

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## Department Service Levels

### Overview

The Economic Development Department works to foster a competitive, resilient, and diverse local business climate and economy. The Department serves the community by attracting businesses and industry that provide services, goods, and employment opportunities. Through partnering with regional economic development stakeholders, the Department is working to position Fort Saskatchewan as a leading jurisdiction in the energy transition. The Department strives to be a resource for the local business community and potential investors, by managing a diverse portfolio of incentives and grants, maintaining current community analytics, and responding to requests for information. The department is also responsible for activating the downtown and managing the City-owned land portfolio.



CITY OF  
FORT SASKATCHEWAN

# DEPARTMENT SERVICE LEVELS

Service level documentation includes Priority Based Budgeting (PBB) data to support service level understanding and enhance understanding of program costs.

PBB is a business planning and budgeting tool to help better understand City programs. Prioritization through results and attributes scoring shares new information about programs and the budget.

Results are drawn from the City's strategic plan and other guiding documents.

Attributes are additional characteristics that also affect a programs overall relevance and prioritization.

Individual results/attributes are scored 0 to 4 with score of 4 being critical in achieving result/attribute and score of 0 not having influence.

The total combined score of results and attributes places individual programs in a quartile grouping with quartile 1 and 2 programs more aligned with strategic goals, results and attributes and quartile 3 and 4 programs less aligned.



## Regional Economic Initiatives Support

### **PBB Program Area Description/Overview:**

Maintain and upkeep memberships in both Alberta’s Industrial Heartland Association (AIHA) and Edmonton Global; participate in and support the initiatives of these organizations as it relates to attracting investment to the City and region; provide guidance and information to guide policy and activity development.

For detailed information about program cost, revenue, full-time equivalent, basic program attributes, and program results, refer to the [Program Summary Report](#).

**Reason for Offering:** A regional approach to attracting investment is considered a global best-practice and is more impactful and effective.

**Volume:** Administration participates in regular monthly meetings of both AIHA and Edmonton Global and occasionally (once/twice per year) participates in outbound marketing activities of AIHA to support their investment attraction efforts.

### **Service Levels:**

Participate in investment attraction activities of AIHA and Edmonton Global, including responding to investor inquiries received through each organization.

**Profile of Users:** AIHA and Edmonton Global, Administration

## Land/Lease Management

### **PBB Program Area Description/Overview:**

Develop policy and procedures for leasing/licencing City-owned assets and property; provide information on relevant market conditions to help inform lease/licence development; provide guidance on acquisition and disposal of property; identify strategic opportunities for the development of City-owned land; provide guidance on City involvement in development opportunities that achieve strategic objectives.

For detailed information about program cost, revenue, full-time equivalent, basic program attributes, and program results, refer to the [Program Summary Report](#).

**Reason for Offering:** Facilitate the strategic management and innovative development of City-owned assets and properties to align with community priorities.

**Volume:** The City currently has approximately 46 unique lease/licence agreements with various user groups. The majority of these agreements have a 5-year term.

The City owns 1,391 acres spread across 436 parcels of land and owns/maintains approximately 50 buildings. The vast majority of the City’s real estate holdings help support the delivery of services to residents and are not likely to be disposed of.

Since 2010, the City has acquired 4 properties for a total of 33.3 acres for various purposes and disposed of 7 properties for a total of 11 acres.

**Service Levels:**

Land Administration Committee to oversee and guide new and renewed lease/licences.

Provide market information as it pertains to real estate development.

A new Land Management Administrator position was approved by Council for 2023 with the position being filled in April 2023. This position has focused on improving the marketability of City-owned lands reserved for development and completing a review of current lease, sale, and purchase processes to ensure alignment with best practices.

**Policy Alignment:** City Property Lease/Licence Policy

**Legislation:** Municipal Government Act

**Profile of Users:** Administration

## **Business Attraction**

**PBB Program Area Description/Overview:**

Promote opportunities for business (commercial/retail) and industry to start, locate, and expand operations within the City. Develop informed messaging that demonstrates why the City would be a prime location for their facility/business and target that messaging to sectors and businesses to assist them in location decisions. Maintain regular contact with prospective companies/businesses; establish the department as a trusted confidant and source of information; liaison between prospective companies/businesses and City departments to facilitate a smooth development process.

For detailed information about program cost, revenue, full-time equivalent, basic program attributes, and program results, refer to the [Program Summary Report](#).

**Reason for Offering:** To attract non-residential investment and create meaningful employment opportunities, generating community prosperity and increase the financial sustainability of the City.

**Demand:** Demand for this service varies depending on broader macro-economic conditions. At peak demand the department is working on 20-25 investment-related files per year that involve a company or business examining the city for a potential development or expansion to an existing operation. Average demand is 12-15 investment files per year. The level of involvement with each of these files will vary as well depending on the nature of the investment. Investor files relating to large-scale industrial complexes or big-box retail can require significant involvement and remain active for 2-5 years, while smaller commercial/retail can be less intensive and remain active for three months – one year.

**Frequency:** Average 12 – 15 investment files per year.

**Service Levels:** The department ensures key messaging and important data is distributed to target audiences to showcase investment opportunities in the city. Prospective investors expect timely and relevant information to assist them in making a location decision.

