



**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING AGENDA**

THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 2015

7 P.M.

**LEKSAND ROOM
AURORA TOWN HALL**



**TOWN OF AURORA
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING AGENDA**

DATE: Thursday, April 9, 2015

TIME AND LOCATION: 7 p.m., Leksand Room, Aurora Town Hall

1. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST AND GENERAL NATURE THEREOF

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

RECOMMENDED:

THAT the agenda as circulated by Legal and Legislative Services be approved.

3. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

4. DELEGATIONS

- (a) **Stephen M. A. Huycke, Town Clerk**
Re: Advisory Committee Member Education and Training
- (b) **Anthony Ierullo, Manager of Long Range and Strategic Planning**
Re: Item 1 – Memorandum from Manager of Long Range and Strategic Planning
Re: Economic Development Program Overview

5. MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

6. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

- 1. Memorandum from Manager of Long Range and Strategic Planning** pg. 1
Re: Economic Development Program Overview

RECOMMENDED:

THAT the memorandum regarding Economic Development Program Overview be received for information.

- 2. Pending List** pg. 14

RECOMMENDED:

THAT the Pending List be received for information.

7. NEW BUSINESS

8. ADJOURNMENT



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Town of Aurora
Planning & Development Services

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 9, 2015
TO: Economic Development Advisory Committee
FROM: Anthony Ierullo, Manager of Long Range and Strategic Planning
RE: Economic Development Program Overview

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the memorandum regarding Economic Development Program Overview be received for information.

BACKGROUND

The Town of Aurora currently delivers services that address the key areas of economic development program delivery including investment attraction, business retention and expansion and tourism. The following provides a brief overview of the current economic development programs:

Investment Attraction

Investment attraction refers to economic development efforts aimed at attracting new commercial investment from foreign investors. The Town is participating in the Invest in York program, is a member of the Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance (GTMA) and a participant in the GTMA's advanced manufacturing investment attraction program. The Town also works with Federal and Provincial ministries on specific investment leads. As a result of these partnerships, the Town is able to access information related to interested investors and follow up with site selectors regarding potential sites in Aurora.

In order to effectively respond to interested investors, the Town launched the businessaurora.ca website in 2009. The site was developed to provide up to date information related to site selection and will be refreshed in 2015/2016. In addition, staff regularly follow up with interested investors, produce a series of brochures/publications and deliver a Business Concierge program to service potential investors.

Business Retention and Expansion

The Town has historically focused its economic development program on business retention and expansion. In 2010, Council approved a Business Retention and Expansion Strategy that identified the following key actions:

April 9, 2015

-2- Economic Development Program Overview

1. Undertaking a Full BR&E Survey
2. Better Use of Networking and the Chamber of Commerce
3. Providing Business and Innovation Support
4. Improving the Supply of Office and Incubation Space
5. Developing a Concierge Service

In 2011, staff have prepared a Business Retention and Expansion workplan that includes the implementation of an ongoing Business Retention and Expansion program and Business Concierge program. The key objectives described in the workplan are outlined below:

1. Deliver a Business Concierge Service;
2. Establish a Business Retention and Expansion Program;
3. Regularly Communicate Business Support Initiatives through the Town Economic Development E-newsletter;
4. Enhance the Town's Small Business Support Function; and,
5. Improve Access to available Non-residential Space through the Town's Online Property Listing Tool.

This work culminated into a comprehensive Business Retention and Expansion Action Plan that staff are currently implementing. The Business Retention and Expansion Action Plan has been attached to this report for information. The Town also produces a Community Profile, local business directory (online and downloadable) and an online business permits and licensing tool (bizpal).

Tourism

Local tourism is supported primarily through the promotion of community special events and cultural heritage events. The Town has also partnered with York Region and RTO6 to promote local tourism and is in the process of preparing a Tourism Strategy to guide future Tourism activities.

