

CITY OF GRANDE PRAIRIE

DECEMBER 31, 2022

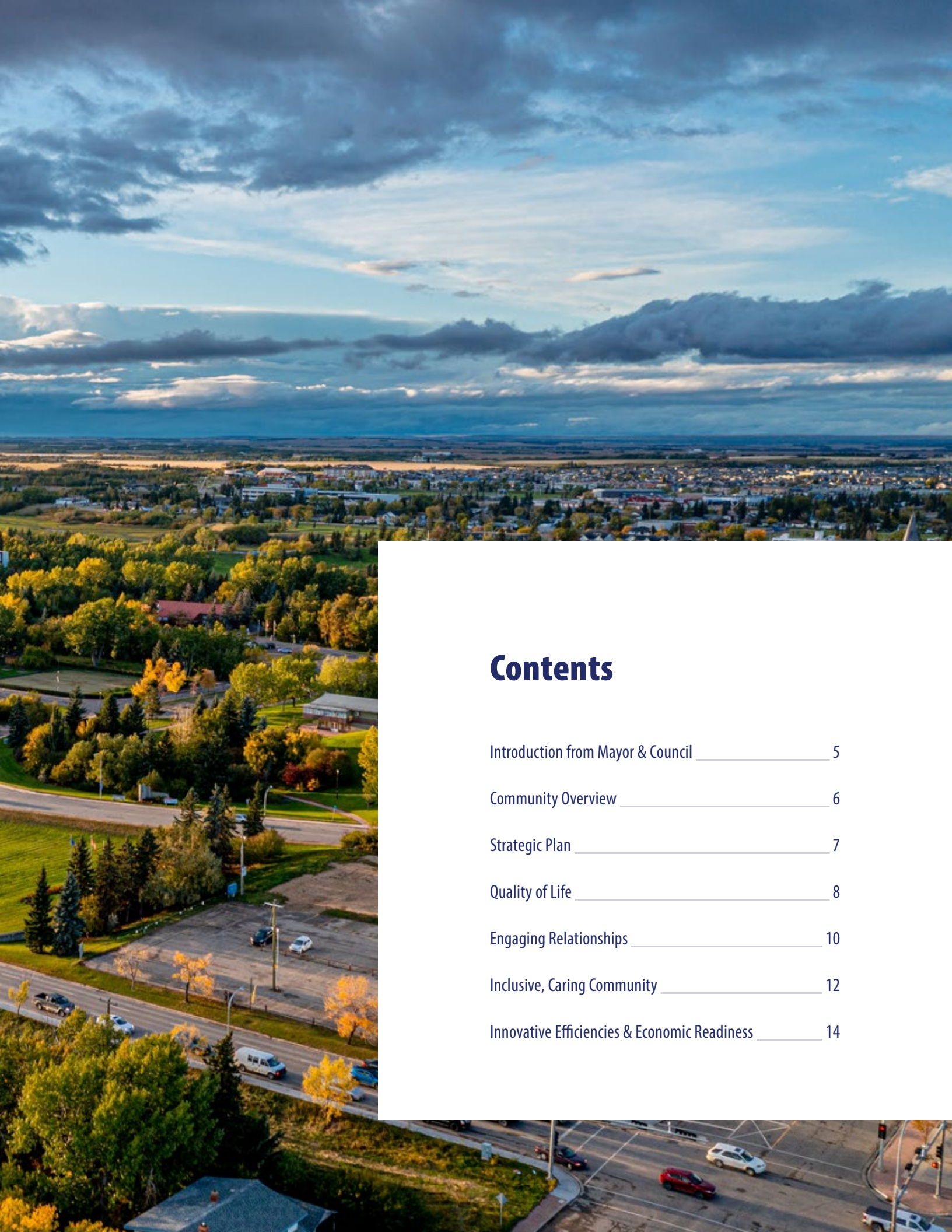
# Annual Report











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## Introduction from Mayor & Council



### 2022 WAS ANOTHER MEMORABLE YEAR IN GRANDE PRAIRIE.

To start, City Council introduced our 2022–2025 Strategic Plan, with an overarching priority of Quality of Life to ensure Grande Prairie remains a place where all current and future residents want to live, work and play.

