



COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE AGENDA

February 14, 2024

1:30 PM

Council Chambers, City Hall

ATTENDEES

Mayor J. Clayton, G. Berg, G. Blackmore, W. Bosch, D. Bressey, M. O'Connor, K. O'Toole, W. Pilat,
C. Thiessen

All City of Grande Prairie public meetings of Council are accessible to the public as a live stream broadcast through our website at: [Meeting Webcast / City of Grande Prairie \(cityofgp.com\)](https://www.cityofgp.com/MeetingWebcast)

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

3. CORRESPONDENCE

3.1 Northwestern Polytechnic

4. REPORTS

4.1 Strategic Plan 2022-2025 Revision

Melissa Byers

4.2 Advocacy Update

Rory Tarant

1. Electricity Distribution Advocacy Update

5. IN CAMERA

5.1 FOIP Act Section 16 - Business Interests of a Third Party

5.2 FOIP Act Section 24 - Advice from Officials

6. ADJOURN MEETING

February 5, 2024

RE: Information Request, City of Grande Prairie, Mayor's Office

Dear Mayor Clayton,

Thank you for Council's ongoing support of the work NWP is doing in the community. I also appreciate Council's assistance in advocating for NWP and post-secondary education in the City. In response to your letter on December 22, 2023, please find the information requested below. Please do not hesitate to reach out to my office should you require additional information to assist in the Council's advocacy of post-secondary education in Grande Prairie.

- What is the total student enrolment at the NWP Grande Prairie Campus and the NWP Fairview Campus?

The following are official unduplicated headcounts released by Alberta Advanced Education through the Learner and Enrolment Reporting System (LERS). Reporting years 2019 to 2021 are from July to June, and 2022-23 are from May to April (reflecting the change in our fiscal year). 2023-24 numbers will be officially posted shortly.

Table 1: NWP Headcount by Campus and Academic Year

Location	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Distance/Regional Students	356	397	283	255
Fairview Campus	603	697	585	658
Grande Prairie Campus	2,077	1,969	1,902	1,999
YREC Hinton/Grande Cache Campuses	39	14		
Grand Total	3,051	3,050	2,755	2,893

Source: LERS, Advanced Education

It should be noted that enrollment for 2019-20, 2020-21, and, to some extent, 2021-22 academic years were largely influenced by the Covid pandemic. Enrollments have been increasing steadily since and will be well above Covid numbers in 2023-24.

- How do current enrolment numbers compare to the total number of seats available in each program and at each campus?

Most of our programs have only soft caps on first-year intake. These are set to maximize the student learning experience but are not strictly enforced. In some circumstances, enrolment may be limited by the physical number of seats in a given classroom for first-year classes. If imposed at all, these tend to be ad-hoc, contingent on class scheduling and enrolment figures for a given year.

A few programs have imposed hard caps on first-year intake limits, primarily due to physical lab limitations or work practicum seat availability.

Table 2: First-Year Intake Registration and Fill Rates By Campus, 2022-23

Program	Fairview Campus			Grande Prairie Campus		
	Cap	Enrolled	Fill-Rate	Cap	Enrolled	Fill-Rate
Animal Health Technology	35	23	66%			
BSc Nursing				120	100	83%
Harley-Davidson Technician	16	1	6%			
Personal Trainer				16	12	75%
ThinkBIG Service Technician	48	47	98%			
Grand Total	99	71	72%	136	112	82%

Source: Student Information System

Apprenticeships do have seat limitations. These are determined in advance, according to base funding received by the Operating and Program Support Grant. The Dean of Trades will, upon review of apprenticeship demand, request additional seats or sections. The resulting number of available seats will depend on funding and forecasting accuracy. The fill rate is the ratio of actual student demand (numerator), and anticipated demand (number of seats available, denominator).

Table 3: NWP Apprenticeship Seats Enrolled and Fill Rate by Campus, 2022-23

Apprenticeship	Fairview		Grande Prairie		All Campuses	
	Available	Fill Rate	Available	Fill Rate	Available	Fill Rate
Carpenter	56	64%			56	64%
Electrician			236	89%	236	89%
Gasfitter	60	77%			60	77%
Heavy Equipment	321	88%			321	88%
Instrument Technology			44	100%	44	100%
Millwright			129	95%	129	95%
Automotive Service Technician	119	92%			119	92%
Motorcycle Mechanic	64	81%			64	81%
Parts Technician			70	66%	70	66%
Plumber	30	40%			30	40%
Steam Pipefitter	36	64%			36	64%
Welder	94	82%	36	100%	130	87%
Total	780	82%	515	89%	1295	85%

Source: Atoms, Apprenticeship and Industry Training (AIT)

- Which programs have temporary or term-specific funding arrangements from the Province? Which of these programs is NWP advocating for permanent funding for?

We are currently seeking grant funding from Foundational Learning and Skills Development Program Designation for the Academic Upgrading and Foundational Learning Certificate of Achievement. This grant allows NWP to cover tuition, mandatory fees and student association fees for students enrolled in these programs.

We have received Targeted Enrolment Expansion (TEE) grants for expansion of our health programs. These programs, the number of expanded seats funded by the grants, and the end term of the grant are listed in the table below. We are advocating for ongoing funding for all of these programs.

