



2019 -2022 BUSINESS PLAN

# Brighter Together.

Economic Development is the process of developing and maintaining suitable economic, social, cultural, learning, environmental and political environments in which balanced growth may be realized, increasing the prosperity of the community.



## **2019-2022 Business Plan**

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# Why Economic Development?

## MISSION

EDL's mission is to strengthen and diversify the Lethbridge economy by initiating and facilitating proactive economic development strategies and promoting Lethbridge as an excellent place to live, learn, invest, visit and do business.

## VISION

Lethbridge:

- continues to be a strong, diversified community, embracing opportunity.
- is a thriving community where planned and balanced growth inspires investment.
- is recognized as a family-friendly, business oriented community.
- will be a leader in supporting and creating the framework and infrastructure required for business, academic, social and cultural entrepreneurship and innovation.

## VALUE STATEMENTS/ROLES

As ambassadors of the community and the Lethbridge brand, we will be:

### Innovative

We think ahead, always with imagination, creativity, and a drive to be part of the next big thing.

### Collaborative

We are stronger together and unite under the same cause.

### Engaged

We are committed to this community and the work that we do.

### Approachable

We are connected to our business community. We listen, understand and offer support for the next steps forward.

### Strong

We work to bring strength and stability to the local economy and within our organization.

### Leaders

We are pioneers for the future prosperity and evolution of Lethbridge.

## 2018-2019 BOARD MEMBERS (Note: Blue indicates City of Lethbridge appointed positions)

Economic Development Lethbridge is an arm's length organization, supported by the City of Lethbridge, governed by a 25-member volunteer Board of Directors and managed by a team of professionals dedicated to promoting economic prosperity in Lethbridge. EDL Board Members are drawn from a diverse cross-section of the community with the intention of best accomplishing the mandate and objectives of the organization.

### Aboriginal: Rob Crow

Agriculture: Christine King

Arts & Culture: Danielle Tait

Chamber of Commerce: Karla Pyrch

City Mayor: Chris Spearman

City Councillor: Mark Campbell

City Manager: Bramwell Strain

Commercial: Robert Kinniburgh

Construction: Richard Thiessen

County/Airport: Klaas Vander Veen

Environment: Kathleen Sheppard

Finance: Jason Sentes

Industrial: Terry Friesen

Lethbridge College: John Jacobson

Multicultural: Richard Kofi Odei-Wontumi

Not-for-Profit: Jennifer Schmidt-Rempel (Board Chair)

Past-President: Bill Spenceley

Regional: Mark Brown

Retail: Kevin Brees

Seniors: Pat Santa

Service: Sandra Mintz

Sports & Recreation: Todd Caughlin

Technical/Research: Chris Stasiuk

Tourism: Marie Milsom Galeana

Transportation: Brad Beerling

University of Lethbridge: Erasmus Okine



## **We are Brighter Together.**

EDL is the support system, the community collaborator and proactive advocate for the future evolution, growth, and prosperity of Lethbridge; primarily as a destination for enterprise, but also as a place for residents to live and work with a great sense of wellbeing. With the support of our Board, we work together to build a bright future.

# Build & Diversify the Economy.

New models of economic development are being considered around the world. The New Economics Foundation (UK) and the New Economics Institute (USA) are just two organizations working on more dynamic models of economic development. Their work emphasizes that the quality of jobs, not the quantity, is key. This is because the current expectations for standard of living improvement generally encompass Quality of Life measures, not just “having a job”. More focus on non-traditional metrics like accessibility of health, education, sports and cultural facilities, levels of literacy as well as environmental sustainability are driving investment decisions.

According to Charlie Coffey, Executive Vice President, RBC Financial Group, “**The foundation of a healthy community is a sustainable and diverse economy that generates wealth for community members, businesses, and all those who interact within the community.** That wealth provides income-earning opportunities for members, contributes to the quality of life, makes the community an attractive place to live and reduces poverty and crime - thereby achieving the vision of a healthy community.” (March, 2004).