The Strategic Plan is built on the following pillars:

- **Innovative Efficiencies & Economic Readiness:** ensuring we are building a strong economy ready for new investment opportunities.
- **Inclusive Caring Community:** promoting multiculturalism and supporting our community's most vulnerable through a variety of programs.
- **Engaging Relationships:** highlighting our successes with stakeholders and other levels of government.

Across the past year we aimed to support these priorities with everything from increased recreational opportunities, the return of new and traditional annual events, public engagement including our bi-annual Resident Satisfaction Survey, the completion of major road and capital construction projects, introduction of supports to address labour needs, and much more!

A huge thank you to all of our residents, municipal partners, the local business community, and our countless non-profits and community groups for making 2022 such a success.

We are proud to present the 2022 Annual Report to demonstrate the many ways we aimed to bring our Strategic Plan to life this year by providing quality services to our residents and community.



#### IN MEMORIAM

City Council wishes to recognize the unexpected passing of Council member John Lehnert in 2022.

John Lehnert was a long-time resident of Grande Prairie, a community leader, a friend and a colleague who will be dearly missed. We look forward to carrying on his legacy in the community and cherish the time we had together.



## Community Overview

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HERE ARE SOME HIGHLIGHTS ON GRANDE PRAIRIE FROM THE FEDERAL CENSUS RELEASED IN 2022:



**2021 population:**  
**64,141**



**Median age** rose from 32 in 2016  
to **34 in 2021**



**8,360 immigrants**



There are more children **under the age of 10 (9,470)** than there are adults aged **60 and over (8,955)**



The city's population represents  
**67 distinct ethnic or cultural origins**



**4.8% increase**  
in the number of private dwellings  
(increase of 1,140) from 2016 to 2021



**Increase from 12% to 16% in the visible minority population in the last 5 years.**  
When you add Indigenous population of 12%, there is a 28% visible minority population.



**Named the youngest city in Canada for cities over 25K people** and the 9th youngest city in Canada for cities over 10K people





# Quality of Life

OUR COMMITMENT TO QUALITY OF LIFE FOCUSES ON FOSTERING A COMMUNITY IN WHICH OUR RESIDENTS LOVE WHERE THEY LIVE AND EMBRACE THEIR ENVIRONMENT. THIS YEAR WE SUPPORTED THIS PRIORITY THROUGH:

## EVENTS CALENDAR

In 2022 we saw:

- **The full return of traditional events such as:**
  - Canada Day
  - Eastlink Centre Triathlon
  - New Year's Eve-ning Out
- **The introduction of new events such as:**
  - Grande North Winter Festival
    - A weekend-long, walkable festival downtown that showcases our winter. Featuring free and ticketed activities and entertainment throughout the downtown core including Bonnetts Energy Centre, Montrose Cultural Centre and Muskoseepi Park.
  - Experience Grande Prairie
  - Alberta Day
  - Harvest Festival
- **The hosting of major sport tourism events such as:**
  - Rogers Hometown Hockey
  - Pinty's Grand Slam of Curling
    - Welcomed 64 teams from Canada, Switzerland, USA, Norway, Denmark, Scotland, Italy and Korea
    - Broadcast to over 1.5 million viewers on Sportsnet
  - **45,368 tickets were sold for concerts, games and events at the Bonnetts Energy Centre for a total of 158 events days which included:**
    - 27 AJHL games with our home team the Junior A Grande Prairie Storm
    - 5 Outdoor events
    - 11 Bonnetts Energy Arena events including Grande Con and The Offspring and Simple Plan
    - 38 Bowes events including Boney M and the Party in White



