



# STEP

St. Paul / Elk Point  
Economic Development Alliance



## COUNTY OF ST. PAUL INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY

# VERTICAL FARMING

**Vertical farming is advantageous in Alberta, where the growing season is limited, but demand for fresh produce is high.**

The province's population has grown by nearly 17% from 2011 to 2021 and is projected to continue the trend until 2030. The strong population growth will drive up the overall demand for food production in the province. Alberta offers an excellent business climate with low overheads, access to a skilled talent pool, and a technology driven innovation ecosystem.



Existing supply chain issues with sourcing fresh produce from CALIFORNIA (current long-haul transportation issues)



Demand to supply restaurants and food retailers with high quality, locally grown produce (as per consumer preferences)



Partnership opportunity with Western Canada's main cooperative offering market access and distribution to over 11 million Canadians

### Business opportunities to capitalize on:

Canadian's demand for organic produce has been growing at an annual rate of **8.7%** while domestic supply has not been keeping pace.

Albertans support locally produced food. The number of Albertans spending over **\$1,000** per year at farmers' markets has doubled from 2008 to 2016.

Alberta's total greenhouse area grew **20%** from 2014 to 2019, reaching a total area of 17.6 million square feet.

### The general awareness of healthy eating and the adoption of plant-based protein is increasing consumer demand for produce.

A study by Canada's Dalhousie University found that about 6.4 million Canadians have either adopted a meatless diet or are limiting their weekly consumption of meat. Market research shows demand for fresh leafy greens is on the rise, driven in part by demand for fresh and local products by higher-income consumers in Canada. Growing preference of chemical free produce and non-genetically modified food will continue to support the growth in vertical farming in Canada.

### The challenge with the existing supply chain is that most of Alberta's produce is imported from the United States, specifically California.

California supplies approximately 70% of Canada's demand for lettuce, and more than 1,500 grocery stores in Alberta rely on this supply. The issue with this supply chain is that the fresh produce must travel far, causing it to wither, deteriorating product quality, increasing food waste, and reducing shelf-life. This presents a valid business case for growing fruits and vegetables closer to home. Evidence can be seen from Alberta's strong growth in the greenhouse sector. Alberta's total greenhouse area grew 20% from 2014 to 2019, reaching a total area of 17.6 million square feet. Growing crops within the province would significantly reduce the time in transportation, providing high quality fresh leafy greens to the local markets.



**There are over 2,000 grocery stores in Alberta that are looking to secure their supply of fresh produce as well as brand their “locally sourced products” to meet consumer demands.**

Beyond sourcing retail chains, restaurants are looking to source local produce based on customer preferences; **28% of Alberta households deliberately choose to eat at a restaurant because it serves food prepared from ingredients that are grown or made in Alberta.**

**Location advantages include:**

-  Construction of a market-ready facility is well underway and can be tailored to meet specific business needs.
-  Business friendly municipality with a solution to access inexpensive utilities
-  Existing ecosystem centered around the agriculture industry
-  Access to affordable talent and ability to train for the right skills through local post-secondary institutions



**Invest in this existing facility in the East-Central region of Alberta in St. Paul County**

- 35 acres property with a state-of-the-art 30,000 sq ft. facility, 80% complete, providing an opportunity to tailor to your needs.
- Opportunity to operate with natural gas co-generation.
- Intake for air flow through facility is treated through HEPA, UV
- and charcoal filtration systems, building is sealed with an epoxy to meet EU-GMP and Canadian medical standards.
- Utilities, including electricity, natural gas, water/sewage and broadband connections, are hooked up in the facility.

 The facility has Canadian Food Inspection Agency approval and is situated on an industrial lot that offers convenient access to a highway system that provides access to large urban centers, including Edmonton, Calgary, and Red Deer, targeting a population of over 4 million.

**Learn more about vertical farming opportunities in the County of St. Paul.**  
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