Disruption from technology driven change is expected to accelerate in an increasingly digitally enabled global economy. Cyber security and the protection of critical infrastructure is increasingly an important consideration for site selectors who need to protect their interests. The nature of work itself is changing as are the needs of businesses in competing around the world with shifting consumer preferences matched with new ways of doing things.

Globalization is also creating increased pressure for communities to differentiate themselves to attract new residents and business investment to their region. Recognizing the importance of place, Economic Development Lethbridge, has been working on community brand development through a rich mix of tactics such as research (in-person interviews, social media mining, place-attachment measurement), education, community engagement (on-line and in person), community presentations, concept development and refinement.

This process helped us identify, through the voice of our residents, some of the strengths that make us unique, challenges that we face and opportunities for growth and catalytic change. This foundation ultimately led to a deeper understanding of the values our community naturally shares and embraces. Lethbridge is a desirable and welcoming place to live and raise a family. A place where we are proud of our traditions, culture and natural beauty. We welcome businesses and people that think differently. We are also well positioned to lead the way in education and innovation.

While these value statements reflect part of the experience of Lethbridge, they also help us promote opportunities in our city and the tremendous potential that exists for business success and quality of life.

We remain committed to building a bright community, together, with a focus on supporting business growth, entrepreneur development and innovative initiatives that keep our community grounded, connected, and sustainable.

# Build and Share the Lethbridge Brand.

## BRAND STORY

Our spirit of innovation is more than just the way we do business. It's a way of life. We recognize that we are a product of our incredible environment, and know we each play a role in weaving the cultural fabric we proudly call our community. We are not afraid to stand apart, but we are **brighter together**. We are Lethbridge.

## BRAND ESSENCE

**Bold**  
**Vibrant**  
**Technological**  
**Grounded**  
**Smart**

## BRAND OBJECTIVE

Lethbridge is recognized as a city that embodies an intelligent and thoughtful community, with deep roots that support innovation.

# Key Outcomes & Results from our 2015-2018 Business Plan.

## 22 Actions



15 complete



2 incomplete



4 in progress



1 deferred

### BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



1. Aggressively market Tecconnect, update business plan and support the establishment of technology companies



2. Partner with private sector to further develop the environment for technology company success



3. Work with RINSA and other partners to create, access and offer services to support commercialization and expansion



4. Work with our partners to attract or create a Western Canadian conference with emerging sector relevance



5. Identify and pursue wealth-generating industry growth opportunities



6. Support local industry in achieving their objectives and overcoming barriers to growth



7. Capitalize on the scope of industry data and research to support business readiness



8. Work closely with other community organizations to understand and meet the needs of business

### MEETING & EVENT DEVELOPMENT



1. Build on established relationships with professional planners to capture business traveler revenues



2. Continue collaboration to provide quality business traveler and guest experiences



3. Work with partners to support bids for major events



4. Work with other tourism organizations to create destination management plan



5. Support the transition to a new tourism model and manage the resulting organizational impacts



## RESPECT & REPUTATION

- ✓ 1. Achieve Intelligent Community designation
- ✓ 2. Discuss and develop the range of criteria to benchmark Lethbridge as a “first-class small city”
- ⌚ 3. Develop the Lethbridge Brand through 2017, launching in 2018
- ➔ 4. Create a national promotional tour (deferred to next business plan)

## STABILITY & SUSTAINABILITY

- ✓ 1. Deliver effective regular meetings focused on strategic governance and policy
- ✓ 2. Ensure meeting attendance and engagement in other events
- ✓ 3. Focus on ongoing policy development
- ⌚ 4. Develop a Board skills and competencies matrix
- ✗ 5. Identify Board Development opportunities

# Six Pillars.

Our strategy to build and diversify the economy can be divided into 6 key focus areas or pillars for the 2019-2022 Business plan:

## 1. Business Retention & Expansion (BRE)

Help existing businesses to expand and grow. We connect business to sources of funding, help remove barriers, provide advice and work to encourage the use of local suppliers and inputs.