Eastlink Centre Triathlon



Harvest Festival



## AMENITY ADDITIONS AND UPGRADES

**New amenities and facilities that opened in 2022 include:**

- The Activity and Reception Centre
  - 16,000 square feet of activity space on the north-east side of town for recreational and leisure amenities and programming, with a focus on youth drop-in opportunities and activities with limited opportunity to play at other venues
- North Bike Skills Park in Crystal Lake
- South Bear Creek Park ball diamond upgrades
- New dog agility equipment at South Bear Creek Park

## 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AQUATERA OUTDOOR POOL

The Aquatera Outdoor Pool, originally called 'Bear Creek Pool', opened on July 13, 1962 and cost the City \$118,000 to build. In the first summer of opening in 1962 the pool saw approximately 55,000 swimmers and had 800 swimmers enrolled in Red Cross swimming lessons.

In 2013, the outdoor pool closed down for major renovation and reopened in 2021 with a number of additional amenities including a tots pool, zero beach, Spanish steps and lily islands, waterslide, green space and leisure picnic area.

The Aquatera Outdoor Pool celebrated its 60th anniversary this year on July 16. The day was celebrated with free public swimming and activities that included decade themed pool & lawn games, and door prizes.



**Aquatera Outdoor Pool**

## CELEBRATION OF EASTLINK CENTRE 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

**In commemoration of their 10 year anniversary on December 11, 2021, Eastlink Centre spent the past year celebrating with a variety of events and features including:**

- Monthly workouts
- Social media contests
- Free and discounted admission features
- Membership sales
- Events including Sport Sampler Days and the "One More Night" Anniversary celebration

## RECREATION AND CULTURE STRATEGIC PLAN

Work started this year on the development of the Recreation and Culture Strategic Plan which aims to enhance existing opportunities, address geographic distribution of services, identify barriers, and plan for investment in recreation and culture infrastructure.

The strategy will present specific framework and actions for the City to take to ensure effective and efficient delivery of recreation and culture services for the next 10–12 years.

## INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES

**The following infrastructure upgrades and maintenance projects were completed in 2022 to support the community:**

- 36.68 kms of roads repaired
- 748 potholes repaired
- 1 km new trails
- 5.28 km sidewalk repairs
- 1 vehicle bridge replaced
- 4 playground replacements
- 645 new trees planted
- 2,070 seedlings planted



# Engaging Relationships

ENGAGING RELATIONSHIPS ARE A PRIORITY OF COUNCIL, DEMONSTRATED BY DEVELOPING AND NURTURING KEY RELATIONSHIPS WITH STAKEHOLDERS AND OTHER LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT, BUILDING ON MUTUAL STRENGTHS AND SHARING SUCCESSES. HERE ARE HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2022:

## HIRING OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS ADVISOR

New to the City is the creation of an Indigenous Relations Advisor. The position is a new role and is part of the City's commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls-to-Action. The Indigenous Relations Advisor provides leadership, cultural expertise, consultation, and guidance to lead the development and implementation of a Reconciliation Framework and Action Plan for the City of Grande Prairie.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENTS

**The following public engagements were completed in 2022 to garner valuable community feedback on policy decisions and City services:**

- Richmond Industrial Area Revitalization
  - Did You Know? All About the Mobile Outreach Program
  - Did You Know? All About the Stormwater System
  - 2021 Municipal Election Feedback Survey
  - Recreation and Culture Strategy
  - City of Grande Prairie Budget 2023
  - Stormwater Utility Model
  - Resident Satisfaction Survey
- Highlights of the results include:
- High quality of life rating
    - 70% of respondents indicate that quality of life in the City is good or very good

- 92% of respondents believe Grande Prairie is a community with a bright future
- 85% of respondents are proud to live here
- 93% of respondents indicate that City-hosted events are an important part of the local sense of community
- City services are seen as well-run and receive generally positive reviews
  - 73% of respondents agree that the quality of service from the City is consistently high
  - Some services receive almost universally positive responses, including the fire department, parks, playgrounds and trails; arts, cultural facilities, and programs; and recreational facilities
- Grande Prairie residents remain very positive about the state of the local economy
  - 89% of respondents indicate that Grande Prairie has a vibrant and healthy local economy, an increase of 9 points from 2020