**Profile of Users:** Business owners/executives from Alberta/Canada/Internationally



## **Business Licencing & Economic Data Management**

### **PBB Program Area Description/Overview:**

Administer the business licence process and bylaw; gather, maintain, and analyze information on the local business community; implement electronic tools such as the online licence portal to allow for efficient collection and management of business-related data. Conduct regular studies on various aspects of the City's economic sectors and conditions to inform policy decisions, business support efforts, and investment attraction activities.

For detailed information about program cost, revenue, full-time equivalent, basic program attributes, and program results, refer to the [Program Summary Report](#).

**Reason for Offering:** To ensure timely and relevant data is available to inform policy decisions, business support efforts, and investment attraction activities.

### **1. Business Licencing**

**Demand:** All businesses operating in the City require a business licence except for those granted an exemption by the Professional and Occupational Associations Registrations Act, and the Health Professions Act.

**Frequency:** Licences are required annually.

**Service Levels:** Businesses expect quick turn-around times when submitting licence renewals or applications for new licences. Upgrades to the online portal and Cityview help ensure businesses are able to renew online and receive their licence within desired timeframes.

**Legislation, Regulations & Standards:** Business Licence Bylaw, Professional & Occupational Associations Registrations Act, Health Professionals Act.

**Profile of Users:** Business owners operating within the City.

### **2. Data Management**

The Economic Development Department collects, manages, and analyzes information and data as it relates to the City's economic sectors. This information helps inform policy decisions as well as guides the department's activities in identifying industries and sectors to focus investment attraction initiatives towards. This information also forms the message to potential investors to demonstrate the opportunity that exists within the City.

**Demand:** While the number of potential investors will vary depending on macro-economic conditions, the need for this data remains constant. Information must be relevant and timely to be effective.

**Frequency:** Larger studies to capture the required data are conducted at a minimum of every three years to ensure information is timely and relevant. Studies are staggered so that only one is conducted per year.

**Service Level:** Ensuring access to timely and relevant data assists the City in attracting non-residential development as well as helping to inform policy decisions. At a minimum this information includes a comprehensive retail analysis, site selection analysis, and labour profile.

**Profile of Users:** Business owners/executives from Alberta/Canada/Internationally

## Business Retention

### **PBB Program Area Description/Overview:**

Recognize the vitally important role that our local business community plays in our economy and provide support to help them overcome challenges and achieve success. Work collaboratively with the business community to implement mutually beneficial communications practices so we understand the barriers and obstacles they face and provide them with timely and relevant information as well as solutions. Build productive relationships and oversee support programs that assist business owners.

For detailed information about program cost, revenue, full-time equivalent, basic program attributes, and program results, refer to the [Program Summary Report](#).

**Reason for Offering:** To connect with local businesses to ensure their success and longevity as key employers and inspire them to compete globally.

### **1. Business Support Incentives**

**Demand:** Demand for the business support incentives continues to be strong. Between 2020 and the end of 2023, 88 applications for funding were approved (\$277,103).

**Frequency:** Applications are open from the end of February to the beginning of November.

**Service Levels:** The City offers five business development incentives that provide financial assistance to businesses. In 2023, Council approved an increase in funding of \$25,000 to provide a maximum of \$75,000 in Business Development Incentives funding.

<b>Program</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Maximum Funding</b>
Export Development	Provide financial assistance for businesses to access markets outside the province	\$5,000
Small Business Education	Provide financial assistance to undertake professional development	\$500
Equipment & Technology	Support businesses to purchase/implement new equipment or technology that improves efficiency or service delivery	\$5,000
Small Business Marketing	Provide assistance for businesses to develop and implement a marketing plan to reach broader customer base	\$5,000
Storefront Improvement	Provide assistance for businesses to make improvements to their physical storefront.	\$10,000

**Policy Alignment:** Business Development Incentive Policy

**Profile of Users:** Local business owners.

## **Downtown Enhancement**

### **PBB Program Area Description/Overview:**

Gather information from stakeholders; provide guidance on initiatives and activities to support and encourage further development downtown; provide ongoing support to existing downtown businesses; attract more people downtown to support the business community; increase density downtown; identify strategic initiatives to support downtown development.

For detailed information about program cost, revenue, full-time equivalent, basic program attributes, and program results, refer to the [Program Summary Report](#).

**Reason for Offering:** To provide support to businesses and encourage additional development in the City's downtown core.

**Demand:** Downtown businesses have been struggling as they lack the visibility and adjacent population density that supports the highway commercial areas. As a result, demand for support in the downtown area has increased.

**Service Levels:** Business engagement to better understand the obstacles and challenges they face and how to best tailor support to their needs.

Downtown specific data gathering to ensure a clear picture of the downtown and the opportunities for development that exist.

Facilitating initiatives and activities (like the [Downtown Action Plan](#)) that help establish downtown as a destination to encourage more visitors that stay longer.

A Downtown Development Strategy was approved by Council for 2024 with the goals on increasing residential density, reducing commercial vacancy, and increasing private investment in downtown as the primary goals.

**Profile of Users:** Residents of the City and business owners operating within the downtown core.