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MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Shepherd and Council

DATE: January 26, 2006

FROM: Robert Fine

SUBJECT: Economic Development Commission Strategic Plan 2006

The EDC laid out an ambitious plan for 2005 and was able to accomplish all goals and objectives set forth. Inquiries to our office increased by 5% over the previous year and for the first year the EDC was able to apply an economic growth number specific to our region. For year end 2004 compared to 2003, our region experienced a growth of 11.1% and projections for 2005 look to be similar.

The EDC continued its Business Visitation Program with approximately 200 firms visited and follow up was provided to over 130 companies. The third annual business directory – 100 Reasons to Do Business in Kelowna and the Okanagan Valley – was produced. The EDC received three national marketing awards – two for the directory and one award for our highly successful website (1.5 million hits in 2005). Various information sessions were held for local business including HR Retention and Marketing Your Business. The EDC also attended industry specific tradeshow including International Council for Shopping Centers, Consumer Electronic Show, Global Petroleum and National Business Aviation Association. In 2005 a high technology study was released and we introduced our Business Confidence Survey in partnership with the Kelowna of Chamber of Commerce.

The 2006 Strategic Plan continues to build on the work projects and initiatives the EDC has undertaken over the last number of years. Three primary areas are identified – Business Enhancement, Business Attraction and Business Facilitation, and this year's plan has added the groundwork for a Community Vision Strategy for the years 2007 – 2012.

The 2006 plan allots a combined 80% of time and effort towards Business Enhancement and Facilitation while the remaining 20% is committed to Business Attraction.

It is important to note the increasing time the EDC spends on Core Activities. These are the activities that take place on an ongoing and/or daily basis. Inquiries have increased over 40% from 2003 to 2005 and the EDC expects that the current year will continue to see an increase in the activity we receive from the public, information dissemination, valley-wide initiatives and ongoing communication within the region.

Core Activities:

- Respond to public inquiries daily by phone, fax, e-mail and walk-in traffic
- Clearing house for information
- Data Updates (*Economic Profile, Cost of Living stats*);
- Valley-wide initiatives
- Work with companies seeking to locate in the Central Okanagan
- Work with manufacturers to ensure new markets developed
- Website Updating
- Ongoing communication with various agencies and organizations

Business Enhancement:

- Business Visitation Program – 200 businesses visited by year end
- Major Employer Visits
- Information Programs – Human Resources, Marketing, Recruitment
- Agricultural Field Service Program
- Cultural Tourism Support Officer
- HR Capital/Recruitment specific tradeshow
- Program specific to Fabrication Industry

Business Attraction:

- Investment Attraction Strategy – Valley Branding
- Aviation Industry
- Film Studio Feasibility
- Demographic Information

Business Facilitation:

- Okanagan Valley Economic Development Society
- 2010 Olympic Procurement Opportunities
- UBC-O – Recruitment, ORAN
- Business confidence Survey
- International Student Program – OC
- Initiative Strategic Vision Process (2007 – 2012)
- EDC Awareness

Community Vision

- Initiate Strategic Vision and Planning Strategy
- Creation of advisory/working committee
- 2007 - 2012

The full Strategic Plan is attached and will also be available at the EDC's website (www.investmentkelowna.com) once Board adoption is received. Any questions or comments can be made to Robert Fine, Executive Director, Economic Development Commission – Telephone: 469-6234 or Email: rfine@investkelowna.com

STRATEGIC PLAN

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Regional District of Central Okanagan

2006

Draft – January 19, 2006

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Regional District of Central Okanagan

VISION

“A prosperous region, where smart growth complements its natural resources and amenities embracing new global economic and social change.”

MISSION

“Working in partnership to facilitate a healthy, dynamic and sustainable community economy by supporting existing businesses and encouraging appropriate new business investment.”

VALUES

The EDC takes an objective and informed approach to research and evaluation while recognizing the relationship between economy, society, culture and environment. The Commission strives to work in the public interest and with all levels of government regardless of political affiliation.

The Board of Directors and the Staff of the EDC are committed to the following values:

- Integrity
- Fairness
- Co-Operation
- Leadership by Example
- Dignity
- Professionalism

2006 Board of Directors

James Baker – District of Lake Country	Appointee
Andre Blanleil – City of Kelowna	Appointee
JC (Broc) Braconnier – Community Futures	Ex-Officio
Myles Bruckal – Real Estate	Real Estate
Steve Burns – Burns Innovation Group	Business
Laurel Douglas – Women's Enterprise Society	Sm Business
Giles Dufort – Harvest Golf Club	Tourism
Theresa Greene – Peachland Chamber of Commerce	Appointee
Diana Groffen – OSTECH	Ex-Officio
Sharon Hallberg – District of Peachland	Appointee
Jim Hamilton – Okanagan College	Education
Tommie Hanley – Shop the Valley	Communication
Brad Imrich – Vadim Computer	High Tech
Ross Langford – Petraroia, Langford, Edwards & Rush	Law
Robert Louie – Westbank First Nation	First Nation
David MacLean – Kelowna Chamber of Commerce	Appointee
Barry McBride – UBC-O	Education
Mark John McInnes – Tolko Industries	Forestry
Bob Monaghan – Kelowna Flightcraft	Aviation
Len Novakowski – Regional District of Central Okanagan	Appointee
Bill Redmond	Business
Roger Sellick – Kelowna Int'l Airport	Aviation
Eric Sorensen – Sun-Rype	Manufacture
Scot Speiser – Business Development Bank	Finance
Ben Stewart – Quail's Gate Winery	Agri/wine
Mark Stober – Stober Construction	Development
Michael Trenn – Westbank Chamber of Commerce	Appointee
David Webb – Best HR Solutions	HR
Peter Withers – Lake Country Chamber of Commerce	Appointee

Executive Summary

The Economic Development Commission has finalized its Strategic Plan for the year 2006. This document provides an executive summary of the plan's objectives. For additional details, please refer to the full Strategic Plan document.

The plan will focus on three main areas as per the Strategic Planning Meeting and direction from our Board members. The plan builds upon initiatives begun in previous years and you will note that some initiatives are transferable between the three primary areas. A notable change in this year's plan is the addition of the initial work required for a Community Strategic Vision and Planning Strategy for 2007 – 2012.

Primary Focus Areas

The plan focuses on the following primary areas and the objectives within each area:

Business Enhancement: For the fourth consecutive year, Business Enhancement initiatives will represent a significant area of focus for the EDC as well as drive many of the initiatives developed under business attraction and facilitation. More than 600 site visits have been conducted to date. These visits have provided a number of benefits in addition to being a means of building relationships with businesses and assisting them with specific challenges. The visits have also been an effective vehicle for increasing the Commission's profile, and communicating to businesses about the resources available to them in the community. With the depth of knowledge and first-hand insight into the local business environment that EDC has, the Commission will be more proactive in identifying and initiating programs and services that will ensure long-term, sustainable economic development.

