



# TARGET SECTOR STUDY & MARKETING PLAN

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Stony Plain is looking to its future with an interest in nurturing a more diverse economy, new opportunities for employment and business ownership, and increases in commercial valuation that can support local services critical to the community's outstanding quality of life.

Stony Plain has unique resources and qualities that can be leveraged to foster business development and investment across diverse economic sectors. The Town can establish a distinctive place within the market, appealing to home-grown and small businesses, and continuing its long-standing role as the place where rural and metropolitan commerce come together. As they are realized, these targets will create a synergy with each other, branding Stony Plain as a destination community for businesses, residents, and visitors.

Stony Plain has an outstanding quality of life attracting new, highly skilled residents in trades and professional occupations. This is a workforce that is attractive to many companies, and these workers can also be entrepreneurs starting their own small businesses. The local workforce is highly regarded by businesses in the area, who report cost advantages and an easier time finding good labour.

Stony Plain has available industrial land at favorable pricing. Speculative buildings are being constructed in each of its business parks, and lease rates are very competitive compared to comparable space elsewhere in the Edmonton periphery.

While the town is not in a position to attract large retail uses, it can leverage key assets to develop a destination shopping and dining district. Those assets include physical spaces like the historic downtown, the Multicultural Heritage Center, and the Stony Plain and Parkland Pioneer Museum. There are a great many artists in the region, and the arts already have a presence in the downtown district. A nucleus of other specialty businesses in the district draw from well beyond the community's normal market.

In some ways, Stony Plain's greatest advantage may be in its historical role as the western gateway of the Edmonton metropolitan area. Stony Plain was established in the late 1800's and has long served as the market center for the rural hinterland. This role can continue with the town leveraging its connections for businesses in the metropolitan area that serve agricultural, mining, and oil and gas sectors in outlying areas. It may also serve as the entry point for small businesses in the rural area to access the Edmonton market.

An established presence will help Stony Plain to advance its brand, combining the elements of a small town feel, recognition as a distinct place (and not merely a bedroom community), a center for arts and culture, and the gateway to the west.

### RECOMMENDED TARGETS

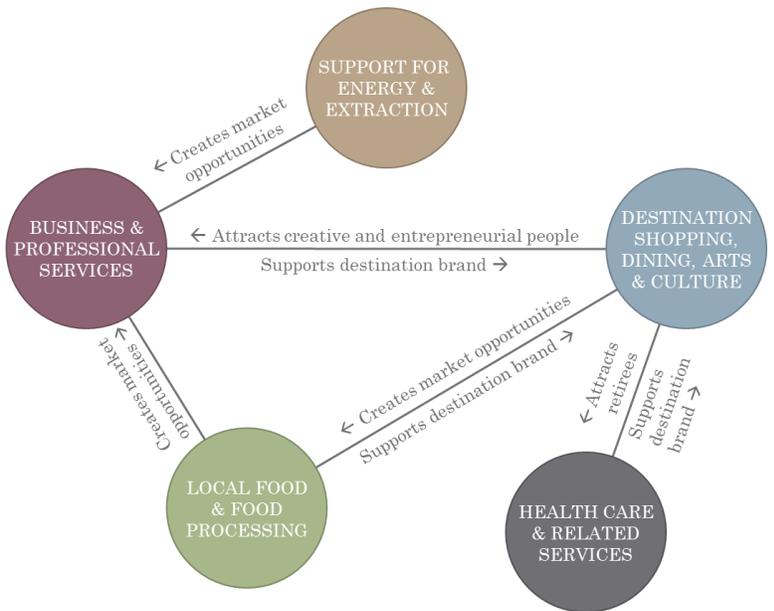
- Support Services for Energy and Extraction
- Business and Professional Services
- Health Care and Related Services
- Local Food and Food Processing
- Destination Shopping, Dining, Arts and Culture

## TARGETED SECTORS

Five key development opportunities emerged from the analysis. In many cases these opportunities are related to each other and their development will serve to reinforce the assets or qualities that draw residents and businesses to the community. The five target opportunities include:

- Support Activities for Energy and Extraction
- Business and Professional Services
- Health Care and Related Services
- Local Food and Food Processing
- Destination Shopping, Dining, Arts and Culture

Each of these targets is an existing or emerging sector with both immediate and long term prospects for development. In each case, Stony Plain faces competition from places in close proximity (such as Spruce Grove) and/or more distant locations targeting similar niche opportunities, which needs to be considered in the approach.



