



Regional Board Report

TO: Regional Board

FROM: Corie Griffiths
Director of Economic Development and Bylaw Services

DATE: February 11, 2021

SUBJECT: Economic Recovery Planning Workshops Summary

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

Purpose: To provide the Regional Board with a summary of the Neilson Strategies November 12, 2020 and January 14, 2021, facilitated Economic Recovery Planning workshop sessions.

Executive Summary:

Following the January 14, 2021 RDCO Board approval of the COEDC 2021 Priorities Plan, the Board requested a summary of the Economic Recovery Planning Sessions facilitated by Neilson Strategies, as well as that any potential resource requirements be provided to the Board.

According to the Neilson Strategies summary document, at the November 2020 Board workshop and the January 2021 Governance and Services Committee meeting, the Committee expressed support for the work of the COEDC in bringing together parties from a variety of business sectors and public agencies, helping to coordinate response and recovery initiatives, keeping businesses informed of assistance programs, and making data and other informational resources available to decision makers.

Summarized from the January 14, 2021 workshop, the Neilson Strategies' Summary cites the Committee's guidance in the implementation of the COEDC 2021 Priorities including encouraging staff to:

- Ensure the pillars of Growing Sustainably, Fostering a Diverse Workforce and Competing Globally remain important while placing a stronger emphasis on Building Business is encouraged whilst in early recovery,
- Highlight efforts aimed at helping vulnerable sectors,
- Provide more regular information to the Board, and to;
- Identify the need to either scale down activities or seek additional resources

Based on the COEDC 2021 Priorities Plan and facilitated Recovery Planning workshops a resource request will be brought forward to the RDCO budget deliberations on February 18, 2021.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Economic Recovery Planning Workshops Summary Report from the Director of Economic Development and Bylaw Services dated February 11th, 2021 be received for information.

Respectfully Submitted:



Corie Griffiths
Director
Economic Development and Bylaw Services

Approved for Board's Consideration



Brian Reardon, CAO

Implications of Recommendation:

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

Background:

In the spring and summer of 2020, during the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic, COEDC staff, with input from the COEDC Advisory Council, facilitated a significant number of Industry Roundtable discussions to identify challenges facing businesses, promote response and recovery assistance programs, and consider COEDC's strategic plan — Moving Forward to 2025 — in light of the new COVID-19 defined operating environment.

From October 2020 to January 2021, Neilson Strategies facilitated three strategic planning sessions with the COEDC Advisory Council and the RDCO Board of Directors to review economic recovery projections and COVID-19 impacts on the regional economy. Participants in these sessions also discussed the region's needs at various stages of recovery, including in the immediate term.

Input provided through consultation sessions confirmed the overall soundness of the COEDC's strategic plan with its four strategic pillars and accompanying priorities. The input also highlighted the importance in the immediate term of emphasizing the *Building Business* pillar which is focused on initiatives and activities to directly support the region's business base.

COEDC staff received the input from the consultation sessions and refined the Commission's priorities for 2021. The resulting 2021 COEDC Priorities plan was presented to RDCO Board's Governance & Services Committee on January 14, 2021. The Committee was asked to provide feedback on the priorities under the four pillars, with particular attention being paid to items listed under *Building Business*. The Committee was also asked to identify any priorities or tasks that in the Committee's view were missing from the plan.

The Committee expressed support for the work of the COEDC in bringing together parties from a variety of business sectors and public agencies, helping to coordinate response and recovery initiatives, keeping businesses informed of assistance programs, and making data and other information resources available to decision makers.

Summarized from the January 14, 2021 workshop, the Neilson Strategies' Summary cites the Committee's guidance in the implementation of the COEDC 2021 Priorities including encouraging staff to:

- Ensure the pillars of Growing Sustainably, Fostering a Diverse Workforce and Competing Globally remain important while placing a stronger emphasis on Building Business is encouraged whilst in early recovery,
- Highlight efforts aimed at helping vulnerable sectors,
- Provide more regular information to the Board, and to;
- Identify the need to either scale down activities or seek additional resources.

Based on guidance from the Committee, a resource request will be included in the February 18th, 2021 budget deliberations.

Financial Considerations:

To be brought forward at the February 18th budget deliberation.

Considerations not applicable to this report:

- General:
- Organizational:
- Financial:
- Policy:
- Legal/Statutory Authority:

Attachment(s):

Neilson Strategies Economic Recovery Planning Summary