



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING AGENDA

June 7, 2021

6:00 p.m.

Virtual

CALL TO ORDER

1. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

2. MINUTES

- a. Approval of EDAC Meeting Minutes – March 1, 2021

3. DELEGATIONS

- a. Edmonton Global– Presentation by Malcolm Bruce on Regional Economic Development – Councillor Erin Stevenson

4. BUSINESS ITEMS

- a. Red Tape Sub-Committee Presentation & Next Steps – Victor Moroz
- b. Industrial Land Strategy Sub-Committee Presentation & Next Steps – Anthony Worbeck

5. INFORMATION ITEMS

- a. Westwind Video by Mayor & Council – Dave Walker
- b. 2021 Spring COVID Recovery Progress Report – Business Video Series - Dave Walker

6. CLOSED SESSION

ADJOURNMENT



Economic Development Advisory Committee June 7, 2021

REQUEST FOR DECISION

ITEM DESCRIPTION:**1. ADOPTION OF AGENDA****PROPOSED MOTION:**

That the agenda be approved as presented.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

n/a

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

n/a

ATTACHMENTS:

n/a



Economic Development Advisory Committee June 7, 2021

REQUEST FOR DECISION

ITEM DESCRIPTION:**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES****PROPOSED MOTION:**

That the March 1, 2021 EDAC Meeting Minutes be approved as presented.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

n/a

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

n/a

ATTACHMENTS:

March 1, 2021 EDAC Meeting Minutes



Economic Development Advisory Committee

Minutes of the EDAC Meeting
Held March 1, 2021
Virtual

Committee Members Present:

Councillor Erin Stevenson, Chair
Councillor Dave Oldham, Vice-Chair
Councillor Michelle Gruhlke
Mayor Stuart Houston, Ex-officio
Anthony Worbeck
Braven Blackwell
Bruce Mullett
Kelly J. Rose
Victor Moroz
Charlene Bell
Heather Shewchuk

Also In Attendance:

Dave Walker, Manager, Economic & Business Development
Karla Gould, Economic Development Specialist
Jamie-Lynn Scobie, Economic Development Specialist

Regrets:

Robert Smith

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Erin Stevenson called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

1. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

No amendments, additions or deletions were made to the agenda.

2021-01 Moved by Victor Moroz that the agenda be adopted as amended.

Carried



2. MINUTES

a. EDAC Meeting Minutes – December 7, 2020

2021-02 Moved by Bruce Mullett that the December 7, 2020 EDAC Meeting Minutes be approved as presented.

3. DELEGATIONS

a. Industrial Land Strategy – Altus Group

2021-03 Moved by Kelly J. Rose that the Industrial Land Strategy presentation be accepted as information.

4. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. Alberta's Red Tape Reduction Initiative - Walker

2021-04 Moved by Braven Blackwell that the EDAC members review and report back on potential recommendations which could be considered as part of Alberta's Red Tape Reduction initiative.

Moved by Anthony Worbeck to strike a standing committee for the red tape reduction recommendations

Moved by Kelly J. Rose to strike a task committee for the Industrial Land Strategy recommendations

Carried

b. Review of 2021 Annual Workplan – Stevenson

2021-05 Moved by Anthony Worbeck that the 2021 Annual Workplan be approved by EDAC as discussed.

That a member (Charlene Bell) of EDAC be appointed to present the 2021 Annual Workplan to Council.

Carried



c. 2020-2021 EDAC Meeting Schedule - Stevenson

Moved that the 2020-2021 Economic Development Advisory Committee schedule of meeting dates be approved as amended.

Carried

5. INFORMATION ITEMS

n/a

6. CLOSED SESSION

The Economic Development Advisory Committee did not go into Closed Session.

Chairperson Erin Stevenson declared the meeting adjourned at 8:39 pm.

CHAIRPERSON – ERIN STEVENSON

RECORDING SECRETARY



ITEM DESCRIPTION:

3. DELEGATIONS

- a. Edmonton Global Presentation – Malcolm Bruce, CEO of Edmonton Global

PROPOSED MOTION:

That Malcolm Bruce of Edmonton Global be thanked for his presentation.

BACKGROUND:

Malcolm Bruce will make a presentation about the role and activities of Edmonton Global and provide a better understanding of the integration with the regional municipalities. This will help raise the profile of Edmonton Global in Spruce Grove and how their efforts contribute to our shared economic development goals.

The presentation will be approximately 30 minutes including times for questions and discussion.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

n/a

ATTACHMENTS:

n/a



Economic Development Advisory Committee

June 7, 2021

REQUEST FOR DECISION

ITEM DESCRIPTION:

4. BUSINESS ITEMS

- a. Red Tape Reduction Sub-Committee Presentation & Next Steps – Victor Moroz

PROPOSED MOTION:

That the Red Tape Reduction Presentation by the EDAC Sub-Committee be accepted as information.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

Alberta's Red Tape Reduction initiative aims to remove needless red tape by one-third to reduce costs, speed up approvals, and save time, money, and resources. These efforts will help to streamline processes and make life easier for workers and businesses in Alberta.

Municipalities are required to make measurable progress in at least one of the areas:

1. Make it easier to start-up a new business;
2. Streamline processes and shorten timelines for development and permit approvals; and
3. Make your municipality a more attractive destination for new investment and/or tourism.

Sub-committee members formulated a survey in response to the three questions in the preceding paragraph.

Respondents are told that this survey is being initiated by the Spruce Grove Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC), which was established by City Council to provide ongoing advice on business and economic development matters. EDAC recently established a sub-committee to look at opportunities for red tape reduction and policy changes, which could contribute to economic growth.

The Red Tape Reduction Sub-Committee recently launched this survey to their own sub-committee members to test the survey before wider distribution. The survey is now being extended to local developers and businesses to help identify potential areas for red tape reduction and policy changes. It is expected that the collective responses would help identify areas to stimulate investment and improve the business competitiveness in Spruce Grove. Individual responses to the survey will be confidential and will be used to help the Sub-Committee develop a report with recommendations to Council.



Economic Development Advisory Committee

June 7, 2021

REQUEST FOR DECISION

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

n/a

ATTACHMENTS:

City of Spruce Grove Red Tape Reduction Report to GOA – February 2020
Copy of SurveyMonkey Questionnaire – May/June 2021



City of Spruce Grove

Red Tape Reduction Report

Submitted to the Alberta Government
February 2020

Red Tape Reduction Report – February 1st, 2020

1. Please indicate any steps your municipality has taken to reduce red tape in 2020.

a) Make it easier to start up a new business.

- a) Implement incentives to encourage new businesses.
- b) Streamline or speed up processes for obtaining a business licence.
- c) Review the process for establishing a business and eliminate any unnecessary municipal requirements
- d) Work with neighbouring municipalities to establish common business licensing systems, or recognize business licences from other Alberta municipalities.
- e) Establish a paperless process for business licence applications, and/or an option for electronic payment of application fees.
- f) Create a section on the municipality's website providing information on how to start a business, including municipal licensing requirements and application forms, process documents, and/or other guidance documents.
- g) Review and evaluate municipal regulatory requirements to limit and mitigate unintended impacts on small business.
- i) Commentary:
 - Feedback from engagement with its business community has transformed the way businesses can obtain and maintain licenses, find relevant information on starting a business and leverage technology to effect red tape reduction.
 - As of 2020:
 - The City charges a one-time fee for a licence when a business is established with no further charges for renewal if completed in January of each year on-line;
 - The business licence process is paperless including renewal notices and other communications;
 - The City offers a tri municipal business license allowing the business to operate in the Town of Stony Plain , the City of Spruce Grove and Parkland County; and
 - Information on starting a business is available on the City's website along with license application forms and contact numbers.
 - The City has identified further efficiencies to implement by commencing to implement CityView, an online application that supports the City's licensing and permitting processes. CityView will allow for enhanced data gathering, transparency and performance monitoring of these processes. This implementation is expected to be complete by fall of 2021.
- h) Other - Support for Young Entrepreneurs and business Start-ups
- i) Commentary:

- The City promotes young entrepreneurs and start-ups through subsidizing participation in the public markets run by the City Centre Business Association, promoting Shop Local in collaboration with the Chamber and City Centre Business Association, and providing access to information on business and management assistance programs, and digital marketing.

b) Streamline processes and shorten timelines for development and permit approvals.