## SUPPORT ACTIVITIES FOR ENERGY AND EXTRACTION

Resource extraction is the primary driver of Alberta’s economy, including oil and gas fields along the eastern slope of the Rockies, oil sands to the north of Edmonton, and extensive mining operations in Alberta and the Northwest Territories. Energy production is a related activity. For Stony Plain, the most important producer lies a half hour to the west, where TransAlta has two coal mines and nine coal-fired power plants. This site represents the largest concentration of electrical power generation in Alberta.

Stony Plain’s advantages with regard to support activities for energy and extraction are its orientation to the west and the ability to accommodate small users, primarily in new buildings or on development sites, at a cost that is lower than most other parts of the metropolitan area. Rather than recruiting outside of the region, Stony Plain will have greater success positioning itself as an expansion site for businesses already in the area. This includes both established businesses that need to adjust their facility for their current operations (due to expansion or contraction) and small businesses graduating up to leased commercial space.

Several strategies are associated with this target. Some of these can be pursued jointly with Spruce Grove, Parkland County, and other communities in the Edmonton region.

1. Implement a business visitation tracking program
2. Conduct a workforce survey
3. Participate in coordinated metropolitan area marketing
4. Develop collateral marketing materials (on-demand printing)
5. Prepare cost comparison reports
6. Evaluate opportunities to conduct print and/or web advertising
7. Execute a public relations campaign
8. Carry out a social media strategy
9. Evaluate opportunities for trade show participation
10. Confer with TransAlta to identify contractors

### TARGETED ENERGY & EXTRACTION INDUSTRIES

- Support services
  - Nonresidential maintenance and repair
  - Services to buildings and dwellings
  - Waste management and remediation
  - Scenic and sightseeing transportation and support activities for transportation
  - Commercial and industrial machinery and equipment rental and leasing
- Other support activities for mining (such as mineral exploration, including geophysical services and surveying)
- Manufacturing and distribution
  - Cutting and machine tool accessory, rolling mill, and other metalworking machinery manufacturing
  - Material handling equipment manufacturing
  - Valve and fittings other than plumbing
  - Wholesale trade
  - Warehousing and storage

## BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Business and professional services are industries that are growing globally and within the Edmonton region. The majority of new business starts are found within these sectors. Many of the persons interviewed for this study believe there to be a large number of solo and microbusinesses in the business and professional services industry located in Stony Plain. A large number of these may be home based and have the opportunity to grow into commercial space.

In addition to business attraction aimed at established companies, strategies to promote these small and startup businesses should center on marketing and client development, closing the gap with regard to equipment or services these businesses need to be competitive, and providing technical assistance to help them grow. Coworking is a promising strategy to enhance networking and deliver business development services to these targets.

Employment in this industry is expected to increase by an average of 2 percent per year between 2013 and 2017, adding about 9,500 jobs during this period. Wages in this sector tend to perform above Alberta averages, according to *Alberta Occupational Demand Outlook, 2013-2023*.

Year-to-year, business, professional, and scientific services accounted for nearly half of all job growth in Alberta between 2013 and 2014. About two thirds of these jobs (23,000) were created in the Edmonton area. The 2014 Entrepreneurial Communities report from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) found that the Edmonton periphery is one of the best places in Canada in which to start a business. The report ranks 122 city regions across Canada on 14 characteristics

Small businesses, the majority of them microbusinesses (under five employees) will make up the majority of prospects in this cluster. This will include a large number of startup businesses, and may include small branch establishments of larger firms. While many will serve a local market, the services they provide are highly transportable and individual businesses have the potential to reach a worldwide clientele.

