



Governance & Services Committee

TO: Governance and Services Committee

FROM: Corie Griffiths
Director of Economic Development and Bylaw Services

DATE: January 6, 2021

SUBJECT: 2021 COEDC Priorities Plan

Purpose: To provide the Governance and Services Committee with an overview of the Economic Development Commission's 2021 programming and to receive the 2021 COEDC Priorities Plan.

Executive Summary:

At the November 2019 Governance and Services Committee meeting, staff presented the *Moving Forward to 2025* Economic Development Strategy. The Strategy was guided by the Central Okanagan Economic Base Analysis and Strategic Development Engagement reports. On November 19, 2019, the RDCO Board endorsed the *Moving Forward to 2025* Strategic Plan.

From April to December 2020 staff undertook comprehensive industry and stakeholder outreach to gain an understanding of the immediate economic impacts of the pandemic on the region. This information has been used to review and reprioritize the COEDC's 2021 priorities within the COEDC's mandate and allocation of resources.

Through a consultative approach, staff applied findings from industry roundtables, Response Action Team identified programming gaps, as well as community and industry insights provided at the Nelson Strategies facilitated 2020 COEDC Advisory Council strategic planning meetings and the RDCO Board recovery planning workshop to the 2021 COEDC Priorities Plan.

During the November 2020 recovery sessions, both the RDCO Board and the COEDC Advisory Council made it clear that while the region remains in the response phase, the COEDC's top priority is to support the local business base as we move towards economic recovery. This is reflected in the 2021 COEDC Priorities Plan to be presented today.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Governance and Services Committee receive the 2021 COEDC Priorities Plan;

AND FURTHER THAT the Governance and Services Committee recommends the RDCO Board approve the Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission's 2021 Priorities Plan.

Respectfully Submitted:

Approved for Committee's Consideration

Brian Reardon, CAO



Corie Griffiths
Director of Economic Development and Bylaw Services

Implications of Recommendation:

Strategic Priorities: Supports the RDCO Strategic Priorities of Sustainable and Economic Development.

Background:

In November 2019, following comprehensive economic analysis and wide stakeholder consultation, staff presented the COEDC's 5-year strategic plan *Moving Forward to 2025* to the Governance and Services Committee. On November 19, 2020 the RDCO Board endorsed the 2020-2025 economic development strategic plan.

British Columbia declared a state of emergency March 17, 2020 to support COVID-19 response.

On May 6, 2020 B.C.'s Restart Plan released. The plan described how and what criteria the province would restart following a progression of 4 phases.

- **Phase 1** March 17 – May 18th 2020. Provincial health orders mandated temporary closure of non-essential businesses and reduced in-class learning and child care.
- **Phase 2** May 18, 2020. The temporary closure of non-essential businesses ended. Many businesses were allowed to reopen once strict safety measures including a Covid-19 safety plan were put into place.
- **Phase 3** June 23, 2020 to present. Additional restrictions are lifted including a return to school(s), film industry, hotels, parks and select entertainment all under enhanced protocols.
- **Phase 4** Conditional on global availability of vaccine or treatment

Chief economists' predictions of when an economic recovery will occur in the Canadian economy differ yet most agree that a complex "K Shaped" recovery, one where the magnitude, speed and ability to recover will be varied and especially slow for those workers and industries whose face-to-face interactions are likely.

In response to the pandemic onset, the RDCO's COEDC service centralized, and updated daily, a one stop resource translating all federal, provincial and locally available programs for business into plain language within one COVID-19 webpage.

In March 2020, the COEDC staff served as a convener and brought together the region's economic development services providers (partner organizations such as valley-wide Chamber network, Women's Enterprise Centre, Community Futures, Tourism Kelowna, Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association and staff from each Central Okanagan community) to form the Response Action Team (RAT).

As the Terms of Reference identifies, the objective of the RAT was to provide coordinated support and align existing services or programs to help Central Okanagan businesses navigate through the immediate economic impact of COVID-19. weekly meetings and follow up action items with partner organizations were facilitated by the COEDC from March to June, moving to monthly meetings from June into 2020.

These meetings serve to coordinate the efforts of various service providers, reduce duplication of work and inefficient use of limited resources, increase understanding of client needs by practitioners and provide a forum to effectively triage and refer clients to appropriate services and programs. For example, an opportunity was identified to connect accelerate Okanagan's DER3 program, designed to help main street businesses enhance or build a digital presence, to the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association's tourism resiliency program to ensure that tourism businesses are aware of and can access support through DER3. Gaps in support programs for industry identified through these meetings are captured in an Advocacy Matrix to inform regional advocacy needs.

In May 2020, the COEDC supported the development of the Terms of Reference for the Regional Recovery Task Force (RRTF). In the response phase the role of RRTF is to communicate to other orders of government the needs, barriers and opportunities of the region as it transitions to recovery. As we move into recovery planning in the years ahead, the RRTF will help guide the development of a long term economic recovery plan.

In order for the region to make evidence based and informed economic development programming priorities for the COEDC and the region as a whole, from April to December 2020, staff facilitated industry roundtables for Aerospace, Agriculture, Arts, Culture & recreation, Construction & Development, Manufacturing, Post-Secondary Education, Small Business and Technology. Within two weeks of each Industry Roundtable, Early Indicators at a Glance documents and detailed Facts Sheets were publically published and directly shared with the RAT, RRTF, and the provincial and federal governments.

Economic development needs identified by industry outreach and statistics gathered from April to November were aligned to BC's Restart plan and were then used to guide two economic development recovery Strategic Planning Sessions.

In November 2020, through two strategic planning sessions facilitated by Nelson Strategies industry expertise and community inputs were provided by the COEDC Advisory Council and the RDCO Board. These recovery strategic planning sessions provided an increased understanding of Canada's recovery predictions, the regional economic context and known industry and workforce COVID-19 impacts as well as post-pandemic recovery needs of the region.

During the November 2020 recovery sessions, both the RDCO Board and the COEDC Advisory Council made clear that while the region remains in the response phase, the COEDC's top priority is to support the local business base as we move towards economic recovery. This is reflected in the 2021 COEDC Priorities Plan.

Alternative Recommendation:

None recommended

Attachment(s):

2021 COEDC Priorities Plan

Moving Forward to 2025

2019 Economic Base Analysis

Strategic Development and Engagement Results