

# **2015-18**

# **Department Business Plan**

## **Economic Development and Tourism**

Updated June 2017



The Economic Development and Tourism team plays a key role in attracting, growing and keeping business in Strathcona County. Our department is recognized across Canada and the United States as one of the leading economic development organizations with proven long-term success.

Our business plans are driven by Council's vision and strategic plan, the Municipal Development Plan, Economic Sustainability Framework and Implementation Plan. Our Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee (EDTAC) provides additional knowledge about business and development goals to the department, while encouraging implementation of creative solutions to identified challenges at the speed of business.

Our primary goal/mission is to increase the total prosperity and assessment in Strathcona County. We are focused on attracting further investment to the County; especially the value-added components of the hydrocarbon and petrochemical industry, while building and growing the agri-business and green sectors of the economy. Our key department focus is on business attraction, retention, expansion, development attraction and entrepreneur support.

Our department goals are:

1. Strathcona County attracts business investment that contributes to the long-term financial sustainability of the municipality.
2. Strathcona County works to address appropriate infrastructure needs for the development and business community.
3. Economic Development and Tourism leverages strategic partnerships creating opportunities for sustainable growth in Strathcona County
4. Economic Development and Tourism actively develops and updates strategic documents to reflect best practices of economic development.
5. Economic Development and Tourism supports a positive working environment and opportunities for learning and growth

The department enjoys excellent working partnerships with the Sherwood Park and District Chamber of Commerce, Alberta's Industrial Heartland Association (AIHA), Strathcona Industrial Association (SIA), Urban Design Institute (UDI) and several other business-related associations. We are members in our regional, provincial, national and international economic development and tourism associations; the department is often looked to for best practices within our industry.

Gerry Gabinet  
Director, Economic Development and Tourism

Strathcona County Council created a strategic plan which outlines their vision for the County in 20 years, and the priorities and strategic goals to achieve that vision.

Strathcona County Administration has developed a corporate business plan to create a bridge between the long-term, high-level goals and priorities outlined by Council in its strategic plan, and the short to medium-term operational goals and priorities of the organization and its departments. Business plans will include measures so we can report how we are doing in implementing Council's strategic plan, as well as achieving department and corporate goals.

### **Vision and values**

Strathcona County, located in the heart of Alberta, is an energetic and thriving community. A leader in North America's petroleum industry and a champion for advancing diverse agricultural business, we use our energy to power our new tomorrow.

We are a specialized municipality, and work cooperatively with our urban and rural residents to govern as a single municipality. Proud of our distinct governance model, we promote and demonstrate our achievements.

We are a welcoming place to live and attract people of all ages, cultures and walks of life to join us. Families thrive in our dynamic, caring and safe community.

We strive to be a model of ecological integrity, protecting our environment and preserving our agricultural heritage. Investment in infrastructure, quality services, cultural and recreational programs and facilities is a priority and sets us apart.

**We are Canada's most livable community.**

### **Corporate values**

- Integrity** We demonstrate ethical standards and behaviours; We display honest behaviour at all times; We do what we say we will do.
- Respect** We treat others with care and dignity; We pay attention to each other; We welcome a variety and diversity of ideas.
- Safety** We consistently demonstrate safe work practices; We build an environment of openness and trust; We make it safe for each other to voice opinions or concerns.
- Fairness** We consider how our actions might affect others; We treat everyone impartially and equitably; We are willing to share the reasoning behind our thinking and decisions.
- Cooperation** We support, assist and learn from each other; We give credit to others for their contributions; We compromise when needed to achieve common goals.

## **Department mission**

Strathcona County Economic Development and Tourism (EDT) strive to support a strong, diversified and resilient economy while balancing social responsibility and environmental stewardship. The department works towards the growth of the community through business and development attraction, retention and expansion and through entrepreneur support. Our key market is the local, provincial, national, and international business community.

## **Department overview**

The department is a team of specialists who work collectively, and in conjunction with other internal and external resources, to encourage business and employment growth in the community and the region. The department focuses its efforts to support a strong and balanced economy. Understanding changing dynamics, we also remain flexible to serve our customer's needs.

The department strives to provide an excellent work environment; attracting and retaining highly qualified personnel. EDT staff are encouraged in their professional and personal development and are motivated to achieve results.

The department is guided by and gains its mandate through many Council and administration-approved documents, including the Municipal Development Plan (2007); Department 4E Review (2009), Economic Sustainability Framework and Implementation Plan (2011) and the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy (2011), combined into department work plans and sector strategies.

