

CMRB's Collaborative Regional Economic Development Framework and Vision

Working Together for the Growth We Want and Know Is Coming

Board Approved June 23, 2023

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Calgary Metropolitan Region is honoured to be in the traditional territory of the Siksika, Kainai, and Piikani Nations of the Blackfoot Confederacy; the Tsuut'ina Nation; the Bearspaw, Chiniki, and Goodstoney Nations of the Stoney Nakoda; and the home of Métis Nation of Alberta Region 3.

In the spirit of truth and reconciliation, the CMRB is actively working to build meaningful and mutually beneficial long-term relationships with Indigenous Nations and communities in and around the Region.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In late 2022, the Calgary Metropolitan Region Board (“CMRB”) engaged MNP to facilitate the process of developing a framework and vision for how the eight member municipalities (“Members”) will collaborate and work together to guide economic development activities as a region.

What follows in this report builds on the foundation laid by CMRB and its members. The approach navigates through the universe of possibilities that could exist under the umbrella of “collaborative regional economic development” to identify tangible, practical steps forward that are informed by the themes that came through research and stakeholder engagement. The purpose, objectives, and subsequent commitments leverage the tremendous work in developing the regional Growth Plan, Servicing Plan, and Regional Evaluation Framework, as well as other studies, strategies, assessments, and reviews that were conducted previously.

Because of the work conducted previously, the Board was positioned to look ahead and see farther than they would have otherwise been able to without the existing common understanding provided in the shared priorities, plans, and tools already set out in the CMRB’s foundational documents.

Collaborative Regional Economic Development requires a mindset whereby neighbouring municipalities work together toward an ambition greater than the resources or capabilities of any one municipality by aligning both their planning and business retention and expansion, investment attraction, talent attraction, and innovation activities to foster economic growth and development across areas of mutual interests.

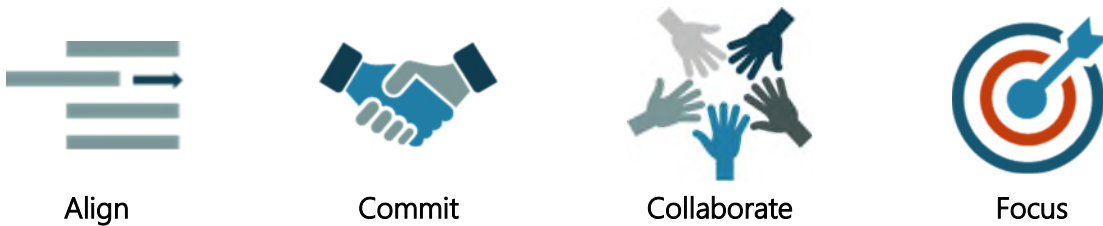
Typically, this involves a region establishing a common purpose, shared objectives, and mutual commitments. A common purpose that is built “on a foundation of trust, reciprocity, and transparency”, recognizes that the individual participants will benefit as the region does and recognizes that regional success leads to individual success rather than the opposite.

The CMRB is well positioned as a forum to discuss shared strategies around collaborative regional economic development, with the guiding question - how can regional thinking lead to greater success for all members? A crucial principle of regional economic development is not to duplicate or replace individual member economic development activities but to augment them and build capacity across the region so that opportunities beyond the means of an individual municipality are not missed. The work of regional economic development ought to look different than individual member economic development activities to harness its greatest potential. Each municipality exists in a unique political, demographic, geographic, and economic circumstance however the following sets out recommendations to capitalize on the existing strengths and ensure by collaborating on specific, focused activities the whole can be greater than the sum of its parts.

MNP has facilitated a process guiding the CMRB toward a Common Purpose with the definition of a Purpose Statement. Shared Objectives which support the common purpose have also been defined through stakeholder engagement and workshop discussions. Based on the research conducted, the various interviews with stakeholders, working group meetings, and Board

workshops, a series of recommended Mutual Commitments intended to achieve the Shared Objectives are presented. Endorsing the Common Purpose and Shared Objectives and deciding which, if not all, of these Mutual Commitments the Board wishes to pursue are recommended for the Board to advance their regional collaborative economic development mandate.

Throughout the stakeholder engagement, workshops, and working group meetings, the feedback from participants can be summarized into four key themes that are considered in defining the purpose statement and objectives.



“Align” reflects the desire of the CMRB members to agree on areas of mutual interest that can serve the common needs and retain member-specific identities and preferences. “Commit” refers to having specific and realistic goals and actions that can be agreed upon directly by some or all of the members to apply resources and make decisions about regional economic priorities. This is intended to build trust and momentum for even more ambitious pursuits together. “Collaboration” was a key theme expressed as a need for a platform and approach that does not add a level of bureaucracy and enables working together in productive ways. And “Focus” is desired to drive tangible impact with limited resources that can be applied by all the members in ways that are most meaningful and appropriate to them.

These themes have set the context for what we heard from members and stakeholders and guide the level of scope, detail, and ambition of the collaborative regional economic development framework.

Purpose Statement

The purpose statement provides the overarching strategic direction for the framework. It articulates the Common Purpose and sandbox in which the region will collaborate and which opportunities and challenges it wants to address collectively. The Common Purpose of collaborative economic development for the CMRB is:

Position the CMR as the most attractive place in North America to invest and grow businesses in our regionally significant sectors.

Combining the priorities, focus areas, and understanding established by the CMRB members in the development of the growth and servicing plans, the regional evaluation framework, and relevant previous studies with the extensive research and Board and stakeholder engagement conducted, three objectives have been developed. These objectives are further described in this report and are supported by recommended commitments, intended to demonstrate progress toward the objectives.

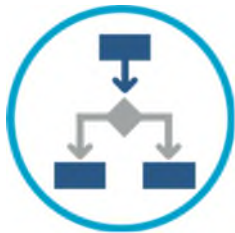
Summary of Objectives and Recommended Commitments



Objective 1

Define, Focus on, and Pursue Regionally Significant Opportunities

- 1.a Identify one or two regionally significant sectors to focus on attraction for the next three to five years;
- 1.b Agree on a definition of success for the two focus regionally significant sectors, including measures of success; and,
- 1.c Investigate a shared-investment-for-shared-benefit framework to support Regionally Significant initiatives.



