

THE CORPORATION OF THE
CITY OF WHITE ROCK
CORPORATE REPORT



DATE: January 25, 2021

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Carl Isaak, Director, Planning and Development Services

SUBJECT: Draft Surveys for Economic Development Strategic Plan Update

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council refer the draft Economic Development Strategic Plan update surveys for business and for residents to the Economic Development Advisory Committee for review, prior to distributing the surveys.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City's Economic Development Officer is working with the Director of Planning and Development Services to review and update the 2009 Economic Development Strategic Plan with a new vision, objectives and strategies based on the current conditions and impact brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and long-term trends affecting the economic vitality of the community. To start this update process and set the foundation for future engagement, two surveys have been drafted to obtain input from businesses and residents regarding their views on economic development in White Rock (see Appendices A and B). This corporate report provides copies of the draft surveys and a request that Council refer the draft surveys to the Economic Development Advisory Committee for their next meeting on February 10, 2021 for informal input that staff will consider prior to distribution.

The survey will be offered primarily as an online survey on www.talkwhiterock.ca, with hard copies of the surveys mailed to medical/professional service-type businesses. The communication plan uses a layered approach to inform residents and businesses about the available surveys and encourage them to participate. This will include the use of newspaper ads, window posters, addressed mail, social media, media relations and communication through business partners (The White Rock Business Improvement Association and the South Surrey & White Rock Chamber of Commerce).

Survey results will be compiled in April 2021 and preliminary results will be reviewed with community focus groups in May 2021. The update of the Economic Development Strategic Plan will begin in June 2021, and a draft update is anticipated to be complete in Fall 2021.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION

Not applicable.

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

The City last updated its Economic Development Strategic Plan (EDSP) in 2009. Council identified economic development and the updating of this plan as a high priority for 2021-2022. Council chose to complete the update in house by hiring an Economic Development Officer (EDO), which occurred in September 2020.

The EDO has created two economic development surveys, one for businesses and one for residents, to seek input over a four week period, beginning February 16, 2021. The draft surveys have been tested on three White Rock residents and three White Rock business owners to assess the– survey content and ease of administration. The feedback received on both criteria was positive.

Staff has evaluated the options available to obtain initial community input and considers the in-house distribution of the economic development surveys to be the most viable in terms of cost-effectiveness and quality of response.

With Council's support, the EDO will also be referring these draft surveys to the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) for informal discussion and consideration of changes prior to launching the survey. The White Rock BIA and the South Surrey & White Rock Chamber of Commerce will also be given an opportunity to review and provide suggestions prior to distribution.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Distribution and promotion of the surveys will cost approximately \$1,200, as follows:

- Advertisements in Peace Arch News (2x) - \$960;
- Online advertisements (promotions on social media) - \$50;
- Direct mail for the surveys to be sent to medical/professional service-type businesses (as these are more challenging to reach via door-to-door engagement) - \$150; and
- Poster printing - \$30.

These expenses, as well as staff time for compiling and analyzing results, will be paid for from the existing Economic Development budget.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Conducting surveys with businesses and residents ensures that community members are informed, consulted and involved in the creation of the City's updated EDSP.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL INVOLVEMENT/IMPLICATIONS

The communications plan for promoting this survey has been supported by the Manager of Communications and Government Relations and the Communications Department.

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

In the 2021-2022 Council Strategic Priorities, under the “Our Economy” statement that “we will support the prosperity and diversification of the City’s economic base,” there is an objective to update the City’s Economic Development Strategy. The related action-item, to implement the current and subsequent revised Economic Strategy, is identified as a “High Priority” item.

The engagement with businesses and residents through the survey to obtain feedback on economic development in White Rock also relates to the ongoing partnership objective under the “Our Economy,” which is to “partner with the White Rock BIA, South Surrey & White Rock Chamber of Commerce, Tourism White Rock Association and the local business community to attract business to the community.”

OPTIONS / RISKS / ALTERNATIVES

The following options are available for Council’s consideration:

1. Direct staff to undertake other ways to obtain input from businesses and residents, such as hiring an outside consultant or survey company to conduct the surveys;
2. Direct staff to distribute the surveys without receiving input from the EDAC; or
3. Direct staff to proceed with the EDSP update without undertaking the surveys.

CONCLUSION

Two drafted surveys for obtaining feedback from businesses and residents regarding their views are attached. This engagement is being proposed by the EDO as a kick-off activity for the updating of the 2009 Economic Development Strategic Plan with a new vision, objectives and strategies. This corporate report provides copies of the draft surveys to Council and requests that Council refer the draft surveys to the EDAC for informal input that staff will consider prior to distributing the survey.

Respectfully submitted,



Carl Isaak, MCIP, RPP
Director, Planning and Development Services

Comments from the Chief Administrative Officer

I concur with the recommendation of this corporate report.



Guillermo Ferrero
Chief Administrative Officer