

Policy Pulse Insight

**BUILDING BETTER
INFRASTRUCTURE:**

INSIGHTS &
RECOMMENDATIONS

MAY 2025

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THE EDMONTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

For over 135 years, the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce has championed growth, innovation, and profitability in Edmonton's business community. Representing members ranging from small businesses to large enterprises across all sectors, we advocate for their interests at all orders of government, fostering a thriving and sustainable business environment.

Our strategic partnerships and innovative services empower businesses to succeed and contribute to Edmonton's prosperity. To learn more visit: www.edmontonchamber.com/about

The Edmonton Chamber of Commerce acknowledges that we conduct our business on Treaty 6 territory and the Métis Homeland, the ancestral lands of the Cree, Blackfoot, Métis, Nakota Sioux, Iroquois, Dene, Ojibway, Saukteaux. Anishinaabe, Inuit, and many others. These lands, known as ᐱᓄᓴᑦᐸᓂᓴᑦᐸᓂᓴᑦ/amiskwaciwâskahikan, have been a center of trade and innovation for Indigenous peoples since time immemorial.

We honour the contributions of Indigenous entrepreneurs and are committed to fostering partnerships that recognize and respect Indigenous business practices. In the spirit of Reconciliation, we strive to include and empower Indigenous voices in our business community, building a strong and inclusive Edmonton together.



Insights and Recommendations

Businesses shared many recommendations for improving infrastructure in Edmonton:

- ③ **Fix and Improve Roads and Transit.**
- ③ **Invest in Digital Connections.**
- ③ **Make it Easier to Build Housing.**
- ③ **Invest in Beautification and Accessibility.**
- ③ **Work With Businesses.**



Executive Summary

Policy Pulse is a monthly survey by the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce that gathers insights from its member organizations to better understand the evolving priorities, challenges, and opportunities facing the local business community. The May 2025 edition focused on the importance of public infrastructure on local business.

Between May 1st and 23rd 2025, 116 member businesses – with representation from every size, sector, and location of the local economy – shared their perspectives on public infrastructure. Highlights include:

- **Local infrastructure is underperforming.** Nearly 80% of businesses rated local infrastructure as only “fair” (47%) or “poor/very poor” (32%).
- **Infrastructure is essential to business success.** 72% of businesses said public infrastructure is “very” or “extremely” important to their operations.
- **Roads and transit top the list for investment.** 52% of businesses identified road maintenance as the most urgent area needing further investment.
- **Active transit is a low priority for businesses.** 59% of members said bike lanes and active transportation networks are expensive, underutilized, and where they’d like to see less investment.

Planning and communication needs improvement. 79% of businesses reported that infrastructure planning issues have directly affected their operations in the past year.

Executive Summary

Businesses made several recommendations for all orders of government to consider:

- **Fix and Improve Roads and Transit.** Businesses want faster repairs to roads and better traffic flow. Clearing snow, fixing potholes, and keeping projects like LRT and bus service upgrades on schedule are top priorities.
- **Invest in Digital Connections.** Companies support investment in broadband and secure systems such as secure systems for online payments and data tools. Working with private partners will speed this up.
- **Make it Easier to Build Housing.** To support growth, Edmonton simply needs a greater mix of housing options. Businesses suggest making it easier to convert vacant office buildings and build in underutilized areas through zoning changes, tax incentives, and partnerships with developers.
- **Invest in Beautification and Accessibility.** A strong downtown helps the whole city. Businesses are asking for improved lighting, safety, parking, wheelchair accessibility, and inviting public spaces to attract people and companies back to the core.
- **Work With Businesses.** Businesses want clearer plans and updates on major projects – what’s being built, when, and at what cost. Create a business advisory group that will produce infrastructure plans that align with the expertise in the city’s business community.

Methodology

Policy Pulse is a monthly survey by the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce that gathers insights from its member organizations to better understand the evolving priorities, challenges, and opportunities facing the local business community.

The May 2025 edition focused on the impact of public infrastructure on business success. The survey was conducted from May 5 to 23 and received 116 responses from a pool of 1,825 businesses, yielding a 7% response rate. It featured a combination of multiple-choice and short-answer questions, and participation was encouraged through a series of three reminder emails.

A wide range of businesses participated, including representation from all sectors of the economy and every area of the city.

- Professional, scientific, and technical services (16%)
- Health care and social assistance (9%)
- Construction, education, and other services (each 7%)
- As well as sectors such as manufacturing, real estate, transportation, and retail.



The strongest representation was from small businesses with less than 100 employees:

- 25% micro-businesses (1-4 employees)
- 29% scale-sized enterprises (5-19 employees)
- 23% mature-sized firms (20-99 employees)
- 16% medium-sized businesses (100-499 employees)
- 7% large enterprises (500+ employees)

Most respondents identified as corporations (62%), followed by not-for-profits (16%), sole proprietorships (11%), and partnerships (8%). Less than 3% represented public sector entities or franchise operations, highlighting the survey's focus on private-sector perspectives.

