

Regional Mayors' and WFN Chief's Economic Task Force

Key Points and FAQs

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- The Central Okanagan economy, like economies worldwide, is impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Central Okanagan municipalities and Westbank First Nation are serving the region by establishing and implementing a regional approach to economic response and recovery.
- Communities throughout the Central Okanagan recognize the regional economy is interconnected with workers and businesses moving fluidly across the region and thus the best way to combat COVID-19 pandemic is through a regional approach
- The regional strategy is two-pronged and includes:
 - Short term actions through the **Economic Response Action Team** to help local businesses “**weather the storm**” over the next three 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 the business community through the Economic Response Action Team
 - Long term actions completed at the direction of the **Regional Mayors' and Westbank First Nation Chief's Economic Recovery Task Force** who will guide a strategy to “**emerge stronger**”
 - Will be delivered by the COEDC over the next 4-18 months and will focus on emerging from this crisis stronger and encouraging new opportunities for economic prosperity.
 - Plan will 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 following the response phase.
 - Will position the region for anticipated stimulus program funding from senior levels of government

FAQ's

Q: What are the local governments and Westbank First Nations doing right now?

A: This differs somewhat between organizations, but in general they are trying to give people a break while still fulfilling legislated responsibilities and providing public services. Some of the actions include:

- Reducing annual budgets to decrease taxes
- Delaying or omitting some late fees
- Waiving interest rate charges on some utility bills
- Suspending parking tickets or parking fees

For specific details, visit their websites at:

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

Q: What is happening in the region right now?

A: Through the Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission, the region is:

- **Serving as a conduit for local economic development/business support organizations to encourage a coordinated regional approach to response and recovery**
 - The COEDC facilitates weekly staff calls with the Economic Response Action Team, including municipal and WFN economic development officers, all chambers of commerce/boards of trade, business service providers and Tourism Kelowna.
- **Creating and sharing plain language guides published by Federal and Provincial business supports.**
 - Relevant resources are housed at [InvestKelowna.com/covid19](https://investkelowna.com/covid19) and updated daily at minimum.
- **Acting as a concierge service and 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.

Q: Who is involved in the Economic Recovery Task Force?

A: The Regional Mayors' and WFN Chief's 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

Q: Who is involved in the Economic Response Action Team?

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

Q: How is this funded?

A: The Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission is a regionally funded function within the Regional District of Central Okanagan. To accommodate the unprecedented need for this work, the COEDC will be shifting resources to undertake this work.

Q: Why is this being done regionally? And how will individual community needs be met?





A: Communities throughout the Central Okanagan recognize the regional economy is interconnected with workers and businesses moving fluidly across the region. Through the COEDC, the region has a long history of working together to support economic growth throughout the region to the benefit of individual communities and residents.

Individual communities are represented on the Economic Recovery Task Force as well as the Economic Response Action Team.

Q: How can I get more information?

A: To keep up to date on the Regional Mayors' and WFN Chief's Economic Recovery Task Force actions and current support for local businesses, contact the Central Okanagan Development Commission by:

- Phoning 250-469-6280
- Emailing info@investkelowna.com
- Visiting investkelowna.com
- Relevant resources for business are housed at InvestKelowna.com/covid19 and updated daily.

