



Regional Board Report

TO: Regional Board

FROM: Corie Griffiths
Director of Economic Development and Bylaw Services

DATE: April 27, 2020

SUBJECT: Regional Economic Response Action Team and Regional Recovery Task Force

Voting Entitlement: All Directors – Unweighted Corporate Vote – Simple Majority – LGA 208.1

Purpose: To provide an update on the RDCO Economic Development Commission's (COEDC) response to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic to date and the Economic Response Action Team and Regional Mayors' and WFN Chief's Economic Recovery Task Force (Economic Recovery Task Force).

Executive Summary:

The Central Okanagan economy, like economies worldwide, is impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Central Okanagan communities, led by the COEDC, are serving the region by establishing and implementing a regional approach to economic response and recovery.

The regional strategy is two-pronged and includes:

- I. Short term **Economic Response Action Team** to help local businesses “**weather the storm**” over the next several months
 - Focus is on ensuring public health and supporting businesses and the labour force through the immediate impacts of business shutdowns and/or severely reduced revenue.
 - Led by the Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission (COEDC) with input from business community stakeholders the development of immediate and short term response activities.

- II. Long term **Regional Mayors' and Westbank First Nation Chief's Economic Task Force (Regional Economic Recovery Task Force)** to develop a strategy to “**emerge stronger**”
 - Task Force will provide Central Okanagan Communities a forum for identifying economic recovery needs.
 - Position and advocate for anticipated stimulus program funding for Central Okanagan businesses and their employees.
 - At a political level, communicate Central Okanagan needs with One Voice.
 - Identify available areas for collaborative projects to support economic recovery.

Next Steps

The COEDC will lead the Economic Response Action Team and support the Economic Recovery Task Force to develop and implement actions of the response and recovery Action Plans. Economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are broad and constantly evolving. The Economic Response Action Team and Economic Recovery Task Force Action Plans are expected to evolve as the region responds to a changing landscape.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT The Regional Board receive for information the Regional Economic Response Action Team and Regional Recovery Task Force report dated April 27, 2020.

Respectfully Submitted:



Corie Griffiths
Director of Economic Development and Bylaw Services

Approved for Board's Consideration



Brian Reardon, CAO

Implications of Recommendation:

Strategic Plan:	Supports the RDCO Strategic Priorities of Economic Development
Financial	Current Action Plan activities are supported by the resources already approved in the 2020 Budget for the Economic Development Commission. No additional resources are requested at this time

Background:

The Economic Development Commission has provided a broad range of programming supporting the economic vitality of the region and implemented the economic directives of the Regional District of Central Okanagan since 1978.

The Central Okanagan economy, like economies worldwide, is being impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Central Okanagan communities, led by the COEDC, are serving the region by establishing and implementing a regional approach to economic response and recovery.

The COEDC has coordinated with partners in the establishment of response and recovery strategies in two-phased regional approach:

A.) Short-term **Regional Response Action Team** to help local businesses “weather the storm”

The short-term response phase (1-3 months) will focus on ensuring public health and supporting businesses and the labour force through the immediate impacts of business shutdowns and/or severely reduced revenue.

B.) **Regional Mayors and Westbank First Nation Recovery Task Force** (Regional Recovery Task Force) will guide the strategy to “emerge stronger”

The long-term recovery phase (4-18 months) will focus on emerging from this crisis stronger and encouraging new opportunities for economic prosperity. To develop a long-term economic recovery plan to reenergize the Central Okanagan economy, retain business base and support employers and workers in getting people back to work as soon as possible following the response phase.

The Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission to date is:

- Serving as a conduit for local economic development/business support organizations to encourage a coordinated regional approach to response and recovery
 - The COEDC coordinates weekly meetings with the Economic Response Action Team, including municipal and WFN economic development officers, all chambers of commerce/boards of trade, business service providers (i.e. Community Futures, Accelerate Okanagan) and Tourism Kelowna.
 - Economic Response Action Team has been meeting weekly since March 27, 2020 (Completed meeting dates: March 27, April 5, April 12 and April 20)
- Communicating key information and updates to the business community
 - InvestKelowna.com/covid19, published March 16, 2020, and updated daily.
 - InvestKelowna.com/taskforce, announced April 15, 2020.
 - Distribution of weekly COEDC newsletters distributed to approximately 2,500 recipients updating the region on community support initiatives, business resources and Federal and Provincial announcements.
 - Weekly email updates provided to the COEDC Advisory Council.
 - Social Media and blog posts to promote community support initiatives and amplify key messages.
- Continually updating a centralized regional webpage and translating funding announcements published by Federal and Provincial business supports into plain language.
 - Relevant resources are housed at InvestKelowna.com/covid19, commencing March 16, 2020, and updated daily at minimum.
- Acting as a concierge service by offering 1:1 support and guidance to business.

- Monitoring and advocating on behalf of local business needs to provincial and federal bodies without creating additional burden for businesses.
 - In an attempt to avoid “death by survey” and increasing the burden on businesses, the Region is working with BC Economic Development Association, Small Business BC and the BC Chamber to access Central Okanagan specific data from regular province-wide surveys.
- Engaging the COEDC Advisory Council and Executive.
 - Working through the COEDC’s established 45-member Advisory Council to maintain an inflow-outflow of information to a cross section of major industry leaders, business service providers, academia and elected officials.
- Creating a terms of reference for the Regional Economic Recovery Task Force announced April 15, 2020.

Economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are broad and constantly evolving. The detailed activities and initiatives of the Economic Response Team and Economic Recovery Task Force are detailed in attached documentation. The Response Action Team and Recovery Task Force efforts will continue to prioritize the public health direction and protocols from provincial and federal health officials. The timeline of the required public health restrictions are unknown; The Response Action Team and Recovery Task Force tactics and activities are expected to evolve and be as the region responds to a changing landscape.

Attachment(s):

- Central Okanagan Economic Response & Recovery Strategy_Summary
- April 15, 2020 Press Release
- April 15, 2020 FAQ
- COVID-19 Regional Economic Response Team Briefing Document
- COVID-19 Regional Recovery Task Force Briefing Document