

Department business plan update

Economic Development & Tourism

Department overview

- Economic Development & Tourism enables the success and growth of business and industry.
- Work collaboratively with internal and external resources to encourage business and employment growth in the community and region.
- With a focus on efforts to support a strong and balanced economy while adapting to the ever-changing customer needs.
- Leadership, knowledge exchange, referrals, education, research, and confidential business coaching.
- Interact with regional stakeholders to advance economic development and tourism interests.
- A team of nine professionals support a strong diversified economy which contributes to quality of life and place.

Core business functions

- Economic Growth: Industrial, Commercial and development attraction
- Diversification and Innovation: Sector Development
- Business Support: Business mentorship, small business seminars, entrepreneurial support, business retention and expansion services, community events e.g. Savour, CP Holiday Train Festival.
- Readiness (Research and Communication): Market Research, Business Location Inventories, business and development outreach via business visitation and networking

Progress on core function forecast

Economic Growth:

- Several new retail projects and tenants in Emerald Hills, Aspen Plaza, Centre in the Park, Sherwood Park Mall and Wye Road.
- 3,508 businesses with employees (2,058 with 1-4 employees) and 11,027 businesses. 1.4% increase in businesses since December 2017.
- Continued execution of foreign direct investment strategy, energy and petrochemical companies including downstream value added industry.
- Industrial projects announced, under construction, recently completed or active files total approximately \$12 billion dollars worth of value.
- Robust customer relationship management system to track inquiries, contacts, companies and projects continues to be utilized.
- Partnerships with Edmonton Global, Alberta's Industrial Heartland Association, Strathcona Industrial Area and the Sherwood Park & District Chamber of Commerce.

Progress continued

Economic Growth Challenges:

Businesses have faced several challenges over the past year including: minimum wage increases, holiday pay, impact of carbon tax, insurance costs, new competition, evolving business models, some business closures in retail & restaurant sector, local hotels seeking more support to increase sport tourism, meetings and conventions to address low occupancy.

Diversification and Innovation:

- Sector Development: Petrochemicals, agriculture and agri-food, specialty retail, tourism, and innovation and technology
- Supply Chain Forum (industry procurement trade show)
- Industry Connector events i.e. tourism cafes, Chamber event sponsorships
- Post Secondary programming exploration and discussions

Progress continued

Business Support:

- Advocacy and alignment with local Chamber of Commerce on various policy recommendations to senior levels of government
- Business Visitation Program: We appreciate the support of the Mayor's Office, Councillors, and Chamber of Commerce to execute the program
- You Can Campaign: award winning video testimonials featuring local businesses including major industry and new targeted industries.
- Custom publications including Site Selection Guide, Travel and Activity Guide, and others
- Small Business Week, business mentoring, one on one coaching
- Savour Strathcona County, Christmas in the Heartland, CP Holiday Train
- Support for local farmer's markets and increased support to local hotels

Progress continued

Readiness (Research, Communication, Business Location Inventories):

- Business Patterns Data from Statistics Canada (twice a year)
- County Economic Fact Sheets
- Annual Economic Directions Publication
- Custom heat maps and demographics
- Consumer Expenditure data
- Business Directory
- Numerous realtor office and economic update presentations
- Members of International Council of Shopping Centres, Economic Development Association of Canada, Economic Developers of Alberta and International Economic Development Council.

Employee engagement

Engagement survey theme	Engagement initiative	People Plan focus area
Leadership, Communication, Staff and Resources, Career Growth	Encourage staff to take part in corporate Career Day to raise awareness about different positions across the County	Positivity, Clear Purpose, Trust Accountability, Team, Leadership
Career Growth	Annually, Human Resources will be invited to attend staff meetings to provide information on learning programs and opportunities	Trust, Leadership
Communication	Seek opportunities to highlight our work to the larger organization and updates to other departments	Accountability, Trust, Clear Purpose
Recognition and Rewards, Career Growth	Encourage staff to volunteer for corporate committees and activities	Team, Positivity, Trust

Initiatives

Tourism Strategy and Implementation Plan

- Development of a 10 year tourism strategy for the community
- Strategic initiative to review enhanced tourism opportunities in the County
- Tourism has potential to be a powerful economic driver and diversifier for the local economy.
- Phase 2 involving tourism asset inventory and consultation recently concluded including public engagement, tourism cafes and surveys.
- *Next Steps:* The What We Heard Report is planned to come back to Council in April.

Tourism Strategy and Implementation Plan- Status

Overall initiative status



Initiative status	Current status	Previous status
Time	Y	G
Scope	G	G
Budget	G	G

Alignment to strategic goals

Goal 3: Cultivate economic diversification, within the petrochemical industry and beyond, through a business friendly environment

- Growth opportunities increase through regional brand and economic development strategies

Goal 6: Provide facilities and services that are available and accessible to residents

- Accessible community and cultural events, entertainment, shopping and dining opportunities

Key deliverables

- A detailed SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats)
- A breakdown of current tourist attractions and advantages throughout the County and the Edmonton Capital Region
- Explore if tourism as an industry in Strathcona County has enough potential for growth
- Determine existing gaps in services that may deter tourism development
- An analysis of the existing sports and business event hosting capabilities
- A review of existing tourism marketing materials and initiatives
- Engage with tourism stakeholders in the preparation of the official Tourism Strategy

Opportunities/Challenges

- Revised timing of presentation of the "What we Heard report", seeking additional information to be included as part of that report i.e./SWOT Analysis
- Education around what is tourism in Alberta, locally and regionally is needed
- Final outcomes are of a community wide benefit for multiple stakeholders
- Stakeholders will be able to help advance tourism as the County cannot do it alone

Risks

Internal and external stakeholder support and participation is required

Recommendations may not be supported by some stakeholders

Financial or human resource capacity to implement tourism recommendations may be limited

Mitigation

Meet with internal departments and external private sector stakeholders through Tourism Cafes, surveys and multiple engagement opportunities

Working with communications and engagement, recreation parks and culture, transportation agricultural services and other departments to help inform and move the project forward

Invite those to be impacted to have a role in defining the project and outcomes

Questions?