Business Attraction: A strategic shift from attracting new businesses to the Region, to attracting *investment in* Central Okanagan businesses took place in 2005. This strategy goes to the next level in 2006 by focusing on the development of specific industry sectors that hold the greatest potential for long-term growth and development. The lack of skilled workers and training opportunities for them is becoming critical in the Okanagan, and a recruitment theme will be applied throughout business attraction activities.

Business Facilitation: Activities in this area are ongoing and proactive. With the creation of a valley-wide economic development society, a regional approach to economic development can evolve from formal, tangible objectives. EDC will continue to build on the initiatives and outcomes identified through the Okanagan Partnership and opportunities related to UBC Okanagan. The Business Confidence Survey initiated in 2005 will continue as will our annual Economic Profile and quarterly Cost of Living index. These products provide valuable tools in the timely identification of issues and measuring the state of the local economy.

Community Vision: A significant addition to the EDC's Strategic Plan as we look towards how the future of our region will look within the next five years. In 2006, we will lay the groundwork necessary to produce a detailed Strategic Community Vision document for the years 2007 – 2012.

Business Enhancement – Strategy and Tactics

1. Continue site visits and follow-up assistance to Central Okanagan businesses in all industry sectors with the goal of visiting 200 businesses by December 31, 2006.
2. Build on the informational programs created to address the most common challenges mentioned through the Visitation program with series on at least two topics in communities throughout the Central Okanagan.
3. Implement the Agricultural Field Service Program to help farm-related businesses diversify and develop strategic, sustainable businesses.
4. Develop the opportunities associated with the Okanagan Cultural Corridor through a program coordinated an Arts/Culture/Cultural Tourism Support Officer who will work directly with arts/and culture-related businesses.
5. Research and identify ways to assist local businesses in realizing trade opportunities with China, including a potential trade mission to China in late 2006 in partnership with S.U.C.C.E.S.S.
6. Attend at least two trade shows specifically focused on skilled human capital/recruitment.
7. Visit 10 of the largest employers in the Region to learn about their business and to ensure their retention in the Region.
8. Marketing plan developed for the region's fabrication industry and identification of opportunities within the oil and gas industry.

Business Attraction – Strategy and Tactics

1. Continue to employ a valley-wide investment attraction strategy in conjunction with the Okanagan Partnership, and to focus on attracting investment dollars to the Okanagan versus attracting actual new businesses. Focus on appropriate investment to specific industry sectors identified by the Okanagan Partnership that hold the greatest potential for growth and development. Identify the regional branding message that will be used consistently by various business and tourism-related organizations involved with marketing the valley, and incorporate this message into strategic marketing collateral.
2. Build on the opportunities identified to grow the Central Okanagan aviation industry through a strategic marketing and awareness campaign. (*Enhancement and Attraction.*)
3. Attend several trade shows related specifically to the manufacturing and technology sectors, with the purpose of marketing the Okanagan Valley and encouraging investment in Central Okanagan businesses. Incorporate a skilled human capital/recruitment component to our presence at these events.
4. Coordinate a feasibility study on the viability of establishing a film studio for film and television production in the Central Okanagan.

5. Ensure EDC's databases, demographics and other information are kept current and the systems and processes to disseminate information are efficient.
6. As a follow up to our attendance and involvement at CeBIT and in the German market, a formalized follow up procedure will be developed.

Business Facilitation – Strategy and Tactics

1. Take a lead role in supporting and educating the community as a whole on initiatives that promote long-term economic benefits (i.e. the opportunities associated with the UBC Okanagan/Okanagan College, 2010 Olympic procurement opportunities, etc.)
2. Continue to support efforts to expand the high-speed internet network through ORAN to sufficiently support the needs of Central Okanagan businesses and help attract new business to the Region.
3. Continue to educate other organizations serving the business community on the work of the EDC, invite reciprocal presentations, and identify new partnership opportunities to deliver programs and services that meet the information needs of business community.
4. Build upon the existing International Student Program.
5. In 2005, a valley wide economic development society was created to share information and enhance regional cooperation. This will be the first year that specific initiatives are developed through the Society.
6. Continue to conduct a Business Confidence Survey every two months and use the Business Confidence Index as a tool in measuring economic activity and identifying areas where economic assistance is needed.
7. In co-ordination with UBC-O market the region to young people through a series of programs.
8. Initiate a strategic vision and five-year strategic plan for the Central Okanagan Regional District, incorporating a wide range of community interest to help shape activities for 2007 – 2012.

Community Vision – Strategy and Tactics

1. Creation of advisory/working committee ensuring all stakeholders are involved.
2. Request for Proposal process including the terms of reference and hiring process.
3. Preliminary work begins with consultant to fully develop a plan in 2007.

Introduction

The Strategic Plan for 2006 continues to build on the work projects and initiatives that EDC has undertaken over the last four years. Through the strategic planning process with the EDC Board of Directors, three primary areas – Business Enhancement, Business Attraction and Business Facilitation – have been identified, and related activities developed. A notable addition to this year's plan is the Community Strategic Vision and Planning Strategy for 2007 –2012. This is a significant undertaking with the groundwork for the Strategy laid out in 2006 and the full document and detailed related activity being undertaken in 2007.

Through the strategic planning process, the industry leaders and regional representatives that comprise the EDC Board recognized the important role EDC has played in such initiatives as establishing a full status university; the development of a formal organization dedicated to regional economic development, expansion of services at Kelowna Airport, and others. With the depth of knowledge and first-hand insight into the local business environment that EDC has, the Commission will take a more proactive, lead role in identifying and initiating programs and services that will ensure long-term, sustainable economic development. The skills and expertise of individual board members will be better utilized in order to better assist local businesses to grow and thrive.

The importance of key performance measures to monitor the work of EDC is reflected in the identification of specific activities, budget implications and timelines for the implementation of projects. During the audit periods of June and December, 2006, the outcomes will be reviewed to measure the value of these activities.

