

Report to Committee

☐ For Committee Direction

☒ For Committee Information



TOPIC:	Collaborative Economic Development (CED) Report	April 22, 2025
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PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to update Council regarding the implementation of the Collaborative Economic Development program.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Committee accept the Collaborative Economic Development (CED) Report as information.

RATIONALE:

This recommendation is based on Council direction related to the signing of the April 2021 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) directing the development of a framework to provide the necessary mechanisms and tools for inter-municipal and regional cross-boundary economic collaboration. The tools developed during the CED Program were specifically designed for the region and provide invaluable information to assist in the future development of commercial lands in Morinville.

REPORT INFORMATION:

In 2016, a report titled “Be Ready or Be Left Behind” was commissioned by the Edmonton Region’s Metro Mayor’s Alliance. The report recommended that the Region’s municipalities needed to work collaboratively in areas such as economic development, transit, land use, and infrastructure. The report pointed out that municipalities in the region need to collaborate on regional economic development in order to compete globally.

In 2017, Edmonton Global was founded as a regional economic development agency to advance foreign direct investment attraction, trade/export and brand awareness in external markets on behalf of Edmonton metropolitan region municipalities.

In 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of St. Albert brought forward a motion at the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board (EMRB) to find a tactical regional economic development approach to aid in the economic recovery from the pandemic and the weakened economic environment. The EMRB did not support this member motion, but a subsequent meeting was called for the interested municipalities to determine a nimbler response to economic development. Out of these discussions, the concept of CED was formed. CED is a scalable model to advance borderless economic growth across the entire region. It provides the ability for interjurisdictional cooperation to advance shovel-ready non-residential lands.

In April 2021, 13 Edmonton region municipalities signed an MOU directing the development of a framework to provide the necessary mechanisms and tools for inter-municipal and regional cross-boundary economic collaboration.

Over the last four years, the signatories to the 2021 MOU have developed the Collaborative Economic Development Framework (CED Framework) to guide joint investment. The CED Framework, funded with proceeds from an Alberta Community Partnership grant, includes a governance plan, template agreements for revenue sharing, templates for business case development, tools to analyze sites, and instructional material to guide partners on the use of the CED Framework and tools.

The 2021 MOU has concluded, and the CED Program is now transitioning from development to implementation. Regionally, there is a low appetite for the governance plan developed, but a high interest in using and maintaining the other tools.

A key differentiator of CED from other economic development initiatives is the three tools that were built specifically for the Edmonton Region:

- Land Analysis: Industrial sector analysis that better informs municipalities on investment readiness and advantages of the region.
- Financial Analysis: An analysis that aids municipalities in evaluating the financial viability and revenue potential of a site within their municipality.
- Incentives: A list of potential financial and non-financial incentives that could be used to improve a project's competitiveness to attract foreign direct investment nationally and internationally.

Overall, the CED framework offers a consolidated guide and supporting resources to enable multi-partner investment and the sharing of the financial and non-financial benefits in projects across the region that would have otherwise not been realized.

CED Benefits

The CED framework empowers Morinville by providing access to resources and tools to enhance investment attraction and non-residential tax growth. CED tools enable analysis that will support public and private decision-making regarding infrastructure investment.

CED's innovative model supports informed investment decision-making for development opportunities. Having CED as a tool in our region supports greater regional industrial output, employment creation, increased investment attraction, innovation, human capital attraction / development, trade capacity expansion, among other benefits. By working with the region to jointly move towards being more investment-ready, it also offers:

- Equal opportunity to invest in the region,
- A coordinated approach to advocacy of shared priorities to other orders of government,
- The opportunity for economic diversification and greater regional prosperity, and
- Overall, a more globally competitive Edmonton Metropolitan Region.

The CED tools provide analysis Morinville could not have accessed with our own resources alone. Having these tools positions us to enhance our investment readiness independently and to benefit from being

in a more investment-ready region. Maintaining these tools also builds on previous funding and Administrative work leveraged to date.

Community Insight

The launch of the CED initiative and its subsequent development over the past four years have been public. CED is a tool created by and for the participating jurisdictions, with input gathered from the economic development teams of all 13 municipalities. Although industry consultation was not conducted, future CED projects presented to Council will need to secure the support of willing landowners. This will initiate consultations in accordance with municipal statutory regulations and policies.

IMPACT:

The initial governance approach is being paused and the focus of member municipalities is on maintaining the data relevance and access to the various tools developed through the project. This will mean the Administrative commitments will be significantly reduced through the implementation stage and the tool maintenance costs can be supported within the current operating budget.

NEXT STEPS:

Administration will continue to participate with other member municipalities in the implementation stage of CED. This will allow Morinville to both access the tools to enhance our investment attraction and the ability to enter into partnerships with other member municipalities in joint development agreements.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION:

At the Tuesday March 9, 2021 Regular Meeting, Council directed the Mayor to sign the CED MOU under motion 82/2021.

More recently, Council members had opportunity to attend a virtual briefing update on the progress of the CED program held on October 21, 2024.

ALIGNMENT:

The CED program is in direct alignment with the following Strategic Plan Goals: **Goal 5 – Economic Development:** Morinville has a diverse economy with thriving businesses, quality jobs, and growing business opportunities and **Goal 6 – Collaborative Relationships:** Morinville is a trusted and valued partner in regional and community collaboration.

Morinville 2022-2025 Strategic Plan:

Goal 5 - Economic Development, Support and collaborate through a multifaceted approach to leverage resources and opportunities for our business' success.

Morinville 2022-2025 Strategic Plan:

Goal 6 - Collaborative Relationships, Identify and implement opportunities with regional partners to achieve cost savings and service efficiencies for both.

CONSULTATION/ENGAGEMENT:

The CED program was a collaborative effort which included consulting with 13 Edmonton region municipalities. This included mayors, CAO's, and economic development departments from all municipalities.

PRESENTER:	S. Novak, Economic Development Officer	ATTACHMENTS: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaborative Economic Development Report Presentation
PREPARED BY:	S. Novak, Economic Development Officer	
CLEARANCES:	M. Hay, Interim Chief Administrative Officer T. Nosko, Interim General Manager Administrative Services T. Auer, Manager of Planning & Economic Development	