## 2. Investment Attraction

Seek out access to new markets and engaging new wealth-generating business to grow our economy with focus on four priority sectors: agri-food, technology, manufacturing and renewable energy.

## 3. Entrepreneurship & Innovation

Leverage Tecconnect as a centre of excellence to create a supportive environment in collaboration with our regional partners for technology based start-ups. Empowering and enabling small business owners to create, experiment and succeed.

## 4. Marketing & Advocacy

Elevate Lethbridge in the provincial and national marketplace through the launch of a community brand. Building collaborative relationships with industry associations, government agencies to help knock down barriers to business.

## 5. Catalytic Projects

Initiate or support major projects that by their nature have the potential for inducing incremental development and economic growth in the region.

## 6. Operational Excellence

Continue to innovate to find efficiencies in our operations and ensure an effective organization well positioned to serve the community into the future.

The primary goals outlined in this plan include four New Initiative Funding requests to support:

- Opportunities and Barriers to Business
- Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)
- Lethbridge Brand Implementation
- Agrifood Corridor Marketing & Development

## 1. Business Retention & Expansion

Help existing businesses to expand and grow. We connect business to sources of funding, help remove barriers, provide advice and work to encourage the use of local suppliers and inputs.

### Top 3 Goals:

- a. **Supply Chain & Logistics Sector:** Building upon our partnerships and initial work to promote a multi-modal systems based approach to transportation, we will support businesses in this sector to expand to serve the market.
- b. **Knowledge Workforce:** Connecting workforce development organizations in the community (including our post-secondary institutions and private providers) with businesses to ensure programs match industry need.

c. **Reducing Barriers** (New Initiative Request): Gathering market intelligence to build capacity in the region to ultimately support business to increase the use of local suppliers and inputs.

### Success Measures:

- Red flags addressed/resolved is increased, number of green flags increased
- Supply chain and logistics sector GDP and employment improved

## 2. Investment Attraction

Seek out access to new markets and engaging new wealth-generating business to grow our economy with focus on four priority sectors: agri-food, technology, manufacturing and renewable energy.

### Top 3 Goals:

- a. **Market Analysis and Intelligence:** Supporting business readiness and improved decision making with Economic Development Lethbridge known as a hub for quality information, research and analysis.
- b. **Targeted Sectors:** Developing strategies to leverage our strengths and deliver high levels of client care to attract new investments in priority sectors.

c. **Regional Foreign Direct Investment** (New Initiative Request): Building past successes, continue to collaborate with regional partners.

### Success Measures:

- Conversion rate (landed vs inquiries) improved
- Investment values increased
- Jobs created

### 3. Entrepreneurship & Innovation

Leverage Tecconnect as a centre of excellence to create a supportive environment in collaboration with our regional partners for technology based start-ups. Empowering and enabling small business owners to create, experiment and succeed.

#### Top 3 Goals:

- a. **RINSA/Partnership Development:** Working with our partners in the Regional Innovation Network of Southern Alberta, we will expand our reach in the region and continue to serve as a model across the province.
- b. **Tecconnect:** Nurturing the development of technology start-ups and accelerate the commercialization of new products/services.
- c. **Investor Network/Ecosystem:** Fostering new relationships within the community to increase the availability of non-traditional capital for entrepreneurs.

#### Success Measures:

- Graduate company performance (jobs created, sales and payroll generated)
- Products / services commercialized increased
- Entrepreneurs supported increased
- Jobs created

### 4. Marketing & Advocacy

Elevate Lethbridge in the provincial and national marketplace through the launch of a community brand. Building collaborative relationships with industry associations, government agencies to help knock down barriers to business.

