

**FOSTERING  
GROWTH  
AND  
UNLOCKING  
POTENTIAL**

# EDMONTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PRIORITIES FOR THE 2023 ALBERTA ELECTION

Over the past several years Alberta has weathered economic headwinds, major fluctuations in worldwide natural resource prices, and a global pandemic that has left its mark on our province and our city. As always, our optimism, energy and grit have shaped our responses to these challenges, and today we're in a position to build on our past success and pave the way for our future prosperity.

As a non-partisan organization, the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce has prepared this document as a summary of our members' priorities for the parties contesting the 2023 Alberta Election. It is important for the overall success of Alberta that the voices of the business community are sought out by elected officials and reflected in provincial policy. We urge whichever party forms the next government to heed our policy recommendations and take them in the spirit of collaboration that they are intended. The recommendations herein have been developed in consultation with our policy committees and our membership.

While Edmonton is not without its challenges, the consensus outlook among our business community is one of cautious optimism. Presently, two-thirds of Edmonton businesses report an optimistic view of the future, but we know this optimism is stronger in some sectors and weaker in others. We need the partnership and support of the Government of Alberta to help overcome some persistent challenges, which are expanded upon with further detail in this document. We call on the Government of Alberta to make our province business-friendly by taking action in the following areas:

## → **Establish a Long-Term Fiscal Management Plan**

Establish a long-term plan that is committed to debt repayment and investing in the future.

## → **Improve Community Safety and Well-being**

Collaborate on solutions that improve access to appropriate services and enhance safety and well-being for all.

## → **Invest in and Foster Innovation**

Invest in innovation and diversification to build on the Edmonton Region's strengths and global leadership potential.

## → **Lead in Clean Energy and Reaching Net-Zero**

Continue investments to support the global shift to net-zero emissions while enhancing business competitiveness.

## → **Address the Growing Affordability Crisis**

Address rising cost pressures which are putting Edmonton businesses into financial hardship.

## → **Bridge the Skills Gap**

Ensure Albertans have the skills that today's labour market requires.

## → **Support our Growing Population**

Plan and build the additional infrastructure and services required to support our growing population.

# EDMONTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PRIORITIES FOR THE 2023 ALBERTA ELECTION

Additionally, the threads that we've woven throughout all of our recommendations, and are of crucial importance to our membership are:

- 1.** Policy certainty and stability, allowing businesses and those they serve and employ to make decisions based on a clear understanding of the conditions.
- 2.** Building our economy and communities by welcoming more equity-seeking groups to decision-making tables.
- 3.** Ensuring Alberta's regulatory frameworks in all sectors are business-friendly, harmonized across orders of government, and sensitive to the speed and dynamic needs of business.

The Edmonton Chamber of Commerce offers best wishes to those seeking office and looks forward to working closely with the next Government of Alberta.

ADVOCATE.  
CONNECT.  
EDUCATE.

# ESTABLISH A LONG-TERM FISCAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

While many political leaders speak about the needs of future generations, decision-making is often focused on immediate challenges. In Alberta, the government has never published a long-term fiscal plan.

Recent budget projections have shown large surpluses due to unexpectedly high oil prices. Contrasted with years of pressure due to low oil prices and the pandemic, the volatility of oil and gas revenues becomes glaring, and highlights the need for long-term fiscal planning.

Some actions that our businesses would like to see from the Government of Alberta include:

| WHAT WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | WHY                                                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>CREATE A RESPONSIBLE FISCAL PLAN.</b> | Adopt a fiscal anchor and a long-term plan that is committed to debt repayment and investing future surpluses. The plan should include clear definitions, performance tracking, and reporting measures.                                                          | Preserving the long-term fiscal stability of Alberta will ensure the province remains the best place to live for future generations.                                           |
|                                          | Clearly define the uses of funds (e.g., Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund) and rationale for investing savings on behalf of Albertans.                                                                                                                         | It is important that Albertans are clear about when and how funds are to be used for consistency and transparency.                                                             |
|                                          | Appoint an independent panel of experts to complete a comprehensive review of how government is funded and provide recommendations on current and potential sources of revenue.                                                                                  | Making Alberta's balance sheet less reliant on, and susceptible to, volatile market factors will ensure that our province is prepared for the fiscal challenges of the future. |
|                                          | Commit to publishing an annual report forecasting the economic impact of changes to Alberta's major industries, the Canadian economy, and demographic changes on the long-term fiscal health of the province that reaches at least twenty years into the future. | Refocusing government on the longer-term (at least twenty years) will ensure Alberta is positioned to weather an uncertain fiscal future.                                      |

According to [Trevor Tombe](#), professor of economics at the University of Calgary and a research fellow at The School of Public Policy, each US\$1 per barrel drop in the price of oil reduces the provincial surplus by roughly \$600 million.