- Establish internal targets for issuing subdivision application decisions that are faster than legislated timelines
- Establish internal targets for issuing development permit decisions that are faster than legislated timelines.
- Prepare process summaries and checklists of required materials for subdivision and development permit applications.
- Update the municipal website to clearly communicate subdivision and development permit approval processes.
- Establish an online application process for subdivision and development applications.
- Establish an electronic payment system for subdivision and development permit applications.
- Commentary:
 - As of 2020
 - The City has a development permit decision performance target. For new residential development, the metric is 28 days including the building permit pre-screen, lot grading approval, development permit issuance and building permit issuance;
 - The City produces process summaries and checklists of required materials for subdivision and development permit applications;
 - The City's website includes the necessary information regarding subdivision and development permit approval processes;
 - The CityView implementation will establish an on-line application system for all planning applications, not just subdivision and development applications as well as an electronic payment system for all planning applications.

g) Other

- The following is a list of policy and process changes that were initiated by the City of Spruce Grove's Planning and Development Department in 2020 to streamline processes and shorten timelines:
 - Building Permits - The City's Permit Clerk became responsible to complete the residential building permit application completeness reviews, freeing the Safety Codes Officers' time for permit issuance and inspections resulting in a reduction in permit issuance timelines by 1 day.
 - Building Permits - The City's Development Service Clerks became qualified to issue same day small residential building permits, i.e., decks, basement development, reducing permit issuance timelines for small permits by approximately 5 days.

- Building Permits - The City implemented Alberta Municipal Affairs' change to no longer require municipal pre-assessment for relaxation of barrier-free requirements. The building permit applicant may now apply directly to the Alberta Municipal Affairs for a relaxation of barrier-free requirements, cutting the approval timeframe by at least two weeks.
- Building Permits - The City implemented a process change for new residential construction allowing builders to start construction of the foundation prior to the building permit being issued, upon request as long as the Development Permit has been issued, the builder is in good standing with the CHBA, and they assume responsibility and liability for any issues that arise during the issuance of the building permit. The commencement of foundation construction prior to issuance of the building permit saves a builder approximately one week.
- Land Use Bylaw Redistricting - The City implemented a process change whereby a signed development agreement is no longer required prior to 3rd reading of a redistricting bylaw, as long as an approved outline plan and engineering brief are in place. This change streamlines the development process and reduces developers' initial financial outlay. Timeline savings is dependent on developer action.
- Planning, Development, Building and Engineering - The City instituted pre-application meetings with proponents of commercial, industrial and multi-parcel and multi-family residential developments, where all affected City departments and sub-departments are represented, to discuss potential concerns, application requirements and infrastructure needs. These meetings potentially save weeks of application processing time for responsive proponents.
- Planning and Development Administration - The City's Planning and Development Department implemented a new administrative procedure whereby all incoming communication to the Administration team and outgoing responses have been centralized in one folder. With the entire admin team having access to the communication, the timeline for follow up on action items and enquiries has reduced by an average of 1 hour.

h) Other - Revamped Economic Development Advisory Committee

- The Business Advisory Group, which provides advice and recommendations to Council, was reformed in 2020 to expand business representation and refocus the mandate to include issues such as red tape reduction.

c) Make your municipality a more attractive destination for new investment and/or tourism.

- a) Partner with neighbouring municipalities to promote investment and economic development opportunities at a regional level.
- b) Develop and implement asset management policies, plans, and strategies to ensure infrastructure supports long-term economic growth.
 - i) Commentary:
 - Approval of City Centre Area Redevelopment Plan – this plan sets out a clear policy framework intended to support reinvestment and business start-ups and expansion in the City Centre.
 - Industrial Land Strategy – this strategy was completed in 2020 to address the shortage of serviced industrial land in Spruce Grove. The City will be looking at ways to incentivize and reduce costs for developers to bring on new industrial lands which would improve our competitiveness in retaining and attracting investment.
 - Integration with Edmonton Global – Edmonton Global has taken over sole responsibility in the metro region for foreign direct investment and export market development. The City is working with them to streamline the investment referral process and adopt compatible Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems. This approach is intended to support the City's investment competitiveness and create a seamless interface with Global.
- c) Other -The Municipality has developed a Recovery Framework that includes a focus on Economic Development to sustain the business community through the pandemic and post pandemic.

2. How do you plan to measurably reduce red tape in 2021?

- a) Make it easier to start up a new business.
- b) Streamline processes and shorten timelines for development and permit approvals.
 - The City will implement the CityView application. This application is the end product of a project that will have evaluated all current processes and timelines regarding permit and license applications and processing. Statistical analysis of the data which will be available in CityView will gauge the amount of Red Tape reduction and the realized benefits.
 - Mobile Vending - The City is discussing a bylaw which would eliminate the requirement for a development permit approval for mobile vending (food trucks, etc.) on private property in certain land use districts and adds the opportunity for annual blanket approvals on public land. This change is expected to streamline the process by up to 21 days.

c) Make your municipality a more attractive destination for new investment and/or tourism.

- Fibre Optic Broadband Network – Council approved the first phase of a fibre optic network to serve the industrial and commercial areas and committed \$4.65 million for construction in 2021. This is critical infrastructure essential for retaining and attracting businesses and talent and reducing costs of service.
- High Load Corridor – started work in 2020 on a potential high load corridor from our industrial area to the provincial high load network. If established, this would reduce costs and inefficiencies for local industries and improve investment competitiveness in the region. The report will be completed in 2021 and will serve to obtain provincial government designation in order to connect Spruce Grove to the provincial High Load Corridor.
- City Centre Area Redevelopment Plan (CCARP) – Based on a multi-year project plan, the City expects to complete engineering design and begin construction on the first stage.

a) Other – Tri Municipal Regional Plan

The City is part of a project that will create a Tri Municipal Regional plan consisting of 9 sub-regional plans including topics such as economic development, competitiveness and infrastructure and service management. The aim of these plans is to identify opportunities for efficiencies and cost reductions as well as support a shared investment/shared benefit philosophy. This plan will be complete by summer of 2021.

d) How do you intend to measure the results of your actions? Include a brief description of your action(s), baseline data (your current state) and quantitative targets.

- The City will implement the CityView application. This application is the end product of a project that will have evaluated all current processes and timelines regarding permit and license applications and processing. Statistical analysis of the data which will be available in CityView will gauge the amount of Red Tape reduction and the realized benefits.
- The City will track new investment in the City through information from business licences and building permits.
- Together with our regional partners, the City will act on the Tri Municipal Regional plan recommendations.
- The City will bring the industrial land Strategy to Council to promote development and measure how much new industrial land is brought to market
- The City will measure foreign direct investment in Spruce Grove through the integration with Edmonton Global.

3. Is there anything else you wish to share about your municipality's efforts to reduce red tape, or your municipality's unique circumstances regarding red tape reduction?

