

## **Town of Fort Smith Economic Development Plan DRAFT**

Thank you for taking the time to review this draft plan

Please write comments in the spaces provided!

When complete hand in to the Town of Fort Smith staff at the Thebacha Trade show or at Town Hall

Submit your name for a draw to win our Raffle Prizes

Your comments will be used in the finalization process of the Fort Smith Economic Development Plan

THANK YOU!

Do you have more information you want to share?

### **Please contact me!**

Diane Seals

Economic Development Officer

867-872-8417 or [dseals@fortsmith.ca](mailto:dseals@fortsmith.ca)

**Looking for a digital copy of the Economic Development Plan?**

**Go to: [www.fortsmith.ca](http://www.fortsmith.ca)**

**You will find a copy under Municipal > Documents > Type: Forms & Applications**

## Executive Summary

The Economic Development Strategy for the Town of Fort Smith is set in the context of the community's vision for the future, established around Council's Vision and Goals, which are as follows:

"The Town of Fort Smith will work with its partners to enhance our excellent quality of life by respecting values, traditions, and healthy lifestyles. We will continue to advance as a unified, active and prosperous community."

### Goals:

- Operate an open, transparent and effective government
- Operate the Town of Fort Smith in a fiscally responsible manner
- Provide excellent municipal programs and services to the citizens
- Continue as a responsible employer
- Preserve, advocate and enhance the natural environment in the Town
- Maintain a safe community
- Support all educational opportunities within the community
- Be a leader in sustainable environmental practices in our community
- Foster a strong cohesive community spirit
- Maintain a healthy, active community
- Grow our residential and business community
- Promote Fort Smith as a desirable destination

The strategy is based on three components of economic development in Fort Smith: Business Growth, Resident Attraction and Growth, and Tourism Development. In creating this strategy, a literature review was completed of the following documents:

- The Town of Fort Smith Community Services Master Plan
- The Town of Fort Smith's Sustainability Plan
- The Town of Fort Smith's Tourism Branding & Marketing Strategy
- Smith Landing First Nation Environmental Scan Report
- Smith Landing First Nation Economic Survey Results
- The Town of Hay River's Integrated Sustainability Plan
- GNWT Tourism 2020 plan
- GNWT Economic Opportunities Strategy
- Yellowknife 2014-2019 Economic Strategy
- Town of Inuvik's Strategic Plan

## Business Development

<b>Goal #1 - Foster and Encourage business and job creation and retention</b>		<b>General Comments</b>	<b>Is this a High, Medium or Low priority project?</b>
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Actions</b>		
Identify Current Situation	Do a gap analysis of current businesses in Fort Smith, what do we have, what do we want, what is possible?		
Develop Land Inventory	Explore options for land availability for commercial, or residential development. Identify available commercial office/retail space. Interview current land owners regarding their interest in subdividing land to use/create office/retail space. Do they have current plans for vacant land (that is located in Town Centre zone)? What would be an incentive for them to build on that land?		
Input from Business Community	Survey businesses to asses if there are impediments to business development (including home occupation businesses). If business incubator space was available to use for meeting clients, printing, computers, etc. would it be used?		
	Review and amend Town bylaws and policies to ensure support for business development, fair pricing, zoning, business incubation and social enterprise (ensure cultural and environmental outcomes as well as financial) and look at future bylaws around air bnb and uber type of businesses.		
Lobby for government positions	Identify current staffing and programming situation at Aurora College. Support and Lobby for expanded educational programming at Aurora College		
	Identify current staffing and government department situation in the GNWT. Support and Lobby for GNWT positions to be stationed in Fort Smith		

## Business Development

<b>Goal #2 - Increase Communication with and within the Business Community</b>		General Comments	Is this a High, Medium or Low priority project?
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Actions</b>		
Improve the local business climate	Quarterly meetings to businesses to be informed about emerging opportunities and inform businesses of relevant Town projects. Host a "Business Walk" - visits to businesses.		
Networking events	Assess the interest in creating business networking or business education series (i.e.: Business After Hours or Business Breakfast, lunches, or evening seminars on relevant topics such as marketing, social media, financing, etc.).		
Youth Education Program	Assist with the development of youth business/entrepreneur education sessions at Aurora College, and the development of Junior Achievement or Lemonade Day Entrepreneur programs.		
	Town of Fort Smith representative to regularly attend Chamber of Commerce meetings		
	Communicate the Town's capital plans and local investments with the business community, i.e.: business newsletter		

## Business Development

Strategy	Actions	General Comments	Is this a High, Medium or Low priority project?
	Assist Businesses to offer coordinated events, promotions and activities, i.e.: Shop Local Campaign. Educate community and businesses regarding advantages of local shopping and use of local investment.		
<b>Goal #3 - Diversify the Local Economy</b>			
Strategy	Actions		
Cooperative planning with community and regional partners	Investigate the possibility of a "Stronger Together" initiative through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities What are our common goals? How can we work together?		
Develop a business Investment Strategy	Develop an Investment Readiness checklist, identify target sectors, look into prospective sectors to market, i.e.: local tannery		
Investigate strategies to keep money from "leaking" out of the community. Support Local Economy	Investigate opportunities for local production/manufacturing, i.e.: local food supply to restaurants, wood supply opportunities, etc. Research possible barriers i.e.: local grocer not able to purchase locally grown food. Research what goods are currently being shipped into the community that could be grown or supplied locally. Encourage and promote local manufacturing: market gardens, chicken/egg production, Farmers Market, wood cutting services, etc.		

