

News Release

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C2E announces top-10 'great ideas' for Edmonton

— *Edmonton's online community offers hundreds of ideas to enhance region*

Connect2Edmonton.com (C2E) --- an autonomous global community that encourages discussion and collaboration on topics of importance to Edmonton's future --- has announced 10 priority ideas that have emerged from its recent "Great Ideas for a Greater Edmonton" contest.

The 'Great Ideas' contest encouraged C2E members – membership is free for everyone – to submit all ideas, big and small, that could help enhance Greater Edmonton's national profile, quality of life or future development. The intention of this unprecedented undertaking was to engage Edmonton enthusiasts worldwide in a positive dialogue to develop a new, inspirational regional vision.

The hundreds of ideas submitted to the contest were overwhelmingly focused on six areas (in alphabetical order): art and architecture; cleaning up the city; downtown development; river valley development; tourism; and transportation.

A year-end, top-10 list of 'Great Ideas for Greater Edmonton' was developed by weighting C2E's top-100 discussion 'threads' (as determined by the number of postings and views that each 'great idea' attracted) with input from 16 C2E volunteers who responded to an all-member invite to participate in a panel discussion. Here is C2E's top-10 list of Great Ideas for Greater Edmonton for 2007:

1. Redevelop Rosedale

Redevelop the EPCOR plant in Rosedale on a scale similar to Granville Island (Vancouver) or The Forks (Winnipeg) ... preferably with an architectural icon, new river valley amenities and an aboriginal cultural centre.

2. Clean up the city

Citizens are tired of complaining. Edmonton needs a comprehensive, year-round plan and measurable, public benchmarks to dramatically reduce litter (especially cigarette butts), graffiti and panhandling. C2E members also want more greenery throughout the city and suggest a corporate competition to encourage businesses to plant flowers and trees, especially along major thoroughfares.

3. Launch Winter Festival / World's Fair bid

There is significant interest in an annual winter festival to celebrate Edmonton's destiny as the Gateway to the North and the largest major city in North America. Ideas to increase outdoor, winter activities include an amateur street hockey tournament. There is also interest in Edmonton making a bid to host a World's Fair in 2017 to mark Canada's 150th birthday.

4. Expand the LRT

Expansion of the LRT (and mass transportation in general) is critical --- planning should begin immediately for a West Edmonton Mall and Edmonton International Airport connection.

5. Enhance Edmonton's national image

Edmonton needs to invest the needed resources on an ongoing basis to aggressively promote itself nationally and internationally to attract visitors, new businesses and needed workers.

6. Improve roadways

Edmonton desperately needs a new bridge over the North Saskatchewan River as well as an unimpeded flow of traffic from downtown to the airport beyond the planned 23rd Avenue interchange.

7. Build a new downtown arena

Although Edmonton's downtown is growing, much more can be done to create more livable spaces and upgrade the city's architectural standards to attract more residents ... especially in East Jasper and Chinatown. C2E members favour a new downtown arena combined with a major, new recreation facility.

8. Build an architectural icon

Edmonton deserves a world-class architectural icon --- a tall tower, new convention centre or stunning bridge --- to set a new benchmark for development, mark its place as a major capital city and to extract a legacy dividend from the greatest economic boom in the city's history.

9. Encourage more public art

Public art --- statues, paintings and even light projections --- are valued and need to be encouraged ... especially on the city's many unappealing concrete walls. More local artists should be commissioned and more local contests are needed to showcase local talent.

10. Celebrate the High Level Bridge

Edmonton's signature landmark should be celebrated with permanent lights, by running the waterfall throughout the summer and perhaps even by suspending a gallery or café from the bridge infrastructure.

"This top-10 list is just a sampling of hundreds of ideas --- some long-term and some doable in 2007 --- submitted by Edmonton enthusiasts from all over the world," says Richard Skermer, C2E's volunteer co-chair. "Everyone who cares about the future of our region is encouraged to review these inspiring submissions on C2E ... and then collaborate online with people who passionately support these ideas to help transform our city."

A community leader will be identified and invited to write a guest column on C2E in response to each of these top-10 ideas.

C2E has attracted 880 members in 20-plus countries and generated more than 18,000 postings in just nine months. Visit www.connect2edmonton.com to view a categorized list of all 'great ideas' collected.

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