Table 4: NWP Programs receiving TEE funding, 2022-23

Program	No of Additional Seats	Year the TEE Grant funds expire
Bachelor of Science in Nursing (GP Campus)	40	2025
Practical Nurse Diploma (GP Campus)	16	2025
Health Care Aide Certificate (FV Campus)	16	2025
Practical Nurse Diploma (FV Campus)	32	2026
Primary Care Paramedic Certificate (GP Campus)	32	2026

Source: TEE Grant Agreements

- Could you provide estimates of how many local students leave the Grande Prairie region to attend programs elsewhere which are offered at one of NWP's campuses? Does NWP track any qualitative data regarding reasons given for attending programs elsewhere? If so, could that data be provided?

NWP does collect information on applicants' decision to attend or to decline offers of admission to our Polytechnic. These data, however, are collected anonymously by a third-party survey vendor and do not include geographical tags that would allow us to discern who the local applicants are.

Response rates to these surveys are generally quite low (less than 20%). Still, the themes emerging from the combined 2021 and 2022 offer of admission declined survey suggest a wide range of individual reasons: preference for their first-choice program not offered by NWP, preference for attending in their home city (not local students), financial reasons, etc. Most of the respondents were applying in the midst of Covid (2021 cohort). Many of these themes were addressed, and continue to be addressed, through our standing Strategic Enrolment Management standing committee. We are developing exit surveys to follow up on NWP students' decision to withdraw from their studies or transfer students moving to the University of Alberta.

Estimates of how many local students leave the Grande Prairie region to attend programs elsewhere, which are offered at NWP, are available (see appendix for further details). The

number of students from Grande Prairie (census division 19) who applied to and attended programs offered by Northwestern Polytechnic (NWP) at various Alberta post-secondary institutions for the academic year 2022-23 is 416. Of these, the number who attended NWP is 361 (87%). Hence, the number of students who left the region to attend these programs elsewhere is 55 (13%). See Appendix A for further details.

There are a number of caveats to these data. These learners applied for Fall 2022 through the Alberta Post-Secondary Application System (APAS) for a Fall-entry 2022-23 program. As such, the practical nurse program, which has a Winter intake, would be excluded. Programs offering laddering opportunities from certificate to diploma, such as Early Learning Child Care or Business Administration, would show lower counts for the diploma, as certificate learners are not required to re-apply through APAS. Open Studies and Academic Upgrading are primarily course-based and cannot be considered for credit programming in the same manner as all the others; they were excluded from the list of programs.

- Are there any other advocacy items that the City could assist NWP with?

NWP is grateful for your help in advocating post-secondary education in Grande Prairie. Our Board of Governors has identified various advocacy priorities and they had the chance to share them with Minister Sawhney last week. They are listed below with a brief summary for context.

NWP Board of Governors Advocacy Priorities for the Minister of Advanced Education Honourable Rajan Sawhney

December 2023

Program Approval

Northwestern Polytechnic require quick and efficient Ministry program approval processes to meet the needs of industry for skilled graduates and to fulfill our polytechnic mandate. NWP is adding new programs to align to our regions and meet the student demand. Unfortunately, our progress and our ability to be innovative and responsive to our communities is hampered by the delays in the program approval process.

Advanced Education has set targets of 20 days for diploma and certificates and 40 days for Part A of degree programs. Since 2021, program approval for new or revised programs at NWP have ranged from 20 – 371 days with an average time of 106 days. This delay significantly impacts our ability to recruit students and at times has led to the delay of launching a program by a full academic year.

Bill 5/RABCCA

Northwestern Polytechnic is pleased that the Government of Alberta has repealed the RABCCA legislation through Bill 5 and supporting institutional development of compensation plans. This ongoing institutional autonomy must be sustained and protected. Any stratification or grouping of institutions or sectors will result in the same challenges felt with RABCCA. Stratification based upon size of the institution is

inappropriate as the nature of senior leadership roles is similar across institutions within a sector, in fact, smaller institutions often have expanded portfolios because of budget capacity and therefore these individuals have at least the same scope, if not greater as compared to similar institutions of larger size. Institutional autonomy on the development of an approved compensation plan will allow NWP to take into consideration factors such as recruitment challenges, retention challenges, and base skill set requirements from our non-union employees.

Ongoing Investment in Post-Secondary Education

Ongoing investment must be sustained to ensure Northwestern Polytechnic can develop in-demand programs for students in northern Alberta. Investment into post-secondary education should match inflation to support continued growth. Budget 2023-2024 provided NWP with no overall increase in provincial funding yet utilities, supplies, materials, and carbon tax have increased. Since 2019, utilities costs with the carbon tax have increased by 41.4% and the cost of supplies has increased by 37%. NWP has increased cost pressures being in the north and having multiple campuses in comparison to southern single campus institutions. NWP is recommending that funding be increased by calculating the inflation rate plus growth in the student population. NWP is also recommending that there be investment into new program development so that NWP can continually evolve our program mix to be responsive to the region and ensure graduates are meeting the needs of our communities.

Regional Medical Education

An investment in regional medical education will address the workforce needs and increase the number of physicians in regional and rural areas. This program will support students from the North through preferential admission practices and residency placements.