2020 was marked by the ongoing pandemic and economic downturn. These conditions created unique circumstances under which the City responded and adjusted in a number of ways:

- Streamlined front counter services and experience without an observable decrease in service level.
- Increased the City's online presence and tools which allowed residents and business to interact virtually with City services.
- Implemented virtual Council meetings which resulted in increased governance participation by elected officials.
- Curated relevant information about support programs, COVID hygiene protocols, and City business through the City's website and social media accounts.
- Activated an EMA to streamline response activities and maintain oversight over the City functions.
- Seamlessly offered Utility and Tax penalty deferral options to 60 business applicants in 2020 with a total worth of \$3.049 million.



Red Tape Reduction Spruce Grove Survey

This survey is being initiated by the [Spruce Grove Economic Development Advisory Committee \(EDAC\)](#), which was established by City Council to provide ongoing advice on business and economic development matters. EDAC recently established a sub-committee to look at opportunities for red tape reduction and policy changes, which could contribute to economic growth.

The Red Tape Reduction Sub-Committee has launched this survey of developers and businesses to identify potential areas for red tape reduction and policy changes, which would help stimulate investment and improve the business competitiveness in Spruce Grove. Individual responses to the survey will be confidential and will be used to help the Sub-Committee develop a report with recommendations to Council.

1. Have you done development in Spruce Grove? If so, please check off the categories that apply:

- ☐ Residential
- ☐ Commercial
- ☐ Industrial
- ☐ N/A

2. What was your overall experience in obtaining information and approvals from the City for your project(s)?

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Satisfactory
- ☐ Needs Improvement
- ☐ Unsatisfactory
- ☐ No Opinion

Other: (please add comments)

3. Did you encounter any issues regarding municipal development standards? For example: site coverage, parking, zoning, etc. as set out in the Land Use Bylaw.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Comments: (please elaborate if issues were encountered)

4. Did you encounter any issues in the development approval process in obtaining permits, development agreements or other authorizations from the City?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Comments: (please elaborate if issues were encountered)

5. What suggestions do you have in how to streamline, or otherwise improve, the attractiveness of Spruce Grove as a place to invest?

Please specify:

6. Would you be open to receiving a call from a member of the Red Tape Reduction sub-committee to expand on your comments?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Contact Information:



Submit

Powered by



See how easy it is to [create a survey](#).

[Privacy & Cookie Policy](#)

Economic Development Advisory Committee

June 7, 2021

REQUEST FOR DECISION

ITEM DESCRIPTION:

4. BUSINESS ITEMS

- b. Industrial Land Strategy Sub-Committee Presentation & Next Steps – Anthony Worbeck

PROPOSED MOTION:

That the recommendations identified by the Industrial Land sub-committee be approved as presented and the presentation be accepted as information.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

The City contracted Altus Group to develop an Industrial Land Strategy to determine ways to increase the supply of serviced industrial land in Spruce Grove. This was presented to Council on January 18, 2021. The strategy set out a series of recommendations which have been categorized into two broad approaches.

The first approach aims to incentivize investment from existing and new industrial land owners and developers through a combination of regulatory changes. The second approach requires the City to take a more direct role in the development and marketing of industrial lands.

The City is working with the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) in prioritizing these recommendations and determining how best to move forward with implementation. To support this process, a sub-committee was formed and identified a number of recommendations they believe the City should pursue. These include:

- Pursue partnership opportunities with new and existing industrial land developers/owners;
- Establish a dedicated high-load corridor for Spruce Grove (advocate for 628 and support the Jennifer Heil Way route);
- Develop a Concept Plan and Market Assessment for the City-owned 18-acre industrial site;
- Investigate the potential of separate land use districts (business parks vs. industrial parks);
- Include Fibre-optics as an engineering standard;
- Improvement of 'quality of place' amenities in the business parks (sidewalks/pathways to support walkability/safety);

In addition to the recommendations in the Altus report, the sub-committee recommends that the City look at options for a separated grade crossing for the CN line.

Following the presentation to EDAC by the sub-committee, discussion around next steps will take place. This could either be:

- Approve the recommendations of the sub-committee as presented and forward to City Council or;
- Develop a more detailed report which provides context and advice on the recommendations and bring this back to EDAC for approval, prior to forwarding to City Council.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:
n/a
ATTACHMENTS:
Industrial Land Strategy Summary Report

Industrial Land Strategy - Altus Group

Summary of Options

SUMMARY OF OPTIONS

Spruce Grove is forecast to need to increase its supply of serviced industrial lands if it is to remain viable as a location for new industrial development by ensuring an adequate supply of available serviced industrial lands over the short, medium and long term.

The options presented have been categorized into two broad approaches that the City can consider in increasing the supply of serviced industrial land.

Details of the following options and actions are found in Section 9 of the report.

Approach One: Incentivize investment in Spruce Grove by existing and new industrial land developers through a combination of policy and regulatory changes to enhance the business case for developing industrial lands.

Policy-related Options

- Place a Priority on the Intensification of Vacant and Underutilized Industrial Lands.
- Place a Priority on Increasing the Amount of Serviced Industrial Land to Maintain a 10-Year Supply on a Moving Basis.
- Ensure that Development Costs Set by the City are Competitive with Other Jurisdictions.
- Enhance City Building Policies in all Planning Documents.

Incentive-related Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streamline the Industrial Development Approvals Process. • Review Non-residential Municipal Tax Rates for Industrial Properties, and the potential application of Bill 7 Incentives. • Evaluate Further Opportunities to Defer Front-End Costs for Industrial Land Development.
Land Use Planning & Infrastructure related Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place Focus on Higher Assessment Development. • Ensure a Full Range of Parcel Sizes are Available in Industrial Parks from 1 to 25 Acres (0.4 to 10 hectares). • Establish Separate Land Use Districts for Business Parks versus Industrial Parks.
Land Development related Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require that Fibre Optics be Added as an Engineering Standard. • Require Best Practice Design and Layout of New Industrial Parks. • Create a High Load Corridor to Connect with Highway 60. • Improve the Services/Amenities for Employees / Commercial and Complimentary Land Uses in Industrial Parks.
Marketing & Promotion related Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Edmonton Global, Commercial Realtors and Site Selectors to Increase the Awareness of Spruce Grove as an Industrial Player. • Undertake Joint Marketing Initiatives in Partnership with Industrial Land Developers. • Leverage Partnership and Catalyst Opportunities with NAIT.

Approach Two: All the options in Approach One apply to Approach Two; however, this approach takes the additional step of having the City take a more direct role in the acquisition and development of serviced industrial land.

Taking the Initiative/Lead on Pre-development Requirements

- Identify which lands are appropriate and suitable for this initiative;
- Identify which studies the City should undertake. These may include Area Structure Plans; Concept Plans; Re-designation of lands; Site Servicing and Infrastructure Reports; Storm Drainage Plans; and, Traffic Impact Assessments;
- Identify reimbursement mechanism, or if this is something the City will fund.
- Prepare a long-range plan for the development of industrial lands within the City including proposed annexation lands and associated infrastructure requirements; and,
- Complete projects in a phased approach as to direct industrial expansion.

Partnerships with Private Developers in the Servicing and Marketing of Lands

- Engage with existing Spruce Grove developers and other industrial land developers active within the region on their interest in investing in industrial land development in Spruce Grove – potentially in a venture involving the City.
- Investigate targeted infrastructure investment opportunities (i.e. roads, services, power sub-stations, etc.) where the City realizes a benefit. This would be similar to the extension of Tamarack Drive to attract a major new facility on 11 acres of land.
- Consider opportunities to option lands for future development where opportunities exist to accelerate timing or secure potentially interested developers.
- Undertake a request for proposals for the development of the city owned 18-acre industrial land parcel adjacent to the Public Works site using a similar approach as Westwind Centre and Tri-Leisure Village.
- The partially serviced land in Campsite, greenfield land south of Tamarack Drive in South Century, and vacant land in Public Works Quarter would be good opportunities to partner with developers considering a level of servicing and infrastructure currently exists.