Objective 2

Coordinate Our Policy and Regulatory Environment to Increase the Ease of Doing Business Across the CMR for Our Regionally Significant Sectors

- 2.a Ensure that an economic development perspective is included in all future CMRB initiatives, including the development and implementation of regional plans, studies, and strategies;
- 2.b Assess the necessary requirements for regionally significant sectors to succeed and coordinate policies and regulatory processes to support the relevant businesses;
- 2.c Align regional water availability, management and infrastructure planning with regional economic development priorities;
- 2.d Develop a regional housing strategy that is aligned with the Regional Transit and Transportation Master Plan (“RTTMP”); and,
- 2.e Establish a relevant regional talent attraction and development strategy that is aligned with the identified regionally significant opportunities



Objective 3
Collaborate with Economic Development Stakeholders to Leverage Shared Resources to Attract Regionally Significant Opportunities

- 3.a Bring together stakeholders for quarterly coordinating meetings to foster collaboration;
- 3.b Develop a regional marketing plan that showcases the region's value proposition and is used by all CMRB members;
- 3.c Investigate the potential to implement a regional certified site program focusing on the regionally significant sectors;
- 3.d Develop a regional marketing plan that showcases the region's value proposition and is used by all CMRB members;
- 3.e Continue to follow the CMRB's principles of Indigenous Relations to further trust-building between the CMRB and Indigenous Nations; and,
- 3.f Continue to build the CMRB open data portal.



Overarching Commitments

- Accept the purpose statement and objectives of the collaborative regional economic development framework at the CMRB Board; and
- Endorse the purpose and objectives of the collaborative regional economic development framework and vision in each members' council.

This framework balances the priorities of each municipality with the opportunities in the region, ultimately setting the stage for practical impacts. To ensure that this framework can be actioned, and objectives achieved, it is recommended that CMRB Board consider endorsing the purpose statement and objectives. Once these are endorsed, the Board will then need to determine which of the commitments they wish to pursue, take the first action steps, and decide how they intend to approach those initiatives.

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1.0 | UNDERSTANDING COLLABORATIVE REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In 2022, the Calgary Metropolitan Region Board (“CMRB”) moved to establish a framework and vision to guide how the organization supports regional economic development. This project builds on decades of initiatives in the region including the Calgary Regional Partnership (“CRP”), as well as previous projects commissioned by the CMRB.

The CMRB engaged MNP in late-2022 to facilitate the process of developing a framework and vision for working together to guide economic development activities. This vision and framework are intended to form a strategic action plan that the CMRB can follow to collaborate on regional economic development.

This framework and vision align with the efforts of the CMRB’s member municipalities and is guided by the CMRB’s provincially regulated mandate. From its inception, CMRB has held a mandate to:

- Promote the long-term sustainability of the Calgary Metropolitan Region;
- Ensure environmentally responsible land-use planning, growth management and efficient use of land;
- Develop policies regarding the coordination of regional infrastructure investment and service delivery; and
- Promote the economic well-being and competitiveness of the Calgary Metropolitan Region.

The CMRB Growth Plan, approved by the Alberta Minister of Municipal Affairs in August 2022, established a mandatory regional framework and associated policies for land use planning in the Calgary Metropolitan Region (“CMR”). A core purpose of the Growth Plan is to manage future population growth and employment opportunities toward the desired future state of the CMR as it welcomes the next million people. It is with this background of anticipated growth that the opportunity for collaborative regional economic development has been highlighted. This vision for economic well-being, along with the regional land use planning of the Growth Plan, provides a strong foundation for collaborative regional economic development. The work already conducted by CMRB and its members to establish the Growth Plan, regional servicing plans, and the regional evaluation framework has set the stage for the Board to be able to look ahead and see farther than would otherwise be possible without a common understanding and mechanisms for shared planning. This foundational work needs to continue and is seen to be making very good progress. It also sets the stage for bringing the economic development lens to the Growth Plan with more aligned, focused commitments and a collaborative approach.

The CMRB provided important convening power and a platform to discuss shared strategies around collaborative regional economic development, with the guiding question of “How can regional thinking lead to greater success for all members?” The purpose of regional collaborative economic development is not to duplicate or replace individual member economic development

activities, but to augment them while enhancing capacity across the region so that regionally significant opportunities are not missed. Regional economic development ought to look different than individual member economic development activities to harness its greatest potential.

Defining economic development is complex as it encompasses many aspects of the functions across all orders of government, a number of public agencies, non-profits, and industry. For the purpose of this project, Economic Development is defined as the *process* – including developing policies, investing in education and technology, and developing infrastructure – that intends to improve a community’s wealth, well-being, and quality of life. In turn, successful economic development leads to growth in the economy.

The components of economic development can be thought of as the stages of building a house: Foundation, Supporting Functions, and Activities and Tactics.



A strong **Foundation** must be set for economic development to be successful. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Planning that will support desired outcomes (e.g. Growth Plan, Joint Planning Areas, etc.);
- Policies and legislation that allow for the creation of businesses, movement of goods, people, and ideas (e.g. Servicing Plans, Transportation Planning);
- Infrastructure (roads, servicing, internet) in place to support growth;
- A quality of life that supports the attraction and retention of citizens and workers; and,
- Regional coordination to ensure communication among all stakeholders.



The framing, or **Supporting Functions** for economic development, come from:

- Existing business owners and entrepreneurs;
- Economic development enablers, such as post-secondary institutions or airports which help to maintain the conditions and quality of life for growth; and,
- Economic development organizations that seek to promote investment.



The **Activities and Tactics** used by enablers and organizations are the finishings of the house. These tactics can be bucketed into four focus areas:

- Business Retention and Expansion (e.g., Business Scale Up programs);
- Innovation (e.g., Start Up programs, Research grants);
- Investment Attraction (e.g., investment tax credits, marketing material, international conferences); and,
- Business Advocacy and Convening functions (e.g., Chambers of Commerce).

Having a common definition provides clarity in how the CMRB and its members interpret the mandate for promoting economic well-being and understand the critical elements that encompass what is understood to be “economic development.”

As a shared meaning of economic development is formed, it then becomes beneficial to understand the current regional context. While economic development can be understood theoretically, there are real-world strengths to leverage, challenges to overcome, and over a century of policy path-dependency that has informed how the region evolved as it has, and where it can go from here. After all, this initiative undertaken by the CMRB is not a theoretical exercise. Rather, it serves to advance a practical agenda by identifying alignment with leading practices, members' interests, stakeholder perceptions and the Board's mandate.

