



INFORMATION ONLY COUNCIL REPORT

To: Paul Gipps, CAO

Date: November 24, 2020

From: John Perrott, Economic Development and
Tourism Manager

File No: 6750-30

Subject: **2021 Draft Economic Development and Tourism Operational Plan**

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to:

- 1) Provide Council with the 2021 Draft Economic Development and Tourism Operational Plan (the Plan); and
- 2) To seek Council's feedback into the draft Plan in preparation for a Council workshop in early 2021 and prior to Council adopting the final Plan.

STRATEGIC AREA(S) OF FOCUS

Economic Growth and Prosperity – support initiatives that promote the community's livability, local business growth, agriculture, wineries, natural beauty, amenities, rich culture, and other attributes that position West Kelowna as a place to live, invest, work, and play.

BACKGROUND

The Plan (Appendix A) outlines the services and activities to be completed by the Economic Development and Tourism Department in 2021 to support Council's priority of Economic Growth and Prosperity. As a draft, this Plan is anticipated to be updated following an economic development workshop with Council, anticipated for early 2021.

The development of this Plan has included input and feedback gathered to date by the Economic Development and Tourism Manager from Council's Economic Development Committee, as well as outreach and engagement with businesses and community leaders, City staff, and by reviewing Council's *Strategic Priorities (2020 – 2022)* document.

DISCUSSION

While 2020 got off to a traditional start with planned activities and typical engagement within the community, by mid-March activities were significantly disrupted due to the onset of COVID-19. For businesses in the community, direction from the Provincial Health Officer resulted in mandated closures of some businesses, office workers to work from

home, and the cancellation of business and leisure travel. The Economic Development and Tourism Department, like others throughout the province, had to identify how it could support all businesses in the community through this difficult time. Many traditional services and activities were paused or halted (e.g. tourism marketing and promotion, business visitation, etc.) while other services and activities (e.g. providing businesses with information on COVID-19 supports, programs, and services) were prioritized as part of the City's response efforts.

While it appears that West Kelowna and the Okanagan region have generally remained stable economically, a degree of uncertainty continues to remain heading into 2021 with recent increases in transmission and evolving approaches to managing emerging outbreaks by the Provincial Health Officer. This may lead to further disruptions to business operations and employment depending on the severity of the pandemic within the region.

Due to this uncertainty, our prevailing view is that with this ongoing pandemic status, we continue to remain in the Response Phase of the Emergency Management Model. We will continue to monitor the pandemic and its impacts on businesses for 2021 and remain flexible to adapt services and activities to meet the needs of West Kelowna businesses.



Table 1: Emergency Management Model

Addressing Economic Development Services Due to COVID-19

Like many local businesses, the Economic Development and Tourism Department has had to reflect on its service offerings and consider possible changes in its service delivery to better support businesses in 2021. The majority of the supports and programs utilized by West Kelowna businesses during the pandemic were funded by provincial and federal governments and then administered by regional services providers. As such, the strong network developed over years by the Economic Development and Tourism Manager with regional service providers and industry organizations made connecting West Kelowna businesses to those programs and resources more effective. Continued participation in the Regional Economic Response Action Team will be critical for learning about emerging support programs and services as they are announced.

Moving forward, the Economic Development and Tourism Department will establish a formal system to communicate directly with West Kelowna business license holders. Having such a system in place will allow proactive communication activities by the Department to share relevant and emerging information from regional service providers to businesses where appropriate. Beginning with the 2021 business license renewal process, the department will work to establish a database of business email addresses and utilize an email management system that will create opportunities to broadly reach out to businesses in West Kelowna in 2021 and beyond.

Secondly, work is underway to establish operational and community economic metrics for the Economic Development and Tourism Department to better assess and understand resource allocation and community economic health. Establishing operating metrics will help future decision-making on resource allocation to balance between responding to service requests and inquires and completing proactive projects. Establishing West Kelowna-specific community economic metrics will assist with identifying opportunities or challenges facing the community economically and shape future decision-making.