Assuming the Role of Sole Developer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to monitor, review and update estimate construction costs and revenue analyses for Spruce Grove industrial lands, based on future market conditions. • Conduct detailed business case for the development and marketing of serviced industrial lands. • Engage through tender the potential design, planning, construction and development team to work on behalf of the City. • Potentially start with 18 acres of vacant land already owned by City. • Hold discussions with key stakeholders and existing land owners in Spruce Grove to gauge industry and market support, and determine potential partnerships.
Cost Model Feasibility Results	<p>Costs of Bringing on New Industrial Lands: According to the construction cost estimates and cost model applied to a new 125.2 net acre industrial park subdivision, the cost per net saleable acre of developing serviced industrial lands in Spruce Grove are approximately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$275,800 per net saleable acre for urban industrial development standards; and • \$233,900 per net saleable acre for rural industrial development standards. • These cost estimates include fibre optic servicing, which contributes approximately \$6,780 per net saleable acre. <p>Estimated Required Viable Land Price: The revenue analysis conducted for the proposed 125.2 net acre industrial park projected that given the stated assumptions, serviced industrial lands in Spruce Grove would need to be priced at least:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$370,000 - \$375,000 per acre for industrial lands developed to urban standards; and • \$315,000 - \$320,000 per acre for industrial lands developed to rural standards.



Economic Development Advisory Committee June 7, 2021

REQUEST FOR DECISION

ITEM DESCRIPTION:

5. INFORMATION ITEMS

- a. Westwind Video by Mayor & Council – Dave Walker

PROPOSED MOTION:

That the Westwind video be accepted as information.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

City Council prepared a video titled Westwind Land Development that was presented at the 2021 Economic Developers of Alberta (EDA) Xperience Conference & Summit held on May 19 & 20. The topic was “How Partnerships Can Drive Innovative Approaches to Economic Development”.

The video showcases the unique approach the City took in securing a joint venture partnership to develop the Westwind area from what was a number of privately owned acreages into a consolidated commercial and residential hub.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

n/a

ATTACHMENTS:

n/a



Economic Development Advisory Committee June 7, 2021

REQUEST FOR DECISION

ITEM DESCRIPTION:

5. INFORMATION ITEMS

- b. Spring 2021 COVID Recovery Progress Report – Business Videos – Dave Walker

PROPOSED MOTION:

That the Business Video Series be accepted as information.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

As part of the COVID recovery process, Spruce Grove developed its Spring 2021 COVID Recovery Report. The purpose of this report is to provide a progress update to Council and the community around key focus areas that have emerged, inform on activities undertaken to date, identify potential opportunities for mid- to long-term recovery efforts, and more immediate next steps on the path to recovery. The report was presented to City Council on May 17, 2021.

The report highlights a number of initiatives the City has undertaken to support local businesses and community groups as they work through the recovery process. These include engaging with businesses to help them navigate and better understand the myriad of COVID-19 support and recovery programs, participating in Shop Local programs the Alberta Red Tape Reduction initiative.

Recently, the City developed a series of short videos featuring local businesses impacted by COVID. These videos provide a better understanding about how the pandemic has impacted their operations and what innovative approaches they are taking to remain viable. The businesses featured include:

- Wilhawk Beef Jerkey
- Ward School of Dance
- Porta Romana
- Talking Dog Brewery

This video series also features not-for-profit groups that showcase how they are providing much needed support to the community during the lockdown and throughout the recovery process. These include:

- Project Joy
- Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Community Church



These videos will be posted on the City website and available through You Tube.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

n/a

ATTACHMENTS:

Spring 2021 COVID Recovery Progress Report

To inform on key focus areas that have emerged along this journey, identify activities taken to date, and recognise opportunities for future recovery efforts.

Spruce Grove COVID – 19 Recovery

Spring 2021 Progress Report



Spring 2021 Progress Report

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	2
Introduction	3
A Word on Resilience	3
What We've Learned	4
Economic and Financial Stability.....	4
Mental Health	5
Technology.....	6
Community Building.....	7
What We've Done.....	8
Looking to the Future.....	9
An Asset-Based Recovery.....	9
Opportunities for High Impact.....	9
Next Steps	10
Economic Stimulus and Innovation.....	10
Reinvesting in Social, Culture and Recreation	11
Community Capacity Building	11
Governance, Administration, and Recovery	12
Environmental Considerations.....	12
From Recovery to Adaptation.....	12
Conclusion.....	13
Appendix A: Activities Inventory – May 2021	14
Appendix B: Regional Business Impact and 3 rd Wave Restrictions Survey – May 2021	16
Appendix C – Sources.....	18

Spring 2021 Progress Report

Executive Summary

This report is not a strategic plan, rather it is an update document for Council on administration's activities and future plans supporting community recovery related to COVID – 19.

The City is cognizant of many effects the pandemic has had on residents and businesses – restricted social connections, shift to virtual work and school, employment loss, illness, even the tragic death of loved ones.

Yet throughout these challenges, exceptional resilience and innovation has been demonstrated as a community. Data, research and stakeholder engagement activities indicate that while challenged, overall people are continuing to persevere and are for the most part finding what they need to get through.

What has also emerged is that the pandemic has not affected everyone equally, and efforts have been made to identify these discrepancies. For example business vacancy rates fluctuate per sector – some have increased and some have decreased. Residential starts and improvements have increased because people are spending more time at home, at the same time housing affordability remains an issue for many in the rental market, particularly for those experiencing challenges before the pandemic.

Effects of the pandemic and response are complex and full impacts will emerge over time. Efforts of administration to date have focused on business retention and attraction, barrier-free access to social supports, community capacity building, and regional collaboration. Future short- to medium-term actions include:

1. *Digital Adoption Program for Business* - Supporting local businesses' transition to online platforms in order to utilize technology and increase competitiveness within a global market
2. *Community Recovery Grant Program* - Formalizing and expanding the scope of community grant opportunities to strengthen and diversify the social fabric necessary for a strong, vibrant, resilient community
3. *Environmental Sustainability* - Exploring opportunities for investment in clean energy and a healthy environment launched from the City's Greenhouse Gas Inventory and Analysis findings
4. *Social Procurement Policy* - Exploring sustainable procurement policy options that consider social, environmental and ethical impacts with economic considerations embedded within

And many more.

While there is still a tremendous amount of economic and social uncertainty before us, the City is preparing to transition into the next phase of recovery using a long-term planning horizon, incorporating lessons learned, defining principles, and setting desired outcomes. Although we may oscillate between the two stages of recovery and adaptation, defined principles and outcomes relating to this future state will guide our actions.

Spring 2021 Progress Report

Introduction

Without a doubt, 2020 was a year unlike any our community has ever experienced. And while there have been challenges, there is much to be proud of in our response to COVID-19. The purpose of this report is to provide a progress update to Council and the community around key focus areas that have emerged, inform on activities undertaken to date, identify potential opportunities for mid- to long-term recovery efforts, and more immediate next steps on the path to recovery.

