

**Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission  
Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, October 23rd, 2024, 7:30 AM  
Regional District of Central Okanagan, Woodhaven Boardroom  
1450 K.L.O. Road, Kelowna**

✓ = attended      X = Absent      \* Not required      A = Alternate Attended

**Advisory Committee Executive:**

X	Larson, Janice, Chair
✓	Hughes-Geekie, Sharon, Vice-Chair
X	Calissi, James, Past Chair

X	Nagy, Angela
X	Quinn, Paula

**Advisory Committee:**

X	Alexander, Andrea
X	Alluri, Rama
X	Berrie, Carla
X	Bruns, Myles
✓	Burleigh, Mark
X	Collins, Dave
✓	Csek, Nikki
X	Dawn, Jeremy
✓	Douglas, Laurel
✓	Dyas, Tom
✓	Ferreira, Christina
✓	Freisen, Jason
X	Gipps, Paul
✓	Goodhew, Alex
A	Harper, Shauna

X	Harvey, Maryse
✓	Ireland, Blair
X	Kam, Michelle
X	Labrecque, Cory
✓	Lake, Brea
✓	Lewis, Chris
✓	Lovegrove, Gord
X	Malcom, Ryan
✓	Myers, Rebecca
X	Popoff, Chantel
✓	Rezania, Sepideh
X	Ritchie, Geoff
X	Selby, Robert
X	Sulentich, Ruth
✓	Threlfall, Rich

✓	Thurnheer, Laura
✓	Udzenija, Nicole
✓	Wall, Johnathan
✓	Wang, Bill
✓	Wentworth, Noel
✓	White, Jill
✓	Widmer, Larry
X	Wolf, Mike

**Staff and Consultants:**

✓	Mallory, Krista
X	Lesack, Sascha
✓	Weston, Eva

✓	Rambe, Mohana
✓	Walraven, Jen
✓	Stark Leader, Myrna

✓	Ginter, Sally

**Guests:**

Vann Struth, Jamie
Rodriguez, Jose
Trevino, Valentina



## **1. Call to Order**

Vice-Chair Sharon Hughes-Geekie called the meeting to order at 7:35 am.

## **2. Land Acknowledgement**

The Chair acknowledged our presence on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded tṛxʷúlaʔxʷ (land) of the syilx / Okanagan people who have resided here since time immemorial. We recognize, honour, and respect the syilx / Okanagan lands upon which we live, work, and play.

## **3. Adoption of Minutes**

Minutes of September 25, 2024, unanimously approved.

## **4. COEDC Strategy 2025-2030 – Project Update and Next Steps**

*Jamie Vann Struth, Senior Manager, Economic Advisory Deloitte*

Draft Strategic Pillars have been developed to get feedback for final planning. Data analysis summaries were presented with comparisons of our region to similar census metropolitan areas around the country. Our populations are growing quickly and getting younger on average. Topics outlined included housing starts and median prices, employment projections, workforce education, and business sizes. Surveys included questions about satisfaction level and importance of topics to determine priorities for businesspeople as well as their outlook. Deloitte enquired about types of business support people would like to receive. Workers are looking for skills training, housing, networking, and mentorship support.

**See attached presentations for details.**

## **5. Facilitated Discussion**

*Jaime Vann Struth, Deloitte*

Interactive voting allowed the Advisory Committee to rank the 5 draft strategic pillars according to priorities for COEDC to focus on when planning. The groups discussed each pillar and programs or initiatives the EDC could use to work within each pillar to progress over the next 5 years. New and continuing ideas were welcomed within Spreading Innovation Widely, Fostering a Skilled Workforce, Building Economic Resiliency, Supporting Export Focused Industries, and Positioning the Region as a Major Player.

Pillar 1 top 3 – Education and awareness, connecting campus to industry, and storytelling. Open-source sharing to compete together as a region, de-programming and direct accessibility to education and funding, innovation investment attraction bringing experts in regional transportation for example to work here.

Pillar 2 top 3 – Bring together sectors for robust conversations to promote housing and healthcare projects and initiatives, skilled workforce degree translation/re-certification links to streamline the process, restaurant associations/retail talent pool skill sharing promotion. Provide specific labour force intelligence data regarding which industries and which skills are most needed, newcomer certification facilitation, retain local graduate talent with wage subsidies.

Pillar 3 top 3 – Support small businesses with information package to bounce back, build resiliency for food producers and maintain clean water locally, strengthen diversity of community by

highlighting data and storytelling around diversity. Encourage season-based businesses to expand to year-round businesses, outreach for event creation, bring groups together with best practices from around the world regarding fire resiliency and food and water security.

Pilar 4 top 3 – Support for export policy navigation, facilities, tourism and transportation infrastructure development, and skilled labour workforce development for smaller businesses. Increase validity of online export for companies that do not produce hard products, providing education and training on the channels for export, connecting export to customers through storytelling at export events.

Pilar 5 top 3 – Promote Okanagan more than Kelowna and resonate with cluster development, promote infrastructure development particularly for cell service and airport, look to Japan and Boulder as examples of positive development. Reverse engineer looking into this region from another province being impressed with how we have solved our issues, excitement about asking the questions in a different way to our knowledgeable stakeholders.

## **6. Questions**

- 15 1:1 interviews were conducted with major institutions and industry groups.
- Transportation as a major issue can be benchmarked but is not something the EDC has domain over. We can support and provide industry information to those initiatives through the Regional District.

<b>Action Items for Advisory Committee:</b>
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## **7. New Business**

- Call for 2025 Advisory Committee Expressions of Interest

### ***Adjournment:***

Meeting adjourned at 9:25 am.

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