

April 26, 2021

City Council approves Red Deer Major Event Strategy and Destination Development Framework

The Red Deer Major Events Strategy & Destination Development Framework is a ten-year plan that will position Red Deer as a premier destination for major events within Canada.

1. What is the Red Deer Major Events Strategy & Destination Development Framework?

The purpose of the Red Deer Major Events Strategy & Destination Development Framework is to position Red Deer as a premier destination for major events. The City of Red Deer commissioned the study to review the current state of major event hosting in the community and develop a strategy for future development.

2. Why are we developing a major event strategy during a pandemic?

Investment in major event development now will result in economic and social benefits that will be enjoyed by Red Deer for many years to come. At this time of significant economic and social disruption due to a global pandemic, major events can be an important agent in recovery. They can be the motivator needed to help the community enhance its economic situation and boost community morale.

The time is right for Red Deer to organize itself to support major event development and the community's broader tourism development goals for the future. A proactive, and highly collaborative approach that fully leverages the strengths and capacities of every stakeholder is needed to achieve the community's vision.

3. Was the public consulted in the development of this strategy?

Yes. The research phase included meetings with the Project Steering Committee and one-on-one interviews and feedback opportunity sessions with key internal and external stakeholders, including local organizations, major event developers, engaged residents, City Council, City staff, and Provincial staff.

4. How will this strategy benefit the community?

Major events have the ability to produce a wide variety of economic and social benefits for Red Deer. From an economic perspective, major events are a proven tourism driver that can bring visitor dollars into communities. Major events are also known to bring host communities together, strengthen local pride, enhance community engagement, build the capacity of local organizations, contribute to the preservation of built and natural environments, and strengthen the case for enhancements to infrastructure and programs.

5. What role will the City play in the proposed strategy?

Over the next year, the City will work closely with Tourism Red Deer to develop a detailed plan to explore transitioning them to become the Destination Development Corporation (DDC). During this time, City administration will continue to handle major event inquiries and event requests. The City will also provide a dedicated staff person to assist with the transition and implementation planning for the strategy. This position, an Economic Development Officer, is already approved within the City's Land and Economic Development budget.

Moving forward, The City will play an active role in ensuring the strategy moves ahead in collaboration with stakeholder groups. The City will form a multi-stakeholder transition committee to provide input toward implementation planning.

6. What role will Tourism Red Deer play?

Tourism Red Deer will work with The City of Red Deer to develop a detailed plan that explores transitioning Tourism Red Deer to become the Destination Development Corporation.

The Destination Development Corporation (DDC) framework is a proactive and highly collaborative approach to fully leveraging the strengths of all stakeholders to achieve the community's vision of Red Deer being recognized as a top major event destination among mid-size cities in Canada. The DDC would be comprised of three functional areas:

1. Tourism Marketing – be the voice of Red Deer as a destination.
2. Major Events – take the lead role transforming Red Deer into a premier major event destination and providing a one-stop approach for major event development.
3. Destination Development – build community-wide capacity to grow Red Deer as a destination.

Tourism Red Deer's transition to become the DDC will allow for the continued growth of regional tourism efforts. With this common interest, the region can find value in aligning destination development and major events. The mandate of the DDC is directly aligned with the Tourism Joint Venture guidance and membership model review TRD is undertaking.

7. Will Tourism Red Deer have capacity to take on this additional role?

The business plan development will determine the implications of the DDC framework prior to the formally establishing the DDC. In the interim, The City has committed a dedicated staff person to assist with exploring the transition.

8. How are small and medium events addressed in the strategy?

Although major events are the focus of this strategy, regional and community events also play an important role in achieving Red Deer's vision. These types of events help to ensure a high degree of activation, animation and engagement around events in Red Deer through the whole year. Opportunities to support community and regional events as well as opportunities to fully utilize venues and attractions are identified as a medium term action item within the strategy.

9. What are the costs associated with this new strategy?

The business plan development will explore the future business needs of the Destination Development Corporation, and will identify resources as well as potential sources.

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