



News Release

April 15, 2020

Supporting Business and Driving Economic Recovery in the Central Okanagan

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Regional Mayors' and WFN Chief's Economic Recovery Task Force (Economic Recovery Task Force) was launched today. The Economic Recovery Task Force was initiated by the Mayors of Kelowna, West Kelowna, Lake County and Peachland, as well as the Regional Board Chair and Chief of Westbank First Nation. They will act to support the immediate needs of local business and drive for full economic recovery in the Central Okanagan.

The Economic Recovery Task Force is co-chaired by Regional Board Chair Gail Given and Kelowna Mayor Colin Basran and is supported by the Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission (COEDC) and senior staff from participating jurisdictions. The local governments and Westbank First Nation recognize they can combat economic impacts of COVID-19 more soundly as a group since businesses and the workforce move fluidly across the region.

The Economic Recovery Task Force will first support action already underway through the COEDC to help businesses focus in the short term on maintaining public and work force health and by connecting businesses with resources to assist them through temporary business closures or reduced revenues.

"The COEDC has already established an Economic Response Action Team made up of key representatives from our local business community who will provide input on what the needs are across industries," said Regional Board Chair Gail Given. "This is a critical first step in knowing what we can do to assist".

The COEDC will lead the group to:

- Keep local businesses informed and connected to provincial and federal programs
- Establish evolving needs in the community as the pandemic shifts to recovery
- Provide one to one guidance for struggling businesses
- Advocate on behalf of the local business community to senior levels of government

Next, the Economic Recovery Task Force will guide the development of an economic recovery plan which the COEDC and partners will implement over the next four to 18 months. The plan will leverage the broad industry expertise and be geared to re-energize the Central Okanagan economy, retain the business base and support employers and workers in getting people back to work as soon as possible.



“We’ve achieved significant economic success in the City of Kelowna and across the region but like economies worldwide, we’ve been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Mayor Colin Basran. “The Economic Recovery Task Force will be providing guidance to make sure our businesses emerge from the pandemic stronger and ready to continue building on local success. With a solid strategy, we’ll know what economic stimuli are required. We’ll be able to act quickly and position ourselves for new economic opportunities like funding programs from senior governments. And we’ll be able to bounce back more quickly.”

For more information on what Westbank First Nation and local governments are doing in their own communities visit:

- [Regional District of Central Okanagan](#)
- [City of Kelowna](#)
- [City of West Kelowna](#)
- [District of Peachland](#)
- [District of Lake Country](#)
- [Westbank First Nation](#)

And to keep up to date on the Regional Mayors’ and WFN Chief’s Economic Recovery Task Force actions and current resources for local businesses, visit the Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission at investkelowna.ca.

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Backgrounder

The Regional Mayors' and WFN Chief's Recovery Task Force is co-chaired by Chair Given and Mayor Basran and comprised of:

- Chief Christopher Derickson, Westbank First Nation
- Regional Board Chair Gail Given, Regional District of Central Okanagan
- Mayor Colin Basran, City of Kelowna
- Mayor Gord Milsom, City of West Kelowna
- Mayor James Baker, District of Lake Country
- Mayor Cindy Fortin, District of Peachland

The Economic Response Action Team is led by the Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission and is comprised of:

- Support staff from the District of Lake Country, City of Kelowna, Westbank First Nation, City of West Kelowna and District of Peachland
- Representatives from the Chambers of Commerce/Boards of Trade of Lake Country, Kelowna, Greater Westside and Peachland
- Community Futures Central Okanagan
- Women's Enterprise Centre
- Tourism Kelowna
- Southern Interior Development Initiative Trust
- Business Associations
- Accelerate Okanagan
- COEDC staff who act as a conduit for the COEDC Advisory Council