Collaborative regional economic development is how a cluster of neighbouring municipalities come together to work together in areas that align across mutual interests. Typically, this involves a region establishing:



The common purpose, which is built “on a foundation of trust, reciprocity, and transparency,” recognizes that the individual participants will benefit as the region does, and recognizes that regional success leads to individual success.

MNP facilitated a process of guiding the CMRB Board towards developing:

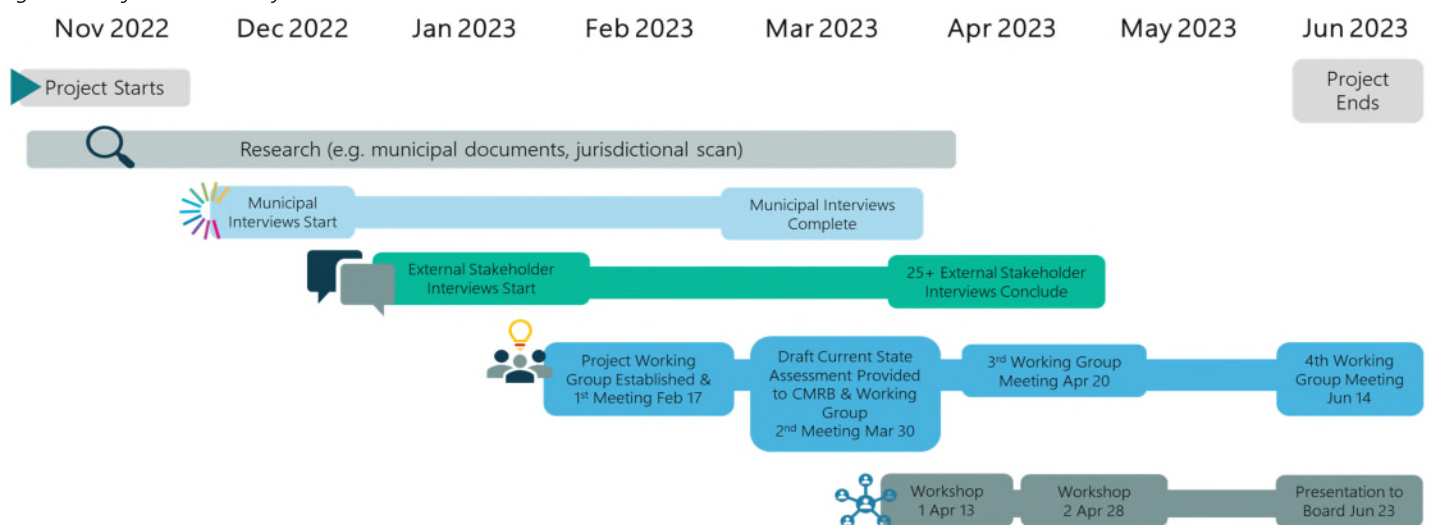
- A Common Purpose through the defining of a Purpose Statement;
- Shared Objectives that support the common purpose have also been defined through stakeholder engagement and workshop discussions; and
- Recommended Mutual Commitments to achieve the Shared Objectives, were discussed.

Based on this framework, to advance the collaborative regional economic development initiative, the CMRB and its members would endorse the Common Purpose and Shared Objectives and decide which, if not all, of the recommended Mutual Commitments they wish to pursue.

2.0 | PROJECT PROCESS

The MNP project began in November 2022 and is scheduled to end by the end of June 2023 (Figure 1). A multi-method approach was used to gather information that captured a comprehensive picture of the current state of economic development across the CMR. The approach sought to navigate through the universe of possibilities that could exist under the umbrella of collaborative regional economic development and identify tangible practical steps forward that are informed by the themes that came through research and stakeholder engagement.

Figure 1: Project Process Key Dates



Extensive desktop research and interviews with over 30 stakeholders were used to develop an understanding of the regional context. This work culminated with a series of findings and observations explained in the Current State Assessment, which was presented to the Board in April 2023. These findings served to guide the discussions during the Board Workshops for how the CMRB and its members, by focusing on areas of alignment and addressing misalignment, can set the stage for a focused discussion with the CMRB members to define how they wish to work together to improve the socioeconomic standing of the region.

These findings were also used by MNP to draft purpose statements and objectives that were presented to the Board during the workshops for their feedback and refinement.

A working group made up of economic development officers and experts from each of the CMRB member municipalities was established to help guide the project. The working group met on four occasions to review drafts and provide feedback and direction to MNP to ensure that there was alignment with municipal priorities for this framework.

By considering the research, previous CMRB projects, best practices, and stakeholder feedback (including that of the workshops and working group), the findings can be summarized into four key themes: Align, Commit, Collaborate, and Focus. The purpose statement and objectives reflect these four identified principles:



Align

This theme conveys the need for alignment across several dimensions including alignment among members, alignment among stakeholders, and alignment of economic development activities with the foundational plans of the CMRB already committed to by the members of the Board. Further, Economic development stakeholders and industry stakeholders raised that they would like to see some services, processes, and policies streamlined in the region to make it easier to do business in multiple municipalities. It was acknowledged that there is a difference between policy and regulatory alignment and complete harmonization which may not necessarily recognize the unique circumstances of each member.



Commit

CMRB members should formalize a commitment to the purpose and objectives of collaborative regional economic development so that long-term visions can be achieved. Commitments build trust among members and give confidence to investors. There is a concern that without formal commitments the momentum for this initiative may get lost in political cycles.



Collaborate

The CMRB members have done a lot of work to build up trust among each other through collaborative projects, such as the Growth Plan. It is important to continue this momentum and continue to collaborate and build trust on initiatives related to economic development. Collaboration was chosen deliberately to articulate that each member brings their unique strengths to the table and that regional economic development will be most successful when members work together out of shared purpose and commitment rather than by directives or mandates. In this context, the associated actions and activities may not always require all eight members at the table.



Focus

There is a clear desire from the CMRB members to focus their efforts to target up to one or two regionally significant sectors to leverage limited resources to generate immediate impact and momentum. Focusing on investment attraction in a limited number of sectors at first, it will allow the members to properly develop the foundation and trust to pursue longer-term and broader initiatives in the future.

