

5 Recommendations and Marketing Action Plan

The Marketing Action Plans look at a three year time horizon with achievable short-term goals to encourage the prospect of an ongoing commitment. With limited dollars and people to carry out the mandate it is very important to remain focused.

Economic development does not act in isolation – it impacts and is impacted by the community's environmental, cultural and social objectives. As a result, the communities' Economic Development & Tourism Department (EDT) must be open to partnerships: accepting them when approached by others and being proactive about establishing them. Sometimes EDT will be the:

- Leader – initiating the partnership and taking primary responsibility for implementing it
- Facilitator – initiating the partnership and taking little to no role in implementation
- Supporter – reacting to a partnership invitation and contributing time and/or money towards implementation.

The Marketing Action Plan tables within this section show where and when this is the case.

5.1 Improve Investment Fundamentals Marketing Action Plan

There are a number of fundamentals that need to be addressed in order for Strathcona County to take the leap into a more aggressive sector attraction campaign. For the most part, these need to be taken care of in the first year. However, dealing with them does not have to happen (and should not happen) at the expense of all of outward marketing initiatives.

Develop an “exit strategy” to track unsuccessful projects. This can be as simple as a survey with companies that leave Strathcona County or prospects that did not come to the community.

Strategic Objective #1: Regularly achieve the Gold Standard of services delivery and maintain top quality promotional presence in target markets and in social media.

Figure 31: Marketing Action Plan – Improving Investment Fundamentals

Strategic Category	Recommended Initiative	Priority and Role	Initiate By
Annual Planning	<p>Adequate resources dedicated to investment retention and attraction. Review Economic Development & Tourism’s budget for spending that is not associated with accomplishing the objectives of these sector plans or projects that directly support the attraction and retention of investment. Reallocate appropriately. Similarly for human resources, to allow staff to focus time on investment readiness, marketing and selling activities, there is little time for other initiatives unless other resources are found. This would include responsibilities such as extensive committee meetings, etc.</p>	High; lead	continue
	<p>Incorporate training into the annual action plan. Most emphasis should be on training that provides staff and board members with best practices, but also spend some dollars on sales/marketing training. Continue memberships in Economic Developers Association of Canada, Economic Developers Alberta and International Economic Development Council to take advantage of savings for training.</p>	High; lead	continue
	<p>Complete annual one-year Marketing Action Plans/Business Plans/Work Plans that will focus human and financial resources for all initiatives during the upcoming year. The plans will make an objective assessment of the previous year’s efforts, relating the outcomes to the targets that were set at the beginning of the year and how they fit with the directions identified in the Economic Development & Tourism Strategy. Development of plan will determine the promotion and measurable strategies to be implemented.</p>	High; lead	continue and enhance

Strategic Category	Recommended Initiative	Priority and Role	Initiate By
	<p>Maintain a detailed and current source of community data including skills inventory, available property information and community profile and labour market statistics. Ongoing updates (minimum quarterly for all but Skills Inventory which is annual).</p>	<p>High; lead but in partnership with realtors, workforce organizations; StatsCan; municipal census</p>	<p>continue</p>
<p>Marketing and Promotion</p>	<p>Establish a Technology Working Group to advise Economic Development Staff on emerging technology issues and opportunities on a quarterly basis. Given the pace of technological change, it is impossible for a static strategy document to keep pace with emerging tools and opportunities. The presence of a formal, structured team of genuine experts to advise economic development staff on tools, tactics and approaches for using and understanding technology in their work will enable the communities to continually be at the leading edge of investment attraction, retention, promotion and development activity. While not every new tool will unleash new opportunities for economic development, having ongoing access to relevant expertise and insight will allow Strathcona to identify those tools that do hold promise, and to become the trailblazers and trendsetters on the economic development front. It will also ensure that as new technologies dictate the need for new community or business infrastructure, Strathcona will be well-positioned to become a centre of “early adoption”.</p>	<p>High; lead</p>	<p>Q2 2011</p>
	<p>Enhance the website to be dedicated to the above sector priorities.</p>	<p>High; lead</p>	<p>Q1 2011</p>
	<p>Utilize social networking tools to enhance economic development promotional efforts. Of all the changes initiated by the advent of Web 2.0 tools, the rise of social networking platforms is perhaps the most far-reaching in its impact. Social networking tools cast internet users in the role of content creators, and create on-line environments for mass participation and mass collaboration. For an emerging generation of entrepreneurs and investors, websites are no longer static brochures of pre-prepared information, but interactive forums in which data, opinion and information are exchanged on a real-time basis. The economic development efforts of the future will see a decreased reliance on traditional web and database tools, and an increased emphasis on the use of social networks to achieve their goals. EDT should actively work to establish, promote and maintain social networking structures and initiatives as a way of both tapping into and leading this trend. In its initial phases, such a program would concentrate on establishing a viable, vibrant presence for the communities on networks such as Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, Flickr, YouTube and LinkedIn.</p>	<p>High; lead</p>	<p>Q3 2011</p>

