winner:

Having cross-country ski and snow shoe rentals available at prime locations near or on the river valley trails, so that residents who don't own this equipment, or residents who don't have their own vehicle to pick up rentals at retail outlets, will be better able to enjoy the paths and routes already set up in the city.

Caitlin Fleming

"Let's stop calling it cold and start calling it a different kind of warm."

Public Presentation on Quebec City's Winter Success Story—February 2012

Understanding what other winter cities have done to take advantage of the winter season was a critical element in developing this strategy. Quebec City is a prime example: each winter thousands of people flock to Carnival, renowned as the world's largest outdoor winter party. Pierre Labrie, former head of Quebec City Tourism, joined us at City Hall on a February morning for a public discussion around Quebec City's journey to becoming a winter destination for Quebecers and international tourists. He talked about the commitment and collaborative spirit it took between many partners, from different parts of the province, to attract events like Red Bull Crashed Ice, the pond hockey championship and to create Carnival. And he stressed that identifying what's uniquely Edmonton and then getting buy-in from the community will be one of the strongest tools to influence change.

WinterCity Goals Validation Workshop—May 2012

Participants of the January symposium and all the public consultations were invited back for a half-day workshop in May, to review draft one of the WinterCity Strategy goals. The results provided the Think Tank with both validation and direction for further improvement.

"Offer free space to food trucks and kiosks—as moveable gathering places to be where the people are."



Pierre LaBrie at the WinterCity Strategy, February 2012 Forum



WinterCity Strategy Goals Validation Workshop, May 2012

CITY OF EDMONTON WINTERCITY STRATEGY PROJECT TEAM

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IMPORTANT LINKS

www.edmonton.ca/wintercitystrategy

- Public Consultation Final Report and list of consultations
- Ideas gathered from IdeaScale, postcard campaign and email
- Videos of presentations on the WinterCity Strategy

www.wintercities.com

- An international source for research, reports and news on how to make the most of the winter season, from northern cities around the world.

CREDITS

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