One topic of discussion that was raised in relation to the purpose statement was the inclusion of “quality of life.” There was no clear consensus on whether the purpose statement should refer directly to the connection between quality of life and economic development or how this connection should be defined. Given the desire of workshop participants to focus efforts, quality of life was taken as implicit within the context of regional significance. Quality of life initiatives will both contribute to, and benefit from, regional economic development.

These themes underpin the recommended purpose statement, objectives, and recommended commitments the CMRB could pursue in their effort toward collaborative regional economic development. This can become the strategy for the CMRB to align around the activities and tactics that drive economic development.

3.0 | THE PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose statement provides the overarching strategic direction for the framework. It articulates the Common Purpose and sandbox in which the region will collaborate and which opportunities and challenges it wants to address collectively. This means it will also clarify what is out of scope for the emerging regional economic development collaboration framework, as well as set the stage for a discussion on what commitments each municipality is prepared to make to achieve the purpose.

The Common Purpose of collaborative economic development for the CMRB is to:

Position the CMR as the most attractive place in North America to invest and grow businesses in our regionally significant sectors.

Defining Regionally Significant

The definition of “Regionally Significant” for collaborative regional economic development will align with the definition established in the CMRB’s Regional Evaluation Framework (“REF”) as described below:

- “Regionally Significant means:
 - a) Of a scale or scope that may impact or benefit two or more municipal members as the context may apply; and,
 - b) Development of scale, scope, or proximity that it will benefit or have impact on regional transit and transportation corridors, energy corridors and utility corridors, natural systems and/or infrastructure.”

The “regionally significant” sectors are industries, such as film, agrifood, and manufacturing, that the CMRB members feel will have the opportunity to drive outsized economic impact across multiple municipalities, (See Objective 1 recommended commitments and actions in the next section for further exploration of which sectors to consider).

The CMRB members discussed defining a purpose to focus on regionally significant sectors, such as film, versus specific businesses so that member municipalities can target specific businesses or components of the sector that best match their identity. Regionally significant sectors may change over time though they are intended to be based on a long-term vision for the region. Drawing on previous work done for the CMRB by Hatch Consulting, “municipal economic development functions inevitably focus on short-term pressures as dictated by political cycles.” Therefore, Hatch Consulting notes, “There is an opportunity for the CMRB to take a longer-term view on behalf of the region. Part of this role is to focus on regional economic priorities that will safeguard the future economy, prosperity and wellbeing of future residents.”

4.0 | OBJECTIVES, RECOMMENDED COMMITMENTS, AND ACTIONS

The following section translates the overarching purpose into more tangible and practical steps. Objectives define *what* needs to be done to achieve the purpose. To articulate *how* to achieve the Objectives, a series of recommended Mutual Commitments, each accompanied by an action, are presented as a means of demonstrating that commitment, and to guide where to begin as a Board.

The objective and recommended commitments were developed based on research and the stakeholder feedback heard throughout the project. As part of the research completed, the previous work done by the CMRB related to regional planning, servicing, and economic development was leveraged to reflect and build upon. In this previous work, the CMRB Board agreed that further consideration should be given to regional coordination, trade and investment, and innovation and growth. The previous work aligns with what was heard from stakeholders for this project:

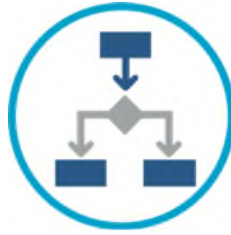
- **Regional Coordination** – Specifically around land use planning, transit, infrastructure, housing, and employment. These are the foundations for economic development as defined by this project and are key areas the CMRB can effectively play a part.
- **Business Services** – The CMRB member stakeholders indicated that they believe that municipal economic development agencies and departments are best suited to manage business retention within their borders. However, in contrast to past discussions had by the Board, the economic development stakeholders and industry representatives interviewed noted that they see room for alignment of some business regulations and services in the region to improve the ease of doing business.
- **Trade and Investment** – As it pertained to trade and investment, the CMRB members and the working group aligned on focusing their efforts on investment attraction specifically and recognized that the potential to collaborate in support of regionally significant industries varies and may include industry-specific regional marketing plans and attraction strategies.
- **Innovation and Growth** – This is important to CMRB members, especially in the regionally significant sectors. Interest in a shared-investment-for-shared-benefit model was brought up in many conversations with CMRB member municipalities as a means of facilitating regional growth. The idea of a regional equity investment fund was brought up in previous work completed for the CMRB; however, it was not defined nor discussed in any further detail during this project. Further research indicates that the Calgary Region has natural advantages that can also provide a basis for innovation and growth in regionally significant sectors such as agriculture. More detailed and focused identification of those opportunities and potential returns for investments are recommended to be pursued.

Leveraging both the previous work commissioned by CMRB with the insights generated from this project's research, engagement, and facilitation exercises, the following three objectives are proposed:



Objective 1

Define, Focus on, and Pursue Regionally Significant Opportunities



Objective 2

Coordinate Our Policy and Regulatory Environment to Increase the Ease of Doing Business Across the CMR for Our Regionally Significant Sectors



Objective 3

Collaborate with Economic Development Stakeholders to Leverage Shared Resources to Attract Regionally Significant Opportunities

These objectives are further described in the following section. A series of recommended commitments have been identified through stakeholder engagement, workshop discussions, and research as means to support the CMRB members achieve the objectives are also provided.

Commitments have been assigned estimated timelines as either Short (up to 6 months to complete), Medium (6 months – 18 months to complete), or Long Term (18 months – 3 years to complete).

While each commitment is recommended, these are provided in a format whereby the Board, faced with finite resources, could accept all or some of the commitments and still advance toward the purpose of collaborative regional economic development.



Objective 1: Define, Focus on, and Pursue Regionally Significant Opportunities

Understanding the Intention

This objective establishes the parameters for member municipalities to collaboratively pursue identified economic development opportunities. Feedback received from the CMRB members during interviews and workshops suggests that there is a shared interest in pursuing collaborative economic development activities that are significant and beneficial to the region.

