

Department business plan update

Economic Development and Tourism

March 30, 2021

Department overview

- The Economic Development & Tourism department's primary objective is to increase prosperity and generate economic activity in Strathcona County for the betterment of residents and businesses alike.
- Focused on and accomplished through:
 - Investment Attraction
 - Business Retention & Expansion
 - Tourism
 - Small Business Support
 - Entrepreneurial Development
 - Economic Diversification

Core business functions

- 1 Economic growth
- 2 Diversification and innovation
- 3 Business support
- 4 Readiness (Research and Communication)
- 5 Readiness (Business Location Inventories)

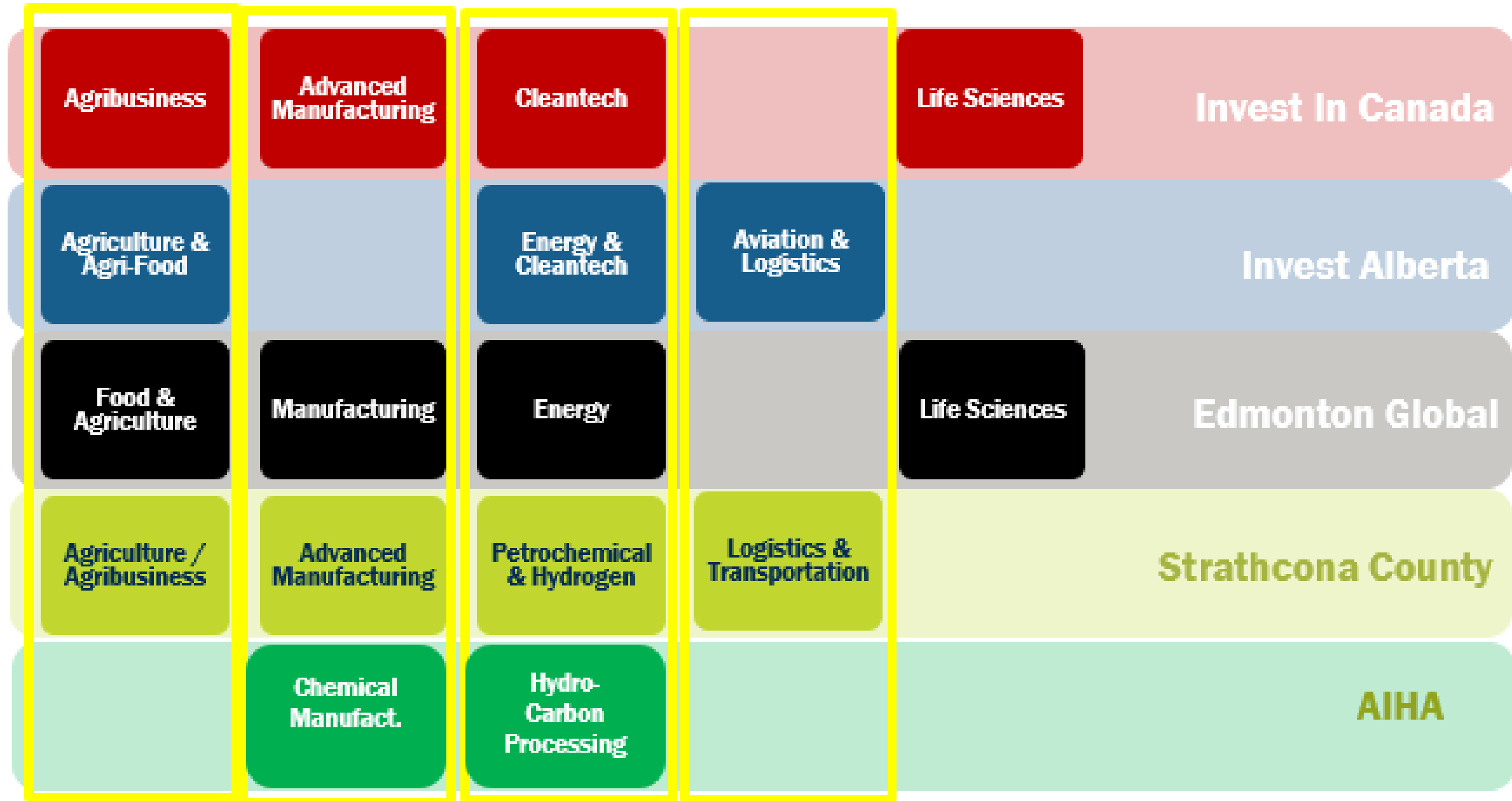
Core function highlights

1 Economic growth

Supporting key investors in commercial, industrial and land development in order to grow the economy.

- Development and implementation of the Heartland Incentive Program
- Support investors and real estate brokerages through information collection, data provision, location decisions and the permitting process
- Site selection and demographic provision with emphasis on investment attraction, business retention and expansion
- Realtor brokerage and economic update presentations to various groups
- Active partnership and alignment with regional investment attraction groups: Alberta's Industrial Heartland and Edmonton Global

Investment Attraction Alignment



Core function highlights

2 Diversification and innovation

Ensuring resiliency and strengthening our local economy through diversification efforts.

