

What has Edmonton done in the past, and what is Edmonton currently doing to create a more sustainable environment?

The City of Edmonton has initiated 7 visions to guide the future to make Edmonton the city we want it to be by 2040. One of these 7 visions is *The Way We Green*, an initiative that focuses on Edmonton becoming a more sustainable city. Some of the specific areas this initiative is focused on include: natural area parks, transit-oriented development, green buildings, electric vehicles, Edmonton Waste Management Centre, LED street lighting, the reuse of winter road sand and energy conservation projects.¹ There are 7 key focuses in Edmonton's *Environmental Plan* to becoming more sustainable: (1) air, (2) energy and climate change, (3) food, (4) land, (5) waste, (6) water and (7) sustainability and resiliency. Each area of focus has a goal and a strategic plan, and many have current actions in place to meet these goals.²

Air

The goal is for Edmonton to have air quality that can sustain both healthy people and ecosystems. The city has partnered with Alberta Capital Airshed, an organization that provides recommendations with respect to quality management and monitoring.³

Implementation of *Edmonton's Community Energy Transition Strategy* will also lead to better outcomes for air quality.

Energy & Climate Change

The goal is to ensure that the energy used in Edmonton is sustainable, to become a carbon-neutral city and to become resilient to disturbances from climate change. The ambitious *Energy Transition Strategy* enumerates multiple programs and tactics that will ensure a more climate resilient city in the future and focus on mitigating the impacts of the city's (and its citizens') greenhouse gas emissions.⁴

The City of Edmonton has clearly led the way with the approval and funding of this ambitious strategy.

Food

The goal is for Edmonton to be a part of an agricultural system that focuses on the local economy and fosters cultural, financial, social and environmental sustainability. The city

¹ The City of Edmonton, Our Environmental Initiatives, http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/city_vision_and_strategic_plan/our-environmental-initiatives.aspx

² The City of Edmonton, Our Environmental Plan in Action, http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/city_vision_and_strategic_plan/our-plan-in-action.aspx#EnergyClimateChange

³ The City of Edmonton, "The Way We Green: The City of Edmonton's Environmental Strategic Plan", July 2011, http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/PDF/TheWayWeGreen-approved.pdf, pg 43-44, [*The Way We Green*].

⁴ City of Edmonton, *Edmonton's Community Energy Transition Strategy*, online: http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/EnergyTransitionStrategy.pdf

is currently working on developing a *Food and Agriculture Strategy* (“fresh”). Under this development, Edmonton has already:⁵

- formed the Edmonton Food Council;
- approved urban beekeeping;
- launched an urban hens pilot project;
- proposed amendments to allow more urban agricultural activities;
- partnered with Northlands to work to increase the volume of local food that is purchased by distributors and institutions; and
- partnered with Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development to support Farmers Markets.

Land

The goal is for Edmonton to connect people with nature to ensure that natural areas are well protected and managed. Edmonton has initiated an *Urban Parks Management Plan* and an *Urban Forest Management Plan* that both concern the development, maintenance and preservation of park and forest land in and around the river valley. Further, the city has worked to create the *Ribbon of Green Concept Plan*, which is aimed at involving the public in creating goals related to land in Edmonton.⁶ Some proposals from the past include: development of parks such as Buena Vista, dividing new land management zones, and ways to make the valley more accessible to the public while preserving the areas.⁷

Currently, Edmonton is working on the *Brownfield Redevelopment Program*, intended to transform abandoned industrial or commercial areas, which usually include contaminated sites, into safe, environmentally friendly land.⁸

Waste

The goal is for Edmonton to generate zero waste in the future. The Edmonton Waste Management Centre, as a world-class facility, is one of Edmonton’s most well known developments. Some of the facilities at the EWMC include:⁹

- an integrated processing & transfer facility;
- a waste-to-biofuels facility which converts non-recyclable and non-compostable waste into fuel;
- a composting facility where municipal waste and sewage biosolids are converted into compost;

⁵ The City of Edmonton, Food and Urban Agriculture, http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/urban_planning_and_design/food-and-urban-agriculture.aspx

⁶ The City of Edmonton, Ribbon of Green Concept, http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/projects_redevelopment/ribbon-of-green-concept.aspx

⁷ *The Way We Green*, supra note 3, pg 24-33.

⁸ The City of Edmonton, Brownfield Redevelopment Grant Program, in effect November 19, 2014, http://www.edmonton.ca/programs_services/documents/BrownfieldGrantProgram.pdf

⁹ The City of Edmonton, Edmonton Waste Management Centre, http://www.edmonton.ca/programs_services/garbage_waste/edmonton-waste-management-centre.aspx

- a materials recovery facility where recyclable materials are sorted;
- an e-waste recycling facility that processes computer equipment and electronic products;
- construction & demolition recycling;
- greys paper recycling where used office paper and white cotton fabric are converted into new paper products; and
- a landfill gas recovery system which converts landfill gas to electricity.

Water

The goal is to increase the water quality of the North Saskatchewan River to ensure healthy people and ecosystems. Current actions include:¹⁰

- involvement in the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance;
- treating and managing biosolids from wastewater to be used as fertilizer; and
- improving water treatment at the Gold Bar Wastewater Treatment Plant. This plant is one of Canada's largest wastewater treatment plants. It is continually being upgraded and new treatment processes and technologies are being introduced. It is able to now surpass regulatory standards, while treating more than 100,000 million litres annually.

Sustainability and Resiliency

The goal is for Edmontonians to strive to be sustainable and resilient in all that they do. The focus is on lifestyle as well as policy. The city established a *Sustainable Purchasing Policy* that encourages companies to think about environmental and social considerations in purchasing products/services. Enviso is the city's larger environmental management system that is focused on achieving the international standard ISO 14001, which ensures that organizations are setting up and following an effective environmental management system. It is a systematic method of managing and improving environmental performance of the whole city. In order to ensure that the management framework is followed, the city has a third-party auditor complete an independent investigation to confirm that Enviso conforms to the ISO 14001 standard that has been set.¹¹

¹⁰ *The Way We Green*, supra note 3, pg 38-40.

¹¹ *The Way We Green*, supra note 3, pg 64-66.