In response to the Premier's mandate letter in early 2023, NWP has been working with the University of Alberta, Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry to develop a northern regional campus for the medical school and deliver the Northern Alberta Medical Program. Funding proposals are with the Ministries of Advanced Education and Health to support the full regional training centre, including the teaching clinic, in Grande Prairie. NWP supports this budget request. The proposal includes: the full cost of delivery which includes development and implementation of NWP pre-medical degree requirement for students in Grande Prairie; full delivery of 4-years of medical education in Grande Prairie; expansion of the family residency training program, as well as other generalist programs (General Internal Medicine, Pediatrics etc.) in Grande Prairie; development of a Regional Teaching Clinic that would include at least 10 family medicine physicians, medical students and residents, practicing in a medical home model. Each family physician would have a panel of approximately 1,200 patients, meeting the primary care needs of approximately 12,000 Albertans in Grande Prairie; teaching clinic remuneration to support local physicians in their teaching practice, and; regional administration of the program in Grande Prairie.

Student Mental Health

In 2021, Advanced Education provided a 3-year funding grant for *Post-secondary Student Mental Health*. This grant expires June 30, 2024. Over the three years of this grant, NWP has provided expanded student mental health services for our students. We cannot keep up with the demand. Over the past three years, NWP has seen a steady increase in mental health clients and appointments (number of unique clients has risen from 58 in 2020.21 to 147 in 2022.23 and number of appointments have risen from 330 in 2020.21 to 615 in 2022.23). For the 2023.24 academic year, we are continuing to see increased demand for mental health services as appointments have risen by an additional 23% in comparison to this time last year. New funding opportunities are required in order to continue supporting our existing and incoming students.

NWP's student mental health services are for assisting students facing stress or short-term mental health challenges. When students identify or develop more severe diagnoses, it is important that there are pathways for post-secondary institutions to transition students to longer term support. Advanced Education in collaboration with the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions can develop off-campus programs to help students secure mental health supports for longer term and more severe diagnoses.

Dual Credit Opportunities

Advanced Education in collaboration with the Ministry of Education can enhance high-school student exposure to skilled trades and other professions experiencing significant labour demands through an intentional expansion of dual credit programs. This includes a faster process for dual credit approval, secured funding that follows the student, and support for innovative delivery between the post-secondary institution and the high school.

Thank you again for your assistance in advocating for post-secondary education in Grande Prairie and the region. We look forward to continuing to work together for the betterment of our students, our city, and our region.

Sincerely,



Vanessa Sheane, PhD, RN
President and CEO

C: Rory Tarant, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, City of Grande Prairie
Cindy Park, Vice-President, External Relations, Northwestern Polytechnic

APPENDIX A

Table 1: Proportion of all qualified Grande Prairie region (census division 19) applicants attending an Alberta post-secondary institution in a program offered by NWP, Fall 2022

NWP Program	Credential	Total Attending an Alberta PSI	% Attending at NWP	% Not Attending NWP
Animal Health Technology	Diploma	10	90%	10%
Business Administration Certificate	Certificate	45	91%	9%
Business Administration Diploma	Diploma	14	7%	93%
Computer Systems Technology Certificate	Certificate	16	100%	0%
Early Learning and Child Care	Certificate	17	53%	47%
Early Learning and Child Care	Diploma	5	0%	100%
Educational Assistant	Certificate	14	43%	57%
Harley Davidson Technician	Certificate	1	100%	0%
Health Care Aide	Certificate	14	100%	0%
Kinesiology	Diploma	6	100%	0%
Motorcycle Mechanic	Certificate	2	100%	0%
Music Diploma	Diploma	3	100%	0%
Office Administration Certificate	Certificate	27	100%	0%
Personal Trainer	Diploma	4	100%	0%
Power Engineering	Certificate	13	54%	46%
Pre-Employment	Certificate	9	56%	44%
ThinkBIG Service Technician	Diploma	3	100%	0%
UT: Bachelor of Arts	University Transfer	38	100%	0%
UT: Bachelor of Commerce	University Transfer	12	100%	0%
UT: Bachelor of Education	University Transfer	38	100%	0%
UT: Bachelor of Engineering	University Transfer	13	100%	0%
UT: Bachelor of Fine Arts	University Transfer	6	83%	17%
UT: Bachelor of Kinesiology	University Transfer	8	75%	25%
UT: Bachelor of Music	University Transfer	1	100%	0%
UT: Bachelor of Science	University Transfer	39	100%	0%
UT: Bachelor of Science in Computing Science	University Transfer	9	100%	0%
UT: Bachelor of Science in Nursing	University Transfer	38	92%	8%

Visual Arts and Design	Diploma	11	100%	0%
Grand Total		416	87%	13%

Source: Data Collection and Reporting (DCaR) – Application Submission Initiative



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

TO: Shane Bourke, City Manager	DATE: February 14, 2024
FROM: Janet MacEachern, Chief of Staff	MEETING: Council Committee of the Whole
REPORT WRITER: Melissa Byers, Senior Strategic Advisor	
SUBJECT: Strategic Plan 2022-2025 Revision	

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council Committee of the Whole recommend Council approve the revised version of the Strategic Plan 2022-2025.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL / COMMITTEE DIRECTIONS

No previous Council or Committee directions.

BACKGROUND

A new Council was elected to represent the residents of Grande Prairie in October 2021. In January 2022, Council met to establish a new strategic plan for their 2022-2025 term.

Council meets every year to review the strategic priorities of the city and analyze progress on projects, initiatives and advocacy items set forth in the strategic plan.

Council met mid-January 2024 to review the Strategic Plan 2022-2025 (Strategic Plan) to ensure its alignment with the current needs of the Grande Prairie community.

ANALYSIS

In 2022, Council established four strategic priorities including Quality of Life, Innovative Efficiencies & Economic Readiness, Inclusive & Caring Community and Engaging Relationships. Each priority has three Areas of Focus with projects, initiatives and advocacy items tied to each.