Moody's Investors Service cited "...the provincial economy that remains concentrated and dependent on non-renewable resources..." as a major reason for downgrading Alberta's credit rating in 2019.

# IMPROVE COMMUNITY SAFETY AND WELL-BEING

Edmonton continues to need significant investment to improve community safety and support the social programs that help vulnerable people connect with the right help at the right time. Due to a shortage of appropriate supports, some actions that our businesses would like to see from the Government of Alberta include:

| WHAT WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | WHY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>SAFE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES.</b> | Increased patrolling of key business areas and transit centres by the Edmonton Police Service and multidisciplinary teams like the HELP and PACT teams. Ensure provincial grants for funding keeps up with rising costs and population and meets demand. | Businesses need to see increased visibility of police officers as part of the efforts to deter crime.                                                                                                                                       |
|                                      | Supporting the <a href="#">recommendation</a> of Edmonton City Council, additional funding for Business Improvement Areas is needed to address the significant social disorder they are facing.                                                          | Business Improvement Areas often experience higher levels of social disorder and crime which can severely affect business operations. Costs associated with theft, vandalism and graffiti, litter and damage to infrastructure are growing. |
|                                      | Ensure appropriate resources to support vulnerable populations and address enforcement when needed to improve safety on transit.                                                                                                                         | Crime and disorder on transit continues to rise. Edmonton Police service announced <a href="#">that “violent occurrences” were up 52.8 percent</a> in 2022 compared to 2021.                                                                |
|                                      | Review funding across all ministries to close gaps and, to echo <a href="#">the request of Edmonton’s Mayor</a> , ensure there are plans to support release from correctional facilities, hospitals, and persons in care.                                | Edmonton has more than double the remand and correctional spaces compared to Calgary and all orders of government must ensure support services are adequate and cohesive.                                                                   |
|                                      | Ensure funding agreements for domestic violence services increases to account for rising need and surging inflation.                                                                                                                                     | Predictable funding will allow organizations to deliver services at a level that meets increasing needs and a growing population.                                                                                                           |

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

**IMPROVEMENT IN COMMUNITY SAFETY  
AND WELL-BEING CONTINUED**

| WHAT WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE            |                                                                                                                                                                                       | WHY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>SAFE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES.</b> | Enhance education about contact services, such as 211, transit safety numbers, and other resources.                                                                                   | When assistance is available to businesses and individuals, they are better equipped to help those in need or access services themselves.                                                                                                             |
|                                      | Continue to invest in housing solutions across the entire housing spectrum. Supportive housing investments must include 24/7 supports to meet the needs of the population they serve. | Preventing and ending homelessness requires each order of government as well as the non-profit and private sectors to work collaboratively and take an evidence-based approach.                                                                       |
|                                      | Ensure adequate daytime and nighttime shelter spaces are available.                                                                                                                   | Edmonton has a critical need for additional shelter spaces to support unhoused community members. According to <a href="#">Mayor Sohi</a> , Edmonton has 1,250 fewer permanent shelter beds than Calgary despite having a larger unhoused population. |
|                                      | Urgently address the drug poisoning crisis and ensure services are available for those who need addictions treatment.                                                                 | <a href="#">Edmonton is currently struggling with a severe drug poisoning crisis</a> . In 2022, Edmonton EMS responded to 3,479 calls related to opioids which was almost double the number (1,761) responded to in Calgary.                          |