Strategic Category	Recommended Initiative	Priority and Role	Initiate By
	<p>Develop a number of sector-specific promotion and information pieces.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The internet takes precedence over all other media, but there is still a place for ready-to-print marketing material or short-run marketing material. Each sector will have its own material and message but the overall look should be consistent with Strathcona’s overall branding efforts. Develop one 4-page sector profile for each industry Print outs of research that further supports the credibility of the sector in Strathcona (e.g. Province of Alberta brochures) 	Medium; lead	Q2 2011
Service Delivery – Department	<p>Achieve the Gold Standard of service delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All current and future promotional materials and tools must be available online and readily available either as the user is browsing alone or on the phone with EDT staff. Create an ability to provide immediate email responses with relevant attachments, including community profile, available properties, mapping and market analyses. Encourage other departments to have land use planning information available electronically (e.g. Zoning By-law, building application). 	High; lead with other municipal departments	Q2 2011
	<p>Contact information goes on EVERYTHING! An investment decision is one of the most significant that any business person will ever make. This type of transaction will not happen without considerable involvement of the development officer. Ensure that the development officer’s contact details are very prominent on EVERYTHING that is published. Direct all prospects to a person, not an “info” or “inquiries” mailbox – they will expect personal service and want to know they will get it before picking up the phone or sending the email.</p>	High; lead	continue
Retention and Expansion	<p>Develop an ongoing business retention and expansion program. Establish annual measurable expectations on the number of business owners and managers to meet with in each sector. Do this on a one-to-one basis or in a discussion group setting. Expand the program to include a specific set of questions that are asked of everyone with good opportunity to probe. Program in 2011 will be focused on Professional, Scientific and Technical Services. Formalized program with greater funding will allow additional focus on Lone Eagles in 2012.</p>	High; lead	Q2 2011
	<p>The retention and expansion initiative (and many others included herein) depend on a comprehensive inventory of businesses that are located in Strathcona County. The current Voluntary Business Directory should be upgraded being that a Business License System is not desired by the County. If an in-house system is built for contact management, this inventory could be built into that in-house system and integrated with the corporate GIS software.</p>	High; lead	Q3 2011
	<p>Develop an inventory of products and services that existing business require for business operation to create more business to business opportunities within the local market.</p>	High; lead	Q3 2011

Strategic Category	Recommended Initiative	Priority and Role	Initiate By
Public Relations	Work with the County's Communications Department to ensure that messages which support the outcomes of this strategy are a part of regular practice. This is an initiative that EDT needs to undertake in support of its investment attraction and retention efforts, but it is one that the County (as a whole) should take the lead. It will primarily support the Lone Eagle strategy, but will also be very effective for investment retention/attraction in all sectors. As an aside, it is imperative a corporate brand is developed for the department to proceed with its complimentary plans.	High; facilitator	continue
Contact Management	Complete transition to a more robust and user friendly Contact Relationship Management system. See below.	High; lead	Q1 2011

5.1.1 Customer Relationship Management Software

A specific request within the Request for Proposals to be completed within this project is a recommendation on customer relationship management software (CRM) that County staff can rely on for their business attraction efforts. There have been significant challenges with the existing and past systems based primarily on interfacing between the municipality's corporate computer infrastructure, which runs on a Novell platform.

More and more CRM developers are creating online modules which will essentially bypass this problem. Organizations that use **web based CRM systems** don't own the CRM software. Instead they subscribe to the CRM services by paying a monthly or annual subscription "service based" or "pay-as-you-go" fee that varies from vendor to vendor. There are also a few extra benefits.

- Information can be easily shared across departments of the municipality or other organizations who are involved in the business attraction and retention process
- Accessibility - web based CRM can be used from anywhere provided you have Internet access
- Hosted CRM systems don't require the deployment of backend systems.
- No upgrades to individual computers required
- No hardware server infrastructure necessary
- Automatic upgrades to the CRM solution

After a review of economic development discussion forums and speaking to a number of economic developers who are using CRM systems it is recommended that Strathcona County pursue SaleForce.com.