A Word on Resilience

The impact of the pandemic has touched people in many ways – restricted social connections, shift to virtual work and school, employment loss, illness, or even the death of loved ones. Yet throughout these challenges we have demonstrated exceptional resilience and innovation as a community. Businesses are being supported through shop-local campaigns, and many have adapted to virtual platforms. Local not-for-profit community groups have stepped up to support vulnerable residents in accessing critical services and meeting basic needs, and large funding streams have been diverted to emergency response and recovery efforts on many levels.

Last fall the City engaged citizens in the form of the COVID-19 Public Engagement Survey. Data from the survey highlighted that many residents have been accessing a wide range of programs as a means of support, indicating that while challenged, people are continuing to persevere and are finding what they need to get through.

Throughout the pandemic, a magnitude of research has been conducted on many fronts in an effort to gain an understanding of the effects. A key finding is that while the pandemic is impacting all people, it is not doing so equally. While many have been managing and adapting, insight into the needs of those most vulnerable has highlighted how COVID-19 has widened previously existing inequities, and identifies opportunities to intentionally target programs and supports toward areas of greatest impact.



COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

The sustained ability of a community to use available resources to respond to, withstand, and recover from adverse situations.

- US Department of Health and Human Services

Spring 2021 Progress Report

What We've Learned

Economic and Financial Stability

The COVID-19 pandemic has had profound effects on the economy, and financial stability for business and residents remains a concern to many. Government programs and funding streams continue to provide critical supports in the short to medium terms; however, long-term impacts remain uncertain. The recent Federal budget extended several key COVID support programs to the end of September 2021.

There are economic signs that the business community is demonstrating resilience in responding to the very challenging conditions presented by COVID. This is not to downplay the impact on businesses in terms of closures, curtailments, and lay-offs. Rather it is about the ability to adapt and innovate with new ways to engage with their customers and accelerate the transition to online digital platforms. Many of these innovations will stay with us even after the end of the pandemic and will reshape many aspects of how business will be done going forward.

Despite the difficult circumstances, we continue to have projects move ahead and new businesses open, which speaks to the underlying optimism and strength that will get us through this period. Spruce Grove vacancy rates for commercial space have increased, but this tends to be a lagging indicator. Retail space vacancy rose from a very low 1.2% in Q1 2020 to 4.2% in Q1 2021, while office vacancy fell from 9.8% to 8.6% over the same period. A significant part of this has to do with national franchises closing their stores across Canada and with new commercial space coming on-stream in Spruce Grove. The industrial market has been relatively stable through this period with some lay-offs and coping with supply chain disruptions. Industrial space vacancy has actually declined from 7.2% to 3.2% from Q1 2020 to Q1 2021.

The total building permit value for the period of Jan-April 2021 (\$44 million) is double what it was for the same period in 2020 (\$24 million). The residential market continues to show surprising strength in new construction starts, improvements and real estate transactions. The total value of residential building permits increased from \$66.5 million in 2019 to \$73.7 million in 2020. This was driven by a spike in the value of home improvements. At the same time, the number of starts for single detached and semi-detached homes increased from 188 in 2019 to 210 in 2020. We are seeing a continuation of this trend into 2021 with 85 starts in Q1 2021 compared to 61 starts in Q1 2020. The average selling price for single detached homes increased by 7.4% between March 2019 and March 2021 to a value of \$412,038 with the number of sale transactions more than doubling.

The City has worked with the Greater Parkland Regional Chamber of Commerce and City Centre Business Association to track the impact of COVID-19 on our businesses. This includes periodic surveys and other virtual engagement opportunities. See Appendix B for key results of the business survey undertaken in late April/early May 2021.

Spring 2021 Progress Report

From the survey responses, 70% reported no layoffs but 46% reported reduced hours. 21% reported employee absences due to childcare requirements. 65% either remained working at their business premises or have all since returned. Less than 2% indicated they will remain home-based and will give up commercial space. 39% are making normal or better than normal revenue while 44% are making less than half of normal revenue. Economic development programs and support for local businesses were rated as having the highest level of importance for recovery efforts. The top business support programs reported are the Canada Emergency Business Account at 45% of respondents and Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy at 41%.

The results show that notwithstanding the overall resiliency of the economy, the impact on businesses has been uneven especially in the retail, personal service and hospitality sectors which have taken the brunt of the COVID-19 restrictions. At the household level, the Social Impacts of COVID-19 November 2020 report estimates that 53% of households in Spruce Grove accessed COVID-19 support programs and resources with the Canada Emergency Response Benefit being the primary benefit utilized.

Housing affordability remains an issue for many, with residents experiencing challenges prior to the pandemic continuing to find themselves in core housing need. Pre-COVID-19 data indicate that one in every five renter households in our City is in core housing need mainly due to affordability, with younger households, lone parents, and singles (including seniors) being affected the most. Based on low-income measure after tax (LIM-AT), approximately 2,140 Spruce Grove residents are experiencing poverty. Insight into exacerbating effects of the pandemic such as increased cost of lumber and diminishing rental vacancy rates for low-income residents will begin to emerge over time.

Mental Health

Influences of COVID-19 and public health measures on the mental health of citizens are substantive, and as in other areas, impacts will take time to be fully understood. According to the Morneau Shepell January 2021 Mental Health Index report, financial stressors and social isolation are often identified as the strongest drivers of mental health. Stable employment and earning a living wage are central to offsetting the risk of declining mental health. Last fall, 73% of Spruce Grove Recovery Survey respondents indicated that support for mental health and addressing social isolation is important, and a recent Greater Parkland Regional Chamber of Commerce survey indicates 37% of business owners report struggling with psychological issues resulting from COVID-19.

The Morneau Shepell January 2021 Mental Health Index report identified Albertans as having the lowest Mental Health Index Score in Canada while Newfoundland and Labrador remain strongest.

Research suggests that although everyone is impacted, individuals with the least bargaining power tend to experience the greatest impact. Women, single-child families, young adults, and individuals experiencing reduced salary tend to report the lowest mental health scores, while men, multi-child families, older adults, and self-employed/sole proprietors tend to rank higher in comparison. Other groups experiencing unique impacts include People of Colour and Newcomers, due to language barriers

Spring 2021 Progress Report

and discrimination related to racism. As of 2021, there are an estimated 3,635 people in Spruce Grove with visible minority status, and 8.41% of Spruce Grove's population are immigrants.

Pre-existing issues around mental health, addictions and suicide appear to be aggravated as a result of the pandemic. Last July more opioid deaths were recorded than in any other month in Alberta's history. Suicide-related calls to Alberta crisis centres increased in 2020; however, preliminary data suggests that suicide deaths for the year are below average. The full picture of how COVID-19 impacted suicide rates will take time to understand.

The pandemic has also resulted in inspired changes or unanticipated benefits for some, such as improved personal relationships and physical health. Those who specify a positive change in their social lives or improvement in personal relationships also tend to have higher mental health scores indicating the importance of positive social connections.

The ability to maintain social connections in innovative ways, such as checking in by phone, texting, video calls, or through social media platforms, is a significant determinant of mental health. Much information on how to access mental health supports, avoid social isolation, manage stress and anxiety, reduce stigma, and support mental wellness is readily available; however, local data on the health of our community is limited, and an opportunity exists to build on this collectively to gain more meaningful insight as the full impacts of the pandemic unfold.

Technology

Social distancing requirements resulting from COVID-19 created the need for even the most resolute to digitalize their practices. What began as frantic improvisation quickly escalated to being essential in areas such as remote work, service delivery, accessibility, education, and social connectivity.