Within the primary areas of EDC activity, the percentage of time and effort devoted to each is estimated as follows for 2006:

Business Enhancement	50%
Business Attraction	15%
Facilitation	30%
Community Vision	5%

It is important to note that considerable staff time is devoted to the following core activities that take place on an ongoing and/or daily basis:

Core Activities:

- **Respond to public inquiries daily by phone, fax, e-mail and walk-in traffic** (over 11,500 inquiries in 2006 – up approximately 5% over 2005);
- **Clearing house for information** (approximately 250 one-on-one consulting and advisement meetings in 2005);
- **Data Updates** (Economic Profile, Cost of Living stats);
- **Valley-wide initiatives** (Okanagan Partnerships, Okanagan Valley Economic Development Society (OVEDS));
- **Work with companies seeking to locate in the Central Okanagan**
- **Work with manufacturers to ensure new markets developed** (Assist with market diversification strategy development; participation in trade shows and other initiatives);
- **Newsletter development** (Excellent response to electronic newsletter and distribution system - distributed weekly to up to 2,000 businesses, proving an effective way to increase attendance at events and awareness of programs and initiatives.)

- **Website Updating** (*regular updating of links and downloads on site – 1.5 million hits annually*);
- **Ongoing communication with various agencies and organizations** (*i.e. Okanagan Science and Technology Council, Chambers, Community Futures, Women's Enterprise Society, etc*)

PRIMARY FOCUS AREAS

Business Enhancement

Research in the field of economic development shows that the majority of wealth in a community is generated by the existing business base and that a strong and viable business retention focus is fundamental to a successful economic development strategy. The goal of business enhancement is to ensure the EDC has a good level of interaction with the business community and can access accurate data in order to resolve problems and concerns quickly and effectively.

Common challenges for Okanagan Valley businesses have been clearly identified through industry-specific studies, business confidence surveys, and the hundreds of in-person site visits done by EDC over the last several years. These challenges include provincial and global economic influences, shortage of skilled workers, increased competition, and expectations of greater production, transportation and communication by modern consumers.

Our research also shows that as Valley businesses grow – increasing staff numbers and stepping up productivity - human resource management and recruitment issues and the need for well defined marketing strategies become increasing challenges. As EDC has assisted more and more local companies in dealing with these issues through its Business Enhancement Program, awareness of our services and the demand for them has increased.

In 2006, EDC's Business Enhancement efforts will continue not only address the issues common to all sectors such as recruitment and marketing, and also include initiatives related to specific sectors that have been identified as having considerable growth potential. For example, new initiatives related to the aviation and agricultural sectors are identified in the 2006 Plan. We will leverage the wide range of information we have gathered and continue to gather through our enhancement work and our first-hand insight into the local economic environment in taking a more proactive role in developing long-term sustainable businesses.

Business Attraction

The continued success of a region is, in part, dependent on its ability to attract new businesses to the region. A successful Business Attraction program requires a significant upfront investment in time and resources to broaden awareness of the Central Okanagan as a place to locate, and ensure that the "right" type of business is pursued. It is essential that business attraction efforts are targeted at businesses that complement the overall vision for the area, are compatible with the Region's strengths, and relate to achievable targets.

EDC has played a key role in the maturation of the Central Okanagan economy. We have had influence in the decisions of several major companies to locate in the Central Okanagan including companies in the manufacturing, high technology, financial, retail and contact center industries. Together these new companies have created thousands of new jobs in the region. We know from our Business Enhancement work that as the community matures, there is need for capital to facilitate continued growth and expansion of the many small businesses that make up the Central Okanagan economy.

This maturation of the economy and the demand for EDC's services were key to the decision last year to shift our Business Attraction activities to attracting *investment dollars into the valley* rather than *attracting new businesses*. In addition, there are now a number of established niche

markets and products that can be marketed specifically. Initiatives to position the Valley as a centre for aviation, technical research and a wide range of manufacturing are being developed.

Building on a major valley branding exercise that took place in 2005, EDC will work to develop new marketing collateral that employs consistent use of local and regional branding messages and logo. The regional brand will be adapted to marketing initiatives to attract workers and investment to specific industries, as well as marketing materials for the Commission itself including display at Kelowna International airport.

Attending trade shows to market the Okanagan Valley business investment opportunity remains an important attraction initiative and several key shows which have yielded good results in the past will be attended. The EDC will also attend for the first time: Globe 2006 (environmental technology), the Incentive Works ((meeting/incentive travel), and the Specialty Equipment Market Association – SEMA (automotive industry) – all strategically chosen based on the objectives to promote and develop the manufacturing and technology sectors. A recruitment theme will be woven into the appropriate trade shows.

Maintaining systems and processes that ensure EDC can respond to inquiries for information about the community will continue to be a priority in order to support the effectiveness of all attraction efforts.

Business Facilitation

Effective business facilitation is also key to success in regional economic development. This requires developing an information infrastructure that includes tools to ensure good communication with decision-makers at all levels of government and other community organizations. EDC must ensure that a business perspective is incorporated into the decision-making process by these entities, and be aware of the financial resources available for business retention and growth. Effective business facilitation also requires EDC to work with groups outside its specific region on growth management strategies with regional benefits.

Activities in this area are ongoing and proactive: continuing to promote a valley-wide approach to economic development, making sources of information and assistance known and accessible to the business community, improving communication between regional planning entities, and initiating and supporting programs that ensure the long-term economic viability of the region such as the opportunities associated with UBC Okanagan and the Okanagan Partnership. The Business Confidence Survey initiated in 2005 that is delivered every two months has proved to be a valuable measure of how companies feel about their future and the general economy and will continue to be implemented as a tool for regional planning.

The rapid growth and of the Okanagan Valley and a more regional approach to economic development that is taking place point to the need for a valley-wide strategic vision. EDC will initiate the process to create a five-year strategic plan for the Central Okanagan Regional District, with the program being undertaken in 2007.

The year 2006 will see additional projects related to the facilitation of information and resources available to agriculture-related businesses, and information exchanges between the EDC and other business organizations to improve communication and dissemination of information to the public.

Community Vision

This is a significant addition to the plan and has the EDC looking towards the shape and identify of our region within the next five years. In 2006, we will lay the groundwork necessary to produce a detailed Strategic Community Vision document for the years 2007 – 2012. This year's work will include the identification of all stakeholders in the region, the terms of reference necessary for completion of the vision document and the formation of a advisory/working committee to oversee the project.

The vision document will describe the kind of community that people who live and work in the region want it to become over the next five years and what role the EDC will play. The document will set direction for the future with some of the directives happening immediately while others evolving over the years. Continuous community involved will be necessary to set priorities and as the document is completed and directions translated into actions and projects a significant impact may be made on the planning process for the EDC.