Public Engagement Town Hall



- Over half (53%) of respondents expect the economy to improve over the next twelve months while 32% expect it to stay the same
- Crime moved from the top issue in 2020 to the fourth in 2022.
  - 62% of respondents agreed that Grande Prairie is a place where residents feel safe and secure, an 11-point increase from 2020
- College Park Parking Study
- Municipal Development Plan Review
- Old Courthouse Designation
- Events Strategy
- Municipal Police Service Review
- Snow & Ice Service Review
  - Completed as part of the Snow and Ice Control Internal Service Review. The review was concluded along with service adjustments, including a more robust winter communications plan.

## DESIGNATION OF FIRST MUNICIPAL HISTORIC RESOURCE

At the December 12 Council meeting, City Council designated the old court house a Municipal Historic Resource, the first of its kind in Grande Prairie.

The designation creates a long-term commitment to ensure the preservation of this historic structure and opens grant opportunities for restoration and conservation of the building.

The old courthouse building is well known today as the Centre for Creative Arts.

## NAMING RIGHTS OF CITY-OWNED FACILITIES

Several key naming rights agreements of City-owned facilities were signed in 2022. Naming rights are a partnership approach which provides many benefits to the community including enhancing programs, facilities, projects and services while offsetting costs by creating alternative revenue streams for the City.

**Facilities with new naming rights partnerships in 2022 include:**

- Eastlink Centre
  - Eastlink, a long-term supporter of our community, renewed their contract with the City for another 10 years
- Design Works Centre
- Aquatera Outdoor Pool
- Hansen Lincoln Field

## ALBERTA NORTHWEST ENERGY EVENING

In October, the City of Grande Prairie, the County of Grande Prairie and the Municipal District of Greenview collaborated to host the Northwest Alberta Energy Evening event in Calgary.

Our municipalities came together to speak to the business community about how investing in the Northwest Alberta region will benefit businesses and residents in our communities with responsible energy development, economic opportunities and an endless potential.

This was one of many events Council hosted in partnership with other levels of government to support and advocate for our region, including the Innovation & Investment Event in Calgary in September and An Evening with Grande Prairie in Edmonton in February, and more!



Alberta's Energy & Resource Region event at the Calgary Petroleum Club

## ALBERTA MUNICIPALITIES RESOLUTION ENDORSEMENT

City Council presented a resolution on electricity distribution and transmission rates at the Alberta Municipalities conference in September which was seconded by the Town of Drumheller.

The resolution asked members to collectively lobby the Province to eliminate the disparity in electricity pricing for transmission and distribution charges across the province. The resolution passed with 88% of members supporting it.



# Inclusive, Caring Community

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BEING AN INCLUSIVE, CARING COMMUNITY MEANS WE PROMOTE DIVERSITY AND MULTICULTURALISM, AND SUPPORT ALL RESIDENTS OF OUR COMMUNITY THROUGH A VARIETY OF PROGRAMMING. EXAMPLES OF THIS IN 2022 INCLUDE:

## TRANSIT REDESIGN

One of the largest projects completed in 2022 was the City's Transit Redesign, introducing new routes and schedules for the first time in over 10 years. Transit services were also expanded to areas that were not previously served through our on-demand service model.

The re-development was implemented to match the growth and technological developments in the city so we can deliver better transit services to our residents with increasing efficiency.

### The new system features three levels of service delivery:

- Conventional fixed route with larger buses
- Conventional fixed route with smaller Community Shuttle buses
- On-demand service-using smaller buses connecting people from a bus stop to a transit hub

Transit is on the move to better connect residents around Grande Prairie with enhanced connectivity and improved service to work, live and play.



## PUBLIC SECURITY UNIT PILOT PROJECT

Launching in late summer, the Public Security Unit Pilot Project was created as a lead enforcement resource for issues related to social order, trespassing and encampments.