City of West Kelowna Economic Development Committee

Council's Economic Development Committee met monthly from April through November 2020 to share their perspective and experiences on the impacts on local businesses due to COVID-19. The diversity of the member's backgrounds and careers provide unique and timely insights about what various industry sectors within West Kelowna were experiencing and helped to inform decisions on economic development services and future planning. At the October Economic Development Committee meeting, members were asked to identify trends and influences that should be considered as part of developing the 2021 Draft Economic Development and Tourism Operational Plan. Highlights from this discussion include:

- Businesses are more comfortable with employees working from home or remotely. This could create increased interest for relocations to West Kelowna for lifestyle while maintaining current employment.
- Consumers are making more purchases online and some of those online purchases are with local businesses.
- Not all businesses have been adversely impacted - some businesses are looking to grow through new acquisitions or opening additional locations.
- Local businesses have demonstrated a lot of innovation in the operation of their businesses: curbside pick-ups, meal kits, introducing online services (reservations, shopping, etc.), and supporting office employees to work remotely.
- Some business have had issues with supply chain disruptions that have left their business with limited ability to sell products later in the year due to limited inventory levels.
- Provincial and Federal Government subsidies have had a positive impact to local businesses during the first months of COVID-19 although some programs held back workers from returning to their jobs.
- Tourism activity in 2021 will likely mirror what was experienced in the summer of 2020 with in-province travelers seeking to spend time outdoors, making travel decisions in a shorter time frame based on consumer confidence of a destination and its business, and seeking alternative to traditional accommodation options.

Economic Development Workshop with Council

Nearing the close of 2020, the 2017 *West Kelowna Economic Development Plan* has reached the end of its expected lifespan of 36 to 48 months. That multi-year document identified a number of multi-year goals to shape the delivery of economic development and tourism activities. Looking forward, the Economic Development and Tourism Department would like to conduct a workshop with Council early in 2021 to identify new multi-year goals economic development and tourism (COVID-19 response, recovery and beyond) that can provide the focus for this and subsequent annual operational plans. This workshop is anticipated to include the following components:

- Introduction to current approaches to economic development
- Overview of the existing regional and municipal economic development and tourism service delivery model
- Community economic highlights and successes over the last decade and informing our way forward
- Identification of economic opportunities and trends that can influence West Kelowna
- Identification of economic development and tourism goals to direct future department activity.

Tactics identified in the attached Plan are expected to be realigned based on the outcomes goals identified in the workshop. Staff will then bring forward the 2021 Economic Development and Tourism Operational Plan back to Council for their consideration and resolve to accept the Plan.

2021 Economic Development and Tourism Operational Plan

The attached 2021 Draft Economic Development and Tourism Operational Plan has been developed to provide initial direction to Council on the areas of department focus for the start of the new year. The plan identifies the tactics, rational, and measurement in the following areas:



The Plan was presented to Council's Economic Development Committee during their meeting on November 18, 2020 for review and comment. At that meeting, members of the Committee provided the following motion:

“THAT the Economic Development Committee recommends that the 2021 Economic Development and Tourism Operational Plan be brought forward to Council for their consideration.”

NEXT STEPS

The Economic Development and Tourism Department will develop the format of the 2021 workshop in collaboration with our senior management team. The content of the workshop will derive from this draft Plan and previous resources developed by the City. Additionally, consideration will also be given to how the City’s Plan works in conjunction with the Central Okanagan Regional District’s Economic Response Action Team and the Mayor’s and Chief’s Regional Recovery Task Force efforts.

Subsequently, staff will incorporate Council’s input with the goal to enable Council to consider and resolve to accept the final Plan with amendments as they feel appropriate in early 2021. Further, as part of our quarterly updates to Council, adjustments to goals or tactics in the Plan would be recommended based on the changing environment with COVID-19.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The costs to implement the activities outlined in the 2021 Draft Economic Development and Tourism Operational Plan will be made as a request to Council in December as part of the 2021 budget process.