There are five core business functions that the department performs. These core functions play a key role in the community's continued prosperity. Each of the core functions is aided and enabled by the above documents to support all business sectors in Strathcona County. It must be noted, however, that each of the functions relates to and is prioritized based on strategic and corporate business plan priorities. Resource management in the department (including an engaged, efficient and effective staffing complement) is optimized to meet the goals set out in each of the strategic, corporate, and department plans. The focus of the department is to aid in achieving the prioritized Strategic goals of Strathcona County.

## **Economic Growth**

Strathcona County Economic Development and Tourism (EDT) provide support to those who invest in commercial and industrial properties and the land development industry in order to grow the economy. The department work supports these groups in opportunity assessments / attraction to the community, information about the community, facilitating regulatory and development permitting processing, and by providing detailed information to assist them in making their business decisions. This work is done to spur on business growth in strong sectors, provide diversification and resiliency to the local economy and to provide employment options for our citizens.

- Commercial attraction
- Development attraction
- Industrial attraction

## **Diversification and Innovation**

Now more than ever businesses and economies must explore opportunities to diversify and seek new opportunities. By strengthening our local economy, we are more resilient to economic shocks. The department supports and encourages entrepreneurs that have a passion for innovation and creative ideas. As examples, we provide business mentorship services, information about potential new markets, information sessions on exporting, connection to innovation focused provincial supports among other supports to business, we are focused on retention and expansion as well as foreign direct investment efforts within the department. We also encourage existing businesses to diversify their markets and expand their horizons. Through attraction, retention and expansion efforts, we seek companies that can fill gaps in our local and regional market place to create wealth for the municipality.

- Cluster development
- Business mentorship

## **Business Support**

Business support includes seminars for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SME's), one-on-one support, community events which are focused on business benefit, and our business retention and expansion services among others offered by the department. The goal of the business support function is to have companies stay successful in the county as well as expand their operations due to their success. This also results in increases to the municipal tax base which in turn allows for continued service excellence to residents and business stakeholders alike. We also support economic sector collaboration by working with organized business groups in various sectors.

- Small business seminars
- Business owners one-on-one support
- Business expansion services
- Business retention services
- Community events

### **Readiness (Research & Communication)**

A key component of being able to see gains in an economy is readiness. The department strives to provide current quality market research to the business community. The department seeks to provide useful information such as a retail market analysis, information on future industrial land strategies, demographic information, business gap and sector analysis among other information pertinent for business decisions. We also provide business and development outreach by presenting appropriate information to the local community and the broader region about successes and opportunities in our community. Utilizing maps, data, geolocation analysis and systems we are able to provide a plethora of useful information to those who are pondering business investment in Strathcona County.

