



COVID-19 Pandemic Response

Economic Disaster Mitigation and Business Resilience Strategy

Department of Economic Development

e: ecdev@wetaskiwin.ca

P: 780-335-7410

www.wetaskiwin.ca

Supporting Business Resilience Throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic

CITY OF WETASKIWIN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This strategy has been developed as a response to COVID-19 and the direct impacts this pandemic has and will have on our businesses and economy as a whole. This will be a fluid strategy that is responsive to the changing situation.

This **Economic Disaster Mitigation and Business Resilience Strategy** employs four tiers:

- Tier One: Clear Dissemination of Information
- Tier Two: Outreach and Individual Business Case Support
- Tier Three: Wetaskiwin Economic Supports During COVID-19
- Tier Four: Post-Pandemic Preparation

This tiered strategy has four main purposes:

- a) Help businesses remain informed enough to maintain commercial confidence;
- b) Help businesses plan for resilience;
- c) Assist in alleviating immediate financial strain on local Wetaskiwin businesses; and
- d) Mitigate the long-term economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the course of the socioeconomic shut down associated with efforts to combat the disease, this strategy shall be employed by the department of economic development in support of local business continuity. Each tier of the strategy is supported by multiple action items, with an associated general timeframe for implementation: Immediate (completed within one week); near-term (completed within 30-90 days); long-term (ongoing and post-pandemic). Associated costs are also identified when possible.

COVID-19 BUSINESS RESILIENCE STRATEGY		
TIER 1: Clear Dissemination of Information		
Action Item	Timeframe	Est. Cost/Time
1. Gather and Share All Business and Employee Support Information <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Government supportsb. Access to fundsc. Bank supports and bridge loansd. Market opportunities	Immediate/ Reviewed Weekly	20 hrs to develop and maintain

<p>2. Create Virtual Business Recovery Centre on Website</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Page dedicated to providing information on support programs available to businesses. b. Found at: http://covidwetaskiwin.ca/index.php/business-supports under business supports 	<p>Immediate/ Updated Weekly</p>	<p>20 hrs to develop and maintain</p>
<p>3. Establish Lines of Communication with Regional Economic Development Stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Leduc & Wetaskiwin Regional Chamber of Commerce - done b. Wetaskiwin County - called c. Maskwacis Four Nations d. Leduc City - called e. Camrose City - called f. Central Alberta Economic Partnership - done g. Economic Developers Alberta - done h. Alberta Innovates - done i. Other Central Alberta Economic Development Departments - ongoing 	<p>Immediate/ Meeting Weekly</p>	<p>20 hrs to initiate contact</p> <p>2-3 hrs weekly to maintain contact</p>
<p>TIER 2: Outreach and Individual Business Case Support</p>		
<p>4. Business Survey: Closed Now</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Support and communicate the Leduc & Wetaskiwin Regional Chamber of Commerce for online business survey b. Review results specific to Wetaskiwin businesses and develop strategy surrounding areas the City has ability to 	<p>Immediate</p>	<p>Chamber is the lead</p> <p>2 hrs to review results</p>
<p>5. Begin Outreach to Local Businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Partner with the Leduc and Wetaskiwin Chamber of Commerce b. Develop messaging to explain the partnership and communicate on the webpage and through social media 	<p>Near-term</p>	<p>1 - 2 hrs per business (approx. 500 local businesses)</p>
<p>6. Develop messaging to encourage businesses to reach out for additional support or direction from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Economic Development Department b. Leduc & Wetaskiwin Chamber of Commerce 	<p>Near-term</p>	<p>1-2 hrs</p>

TIER 3: Wetaskiwin Economic Supports During COVID-19		
<p>7. Temporary Policy and Bylaw Amendments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Utilities: Penalty Payment Cancellation as of March 19, 2020 b. Property Taxes: No penalties applied on unpaid property taxes c. Plastic Bag Ban: Temporary suspension as of March 24, 2020 d. Intermodal Container: Deferral of fees and charges amendment - Administration pushed the current motion on the table to return to Council in Q4, 2020 e. Noise Bylaw: City Manager has the ability to issue permits allowing the production of certain sounds in extreme cases. (e.g. business working 24 hr shifts to accommodate safe distancing) f. Business Licenses: Deferral of penalties and enforcement 	Near-term	TBD
<p>8. Share Training Opportunities Pertaining to Business Resiliency during the Pandemic</p>	Immediate	1-2 hrs
<p>9. Support Local Marketing Initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Leduc and Wetaskiwin Chamber of Commerce: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Landing page for Chamber - unique opportunities ii. #LeducWetaskiwinOpenForBusiness 	Ongoing	As needed
<p>10. Workforce Retention (e.g., connecting displaced workers)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Promote local job boards such as the Leduc & Wetaskiwin Regional Chamber of Commerce b. Promote other job boards such as Indeed.ca, Monster.ca and the Canada-Alberta Job Bank c. Share information the Federal Programs including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Work-share Program ii. Wage Subsidy Program 	Near-term	1-2 hrs to set up

TIER 4: Post-Pandemic Preparation		
<p>11. Plan for Post-pandemic Business Recovery Workshops</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Invite Federal and provincial officials, tax, accounting, legal experts, planning & development department, etc. b. Work with the Leduc & Wetaskiwin Regional Chamber of Commerce and other support organizations to host these events <p>*Essential to provide direct information to overwhelmed and struggling business owners.</p>	Long-term	2020 Budget
<p>12. Continue Outreach to Businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Understand long-term needs b. Develop resource listing for businesses reopening after closures 	Long-term	TBD
<p>13. Marketing the City to Keep it Top of Mind as a Place to Invest, Live and Visit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Digital marketing efforts and public relations efforts must be developed. b. Modify communications to address the pandemic situation. <p>• A reminder to locals about the importance of shopping local.</p>	Long-term	2020 Budget
<p>15. Assessing the Economic Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic</p>	Long-term	TBD