#### Top 3 Goals:

- a. **Brand Implementation** (New Initiative Request): Complete brand asset development and lead deployment supporting on-line accessibility of assets for community partners.
- b. **Digital Content:** Lead activation of the brand by expanding existing digital media strategies and executing enhancements contemplated in the brand strategy.
- c. **Team Lethbridge:** Coordinate the planned 2019 and 2021 missions to Edmonton and support relevant additional interactions as opportunities arise within the Team Lethbridge umbrella.

#### Success Measures:

- Place Attachment Survey results improved (vs baseline)
- Post-secondary graduate retention rates improved
- Targeted population segment increases

## 5. Catalytic Projects

Initiate or actively support major projects that by their nature have the potential for inducing incremental development and economic growth in the region. Leverage our networks to actively engage stakeholders and attract investment.

### Top 3 Goals:

- a. **Airport redevelopment:** Support the creation of a comprehensive land use and redevelopment strategy with corresponding targeted investment attraction strategy.
- b. **Agri-Food Corridor:** Working with regional partners, develop marketing materials to better position the region on a national and international level for value added processing investment opportunities.
- c. **Innovation District:** Supporting the development of appropriate planning, land use, incentive and business retention tactics to move forward the objectives of the concepts of an Innovation District arising from the Smart Cities Challenge.

### Success Measures:

- Investment inquiries landed
- Development permit values increased
- Post-secondary graduate retention rates improved

## 6. Operational Excellence

Continue to innovate to find efficiencies in our operations and ensure an effective organization well positioned to serve the community into the future. EDL is a stable organization with an effective governance board. EDL has policies and programs that engage qualified employees with the resources required to generate results for the community.

### Top 3 Goals:

- a. **Funding Diversification:** Seek out new grants, partners and other sources of funding to maximize our leverage of municipal funding investments. This includes continued corporate sponsorships and other ventures to ensure a sustainable future.
- b. **Efficiency & Optimization:** Innovative delivery of services combined with a continuous improvement mindset will help to realize continued cost reductions and operational efficiencies.
- c. **Staff/Board Development:** Enhance Board member recruitment and skill development to ensure a dynamic group of thought leaders are well positioned to act as the stewards of the economic strategy for Lethbridge.

### Success Measures:

- Leveraged funding ratio increased
- Program vs operational expense ratio improved
- Number of qualified board vacancy applications increased
- Board of Directors' Self-Assessment survey results improved

# Alignment with City Council's strategic plan.

City Council Vision: We will continue to work together to ensure that Lethbridge demonstrates active leadership in environmental stewardship and innovation and is recognized as being a safe, healthy, vibrant, prosperous, economically viable place where all people can fully participate in community life.

## DEVELOP AND LEVERAGE RELATIONSHIPS

City Goal	EDL's alignment through work with:
Identify and advocate for issues important to Lethbridge and the region	Southern Alberta Alternative Energy Partnership Southern Alberta Investment & Trade Initiative Lethbridge-Taber Food Corridor Regional Innovation Network of Southern Alberta
Focus on our intergovernmental relationships	Alberta Economic Development & Trade Alberta Agriculture & Forestry Economic Developers Alberta Economic Developers Association of Canada Invest Alberta Trade Commissioner Service Innovation, Science & Economic Development
Liaise and work with community stakeholders, including public sector partners and the business community	25 Member Board Initiative Partners Team Lethbridge

## WORK WITH BUSINESSES TO IDENTIFY BARRIERS TO INVESTMENT

City Goal	EDL's alignment through work with:
Promote the City of Lethbridge through a community brand	Development of the brand and implementation plan
Revitalize the airport as a key factor in expanding economic opportunity	Redevelopment planning and targeted investment attraction
Review our supply and access to industrial lands	Land use planning, business expansion, targeted investment attraction