SalesForce.com

SalesForce.com has been a leader in web based CRM since the mid-2000s and have done one better than all other companies by developing an economic development-specific platform. The discussion forums and interviews with users point towards two seemingly mandatory things that maximize the usefulness of the software:

1. hiring a consultant to customize the software to specific needs
2. hiring a consultant to train all users

There are many valuable features:

- Automation of Marketing – This module helps in managing the marketing campaign. It also provides the reports the success of the campaigns.
- Customer Service and Support – This component helps to manage customer contact to ensure timely and value added follow-up.
- Sales Force Automation – It allows extensive control over sales data and defines the processes that are adopted by the entire organization.
- Document Management – It provides online access to complete account and contact repository. It assists in tracking and managing relationships with individual clients.
- Content Management – It empowers the employees by providing them with direct access to the presentations and documents. It provides the every employee with the needed CRM content in a snap.
- Contract management – This is a central repository for the customer contacts. It also helps create and track deals until they are signed.
- Analytics – It provides a detailed analysis of the sales data that clarifies the success or failure.

The downside of a web based CRM application is, of course, that it can only run with internet access. If downtime is significant at the County offices then this will be a problem. There will also be a period of adjustment for staff to get used to the new systems.

Without being a serious prospect, we could not extract a cost quotation from SalesForce.com, however, it is estimated that for 10 user licenses it will cost \$12,000 on an annual basis. The number of users can be modified at any time. The company offers a free 30 day trial.

See www.salesforce.com/industries/public-sector/economicgrowth.jsp for more details including a video demo.

Note that this evaluation covers the business attraction element of economic development. SalesForce.com may be functional as a business directory/retention tool, but this should be verified prior to use. For retention specific tools see Blane Canada's Synchronist software (www.blanecanada.com) and Executive Pulse's Online Business Retention and Expansion tool (www.executivepulse.com).

There may be corporate advantages to building a new in house system which may include sharing information between departments and connecting to other in house data systems. If an in-house solution is pursued because there are overall corporate or divisional advantages then the new system should include features and benefits that have been highlighted in the web based systems mentioned above.

5.2 Alberta’s Industrial Heartland Sector Marketing Plan

Strategic Objective#2: Transform Alberta’s Industrial Heartland into a globally recognized Integrated Energy Complex.

Figure 32: Marketing Action Plan – Alberta’s Industrial Heartland

Strategic Category	Recommended Initiative	Priority and Role	Initiate By
Government Policy and Legislation: Physical Infrastructure, Land Use and Financial	As other best case examples of chemical clusters have shown, directed master plans and investment in centralized infrastructure are necessary to spur investment and drive long-term success. Further coordination between the municipalities in defining master plans for centralized services, utility provision and transportation links is required. The simple zoning of the land for heavy industry and allowing companies to develop on their own terms is insufficient. Cooperation will also be required with current land owners and operators within the Heartland.	High; lead and supporter with AIH and private sector	continue
	Continue to work with Heartland partners in pursuing the provincial and federal government for a number of important policy and legislation changes, including Federal and Provincial Tax Rules (e.g. ACCA), enhancement of BRIK program to include integrated operations, support for development of infrastructure, taking equity positions or Loan Guarantees and labour rules and regulations that support lowered construction costs.	High; supporter with AIH and private sector as the lead	continue
	Play an active role on the Linear Infrastructure Corridor Committee	High; support	continue
Labour Market Development	Nurture ongoing relationship development with project managers and/or human resources managers of local companies in order to assess latest issues and how they may affect long term development	High; lead with Alberta Employment & Immigration; Chamber of Commerce; private sector	continue
	Continue to play a support role in developing labour attraction strategies that are intended to resolve issues as identified above	Low; support with Greater Edmonton Economic Development Team	continue
	Work with EEDC to identify Labour Attraction strategies that EDT can get involved in including the development of a Regional Labour Attraction Strategy	Low; support with Greater Edmonton Economic Development Team	continue

Strategic Category	Recommended Initiative	Priority and Role	Initiate By
Marketing and Promotion	Partnerships with the province and regional organizations are the best method of promotion here – leverage these resources to maximize Strathcona’s time and money. Strathcona is currently most active with Finance and Enterprise (Province of Alberta) with respect to the chemical cluster concept (other stakeholders include the members of Alberta Industrial Heartland, Department of Energy and City of Edmonton). Other opportunities include Trade Team Alberta, Hydrocarbon Upgrader Task Force and Chemical Cluster Steering Committee. Drive agendas towards supporting the Strathcona’s strengths and have the initiatives include trade missions, investment sales calls, website and printed promotions.	High; lead and facilitator	Q1 2011

5.3 Professional, Scientific and Technical Services Sector Marketing Plan

Strategic Objective #3: Develop a globally recognized professional, scientific and technical services hub by marketing Strathcona’s available labour force and quality of life.