REVIEWED BY

Sandy Webster, Director of Corporate Initiatives

Shelley Schnitzler, Legislative Services Manager/Corporate Officer

APPROVED FOR THE AGENDA BY

Paul Gipps, CAO

PowerPoint: Yes No

Attachments: 2021 Draft Economic Development and Tourism Operational Plan



City of West Kelowna
**2021 Draft Economic Development & Tourism
Operational Plan**

November 24, 2020



**Business Communication &
Outreach**



**Community & Business
Assistance**



Film Production Support



**Tourism Marketing &
Management**



**Internal Organization
Support**



Business Communication & Outreach

Goal: To establish regular communication channels between the Economic Development & Tourism Department and West Kelowna businesses through online and in person methods.

Our Goal	Rational	How will we gauge its impact
Establish a database of West Kelowna Business License Holders contact information.	Use this database for electronic communication in 2021 including quarterly e-newsletters and periodic notices for important information.	Size of database.
Establish a quarterly business focused e-newsletter.	Use the newsletter to increase awareness of community and regional business-related programs, services, and community information relevant to West Kelowna businesses and investors.	Newsletter analytics (open rates, bounce rated, etc.), Number of communications sent, and measurements of effectiveness (e.g. surveys).
Establish a Community Economic Indicators Dashboard as part of the City's Website.	To gain a deeper understanding of community-specific economic data-points to help gauge the economic climate of West Kelowna.	Website analytics and measurements of effectiveness (e.g. surveys).
Increased in-person or digital visits with West Kelowna business owners to learn about what opportunities and challenges are facing them.	To support an ongoing understanding of West Kelowna businesses and identify potential support efforts.	Targeting 35 to 40 in-depth business visits through in-person or virtual formats.

Note: Please see the last page of this Plan for an outline of the community and regional partners we expect to work with and the kinds of projects we may work on together.



Community & Business Investment Assistance

Goal: To provide information and assistance to instill confidence in entrepreneurs and individuals seeking to invest in West Kelowna.

Our Goal	Rational	How will we gauge its impact
Assist businesses and investors to navigate City departments with introductions, advocacy, and support.	To provide entrepreneurs and investors with an advocate when they look to navigate City Hall policies and processes for their specific projects in West Kelowna.	Annual measurement of inquires and requests, measurement of effectiveness (e.g. surveys, telephone follow-ups, etc.)
Provide community information, referrals, and support for business site selection.	To assist entrepreneurs and investors with community statistical information, community contacts, and site selection support to encourage them to locate or grow their business in West kelowna.	
Connect local businesses with available community and regional business support programs and facilitate connections among businesses for potential collaborations or business opportunities.	To help increase awareness and access to support programs and services. Increase opportunities for West Kelowna business-to- business support and collaborations.	
Establish and promote website resources focused on home-based and remote workers on the City's Economic Development web page.	Due to COVID-19, more organizations are allowing their staff to work remotely on a part-time or full-time basis. West Kelowna is a desirable destination for those workers due to the combination of strong telecommunication infrastructure and lifestyle opportunities.	



Film Production Support

Goal: To provide support for film productions in West Kelowna and maximize the economic benefit in West Kelowna and across the Greater Westside.

Our Goal	Rational	How will we gauge its impact
Facilitate film permit requests to film in West Kelowna.	To make it easier for film production firms to navigate City Hall guidelines and permits to shoot film and television productions in West Kelowna.	Annual reporting on the number of film permits requested. Annual reporting on the number of film productions completed.
Develop Community Filming Guidelines.	To provide easy to understand and follow guidelines that balance being supportive and open for film production while minimizing resident and business impacts.	Implementation of guidelines by end of Q1 2021. Feedback from Okanagan Film Commission & production companies.
Assist in linking and connecting film productions companies with Westside businesses.	To maximize the economic opportunity created by film productions occurring in West Kelowna for West Kelowna businesses as suppliers to the production or as film locations.	Annual reporting on number of film permits managed.
Establish internal communications about film productions planned or occurring in West Kelowna.	To increase awareness of film activity occurring in West Kelowna amongst members of Council and City Staff.	Number of internal communication notices sent out and feedback from members of Council and City Staff.