Stony Plain will be attractive for the opportunity it gives to business owners and employees to work close to home. The attraction will be heightened over time if the Town is successful in developing its image through plans to turn the downtown into a specialty shopping and dining district and center for arts and culture. Doing so will help to attract additional professionals, technical specialists, and executive-level employees to the community.

Short term strategies for this sector focus on entrepreneurship and developing small businesses that have the opportunity to grow. These strategies include:

1. Attend and support business networking groups and events
2. Build brand awareness of Stony Plain as a small business "hot spot"
3. Work with schools to expand entrepreneurial education at all levels
4. Prepare a feasibility study for coworking or makerspace
  - a) If feasible, develop business plan for coworking or makerspace
  - b) if feasible, develop a coworking or makerspace

### TARGETED BUSINESS & PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

- Professional, Scientific and Technical Services
  - Legal Services
  - Accounting, Tax Preparation, Bookkeeping and Payroll Services
  - Architectural, Engineering and Related Services
  - Specialized Design Services
  - Computer Systems Design and Related Services
  - Management, Scientific and Technical Consulting Services
  - Scientific Research and Development Services
  - Advertising, Public Relations, and Related Services
  - Other Professional, Scientific and Technical Services
- Information and Cultural Industries
  - Publishing Industries (except Internet)
  - Motion Picture and Sound Recording Industries
  - Data Processing, Hosting, and Related Services
  - Other Information Services

## HEALTH CARE AND RELATED SERVICES

Health care is the Edmonton region's largest industry, at 12 percent of total metropolitan area employment in 2010. Health care and social assistance was also the region's fastest growing industry between 2006 and 2010, with an increase of over 17,000 employees. Across Alberta, the industry had the second-largest number of employees, though also the largest increase in jobs.

Continuing population growth in Stony Plain, Spruce Grove, and Parkland County, and an increase in older households, will create additional demand for health care services and supportive services, especially for the elderly. Stony Plain can leverage its location and the presence of Westview Health Centre to capture business development opportunities related to this growth.

Two of the best opportunities for development are related to the aging population. The home health care industry will see substantial growth as older residents need support to remain in their homes. This sector can consist of outlets at which patients purchase or lease supplies and devices, and service providers offering in-home assistance. Senior housing will also be in demand, ranging from apartment or condominium units with design features oriented toward older and mobility-impaired seniors, through full-service nursing facilities. The greatest share of the senior living facilities west of Edmonton are located within Stony Plain.

Westview Health Centre is an important anchor for this target opportunity. It is the westernmost health clinic in the Edmonton area. The facility delivers routine health care services, a 24-hour emergency clinic (though not a trauma center), day/outpatient surgery, rehabilitation, and mental health services. The centre has 20 acute care beds, four maternity beds, and 50 long-term care beds.

Many additional health-related businesses are represented in the community, including small and solo businesses, and unincorporated practitioners. Examples are personal trainers, dietitians and nutritionists, massage therapists, and other personal care service providers. Alternative health services are an important component of this target. Examples include aboriginal healing, chiropractic care, naturopathy, reiki, acupuncture, and reflexology. The Public Health Agency of Canada reports that more than 70% of Canadians regularly use complementary and alternative health care therapies such as vitamins and minerals, herbal products, homeopathic medicines and other natural health products to stay healthy and improve their quality of life.

Stony Plain is the health care center for a market of 80,000 people, and as an alternative to Edmonton, offers improved access and convenience for patients in outlying areas. With the lion's share of senior housing in the western suburbs, the Town is central to the largest volume users of health care and related services.

1. Work with the provincial government to expand health care services
2. Approach developers to consider senior housing development
3. Recruit regional service providers to expand into Stony Plain

## LOCAL FOOD AND FOOD PROCESSING

Consumer sensibilities around food are evolving. A growing segment of the market believes that organic, locally-produced, non-GMO, gluten-free, craft or artisanal products, and similar foods offer better taste, nutrition, or food safety. These market niches are the focus of many food industry startups, and are increasingly drawing the attention of large manufacturers.

