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## **Council-In-Committee Meeting – June 04, 2019**

Subject: Economic Development Strategy Final Report  
Report Number: DCS 19-48  
Division: Development and Cultural Services  
Department: Tourism and Economic Development  
Purpose: For Decision

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### **Executive Summary:**

This report seeks endorsement from Norfolk County Council of the Economic Development Strategy recommendations developed through a community-based consultation process undertaken between April 2018 and May 2019.

### **Discussion:**

As follow up to Report DCS 19-14 presented to Council in February 2019, the final version of *Norfolk County Economic Development Strategy (Attachment A)* contains a series of strategic directions and recommendations based on local economic data, feedback from survey comments, round table discussions, engagement with the Project Oversight Team and Technical Advisory Team, reviews of interim recommendations presented to Norfolk County Council, and other consultations with stakeholders, business owners and local residents.

The purpose of the Economic Development Strategy is to provide overall guidance on matters related to the philosophy of community economic development in Norfolk County. It will help to shape operational and tactical initiatives and programs moving forward.

### **Strategic Directions:**

The Economic Development Strategy can be summarized into three Strategic Directions:

- A. Help Entrepreneurs to Expand Wealth and Prosperity
- B. Harness Community Energy to Improve Public Spaces
- C. Welcome Youth and Newcomers to Grow Population and Workforce

Each Strategic Direction within the document includes a series of focus areas, under which several recommendations are outlined.

An additional section includes recommendations for measuring the success of the municipality's efforts in implementing the Economic Development Strategy.

A complete background for this project can be reviewed at [norfolkbusiness.ca/strategy](http://norfolkbusiness.ca/strategy).

After the interim recommendations were presented to Council, the community was asked to prioritize the proposed strategic directions and recommendation for each of them, to help inform the final report. More than 400 respondents completed the survey called "Economic Development Strategic Directions" (Attachment B) in March 2019.

### Implementation Priorities and Next Steps

Next steps for the Economic Development Strategy will include working with staff, businesses, stakeholders, advisory boards, Senior Leadership Team and Council to implement the following tangible actions that the local community can affect:

1. Stabilize funding for key municipal economic development efforts to retain / expand existing business and attract new investment in priority sectors (value-added agriculture, sustainable tourism, emerging industries) through business visits and consultations, supports for entrepreneurs, and incentives for businesses poised to grow meaningful employment opportunities.
2. Transition destination tourism marketing programs into a new "All Norfolk" model aimed at increasing community pride, resident attraction and workforce development through continued collaboration with the private sector and securing new, independent sources of revenue.
3. Increase participation by citizen volunteers, business operators and other stakeholders in tangible community economic development projects including enhancement of downtowns, newcomer settlement services, volunteer engagement and coordination, and other initiatives.

Tangible next steps after Council approval of the Economic Development Strategy will include the scheduling of discussion round tables on priority topics. Advisory Boards, stakeholders, County staff and others will be invited to participating in shaping the way forward. A research document, "Ideas for Future Solutions", may also assist with implementation priorities and next steps. See Attachment C.

### Monitoring Performance Measurement

To measure performance of the recommendations contained within the Economic Development Strategy, an annual staff report will be presented to Advisory Boards and Council. Additionally, a new monitoring tool for 2020 onward could involve enrolling the municipality in the World Council of Cities Data Project. This affordable initiative would track Norfolk County's compliance with ISO 37120, an international standard, as described in Section 10, "Key Performance Indicators of the Economic Development Strategy".

**Financial Services Comments:**

The Economic Development Strategy initiative is being conducted in-house with no additional resources. Costs incurred to date to develop the final report have been absorbed within the Tourism and Economic Development department's existing budget. As recommended actions are implemented, any new initiatives resulting in additional costs will be subsequently presented to Council in a separate report for consideration and approval or, alternatively, included in future operating budgets as a New Budget Initiative for Council's consideration along with all other new initiative requests.

**Interdepartmental Implications:**

N/A

**Consultation(s):**

The Norfolk County Economic Development Strategy Review involved a Project Oversight Team and a Technical Advisory Committee of municipal staff and representatives from provincial ministries and regional agencies. The project took into consideration feedback from almost 2,000 responses from four online surveys, and suggestions gathered at ten round tables across Norfolk County. The interim recommendations were also reviewed at public meetings of the Tourism and Economic Development Advisory Board and the Agriculture Advisory Board. See Section 11, "Acknowledgements", of the Economic Development Strategy for a list of participants.

**Strategic Plan Linkage:**

The Economic Development Strategy is intrinsically linked as a foundational document to the municipality's Corporate Strategic Plan. This version of the Economic Development Strategy aligns well with the existing Corporate Strategic Plan and will assist in the revision of future editions.

**Conclusion:**

Approval of the Norfolk County Economic Development Strategy is required to replace the former strategy document approved in December 2011.

**Recommendation(s):**

THAT Norfolk County Council receive Report DCS 19-48, *Economic Development Strategy Final Report*, as information;

AND THAT Norfolk County Council endorse the recommendations contained within the Economic Development Strategy;

AND FURTHER THAT staff be directed to implement the priorities set out in the report.

**Attachment(s):**

- A. Norfolk County Economic Development Strategy 2019 Final Report

B. Survey Results: "Economic Development Strategic Directions"

C. Research Document: Ideas for Future Solutions

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