

Priorities Committee Meeting_Apr28_2020**STRATEGIC INITIATIVE AND UPDATE**

What We Heard Report, Tourism Strategy and Implementation Plan**Report Purpose**

To provide the Priorities Committee with the What We Heard Report for the Tourism Strategy.

Our Prioritized Strategic Goals

Goal 1 - Build strong communities to support the diverse needs of residents

Goal 3 - Cultivate economic diversification, within the petro-chemical industry and beyond, through a business-friendly environment

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

Report

Tourism has the potential to attract and grow our primary sectors. Tourism can be broadly defined as "the activities of people travelling to places outside their usual environment for leisure, business or other purposes for not more than one consecutive year". The Government of Alberta has set an ambitious goal to double tourism spending in Alberta to \$20 billion by 2030. Tourism can enhance quality of life by creating a sense of place, which can support major employers in the area with talent attraction. It can also support the retail community and cultivate economic diversification.

The tourism strategy and implementation will help create a shared vision for tourism in Strathcona County, a framework for stakeholders to collaborate, and a direction for tourism development over the next ten years. Through this process the business community will have an appreciation on how they can support the community and economy through tourism opportunities.

The budget was approved, and Council moved the project ahead to start in 2019 rather than 2020 as originally planned. The project was brought forward by Administration as a result of input received from members of the business community, including the Sherwood Park and District Chamber of Commerce, Council and the Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee (EDTAC) over the 2016-2018 time period.

Stakeholders, residents, Council members, and Strathcona County staff have provided input through surveys and interviews to inform the strategy and provide input on tourism opportunities:

- 281 residents completed a survey, 21 of which were completed in-person at a public engagement pop-up at Millennium Place on November 14, 2019
- 34 unique stakeholder groups who have an interest in tourism, chose to participate in the engagement process either through public engagement sessions or by survey:
 - Four hotels and ten other local businesses
 - Nine local organizations
 - Two other municipalities and eight tourism organizations
- Individual interviews with each member of Council
- Eight Strathcona County departments participated in staff input sessions

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The Strathcona County Tourism Strategy and Implementation consists of 5 phases:

- Phase 1 – Project start-up
- Phase 2 – Tourism asset inventory and consultation
- Phase 3 – Destination analysis and opportunity assessment
- Phase 4 – Draft strategy and implementation plan
- Phase 5 – Final strategy and implementation plan

Phase 3 is now coming to completion.

What We Heard Report summary

The following describes 7 key themes that were synthesized from all the engagement inputs received from stakeholders to date:

1. There is strong support for tourism development among many Stakeholder groups
2. There is a lack of awareness of tourism among some segments of the population
3. There is a need for a unifying vision
4. There is need of organizing for tourism development
5. There is a willingness to collaborate and partner
6. There are a lack of tourism products and operators
7. There are opportunities for product development
8. There is a desire for enhanced tourism marketing

This is a community owned 10-year tourism strategy. This report sums up what we heard from our residents, businesses stakeholders, shareholders and Council of Strathcona County. We thank all those who have contributed.

Council and Committee History

Mar. 10, 2020	Priorities Committee Meeting, Economic Development and Tourism Business Plan Update
Feb. 11, 2020	Priorities Committee Meeting, Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee (EDTAC) Annual Report
Jan. 21, 2019	Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee Meeting
Dec. 4, 2018	Council Budget Meeting, 2019 Multi-Year Budget. Motion 2018: CB 32 Moved by B. Tonita that \$100,000 to fund Initiative 21 - Tourism Strategy and Implementation be brought forward in the operating budget from 2020 to 2019.
Nov. 13, 2018	Priorities Committee Meeting, Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee (EDTAC) Annual Report
Nov. 21, 2017	Priorities Committee Meeting, Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee (EDTAC) Annual Report
Jan. 24, 2017	Priorities Committee Meeting, Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee (EDTAC) Update

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Nov. 22, 2016 Priorities Committee Meeting, Economic Development and Tourism
Advisory Committee (EDTAC) 2016 Council Update

Other Impacts**Policy: n/a****Legislative/Legal: n/a****Interdepartmental: Economic Development and Tourism, Recreation, Parks and
Culture, Planning and Development Services, Communications****Master Plan/Framework: n/a****Communication Plan**

Communication objectives are to create resident and stakeholder awareness of the tourism strategy purpose and objectives; to create resident and stakeholder understanding of the implementation process and timelines; and to generate awareness and interest in participating in public engagement.

Enclosures

- 1 Tourism Strategy and Implementation Plan Presentation - What We
Heard Report Tourism Strategy Presentation
- 2 What We Heard Report Tourism Strategy and Implementation Plan –
April 8, 2020