STRATEGY AND TACTICS

BUSINESS ENHANCEMENT

Business Enhancement - Objectives

1. Continue site visits and follow-up assistance to Central Okanagan businesses in all industry sectors with the goal of visiting 200 businesses by December 31, 2006.
2. Build on the informational programs created to address the most common challenges mentioned through the Visitation program with series on at least two topics in communities throughout the Central Okanagan.
3. Implement the Agricultural Field Service Program to help farm-related businesses diversify and develop strategic, sustainable businesses.
4. Develop the opportunities associated with the Okanagan Cultural Corridor through a program coordinated an Arts/Culture/Cultural Tourism Support Officer who will work directly with arts/and culture-related businesses.
5. Research and identify ways to assist local businesses in realizing trade opportunities with China, including a trade mission to China in late 2006 in partnership with S.U.C.C.E.S.S.
6. Attend at least two trade shows specifically focused on skilled human capital/recruitment.
7. Visit 10 of the largest employers in the Region to learn about their business and to ensure their retention in the Region.
8. Marketing plan developed for the region's fabrication industry and identification of opportunities within the oil and gas industry.

Business Enhancement-Background and Rationale

The Commission continues to make Business Enhancement its primary focus area, having demonstrated over the past four years how the concept of a community with a strong and growing economic base is attractive to individuals and companies looking to locate and invest in a community.

The foundation of the program is the Visitation program and once again EDC has the goal of visiting another 200 Central Okanagan businesses in all industry sectors by the end of 2006. EDC directors will be encouraged to participate in these site visits and assist with follow up assistance so that local businesses can benefit from their industry-specific knowledge and experience. We will continue to share the results of our Business Enhancement surveys and site visits with other business organizations and continue to partner with them to market and deliver appropriate programs. This will include an expansion of the Business in Park series on topics of relevance to a wide range of businesses.

Building on the work done in 2004 and 2005 to identify new opportunities for farm-related businesses, an Agricultural Field Service Program will be implemented in 2006 providing direct one-on one assistance to agricultural community. Similarly, a Cultural Tourism Support Officer

will also be hired to work one-on-one with individuals and businesses throughout the Okanagan Cultural Corridor to further develop and promote the valley's arts and culture products.

EDC will capitalize on the potential to develop the valley's aviation industry through initiatives aimed at raising the profile of local aviation companies; partnering with existing businesses to attract suppliers and customers, and increasing investment in these firms through partnerships and new product development.

The Commission will build on its work in 2005 with S.U.C.C.E.S.S. – a major immigration and social services agency out of Vancouver help local companies realize opportunities for them to do business with China.

The lack of skilled workers that is affecting many sectors will be addressed in part by working with UBC Okanagan and other partners to identify the issues that prevent young people from staying in the Region to pursue their careers. Solutions to the skilled worker issue will also be addressed through the newly established Okanagan Valley Economic Development Society. The Commission will attend at least two trade shows aimed at attracting skilled workers to the area in addition to industry-specific trade shows where local businesses are invited to attend. (See also *Business Attraction*.)

1. Continue Site Visits

Using the services of the EDC's contracted Business Enhancement Specialist, visits will be ongoing to Central Okanagan businesses in all industries. The goal will be to interview 200 businesses by the end of the year and provide individual follow-up as required. A systematic approach to include EDC directors on visits will be employed.

The findings of the Visitation program will continue to be used to develop programs and initiatives in the Strategic Plan. The breakdown of businesses visited will be 25 businesses in Peachland, 25 businesses in Lake Country, 25 businesses in Westbank and 125 in Kelowna.

Actions for Implementation

- | | |
|--|----------|
| • Identify businesses to visit (coordinated between consultant and Executive Director) | Ongoing |
| • Consultant to organize meetings with business | Ongoing |
| • Consultant to coordinate plan to involve EDC directors to attend visits | February |
| • Follow up to meetings (consultant) | Ongoing |
| • Consultant to provide detail visit breakdown | Monthly |
| • Consultant to provide overview of visits, results, trends, etc. | June/Dec |

Partnership and Financial Implications

Continue to work with Chambers of Commerce, OSTEC and the business community in general to identify companies to visit. The program budget is \$60,000.

2. Visitation Response Program

In 2004, EDC introduced the Business in the Park series of educational programs – short, inexpensive lunch time programs held for groups of up to 20 businesses in Lake Country, Kelowna, Westbank and Peachland. To date, Business in the Park programs on hiring and marketing topics have been well received in all locations for the efficient, convenient delivery of

pertinent information. Based on this success, the program will be expanded to address two new topics of interest to a wide range of businesses in 2006.

Other information and networking programs will be held in conjunction with appropriate partners to meet the needs expressed by the business community.

Actions for Implementation

- Identify appropriate programs that meet the needs expressed by businesses visited Ongoing
- Develop second stage marketing program for Business in the Park March
- Develop “Capitalization” program for Business in the Park May/June
- Continue Export series (minimum of 1) September
- Sponsorship of AceTech event (CEO focus) June

Partnership and Financial Implications

The EDC will partner with the appropriate organizations for the various program series including the Chamber of Commerce(s), OSTECH and Community Futures. Additional partners may be identified as other program series are developed. Budget for all identified series and sponsorships is \$6,000.

3. Agriculture Field Service Program

The purpose of the program is to provide direct assistance to the Okanagan farming community and develop this economic sector to its full potential. Several factors provide the basis for the creation of the program. Farming, traditionally the backbone of the Central Okanagan, has declined in financial sustainability over the last three decades. To remain viable, farmers must look to innovative opportunities that exist for them in such areas as crop choice, value-added diversification, agri-tourism and new marketing channels. The challenge to realizing these opportunities has been for agriculturalists themselves to find the time and ability to research and explore opportunities for sustainable farming.

Much like the EDC's Visitation program which is based on site visits to companies in all sectors and one-on-one follow up, the AFSP is aimed at bringing guidance and assistance specifically to the agricultural sector in order to develop more strategically oriented, sustainable businesses. The AFSP is an opportunity for the region to support the development of sustainable and economically rewarding farming in the Okanagan. The program will focus on two target areas: understanding the ongoing challenges facing the agriculture industry, and assisting farm operators directly to pursue new opportunities. In addition, the program will develop proactive agriculture initiatives throughout the region.

Actions for Implementation

- Conduct situation analysis study February
- Create mentoring administration model February
- Conduct mentoring interviews Ongoing
- Plan and implement association seminars March/Nov
- Plan for education sessions April
- Assist with conducting education programs Oct/Ongoing
- Organize information library May/Ongoing
- Organize information website July/Ongoing
- Complete 20 case project reviews November

Partnerships and Financial Implications

The program is a partnership between the EDC, CORD planning department and Western Economic Diversification. Budget from the EDC is \$25,000 with total budget for program set at \$110,000.

