

Priorities Committee Meeting_Mar30_2021

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE AND UPDATE**Economic Development and Tourism – Department Business Plan Update****Report Purpose**

To provide the Priorities Committee with an update on the progress of the 2021-2024 Department Business Plan for Economic Development and Tourism (EDT).

Our Prioritized Strategic Goals

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

Continuously improving the way we work, as one organization, in an agile and sustainable manner

Report

The EDT Department, within the Infrastructure and Planning Services Division, supports the County's strategic direction and business goals by increasing the total prosperity and generating economic activity for the betterment of residents and businesses alike. The department is focused on investment attraction, business retention and expansion, tourism, small business support, entrepreneurial development and economic diversification.

The team of nine-and-a-half staff interacts collaboratively and in partnership with a variety of stakeholders such as Edmonton Global, Alberta's Industrial Heartland Association, Strathcona Industrial Association and the Sherwood Park and District Chamber of Commerce to advance the interests of the regional and local economy.

2020 was a challenging year for many in the business community as a result of the global pandemic. The department and County responded with the creation of the Economic Resilience and Vision Task Force, resulting in engagement sessions with a number of business stakeholder groups to explore actions and initiatives to assist. Further successes and challenges of EDT are highlighted in the attached presentation. Industrial projects announced, under construction, recently completely or active files in the investment funnel at this time are approximately \$12 billion.

Last year, EDT developed the Heartland Incentive Program (HIP) which is a novel incentive program that is offered by Strathcona County to promote investment in the energy value chain and associated infrastructure in Alberta's Industrial Heartland. The HIP provides a 1% tax exemption on capital expenditures for a new eligible project. This program positions Strathcona County to be competitive on the world investment stage for petrochemical development.

2021-2024 Forecast

The Department is currently reviewing staff resources into the future, coupled with targeted sectors and initiatives to ensure success moving forward for investment attraction, business retention and economic diversification. Ongoing work is underway to implement the actions of the 10-year Tourism Strategy and implementation plan. Initiatives associated with the work of the Economic Resilience and Vision Committee are ongoing.

The department is reviewing additional incentive programs that will provide increased ability to attract new investments into the region. The revision of Bills 7 and 29 (2019) under the

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Municipal Government Act allows for the ability to attract new investment through the tax exemption of non-residential or machinery and equipment taxes.

Other Impacts

Policy: n/a

Legislative/Legal: n/a

Interdepartmental: n/a

Master Plan/Framework: Tourism Strategy & Implementation Plan, Diversification Review, Foreign Direct Investment Strategy, Retail Study

Enclosure

1 Department Business Plan update – Economic Development and Tourism