
Team presenting updates and draft actions for economic development plan

The team leading the county-wide economic development strategic planning process is set to update stakeholders throughout the region at a meeting Oct. 5 at 1 p.m. in Lanark County Council chambers.

Valley Heartland Community Futures Development Corporation, Lanark County and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs are leading the process, and the leadership team is ready to provide a progress report and to see the draft action plans that have come from data analysis, local knowledge and stakeholder input. All economic development stakeholders throughout the region are invited to attend.

“We are well over the halfway mark in the process of developing the strategic plan,” says Stacie Lloyd, Regional Economic Development Officer for Valley Heartland. “The collaborative process began in May, and we are on track to have the plan completed in November with a roadmap to guide activities and help make decisions on future economic development programs and services for the county.”

All local municipalities have been taking part and driving the process through leadership teams and working groups consisting of more than 40 local business owners, retired business owners, hospital board members, politicians, municipal staff, economic developers and entrepreneurs. Broader participation has included interviews and an online questionnaire with community and economic development stakeholders throughout the region. More than 338 questionnaire responses were received from business owners, residents, a few students and more than 30 economic development/service organizations representing an even larger number of respondents.

“In addition to sharing their ideas of what makes Lanark County a great place to live, work and play, stakeholders provided excellent comments on areas to improve and ways to help Lanark County thrive,” Ms. Lloyd said. “The four dedicated working groups have been very engaged throughout the process, with the latest working group established to analyze stakeholder input and develop the evidence-based action plans for the plan.”

Common themes include support for entrepreneurs, business retention and expansion, planning for growth and investment, and foundational community economic development, with many areas of overlap and interconnectedness.

“We appreciate the thoughtful input from all respondents and the municipal leadership teams,” Ms. Lloyd added. “Their feedback has helped to identify strengths to build on, our competitive advantage, areas to focus efforts and common themes.”

“The input and collaboration of everyone involved in this process will go a long way to ensure we have a strong economic development strategic plan,” said Warden Bill Dobson (Montague Reeve). “I encourage stakeholders to come to the meeting on Oct. 5 to further contribute to the draft action plans for a strong economic future for our county.”

Updates on the strategic planning process can be found at <http://valleycfdc.com/strategic-planning/>.
For more information, contact Ms. Lloyd at 613-283-7002 ext. 106 or e-mail EcDev@valleycfdc.com.

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