



REQUEST FOR DECISION

MEETING DATE: September 27, 2021

TITLE: Council Delegation - Economic Development Advisory Committee Report to Council

DIVISION: City Manager's Office

SUMMARY:

The reports prepared by the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) on the Industrial Land Strategy and Red Tape Reduction are being brought forward to Council.

PROPOSED MOTION:

THAT the reports on the Industrial Land Strategy and Red Tape Reduction prepared by the Economic Development Advisory Committee be received as information.

THAT the reports on the Industrial Land Strategy and Red Tape Reduction be referred to Administration for review and that Administration report back to Council with advice on the recommended actions contained in the reports.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

Council approved the 2021 workplan for the EDAC at its meeting on March 22, 2021. This included a review of the recommendations contained in the Industrial Land Strategy prepared by Altus Group and undertaking a Red Tape Reduction project to identify issues and opportunities to increase business competitiveness. This work has now been completed and the EDAC is now reporting back to Council on the results.

In order to undertake these tasks, the EDAC established two sub-committees – an Industrial Land Strategy Sub-Committee chaired by Councillor Michelle Gruhlke and a Red Tape Reduction

Sub-Committee chaired by Councillor Dave Oldham. A short synopsis of the work is provided below.

Industrial Land Sub-Committee

The purpose was to review the recommendations contained in the Industrial Land Strategy Report (January 18, 2021) prepared for the City by Altus Group. The Sub-Committee identified and augmented what they believe were the key issues and recommendations, and prioritized the recommended actions. These included concern about the mix of land uses in the industrial area, its negative impact on attracting industrial investment and the need to address zoning. Another recommendation was added that the City should investigate the feasibility of a separated grade crossing of the CN rail line as this is not only a competitiveness issue today but will become more significant as the City grows south of the tracks.

Red Tape Reduction Sub-Committee

This sub-committee was charged with looking for opportunities to streamline processes and shorten timelines for development and permit approvals, and identifying other measures to make the municipality more competitive. A survey was developed and distributed to a cross-section of businesses and developers in Spruce Grove. The results were tabulated under five main themes which led to the development of a number of recommended actions that focused heavily on the development and permit approval processes and taking a more facilitative approach with clients.

Next Steps

The reports on the Industrial Land Strategy and Red Tape Reduction were both approved at the EDAC meeting on September 7, 2021 with direction to forward them to Council for consideration.

OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES:

n/a

CONSULTATION / ENGAGEMENT:

The reports on the Industrial Land Strategy and Red Tape Reduction were developed by the EDAC which is a Council Committee established to provide advice on business and economic development matters. The EDAC has 11 members including 3 Councillors (Councillor Erin Stevenson as chair; Councillor Dave Oldham and Councillor Michelle Gruhlke). The other members are drawn from business and community stakeholders including the Greater Parkland Regional Chamber of Commerce and the City Centre Business Association.

IMPLEMENTATION / COMMUNICATION:

Administration will review the findings and recommendations contained in the reports submitted to Council by the EDAC and will subsequently report back to Council on recommended actions.

IMPACTS:

The report on the Industrial Land Strategy is intended to address the shortage of serviced industrial land in Spruce Grove – particularly for larger parcels. The recommendations, if approved by Council, would be incorporated into the City's 2022 Corporate Plan.

The Red Tape Reduction Report provides input to the City on areas where there may be an opportunity to improve the City's development and permit approval processes and increase the City's economic competitiveness. This will also assist the City in submitting its annual report on red tape reduction to Alberta Municipal Affairs as required by Bill 48 - *Red Tape Reduction Implementation Act, 2020*.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

n/a

STRATEGIC VISION ELEMENT:

Where People Choose to Grow a Business - A strong, diversified business centre

RELATED GOAL:

The City has well developed relationships with key stakeholders in the community and the region who impact the economic success of the City's business sector.