4. Okanagan Cultural Corridor Project/ Arts/Culture/Tourism Support Officer

Comprehensive research, analysis and planning for developing and marketing the cultural tourism experience in the Okanagan Cultural Corridor – a geographic area bound by the regional districts of North Okanagan, Central Okanagan and Okanagan-Similkameen - has been underway since 2000. This work has identified the need to further develop the arts and cultural community and marketing the Regional arts and culture product as means of building the economy.

Arts and culture are generally recognized as one of the four pillars of community development (along with economy, environment and social). Creative cities attract new residents and businesses; these cities also have a better record in retaining residents. Arts and culture are also important contributors to the economy. Employment growth more than tripled in BC for the arts and cultural sector between 1971 and 2001. Compared with an increase of 81% in the overall labour force, the cultural labour force grew by 160%.

Cultural tourism is increasingly recognized world wide as a significant marketing opportunities, as the traveling population ages, it will be seeking out travel experiences which offer learning, enrichment and a sense of place. Growth projections from the Canadian Tourism Commissions TAMS reports within the US market, over the next 20 years, travel by performing arts enthusiasts is expected to increase by 44%, visual arts by 39%, heritage by 37% and wine/culinary by 36%.

Much like the EDC's Visitation program, an Arts/Culture/Cultural Tourism Support Officer (ACT) will be hired with an overall objective of continuing the momentum generated by the Okanagan cultural corridor to create new, positive energies in the Cultural tourism and Arts, Culture and Heritage sectors. The ACT Officer will work with a minimum of 20 individuals and organizations each year for the next two years. In addition, the ACT Officer will work to encourage new models to form in the arts and cultural tourism sector and develop projects and programs where individuals and organizations work together to realize marketing and business opportunities.

Actions for Implementation

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| • Conduct review of existing resources | February |
| • Create mentoring administration model | February |
| • Conduct mentoring interviews | Ongoing |
| • Plan and implement seminars | Mar/Nov |
| • Plan for education sessions | April |
| • Assist with conducting education programs | Oct/Ongoing |
| • Organize information library | May/Ongoing |
| • Organize information website | July/Ongoing |
| • Complete 20 case project reviews | November |

Partnerships and Financial Implications

The program will be administered through the EDC similar to how the Okanagan Film Commission is set up, however, the cultural officer will report directly to the EDC and an advisory committee. Budget committed from EDC is \$25,000 with total budget of \$125,000.

5. Export Development Opportunities with China

Interest in exporting is increasing among Central Okanagan businesses as they grow and mature. EDC will explore ways to assist the local business community to realize trade opportunities available to them with China, Germany and Japan. Building on the work the Commission has done with S.U.C.C.E.S.S. in 2005, the Commission is looking at partnering with that organization on a trade mission to China in the fall of 2006 with the goal of attracting foreign investment in the Okanagan and developing new markets for local business. Strategic contacts made with Germany and Japanese investors through events and programs in 2005, will be leveraged in an effort to create tangible investment in the community.

Actions for Implementation

- Research to identify markets/programs Ongoing
- Trade mission – feasibility June

Partnerships and Financial Implications

The EDC will look to other partners including economic development offices throughout the valley as well as the S.U.C.C.E.S.S. group. Budget to investigate the opportunities and develop specific initiatives is \$5,000.

6. Trade Show Participation (Recruitment)

While recruitment will be an underlying theme at all trade events EDC attends, the Commission will attend at least two shows aimed exclusively at recruitment in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom in March, 2006. The increasing challenge for our region to recruit skilled labour precipitates our involvement in these shows. These will be repeat shows for the EDC and our 2005 attendance resulted in 10 skilled workers moving to the region. The shows have also been identified by the Province of British Columbia as primary opportunities. The EDC will partner when possible with the province but also with private industry to ensure local opportunities are promoted.

Actions for Implementation

- Secure booth space at Utrecht and Emigrate Shows January
- Secure all possible partners for both events February
- Attendance at the shows March

Partnerships and Financial Implications

The Province of British Columbia will be in attendance at both shows and we will partner with them where appropriate. The EDC will also identify private partners including those

businesses specializing in HR recruitment and emigration. Total budget for is set at \$15,000. with partnerships covering most of the costs.

7. Visit 10 of the largest employers in the Region to learn about their business and to ensure their retention in the Region.

As an extension to our Business Visitation program the EDC will visit up to ten of the largest companies in the region. The visitation program focuses on companies that make up approximately 90% of our business community – companies with 20 and less employees. These additional visits will focus on the companies with 100 or more employees. These companies are important to our region and because of their size are somewhat overlooked as it is assumed they are “doing fine” and do not require the assistance of the EDC. The EDC Executive Director, an EDC Board member and the Mayor of the appropriate community will visit the companies to gauge awareness of the EDC, what challenges and successes the company has and assist to ensure the retention of the company in the community.

Actions for Implementation

- | | |
|--|----------|
| • Identify ten of the largest region's employers | February |
| • Visit companies | Monthly |
| • Provide necessary follow up and assistance | Ongoing |
| • Provide overview, results, trends of visits | June/Dec |

Partnerships and Financial Implications

There will be no direct impact to the EDC budget.

8. Marketing plan developed for the region's fabrication industry and identification of opportunities within the oil and gas industry.

With the announcement of Western Star Trucks to reduce production from 34 to 22 trucks a day in 2006, now is the time for many of the Valley's metal fabricators to seek new market opportunities. A preliminary meeting was held and two main themes emerged:

The Central Okanagan should be and can be seen as an area of expertise with an emerging and available labour force. Given the struggles that many cities and adjacent provinces are experiencing, the Region is poised to seek new business as we have a newly trained supply of skilled labour and flexible training options so as to meet tight deadlines and the new business, and;

The most natural and easily accessible markets which should be targeted are the oil and gas sector in Alberta and Northern British Columbia.

A preliminary market plan was developed and will need to be finalized. It is also imperative that the local companies are willing to commit to the plan including financial support.

Actions for Implementation

- | | |
|---|----------|
| • Meet with local companies to fully develop plan | February |
| • Identify and secure partnerships | March |
| • Acquire a comprehensive oil and gas directory | March |
| • Review core capabilities of participating companies | April |

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| • Development of website specific to the industry | May |
| • Investigate feasibility of adding video clips to website | May |
| • Trade Show attending – Global Petroleum | June |
| • Follow up and development of additional activities | Sept/Ongoing |

Partnerships and Financial Implications

It all activities were to be completed total budget would be approximately \$25,000. The EDC would seek financial support from local company and should see a maximum of \$5,000 of budget allocation to program.