Remote work has now become mainstream. As a result, investments for larger spaces are expected to decline, and geographical locations are no longer a barrier to hiring talented people. Local businesses and service providers have adapted quickly to the pandemic by pivoting service delivery methods utilizing technology, and the City's Fibre Optic Broadband Strategy will provide an initial foundation to deliver a variety of essential services to residents digitally. Smart City technologies such as sensor networks, intelligent transportation and traffic management systems depend on Broadband infrastructure, and investing in affordable high speed internet services will be more important than ever in supporting the success of industrial and commercial businesses.

When digital becomes essential in a crisis, digital exclusion becomes a crucial factor with significant consequences, particularly for vulnerable populations who do not have access to the internet or devices such as smart phones, tablets, or computers. Elderly and low-income households are particularly at risk for digital exclusion. Local activities such as Project Joy were launched as a local response, providing a mechanism for isolated seniors to connect with family members through technology during the pandemic. Local organizations came together to offer Tech Drives to provide residents with access to laptops and Wi-Fi when public building closures exacerbated pre-existing barriers to services requiring

Spring 2021 Progress Report

technology, and initiatives such as HelpSeeker and SeniorConnect provided needed options for community supports through technology. Expanding use of technology opens opportunities for connections, breaks down transportation barriers to access services, and offers innovative ways to deliver expanded options to access services that will remain feasible as lockdowns ease.

Interrupted educational opportunities and differential access to virtual and distance learning have impacted many and may initially increase existing educational disparities for children and youth. However, as online education systems normalize and grow, an increase in the reach, accessibility, and affordability of education can be expected as well.

The need to understand current and long-term impacts of COVID-19 has fuelled the necessity for innovative and comprehensive data supported by technology. At the same time, the rapid development and execution of technological projects has identified the importance of ethics and privacy preservation, key factors in trust building, which directly impacts the viability of any technical solution. The City has an opportunity to invest in technology and space for community to access it in order to collect and utilize data through ethical and transparent practices that inform on service uptake and support informed decisions that benefit residents and businesses. Technology will continue to play a key role in recovery on many fronts.

Community Building

During these times, innovative community connections and capacity building have been more important than ever with individuals, associations, not for profits, and businesses continuing to seek out opportunities to contribute their gifts and skills to care for each other and the community.

There are approximately 159 not-for-profit organizations in Spruce Grove. A primary area of concern identified within this sector relating to the pandemic is the mental strain on staff, particularly within those organizations whose mandate is to offer supports to vulnerable populations. More complex environments with decreasing resources means increased demand for services with lessened capacity. Challenges with adjusting to technology needs and difficulty understanding the Alberta Health operating guidelines have been identified as primary challenges for this sector as well.

Despite the challenges, there remains a strong commitment to staying the course and maintaining a spirit of resiliency expressed through the desire to connect and help others. Knowledge-sharing, research, and opportunities to partner in new ways on solutions to emerging issues through collective impact has remained strong.

Sharing knowledge among community members allows us to continue building strong community ties and fosters hope and resilience. The City continues to support many organizations in this regard through hosting collaborative tables such as the Critical Connections Interagency and launching an email software called Constant Contact as a mechanism to stay connected and share information with community groups to support resiliency. Work continued to advance on issues such as poverty and homelessness through collective impact with the evolution of Hope & Home, grass roots initiatives such

Spring 2021 Progress Report

as Project Joy emerged to support social connections for seniors and other community-based programs were launched through FCSS recovery grants.

Local actions to help individuals experiencing homelessness navigate barriers to health care and safe isolation spaces were strengthened and expanded through the Community Winter Emergency Response. The Parkland Regional Chamber of Commerce and the City Centre Business Association have emerged with a strong, unified voice for the regional business community.

What We've Done

The City has taken an active role in helping businesses navigate the myriad of COVID-19 support and recovery programs available through the federal and provincial governments. These programs have been instrumental in helping many businesses survive and maintain employment levels. The City has actively engaged with businesses to increase awareness of what support is available and assisting them in determining eligibility and how to apply.

Another role for the City has been to work with the Greater Parkland Regional Chamber of Commerce and the City Centre Business Association in promoting Shop Local initiatives. This campaign has been highly successful as residents have stepped up to support local businesses. The City's involvement included an active role on social media, advertising, local event sponsorships, shop local website support, advocacy partnerships and other targeted measures.

The City has also participated in the Alberta Red Tape Reduction Initiative. This is intended to streamline approval processes, reduce the cost of doing business and eliminate barriers to new investment and business start-ups. The City submitted its first annual report to the Alberta government in February 2021 which sets out the initiatives undertaken over the past year and those that are in process. The cumulative effect is to encourage business investment and ensure that our City remains a competitive business centre. This will contribute to a positive investment climate coming out of COVID-19.

Efforts have been made by the City to provide social, recreation and culture opportunities that align with social gathering restrictions. Continuous adaptation to the changing public health requirements enables safe community access to facilities like the Agrena and BPAC and access to open spaces such as outdoor arenas and in the summer, Jubilee Spray Park. Virtual versions of programs and events such as Canada Day and mental wellness programming for youth have been well received. Innovative opportunities to reinvest and relaunch efforts in this area as public health restrictions ease will continue to be explored.

The City has also been providing leadership to continue bringing community groups together to collectively address social based issues exacerbated by the pandemic, such as expansion of the Spruce Grove Winter Emergency Response, the Tri-Regional Homelessness and Poverty Change Initiative (Champions' Table) and Critical Connections Interagency of service providers.

Spring 2021 Progress Report

Other community capacity-building activities include disbursement of community grants to organizations supporting vulnerable populations by addressing needs such as food security, social isolation, mental health, and domestic violence. Comprehensive research assessing implications to social health as a resource for community decision-makers through the pandemic has also been offered, as have modified direct programs and services assisting residents with various levels of system navigation to connect with the help they need. Ongoing awareness campaigns to communicate available supports, development of activities to support vulnerable residents, and supporting community safety efforts have been ongoing and will continue.

Environmental stewardship continues to be an important strategy to focus on community health and recovery. The City is undertaking a number of initiatives to reduce our carbon footprint, such as a detailed greenhouse gas (GHG) emission report, a bylaw banning single use items, and an upcoming Climate Change Action Plan.

In 2020, with the onset of COVID-19, the City implemented a tax and utility deferral program to support residents struggling financially. Administration will continue to monitor the needs of residents in this area to provide the most appropriate support possible.

For a comprehensive listing of activities undertaken by the City, see Appendix A.

Looking to the Future

An Asset-Based Recovery

Utilizing an asset-based approach to recovery means building upon work already underway for sustainable change, allowing and providing opportunities for residents and organizations to contribute their unique gifts and skills towards caring for the community, and identifying areas where the City can intentionally focus attention and investment for the greatest impact. When community resilience is at work, residents and organizations demonstrate the ability to unite community resources and collaborate to take collective action. Moving forward, we will utilize our existing people, organizations, skills, and assets (both tangible and intangible) to achieve community recovery while reducing our need to create or invest in new assets.