Economic Development Action Plan

In addition to the above mentioned activities, Council has also approved an economic Development Action Plan that outlines specific activities for staff to pursue. Staff have been advancing the items within the Plan and have attached a copy of the Plan for information.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – Business Retention and Expansion Action Plan
- Attachment 2 – Economic Development Action Plan



Attachment 1

**Town of Aurora
Planning and Development Services
Business Retention & Expansion
Action Plan**

How We Grow:
 Continued Smart & Sustainable Growth, Availability of Appropriate Space or Land, Retaining & Attracting Businesses

| Action | Accountability | Timelines | Indicators |
|---|--|--------------------------|--|
| Regularly monitor & report on population and employment growth, including by industry sector | Economic Development | Annually, beginning 2014 | Bi-annual Report to Council outlining trends |
| Investigate opportunities to pre-install high capacity broadband in new development areas | Economic Development / Planning | Q1 2014 | Explore with potential providers & developers |
| Evaluate opportunities to further strengthen employment protection policies in Official Plan | Economic Development / Policy Planning | Q3 2014 | Research completed to contributed to planned Official Plan review in 2015 |
| Expand Business Retention & Expansion program and business visitations | Economic Development | Q2 2014 | Completion of 200 Business Visitations Annually (Conditional on the hiring of a BR&E Specialist) |
| Better promotion of available space and land in Town, through businessaurora.ca | Economic Development / GIS mapping | Q1-Q2 2014 | Creation of revised/new web mapping tool to promote available property |
| Work with partners to attract an innovation incubator / post-secondary presence / skills centre to support local businesses and attract new start-ups | Economic Development | Ongoing | Approval of a new facility by 2020 |

Services for Business:
 Making Sense of Development Approvals, Connecting Businesses with Residents, Business Networking & Joint Marketing

| Action | Accountability | Timelines | Indicators |
|---|--|-------------|--|
| Work across departments to streamline development approval process and resolve conflicts | Economic Development, with Planning & Building | Q1 2014 | Formal launch of Business Concierge Program in 2013 |
| Conduct information sessions for businesses & land owners on development approval process | Planning & Building | Q2 2014 | The delivery of at least two workshop by 2014 |
| Promote 'How To' guides on the development approval process via businessaurora.ca | Economic Development / Planning | Q1 2014 | Materials posted prominently on businessaurora.ca and aurora.ca |
| Investigate opportunities to monitor and host, link to, or consolidate local job opportunities through businessaurora.ca | Economic Development / GIS mapping | Q1-Q2 2014 | Creation of revised/new web mapping tool to promote local job opportunities |
| Investigate holding a joint job fair in coordination with local service providers | Economic Development | Q2 2014 | Report outlining opportunities to partner with local service providers on hosting a job fair |
| Encourage & assist with business-driven initiatives such as shop tours & 'shop local' promotions | Economic Development /Chamber of Commerce | As required | Formal launch of Business Concierge Program in 2013 |
| Explore opportunities to work with York Region on sectoral cluster mapping analysis, to help inform networking and local supply chain opportunities | Economic Development | Q3-Q4 2014 | The delivery of at least two workshops by 2014 |
| Promote Chamber events on networking and joint marketing initiatives, and support making them available to non-members | Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce | Ongoing | Promotion of at least 12 events per year |

Enhancing Existing Resources:

Revitalizing Downtown Aurora, Improving Public Transit, Increased Communications & Support Programs

| Action | Accountability | Timelines | Indicators |
|--|--|-----------------------------|--|
| Ensure coordination of downtown revitalization efforts explored through various processes via work plan and regular reporting | Economic Development / Planning | Annually, beginning 2013/14 | Preparation of annual Aurora Promenade workplan to clarify and coordinate works related to downtown revitalization |
| Review Economic Development e-newsletter for reach (subscriptions) and content | Economic Development | Q1 2014 | Deliver revised economic development newsletter quarterly |
| Offer & promote support services provided in partnership with York Region, Aurora Chamber of Commerce, local service providers | Economic Development / external | Ongoing | Track inquiries & support service referrals |
| Advocate York Region for improved east-west transit service and service to employment areas | Economic Development / Infrastructure & Env. | Q1 2014 | Increased transit routes/frequency/ridership |
| Advocate the Province for regular two-way and weekend GO train service | Economic Development / Infrastructure & Env. | Q1 2014 | Report to Council recommending formal request to the Province |
| Investigate opportunities to improve downtown accessibility for all modes of transportation | Economic Development / Infrastructure & Env. | Q4 2014 | Preparation of a Transportation Strategy for the Aurora Promenade |
| Support measures to attract pedestrian activity downtown in support of local businesses: | | | |
| Self-guided walking tours, with potentially multiple themes | Economic Development / Heritage Planning | Q4 2014 | At least one business-focused tour created |
| Temporary sidewalk patio policy or pilot program | Policy Planning / Economic Development | Q1 2014 | Program/pilot in place for 2014 patio season |
| Improving public access to digital infrastructure in the downtown core | Economic Development | Q2-Q3 2014 | Report outlining options and partners |