Figure 33: Marketing Action Plan – Professional, Scientific and Technical Services

Strategic Category	Recommended Initiative	Priority and Role	Initiate By
Business Collaboration	Develop an inventory and database of sector skills and capacity leading to the creation of an industry network or association.	High; lead	Q1 2011
	Strathcona has tremendous strength in portions of the professional, scientific and technical services sector including industrial and environmental engineering, geographic information systems, construction management, planning, surveying and design. However, the sector is poorly networked, and poorly understood in the local context. The County should initiate efforts to develop a clear picture of activity in this area by creating a database of companies, skills and support structures within the community and their particular areas of expertise. Once this resource is developed, the County should facilitate the creation of an ongoing industry network to ensure that local partnering, joint venture and lead sharing opportunities are maximized, and that local companies are aware of the depth of local expertise in this area.	High; lead	Q2 2011
Product Development	Investigate and quantify, if possible, the competitive advantages that Strathcona may have over other locations regarding labour force availability and cost, property rental and utilities.	High; lead	Q2 2011
	Aim for continued improvements and developments to the ICT infrastructure and collaborate with other departments in building infrastructure that encourages residents to live and work in Strathcona such as improved transit service.	Medium; facilitator	2013

Strategic Category	Recommended Initiative	Priority and Role	Initiate By
Marketing and Promotion	Local companies have expressed some interest in seeing the County develop an annual awards program and promotional campaign designed to celebrate success and expertise in the environmental sector. This program should include awards to recognize local businesses that have accomplished significant positive change or activity on the environmental front. However, it should also be structured so that local businesses have an opportunity to learn of new products, techniques and tools that will improve their operations while safeguarding the environment.	Medium; facilitator with Chamber of Commerce	Q2 2012
	Seek new LEED-certified building projects and other environmental projects to develop and showcase local expertise. This will enhance existing efforts as every new building the County is now constructing is a green LEED building and the County's efforts of supplying green energy through its community energy centre. It also fails to acknowledge that all our urban village communities are green developments and would rank as LEED ND communities. The County should actively promote and seek out new opportunities to work with the community in the development of new LEED-certified facilities, as this serves two purposes. First, it provides the County with additional opportunities to showcase its leading edge environmental agenda. Second, it increases the local expertise and capacity around the LEED certification process, and the number of companies capable of working on LEED-certified building projects. As LEED certification becomes increasingly standard, this will give Strathcona companies a distinct advantage in a significant new market for their services. The same approach should be replicated with other kinds of environmental projects such as green energy.	Medium; lead	continue
	Develop a database of the following key prospects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All firms that are supplying professional, scientific and technical services to local industries • All firms that are supplying professional, scientific and technical services to oil sands developments • Companies in Edmonton in this sector that are 10+ employees • Key influencers in this sector (e.g. Capital Region -based real estate professionals, international logistics consultants) 	High; lead	Q2 2011
	Develop a four-page business case brochure that clearly highlights Strathcona's unique value proposition and competitive advantages. Ensure it is web-ready.	High; lead	Q1 2011
	A combination of direct and indirect promotional tactics will be utilized to reach Influencers with a heavier emphasis on direct tactics. Direct approaches include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-on-one meetings with target company representatives and influencers in Edmonton, Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver • Frequent telephone contact • Attendance at meetings held by relevant industry associations 	Medium; lead	Q3 2011
	Recruit Partners from existing local success stories; build on their successes as 'proof of propaganda'	High; lead	Q2 2011

5.4 Lone Eagles Sector Marketing Plan (Transition from Pure “Tourism”)

This Marketing Action Plan emphasizes a transition from a pure tourism focus to one that builds on the strengths of Strathcona’s “quality of place” to capitalize on Lone Eagles, which is a much more significant economic sector. Lone Eagles have tremendous economic upside without requiring a significant outlay of financial resources for infrastructure development.

Given this relatively alteration in scope, the County should consider modifying the name of the Economic Development & Tourism Department to the Economic Development Department. This will accurately reflect the fact that tourism is an aspect of economic development.