Opportunities for High Impact

A focus of our forward-thinking recovery efforts needs to be identifying the areas of highest impact that we can influence. Appendix C highlights a list of recommendations from the federal government contained within the Chief Public Health Officer's Report on the State of Public Health. Key learnings from this report can be applied to City plans. Specifically, we should focus on:

- Economic security and employment conditions
- Stable housing and healthy built environment
- Health, social service, and education systems

Spring 2021 Progress Report

- Environmental sustainability

Additionally, some foundational requirements for structural change are presented in this report that should be adopted within City operations:

- Embracing a culture of inclusion
- Data understanding and decision-making
- Communication
- Collaboration

Next Steps

Efforts of administration and community partners to date have focused on business retention and attraction, barrier-free access to social supports, community capacity building, and regional collaboration. Future focus will continue on this track, while expanding to include:

- *Digital Adoption Program for Business* - Supporting local businesses' transition to online platforms in order to utilize technology and increase competitiveness within a global market
- *Social Procurement Policy* - Exploring sustainable procurement policy options that consider social, environmental and ethical impacts with economic considerations embedded within.
- *Community Recovery Grant Program* - Formalizing and expanding the scope of community grant opportunities to strengthen and diversify the social fabric necessary for a strong, vibrant, resilient community
- *Environmental Sustainability* - Exploring opportunities for investment in clean energy and a healthy environment launched from the City's Greenhouse Gas Inventory and Analysis findings

A more detailed breakdown of the City's next steps is shown in the following subsections:

Economic Stimulus and Innovation

The City has approved or is planning several major capital and operating initiatives that will not only contribute to the long-term growth of the community, but will provide significant economic stimulus in helping the local economy recover from COVID-19:

- Implementation of the City Centre Area Redevelopment Plan with construction budgeted at \$10.5M between 2021 and 2023.
- Build-out of a fibre optic broadband network in the industrial and commercial areas budgeted at \$4.6M to be completed in 2021.
- Next steps in developing an implementation plan for the Industrial Land Strategy to increase the supply of serviced industrial land for future economic growth.
- Approval to undertake preliminary design for a Civic Centre which if given final approval will proceed to construction in 2022 with a budget in the range of \$45-49M.

Spring 2021 Progress Report

- Additional funding committed to Edmonton Global over the next three years to increase investment attraction and export development efforts for the metro region.

Another initiative under consideration by the City is a Digital Adoption Program aimed at small business. The business community has been adapting to challenges and innovating their business models but many businesses need help in transitioning to online digital platforms which are expected to sustain past the pandemic. By the end of May, the Alberta government in collaboration with Business Link is expected to announce a Digital Economy Program across Alberta. It is still unclear whether it will be administered through municipalities or Business Link. This in combination with the 2021 Federal Budget's Canada Digital Adoption Program may provide a source of funding or direct access to mentoring services.

Reinvesting in Social, Culture and Recreation

Several innovative projects, programs, and initiatives are either currently or soon-to-be underway to support improved physical, mental, and social wellbeing of residents:

- Decision to proceed with the Civic Centre preliminary design project explores merged investment in sports and recreation with arts and culture, and if approved will sustainably address several recreation and culture needs within the community.
- Exploration of reimagined culture and recreation programming will allow for increased synergies and transformational service delivery to enhance the wellbeing and quality of life of residents in new ways.
- FCSS is conducting a core program review to determine the most effective means of meeting the changing social needs of vulnerable residents through prevention as we continue to move through the pandemic and into future recovery, analysis is expected to continue in 2021 with phased implementation in 2022.
- The Block Party Program has always been an important means for healthy neighbourhood connections, and with the onset of COVID in 2020, the program was suspended. In 2021, the City is launching a modified version of the Block Party Program as a part of intentional recovery efforts to encourage and support safe social connections for neighbours that align with Provincial Health guidelines. The program is expected to launch once enhanced public health restrictions are lifted.

Community Capacity Building

Investing in the important work of non-profits has and will continue to be a priority in recovery efforts as we shift to adaptability.

- In 2020 the City launched a local FCSS Recovery grant to support non-profits delivering preventative social programs to vulnerable residents. In 2021, the City will again offer the grant which is expected to launch in summer. The grant supports local organizations offering preventative social services and programs in the areas of social well-being and isolation, support to vulnerable populations, and neighbour connections as part of recovery efforts.

Spring 2021 Progress Report

- Domestic violence remains a concern for communities including our own, and with the economic and social, and psychological stressors experienced by many paired with lockdown requirements of the pandemic, the need for supports is heightened. The City offers a grant to organizations supporting victims, children exposed, and treatment services for offenders. The grant is expected to open calls for applications in fall 2021.
- Sustainable community investment is important for intentional results. As part of future adaptation, the City is looking to expand and build on current grant opportunities by creating a progressive Community Grant Program to replace long standing public submission process. The program is being developed in 2021 and is expected to launch in 2022.
- The City has continued to provide leadership, education, and opportunities for connections and shared learning throughout the pandemic to support community recovery. In 2021 the City launched a quarterly series of workshops entitled Non-Profit Capacity Conversations; the most recent topic being Adapting to Changing Restrictions. Topics for discussion are identified by community participants and will evolve with the changing needs as we move towards adaptation.

Governance, Administration, and Recovery

- Sustainable procurement is about leveraging social value from existing purchasing power that helps to shape healthy, inclusive, and vibrant communities. The City is currently exploring procurement policy options that consider social, environmental and ethical impacts with economic considerations embedded within.
- The Community Inclusion Initiative, approved in the Corporate Plan 2021-2023, builds upon the groundwork done by the Measuring Municipal Inclusion Project. The primary focus for 2021 will continue to be internal administration capacity development and integration of EDI into practices, policies, and program/ service delivery. Foundational work will be developed for the governance items (e.g. drafts of policy developed) for presentation and approval to City Council after the election.

Environmental Considerations

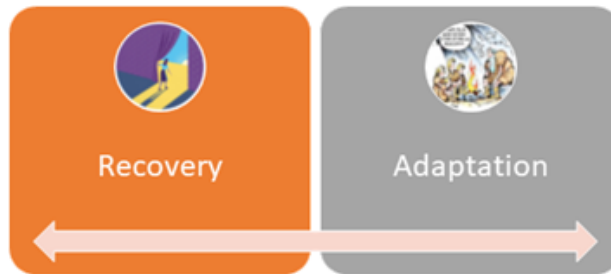
- As the City works through the development of the Climate Change action Plan, future initiatives will be identified to further support a green recovery for the City.
- Moving through the various recovery programs, consideration will be given to the environmental impacts of these actions, just as the social and economic impacts will be considered. The City understands that recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic is an opportunity to build and grow a green, healthy, and vibrant community.

From Recovery to Adaptation

While there is still a tremendous amount of economic and social uncertainty, the City is looking to prepare for transition into the next stage of the pandemic recovery. This preparation will use a long-term planning horizon to incorporate lessons learned during the pandemic, define principles, and set desired outcomes. Although we may oscillate between the two stages, defining principles and outcomes

Spring 2021 Progress Report

of this future stage will guide our actions. Corporate activities that support this future adaptation stage can be articulated and promoted as part of the City's next steps.



Conclusion

Administration will continue to identify and implement intentional, impactful ways to address and support community recovery through ongoing stakeholder engagement, research and fiscal prudence. Programs and initiatives will continue to be recognized and implemented, and where identified, recommendations will be brought forward for Council consideration and approval.

