





Subject: **Economic Development Plan 2024-27 Draft**
 Meeting Date: Tuesday, June 18, 2024
 Prepared By: Wendy Gerbrandt, Economic Development Manager
 Presented By: Wendy Gerbrandt, Economic Development Manager

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Committee of the Whole request that Administration bring forward the Economic Development Plan with the recommended changes to Council for approval.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT: (Check all that apply)

	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
High Quality Infrastructure		Economic Resilience		Quality of Life		Effective Leadership		Level of Service	

RELEVANT LEGISLATION:

Provincial (cite)- Municipal Government Act
Council Bylaw/Policy (cite)- Municipal Development Plan, Land Use Bylaw

BACKGROUND/PROPOSAL:

In 2023, Administration received approval from Council to develop an Economic Development Plan aimed to foster sustainable growth and prosperity within the county. Tara Zeller, Economic Development Consultant, was contracted to aid in the development of this 3-Year Economic Development Plan through data analysis and community engagement.

Through this plan, Kneehill County aims to establish a framework that fosters opportunities to build a resilient and diverse economy. In turn, this will enhance the livelihoods of its businesses and residents, making the County an attractive destination for investment and growth.

The Economic Develop Plan aligns with the County’s Strategic Plan, 2019 Municipal Development Plan (MDP) and the preliminary outcomes from the 2024 Municipal Development Plan working groups, Land Use Bylaw, and through open dialogue and engagement with stakeholders, businesses, residents and Council in the economic development planning process.

The Economic Development Plan, once approved by Council, will guide the organization on the areas in which to focus.

DISCUSSION/OPTIONS/BENEFITS/DISADVANTAGES/OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

For the purposes of this presentation, Administration will present an overview and highlights of the planning process and outcomes and the 3 year strategic priorities, objectives and outcomes.

2024-27 Economic Development Plan

Kneehill County initiated a comprehensive 3-year Economic Development Plan aimed at driving sustainable growth and prosperity while prioritizing residents' well-being. The plan, shaped with input



from diverse stakeholders and facilitated by an Economic Development Consultant, outlines actionable strategies aligned with community aspirations.

In the pursuit of economic development, the respectful preservation of Kneehill County's agricultural heritage is carefully stewarded, ensuring a resilient, culturally rich, and economically prosperous future for generations to come.

The following key sectors are focused on throughout the plan:

Agri-Business: With favorable conditions for agricultural processing and ag-tech innovation, the county aims to capitalize on Alberta's status as a major agri-food exporter.

Tourism: Leveraging proximity to major urban centers and unique attractions, the county targets wellness tourism and film industry investments.

Energy: Positioned in the Western Canadian Sedimentary Basin, Kneehill County eyes renewable energy projects to supplement its growing oil production.

Manufacturing & Logistics: The County's strategic location provides easy access to transportation routes, making it an attractive destination for manufacturing businesses.

Four (4) strategic priorities have been identified to foster economic resilience and diversity:

1. Build Leadership Capacity
2. Strengthen Existing Businesses
3. Enhance Investment Readiness, and
4. Elevate Kneehill County's Brand

From these priorities, ten goals have been determined to focus on over the next three years, to strengthen Kneehill County's economic development initiatives.

GOAL #1: Increase awareness and understanding of economic development principles for elected officials, senior staff, businesses and residents

GOAL #2: Foster community stakeholder engagement and input to stimulate economic opportunities

GOAL #3: Support and inspire youth entrepreneurs and leaders to establish Kneehill County as a desired community to remain, return and establish

GOAL #4: Design and deliver a business retention and expansion program that initiates engagement between the County and businesses

GOAL #5: Encourage diversification and innovation in industry sectors to stimulate economic growth and job creation

GOAL #6: Achieve an intermediate to advanced investment readiness status to attract investments to drive economic growth

GOAL #7: Develop a targeted investment attraction strategy by engaging the community

GOAL #8: Promote and elevate the quality of life to attract and retain residents, attract visitors, workforce and business investments to the County

GOAL #9: Identify and collaborate with regional partners and stakeholders to promote and amplify the region



GOAL #10 Continuously monitor progress and gather input to update the plan

FINANCIAL & STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

Resulting direction from the Economic Development Plan can have varying degrees of financial and staffing impact. Any projects that align with the Master Plan and Strategic Plan will be brought to council for consideration through the budgetary process.

ATTACHMENTS:

2024-27 Economic Development Plan Draft

APPROVAL(S):

Mike Haugen, Chief Administrative Officer

Approved-