# INVEST IN AND FOSTER INNOVATION

As the economy shifts towards new opportunities, diversification within and without the energy sector is critical. The Edmonton Region is full of innovators, ready to lead the way and reach global markets with a geographical advantage for trade, global leaders in AI research, and with post-secondary institutions leading in research, skills training, and innovation. Some actions our business community would like to see include:

| WHAT WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                     | WHY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>MAKE THE EDMONTON REGION A CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN LOGISTICS.</b> | Improve regional trade infrastructure by investing in Edmonton's International Airport.                                                                                                             | Edmonton has many advantages in reaching global markets which can reduce the impact of existing and future supply chain disruptions and foster investment.                                                                               |
|                                                                      | Establish a health and life science strategy through consultation with business, agriculture, and manufacturing leaders; post-secondary institutions; innovation organizations; and municipalities. | The Edmonton Region has a strong foundation in the health and life science sector. Supporting the region's existing talent and opportunity will signal to investors that this sector is a high priority for all decision-makers.         |
| <b>PRIORITIZE THE HEALTH AND LIFE SCIENCE SECTOR.</b>                | Invest in a dedicated life science accelerator and specialized infrastructure to support the already strong research and commercialization ecosystem.                                               | Contribute to advancing research and development of Canadian pharmaceutical manufacturing. Capitalize on this growing sector and fill the gap for local start-ups who commercialize their intellectual property out of our jurisdiction. |
|                                                                      | Accelerate funding for projects in areas with speeds less than federal targets of 50 Mbps for downloads and 10 Mbps for uploads.                                                                    | Accessing high-speed internet is critical to diversifying Alberta's economy and connecting northern and rural based business with the world.                                                                                             |
| <b>ENSURE ALBERTA BUSINESSES HAVE ACCESS TO HIGH-SPEED INTERNET.</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

**INVEST IN AND FOSTER INNOVATION  
CONTINUED**

| WHAT WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE                                                           |                                                                                                                                                            | WHY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>SUPPORT FOR THE GROWING ARTS, TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRIES.</b>            | Implement a video game tax credit competitive with other Canadian jurisdictions.                                                                           | Previous tax credits caused an influx of game developers from 25 to 66 companies in only two years. Without a tax credit, companies are <a href="#">pausing plans</a> for further development in our cities.                                                                                                                             |
|                                                                                     | Work with industry and relevant groups to take action that establishes our region as an e-sports centre and supports the strength we have in the sector.   | According to the Alberta E-Sports Strategy, the sector works as a platform to bolster events, tourism and travel, modernize education and facilities, and enhance the innovation economy. With a strong grassroots community, places to play, and a talent presence and pipeline, Edmonton has strengths to support the emerging sector. |
|                                                                                     | Invest in arts and tourism through support for events and major conferences.                                                                               | Build on Edmonton’s state of the art venues, proven major event hosting experience, including world-class summer and winter festivals, and unique mix of urban and wilderness experiences to attract visitors and grow the visitor economy.                                                                                              |
|                                                                                     | Work with post-secondary institutions and industry groups to expand opportunities to support the arts and tourism industries through educational programs. | Support talent throughout the sector and ensure students are informed about career opportunities in arts, tourism, and hospitality.                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>THE EDMONTON REGION BECOMES A GLOBAL LEADER IN CRITICAL MINERAL DEVELOPMENT.</b> | Invest in geological and mineral mapping.                                                                                                                  | Reduces investors’ risks, making Alberta a safer jurisdiction in which to invest.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                                                                                     | Work with industry, Indigenous communities, and other community groups to review, amend, and establish the critical minerals regulatory regime.            | A streamlined, clear, and stable regulatory system that has broad community support is key to establishing investor confidence and ensuring resources are developed quickly.                                                                                                                                                             |
|                                                                                     | Enhance Indigenous involvement in mineral exploration and development.                                                                                     | Ensuring that Indigenous communities are partners in prosperity in the spirit of Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action 92(ii).                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                                                                                     | Enhance workforce skills in critical mineral development at every stage of development.                                                                    | Ensuring Albertans have the skills, expertise, and training in all stages of critical mineral development is essential to attracting investment and preventing investment flight to competing jurisdictions.                                                                                                                             |

**CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE**



## INVEST IN AND FOSTER INNOVATION CONTINUED

| WHAT WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                 | WHY                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>THE EDMONTON REGION BECOMES GLOBAL LEADER IN CRITICAL MINERAL DEVELOPMENT. (CONTINUED)</b> | Work with partners including the federal government to invest in opportunities along the full value chain to attract investment in research and new product development.                        | Will cultivate an emerging critical minerals sector with processing in Alberta beyond mining.                                                                                                                      |
|                                                                                               | Support critical mineral production by incentivizing private sector investment.                                                                                                                 | Will establish Alberta as one of the most attractive investment destinations in an emerging industry which the International Energy Agency (IEA) expects to exceed US\$400 billion in global market value by 2040. |
| <b>EDMONTON BUILDS ON ITS STRENGTHS IN AGRICULTURE.</b>                                       | Support the agriculture and agrifood sectors by continuing to invest in research and innovation to expand the role of technology and support the expansion of increased value-added production. | Agriculture and agrifood is critical to Alberta's economy with over <a href="#">\$9 billion in GDP annually</a> and <a href="#">employing almost 70,000 people</a> .                                               |

## Edmonton Region Strengths in Innovation and Reaching Global Markets:

### Innovation

- Post-secondary institutions in Edmonton lead in research, skills training, and innovation.
- The federal government has recently invested \$80 million for a new manufacturing facility in Edmonton through the Canadian Critical Drug Initiative (CCDI).
- The Edmonton Research Park focuses on medicine and biotechnology.
- The University of Alberta is a global leader in AI research.
- Edmonton has the fastest-growing technology ecosystem in North America.
- Surrounded by 1.7 million acres of fertile farmland, the Edmonton region's strong research and development ecosystems support the province's agriculture industry at all stages of production.

### Reaching Global Markets

- The Edmonton International Airport is the closest major North American airport to Asia.
- The Edmonton International Airport is the only CEIV Pharma certified airport in Canada for handling temperature-sensitive cargo such as food products and pharmaceutical and medical cargo.
- Edmonton is located on the important CANAMEX trade corridor.
- Edmonton connects with Class 1 rail lines to both ports of Vancouver and Prince Rupert.

Canadian businesses continue to face the impacts of increasing pressure on supply chains. A March 2022 survey by Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters (CME) of its members showed that nine out of ten Canadian manufacturers were encountering supply chain issues, with over 60 per cent rating the impact of these disruptions as either major or severe.

# LEAD IN CLEAN ENERGY AND REACH NET-ZERO

Since the discovery of oil in 1947 at Leduc No. 1, the Edmonton region has been at the forefront of Alberta’s energy sector. The sector is responsible for thousands of direct jobs in the Edmonton region and many times more indirectly.

The energy sector is essential to Alberta’s economy and the province has been a leader in technology advancements to address climate change. Our members and the broader business community believe the critical policy opportunity that lies ahead of Alberta is the harmonization of climate and energy policy. As we continue to develop our resources in a responsible and sustainable way, we will need to ensure we are meeting market demands for our energy products as well as market demands on sustainability goals. Some actions that our businesses would like to see from the Government of Alberta include:

| WHAT WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                    | WHY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>UNLOCK PRIVATE SECTOR INNOVATION AND INVESTMENT TO REACH NET-ZERO GOALS.</b> | Work with businesses and other orders of government to establish policy certainty.                                                                                                 | According to the Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero (GFANZ) estimates, 70% of the direct investment needed to reach net-zero emissions will need to come from private investment. Currently, one of the main barriers to accessing private sector capital is the lack of policy certainty.                                   |
|                                                                                 | Ensure Renewable Natural Gas (RNG) regulations are incentivizing investment and development by completing a comprehensive review of RNG regulations in consultation with industry. | Developing Alberta’s RNG potential is critical to reducing emissions and meeting net-zero goals. Alberta RNG has the potential to supply <a href="#">over 1 million residential homes</a> with gas without major upgrades to existing infrastructure.                                                                             |
| <b>BECOME THE GLOBAL LEADER IN HYDROGEN PRODUCTION.</b>                         | Ensure strong investment in Alberta carbon capture, utilization and storage (CCUS) projects.                                                                                       | Alberta can become a major global supplier of clean hydrogen while reducing our provincial carbon emissions and ultimately reaching net-zero emissions. Alberta’s natural gas reserves are a proven source of affordable hydrogen production and, when combined with CCUS, this equates to a quickly scalable low carbon process. |

