

CLARESHOLM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
3-YEAR BUSINESS PLAN, 2019-2021



Claresholm

Where **Community** Takes Root

January 21, 2019

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OBJECTIVE #1 - COORDINATED MARKETING & COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The Town of Claresholm communicates through a number of channels including tourism, recreation, economic development, parks, public works, policy, governance, and others. While internal and external marketing strategies often coincide, the desired outcomes for each department are unique. The coordinated strategy will identify what approaches are available and effective, what methods the Town is currently using, and provide a framework and guidelines for the next 3-years.

ACTION ITEMS

3-YEAR MARKETING PLAN (2019-2021)

- Develop a coordinated internal and external marketing and communications strategy
 - Develop key messaging for the town including a variety of statistics
 - Include an investment attraction strategy for Starline Business Park
 - Market to our commuting workforce to consider Claresholm as home
 - Market to millennials (closer to downtown/higher density housing is attractive)
 - Cooperative marketing of light industrial land, and residential opportunities
 - Develop a social media strategy
 - Continue to develop website
 - Develop a plan to communicate progress and momentum to residents and business owners
 - Create awareness of metrics in relation to progress that the EDO/EDC is making
 - Use coffee shop news letters
- Report quarterly to EDC, Council and residents

OBJECTIVE #2 – REVITALIZE DOWNTOWN & HIGHWAY CORRIDOR

Maintenance and revitalization of Claresholm’s Downtown and Highway-2 corridor will continue to be a priority in the 2019-2021 Economic Development Business Plan. The task of creating an environment that supports sustainable business most often falls to the local government and economic organizations.

ACTION ITEMS

GATEWAY WELCOME SIGNS

- LED signs to be installed late 2018 or early 2019
- A fresh coat of paint and minor landscaping upgrades to the welcome signs will complete phase-2 of the signage project in early spring 2019.

COMMUNITY ADVERTISING PROGRAM- HIGHWAY-2 BILLBOARDS

- Continue to monitor the existing billboard lease agreements and accept more applications until space is unavailable
- Seek new opportunities that suit the program, including but not limited to, the south-entrance on Highway-2.

SIGNAGE PHASE-3, WAYFINDING PROJECT

- Create policy framework for Wayfinding signage project
- Provide direction at key interactions in downtown, commercial, industrial, and parks areas
- Develop a program for businesses and nonprofits to participate with coinciding blade signage

OBJECTIVE #3 - RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Successful economic development organizations include a strategic networking, partnership, and alliance component in their economic development plan. Strategic alliances are political partnerships that are effective in increasing capacity, accessing human and capital resources, opportunity identification, and marketing.

ACTION ITEMS

COLLEGE/ADULT LEARNING

- Build relationships with select post-secondary institutions to identify opportunities
 - Cultivate relationship with Lethbridge College, Olds College, and SAIT
 - Investigate if there are learning or internship opportunities related to the Cannabis Centre for Excellence
 - Identify opportunities for business and colleges to connect for practicum, internship, and co-op opportunities for students

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

- Opportunities for Growth
 - In partnership with the Chamber, continue to plan and host seasonal networking events that are focused on learning, leadership, and industry.
 - These events are marketed to residents, municipal staff, and community groups, both locally and regionally.
- Claresholm business conference
 - In partnership with the Chamber, continue to plan and host the Claresholm Business Conference.
 - This event is marketed to residents, municipal staff, and community groups both locally and regionally.

AGRICULTURE

- build relationship with farmers and ranchers through initiatives such as feast of Claresholm

SERVICE GROUPS

- Look for opportunities to work together with service groups

EVENT HOSTING - LOCAL BUSINESS SEGMENTS

- Home-based business luncheons, industrial-commercial business dinners, downtown meet & greets.
- Networking, direct Town-to-business feedback, resource awareness, education, and BVP surveys.

BUSINESS VISITATION PROGRAM (COMPREHENSIVE CAMPAIGN)

- Coordinated BVP with the help of Community Futures, EDO assistant, and EDC volunteers to reach more businesses in a shorter time.
- Plan, execute, short term action on red flags, evaluate the results, take long term action.

OBJECTIVE #4 - INDUSTRIAL OPPORTUNITIES

The completion of the Planning for Growth Project provides almost 170 acres of Industrial, Service-Industrial, and Highway-Commercial lands available for development in Claresholm.