However, there is concern from elected leaders and administration staff that without formalizing what this commitment to collaboration should look like, the momentum may get lost in the election cycle. Formalized commitments will keep the CMRB members accountable to the purpose and each other and strengthen trust. Framing the commitments around the regionally significant sectors and opportunities will also help focus the collaborative regional economic development efforts.

Economic and strategic plans from each member municipality suggest that the CMRB members share many of the same priorities and target sectors for economic development and are fairly aligned in the sectors they believe are regionally significant. This can be further refined to align with the Government of Alberta's priority sectors as well.

Using the declared economic development priorities of each CMRB municipality, as identified through municipal documents and/or the CMRB Board Workshop, it is clear that Film and Digital Media is an area of political alignment, momentum, and potential for quick wins. Agriculture is also an area of regional alignment, especially as the individual member municipalities establish how they can best contribute to the whole value chain from primary production, value-add processing, and ag-tech. Manufacturing stands out as a potential third opportunity, especially heavy industrial manufacturing which can benefit the region but faces site-suitability limitations as a sector. Manufacturing may also still be very general in its definition and would need further clarification and precision. A starting point could relate to the ability to support niches in regionally significant manufacturing where members contribute different aspects to a singular initiative such as supportive sites like industrial parks or zones.

Recommended Commitments

1.a. Identify one or two regionally significant sectors to focus on attraction for the next three to five years.

Timeline: Short-Term

The CMRB members discussed defining a purpose to focus on regionally significant sectors versus specific businesses so that municipalities can target specific businesses or components of the sector that best match their identity.

By agreeing to focus on a smaller number of sectors at first, members will be able to properly develop the foundation and trust to pursue “bigger fish” in the future. Regionally significant sectors may change over time but should be based on a long-term vision for the region.

Action: *Adopt a motion within the CMRB Board to agree to identify and pursue one or two regionally significant sectors to focus on for collaborative regional economic development.*

1.b. Agree on a definition of success for the two focus regionally significant sectors, including measures of success.

Timeline: Short-term

Once the regionally significant sectors are identified, the CMRB members will need to develop a process for how they will identify, attract, and manage regionally significant economic development opportunities that come up. This can include formally leveraging existing economic development organizations and enablers through protocol agreements.

This would formalize a process that would be repeatable and could be passed on through election cycles. A formal process would also help to keep members accountable to each other.

Action: *Strike CMRB working groups for each regionally significant sector chosen to focus on to define success and develop a performance measurement framework*

1.c. Investigate a shared-investment-for-shared-benefit framework to support Regionally Significant initiatives.

Timeline: Medium-Term

Many of the member municipalities expressed interest in developing a shared-investment-for-shared-benefit (“SISB”) framework that could support participation in Regionally Significant opportunities. Member municipalities indicated that such a framework could be used when members want to diversify their tax base but may not have the appropriate land or servicing available in their borders to support a project. In this situation, the member could invest in and receive revenue from a project within another member’s border. The Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board has developed an SISB framework that could be used as an example for the CMRB.

The discussion from CMRB members was an idea that all members would be involved in developing the framework, which would support the formalization of commitments. However, when it comes to utilizing the framework for a regionally significant project, not all CMRB members would have to be involved in the agreement, they would choose to participate based on the priorities of their municipality. CMRB would be involved as the facilitator of agreements between members to ensure that the framework is adhered to.

Formalizing an approach to co-investment, members establish professional alignment on the management and benefits of taking on a project.

Action: *Direct the CMRB administration to investigate models for shared investment for shared revenue that would best suit the CMRB members and regionally significant sector priorities.*



Objective 2: Coordinate Our Policy and Regulatory Environment to Increase the Ease of Doing Business Across the CMR for Our Regionally Significant Sectors

Understanding the Intention

Objective 2 creates an environment in the CMR that is easy for businesses and employees that support the identified target region sectors to thrive. This includes CMRB members working to coordinate tools, policy and regulatory processes that enable business growth in key priority sectors. It also involves the members working together to strengthen foundational elements of economic development such as land use planning, infrastructure and servicing planning, regional transportation and transit, housing, and talent attraction, which help to promote the region's high quality of life.

Previous relationships between the CMRB members have left a negative perception of members to stakeholders. Many comments were made by stakeholders about the perceived dysfunction of the region and municipalities not getting along. This has led to reported trepidation and avoidance by stakeholders in pursuing some opportunities if there are multiple municipalities involved. Some stakeholders shared stories of opportunities falling through due to frustration with municipal partners who could not collaborate on servicing or transportation and transit. These negative experiences not only have a negative impact on stakeholders currently operating in the region but are believed to impact new stakeholders from entering the market.

Stakeholders noted experiences of spending over \$200,000 in obtaining secondary opinions, waiting over two years for approvals, and requiring different documentation for obtaining business licences and planning permits in each municipality. There were also comments made regarding the various bylaws that enable growth in some jurisdictions but have not been updated in others such as fire and occupancy permits, and parking lot size limitations that hinder access to businesses, events, and hotels.

Many stakeholders noted that while a business may set up in one municipality, their staff, customers, or their materials, may be located in another. In this way, stakeholders do not always see municipal borders when thinking about their operations and are excited about the prospect of regional collaboration. They hope for more coordination and harmonization of processes across the region. There was an appetite from stakeholders for the CMRB to create an environment where businesses feel that their needs, including the needs of their staff, will be met no matter which side of the border they are on.

Further, creating an environment for businesses to thrive also includes ensuring that the talent they need is supported in the region. This is at the convergence of economic development to promote business, and economic development to promote quality of life. Stakeholders discussed that talent attraction and retention is a top-of-mind challenge in the region. Stakeholders noted that the municipalities provide many different lifestyles to suit the needs of most people, which is a selling point for the region. However, housing availability and high costs, and a lack of regional

transportation were raised as significant concerns. Stakeholders cited needing to appeal to the growing diversity of the region, including multi-generational families and immigrants. Additionally, as the region grows, interconnection will only become more critical to ensure that talent pools are not isolated from potential regionally significant investments.

This is especially true for many employment types relied upon to support key industries, which the region relies upon to attract and retain talent. Providing housing options for individuals like these, as well as providing affordable and reliable regional transit systems, were noted as priorities the region should be focusing on. While the CMRB Regional Transportation and Transit Master Plan intends to address this concern, the application of a regional economic development lens further reinforces the importance of this work and work like it.