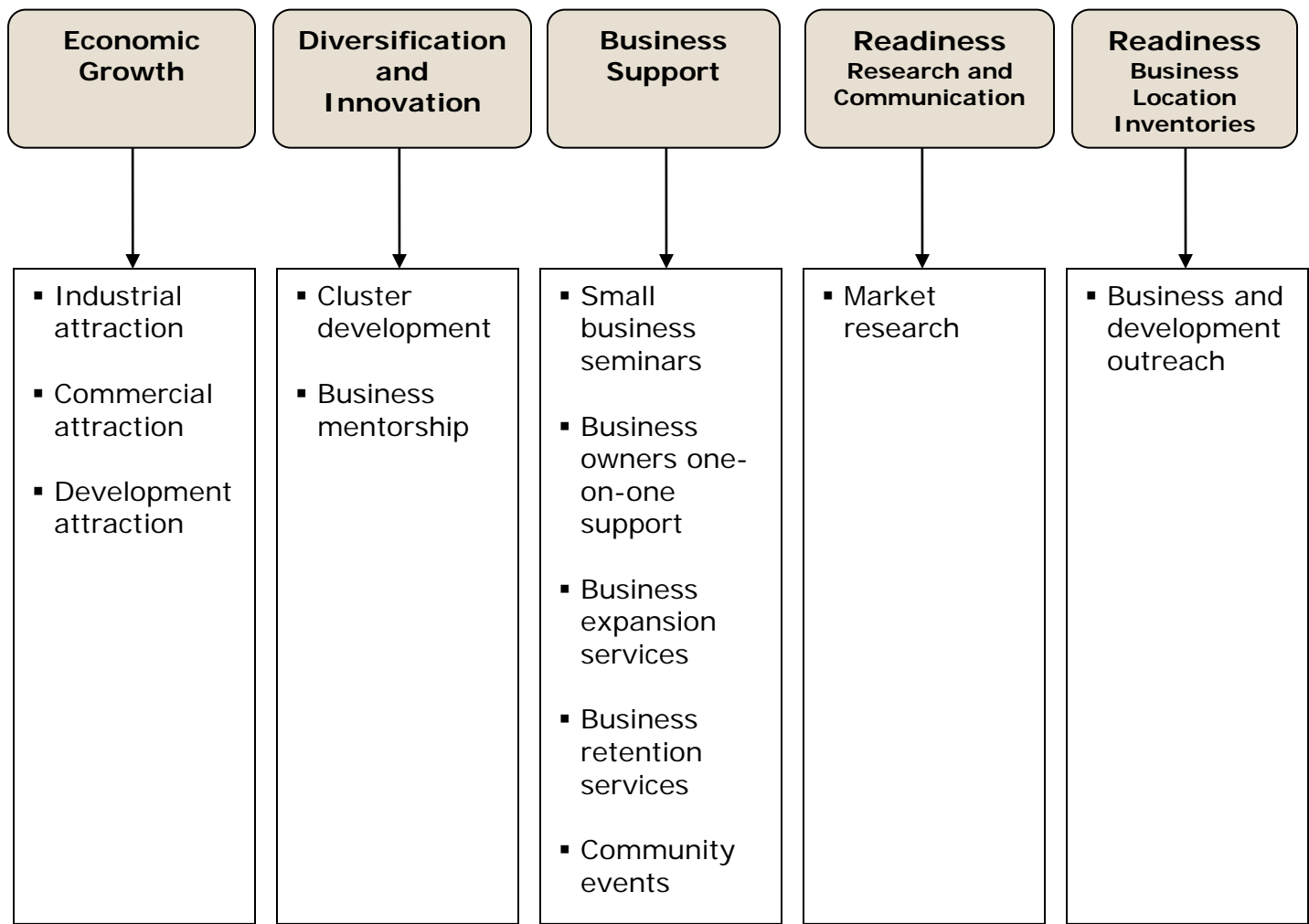
- Market research

### **Readiness (Business Location Inventories)**

The timing of finding a suitable location for a business is very important to business leaders. This requires the culmination of property and building availability proper zoning and the necessary knowledge regarding these properties to be able to take advantage of the opportunities as they arise. To be successful at taking opportunities to fruition, the County has to be financially competitive with other marketplaces. EDT works with the development, real estate, and regulatory officials to ensure we have a balanced supply of properties to meet the market demand while remaining competitive for the majority most sectors.

- Business and development outreach

## Department core functions and programs



## Department goals

**Goal 1: Strathcona County attracts business investment that contributes to the long-term financial sustainability of the municipality.**

*Outcome: Increase in number and types of businesses in Strathcona County.*

**Linkages:**

Strategic Plan (prioritized):

Goal 2: Increase and diversify the petrochemical business.

Goal 4: Increase public involvement and communicate with the community on issues affecting the County's future.

Goal 6: Promote Strathcona County locally, nationally and internationally as a place that is open for a wide range of diverse business and investment.

Corporate Business Plan:

Goal 1: Strathcona County has planned for long-term financial sustainability in support of service delivery and infrastructure asset management.

Goal 3: Economic opportunities are created through strategic partnerships.

Goal 4: Informed decision making supports quality of life in the community

[Strathcona County EDT Strategy](#)

[Municipal Development Plan](#)

**Initiatives:**

Interact with potential international business investors in the petroleum and petrochemical sectors to aid in business case development for investment in Strathcona County

Enhance and encourage support of the logistical hub in Strathcona County that serves the petroleum and petrochemical sectors access to market

Market the community to potential business investment for Strathcona County, focusing on industrial sectors that drive the County's economy

<b>Key Performance Indicator/Measures</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>Target</b>
Number of total business establishments in Strathcona County	8,960 (2013)	11,150 (2018)



**Goal 2: Strathcona County works to address appropriate infrastructure needs for the development and business community.**

*Outcome: Businesses continue to invest, grow and expand in Strathcona County.*

**Linkages:**

Strategic Plan (prioritized):

- Goal 1: Strategically manage, invest and plan for sustainable municipal infrastructure.
- Goal 2: Increase and diversify the petrochemical business.
- Goal 3: Advance the community’s interests by developing and maintaining strong relationships with our neighbouring municipalities and civic organizations to ensure long-term prosperity.
- Goal 6: Promote Strathcona County locally, nationally and internationally as a place that is open for a wide range of diverse business and investment.

