



Subject: Economic Development Highlights
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Department: Planning and Development Services
Date: March 20, 2018

In accordance with the Procedure By-law, any Member of Council may request that this Information Report be placed on an upcoming General Committee or Council meeting agenda for discussion.

Executive Summary

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide Council with a high level summary of economic development activities and achievements in Aurora. The highlighted activities include:

- Establishing an Economic Development Board provide advice and recommendations on community economic development.
- The hiring of a full time Economic Development Officer.
- The launch of the Business Visitation Program to improve business engagement
- Announcement of a partnership with Niagara College to renovate the Aurora Armoury as a new post-secondary facility and innovation incubator.
- The attraction of new hotel investment to Aurora.
- The development and sale of the Aurora Business Park.
- The implementation of the Aurora Promenade Community Improvement Plan.
- The redevelopment of Library Square.
- The establishment of small cell pilot projects with Bell and Rogers.
- The approval of significant new employment lands along Highway 404.
- The implementation of two way 15 minute train service from Aurora to union station.
- An expanded Business Concierge Service program to manage all non-residential development activities.

Background

Staff have been working on a variety of economic development programs that address several key action items as outlined in the Town's Strategic Plan and Economic Development Action Plan. These initiatives and related achievements are summarized below.

Analysis

The following paragraphs provide a summary of the recent economic development achievement in Aurora.

Establishment of the Economic Development Board

Aurora has a long history of seeking volunteer expertise to provide Council economic development advice. Most recently, the Town appointed an Economic Development Advisory Committee that approved an Economic Development Action Plan to guide economic development activities. The Aurora Economic Development Board is being established to assume this advisory role and provide advice and recommendations on community economic development.

Hiring of a full time Economic Development Officer

The Town hired a full time Economic Development Officer to lead business visitation activities, coordinate economic development marketing activities and administer the Town's Community Improvement Plan in 2017.

Launch of the Business Visitation Program

The Town launched a business visitation program in the summer of 2017 and has visited dozens of businesses over the past several months. The purpose of the program is to improve communication and establish relationships with the business community. This program has allowed us to be more proactive in addressing the needs of local business.

Partnership with Niagara College

The Town recently announced a partnership with Niagara College to renovate the Aurora Armoury as a new post-secondary facility and innovation incubator. The facility

will be operated by the Canadian Food and Wine Institute and provide training and services for local residents and businesses.

New Hotel Investment

The Town has been actively pursuing hotel investment for several years and recently announced the construction of a new Microtel Inn and Suites on Eric T Smith Way. In addition to the Microtel Hotel, staff have been successful at attracting two additional hotel investments on employment lands on Highway 404.

Sale of Aurora Business Park Lands

Economic development staff are responsible for the acquisition and disposition of lands in Aurora. Over the past several years, staff have been coordinating the servicing and sale of Aurora Business Park at Leslie Street and Highway 404. This 85 acre development has resulted in significant business investment including the corporate head office for Bulk Barn Food and over \$15 million of net revenue for the Town.

Aurora Promenade Community Improvement Plan

The Aurora Promenade CIP was approved by Council in February 2014. A CIP is a tool provided under the *Planning Act* that allows a municipality to offer financial incentives to the private sector to stimulate redevelopment. The incentive programs of the Aurora Promenade CIP represent a tailored response to the property (re)development needs within the CIP Area. Council has approved funding for 5 project applications under the CIP to date.

Library Square Redevelopment

The Town recently announced a major downtown revitalization project adjacent to the Aurora Public Library and Aurora Cultural Centre. The project, referred to as library square, will introduce a community square and community gathering area as well as provide additional community space with a planned expansion to the Aurora Cultural Centre.

Small Cell Partnerships to enhance Cellular Service

The Town of Aurora was the first community in York Region to pilot a partnership with Bell Canada to install Small Cell Technology on municipal infrastructure. This partnership generates additional revenue for the Town and has improved service levels

for residents and businesses. The Town is currently in discussions with Rogers Communications to implement a similar pilot project.

Approval and servicing of new employment lands along highway 404

The Town will see a significant amount of employment lands enter the market along highway 404 and has been working with property owners and investors to assist with site selection support. The Town is also actively pursuing opportunities to advance the construction of an additional highway interchange at Highway 404 and St Johns Sideroad.

Enhanced Go Train Service

The Town has been working with Metrolinx to plan for the implementation of two way 15 minute train service from Aurora to union station. This includes the expansion of the existing rail corridor and the construction of a new grade separation at Wellington St. The increased service levels will have a significant impact on economic development.

Expansion of the Business Concierge Program

The Town has recently expanded its Business Concierge Service to manage all non-residential development activities. Staff have also prepared a brief video to describe the program and highlight a few successes.

Advisory Committee Review

None

Legal Considerations

None

Financial Implications

None

Communications Considerations

None

Link to Strategic Plan

This report summarizes various economic development activities that contribute to the advancement of several action items identified in the Economy Pillar of the Strategic Plan.

Alternative to the Recommendation

None.

Conclusions

Staff have been advancing several economic development programs that address several key action items as outlined in the Town's Strategic Plan and Economic Development Action Plan. These initiatives and related achievements are summarized in this report for information purposes.

Attachments

None.

Previous Reports

None.

Pre-submission Review

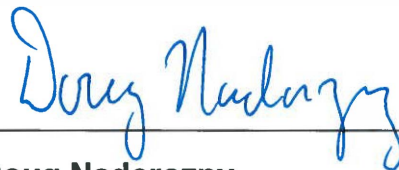
Agenda Management Team review on March 1, 2018

Departmental Approval



Marco Ramunno
Director
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Approved for Agenda



Doug Nadorozny
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