Fostering innovation and creativity in entrepreneurs.

- Identify advantageous sectors for diversification (Transportation & Logistics, Agriculture and Agri-Food Processing, Petrochemicals, Advanced Manufacturing)
- Analyze market opportunities and trends (e.g. hydrogen)
- Execute foreign direct investment strategy down the petrochemicals value chain and beyond
- Direct attraction efforts with investors in key innovation sectors (AI, Clean Energy, Safety)
- Develop attraction materials and content for key sectors & business parks
- 10-year Tourism Strategy & Implementation Plan activities and actions

Core function highlights

3 Business support

Ensuring long-term success of businesses in the County.

- Regular engagement with existing businesses and industry to eliminate barriers to growth and further investment
- Business Visitation Program in partnership with Sherwood Park & District Chamber of Commerce and elected officials
- Expanded business directory and mapping tools during COVID-19
- Virtual small business week, business mentoring, one on one coaching
- Video testimonials featuring local businesses (You Can Campaign)
- Staff within the department will continue with educational opportunities to provide the best referral services possible, known as “concierge services”

Core function highlights

4 Readiness (Research and communication)

Providing quality information for business strategy.

Communicating the value proposition of Strathcona County to prospective investors.

- Share site specific details to developers, brokers and agents. Specifically relating to properties, transportation and utilities infrastructure, levies, and land use
- Internal working group collaboration with Edmonton Global on development of 5G networks, hydrogen hub, marketing seminars and investment readiness
- Expanded shop local promotions with Chamber of Commerce and support local campaign
- Custom publications including site selection guide, travel and activity guide and economic directions
- Monthly e-newsletters to the business community and robust social media communications (examples include: tourism attraction, educational opportunities, news relevant to local businesses)

Core function highlights

5 Readiness (Business location inventories)

Ensuring a variety of suitable locations exist for businesses that are growing and potential investors.

- Worked closely with developers and internal stakeholders to identify suitable locations for development, and associated infrastructure
- Data maintenance and sharing via digital business support tools (Business Directory, Investment Intelligence Tool, Property Locator)
- On-going upgrades and adoption of Customer Relationship Management to track companies and inquiries
- Business Patterns data, consumer expenditure data, custom heat maps and demographics
- Support businesses with zoning (land use) information, property search and referrals to planning and development

Successes and challenges

- Industrial projects announced, under construction, recently completed or active files total approximately \$12 billion in value
- Development of new bylaw to attract investment
- Businesses facing economic downturn and supports related to COVID-19
- Council creation of the Economic Resilience and Vision Task Force (ERVTF)
- Engagement of a variety of sectors and businesses via interviews to determine impacts and ways to assist during the pandemic
- Economic Development & Tourism committee continued to provide advice and guidance
- Ground breaking for the new Italian Centre
- Department won an Economic Development Association of Canada marketing award for 2020 Economic Directions Publication
- Reduced staff in key positions in 2020 resulted in a balancing of priorities during the pandemic

COVID Impacts

- Staff impacts
 - About half of the team working from home virtually
- Service impacts
 - Increase in one-on-one business consultations regarding financial supports
 - Support local campaign was developed
 - New webpages needed to support businesses with various information
 - Being unable to travel resulted in difficulties with investment attraction
 - Certain events were cancelled or postponed
- Financial impacts
 - Surplus at year end resulting from vacant positions and reduced business travel and associated professional development costs

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	Share initiatives and successes within the organization through regular updates to the Insider page. Encourage participation in staff engagement survey.	Accountability, Trust, Clear Purpose
Recognition and Rewards, Career Growth	Staff have volunteered for corporate committees and activities. Recognizing staff successes and achievements.	Team, Positivity, Trust

Tourism Strategy and Implementation Plan- Completed

Overall initiative status



Initiative status	Current status	Previous status
Time	G	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 <ul style="list-style-type: none">Growth opportunities increase through regional brand and economic development strategies Goal 6: Provide facilities and services that are available and accessible to residents <ul style="list-style-type: none">Accessible community and cultural events, entertainment, shopping and dining opportunities

Risks	Mitigation
Internal and external stakeholder support and participation is required	Meet with internal departments and external private sector stakeholders through Tourism Cafes, surveys and multiple engagement opportunities
Recommendations may not be supported by some stakeholders	Working with communications and engagement, recreation parks and culture, transportation agricultural services and other departments to help inform and move the project forward
Financial or human resource capacity to implement tourism recommendations may be limited	Invite those to be impacted to have a role in defining the project and outcomes

Key deliverables
Developed a detailed 10-year tourism strategy for the community Strategic initiatives to review enhanced tourism opportunities in the County. Tourism has potential to be a powerful economic driver and diversifier for the local economy. <ul style="list-style-type: none">SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats)Provided a breakdown of current tourist attractions and advantages throughout the County and the Edmonton Capital RegionExplored tourism as an industry in Strathcona County has enough potential for growthDetermined existing gaps in services that may deter tourism developmentAnalyzed existing sports and business event hosting capabilitiesReviewed existing tourism marketing materials and initiativesEngaged with tourism stakeholders in the preparation of the official Tourism Strategy

Opportunities/Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Complete

Questions?