It was created in consultation with concerned members of the community and is working to address incidents related to lower-end social or criminal behaviors such as thefts, loitering, trespassing and public disturbances.

The unit is comprised of 8 officers working 24 hours a day dedicating proactive patrols throughout priority areas in the city. The Public Security Unit works closely with and in support of the Mobile Outreach Program and other social service providers to improve the level of safety for all members of the community.

## EXPLORE GRANDE PRAIRIE WELCOME PACKAGES

Explore Grande Prairie welcome packages were introduced in 2022 to support newcomers to Canada residing in Grande Prairie with access to recreational activities and transportation to develop connections to our community.

Each package includes five passes to the Eastlink Centre, five passes to the Activity Reception Centre, and a three-month pass for free transit. The Explore Grande Prairie welcome packages are designed as a one-time opportunity to welcome new immigrants with refugee, work permits, and



student visa status into our community. 179 Explore Grande Prairie welcome packages were distributed this year.



Eastlink Centre

## WELCOMING WEEK

The City of Grande Prairie's Local Immigration Partnership Council invited residents to join in International Welcoming Week events September 10 to 16.

150 members of the community joined in the week-long festivities including recreational activities, cultural activities, training and development opportunities and many other features to encourage community inclusion.

## GIRLZONE RECREATION EVENT

52 young girls attended the City's first-ever GirlZone Recreation Event on September 10, encouraging gender equality in sport and recreation.

GirlZone was an activity-based day for girls ages 10 to 15 to encourage them to try new skills from bike skills and parkour to volleyball and soccer, featuring a cooking class hosted by Alberta Health Services, and a presentation about body positivity.

It aimed to address the decreased participation rate of girls in recreation and sport activities since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and create a barrier and judgement-free environment for girls to explore new activities they otherwise wouldn't have tried.

## MINDS IN MOTION

In partnership with the Alzheimer Society, Eastlink Centre introduced the Minds in Motion program for those with early to mid-stage Alzheimer's disease, or another dementia, and their care partner.

Certified fitness staff at the Eastlink Centre received specialized training from the Alzheimer Society of Alberta and Northwest Territories to offer this course to residents in the Grande Prairie region.

The program provides a dementia-inclusive and fun space for participants to enjoy light physical activity and mental stimulation in a social environment with their care partner. Two full sessions ran in 2022.

## GRANT FUNDING

The City of Grande Prairie offers a multitude of funding and grant opportunities to support local individuals and organizations who are making a positive impact in our community. The City takes pride in being able to provide financial assistance to their local athletes, artists and community groups in order to help them achieve their goals.

Here is a recap of how some of that funding was allocated in 2022:

Grant Name	Grants Issued	Total Funding Provided
Pursuit of Excellence ( <i>Athlete Travel/Development, Coach Development, Official Development, Bob Neufeld, Come Fly With Me, Perky McCullough</i> )	38	\$33,921.85
Arts and Culture ( <i>Individual Project, Major Project, Festival Funding, Performance Funding</i> )	18	\$107,780.00
Large Scale Tourism	2	\$100,000.00
Sport Hosting	6	\$25,000.00
Community Improvement Grant	4	\$14,720.75
Community Group Funding	34	\$4,350,130.00



# Innovative Efficiencies & Economic Readiness

THE CITY OF GRANDE PRAIRIE IS FOCUSED ON CREATING INNOVATIVE EFFICIENCIES AND ECONOMIC READINESS TO ENSURE WE ARE BUILDING A STRONG ECONOMY READY FOR NEW INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES. TO ACHIEVE THIS, HERE ARE SOME HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2022:

## COMPLETION OF THE DOWNTOWN REHABILITATION AND STREETSCAPES PROJECT

2022 saw the completion of the highly anticipated Downtown Rehabilitation and Streetscapes Project.