Tourism Marketing & Management

Goal: To attract visitors to West Kelowna and the Greater Westside who will support our tourism businesses throughout the year.

Our Goal	Rational	How will we gauge its impact
Deliver Visit Westside Destination Marketing activities focused on in-region (COVID-19) travellers and provincially as recommended by Destination British Columbia.	To continue to highlight tourism experiences to visitors within the Okanagan region to entice them to spend more time in West Kelowna.	Annual reporting of website & social media metrics. Annual tracking of earned and paid advertising.
Contract the Westbank Museum to provide Visitor Services on an annual basis.	Visitors access Visitor Information Services year-round while the Museum is open to the public – shifting from a seasonal contract will allow for greater recognition and measurement of guests served annually.	Monthly reporting of visitors served at the Visitor Centre.
Improve tourism identity (Wine Trail etc) within the Farm Loop (Glencoe & Elliot Road) area.	Support increased visitation and awareness to wineries, breweries, and cideries in the Farm Loop area through the installation of visual enhancements (barrel stacks, banners, signs, etc.).	Feedback from businesses and visitors on our effectiveness.
Assess the interest by West Kelowna eligible accommodation providers to implement a Municipal and Regional District Tax (e.g. Hotel Tax) for funding future tourism marketing services.	With Council considering allowing Short Term Rentals, implementing a municipal MRDT would allow the City to access Online Accommodation Provider MRDT funds collected by the Province of BC for tourism promotion or affordable housing.	Report to Council following consultation with all eligible accommodation providers within West Kelowna.
Engage with the Westside tourism industry through digital communication tools.	To keep tourism business apprised of information on support programs, partnership opportunities, and new tourism experiences for cross referrals for their guests.	Digital communication analytics, business feedback on our effectiveness.



Internal Organization Support

Goal: To help improve City Department engagement and lessen impacts of projects to West Kelowna businesses.

Our Goal	Rational	How will we gauge its impact
Development Services Department	Examples of projects where support can be provided include short-term rentals, business licensing, community visioning, land-use, social planning, etc.	Annual reporting on supports provided and feedback from City staff in the departments.
Engineering & Public Works Department	Examples of projects where support can be provided include road closure permits for film production, capital projects that impact businesses, tourism signage improvements, etc.	
Parks & Recreation Department	Examples of projects where support can be provided include promoting parks and trails, community events, liaising with community businesses.	
Communications & Engagement Department	Examples of projects where support can be provided include coordination of economic development and tourism messaging, engaging with businesses, etc.	

Note: Beginning in 2021, Economic Development and Tourism Department statistics will be included as part of the Quarterly Department Statistics report provided to Council.

Partnerships: In 2020, the Economic Development and Tourism Department will work with a number of community and regional organizations and service providers to support economic activity in West Kelowna. Examples include:

Who we will work with	How we can collaborate
Westbank First Nation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit Westside Tourism Marketing • Public Service Announcements for Tourism • Community Marketing – Resident Attraction
Greater Westside Board of Trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing support as an ex-officio Board Member for Board & Staff • Key Business Award Sponsorship • Information & best practice sharing
Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member of the Advisory Committee • Business assistance for entrepreneurs • Regional Business Walks • Information & best practice sharing
Regional Economic Response Action Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sharing on programs and services to support businesses during COVID-19 Response period
Community Tourism Organizations (TOTA, Tourism Kelowna, BC Ale Trail, Westside Wine Trail, BC Wine Institute, etc.).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative marketing and promotional activities • Joint Application for Marketing Funds from Destination British Columbia • Information and best practice sharing • Serving as committee members