## Population Growth

<b>Goal #4 - Attract residents to live in Fort Smith</b>		General Comments	Is this a High, Medium or Low priority project?
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Actions</b>		
Identify the current situation	Assess available housing, rental properties, land and future housing possibilities and average costs.		
Create a Resident Attraction Campaign	Define our Story: Lead focus groups to sift out the authentic story. Assists in both defining the types of residents we want to market to as well as a tourism market.		
	Identify key resident sectors for attraction: i.e.: seniors, young professionals, young families & Create campaigns and marketing materials for each sector. Identify incentives for attraction.		
	Create Community Profile for marketing purposes outlining key assets to living in Fort Smith, with professional photos to be used for both Tourism and Resident attraction marketing.		
Ensure visitors first impression is positive	Create and deliver welcome packages for new residents. Create a weekly events calendar to be posted around town as well as on website & social media. Ensure website and social media are kept up to date with a focus on Town's assets.		
	Identify points of contact for visitors and identify if improvement is needed. i.e.: airport, restaurants, VIC, hotels, museum, rec. centre, trails, etc. " All visitors are potential residents".		
Create a Resident Ambassador Program	Train all front line and retail staff as hosts of the community. Encourage all retail stores and residents to participate in Northern Most Host and Be a Tourist in your Town programs.		

## Population Growth

<b>Goal #5 - Enhance Liveability</b>		General Comments	Is this a High, Medium or Low priority project?
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Actions</b>		
Strengthen Public Engagement	Develop a communications plan, including community outreach (newsletters, social media, interactive processes, etc.)		
Improve Infrastructure	Identify community infrastructure and programming that needs improvement or is lacking.		
Identify Physical Design	Create overall plan for downtown development. Address derelict and/or unused property and buildings in commercially zoned areas, with special focus on the downtown core.		
	Town Beautification Program - Improve community pride with visual appearance of the Town Centre as a unique destination to shop and do business. Create a document outlining an overall themed look that fits with the Town's story and brand.		
	Create a funding program for businesses to improve the look of their business, i.e.: landscaping, renovations to front of building, etc.		
Identify Transportation concerns	Identify opportunities for reduced rate travel.		
Grow culture and arts sector	Champion the creation of an NWT Arts Facility in the downtown/main street area of Fort Smith: to provide facilities such as theatre space, gallery space, venues for musical performance, workshop areas, educational facilities, technical equipment, etc.		
Increase Housing Options	Continue work with landowners to develop affordable housing, i.e.: tiny homes, rental homes		

## Tourism

<b>Goal #6 - Attract shoppers &amp; visitors from the region into our community</b>		General Comments	Is this a High, Medium or Low priority project?
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Actions</b>		
Direct Marketing Campaign	Direct marketing to Yellowknife, Fort Chipewyan, Fort Resolution and Hay River regarding events and festivals, and seasonal shopping. Test use of shopping passport, discount coupons and coupon booklets		
<b>Goal #7 - Champion and Assist with Tourism product development and packaging</b>		General Comments	Is this a High, Medium or Low priority project?
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Actions</b>		
Champion new development	Outline the potential tourism growth and development opportunities with the formation of a Territorial Park at the Rapids of the Drowned or along the Slave River Corridor between Fort Fitzgerald and Bell Rock. Request development for new Territorial Park development.		
	Champion and assist with the creation of tourism opportunities such as events, programs, festivals and activities along with cooperative programming. Develop in-kind donations request form for local events.		
	Identify and support the removal of barriers to private sector tourism development		
	Encourage and promote cultural components in all aspects of tourism products.		
	Assist with creation of tourism packaging to both Southern and Northern markets. Identify products, markets and market strategy.		
	Follow and modify Detour Package in the Fort Smith Tourism & Marketing Plan		



## Tourism

<b>Goal #8 - Increase number of sporting events and conferences hosted in Fort Smith</b>		General Comments	Is this a High, Medium or Low priority project?
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Actions</b>		
Create active Volunteer Base	Assist AWG Society in development of volunteer base in key sectors and volunteer program		
Identify key areas and sectors	Design itinerary packages and activities that can extend a stay, pre or post event		
	Follow and modify where needed, The Good Sports Campaign, in the Fort Smith Tourism & Marketing Plan		
	Research & Identify large events to host or co-host with Hay River		
	Identify conferences to host. Create marketing conference and event package.		
Advertise	identify key target market according to the Explorer quotient used by Tourism Canada		
	Assist with packaging and promotion of well established local festivals. Follow and modify where needed, the Playground Campaign, in the Fort Smith Tourism & Marketing Plan		
	Work with local businesses to support and offer incentives for sports teams to come to Fort Smith		
	Advertise upcoming festivals at AWG and other large events before the summer season. Provide special offers.		
	Work with other local organizations to leverage marketing		

## Tourism

<b>Goal #9 - Work with regional partners to market Fort Smith (i.e.: Hay River, Fort McMurray, Yellowknife and Edmonton)</b>		General Comments	Is this a High, Medium or Low priority project?
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Actions</b>		
Regional Partnerships	Create a co-operative Regional Marketing plan, ensure Fort Smith is well marketed by regional partners		
	Investigate unique packaging and itinerary ideas		

Where do you see yourself or your organization involved in this plan? Please let us know!

Any additional comments? We really appreciate your feedback!