Attachment 2

Town of Aurora

Economic Development Action Plan

2012-2014

What is Economic Development?

Economic development refers to the sustained, concerted actions of policymakers and communities to improve the standard of living and economic health of an area. At the core of economic development is the creation of quality employment opportunities that enrich the lives of people. An enhanced quality of life for our residents includes opportunities for employment, recreation, retail and housing.

Strategic Direction for Economic Development Action

The Town of Aurora recently approved a new Strategic Plan that outlines a series of goals, objectives and actions that will help guide municipal decisions over the next two decades. This Action Plan is guided by the economic goals, objectives and actions outlined in the Strategic Plan. The goal of this Plan is to contribute to fulfillment of the goal and objectives described under the Economic Pillar of the Plan as outlined below:

Economic Goal - Enabling a Diverse, Creative and Resilient Economy

Objective 1: Promoting economic opportunities that facilitate the growth of Aurora as a desirable place to do business

Short term Economic Development Specific Actions

- Leverage partnerships with local boards, chambers and business organizations to promote Aurora as a preferred location for business
- Develop plans to attract businesses that provide employment opportunities for our residents
- Assess the feasibility of a research and innovation centre to promote the commercialization of technology and business and employment growth
- Create, implement and regularly update an Economic Development Strategy
- Actively promote and support a plan to revitalize the downtown
- Assess the feasibility of establishing an entertainment district in the downtown area, a community square/gathering area/piazza and a permanent or scheduled outdoor pedestrian mall on Yonge Street in the Aurora Promenade
- Work with regional, provincial and national partners to promote Aurora as a preferred location for international investment
- Assess opportunities to partner with a college or university to establish a satellite facility in Aurora

Objective 2: Supporting small business and encouraging a more sustainable business environment

Short term Economic Development Specific Actions

- Explore opportunities to enhance the Town's business support services such as a business concierge service for non-residential development approvals
- Work with community partners to promote local employment practices/opportunities for local businesses and residents
- Work with development community partners to establish a hotel and/or convention centre that meets the growing needs of our businesses and residents
- Continue to liaise with municipal, provincial and senior levels of government to investigate potential opportunities to attract economic investment
- Establish regular communication with the Aurora Chamber of Commerce and the business community to better understand and address local business needs and promote business retention/expansion

- Identify the roles that the Town can play to support small home based business in Aurora
- Recognize corporate social responsibility in the Aurora business community
- Attract new business that are green, clean and knowledge-based
- Investigate opportunities to encourage the creation and mobilization of knowledge in the local economy

Economic Development Strategy

In order to best leverage available resources, the Town of Aurora focuses its economic development efforts on maximizing customer satisfaction among our existing businesses. The Town is also focused on aggressively pursuing and supporting businesses who have expressed interest in locating to Aurora. This includes assisting with site selection, providing prompt information and coordinating with the client on securing the appropriate approvals. This approach relies on business networks, leveraging members of the Town's Economic Development Advisory Committee, realtors and economic development partners to generate leads that are serviced by the municipality after interest has been established.

Economic Development Mission

The Town of Aurora's economic development mission is to act as a business development enabler. This means supporting the growth of the existing business community, aggressively supporting business who have an interest in locating in Aurora and providing support for tourism related activities. The Town's economic development mission statement is:

To enable development of interested new businesses

Economic Development Priorities

1) Bio-medical campus

Description: The Town is committed to pursuing an enhanced bio-medical presence in Aurora to complement the existing business base and leverage the research and development plans of Southlake Regional Hospital. A bio-medical campus is defined as a cluster of bio-medical and pharmaceutical firms located within the Town of Aurora (approximately 10 square kilometers).