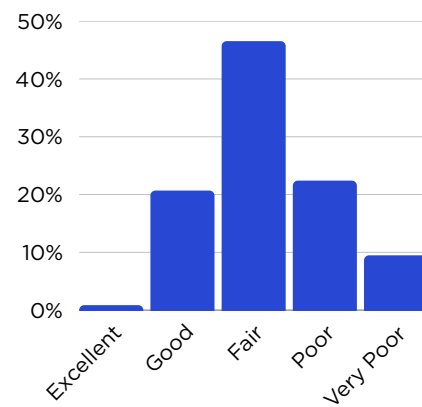
LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE IS UNDERPERFORMING

Public infrastructure is essential to the success and long-term strength of local businesses. It includes things like roads, bridges, public transit, water and power systems, and internet access—services and systems that help communities and businesses run smoothly. When infrastructure works well, it lowers costs, improves access to customers and suppliers, and helps employees get to work. Strong infrastructure also encourages new investment and supports a healthy local economy.

But when infrastructure is outdated, poorly maintained, or not well planned, it can create major challenges for business. Traffic congestion, power outages, or unreliable internet can slow down operations and increase expenses. Construction projects that drag on or fail to connect key business areas can make it harder for companies to grow.

When asked how they would rate the state of Edmonton's infrastructure, businesses had mixed—but mostly negative—views. Nearly half (46.5%) rated it as “fair,” while 32% said it was “poor” or “very poor.” Only one business rated it “excellent,” showing that overall satisfaction is low.

How would you rate the overall state of Edmonton's infrastructure?



INFRASTRUCTURE IS ESSENTIAL TO BUSINESS SUCCESS

Infrastructure is not a side concern for Edmonton businesses—it's essential. Nearly three-quarters of businesses (72%) said strong infrastructure is very or extremely important to their success. Yet almost 80% said they've faced problems in the past year due to poor infrastructure, and only 23% felt their location had what they needed to operate effectively.

Businesses reported ongoing challenges like traffic congestion, outdated utilities, construction delays, and unreliable internet. These issues don't just slow down daily operations—they also impact hiring, investment, and growth plans. Many expressed frustrations with potholes, long project timelines, and poor communication around major construction projects.



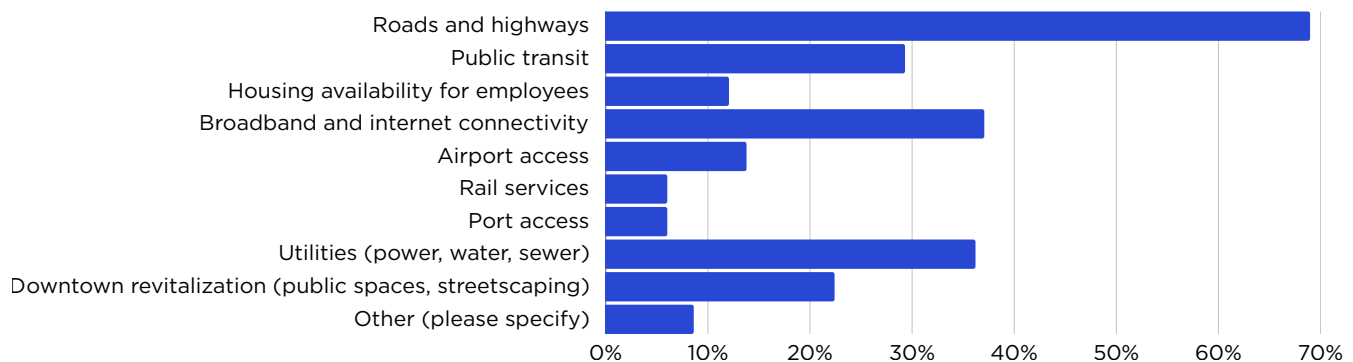
ROADS AND HIGHWAYS TOP THE LIST FOR INVESTMENT

When asked about the adequacy of infrastructure at their current location, only 23% of businesses felt it fully met their needs. Most (62%) reported at least some gaps, and 10% said the shortfalls were significant. The most reported issues were road congestion (64%), aging utility systems (22%), and limited access to affordable housing or stable internet. These results show that while infrastructure is a priority, many Edmonton businesses feel it isn't keeping pace with their day-to-day needs or future plans.

Edmonton businesses are clear about the need to focus infrastructure spending on the basics. Upgrading roads and highways was the top priority (52%), with strong calls to repair potholes, improve snow removal, and reduce traffic congestion. Public transit followed closely behind (26%), with businesses supporting better LRT service and more efficient bus routes. Housing was also seen as an important investment (16%), particularly projects that combine residential and commercial spaces to support workforce access and economic development.