Strategic Objective #4: Promote the County to Lone Eagles as the preferred destination for small business in the Edmonton region through reaping the opportunities available from the County’s many quality of place advantages.

Figure 34: The Messaging for Lone Eagles Target

The Approach	Timetable for			
	Further Investigation	Partnership Development	Product Development	Promotion
We’re ready. Let’s go out and get the investment!	Those who can deliver the message of “strong community” along with “individualism” and “opportunity” must be brought into the initiative.	Social media and public relations strategy will identify broadcast media partners. Small business groups must be contributing. Community’s message must be well-coordinated.	Public profile needs to be energized. Additional measures like investment in ‘quality of place’ infrastructure will assist	Currently, the main emphasis of the initiative. Distribution list of alumni, website and public relations are key.

The heaviest emphasis for the Lone Eagle sector is in the public relations and internet/website strategies. Most of the required direction is identified there (Section 5.1).

Figure 35: Marketing Action Plan – Lone Eagles

Strategic Category	Recommended Initiative	Priority and Role	Initiate By
Investment Attraction	The heaviest emphasis for the Lone Eagle sector is in the public relations and internet/website strategies.	High; lead	Q2 2012
	<p>The most likely future investors are those who have previous ties to the community or those in the Capital Region. Consistently distribute information to this group and involve them in social media.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish distribution lists of existing citizens and business owners, graduated high school students, people who once worked in the community • Dedicate significant resources to providing ongoing information to this target group through social/interactive media networking, email distribution, website postings, newspaper/radio/television appearances 	High; lead	2012
	Work with media to promote success stories of young persons who have chosen to make their homes/careers in the area	Medium; lead	2013
	Undertake periodic surveys of local Lone Eagles (on a statistically representative basis) that identifies aspects they feel would improve the quality of life; implement as required	Medium; lead	2014

5.5 Agriculture & Value Added Food Processing Sector Marketing Plan

Strategic Objective #5: Grow the niche, value added agricultural and food processing sector into a unique food innovation centre.

Figure 36: Marketing Action Plan – Agriculture & Value Added Food Processing

Strategic Category	Recommended Initiative	Priority and Role	Initiate By
Product Development	Work to link local institutions such as schools, municipal offices, hospitals and colleges to local farmers and buy local products for their facilities. Work with groups such as Dine Alberta, Keep Edmonton Original and Local Food Plus.	Medium	2012
	Collaborating with Planning and Agriculture Services, evaluate the County’s by-laws and food support programs and make adjustments to grow home-based and small business in the food sector.	High	2012
	Build a cooperative program with local schools to grow interest in youth in the areas of food production, processing, marketing/retailing, and distribution. Following on the education sector, expand college programming to include agriculture, food processing, retailing and food service business operations.	Lower	2013
	Strengthen links with other local food initiatives including Dine Alberta, Alberta Farm Fresh Producers and Elk Island Community Futures to share information and data and host workshops and events centred on growing the local food industry	Medium; support with Dine Alberta, etc.	2012
Investment Attraction / Development	Look regionally with the Capital Region to identify potential processors in the region who are expanding and need industrial park services such as Strathcona can provide. Network with Capital Region Local Food Initiative	Medium	2011

5.6 Strategic Directions – Retail

Strategic Objective #6: Define the relative importance of the retail economy as a wealth generator in order to determine level of effort.

Figure 37: Marketing Action Plan – Retail

Strategic Category	Recommended Initiative	Priority and Role	Initiate By
Planning	Determine the priority level of this initiative through the completion of an update of the 2005 Retail Market Study which includes as many of the following three as is possible: Market Threshold Analysis, Residents Survey and Push/Pull Factor Analysis	High	Q1 2011
	Repeat Retail Market Study (including Market Threshold Analysis, Residents Survey and Push/Pull Factor Analysis) every 3-4 years to determine whether retail/commercial conditions have changed and if priority to this element should change	Medium	2014-15
Investment Attraction / Development	Ensure all available commercial properties are identified and updated in online properties guide.	Medium	Q2 2011
	Based on the updated Retail Market Analysis, implement a communications plan to reach out to important influencers.	Depends on outcomes of Retail Market Analysis	
	Educate municipal staff and politicians on the Retail Market Analysis and develop cohesive strategies to expand the retail market in the County	Depends on outcomes of Retail Market Analysis	
	Develop a retail lure package and distribute at appropriate events	Depends on outcomes of Retail Market Analysis	