Tasks:

- Review of available and appropriately zoned lands to facilitate growth in bio-medical industries
- Completion and implementation of a sector marketing study to determine optimal approach to attracting interested bio-medical firms
- Review of available incentives to attract bio-medical firms and their applicability to Aurora.
- Pursue discussions with Southlake Regional Hospital, the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, local bio-medical firms and other relevant parties to pursue interested new bio-medical firms to Aurora.
- Investigate opportunities to assist in establishing bio-medical business networks.
- Conduct an analysis of infrastructure that is required/available to support the initiative
- Develop an inventory of senior executives residing in Aurora

Key Performance Indicators: Number of new bio-medical jobs in Aurora per year
Percentage of existing bio-medical employment retained

Link to Strategic Planning: The initiative will support a number of the actions outlined in the Strategic Plan including the following:

- Leverage partnerships with local boards, chambers and business organizations to promote Aurora as a preferred location for business
- Develop plans to attract businesses that provide employment opportunities for our residents
- Work with regional, provincial and national partners to promote Aurora as a preferred location for international investment
- Work with community partners to promote local employment practices/opportunities for local businesses and residents
- Continue to liaise with municipal, provincial and senior levels of government to investigate potential opportunities to attract economic investment
- Attract new business that are green, clean and knowledge-based
- Investigate opportunities to encourage the creation and mobilization of knowledge in the local economy

2) Entertainment District

Description: The Town would like to pursue the establishment of an entertainment district in Aurora (preferably in the Aurora Promenade) to enhance the quality of life in the area and meet the entertainment needs of the local community and the surrounding area. The district could feature a cluster of restaurants, music venues and art galleries and act as a centre of attraction for Aurora.

Tasks:

- Review/confirm of available appropriately zoned sites that could facilitate an entertainment district preferably in the Aurora Promenade.
- Conduct a best practice review of successful entertainment districts including the Distillery District in Toronto and Broad Ripple Village in Indianapolis.
- Review available incentives to attract entertainment business to a designated geographic area.

Key Performance Indicators: Establishment of designated Entertainment District in Aurora

Link to Strategic Planning: The initiative will support a number of the actions outlined in the Strategic Plan including the following:

- Actively promote and support a plan to revitalize the downtown
- Assess the feasibility of establishing an entertainment district in the downtown area, a community square/gathering area/piazza and a permanent or scheduled outdoor pedestrian mall on Yonge Street in the Aurora Promenade
- Work with regional, provincial and national partners to promote Aurora as a preferred location for international investment
- Work with development community partners to establish a hotel and/or convention centre that meets the growing needs of our businesses and residents
- Continue to liaise with municipal, provincial and senior levels of government to investigate potential opportunities to attract economic investment

3) Innovation Incubator

Description: The Town would like to pursue the creation of an Innovation Incubator in Aurora. The Incubator would enable the commercialization and mobilization of local knowledge and promote business development. The intent is to develop a venue for small businesses to develop products for commercial production, share ideas, receive business support and encourage the growth of innovative new businesses within the community.

Tasks:

- Conduct a feasibility study of the suitability of Aurora as the potential location for an innovation incubator.
- Conduct a best practice review of successful innovation incubators including MaRS and the Market Convergence Centre.
- Investigate the establishment of a innovation roundtable to support the initiative

Key Performance Indicators: Completion of feasibility study with implementation recommendations.

Link to Strategic Planning: The initiative will support a number of the actions outlined in the Strategic Plan including the following:

- Leverage partnerships with local boards, chambers and business organizations to promote Aurora as a preferred location for business
- Develop plans to attract businesses that provide employment opportunities for our residents
- Assess the feasibility of a research and innovation centre to promote the commercialization of technology and business and employment growth
- Actively promote and support a plan to revitalize the downtown
- Assess opportunities to partner with a college or university to establish a satellite facility in Aurora
- Work with community partners to promote local employment practices/opportunities for local businesses and residents
- Identify the roles that the Town can play to support small home based business in Aurora
- Recognize corporate social responsibility in the Aurora business community
- Attract new business that are green, clean and knowledge-based
- Investigate opportunities to encourage the creation and mobilization of knowledge in the local economy

4) Permanent Farmers' Market

Description: The Town is interested in investigating the possibility of supporting a year round farmers marketing in Aurora. The would like to pursue the establishment of an entertainment district in Aurora (preferably in the Aurora Promenade) to enhance the quality of life in the area and meet the entertainment needs of the local community and the surrounding area. The district could feature a cluster of restaurants, music venues and art galleries and act as a centre of attraction for Aurora.