All members highlighted the development challenges they face when it comes to water. They also all expressed the need to “shop smart” when it comes to business attraction to ensure that available water is managed responsibly. Access to water remains one of the biggest challenges for the region. It directly impacts economic development in terms of industries that can be attracted, construction of homes, and infrastructure development. Water disputes have been part of historical issues between member municipalities, and some legacy of these issues linger today. As the region prepares for growth and responds and adapts to climate change, there must be collaboration and coordination in water resource planning.

Coordination does not mean that each municipality would have to meet the lowest or highest standard for a process. Rather, coordinating the policy and regulatory environment means all members of the CMR are working together to recognize each other’s systems to effectively support key sector business growth in the region. Through this coordination, policies and processes that are directly relevant to the regionally significant sectors identified would be reviewed and coordinated in a way that allows businesses to easily operate throughout the region and ultimately grow within the CMR. This would increase investment attraction opportunities for the region and the long-term economic growth of each regionally significant sector.

Work needs to be done to showcase to stakeholders that there is regional collaboration. The CMRB is best positioned to facilitate and convene regional coordination especially as it relates to land and infrastructure planning, which are foundational for economic development. Getting the foundational elements, such as policy and infrastructure, right can enable regionally significant sectors to envision the ease of doing business in the region. A role of facilitating this coordination for ease of doing business can build the trust needed to gain traction for collaboration.

A coordinated policy and regulatory environment is not only beneficial for businesses and residents but could benefit the CMRB members’ advocacy work to the provincial and federal governments that may address policy and regulatory matters beyond their control. This would also provide capacity or efficiency gains for individual municipalities as the policy intended for common or coordinated practice might be developed by different municipalities individually and then used by several or all.

Recommended Commitments

2.a. Ensure that an economic development perspective is included in all future CMRB initiatives, including the development and implementation of regional plans, studies, and strategies.

Timeline: Short-term

Economic development can touch on many aspects of what the CMRB does or is planning to do. The inclusion of an economic development perspective or impact analysis in future work can help the CMRB align initiatives and commit to regional collaboration. This could be enabled through discussions with stakeholders during new project development, the economic impact analysis of a project, or the establishment of a CMRB economic development committee or working group to review all work.

Action: *Pass a motion that any future studies, strategies, and assessments undertaken by the CMRB include a section articulating how this work can support the economic development focus areas of the region, including the chosen targeted regionally significant sectors.*

2.b. Assess the necessary requirements for regionally significant sectors to succeed and coordinate policies and regulatory processes to support the relevant businesses.

Timeline: Short-Term

Once the CMRB members have identified the regionally significant sectors they want to attract, they will need to ensure that the relevant policy and regulatory environment in the region will allow the businesses to establish and grow.

Action: *Direct the regionally significant sector working groups to engage further with representatives of those sectors to understand the policy and regulatory environments gaps and opportunities, and report back to the Board with findings.*

2.c. Align regional water availability, management, and infrastructure planning with regional economic development priorities.

Timeline: Medium-Term

As the CMRB continues to develop context studies for joint planning areas and other regional development initiatives, the role the region could play in the delivery of water servicing and regional water management should be further explored, with economic development as a key consideration.

Water Stewardship is a policy area in the Growth Plan and the CMRB Servicing Plan outlines the Long-Term Water Strategy. Using these two guiding documents, water must be part of the conversation about all regional economic development and could be looked at from the requirements of regionally significant sector opportunities as a means to start this alignment.

Action: *Direct CMRB Administration to establish principles as to how the regionally significant sector growth can align with the Growth Plan's Water Stewardship policy area and Long-Term Water Strategy, once available.*

2.d. Develop a regional housing strategy that is aligned with the Regional Transit and Transportation Master Plan (“RTTMP”).

Timeline: Long-Term

There will be a growing demand for housing in the region as the population grows, which will need to be aligned with regional transit and transportation infrastructure, and joint planning areas, as well as the anticipated talent attraction within each regionally significant sector. This will need to be supported by a regional housing strategy that addresses affordable housing needs and enables a range of housing options to meet the needs of a growing region and aligns with the identified regionally significant opportunities.

Action: Direct CMRB administration to establish a project charter for a regional housing strategy that aligns with the RTTMP and the regionally significant sectors. This action assumes that the RTTMP is fully completed before aligning its strategic initiatives with the regional housing strategy.

2.e. Establish a relevant regional talent attraction and development strategy that is aligned with the identified regionally significant opportunities.

Timeline: Long-Term

The CMRB can use insights from talent development stakeholders and community employment demands or trends to establish a relevant regional talent attraction and development strategy that is aligned with the identified regionally significant opportunities.

Stakeholders are looking to young people and thinking about how to keep them from leaving the region. Specifically, they are looking for attractive education and training options, job opportunities, affordability of housing and transit, and culture and entertainment options that young people want.

Additionally, investors are increasingly looking at doing and expanding business in jurisdictions that have desirable ESG and DE&I-friendly stances. This can include steps taken to address climate change, policies that support women and visible minorities, and structures that support inclusion.

By working with the regional talent development stakeholders and community, the CMRB can position the region to attract, retain, and develop the talent needed for the growth expected.

Action: Direct CMRB administration to review the Calgary Economic Development (“CED”) talent strategy and identify areas of alignment and opportunity with a regional focus to determine if a distinct regional talent attraction strategy is required.



Objective 3: Collaborate with Economic Development Stakeholders to Leverage Shared Resources to Attract Regionally Significant Opportunities

Understanding the Intention

Economic development and industry stakeholders consistently noted that there is an opportunity and desire for more collaboration between them and the CMRB members to maximize mutual benefits from economic development activities. In short, the region needs a facilitator to guide collaboration among the municipalities and stakeholders in order to efficiently and effectively achieve the first two objectives.

The ecosystem of economic development across Canada is complex. From governments and their agencies/ organizations to research institutions and non-profit associations, numerous players are responding to economic trends to advance federal, provincial, regional, and local economic interests. With so many players in the ecosystem, it is important to find some collaborative alignment. It is also important to have a strong foundation of policies and infrastructure to encourage the economic development the region wants to see.