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

**LEAD IN CLEAN ENERGY AND REACH NET-ZERO CONTINUED**

| WHAT WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                      | WHY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>DEVELOP A CCUS INVESTMENT TAX CREDIT (ITC).</b>                         | The credit should mirror the American tax credit with a starting date retroactive to before 2023 and extending 12 years from the beginning of a project's operation. | This gives proponents sufficient time to develop and deploy CCUS projects and provides investment certainty and clarity.                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|                                                                            | Alberta's ITC should be at least 15% and structured so that, when combined with the federal government's ITC, it matches or exceeds the American tax credit.         | The ITC is critical to attracting investment in Alberta CCUS and it offers an impressive ROI while preventing investment flight to more competitive jurisdictions. <a href="#">A 1996 New York State Office of Tax Policy Analysis report</a> estimates that given New York's 5 percent ITC, one dollar in credits leverages \$20 in investment. |
|                                                                            | Ensure that the CCUS ITC can also be combined with other federal and provincial incentive programs.                                                                  | Increase the financial benefit, making Alberta an attractive investment destination in an emerging industry.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>ESTABLISH THE EDMONTON REGION AS A GLOBAL LEADER IN PETRO-CHEMICALS</b> | Enhance the Alberta Petrochemical Incentive Program (APIP) by expanding definition of "eligible capital".                                                            | Simplifying the APIP will increase certainty and attract investment.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|                                                                            | Extend the project completion deadline for eligible APIP projects.                                                                                                   | Refreshing the APIP's deadlines to align with the United States will maintain a level investment playing field and prevent investment flight.                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|                                                                            | Fast-track APIP payment schedule for projects over \$150 million to two years.                                                                                       | Improving a project's feasibility during the viability assessment period makes Alberta a more attractive investment destination.                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|                                                                            | Consider expanding APIP to projects using other feedstock.                                                                                                           | By expanding APIP to include other feedstock that are produced in the Edmonton Region, Alberta will attract investment that adds value to Alberta's energy products and help to further diversify the economy.                                                                                                                                   |

**Alberta is home to more than half of Canada's petrochemical processing capacity.**

**The International Energy Agency (IEA) predicts that hydrogen demand will grow six-fold by 2050.**

**Alberta is estimated to have the capacity to sequester 78,000 MtCO<sub>2</sub>, yet only 55.8 MtCO<sub>2</sub> is currently being sequestered.**

# ADDRESS THE GROWING AFFORDABILITY CRISIS

Rising costs are a growing concern in our province and must be urgently addressed. For example, the [Housing Needs Assessment](#) identifies that Edmonton has over 360,000 homes but fewer than 15,000 social and affordable housing units, while 49,000 households live in core housing need, and this number is expected to increase.

Cost pressures are having a major impact on businesses as well. According to Q1 2023 data from the [Business Data Lab](#) (BDL), businesses in Edmonton expect to face challenges due to the rising cost of inputs, inflation, and rising interest rates and debt costs. As a result of just the rising cost of borrowing, 29.8% of businesses are expecting to reduce investment over the next three months. Effective policy relief will need to be targeted to mitigate the most severe effects of the affordability crisis. Some actions that the Edmonton business community would like to see to alleviate these pressures include:

48.8% of businesses in Edmonton expect to face challenges due to the rising cost of inputs over the next three months.

61.9% of Edmonton businesses expect challenges due to rising inflation.

41.6% expect challenges due to rising interest rates and debt costs.

As a result of the rising cost of borrowing, 29.8% of businesses are expecting to reduce investment over the next three months.\*