Council met in January 2024 to review the Strategic Plan. At the review it was determined that the Strategic Plan meets the current needs of the community and the progress towards addressing the strategic priorities is satisfactory.

Under the strategic pillar, Inclusive & Caring Community, the housing area of focus definition was changed from “ensuring our community provides necessary and suitable options for housing” to “creating an environment for diversity of housing in our city.” The rest of the Strategic Plan remains unchanged.

Relationship to City Council's Areas of Focus / Strategic Priorities

The Strategic Plan establishes Council’s areas of focus and the strategic priorities for Council’s 2022-2025 term.

Environmental Impact

No environmental impact.

Economic Impact

No economic impact.

Social Impact

Creating an environment for diversity of housing in our city will enhance opportunities to meet the community’s housing needs.

Relevant Statutes / Master Plans / City Documents

[Strategic Plan 2022-2025](#)

[Strategic Plan Progress Report 2023 Q3](#)

Risk

No risks identified.

Alternatives (Optional)

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Council met in January 2024 to review the Strategic Plan.

Administration was present during Council’s Strategic Plan review.

BUDGET / FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No financial implications.

SUMMARY / CONCLUSION

Council reviewed the Strategic Plan 2022-2025 and recommended one minor change. The website will be updated with the revised Strategic Plan once approved.

ATTACHMENTS

City of Grande Prairie Strategic Plan 2022-2025 - Revised



City of Grande Prairie Strategic Plan

2022 – 2025





Mayor's Message



It gives me immense pride to serve as your Mayor and it is my pleasure to present Council's 2022–2025 Strategic Plan. This newly elected Council is one that I am extremely excited to serve with. They exude vast knowledge, experience, and a passion for our community.

Since the election, Council has been hard at work learning through an extensive orientation process and discussing our priorities related to operational efficiencies, infrastructure, facilities and programs, service levels, fiscal performance, accountability, and taxes.

The four strategic priorities outlined in this plan are designed to guide Council's work over the coming term. As a Council, the work we do must be focused on people, the quality of life for our residents and supporting a city that our residents can be proud of, enjoy and love. We have much to celebrate and to be thankful for.

We are committed to creating an inclusive and caring city- a community that includes all people and serves all people. What matters to you – matters to us.

This plan also focuses on innovative efficiencies and economic readiness because we know a strong local economy enables a sustainable high quality of life. With 2022 well underway you can feel the optimism in the air. There are significant projects that have been announced in our region and Council plans to develop and execute actions that foster a strong and resilient local economy.

We will strengthen and nurture key relationships with regional stakeholders and other levels of government. This means positive and improved intergovernmental relations to help build a strong connected community.

Our Council priorities reflect our commitment to building on the successes of our community. We welcome your input and encourage everyone to actively participate in the next phases for the growth of our community. Together, as engaged citizens and businesses we will set the stage for the success of our community.

Mayor Jackie Clayton



City of Grande Prairie Council 2021–2025



Mayor
Jackie Clayton



Councillor
Grant Berg



Councillor
Gladys Blackmore



Councillor
Wendy Bosch



Councillor
Dylan Bressey



Councillor
Mike O'Connor



Councillor
Kevin O'Toole



Councillor
Wade Pilat



Councillor
Chris Thiessen



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 are thankful for the work, care and dedication he put into the development of this Strategic Plan.

Grande Prairie is a vibrant, connected and inclusive community with a resourceful spirit. We leverage diversity and seize our growing opportunities by embracing challenges.

Strategic Priorities 2022–2025





Quality of Life

Fostering a community in which our residents love where they live and embrace their environment.

Areas of Focus



Fierce Community Pride – enabling residents to contribute to our community and serve as ‘ambassadors’ in developing and telling our story.



Active Lifestyle – encouraging and facilitating healthy individual and family lifestyles that are inclusive and affordable to residents.



Safety – Developing a community in which residents are safe and feel safe.

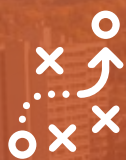
Where we want to live, learn, work and play.



Innovative Efficiencies & Economic Readiness

Developing and executing actions that foster a strong and resilient local economy.

Areas of Focus



Strategic Growth – pursuing alternate revenue sources to provide a more sustainable future through diverse and innovative economic opportunities.



Innovation – cultivating and developing an excellent administration and local governance to develop and grow a meaningful and prosperous social and economic community



Attraction – drawing people to our community by developing economic and social benefits through sharing our unique landscape, culture, sport and tourism.

A strong team and local economy enables a sustainable high quality of life.



Inclusive & Caring Community

Fostering deep and sincere inclusiveness throughout all social and economic dimensions of the community.

Areas of Focus



Housing – creating an environment for diversity of housing in our city.



Youth to Seniors – developing and pursuing opportunities that enhance the quality of life for all ages.



Multicultural – acknowledging and supporting the full spectrum of cultural diversity in our residents.

A community that includes all people and serves all people.



Engaging Relationships

Developing and nurturing key relationships with stakeholders and other levels of government; building on mutual strengths.

Areas of Focus



Reputation Management – protecting and enhancing the quality of our reputation as a community of choice.



Culture and Pride – ensuring appropriate attention and resources are dedicated to economic, political, community and cultural relationships.



Marketing & Communication – remaining clear on what we stand for as a community in proactive and deliberative two-way communication with partners and stakeholders.

Purposeful relationships build a strong, connected community.





ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

TO: Shane Bourke, City Manager	DATE: February 14, 2024
FROM: Janet MacEachern, Chief of Staff	MEETING: Council Committee of the Whole
REPORT WRITER: Rory Tarant, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs	
SUBJECT: Electricity Distribution Advocacy Update	

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Committee accept this report for information.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL / COMMITTEE DIRECTIONS

MOVED by W. Bosch

Committee recommend Council approve the 2023 Council Advocacy Priority list:

- Electricity Distribution Costs
- Attraction and Retention of Health Care Professionals
- Provincial Support for Industrial Attraction Grant Programs
- Improved Rail Service
- Daycare Shortages
- Provincial and Federal Funding for Housing Needs
- Local Government Funding Framework

BACKGROUND

In Alberta, our electricity distribution system is facilitated through various service areas which are serviced by different companies (see Attachment 1). Distribution costs are isolated to each service area and residents and businesses pay the costs attributed to their area.

This system has created a disparity in costs between the service areas. Large geographical areas which have less residents per kilometre of power line pay significantly more for electricity distribution than urban areas with denser development (see Attachment 2). This has led to significant disparities in electricity delivery prices across the province.

The ATCO service area, in which Grande Prairie is located, sees the highest electricity distribution rates in the province with annual residential charges averaging over \$1,100 per household in 2023. This compares to an average of \$350 in the larger urban centres (see Attachment 3). This disparity continues to grow greater and greater each year (see Attachment 4). In the last 20 years, our service area has gone from paying about two times the average of other services areas to over three times as much.

While all figures provided in this report are based on 2023 data, it is important to note that the AUC has approved an interim 9.9% increase to ATCO's distribution rates for 2024. This will result in the average home paying an additional \$109 for distribution alone this year.

The disparity also has an adverse impact on industrial/commercial properties. For example, a large industrial plant in the ATCO service area with a 4,000 kW demand would pay approx. \$319,000 in distribution fees per year. This contrasts with the same facility in the Fortis Alberta service area which would pay between \$67,000 and \$152,000 per year. A 10-storey commercial office building in ATCO's service area with a 500 kW demand would pay distribution charges of \$93,000 per year while the same building in Fortis' area would pay \$35,000.

Not only does this impact property owners on their monthly utility bills, it also impacts them through their property taxes. In 2023, the City was charged \$2.4 million in electricity distribution fees alone, which made up 36% of the City's total electricity bill.

ANALYSIS

The City believes that there is a better solution. Provinces like British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Manitoba have equalized electricity delivery rates across their provinces recognizing the interconnectedness of the system and the general benefit to all provincial residents of having a connected system.

60% of the energy demand in the ATCO service area is driven by industrial customers (see Attachment 5). As the entire province benefits from the industrial development that occurs in ATCO's service area through direct and indirect employment and income taxes, there is a strong argument to be made that all residents and businesses in the province should share in electricity distribution costs to these customers.

In 2023, ATCO had wildfire losses of over \$100 million on their distribution infrastructure. The replacement of this infrastructure is paid by customers within the ATCO service area. As the rest of the province benefits from the industrial activity serviced by this infrastructure, it is reasonable to request that all provincial residents share in the risks posed to it.

In order to equalize distribution rates fully across the province, the average residential property would need to pay \$41/month. To achieve full equalization, customers in the Enmax service area (Calgary) would see an increase of \$14/month while those in the Epcor service area (Edmonton) would see an increase of \$11/month. Fortis customers would see a \$4/month decrease while those in the ATCO service area would see a \$50/month decrease. This would result in a \$600 per year savings for the average Grande Prairie household.

Advocacy Efforts To Date

In fall 2022, the City put forward a resolution to Alberta Municipalities asking members to support advocating for a more equalized electricity distribution approach in Alberta. The resolution passed with the support of 88% of members. RMA supported the same resolution in 2022 as well.

The City has briefed our local MLAs on the subject and both have indicated their support for the change. The City met with the Minister of Affordability & Utilities in Nov. 2022 who informed us that the Ministry was not pursuing these changes at that time. In Nov. 2023, the City met with the new Minister who expressed that the Province has some legislative changes being proposed on electricity in the Spring Sitting of the Legislature, but did not elaborate on what those changes were.

Relationship to City Council's Areas of Focus / Strategic Priorities

Aligns with Council's Engaging Relationships strategic priority: Developing and nurturing key relationships with stakeholders and other levels of government; building on mutual strengths.

Environmental Impact

No impact.

Economic Impact

Reducing utility costs would support investment attraction and retention efforts.

Social Impact

Most households in Canada spend less than 3% of their after-tax income on their energy needs. Households that spend more than twice this value (more than 6% of their income) on securing access are thought to experience disproportionately high home energy cost burdens and are said to be experiencing energy poverty.

In the ATCO Electric and ATCO Gas North service areas, the average household pays about \$4,800 per year for home heating and electricity costs. City of Grande Prairie households have an average after-tax income of \$88,000. This means that the average household spends about 5.5% of their income on energy. This is much higher than the national average and means that there are many local households who are experiencing energy poverty. As electricity distribution fees make up about 25% of a Grande Prairie household's total energy bills, a reduction in these fees would be a big step in reducing energy poverty in the city.

Relevant Statutes / Master Plans / City Documents

Risk

The risk of inaction in addressing the equalization of distribution costs is that the disparity between the service areas will continue to increase and ATCO service area residents will continue to fund a disproportionate share of the province's electricity distribution system.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Discussions with senior executives at ATCO have indicated that the company aligns with the City's position on distribution rate convergence and has taken an active role in supporting our advocacy in this regard.