ACTION ITEMS

PLANNING FOR GROWTH- PROJECT COMPLETION

- The following components will be complete by the project deadline, January 2, 2019:
 - Area Structure Plan
 - Detailed design for infrastructure phasing plan
 - Market analysis, financial feasibility, and cost-sharing recommendations
- Cost sharing discussions between Council and landowners

STARLINE BUSINESS PARK

- Review all Planning for Growth Project documents upon completion
- Use the recommendations to:
 - Develop a coordinated marketing and communication strategy as per objective 1
 - Develop an investment attraction strategy using the opportunities and constraints analysis, as prepared in the report
 - Align the needs of the recommended phasing plan with the Towns Capital plan

PLANNING FOR GROWTH- GRANT REPORTING

- CARES Grant reporting is due February 28, 2019
- Complete the project summary and financial reporting as per CARES grant guidelines

NEW CARES GRANT APPLICATION

- The CARES program is accepting applications May 1, 2019 - May 31, 2019
- The Town will complete an application for a project in 2020 and may include one of the following:
 - Infrastructure master plan
 - Phase-3 planning for Starline Business Park
 - Investment readiness of the brownfields and landfill areas

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT READINESS PROJECT

- Develop community profile, statistics, and inventory of Claresholm's assets including but not limited to:
 - Property listings, prices, and contacts
 - Real-time summary of local real estate, new developments, and applications
 - Traffic counts, utility costs and tax rates, lease rates
- Designated page on the website for site-selectors, using Townfolio

NEW CARES GRANT PROJECT- IF APPROVED

- With an approved project, work can begin in 2020

OBJECTIVE #5 - BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION

BR&E is an ongoing cooperative effort between business, local government, agencies, other organizations and people in the community with the purpose of identifying opportunities and actions to assist local businesses in expansion, the retention and creation of jobs and the diversification of the local economic base, as well as the implementation of defined actions to improve the local business climate.

ACTION ITEMS

BUSINESS VISITATION PROGRAM

- New-business and utility-change notification system – in action
 - Posted to online directory, contact information updated with EDO
 - Welcome letter sent from the EDC chairperson and vice-chairperson
 - Phone-call from EDO to learn about the business and open communication
- Develop a strategy for challenging land owners
 - Start the conversation with owners, conduct a |SWOT of each property
 - Understand the land owners' motivations
 - Understand and consider the obstacles
 - Develop a plan for each property
- Continue to complete the BVP survey whenever possible

DEVELOP A BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION PLAN

- Identify the barriers to businesses operating or expanding
- Detail resources that can be provided to business
 - Planning, funding, real estate, partnerships, problem solving
- Costs to doing business
 - Consider how bureaucracy can be reduced when starting/expanding a business
- Succession Planning
 - Develop a plan so that there is awareness and support for existing business owners
- Workforce development
 - Develop information resources to be able to hand out to employers on topical items such as foreign worker programs et.

OBJECTIVE #6 - INVESTMENT ATTRACTION

A business investment and attraction program is an economic development strategy focused on encouraging the flow of investment from existing business and attracting new investment into our community from external sources. The key goal is to strategically plan, manage and implement programs that help existing business thrive and grow while providing an 'open for business' environment for new investment.

ACTION ITEMS

DEVELOP AN INVESTMENT AND ATTRACTION PLAN

- Identify optimal sectors, industries, and businesses, with a focus on job creation and town growth
 - Develop an economic development asset map of Claresholm
 - Investigate opportunities for the Ag value-chain, especially with the possibility for Claresholm to be an Ag Service Centre
 - Investigate opportunities related to Agri-plex
 - Investigate opportunities around specialty crops such as cannabis

OBJECTIVE #7 - ENTREPRENURIAL DEVELOPMENT

Healthy, thriving entrepreneurs and businesses are the core foundation that will sustain a community. Strong, vibrant and sustainable communities require a thriving entrepreneurial culture and sustainable business sector. Economic growth from 'within' a community is the financial foundation that spurs the overall quality of life in a community.

ACTION ITEMS

HOSTING

- Create opportunities for events, hosting, and networking within Claresholm with a focus on:
 - Home based business development
 - Industry specific opportunities as identified in the Planning for Growth project

EDUCATION

- Provide information and resources and training and education available for businesses and entrepreneurs through the business conference et.

RESOURCES

- Create a library of resources for business creation

ATTRACTION

- Develop a plan for entrepreneur attraction from outside of Claresholm
 - Plan networking/conference events that enable entrepreneurs outside of Claresholm to mingle with business people in Claresholm as well as learn about Claresholm's competitive advantage