A defining characteristic of all of these markets is that they tend to have strong opportunities for small-scale production and emerging businesses that are well matched to Stony Plain's character, location, business sites, and resources. Almost 90 percent of food manufacturers have fewer than 100 employees. Access to markets will be a factor for some businesses in this sector, as many small food processing businesses tend to sell to a regional market before expanding to a larger scale. This is more of an issue among those producers catering to the local food movement.

Stony Plain has some important assets that contribute to the potential of this target.

- North Central Co-Operative Association
- Homegrown Foods
- Freson Bros
- The Multicultural Heritage, its restaurant, gardening programs, and Maker's Market

### MICHE FOOD PROCESSING OPPORTUNITIES

- Locally-grown and processed foods
- Artisanal or craft food products
- Nutraceuticals and functional foods
- Dietary food products
- Ethnic foods
- Pet foods

Stony Plain is the place “where farm meets table”. Historically, the town has served as the market center for the rural region for over a century, and the presence of organizations like the North Central Co-Operative Association and the Multicultural Heritage Centre’s demonstration farm, agricultural programs, and Maker’s Market reinforce that role. These are among the building blocks that help to position Stony Plain as the location of choice for small and emerging producers to take products to a larger market, and for people interested in niche or craft products to learn and to interact with the people making them.

1. Sector strategies include:
2. Expand food-related educational programs offered in Stony Plain
3. Develop food tourism themes and food events in Stony Plain
4. Prospect for emerging food businesses to recruit to Stony Plain
5. Consider opportunities to market for food processing businesses
6. Assess the feasibility of developing a food hub in Stony Plain
  - a) If feasible, develop a business plan for a food hub in Stony Plain
  - b) If feasible, develop a food hub in Stony Plain
7. Explore opportunities to offer a shared commercial kitchen
  - a) If feasible, offer a shared commercial kitchen

## DESTINATION SHOPPING, DINING, ARTS AND CULTURE

More than 1.3 million people live in the Edmonton region, which has the second-fastest growth rate and third-highest median income among Canada’s largest metropolitan areas. This creates a very large market for specialty retail, dining, arts, and culture; destination activities for which people will travel outside of their normal patterns. Stony Plain’s unique resources can be leveraged to make the community a center for these uses.

Stony Plain has the nucleus of a destination district anchored by its historic downtown, Multicultural Centre, Pioneer Museum, Heritage Park, and Rotary Park. Already, there are several existing shops and galleries in the downtown core. These are drawing customers from far beyond the Town’s regular trade area.

Art is an important element of the market. Albertans spent more on the arts, per capita, than any other province. The province also had the largest percentage growth in spending between 1997 and 2008, when it also ranked first in overall spending. The Edmonton metropolitan area was ranked third, nationally among the largest cities, in total consumer spending on the arts, spending \$933 per capita on all arts and culture, and \$124 per capita on art works and events. To add some dimension to these statistics, \$62 million is spent on art, antiques and decorative ware within 100 kilometers of Stony Plain. More than \$22 million in spending on art and craft materials is generated in the same area.

No one business can create a destination district, although it is not uncommon for one or more businesses to play a critical role in the formation and development of a district. For a district to become a successful destination, collaboration between businesses, property owners, organizations, and local government is essential. Success also requires a sustained effort over years, while the business mix evolves and the district becomes better known within its market.

The Town of Stony Plain cannot create a destination district through its actions alone. Leadership will need to come from within the community, its business, and property owners, through their actions to bring about the vision. The Town’s role will be to make people aware of the opportunity and encourage individual or collective efforts through planning, technical or logistical assistance, investments in infrastructure, and financial support.

Strategies designed to capture this opportunity include:

1. Prepare a downtown plan
2. Integrate the downtown, Multicultural Centre, and Rotary Park
3. Implement a marketing plan for the downtown district
4. Recruit specialty retail and dining establishments
5. Carry out arts and cultural activities in the downtown
6. Work with partners to create ongoing downtown events