BUDGET / FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

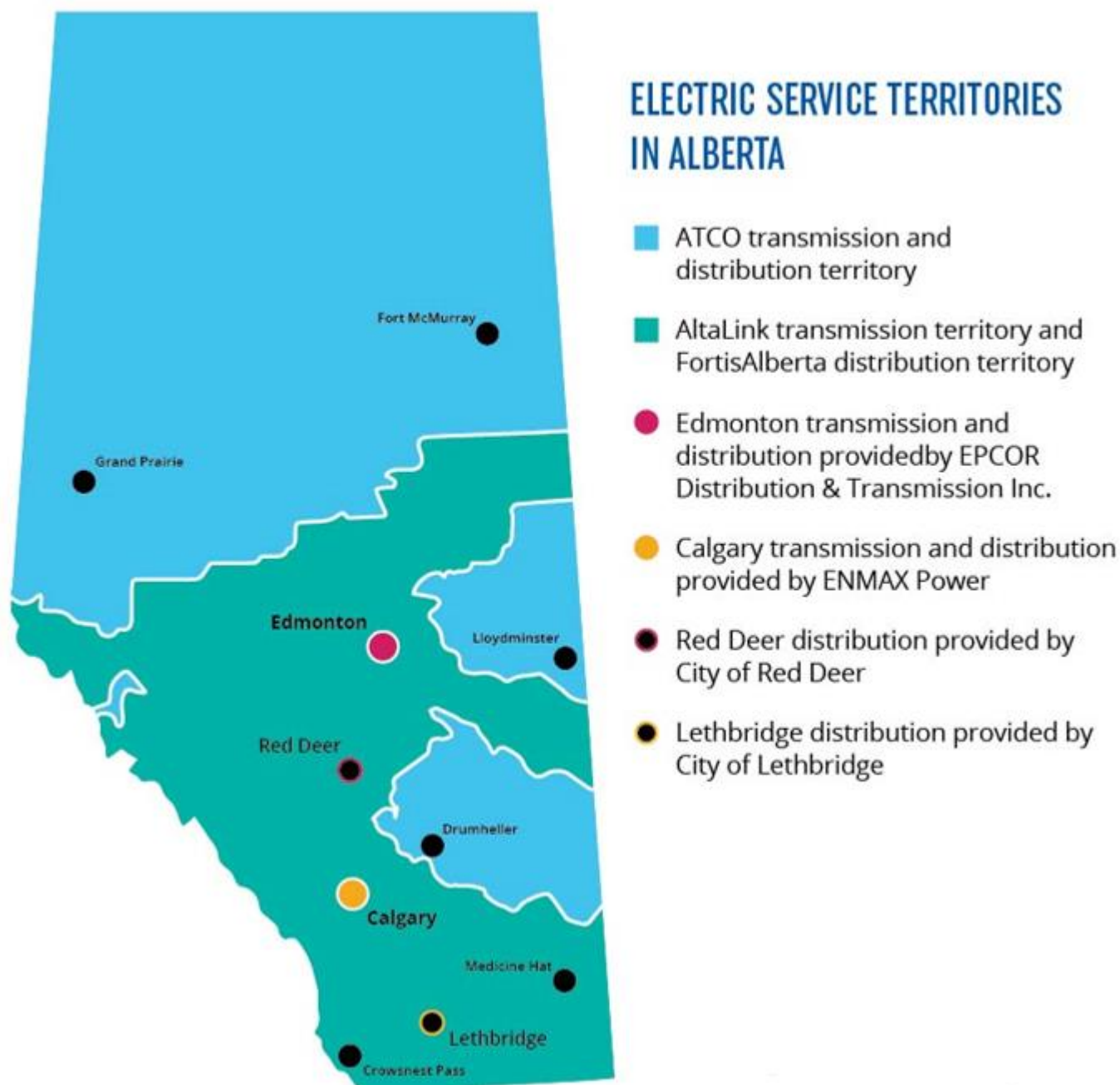
The City expends \$2.4 million per year on electricity distribution costs. A reduction in distribution costs would reduce this expenditure substantially.