Corporate Business Plan:

- Goal 1: Strathcona County has planned for long-term financial sustainability in support of service delivery and infrastructure asset management.
- Goal 2: Strathcona County priorities, successes and challenges are known.
- Goal 3: Economic opportunities are created through strategic partnerships.
- Goal 4: Informed decision making supports quality of life in the community.

[Strathcona County EDT Strategy](#)

[Municipal Development Plan](#)

**Initiatives:**

Market Strathcona County to attract additional industrial businesses that diversify and or support the energy sector

Encourage and facilitate a “Strathcona County Development Readiness Strategy” to have the land and building supply necessary to meet the potential business growth

Build and manage data systems that provide accessibility to trusted and accurate data business requires for locational decisions

Facilitate Strathcona County companies seeking assistance with growth and expansion intentions

<b>Key Performance Indicator/Measures</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>Target</b>
Number of business establishments with over four employees	1376 (2013)	1391 (2018)
Building permit values for commercial and industrial additions and renovations	Three year average values = \$44.1 million (2012 – 2014)	Three year average values = > \$47 million (2015 -2018)

**Goal 3: Strategic partnerships are leveraged to create opportunities for sustainable growth in Strathcona County**

*Outcome: Local, regional, national and international partners are aware of Strathcona County, and development opportunities within the municipality.*

**Linkages:**

Strategic Plan (prioritized):

- Goal 2: Increase and diversify the petrochemical business.
- Goal 3: Advance the community's interests by developing and maintaining strong relationships with our neighbouring municipalities and civic organizations to ensure long-term prosperity.
- Goal 4: Increase public involvement and communicate with the community on issues affecting the County's future.
- Goal 6: Promote Strathcona County locally, nationally and internationally as a place that is open for a wide range of diverse business and investment.

Corporate Business Plan:

- Goal 1: Strathcona County has planned for long-term financial sustainability in support of service delivery and infrastructure asset management.
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**Initiatives:**

International stakeholder engagement for companies already invested in Strathcona County (head office and global operations engagement and information sharing)

Identify growth opportunities for business through strong business networks

Utilize partnerships to address the current and future needs of business community

Exchange appropriate knowledge with the business community, associations, and other relevant organizations

Liaise with local, regional, provincial, national, and international groups

<b>Key Performance Indicator/Measures</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>Target</b>
Number of County Connect requests - review of requests identifying opportunities for partnership	TBD (2017)	130 (2018)

**Goal 4: Economic Development and Tourism actively develops and updates strategic documents to reflect best practices of economic development.**

*Outcome: The department exhibits efficiencies and effectiveness in its daily operations.*

**Linkages:**

- Corporate Business Plan:
  - Goal 1: Strathcona County has planned for long-term financial sustainability in support of service delivery and infrastructure asset management.
  - Goal 4: Informed decision making supports quality of life in the community
  - Goal 5: We are efficient and effective in daily operations

**Initiatives:**

- Regular evaluation of services and programs offered by the department to ensure optimization of staff and fiscal resources
- Complete and begin implementation of Economic Sector Analysis and Diversification Review
- Various strategies and implementation plans for department work are developed or updated including: department strategy, foreign direct investment strategy, marketing and social media strategy including development of international marketing materials
- Industrial land strategy and retail market analysis update
- Market and land use gap analysis

Key Performance Indicator/Measures	Benchmark	Target
Number of service enhancements (under development / updating)	2 (2016)	6 (2018)

**Goal 5: Economic Development and Tourism supports a positive working environment and opportunities for learning and growth**

*Outcome: Employees are satisfied, empowered and motivated to learn, achieve and innovate.*

**Linkages:**

- Corporate Business Plan:
  - Goal 6: Strathcona County is an employer of choice attracting and retaining the best people in all aspects of municipal service delivery.

**Initiatives:**

- Actively practice and encourage open communication, active listening and support
- Succession planning for the continuity of department operation and function
- Provide timely and meaningful recognition and feedback
- Encourage participation in relevant training

Key Performance Indicator/Measures	Benchmark	Target
Percent of employees utilizing learning opportunities	78% (2016)	100% (2018)