BUSINESS ATTRACTION

Business Attraction – Objectives

1. Continue to employ a valley-wide investment attraction strategy in conjunction with the Okanagan Partnership, and to focus on attracting investment dollars to the Okanagan versus attracting actual new businesses. Focus on appropriate investment to specific industry sectors identified by the Okanagan Partnership that hold the greatest potential for growth and development. Identify the regional branding message that will be used consistently by various business and tourism-related organizations involved with marketing the valley, and incorporate this message into strategic marketing collateral.
2. Build on the opportunities identified to grow the Central Okanagan aviation industry through a strategic marketing and awareness campaign. (ENHANCEMENT AND ATTRACTION).
3. Attend several trade shows related specifically to the manufacturing and technology sectors, with the purpose of marketing the Okanagan Valley and encouraging investment in the Central Okanagan businesses. Incorporate a skilled human capital/recruitment component to our presence at these events.
4. Coordinate a feasibility study on the viability of establishing a film studio for film and television production in the Central Okanagan.
5. Ensure EDC's databases, demographics and other information are kept current and the systems and processes to disseminate information are efficient.
6. As a follow up to our attendance and involvement at CeBIT and in the German market, a formalized follow up procedure will be developed.

Business Attraction - Background and Rationale

With the establishment of the Okanagan Valley Economic Development Society (OVEDS), a truly regional approach to valley branding and attracting business investment to the Region can be employed. This regional approach is closely tied to the outcomes of the Okanagan Partnership that has identified industry "clusters" that hold the most potential for economic growth in the Region. The Commission will therefore continue to weave the results of the Okanagan Cluster Strategy throughout its attraction activities in 2006, and take an even more focused approach to developing the most promising sectors. The activities relating to the Valley-wide approach outlined in this document are contingent to agreement by all partners.

Several trade shows associated with the manufacturing, technology and aviation sectors, have been targeted for attendance in 2006 as a means of promoting awareness of the region and attracting appropriate investment dollars. Evolving the aviation industry is a main objective of participation in these shows as the aviation industry has been identified as having the greatest potential for growth, attracting major companies to the Region, and creating quality, high-paying jobs.

Business enhancement and attraction activities will combine to raise the profile of the Okanagan's aviation industry and support local companies in this sector to develop new markets, attract new suppliers and engage in new product development. Tangible outcomes of the aviation strategy have been set at a 25% increase in investment in the Okanagan aviation industry and the creation of 300 new jobs within five years.

With the skilled trades now a major challenge in virtually all industry sectors, a recruitment focus will be incorporated into EDC's presence at all trade events in attends. Two shows in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom dedicated exclusively to recruitment will also be attended in March, 2006.

Based on the work of the Okanagan Investment Attraction Strategy completed in 2005, preliminary branding development took place which included a logo reflecting the unique attributes of the Okanagan, and development of the concept, "The Okanagan Strategic Advantage." This concept will be expanded in 2006 to create a visually strong, well-defined logo and materials that support efforts to market specific industry sectors such as the aviation industry as well as the EDC's own marketing materials.

To ensure EDC is responsive and efficient in providing the information required for attraction activities, the Commission's databases, email distribution systems and website will be assessed and updated regularly throughout the year.

1. Valley-Wide Investment Attraction Strategy

In 2005, EDC made a major shift to attracting investment in existing businesses and specific industry sectors from attracting new businesses overall as means to economic development in the Central Okanagan. The year also saw the formation of the Okanagan Valley Economic Development Society which is dedicated to a regional approach to addressing the challenges facing businesses throughout the Valley. Both the investment attraction and valley-wide strategy support the outcomes of the Okanagan Partnership and the need to focus on development of industry sectors that hold the greatest growth potential.

The EDC has played an integral role in preliminary work to identify an appropriate "brand" for the Okanagan Valley. In order to effectively market specific industry sectors and attract skilled workers and new investment to the Region, strategic marketing and promotional materials will be needed. These range from brochures and promotional videos that highlight the capabilities of specific industry sectors, to more general marketing collateral that highlight the advantages of living and working in the Okanagan.

The activities relating to the Valley-wide approach outlined in this document are contingent to agreement by all partners.

Actions for Implementation

- | | |
|---|---------|
| • Meet with Society members to outline specific roles/initiatives | Ongoing |
| • Further development of Okanagan Advantage logo/brand | April |
| • Design and development of specific promotional materials | May |

Partnerships and Financial Implications

Funding for the materials will be administered through the valley society with total funds committed by the EDC at \$20,000, however, the funds are for all initiatives undertaken by the society.

2. Aviation Industry Development

The Okanagan Partnership has identified the aviation industry as holding greatest potential for development as an industry cluster based on its competitive advantage, high-paying jobs and the presence of major companies already in the Region. For a number of years EDC has been

actively involved with the Kelowna International Airport on specific initiatives, and with the Aviation Air Action Group in targeting direct flights to Toronto. Since 2003, the EDC has had a strategic presence at the airport, playing a video focusing on the cost of doing business. This video will be updated again in 2006.

In addition, a strategic approach to building the regional economy through this sector will be undertaken in partnership with OSTEC and the Okanagan Valley Economic Development Society. This initiative has a distinct goal of increasing investment in the Okanagan aviation industry by 25% within five years, and adding 300 new jobs to the industry within 5 years (1,200 to 1,500 in aviation by 2011.)

The program will be directed by an Aviation Advisory Council. Participation at key manufacturing and technology trade events will be the mainstay of the program supported by strategic marketing materials and a database of target customers and contacts and information.

Actions for Implementation

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| • Review requirements regarding consultant | March |
| • Development of promotional materials | April |
| • Development of website | April |
| • Build database of target customers, contacts and business Information in the industry | April/Ongoing |
| • Identify airport accessible sites for all Okanagan communities | April |
| • Contact local aerospace companies for input/technologies/ideas | April/Ongoing |
| • Create an industry advisory committee | April |
| • Attendance at MRO Conference | April |
| • Attendance at Canada Aerospace Conference | May |
| • Create a communications plan | June |
| • Attendance at NBAA | October |

Partnerships and Financial Implications

This initiative is a partnership between the Valley economic development offices and each project may have additional private partners involved. Budget for the aviation initiative is \$10,000 – this does not include the funds budgeted for the valley wide aviation industry will bringing the program total to \$100,000.