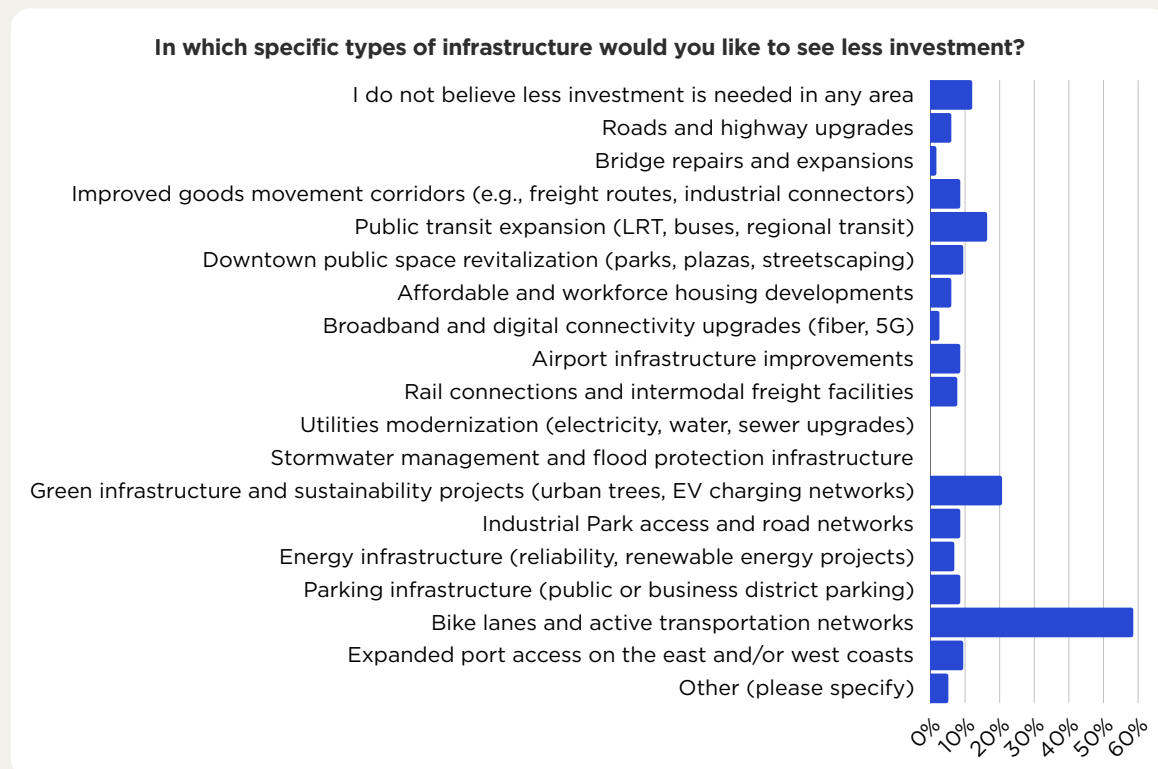
While digital infrastructure wasn't a top concern overall, several businesses—especially those operating in mobile or remote environments—highlighted growing challenges with internet reliability and access to fast, stable connections, which directly affect sales, service, and payment systems.

Which types of infrastructure are most critical to your business operations?



ACTIVE TRANSIT IS A LOW PRIORITY FOR BUSINESSES

When asked where the government could reduce infrastructure spending, 59% of respondents pointed to bike lanes and other active transportation projects. Some also questioned the cost-effectiveness of ongoing downtown public space upgrades (21%) and certain LRT expansions (16%).



These responses reflect business concerns about limited budgets and the need to prioritize infrastructure that supports core business operations, goods movement, and employee commutes over amenities with lower economic return.

PLANNING AND COMMUNICATION ARE FALLING SHORT

Perceptions of confidence in Edmonton's infrastructure are mixed. Only 29% of businesses said they believe current infrastructure will support growth over the next five years, while 36% disagreed, and the rest were unsure. This level of uncertainty can make businesses more cautious about investing or expanding locally. Many respondents called for more openness, clearer timelines, better consultation, and stronger oversight to ensure infrastructure projects align with business needs.

Many businesses also shared concerns about the way major construction and infrastructure projects are managed. Common frustrations included long or unclear construction timelines, reduced or limited public parking during projects, and disruptions caused by poor communication. Some businesses also connected these infrastructure challenges to broader issues like public safety and homelessness.

Suggestions for improvement included speeding up project delivery, expanding broadband access, improving LRT service—particularly to key destinations like the airport—and creating incentives to support businesses impacted by long-term construction projects. Overall, businesses want infrastructure decisions to reflect real operational needs and contribute to long-term economic growth.



We Want to Hear From You



The insights in this report come directly from Edmonton's business community—and your perspective matters too.

Join the Conversation

Become a Chamber Member and:

- Participate in monthly Policy Pulse surveys that shape our advocacy
- Receive exclusive newsletters with survey results and policy insights
- Join business roundtables on issues affecting your operations
- Connect with government representatives and fellow business leaders

Your experience matters. From infrastructure challenges to growth opportunities, every voice helps build a stronger case for what Edmonton's businesses need to thrive.

Ready to Get Involved?

Visit: www.edmontonchamber.com

Email: policy@edmontonchamber.com
