

New: Winter Cities

Initiative Title:	Winter Cities
City Council Sponsor(s):	Councillor B. Henderson / Councillor S. McKeen
Supporting Department and Lead Staff:	Community Services, Lyall Brenneis / Kate Gunn

BACKGROUND:

- The City of Edmonton has a vision to become a city that celebrates and embraces winter. In October 2012, Edmonton City Council approved *For the Love of Winter: Strategy for Transforming Edmonton into a World-Leading WinterCity*, which identifies four pillars and ten goals to help Edmonton achieve this vision.
- The *WinterCity Strategy Implementation Plan* was created to support the ten goals, and identifies 64 separate action items. The *Implementation Plan* was approved by Council in September 2013.
- While a community driven Think Tank led the development of the WinterCity Strategy in 2011, a new WinterCity Advisory Committee, with five sub committees, now oversees the implementation of the WinterCity Strategic Plan.
- A WinterCity Coordinator manages the WinterCity Office housed in Community Services Department and provides oversight, support and coordination of the WinterCity Initiative.
- Actions in the Implementation Plan are well underway in 2013 and 2014. Several key actions for 2014 include: development of the Winter Design Guidelines, planning for the international Winter Cities Conference in January 2015 and the business plan for the Coordinating Festival Body.
- The challenge going forward is to maintain the strong community momentum created in the start up phase of this Initiative, to forge ahead to implement foundational key actions and to continue to bring a winter lens to the work of all City departments.

DESIRED OUTCOMES:

- The WinterCity Strategy and Implementation Plan provide a strategic vision and concrete actions to recast Edmonton as a leading winter city and galvanize a change in attitude to winter.
- Continuing to work on this Initiative involves both leveraging winter assets we already have and applying a winter lens on other City of Edmonton investments.

- The outcome of this effort will be to realize Edmonton's full, year round economic and social benefits, and, in turn, improve quality of life for all Edmontonians.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC DIRECTION:

- For *The Way Ahead*, the WinterCity Initiative primarily addresses the goal of "Improving Edmonton's Livability". The Initiative will:
 - Support the creation of innovative and attractive public spaces
 - Support the development of sustainable infrastructure that fosters and supports civic and community needs.
 - Increase citizens' use of and participation in municipal infrastructure, services and programs geared towards providing enjoyment and personal health benefits.
- The WinterCity Initiative is directly referenced in *The Way We Live* which states that Edmonton:
 - 5.2.5. Promotes and celebrates winter and Edmonton's status as a winter city.
- The approach to embracing winter ties in with all of the City's other strategic plans: *The Way We Grow*, *Move, Green*, and *Prosper*.

START-UP BUDGET REQUIREMENTS:

- The majority of items in the Implementation Plan do not require additional funding as the WinterCity Initiative is largely about leveraging existing resources to ensure that a winter lens is applied to other City initiatives.
- City Council approved some new ongoing and one-time funding for the Winter City Initiative in December 2013. The 2014 budget for the WinterCity Strategy is now \$455,000 plus \$275,000 in one-time funding for the planning of the January 2015 international Winter Cities conference and \$15,000 in one-time funding for cross country ski trail grooming equipment.
- The approved ongoing budget funds a variety of actions across the four pillars of the WinterCity Strategy, including some that are deemed foundational as well as tangible community-based initiatives.
- In future years, additional funding will be required for select actions such as the development of an Integrated Lighting Master Plan and for the creation of a Winter Patio Development Program.

TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION OF PROJECT PLAN:

- The WinterCity Implementation Plan is a ten-year plan. Since a culture shift is envisioned, achieving its goal may take longer. However, in the ten year timeframe, all the foundational actions should be complete and a winter lens be in place. The WinterCity office should become obsolete.