
Subject: Economic Development Overview

Report to: Planning and Economic Development Committee

Report date: Wednesday, February 20, 2019

Recommendations

That Report ED 1-2019 **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to provide the PEDC with an overview of the Economic Development Department and their activities.
- The primary role of the Niagara Economic Development Department (NED) is to support the growth of Niagara's economy and ensure competitiveness.
- Economic Development activities principally take place within four function areas: Trade and Investment; Business Development and Expedited Services for Business; Strategic Initiatives and Strategic Marketing Initiatives.

Financial Considerations

Funding for the activities described in this report has been included in the 2019 operating budget and is subject to approval by Council.

Analysis

This report introduces two presentations by the Niagara Economic Development team. These presentations aim to provide members of the PEDC with an understanding of the scope of the work of the Department as well as the Niagara Foreign Trade Zone. It also provides an overview of the development of the Economic Development Strategy.

Reporting and Delineation of Economic Development Responsibilities

Niagara Economic Development reports directly to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and reports to Regional Council through PEDC. We work closely with economic development staff in the six municipalities who have economic development offices and with the CAOs in the municipalities where there are no economic development staff. Through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), drawn up by the 12 CAOs at the time in 2012, and approved by Regional Council, there is a clear delineation of economic development responsibilities, so as not to duplicate efforts. The MOU states that the local municipalities are best suited to deliver Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) services because of their unique knowledge of their respective municipalities.

NED is ideally positioned to deliver services that support economic development for the region as a whole, including investment attraction, lead generation and research. Team Niagara, which includes representation from all municipalities was formed to implement the MOU.

Economic Development Eco-System in Niagara region

Regional Economic Development team members operate within an eco-system of stakeholders in the Niagara region and beyond. Some of these relationships are formalised through funding agreements while others are informal working relationships. These stakeholders include but are not limited to Team Niagara, Niagara Development Corridor Partnership Inc., Brock University, Niagara College, Innovate Niagara, Chambers of Commerce and the Niagara Industrial Association.

Regional Economic Development Areas of Focus

There are four main functional areas identified within NED, each of which has a dedicated manager. These areas are Trade and Investment, Business Development and Expedited Services, Strategic Initiatives and Strategic Marketing. In addition, there is a Manager, Research and Analysis whose work supports all of our projects and an EDO who provides support to the tourism and agriculture sector as well as being a resource to the local area municipalities.

In addition, as part of the NED team, there is a coordinator role for the Niagara Foreign Trade Zone (NFTZ) point. Niagara Region has sub-contracted the day-to-day operations of the NFTZ to the Niagara Development Corridor Partnership Inc. (NDCPi) in Fort Erie, with oversight provided by NED. The coordinator is physically located in office space provided at the offices of the Fort Erie Economic Development and Tourism Corporation.

Economic Development Strategy

At the beginning of 2018, a partnership was formed between Niagara Region, Brock University and Niagara College to develop a Long Term Economic Development Master Plan, which looked forward 20 years. The objective of this Master Plan was to align the long-term goals of all three institutions to ensure economic growth and prosperity for the Niagara region. A consultancy company, Global Investment Attraction Group (GIAG), was awarded the contract in May 2018, following a competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) process. GIAG completed the research and analysis phase of the project and extensive stakeholder consultations, by the end of September. At that time, following a major change of direction, NED continued to develop a shorter-term strategy on its own, building on the work completed by GIAG and additional sector consultations. Our two partners have received all reports and will receive the final strategy document. The GIAG reports are attached to this report as appendices, for information. They include

the Economic Analysis and Forecasting Draft Discussion Paper, A Vision of Niagara Region in 2041 Discussion Paper and the Aggregated Stakeholder Consultation Report.

The shorter five year Economic Development Strategy is currently being finalised and the intention is to present a draft to PEDC for information.

Alternatives Reviewed

None applicable.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

Economic development activities described in this report directly support three of Council Strategic Priorities:

- Fostering innovation, investment and entrepreneurship
- Building a labour-ready workforce
- Positioning Niagara globally

Other Pertinent Reports

None

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Appendices

Appendix 1	Economic Analysis and Forecasting Draft Discussion Paper
Appendix 2	A Vision of Niagara Region in 2041 Discussion Paper
Appendix 3	Aggregated Stakeholder Consultation Report