Spring 2021 Progress Report

Appendix A: Activities Inventory – May 2021

Economic & Financial Stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red Tape Reduction actions to further the work of reducing red tape and increase business investment attractiveness. • Cancellation of previously approved tax 3.9% increase in 2020 resulting in \$1.6M savings for taxpayers • Options to defer utility and tax payments were offered to residents in 2020 • A Shop Local campaign was developed and continues to be promoted in support of local business • City Centre Area Redevelopment Plan approval to help guide redevelopment and revitalization of the City Centre • Recent completion of the Industrial Land Strategy to help plan and prepare for the development of new employment lands • Launching of Reaching Home Regional Housing Coordinator and Rent Subsidies to support housing accessibility and affordability needs for eligible residents • Increased capacity for case managers to support vulnerable residents accessing vital financial supports • Local FCSS Food Security - \$15,000 was provided to local not for profits to address food security needs through food vouchers during the pandemic • Adapted Community Volunteer Income Tax Program to a virtual model, targeting low-income residents to ensure ongoing receipt of financial benefits • Tri-Region Housing and Service Needs Estimate in partnership with Stony Plain FCSS and community partners to better understand housing needs of most vulnerable residents in Spruce Grove and the region • A Tri-Regional Municipal Housing Needs Assessment and proposed Strategy was developed within the Region resulting in public policy questions for future Council decision
Mental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offered and promoted additional barrier free counselling sessions to support with mental health resiliency and prevention • Virtual social programs targeting youth, adults and families promoting preventative mental wellness tools specific to a COVID environment • Facilitated access to social services and mental health supports for residents through comprehensive information and referral services, ongoing social media campaigns, and the City's webpage • Advocacy for community mental health programming through partnerships and involvement on the Youth Mental Health Coalition • Staged relaunch of recreation activities at designated indoor and outdoor facilities in adherence to health guidelines • Collaborated with schools to deliver a combination of virtual and face to face mental wellness programming for youth
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadband Strategy and Action plan to improve internet connectivity in commercial and industrial areas

Spring 2021 Progress Report

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launched HelpSeeker platform to empower residents in navigation of social and health services • Launched an accommodation plan to remove barriers to services for those who experience technology as a barrier • Launch of Constant Contact as a platform for connection with community partners for capacity building through information and support • Launch of new social media programming for innovative youth connections • Supported Project Joy funding through the Corporate Plan to reduce isolation of vulnerable seniors through technology • Transitioned to virtual service delivery model and remote work
Community Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local FCSS Recovery Grant - \$40,000 was provided to local not for profits in 2020 to deliver a range of social programming activities during the pandemic • Provincial FCSS Recovery Grant – an additional \$216,393 was funnelled into the community through Community Social Development to support local organizations providing food security and other services to vulnerable residents in the Tri-Region • Domestic Violence Grant - \$30,000 was provided to organizations supporting reduction of incidents of domestic violence • Council Contingency - \$27,000 to address basic needs and reduce barriers to mental health supports during the lockdown • Launch of Neighbour Network to provide online and in-person support for people interested in creating connections with their neighbours and within their neighbourhoods • Community Winter Emergency Response coordination and support resulting in expansion of community shelter hours during the lockdown • Planned and facilitated strategic planning sessions for community not for profits • Champion's Table evolution to Hope & Home - Tri-Municipal Poverty and Homelessness Reduction Change Initiative • Promotion of Senior Connect, a free online training program to educate residents on how to recognize and respond to seniors in need • Social Effects of COVID-19 Report Series developed and published as a resource for administration and community organizations responding to the pandemic and grant proposal development • Community Inclusion Initiative was launched to build on the work begun through the Measuring Municipal Inclusion project • Hosting of the Critical Connections Interagency to support service delivery to vulnerable residents through education and information sharing
Governance and Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed HR policy audit through EDI lens to support an inclusive workplace • Developed an equity lens to be applied to City programs and services to support inclusive access to programs, services and supports • Facility Inclusion/Accessibility Audit RFP

Spring 2021 Progress Report

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed and implemented GBA+ mandatory training for staff • Developed and implemented leadership competencies framework • Accommodation and relaunch planning and implementation • Internal technology infrastructure to ensure business continuity and effective service delivery to residents through the pandemic and subsequent lockdown • Completed Tri-Municipal Regional Plans for analysis and identification of opportunities for efficiencies and alignment across municipalities within the region • Launch of the Emergency Management Agency • Developing a Climate Change Action Plan to support environmental sustainability • Completed Greenhouse Gas Inventory and Analysis to better understand how the City is contributing to climate change • Passing of Single Use Item Reduction Bylaw to help reduce the amount of plastic contaminating the environment
--	---

Appendix B: Regional Business Impact and 3rd Wave Restrictions Survey – May 2021

The City of Spruce Grove has worked with the Greater Parkland Regional Chamber of Commerce and the City Centre Business Association (CCBA) to track the impact of COVID-19 on our businesses. This includes periodic surveys and other virtual engagement opportunities. Following are some key results from an early May 2021 survey:

- 46% of businesses have a physical presence in Spruce Grove
- Industry sectors mostly impacted:
 - 25% - Retail
 - 15% - Hospitality and Recreation
 - 10% - Construction
 - 9% - Health Care and Social Assistance
 - 8% - Finance and Insurance
 - 5% - Manufacturing
 - 3% - Real Estate Management
 - 3% - Scientific and Technology
 - 2% - Utilities
 - 1% - Transportation and Warehousing
 - 19% - "Other"
- Size of businesses mostly impacted:
 - 44% - businesses with 1-5 employees
 - 16% - Sole Proprietors
 - 13% - businesses with 11-25 employees
 - 13% - businesses with 6-10 employees
 - 10% - businesses with 26-50 employees
 - 4% - businesses with +51 employees
- 83% of businesses agree that in general, people around them are following public health recommendations
 - 44% - strongly agree
 - 39% - somewhat agree

Spring 2021 Progress Report

- 70% of businesses reported a total of 0 layoffs
- 46% of businesses had to reduce work hours
 - 20% - yes, me and my team
 - 15% - yes, just me
 - 11% - yes, my team
- 21% of businesses experienced employee absences due to childcare requirements
- 33% of businesses are somewhat still working remotely
 - 9% - yes, 80% of team
 - 8% - yes, just me
 - 7% - yes, 100% of team
 - 6% - yes, 50% of team
 - 3% - yes, 20% of team
- 60% of businesses experienced issues/delays with supply chain
- 48% of businesses report that they have less than a year until they run out of the cash needed to cover everyday expenses
 - 30% - less than 3 months
 - 13% - between 3-6 months
 - 5% - between 6 months and a year
- 28% of businesses are not at any risk in terms of running out of the cash needed to cover everyday expenses
- 44% of businesses are making less than half of their normal revenue
- 39% of businesses are making normal or better than normal revenue
- 61% of businesses feel that the provincial government is handling the pandemic badly
 - 32% - badly
 - 29% - very badly
- 73% of businesses have accessed at least one federal and/or provincial COVID-19 program for support. The most commonly accessed programs were/are:
 - 45% - Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA)
 - 41% - Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS)
 - 20% - Small and Medium Enterprise Relaunch Grant (SMERG)
 - 16% - Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy (CERS)
 - As of today, 93% of businesses are somewhat open
 - 71% - yes, fully open
 - 22% - yes, partially open due to COVID-19
- 41% of businesses desire advocacy support to other levels of government from local municipalities
- 59% of businesses desire advocacy support to other levels of government from their Chamber of Commerce
- 43% of businesses claimed that their biggest obstacle to COVID-19 business recovery is a slow return of customers
- 61% of business owners have been dealing with psychological health issues
- 49% of businesses think that the restrictions that have been put in place have gone too far
- 30% of business owners have already been vaccinated and 25% will get the vaccine once it is offered to them
- 27% of businesses are choosing not to get the vaccine when it will be offered to them

Spring 2021 Progress Report

Appendix C – Sources

- COVID-19 Recovery Survey, 2020, City of Spruce Grove
- Greater Parkland Regional Chamber of Commerce Surveys
- Social Impacts of COVID-19 Report Series, City of Spruce Grove
- Draft Recovery Framework, City of Spruce Grove
- The Mental Health Index Report Canada, January 2021, Morneau Shepell
- From Risk to Resilience: An Equity Approach to COVID – 19, Government of Canada
- A Guide for a Community-Based COVID-19 Recovery, Tamarack
- Alberta’s Recovery Plan, Government of Alberta