3. Trade Show Focus/Manufacturing and Technology

EDC has had considerable success raising the profile of the valley as a place to invest by attending trade shows outside the Okanagan, as well as creating sales and exposure for the companies that attend with us. The current focus on manufacturing and technology will see EDC attend several shows geared specifically to these sectors in 2006. Among these are three events EDC will attend for the first time: Globe 2006 (environmental - March), the Incentive Works show (August), the premier event for the meetings and incentive market in Canada, and the Specialty Equipment Market Association – SEMA (November), the premier automobile specialty product trade event in the world. The EDC will repeat shows previously proven to be successful – CES (Consumer Electronics Show – January), ICSC (Int'l Council of Shopping Centres – January and September), CTIA (Internet/Wireless – April), Global Petroleum (June).

Actions for Implementation

- | | |
|--|---------|
| • Research, identify and secure participation at shows | Ongoing |
| • Advertise and secure partners for each show | Ongoing |

Partnerships and Financial Implications

Attendance at the shows involves a number of partners including private industry and associations and agencies. Revenue will be received from the companies attending the tradeshows and it is expected that net expenses to the EDC will be approximately \$30,000 based on attendance at the seven shows identified.

4. Film Studio Feasibility Study

With the significant growth in the BC film and television industry over the last 15 years, the film industry has become a relatively stable component of the BC economy and industry leaders have encouraged film production to occur outside of the Greater Vancouver area. EDC will partner with the Okanagan Film Commission to assess the viability of the dedicated film studio located in the Okanagan.

Actions for Implementation

- RFP for feasibility study March
- Completed study and dissemination of results June

Partners and Financial Implications

In partnership with the Okanagan Film Commission the EDC will fund 50% of the study and budget implication is \$5,000.

5. Demographic Information

The EDC produces a wide range of demographic information on the region. Our Economic Profile and individual Community Profiles are used both by the general public, and internally as a means of sourcing information for business attraction, business retention, presentations media, etc. These documents are also downloaded from our website an average 300 times per month. As the Okanagan grows and awareness of the Commission's programs and services increases, it is imperative that the information in these documents remains current and readily accessible to staff and the public.

Actions for Implementation

- Update the economic profile utilizing most recent available data June
- Update each separate community profile September

Partnerships and Financial Implications

Budget committed for full updates is \$6,000.

6. Formalized follow up procedure for German market leads

Over the past two years we have participated at the CeBIT technology shows in Hanover, German. The show is the largest technology show and has attendance of over half a

million. We have been able to present specific opportunities and information on our region directly to a number of key business leaders. We will contract with a German marketing/communications firm to develop a formalized follow procedure including additional meetings, presentations and a reciprocal visit to the Okanagan in the fall of 2006. We will also continue to take advantage of our German web presence and quarterly German newsletters.

Actions of Implementation

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| • Contract with German marketing/consulting firm | Jan |
| • Develop and finalize follow up procedure | Feb |
| • Follow up visits and presentations | March |
| • Quarterly German newsletter | Mar/Jun/Sep/Dec |
| • Organize fall visit and identify partners | June |
| • Host fall event | Sept/Oct |

Partnership and Financial Implications

Partnerships will need to be identified but could include Chambers, UBC-O, OC and Valley-wide Economic Development offices. Budget for consultant will be approximately \$5,000 and an additional \$4,000 is set for the fall visit with expected sponsorships to reduce actual cost to EDC.

BUSINESS FACILITATION

Business Facilitation – Objectives

1. Take a lead role in supporting and educating the community as a whole on initiatives that promote long-term economic benefits (i.e. the opportunities associated with the UBC Okanagan/Okanagan College, 2010 Olympic procurement opportunities, etc.)
2. Continue to support efforts to expand the high-speed internet network through ORAN to sufficiently support the needs of Central Okanagan businesses and help attract new business to the Region.
3. Continue to educate other organizations serving the business community on the work of the EDC, invite reciprocal presentations, and identify new partnership opportunities to deliver programs and services that meet the information needs of business community.
4. Build upon the existing International Student Program;
5. In 2005, a valley wide economic development society was created to share information and enhance regional cooperation. This will be the first year that specific initiatives are developed through the Society.
6. Continue to conduct a Business Confidence Survey every two months and use the Business Confidence Index as a tool in measuring economic activity and identifying areas where economic assistance is needed.
7. In co-ordination with UBC-O market the region to young people through a series of programs.
8. Coordinate a valley-wide strategic vision and five-year strategic plan for the Central Okanagan Regional District.

Business Facilitation - Background and Rationale

The Economic Development Commission needs to focus energy and attention on areas that help inform local government and communities of the opportunities that exist for economic development. This involves new initiatives and the need to put a business-like focus on decisions made by local government. Policy work not only should deal with infrastructure but companies and individuals as well.

This area of the Strategic Plan needs to be fairly fluid so that the Commission can react quickly, while at the same time be proactive in providing a competitive advantage for businesses that already operate in the Valley, and those that may move here in future. It should also be noted that Business Facilitation operates in partnership with the various objectives in both the Business Enhancement and Attraction sections of the Strategic Plan.

Areas of focus in 2006 will include supporting and educating local government and communities throughout the Central Okanagan on initiatives with long-term economic benefits such as the Okanagan Partnership and Cluster Strategy, 2010 Olympic procurement opportunities and the International Students Program.

A program to educate other organizations serving the business community about the work of the EDC was initiated in 2005 in the form of familiarization (FAM) tours, to help ensure the services provided by all organizations are complementary and make the best use of community resources. EDC will continue to initiate such information exchanges in 2006.

The Okanagan Valley Economic Development Society was established in 2005 with the purpose to facilitate the development and implementation of initiatives in support of collective economic development opportunities in areas encompassing the three regional districts in the Valley. This year specific initiatives are being developed relating to both Business Enhancement or Business Attraction sections.

The Business Confidence Survey initiated in 2005 as a joint initiative of the EDC, the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce, and Kettle Valley Research has resulted in a Business Confidence Index that provides valuable information on how confident local businesses are about the state of their businesses and industry in general. This survey will continue to be done every two months as a valuable tool in identifying needs, issues and potential solutions specific to the Central Okanagan.

With the changes our region has seen over the past number of years it is imperative we look to what the future may hold for the Valley. EDC will initiate preliminary meetings to develop a wide strategic planning initiative in 2007.

1. Community Education

The EDC has a role to play within the community to help educate and inform the public regarding the short term and long term economic impacts and benefits of specific initiatives, developments, within the region. The EDC is not a lobby-type organization but is excellently placed within the community to provide non-biased information regarding various impacts as related to our economy. Examples of this would include the impact of UBC-Okanagan; results of the Okanagan Partnership study, 2010 Olympics procurement opportunities and the International Students Program.

Actions for Implementation

- Continue to be aware of coming developments, initiatives, projects, etc. Ongoing
- Utilize weekly radio show and other media as education platform Ongoing
- Utilize weekly e-newsletter to disseminate information Ongoing

Partnerships and Financial Implications

Partners vary from project to project. Budget commitment is not expected other than staff resource.

