



Report

Subject:	Economic Development and Culture Strategy
Department:	Community Services
Division:	Economic Development
Report #:	CMS-2024-022
Meeting Date:	2024-11-04

Recommendations

That report CMS-2024-022, Economic Development and Culture Strategy 2024 - 2030, be received; and

That the Economic Development and Culture Strategy prepared by McSweeney & Associates Consulting Inc. be adopted; and

That Council direct the Economic Development and Culture division to begin implementation of the Strategy as part of its annual operating work plan; and

That Staff report annually on the implementation progress of the Economic Development and Culture Strategy.

Overview

In May 2024, the Town of Orangeville embarked on the development of a five-year Economic Development and Culture Strategy (EDC Strategy). The strategy will guide Orangeville's economic development efforts by addressing unique local needs and challenges and identifying future opportunities. The four-step development process was led by McSweeney and Associates Consulting Inc. in collaboration with the Economic Development and Culture (EDC) division and a Steering Committee comprised of representatives from the Town, the Orangeville Business Improvement Area, and Dufferin County.

The proposed EDC Strategy is built around three themes: CONNECT with Orangeville, ENHANCE Orangeville and BUILD Orangeville, and identifies three priority focus areas: Resilient Business Community, Small Business, and Tourism and Culture. Using this framework, the EDC Strategy outlines 39 specific actions and identifies the rationale behind each one. In crafting this EDC Strategy, the Town of Orangeville has created a

realistic and actionable plan to build on its existing assets and become a community of choice for business investment, retention, and growth.

Background

As part of the 2024 budget process, Council approved the development of a new EDC Strategy. All key actions in the existing 2018 strategy had been completed or had become irrelevant due to changes within the community. An updated strategy was required to understand and respond to shifts in the Town's local economy, business needs, assets, resources, and challenges. This need was reinforced by the Town's Corporate Strategic Plan 2023-2027, in which two of four strategic goals - Economic Resilience and Community Vitality – required specific economic development and culture support. This new EDC Strategy will guide Orangeville's approach to economic development over the next five years, to 2030.

Process

The creation of the EDC Strategy followed a defined four-step process:

1. **Discover:** Data and documents were reviewed and analyzed to build an understanding of the community. This step included the completion of an extensive Community Analysis and a review of comparator communities.
2. **Define:** Consultations with 125 stakeholders were completed using three different tools. An online survey aimed to gather input from a wide and diverse group of stakeholders and was distributed throughout the community. Business owners, employees, entrepreneurs, residents, organizations, students, and volunteers were all invited to respond to the survey. Invitations to one-on-one interviews and focus groups were targeted to business owners and leaders of community organizations, as well as representatives from the Town of Orangeville and Dufferin County. Each engagement tool asked the same seven open-ended questions that aimed to capture the community's vision for Orangeville. The consultation process was meaningful and intensive, ensuring broad community support and active engagement.
3. **Develop:** Findings from the first two steps were summarized and used to guide the development of strategic themes and actions. A working session brought together an engaged group of 31 stakeholders to identify a broad set of potential actions. These were reviewed and refined by the EDC Strategy Steering Committee and EDC Staff.
4. **Deliver:** The final EDC Strategy was completed for review and consideration by Council. Pending approval, a thorough Implementation Plan will support the execution of the EDC Strategy over the next five years by identifying specific tactics, timelines, budget, and partners.

Priority Areas of Focus and Themes

Through the development process, three Priority Areas of Focus were identified to guide the creation of relevant actions:

1. **Developing a Resilient Business Community:** Economic diversity is one of the most effective ways to increase long-term economic resilience. Actions focus on retaining local business, providing opportunities for business to grow, and attracting new business to the community while creating a climate conducive to investment.
2. **Supporting Small Business:** Small businesses are the heart of Orangeville. Actions to support these businesses ensure that they, in turn, can support the local economy by creating valuable connections, investing in community initiatives, and contributing to the tax base. Succession planning support, particularly for longstanding businesses, will help to maintain the vibrancy of Orangeville's small business community.
3. **Fostering Tourism and Culture:** Tourism and culture are intertwined in Orangeville. Important cultural assets also act as foundational tourism drivers that attract visitors, support local business, and create jobs in creative industries such as film, photography, and design. The Town's existing Tourism Strategy specifically recognizes the importance of tourism in Orangeville and identifies actions to attract visitors. Actions in the EDC Strategy aim to identify relationships, opportunities, and assets that can support culture and, in turn, tourism in Orangeville.

While each strategic action directly supports one Priority Area of Focus, it may also impact others. This is noted throughout the EDC Strategy and demonstrates the many connections that exist in Orangeville's business community.

As the strategic actions were developed, three themes became apparent and were used to define the overarching objectives of the work to be completed:

1. **Connect with Orangeville:** Addresses the need to better understand and serve the business community.
2. **Enhance Orangeville:** Focuses on improving the well-established community that already exists.
3. **Build Orangeville:** Identifies the actions that are required for Orangeville's future success.

Corporate Implications

The development of the EDC Strategy was funded through a 2024 Capital Budget request of \$75,000 and the project is expected to be completed on time and under budget. Many strategic actions can be delivered within the existing capacity and operating budget of the EDC division. Any support required from other divisions will be identified in the Implementation Plan and will be managed appropriately based on capacity. Should a strategic action require additional financial resources, a request will be made as part of the annual budget process.

Conclusion

The EDC Strategy will guide the economic development efforts in the Town of Orangeville over the next five years. By creating specific and relevant actions based on quantitative analysis and extensive stakeholder engagement, the Steering Committee and EDC division are confident that the strategy addresses the unique needs of Orangeville's business community and will help to support its resiliency and growth.

Strategic Alignment

Strategic Plan

Strategic Goals: Economic Resilience

Objectives: Readiness, Ecosystem and Competitiveness

Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan

Theme: Economic Development and Culture

Strategy: Preserve Orangeville's small-town appeal, while bolstering robust businesses and tourism opportunities that support a healthy economy.

Notice Provisions

Not Applicable

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachment(s): 1. Economic Development and Culture Strategy