## ENRICH OUR COMMUNITY THROUGH DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY

City Goal	EDL's alignment through work with:
Develop shared leadership with our Indigenous community to develop local solutions toward reconciliation in our community	Indigenous entrepreneur training, mentorship in collaboration with Blood Tribe Economic Development, Indigenous Resource Group, Community Futures Treaty 7 Southern Alberta Women in Business entrepreneurship training for immigrants through BusinessLink

# New Initiative Funding Request Summary.

## OPPORTUNITIES AND BARRIERS TO BUSINESS

Funding in this area will create an opportunity to identify barriers faced by the business community as well as enhance relationships through a series of standardized Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) programs. While EDL has core BRE programs in place, there is a need and strong alignment with City Council's strategic plan to enhance the reach and impact of these programs. These enhanced initiatives require additional resources that are not currently in the EDL budget. The program will support the needs of the business community by providing market intelligence regarding local investment opportunities and growth potential. While other community organizations work on elements of BRE within their mandates, this initiative will be focused on intelligence gathering and will aggregate information in a cohesive way, to provide data on the city's competitive position and market networks.

## FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT (FDI)

The objective of this initiative is to re-engage with foreign investment opportunities through continued missions and enhanced relationships with businesses looking to expand into foreign markets. Southern Alberta remains well positioned to capture the interest of foreign markets and to expand trade relationships. Diversifying our economy by increasing access to new markets is important to our industries and to City Council's strategic plan. The Southern Alberta Investment & Trade Initiative will focus on four key segments, Agriculture (Agri-food), Technology & Innovation, Tourism and Renewable Energy. We will continue to market to China and Asia Pacific countries as well as India and Europe.

## LETHBRIDGE BRAND IMPLEMENTATION

The objective of the brand initiative is that at the end of 2022, Lethbridge is known as a place that "embodies an intelligent and thoughtful community, with deep roots that support innovation." The brand goals include:

- support economic diversification in Lethbridge
- help to build a knowledge economy founded in creativity and innovation
- capture the personality of the city: solid (rooted in history and tradition), enthusiastic, friendly, intelligent, green
- attract smart, interesting businesses and people to enrich life in the city
- continue to build a diverse, friendly community

The objective of the Brand Launch is to maximize promotion by developing a partner-based approach that empowers brand ambassadors, ensures financial viability and expands EDL's capacity to promote the community in unique and impactful ways.

## AGRIFOOD CORRIDOR MARKETING & DEVELOPMENT

This initiative will support the development of marketing materials and related collateral to promote a Lethbridge-Taber Agrifood Corridor to enhance the position of the region and drive attendance at key industry events. A regional approach combined with a targeted investment attraction strategy in the agrifood processing sector is the most effective way to engage large, multi-national companies. Developing professional print, video and web properties to support investment attraction work will enhance existing efforts to better present the rich resources of southern Alberta to lure new and large scale value added processing. This will also enable the region to actively engage with/take advantage of emerging opportunities from the federal supercluster program administered by Protein Industries Canada (PIC) & the Plant Protein Alliance of Alberta.

# Budget summary.

	PREVIOUS BUSINESS PLAN				NEW BUSINESS PLAN			
	2015 Actual	2016 Actual	2017 Actual	2018 Budget	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Economic Development</b>	716,480	730,809	745,425	760,334	760,334	760,334	760,334	760,334
<b>Convention &amp; Event</b>	235,222	239,927	244,725	62,405	-	-	-	-
<b>Tecconnect Support</b>	71,681	72,120	72,562	73,013	73,013	73,013	73,013	73,013
<b>Total Base</b>	1,023,383	1,042,856	1,062,712	895,752	833,347	833,347	833,347	833,347
<b>New Initiatives</b>	144,500	144,500	-	-	77,500	29,500	29,500	29,500
<b>Total Municipal Contribution</b>	1,167,883	1,187,356	1,062,712	895,752	910,847	862,847	862,847	862,847
<b>Leveraged Funding**</b>	673,716	402,425	442,742	534,430	500,966	474,566	474,566	474,566
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>1,841,599</b>	<b>1,589,781</b>	<b>1,505,454</b>	<b>1,430,182</b>	<b>1,411,813</b>	<b>1,337,413</b>	<b>1,337,413</b>	<b>1,337,413</b>

\*\*2015-2018 \$0.44 leverage funding ratio.