The essential role these stakeholders play in the success of the region's economic development activities indicates that mutual long-term benefits that can be attained from collaborating and leveraging shared resources. Shared resources, in this case, refers to the assets, data, and knowledge that can be used by stakeholders or CMRB members to meet economic development objectives. By establishing methods for collaborating with economic development stakeholders, the CMR can better identify, attract, and facilitate economic development activities in a way that effectively meets or exceeds the desired outcomes of regionally significant economic development activities.

Recommended Commitments

3.a. Bring together stakeholders for quarterly coordinating meetings to foster collaboration.	Timeline: Short-Term
<p>The CMRB could establish quarterly meetings and channels of formal communications with key economic development stakeholders to share insight and resources that maximize the benefit from identified or implemented economic development activities.</p> <p>Many stakeholders were thankful for the opportunity to provide their input into this project as they are supportive of the region collaborating more. Stakeholders indicated that they see the role of the CMRB as one to promote and facilitate collaboration with the region. Stakeholders view the CMRB as a platform to bring together ideas, which could include providing more opportunities for stakeholders to meet jointly with all Board members.</p> <p>Stakeholders indicated that the CMRB could serve as a facilitator and platform for members and industry representatives to share ideas. Some stakeholders hoped that they could present to the Board in a joint format and want to be involved in future engagement for the development of CMRB strategies.</p> <p><i>Action: Direct CMRB administration to convene, on a quarterly basis, a coordinating meeting with key regional stakeholders, organizations, and institutions (Indigenous Nations, YYC, PSIs, CED, etc) to share priorities and discuss areas of alignment across the region for topic-specific discussions (e.g., Discussion on the Film and Television Industry, or Discussion of Talent Attraction).</i></p>	

3.b. Develop protocol agreements with economic development stakeholders that clarify roles and maximize resources among external partners.	Timeline: Short-Term
<p>Establish regional protocols or agreements on how identified economic development stakeholders, such as Travel Alberta, Invest Alberta, the Calgary Airport, and CED, will collaborate with members of the CMRB on regionally significant opportunities. These protocols would outline the expectations of all parties for participating in a collaborative partnership.</p> <p><i>Action: Using the Edmonton Region's protocols as a template, convene proactive discussions with Invest Alberta, Calgary Economic Development, CMRB, and Municipal Economic Development professionals to clearly articulate who is responsible for what functions across the region.</i></p>	

3.c. Investigate the potential to implement a regional certified site program focusing on the regionally significant sectors.

Timeline: Medium-Term

The CMRB would determine the strategic benefit of available sites and formalize a site identification process that can be used by regionally significant business opportunities to identify locations that meet their operational needs. The certified site program would be aligned with the CMRB Growth and Servicing Plans, including Joint Planning Areas, as well as future regional plans such as the RTTMP.

Jurisdictions, such as Ontario, Atlantic Canada and the State of Tennessee, have established versions of Certified Site Programs meant to facilitate a smoother site selection experience for potential investors. These programs involve identifying investment-ready sites (typically including pre-zoned, pre-serviced) sites that meet a set of predetermined standards and are promotable and navigable through a certified site portal.

Action: Undertake a scoping exercise to determine the resources required, lessons learned from comparable jurisdictions, and stakeholder sentiment to better inform a Board decision on further investment in a certified site program.

3.d. Develop a regional marketing plan that showcases the region's value proposition and is used by all CMRB members.

Timeline: Medium-term

To promote the CMR, CMRB members and working group participants expressed interest in developing a unified and consistent message describing the region's value proposition to effectively market the region. This could involve creating a regional marketing plan that will provide the guiding marketing channels and communication for all member municipalities to promote the region to the priority regionally significant sectors.

Action: Incorporate data and information sharing into the protocol agreements and coordinate with Calgary Economic Development and Invest Alberta to establish a regional marketing strategy and plan that ensures the CMR story is understood by those already working in national and international markets to identify potential investors.

3.e. Continue to build the CMRB open data portal

Timeline: Long-Term

The CMRB has developed an open data portal to share information publicly, and some data has been added. This portal is to be more comprehensive with additional regional data added from each municipality and relevant provincial and federal information. While this is a project that is already ongoing, it requires an additional commitment to align with economic development goals. The intention is to provide relevant, fact-based information to municipalities, researchers, and stakeholders, to support all regional collaborative economic development decision-making

Action: Reinforce the CMRB's commitment to further developing regional datasets and the open data portal by formally recognizing the economic development benefits of shared data.

4.4 Overarching Commitments

Understanding the Intention

To ensure that this framework can be actioned, and objectives achieved, the CMRB will need to endorse the purpose and objectives of the collaborative economic development framework and vision. Once that is agreed upon, the Board will need to determine which of the proposed commitments they want to pursue, the resource requirements to pursue them, and how they will fund and resource those projects.

Accept the purpose and objectives of the collaborative regional economic development framework and vision at the CMRB Board.	Timeline: Short-Term
<i>Action: The CMRB Board adopts a motion to endorse the purpose and objectives of the collaborative economic development framework and vision.</i>	
Endorse the purpose and objectives of the collaborative regional economic development framework and vision in each members' council.	Timeline: Short-Term
<i>Action: CMRB members each adopt a motion to endorse the purpose and objectives of the collaborative regional economic development framework and vision in their councils.</i>	

5.0 | NEXT STEPS

The CMRB has ventured into this journey of collaborative regional economic development from a place of strength. There are tremendous assets in the region and the findings outline that the opportunities ahead involve building on those strengths, and the momentum at hand.


With a defined collective purpose for regional collaboration in economic development, the region can pursue even greater ambition than any member could achieve on its own. The challenge ahead is not whether there is a path forward, but rather which of several paths forward can create the optimal level of collaboration for the region. The level to which the participating municipalities will want to foster a borderless regional experience and economic growth will be faced with the competing realities of municipal identity, regional legacies, and priority alignment.


The framework balances the priorities of each municipality with the opportunities in the region, ultimately setting the stage for practical impacts. By aligning on the Common Purpose, focusing on Shared Objectives, and agreeing to Mutual Commitments, this framework can become the strategy for the CMRB to commit to the activities that drive collaborative regional economic development.