This multi-phase project was brought to life through the dedicated vision of Council and the community to build a strong future for downtown through infrastructure upgrades and an updated streetscape design including:

- replacement of underground pipes including, storm, water, and sanitary pipes that date back to the 1930s
- streetscapes upgrades designed to create a modern, pedestrian friendly, and accessible downtown core
- many new features focused specifically on accessibility including enhancing walkability for all and navigation for those with physical or visual impairments
- highlights:
  - 226 trees planted
  - 1473 m of old storm line removed
  - 1831 m of new storm line installed
  - 1865 m of sanitary line replacements
  - 1468 m water line replacements
  - 16,665 m of roadway reconstruction
  - 2478 m of sidewalk reconstruction

A unique feature of this project, was the conversion of 101 Ave. into a “Festival Avenue,” designed with a curb-less sidewalk to transform the area for festivals, celebrations and

community events such as the Experience Grande Prairie event this past summer.

The upgrades provide an improvement to the downtown today while supporting future development and creating opportunities for ongoing investment that serves our community needs and deepens our identity as an urban hub in northwestern Alberta.

The City extends a huge thank you to all of the downtown businesses and residents for their patience during construction. We look forward to all the new opportunity the space brings and watching the City Centre continue to grow.



## RURAL RENEWAL STREAM

The City of Grande Prairie received designation in July and launched the Grande Prairie Rural Renewal Stream program in August 2022. The Rural Renewal Stream offers eligible workers the opportunity to immigrate to Alberta as a Provincial Nominee with the formal support of the municipal government.



With the support of this program, the City of Grande Prairie fills local labour gaps by endorsing employers and job seekers to fast-track immigration for eligible candidates. 146 employers were endorsed through the program and 66 candidates who will be filling local jobs.

## 1 YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF INVEST GRANDE PRAIRIE

Invest Grande Prairie was launched in 2021 as a reimagining of the City's Economic Development department that builds on previous investment attraction and business retention and expansion activities.

Invest Grande Prairie celebrated it's one year anniversary with the following accomplishments:

- Return of regular industry mixers, such as Building and Development, Health and Wellness, Retail and Food, and more, where they host 35–50 people at each event to discuss current issues, projects and ideas
- Launch of the "15 Minutes to Anywhere" video to market our local community to future investors and job seekers as a great place to live, learn, work and play with a wide array of amenities, only 15 minutes away from your destination
- 17 Local Business Stories showcasing locally owned businesses in the region who are innovating, trailblazing and demonstrating the potential available in Grande Prairie

## LAUNCH OF ENTERPRISE RESOURCE PLANNING

Internally, the City rolled out a new Enterprise Resource Planning system to modernize and tie together key Human Resources, Finance and Procurement process.

The new system is improving and streamlining internal process to maximize efficiencies for the organization, helping us to better serve the community.

## PROCUREMENT STATISTICS

**In 2022, the City had:**

- 156 competitive bids awarded resulting in an overall value of \$58,499,649
- 446 auctions of surplus assets resulting in \$213,074 in revenue and 7774 square feet of usable space

## ECONOMIC DATA

Topic	Stat (Total for 2022)
Total building permits issued	741
Total construction value of building permits	\$116,697,002
Total population (2021 Census)	64,141
Total number of dwellings	27,551
Overdimensional vehicles for 2022	8,684
Drilling licenses for 2022	1,026
Drilling completions for 2022	1,034
Land area in sq. km	136.6

## GRANTS/ INCENTIVES

The City of Grande Prairie has a variety of grants and incentives available with the aim of supporting business development and investments that create jobs, stimulate the local economy and expand a diversified tax base. Here is how that was allocated in 2022:

Grant Name	Grants Issued	Amount Awarded
Beautification and Patio	22	\$274,512.11
Local Marketing	53	\$125,445.22
Training	46 applications and 100 employees	\$47,411.41
Barrier Free	8	\$64,556.89
New Business Development	0	0
Business Retention and Expansion	1	4 year total: \$184,389.46
Business Revitalization	15	\$420,415.79
Residential Infill	3	\$75,000
Municipal Fee Rebate	4	\$35,630

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