

Business Retention & Expansion Strategy For the City of Fort Saskatchewan



Fort Saskatchewan Business Retention & Expansion Strategy

BR&E Project Overview

- What is the BR&E project?
- Why BR&E?
- What are the desired outcomes?
- Who is involved/delivering BR&E for us?



BR&E Process

- Based on award-winning BR&E practices
- Six stages of project:
 1. Business Database
 2. Economic Analysis
 3. Survey tools development
 4. Business surveys (in-person and on-line)
 5. Taskforce discussion, Strategy building
 6. Report and Implementation



BR&E "Plus"

- BR&E Plus elements:
 - Updating business database
 - Economic analysis
 - Strategy development



BR&E Survey

- In-depth interviews took 40 – 90 minutes
- 58 in-depth interviews done and 63 on-line surveys received
- On-line survey: 7 questions around diversification, oil & gas exposure, advantages & disadvantages



BR&E Interview Questions

- Business planning & succession
- Diversification
- Impact of oil & gas prices
- Fort Sask as a place to do business, advantages & disadvantages
- Future plans
- Barriers to business growth
- Supply chains
- Workforce



Key Findings

- Small & Medium Enterprises (SME's) account for largest portion of job growth
- SME sector heavily reliant upon Industrial Heartland large industry for most of its business – extends to service and retail sectors in the City
- SME sector needs/wants to diversify customer base



Key Findings

- Third-party support programs not readily available in Fort Sask compared to other municipalities – need to develop a business 'eco-system'
- Inadequate access to utilities such as broadband
- Perception that crime has increased in certain areas of the City
- Consolidation occurring with large employers



Quick Wins...So Far

- Beginning to build SME support 'Eco-system' in partnership with Chamber:
 - Business Link
 - Futurpreneur
 - Alberta Women Entrepreneurs (AWE)
 - Self-Employment Training Program
 - Ministry of Labour
 - NAIT
 - The Community Futures Program?



Quick Wins...So Far

- 14 businesses introduced to the Ministry of Labour to get assistance on training and employment funding programs
- NAIT courses and 'NAIT-in-Motion' being considered, based upon business needs



Next Steps

- Stakeholder taskforce meeting
 - Comprised of local businesses, Provincial Government, City Departments, Chamber of Commerce
 - Tasked with developing solutions to addressing key challenges/opportunities.



Next Steps

- Final report will present:
 - A current economic analysis
 - Analysis of the surveys
 - Business Retention & Expansion recommendations
 - Solution-based projects that Economic Development will bring forward