Tasks:

- Pursue discussions with the Aurora Farmers Market, the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, the Aurora Cultural Centre and other relevant parties to determine the level of interest in a year round farmers market.
- Conduct a feasibility study of the suitability of Aurora as the potential location for an permanent farmers market.

- Conduct a best practice review of successful permanent farmers markets including St Lawrence Market in Toronto and Faneuil Hall Market in Boston.

Key Performance Indicators: Completion of feasibility study with implementation recommendations.

Link to Strategic Planning: The initiative will support a number of the actions outlined in the Strategic Plan including the following:

- Develop plans to attract businesses that provide employment opportunities for our residents
- Actively promote and support a plan to revitalize the downtown
- Work with community partners to promote local employment practices/opportunities for local businesses and residents

5) Post Secondary Presence

Description: The Town has included lands as part of the 2C Secondary Plan to accommodate a potential Post Secondary Institution in Aurora. A potential university could attract additional business investment to Aurora and serve the education need of Northern York Region.

Tasks:

- Engage Regional and Provincial levels of government to discuss support for a university in Aurora.
- Prepare a proposal for a post secondary institution in Aurora for consideration.

Key Performance Indicators: Preparation of proposal for a post secondary institution in Aurora

Link to Strategic Planning: The initiative will support a number of the actions outlined in the Strategic Plan including the following:

- Develop plans to attract businesses that provide employment opportunities for our residents
- Assess the feasibility of a research and innovation centre to promote the commercialization of technology and business and employment growth
- Actively promote and support a plan to revitalize the downtown
- Assess opportunities to partner with a college or university to establish a satellite facility in Aurora
- Work with community partners to promote local employment practices/opportunities for local businesses and residents
- Continue to liaise with municipal, provincial and senior levels of government to investigate potential opportunities to attract economic investment
- Attract new business that are green, clean and knowledge-based
- Investigate opportunities to encourage the creation and mobilization of knowledge in the local economy

6) Enhanced Business Support Services

Description: Business retention and expansion is a priority area in Aurora. This includes the continued implementation of the Town's Business Retention and Expansion Strategy.

Tasks:

- Implement a regular business visitation program
- Investigate opportunities to streamline the municipal approval process.

- Improve communication with the business community

Key Performance Indicators: Number of business visited per year
Average business satisfaction rating

Link to Strategic Planning: The initiative will support a number of the actions outlined in the Strategic Plan including the following:

- Explore opportunities to enhance the Town's business support services such as a business concierge service for non-residential development approvals
- Work with community partners to promote local employment practices/opportunities for local businesses and residents
- Work with development community partners to establish a hotel and/or convention centre that meets the growing needs of our businesses and residents
- Establish regular communication with the Aurora Chamber of Commerce and the business community to better understand and address local business needs and promote business retention/expansion
- Identify the roles that the Town can play to support small home based business in Aurora
- Recognize corporate social responsibility in the Aurora business community

**Economic Development Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda
Thursday, April 9, 2015**

| Advisory Committee: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------|----------------|---|---|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| ITEM NO. | MEETING DATE | MEETING | SUBJECT | ACTION | ACTION DEPT. | RESPONSE DATE | TYPE OF RESPONSE |
| 1 | 2013-10-10 | EDAC | 9. Report dated September 12, 2013 from Corporate and Strategic Planning from Regional Council Meeting of September 26, 2013 Re: Economic Development Action Plan Update – York Region Broadband Strategy Progress | THAT the Manager of Long Range and Strategic Planning be requested to report back to the Committee on broadband in the downtown core. | PDS | | |