\*\*2019-2022 Target \$0.55 leverage funding ratio.

## BUDGET CHALLENGES

- Deliver efficiencies to offset Inflationary pressures in wages & benefits, office lease/occupancy costs and fee for service contracts
- Incremental productivity to address impact on fixed costs associated with implementation of LDMO requires new sources of matching or leverage funds
- Diminishing returns given fixed operating costs reduction of 18% over last 4 year business plan
- Uncertainty in provincial/federal grant programs to provide matching funds for new initiative requests
- Risks to next 3 year RINSA proposal and other related provincial funding during next budget cycle

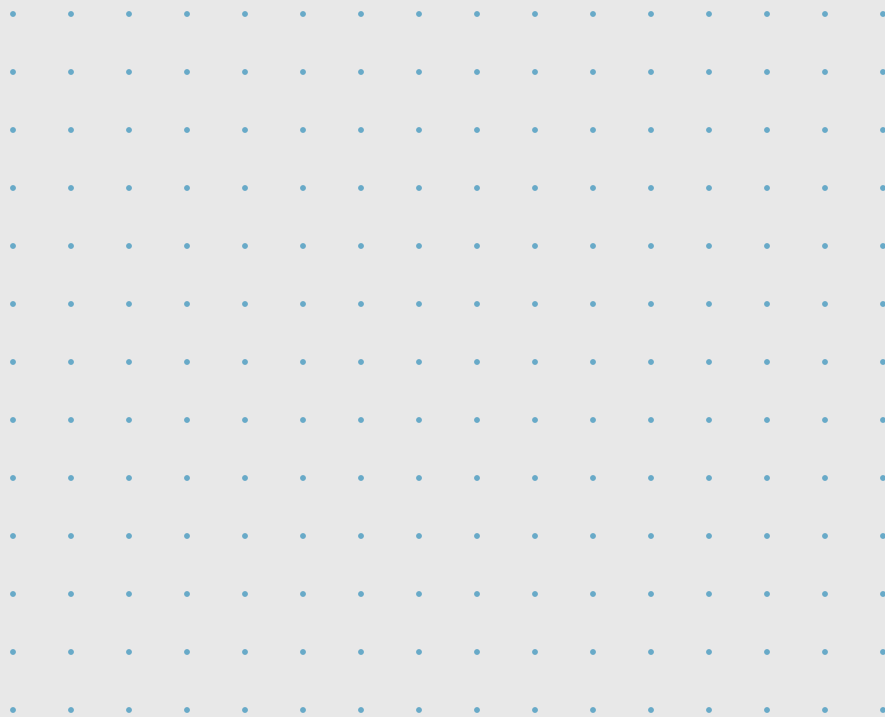
## Environmental Risks.

To increase the likelihood of achieving its outcomes, the organization must consider and manage strategic risks:

- Lethbridge has historically had among the lowest unemployment rates in the province, the availability of a skilled, knowledge workforce is critical to sustaining growth of industry. Workforce development is increasingly a concern and potential area of incremental work for economic development organizations across Canada.
- Rising protectionism internationally may impact Lethbridge's ability to access markets for its products and services. At the same time, new opportunities for investment relationships exist with trade agreements in Asia (CPTPP) and Europe (CETA) which will require resources to develop and explore.
- Trade and the flow of investment into Alberta and by extension Lethbridge will continue to be affected by geopolitical uncertainty and commodity price volatility requiring accurate data collection and analysis.
- Increased competitive landscape within Alberta with new investments in the capital region with the start-up of Edmonton Global and incremental funding provided to Calgary Economic Development will necessitate a flexible and collaborative approach with regional partners.







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