SUMMARY / CONCLUSION

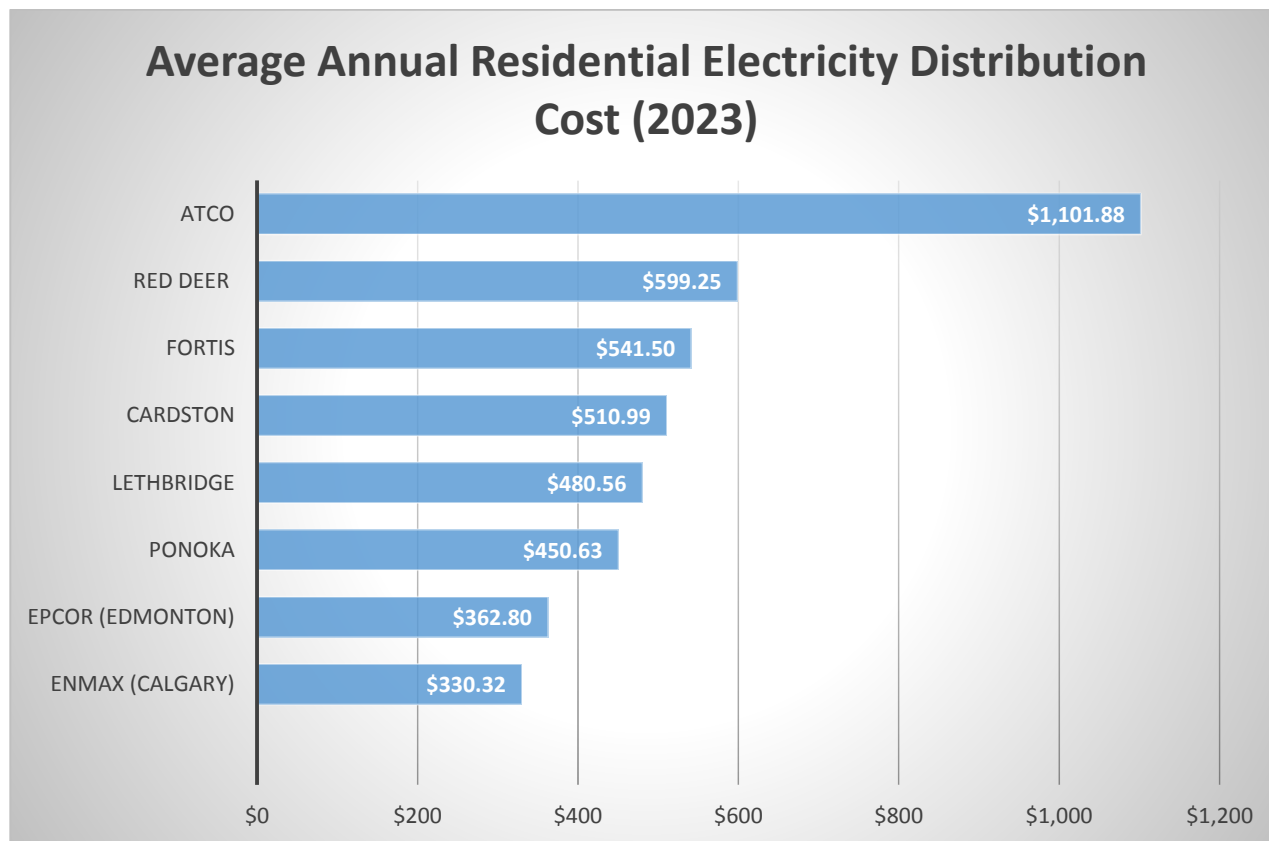
Council has included electricity distribution cost disparity as an advocacy priority for the past two years. The issue has been communicated to the provincial government who has the ability to effect change. Current data shows that the disparity across the province continues to grow each year. It is recommended that Council accept this report for information.

ATTACHMENTS

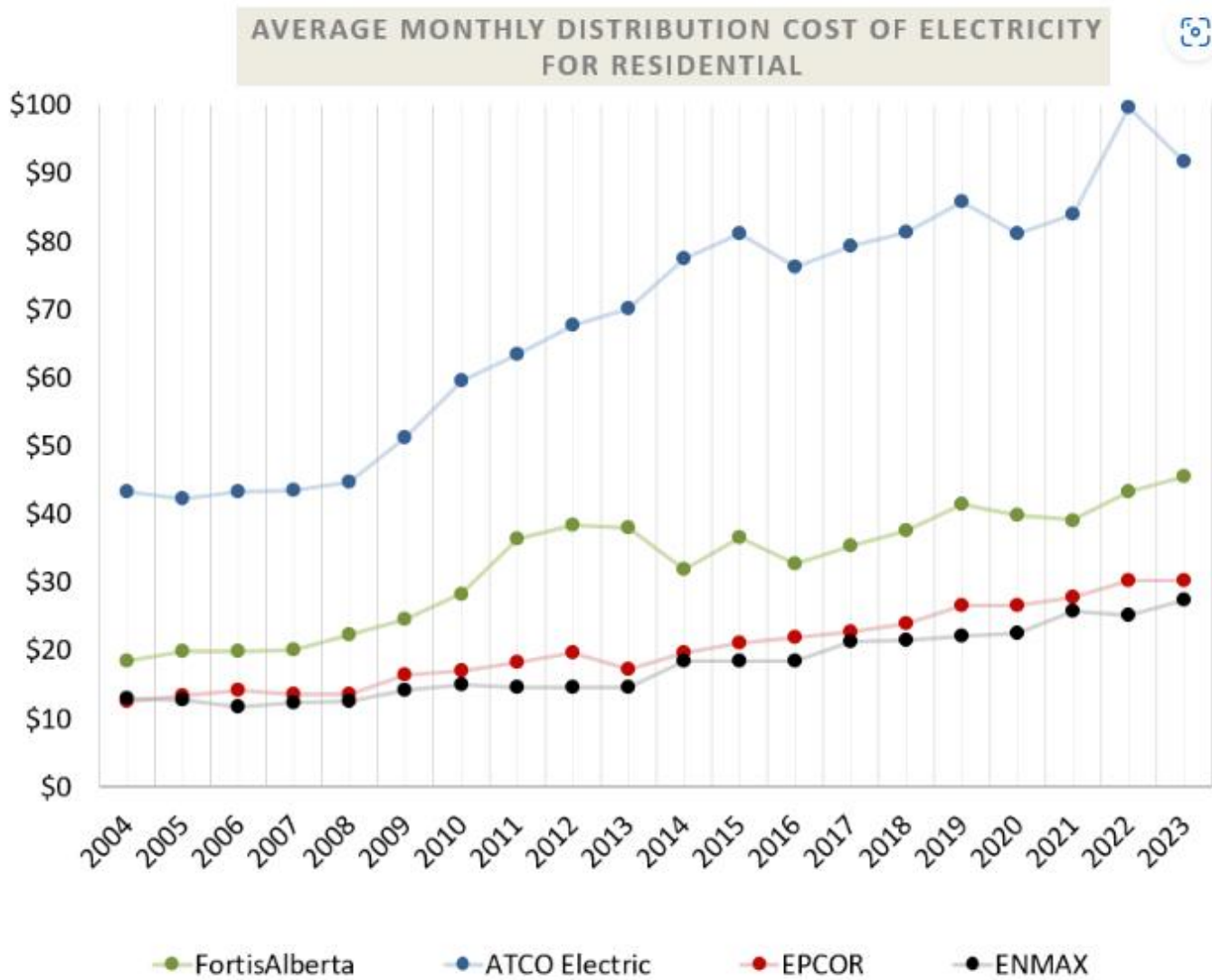
Attachment 1: Map of Electric Service Territories in Alberta