2. Broadband Access

A joint initiative of the Okanagan Partnership and the University of BC-Okanagan. The Optical Regional Access Network (ORAN) supports advanced research, business and education in the community. EDC's involvement in this initiative crosses over into both Business Enhancement and Business Attraction: broadband access will allow existing companies to foster innovation and advancement while at the same time the EDC will be able to promote the region as a real high tech area with appropriate infrastructure.

Actions for Implementation

- Continue support through the Okanagan Partnership Ongoing
- Continued involvement with UBC-O (i.e. President's Advisory) Ongoing

Partnerships and Financial Implications

University of British Columbia and the Okanagan Partnership. There will be little or no impact on the EDC budget.

3. Familiarization Tours

The EDC continues to initiate information exchanges between the Commission and other business organizations throughout the Central Okanagan. The purpose is to ensure all levels of staff understand what the different organizations do and the kind of information they provide, and avoiding the duplication of information.

Actions for Implementation

- | | |
|--|---------|
| • Identify key organizations to share information with | May |
| • Establish schedule for presentations | Ongoing |
| • Continued involvement WES Business Partners | Ongoing |

Partnerships and Financial Implications

Partnerships in this initiative will be the various business organizations that the EDC works with including Community Futures, DKA, Chambers and WESBC. There will be no financial implications other than staff resources.

4. International Student Program

The EDC will continue its International Student Program initiated in 2004 in partnership with Okanagan College. The program will include tours and receptions for international students to showcase the region's opportunities, with emphasis on opportunities associated with the aviation industry, as described in the Business Enhancement and Business Attraction areas of the Strategic Plan.

Actions for Implementation

- | | |
|---|----------|
| • Meet with OUC and other partners to develop tour | February |
| • Hold tour at aviation companies and airport | February |
| • Evaluate tour and develop steps for future events | April |

Partnerships and Financial Implications

Okanagan College. Financial implication is approximately \$2,000.

5. Okanagan Valley Economic Development Society

The newly formed society was created as a way for the individual economic development officers within the valley to share information and develop initiatives that would work better on a regional basis. The activities for this initiative cross over between business attraction and business enhancement and the actions, partners and financial implications are repeated under each section of the strategic plan.

Actions for Implementation

- | | |
|---|---------|
| • Meet with Society members to outline specific roles/initiatives | Ongoing |
|---|---------|

Partnerships and Financial Implications

Partners include all valley economic development offices and budget is outlined under the appropriate section for each initiative.

6. Business Confidence Survey

Designed as an additional tool to monitor how local businesses perceive the environment they are operating in and address appropriate issues, a Business Confidence Index was created in 2005 as a joint project of the EDC, the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce and Kettle Valley Research. This bi-monthly web-based survey will continue to be released every two months and regular reports distributed to the EDC and the Chamber members as well as to local media.

Actions for Implementation

- Chamber and EDC provide firm with email addresses and contacts Ongoing
 - One-line survey instrument developed March
 - Data collected and analyzed Ongoing
 - Final report to EDC and Chamber for analysis and distribution. Ongoing
- Process repeated in
February, April, June,
August, October, December

Partnerships and Financial Implications

EDC and the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce. There is no financial impact to EDC budget.

7. Partner with UBC Okanagan On Retention of Young People to the Community

Recognizing local businesses are increasingly challenges to find sufficient numbers of workers and provide training to those workers, the Commission will initiate a program for identifying why young people leave the area, and potential means of retaining them.

Actions for Implementation

- Meet with UBC-O to develop strategy March/ongoing
- Seek other partners to involve ongoing

Partnerships and Financial Implications

The partnership with UBC-O may broaden to include other post-secondary institutes and may include partnering with other valley economic development offices. Budget will be determined once specific initiatives are set.

Community Vision

Community Vision – Objectives

1. Creation of advisory/working committee ensuring all stakeholders are involved.
2. Request for Proposal process including the terms of reference and hiring process.
3. Preliminary work begins with consultant to fully develop a plan in 2007.

Community Vision – Background and Rationale

With the changes our region has seen over the past number of years it is imperative we look to what the future may hold for the Region. A community vision document describes the kind of community that people who live and work in the region want it to become over the years. The vision document will look outwards over a five-year period from 2007 – 2012. It will identify what people value and want to preserve, what improvements are needed, and how change should occur.

The EDC will begin preliminary meetings to develop a strategic planning initiative in 2007 that will outline opportunities, goals, objectives and outcomes for the years 2007 – 2012. This year will lay the foundation for the initiative and will include the identification of specific partners, meeting schedules, input requests, best practice and budget costs. We will research how other communities have developed their five-year plans. This year will outline the terms of reference for the vision document, public input, workshops, surveys and will form a community advisory committee to serve as a “watchdog” of the process to ensure that community input is carried through and all stakeholder groups are informed and involved.

1. Creation of advisory/working committee

The formation of a advisory committee or Community Liaison Group, will be composed of a wide range of community volunteers, and will provide continuity throughout the process. The committee will serve as a “watchdog” to ensure that community input in carried through and all stakeholder groups are identified and involved.

Actions for Implementation

- | | |
|--|---------|
| • Preliminary identification of committee members | April |
| • Approach identified members and seek additional members | April |
| • Formation of committee | May |
| • Meetings established to inform committee and receive input | Ongoing |

Partnership and Financial Implications

Various partners will need to be identified through the process but will include Chambers, government agencies, associations, etc. There will be little or no impact to the EDC budget.

2. Request for Proposal Process

With input from the advisory committee a Request for Proposal will need to be developed. It is anticipated that a consultant already experienced in the community vision process will be necessary for the initiative to succeed.

Actions for Implementation

- Research of other communities process May/June
- Draft terms of reference September
- Finalized terms of reference and release October
- Review of proposal received and hiring process Nov/Dec

Partnership and Financial Implications

Budget is set at \$1500 to allow for appropriate advertising and development of terms.

3. Preliminary Work with Consultant

It is expected that by yearend a consultant will be hired to begin detailed work on the vision document in January 2007. Preliminary meetings will have been held late in 2006 with the consultant to outline a work schedule, outcome and goal expectations.

Actions for Implementation

- Hiring process for consultant Nov/Dec
- Preliminary meetings regarding schedule, outcomes, etc. Dec

Partnership and Financial Implications

Budget from this year will be minimal and is set at \$3,500. The cost impact will be significant in 2007 and will total \$50,000 or more –we will seek outside funding to offset costs.