| WHAT WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE                          |                                                                                                                                     | WHY                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>SUPPORT TO HELP WITH RISING COST PRESSURES.</b> | Expand the commercial Clean Energy Improvement Program (CEIP) eligibility to projects exceeding one million dollars in total costs. | The cap on the maximum amount a project can cost is a major barrier to commercial property owners interested in utilizing the CEIP program.                                                                 |
|                                                    | Enhance retrofit programs to support homeowners and businesses with rising energy costs.                                            | Energy poverty is growing in Alberta, most acutely experienced by those in older buildings that need upgrades.                                                                                              |
|                                                    | Investments in, and commitment to, reducing the barriers to accessing housing across the spectrum.                                  | Due to the increasing cost of owning or renting a home, Alberta's affordability is at risk.                                                                                                                 |
|                                                    | Continue to provide targeted supports for Albertans to meet their basic needs until inflation rates cool.                           | Affordability relief must be responsive, targeted, and temporary in order to be effective and should be based on income and household size.                                                                 |
|                                                    | Support not-for-profit agencies with stable and predictable funding and consult stakeholders to ensure resources are maximized.     | Many not-for-profit organizations have seen funding stagnate in recent years which has led to reduced service levels in some cases. Social services play a critical role in meeting the needs of Albertans. |
|                                                    | Limit increases to fees and regulations wherever possible.                                                                          | Review onerous and unnecessary regulations and fees and streamline regulatory approvals.                                                                                                                    |

# BRIDGE THE SKILLS GAP

Alberta is experiencing a skills gap that is costing our economy greatly. In the first quarter of 2023, an average of 28% of businesses in Edmonton stated that they were experiencing a labour shortage and 27.8% stated that they struggled with recruiting skilled employees.\*

Addressing the skills gap will require additional effort, but the opportunities it will generate for businesses will be immense. Some actions that our business community would like to see from the Government of Alberta include:

| WHAT WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                               | WHY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>ENSURE STABLE, ONGOING INVESTMENT IN SKILLS TRAINING AND POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS.</b> | Create pathways to transfer skills through upgrading, re-training, and apprenticeship programs for underemployed Albertans.                                                                   | For those who have skills that are lower in demand, upskilling and reskilling helps to gain employment opportunities.                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|                                                                                              | Ensure that post-secondary institutions and regulatory bodies support opportunities for growth in low-carbon energy, including through certification programs.                                | The oil and gas sector accounts for approximately 6% of jobs in Alberta. With so many skills already in our energy sector, there is a great opportunity to build on these skills by adding new areas of expertise.                                                                                                         |
|                                                                                              | Attract international students by working with post-secondary institutions to strengthen Canada's global brand as a study destination, especially in fields experiencing shortages.           | International students represent an underutilized opportunity for meeting the needs of the Albertan economy as they are proficient in at least one Canadian official language, and have Canadian credentials and in-demand labour skills.                                                                                  |
|                                                                                              | Change the employment requirement of the Alberta Advantage Immigration Program (AAIP) to a one-year offer of employment.                                                                      | Expanding the AAIP would allow more Alberta-trained international students to remain in our province following graduation.                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>ATTRACT MORE SKILLED WORKERS TO ALBERTA.</b>                                              | Collaborate with the federal, provincial and territorial governments, and professional regulatory bodies to create conditions for improved transferability of credentials across the country. | Skills gaps are being felt across the country and, with reduced barriers to mobility, people can move to the jurisdiction that needs their skills and begin to work in their field as soon as possible.                                                                                                                    |
|                                                                                              | Expand marketing to include more aspects of what makes the capital city, and Alberta, great.                                                                                                  | <a href="#">Studies show</a> that there is a divide between all that Alberta offers and people's perception of the province, which has a negative impact on youth attraction and retention. By sharing more about what makes Alberta great, we can change this perception and attract more skilled people to our province. |

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

**BRIDGE THE SKILLS GAP  
CONTINUED**

| WHAT WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE                                            |                                                                                                                                                                          | WHY                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>SUPPORT<br/>BUSINESSES IN<br/>FILLING THEIR<br/>HIRING NEEDS.</b> | Review programs such as the Alberta Job Grant to ensure program access is comparable to other provinces and training opportunities include owners of small businesses.   | Owners of small businesses will benefit from increased training to help them expand their business.                                                                                                                               |
|                                                                      | Support new and existing programs that remove systemic barriers, support underrepresented groups, and increase the capacity of non-profit organizations doing this work. | There are many non-profit organizations with missions to help underemployed groups to access the workforce. Funding to support capacity through non-profit organizations will help grow strength through many community networks. |
|                                                                      | Expand access to grants for work-integrated learning through the Canada-Alberta Job Grant or other avenues.                                                              | Work-integrated learning is being offered by many post-secondary programs and is a great opportunity for students to gain relevant work experience and for employers to have their needs met.                                     |

