



The Corporation of the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie

Information Report

Report From: Jessica Pridham, Economic Development & Communications Coordinator

Meeting Date: September 25, 2023

Subject: SRECDEV.2023.01 Economic Development and Communications Update

Appendices: None

Report Summary

Throughout the past year, progress related to the implementation of the Economic Development Strategic Plan has been significant. Focus was given to some key projects such as; updating the Community Improvement Plan (CIP) Policy, Chesley and Tara were onboarded to the Spruce the Bruce Program through finalization of Community Toolkits and Façade Guideline documents, an Economic Development Workplan was developed that aligns with the Corporate Strategic Plan and a business directory was developed.

The partnership with Bruce County through the Regional Economic Development Pilot, and onboarding of a new Economic Development and Communications Coordinator have supported this progress provided the opportunity to complete these initiatives.

Looking ahead to the remainder of 2023, focus will continue with the finalization of the CIP Policy process, commence work on a Corporate Communication Plan, plan for the 150th Anniversary of Incorporation of Paisley for 2024, plan for the Paisley Queen Street Bridge Opening, and the development of an Available Employment Land Database and support the CAO in developing a 3-year workplan that aligns with the Capital Budget and Strategic Plan for the Municipality, in addition to regular duties such as business and community group support and collaboration, ongoing corporate communications, budget planning, supporting County and partner initiatives.

Background

In 2022, the County of Bruce and the Municipality entered into a Memorandum of Understanding whereby the County provided six months of part time economic development support to the CAO as a result of staffing vacancies. The support focused on moving longer term/County level initiatives forward that had been identified in the Economic Development Strategic Plan. The term of the assistance was from November of 2022 to end of April 2023. In addition, the County provided their expertise and guidance in development of a robust position criteria for the vacant Economic Development & Communications Coordinator role. In June, 2023 Arran-Elderslie was successful in the recruitment of this newly aligned role. During the period of time that the County provided support a number of projects were completed and/or substantially advanced. A formal transition/succession workplan for programs initiated by the Regional Support Economic Development Coordinator was developed and shared with the new Economic Development & Communications Coordinator.

Analysis

As part of the Regional Economic Development partnership with Bruce County, a work plan was developed that consisted of several components identified in the Economic Development Strategic Plan:

1. Review and update the municipal Community Improvement Plan (CIP) Policy.
2. Onboard Tara and Chesley to Spruce the Bruce Program.
3. Assist in the Development of an implementation plan related to the economic development strategic plan (i.e. 5-year workplan) ensuring it aligns with the corporate strategic plan.
4. Create a database of available employment lands in Arran-Elderslie and a process for continually updating this.
5. Undertake a Business Census for the municipality, this will support ongoing mapping, business directory and business retention and expansion work.

The Regional Economic Development Pilot took place from November 2022- April 2023, during which the following was completed:

- The CIP Policy project was presented to Council on December 12, 2022. The policy was then reviewed and updated by Bruce County. Consultation was undertaken with 15 businesses, staff and members of the community and adjusted as required.
- Research for the Community Branding Toolkits were developed. Stakeholder input was collected through an online questionnaire and workshop sessions to develop a logo and tagline, and Community Toolkit for Tara and Chesley.
- Mapping and analysis of existing building facades were complete and approved with staff feedback to develop new Façade Guidelines for Tara and Chesley.
- The Economic Development Strategic Plan was reviewed, and an action plan was developed for the new Economic Development and Communications Coordinator to complete.

- A preliminary list of available employment lands was developed along with a process for continually updating this document/inventory.
- A business directory was completed along with a process for updating this.
- Community business maps commenced.

In June of 2023, the Economic Development and Communications Coordinator transition to complete some of the initiatives that have been commenced with a focus on the following:

- The updated CIP Policy was reviewed by key staff. Feedback was sent to Bruce County and document finalized and submitted for review to the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for approval.
- The Community Toolkits and Facade Guidelines were finalized on July 11th, 2023, qualifying Chesley and Tara for Spruce the Bruce grants.
- Commenced business walks during which these new program inclusions were highlighted to qualifying businesses. An email was also sent to local business announcing this update.
- Work was completed to as part of the Economic Development Strategic Action Plan.
- Economic development programs have been promoted to businesses of Chesley, Paisley and Tara through in-person visits, direct emails, and a business newsletter sharing municipal news and programs and funding resources.
- Finalization and distribution of the community business maps.
- A Business resource section was built out on the Municipal website to help meet the needs of existing businesses and prospective investors.
- Met with Committees such as WOWSA (Women of Wellington & Saugeen Area), Saugeen Connects, VPI, The Hub of Huron Kinloss, Municipality of Brockton. Plans for collaboration continue to be advanced.
- Supported downtown business in Paisley Queen Street North by adjusting road signage to better identify downtown business, support to weekend vendor markets and Paisley Bridge opening celebration planning.
- Built collaborative relationships with businesses and community development groups to discuss matters of common interest and identification of opportunities to collaborate on shared services and joint marketing efforts such as the Paisley 150th Anniversary celebration, and the Paisley Bridge Opening celebration.
- Participated in Bruce county's economic development programs and activities including Spruce the Bruce, Tourism efforts, and Business to Bruce programs.

For the remainder of 2023, the Economic Development Section will be focusing on the following key projects:

- Ensure implementation of the revised CIP policy following Ministry review and approval.
- Support the CAO in developing the 3-year workplan that aligns with the Corporate Strategic Plan.
- Review and update the list of available vacant employment lands in Arran-Elderslie consulting the building department, including the creation of a process of keeping this list up to date.
- Plan community events such as Paisley Bridge Opening, and the Paisley 150th Anniversary.
- Commence work on a Corporate Communications Plan.

- Assisting an amalgamated Chamber or Business Association with the objectives to align with municipal projects/initiatives.
 - Ongoing corporate communication support and planning.
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Link to Strategic/Master Plan

6.2 Supporting Businesses and the Local Economy

6.3 Facilitating Community Growth

Financial Impacts/Source of Funding

No financial implications at this time.

Approved By: Sylvia Kirkwood, CAO