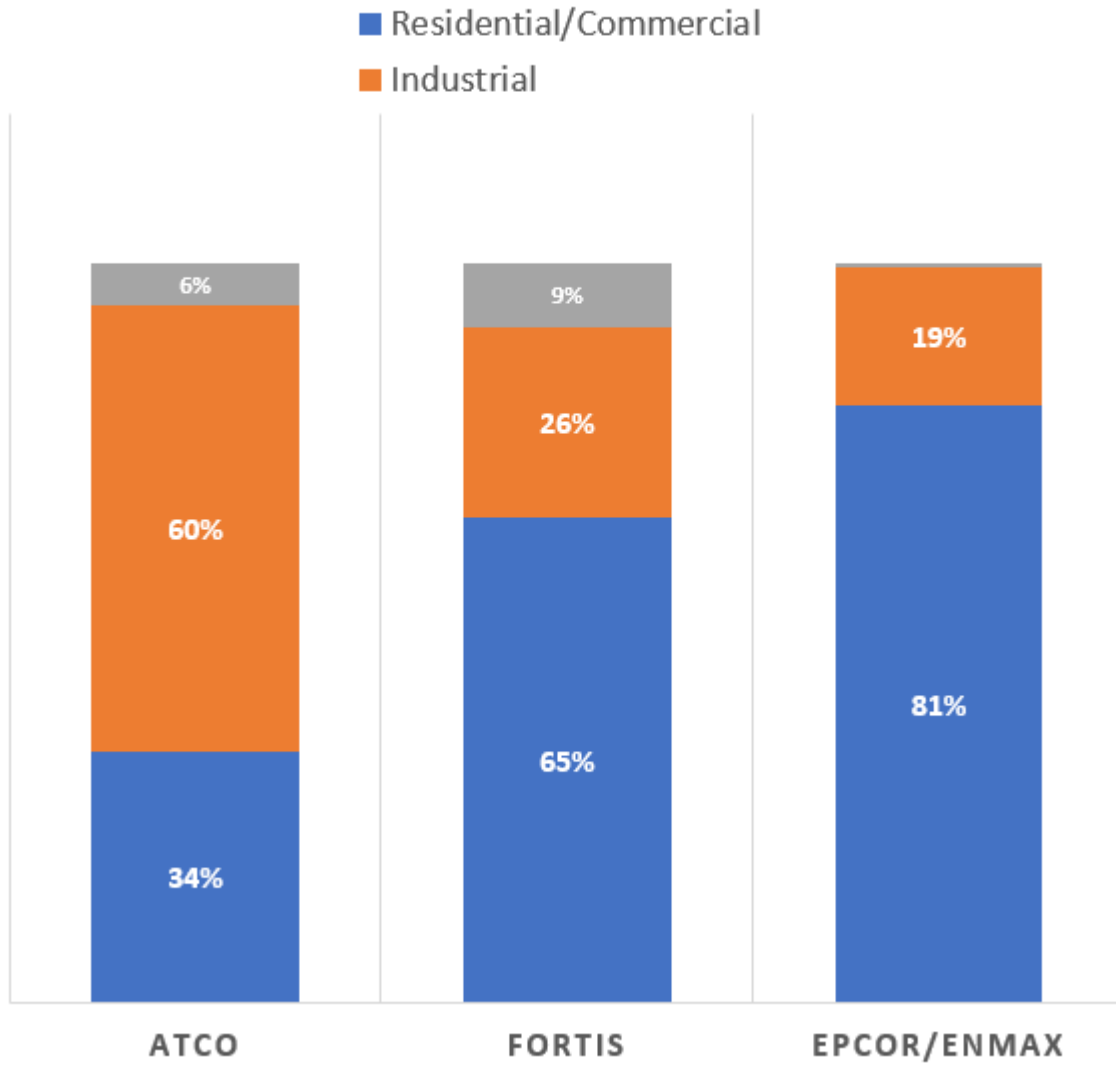
	Customers	Km of line	Customers per km of line
	230,031	60,000	3.83
	604,792	124,000	4.88
	526,750	8,600	61.25
	424,807	6,300	67.42

Attachment 3: Annual Average Residential Electricity Cost (2023)

Attachment 4: Average Monthly Distribution Costs of Residential Electricity (2004-23)



ENERGY MIX



Attachment 6: Equalization Impacts