**Edmonton Region’s Strengths in Attracting and Retaining Skilled Workers:**

- The River Valley is the [largest stretch of urban parkland](#) in North America and is 22 times larger than Central Park in New York City.
- Edmonton has plans to [double](#) its population.
- The region represents [one third](#) of Alberta’s population.
- Edmonton is the [northern-most major city](#), and we embrace our winters with festivals, sporting events and cuisines that make up our strong arts and culture scene year-round.
- The city is the [second youngest](#) metro region in Canada.
- Edmonton is North America’s [fastest growing](#) tech ecosystem.

# SUPPORT OUR GROWING POPULATION

Alberta’s population has grown by over 58,000 in the third quarter of 2022 alone, shattering records for the province. Edmonton needs robust capital investment in infrastructure to keep up with this growth, whether it is roads and transit, trade infrastructure, schools and hospitals, or arts, cultural and recreational facilities.

In a labour market that is flexible and global, talented workers have more choice about where they live. We must ensure that our urban centres have the amenities that workers and their families need. Some areas where Edmonton specifically could use support include:

| WHAT WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                   | WHY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>ENSURE ALBERTANS HAVE ACCESS TO CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE.</b> | Investment in homes, schools, childcare spaces, and hospitals.                                                                                                                                    | As more people move to Edmonton, the number of homes, schools, hospitals, and childcare spaces must keep up to support the growing population.                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                                                 | The Government of Alberta must urgently address the shortage of doctors, nurses, and other health professionals.                                                                                  | Timely access to health care is fundamental to the well-being of Albertans, and the lack of timely access has an impact on businesses.                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|                                                                 | Increased investment in mental health resources and capacity including counselling resources, attraction of mental health professionals, and resources for businesses to support their employees. | The impact of mental health issues on workplaces can be severe, including reduced productivity, increased absenteeism and presenteeism, higher staff turnover, and decreased job satisfaction. <a href="#">The MHCC estimates that 500,000 Canadians miss work each week due to mental health issues</a> , costing the Canadian economy \$50 billion a year. |
| <b>ENSURE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION CONNECTS KEY ZONES.</b>         | Collaborate with the City of Edmonton to establish a direct bus route between downtown and the airport.                                                                                           | When looking to a city for trade, hosting capabilities for large events, and for travel, visitors value the ability to reach their destination quickly and conveniently. By improving the convenience of Edmonton’s airport access, we can maximize the opportunities to share our capital city and province with visitors.                                  |
|                                                                 | Work with the City of Edmonton to expand transportation services, connect business districts, and improve transit safety.                                                                         | Improvements are needed in transportation infrastructure to connect business districts. Doing so will support vibrancy by bringing new people and ideas to key business improvement areas.                                                                                                                                                                   |

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

**SUPPORT OUR GROWING  
POPULATION CONTINUED**

| WHAT WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE                     |                                                                                                                                                                       | WHY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>ENSURE BUSINESS DISTRICTS ARE VIBRANT.</b> | Support Edmonton’s arts, sports and culture sector through investment in infrastructure, festivals, and events.                                                       | As our many festivals, events and experiences display, Edmonton’s arts sector plays a critical role in the excellent quality of life we have in the capital city. Investing in and promoting this sector will help to attract talent and tourism to the province.                                                              |
|                                               | Explore ways to increase the number of people living, working, and visiting Edmonton’s downtown and business districts and continue partnerships to support vibrancy. | As of February 2023, Edmonton’s downtown workforce mobility has <u>decreased by 50%</u> from pre-pandemic levels. The downtown plays a major role for the city and the region by supporting the visitor economy, arts, entertainment, and investment attraction. More work is needed to enhance vibrancy and stimulate growth. |

*\*The Canadian Survey on Business Conditions Report (CSBCR) presents in-depth quarterly analysis of the CSBC conducted by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce’s Business Data Lab. The Business Data Lab collaborates with the Canadian Chamber’s network of boards of trade and chambers of commerce to distribute and amplify CSBC insights to the local level.*





9990 Jasper Ave #600, Edmonton, AB T5J 1P7