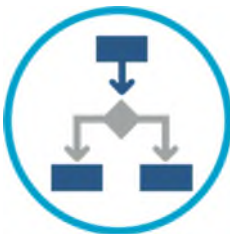


Summary of Objective and Recommended Commitments and Actions

To ensure that action can be taken based on this framework, and objectives achieved, the CMRB Board will need to endorse the purpose and objectives of the collaborative economic development framework and vision. Once that is agreed upon the Board will need to determine which, if not all, of the recommended commitments they wish to pursue, their resource requirements and timelines for achievement, and how they will resource those commitments. It is important to note that there are multiple courses of action the CMRB Board can follow to implement the determined commitments and their resourcing requirements. The actions that are the best fit to meet the CMRB Board’s desired outcomes will need further exploration prior to implementing the determined commitments for delivering on the framework and vision. The recommended commitments to action the framework and vision are summarized in the tables below

	Recommended Commitments	Action
 <p>Overarching Commitments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accept the purpose and objectives of the collaborative regional economic development vision and framework at the CMRB Board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CMRB Board adopts a motion to endorse the purpose and objectives of the collaborative economic development framework and vision.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Endorse the purpose and objectives of the collaborative regional economic development framework and vision in each members’ council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CMRB members each adopt a motion to endorse the purpose and objectives of the collaborative regional economic development framework and vision in their councils.

Objective	Recommended Commitments	Action
 <p>Objective 1 Define, Focus on, and Pursue Regionally Significant Opportunities</p>	<p>1.a Identify one or two regionally significant sectors to focus on attraction for the next three to five years.</p>	<p>1.a Adopt a motion within the CMRB Board to agree to identify and pursue one or two regionally significant sectors to focus on for collaborative regional economic development.</p>
	<p>1.b Agree on a definition of success for the two focus regionally significant sectors, including measures of success.</p>	<p>1.b Strike CMRB working groups for each target regionally significant sector to define success and develop a performance measurement framework.</p>
	<p>1.c Investigate a shared-investment-for-shared-benefit framework to support Regionally Significant initiatives.</p>	<p>1.c Direct the CMRB administration to investigate models for shared investment for shared revenue that would best suit the CMRB members and regionally significant sector priorities.</p>

 <p>Objective 2 Coordinate Our Policy and Regulatory Environment to Increase the Ease of Doing Business Across the CMR for Our Regionally Significant Sectors</p>	<p>2.a Ensure that an economic development perspective is included in all future CMRB initiatives, including the development and implementation of regional plans, studies, and strategies.</p>	<p>2.a Pass a motion that any future studies, strategies, and assessments undertaken by the CMRB include a section articulating how this work can support the economic development focus areas of the region.</p>
	<p>2.b Assess the necessary requirements for regionally significant sectors to succeed and coordinate policies and regulatory processes to support the relevant businesses.</p>	<p>2.b Direct the regionally significant sector working groups to engage further with representatives of those sectors to understand the policy and regulatory environments gaps and opportunities, and report back to the Board with findings.</p>
	<p>2.c Align regional water availability, management and infrastructure planning with regional economic development priorities.</p>	<p>2.c Direct CMRB Administration to establish principles as to how the regionally significant sector growth can align with the Growth Plan’s Water Stewardship policy area and Long-Term Water Strategy, once available.</p>
	<p>2.d Develop a regional housing strategy that is aligned with the RTTMP.</p>	<p>2.d Direct CMRB administration to establish a project charter for a regional housing strategy that aligns with the RTTMP and the regionally significant sectors. This action assumes that the RTTMP is fully completed before aligning its strategic initiatives with the regional housing strategy.</p>
	<p>2.e Establish a relevant regional talent attraction and development strategy that is aligned with the identified regionally significant opportunities.</p>	<p>2.e Direct CMRB administration to review the Calgary Economic Development talent strategy and identify areas of alignment and opportunity with a regional focus to determine if a distinct regional talent attraction strategy is required.</p>



**Objective 3
Collaborate with
Economic
Development
Stakeholders to
Leverage Shared
Resources to Attract
Regionally
Significant
Opportunities**

<p>3.a Bring together stakeholders for quarterly coordinating meetings to foster collaboration.</p>	<p>3.a Direct CMRB administration to convene, on a quarterly basis, a coordinating meeting with key regional stakeholders, organizations and institutions (Indigenous Nations, YYC, PSIs, CED, etc.) to share priorities and discuss areas of alignment across the region for topic-specific discussions (e.g., Discussion on the Film and Television Industry, or Discussion of Talent Attraction).</p>
<p>3.b Develop protocol agreements with economic development stakeholders that clarify roles and maximize resources among external partners.</p>	<p>3.b Using the Edmonton Region’s protocols as a template, convene proactive discussions with Invest Alberta, Calgary Economic Development, CMRB, and Municipal Economic Development professionals to clearly articulate who is responsible for what functions across the region.</p>
<p>3.c Investigate the potential to implement a regional certified site program focusing on the regionally significant sectors.</p>	<p>3.c Undertake a scoping exercise to determine the resources required, lessons learned from comparable jurisdictions, and stakeholder sentiment to better inform a Board decision on further investment in a certified site program.</p>
<p>3.d Develop a regional marketing plan that showcases the region’s value proposition and is used by all CMRB members.</p>	<p>3.d Incorporate data and information sharing into the protocol agreements and coordinate with Calgary Economic Development and Invest Alberta to establish a regional marketing strategy and plan that ensures the CMR story is understood by those already working in national and international markets to identify potential investors.</p>
<p>3.e Continue to build the CMRB open data portal</p>	<p>3.e Reinforce the CMRB’s commitment to further developing regional datasets and the open data portal by formally recognizing the economic development benefits of shared data.</p>

Conclusion

Through thorough analysis and open dialogue, a clear picture has formed of what is needed, desired, and possible for the Calgary Metropolitan Region Board to advance collaborative regional economic development. Beyond an understanding of what is needed and desired by member municipalities to advance economic development throughout the region, this framework demonstrates a mutual understanding that the sum of the region is greater than its individual parts. By engaging in collaborative economic development, the region will be positioned to attract and grow economic development in a way that is unified, mutually beneficial and exceeds what could be accomplished individually. The framework gives the Calgary Metropolitan Region Board and its member municipalities the foundation of how to align, commit, collaborate, and focus on collaborative economic development activities.

By building off the foundation, this work can transform the way the members of the region work together, build momentum in the short term, and advance their larger ambitions in the longer term. This is what is needed to maximize and sensibly manage the growth we want and know is coming.