

## **Municipality of Chatham-Kent**

### **Community Development**

**To:** Mayor and Members of Council

**From:** John Norton, General Manager Community Development  
Karen Loney, Community Development Coordinator

**Date:** March 30, 2020

**Subject:** CK Growth Strategy and Economic Recovery

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This report is for the information of Council.

#### **New Opportunities and Action Plan**

The Covid-19 crisis has had a profound impact on the local economy, as well as national and international economies. The impact continues to evolve as the health crisis unfolds. At this time the total economic impact is unknown.

The unexpected economic impacts from Covid-19 have created economic uncertainty. Therefore, the CK Growth Strategy needs to be flexible to address the new and uncertain changes happening to our economy.

At this time, at least for the short term, some items in the CK Growth Strategy should be deferred for the short-term until the economy stabilizes.

On the other hand, the current economic uncertainty creates new economic opportunities. The CK Growth Strategy needs to pivot to this new economic situation.

In response, the following steps have been undertaken:

#### **Step One: Corporate Economic Recovery Committee**

A cross-departmental staff committee has been created to focus on economic recovery. The purpose of the internal economic recovery committee is to review the municipal corporation's role, opportunities and policies to mitigate the economic impact of Covid-19. This is crucial to getting the municipality focused and ready for the economy after the Covid-19 crisis. The committee will consider making recommendations in regard to the CK Growth Strategy.

The Community Development Advisory Committee (Committee of Council, chair Councillor Aaron Hall) will be consulted by this new staff Corporate Economic Recovery Committee.

In addition, the Committee will consider whether a community “CK Economic Recovery Task Force” should be created. This Task Force would bring together business leaders to lead on the community’s economic recovery.

### **Step Two: Mobilizing Economic Development Services**

Chatham-Kent Economic Development is being up staffed on a temporary basis by other employees who are available. There is no additional cost to the corporation for this additional up staffing since existing employees are being redeployed from other jobs on a temporary basis.

Economic Development is contacting small business owners to offer support. A new page called “Covid-19 Business Resources” has been created on our webpage and can be reviewed at this link: <https://www.chatham-kent.ca/EconomicDevelopment/covid-19-business-resources>.

To support business sustainability and resiliency during the Covid-19 crisis Economic Development services will be enhancing the following supports to business.

- Increased communication to raise awareness of resources and support,
- One on one support to help businesses wanting to access Covid-19 grants, or programs,
- Increased digital support for e-commerce to support changing practices,
- Business continuity planning,
- Direct reach out to businesses to be a network for resources, and
- Development of new training support in response to changing needs.

Services will be continually reviewed to ensure Economic Development is responsive to supporting the needs of the business community.

### **Step Three: Continuous Communication**

To support Chatham-Kent business leaders to be champions in responding to the Covid-19 crisis and to support economic resiliency and growth in CK it is important that they are knowledgeable of resources and how they can help. A communication plan will be developed that will enhance the CK Economic Task Force and corporate message using a continuous quality improvement approach. The strategic framework will be assessed and re-adjusted based on the impact of Covid-19.

### **Consultation**

This report will result in discussion with various small business owners, the collective Community Development Leadership Team, the Community Development Advisory Committee and the Municipal Internal Economic Operational team.

**Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications from this report as any recommendations would return to Council for consideration

Prepared by:

Reviewed by:

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