

City of Mississauga Corporate Report



Date: September 21, 2021 To: Chair and Members of General Committee	Originator's files:
From: Andrew Whittemore, M.U.R.P., Commissioner of Planning & Building	Meeting date: October 6, 2021

Subject

Economic Development Office Annual Update on Economic Recovery Plans for Small Business and Broader Industry

Recommendation

That the corporate report dated September 21, 2021 entitled "Economic Development Office Annual Update on Economic Recovery Plans for Small Business and Broader Industry", from the Commissioner of Planning & Building Department, be received.

Executive Summary

- The Economic Recovery Plan for Small Business and the Economic Recovery Plan for Broader Industry (the "Plans") were developed to guide the economic recovery actions for the City to address the impacts of COVID-19 on the business community in Mississauga.
- Both Plans were reviewed by the business and community led Economic Resiliency Task Force on July 20th, 2020 then approved by Council on September 23rd, 2020.
- In total, the Plans identified 42 unique actions to support Mississauga's economic recovery and are structured around the following four priorities: Outreach and Communication; Small Business and Broader Industry Programs and Initiatives; Broader Industry Programs and Initiatives; Entrepreneurship and Innovation.
- The Economic Development Office was tasked with leading the implementation of these two Plans and has met with the Task Force to provide a progress update on April 19th, 2021.
- The Task Force provided positive feedback and a commitment to support the City's economic recovery efforts.

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to have an unprecedented and evolving impact upon the global economy, creating unique challenges and opportunities across Mississauga's business community. While enormous progress has been made since the start of the pandemic to respond and recover from the impacts of COVID-19, persistent health risks from virus spread and public health interventions to protect residents, continue to impact both consumers and businesses. From the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Economic Development Office (EDO) along with other City Divisions and partners in the private, public and education sectors, worked together to support Mississauga's business community.

In the summer of 2020, an Economic Recovery Plan for Small Business and an Economic Recovery Plan for Broader Industry were developed to guide economic recovery priorities and actions for the City. These Plans were reviewed and endorsed by the Economic Resiliency Task Force (the "Task Force") made up of business and community leaders, Mayor and select members of Council directed by Council to validate the City's economic recovery efforts.

Council approved the Economic Recovery Plan for Small Business and the Economic Recovery Plan for Broader Industry on September 23rd, 2020. In total, the plans identify 42 unique actions to support Mississauga's economic recovery through a lens of inclusive growth where all community stakeholders have equal opportunities for economic mobility and growth through the dissemination and/or delivery of information and programs that are representative of Mississauga's diverse community.

EDO began implementing the plans last summer and met with the Task Force to provide a progress update on April 19th, 2021 (Appendix 1: Economic Recovery Plan Implementation Update: Small Business & Broader Industry). Overall, the Task Force provided positive feedback and a commitment to assist in delivering the actions.

Comments

Throughout the pandemic, EDO prioritized its response to reflect the urgent, diverse and evolving needs of the business community, while continuing to advance strategic initiatives that will guide the City towards sustained economic prosperity for all.

To achieve this balance of *Inclusive Growth*, economic recovery plans were structured to address priorities within the following four overarching areas:

- Outreach and Communication;
- Small Business Programs and Initiatives;
- Broader Industry Programs and Initiatives;
- Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

Outreach and Communication

EDO has prioritized ongoing engagement with the local business community throughout the pandemic to listen to their evolving business needs. Since the onset of the pandemic, EDO has reached out to its business partners through the following:

- **Business Stakeholder Roundtable Sessions** – Conducted roundtables with the business community to facilitate conversations on how to best support local businesses throughout the pandemic. As of August 31st, 2021, EDO hosted 12 COVID-19 roundtables, with companies representing close to 22,000 employees.
- **Outbound Advisory Services Program** – Launched a targeted and proactive one-on-one outreach program to the business community. As of August 31st, 2021, engaged over 199 businesses and worked to address and resolve over 161 issues.

The constantly evolving COVID-19 related policy environment, including numerous support programs and public health restrictions, created an urgent need for enhanced communications. The City recognized the need to provide timely and accurate information to the business community by delivering the following services:

- **COVID-19 Business Support Web Page** – Developed and maintained a central one-stop shop digital resource to help businesses access information, programs and funding to support their response and recovery from COVID-19. As of August 31st, the COVID-19 Web Page has had over 24,800 visitors.
- **COVID-19 Relief Portal** – Developed and maintained a self-selection tool that provides a library of over 400 business resources, relief programs and incentives. The Portal continues to be an important and well-used resource.
- **Business Training and Recovery Support Webinars** – Hosted a series of COVID-19 related information and training webinars to build essential business skills. As of August 2021, EDO delivered 69 webinars to 4,888 attendees.
- **Health, Safety & Reopening Guidelines** – Developed a central digital resource to inform and support businesses on workplace safety. In addition, partnered with Region of Peel, Mississauga Board of Trade, the City's Enforcement Team, and the Mayor's Office to deliver a series of webinars to support businesses. Webinar topics ranged from "Mandatory Face Coverings By-Law" to "What to Do If COVID-19 Affects Your Business" and "Workplaces in Peel: Vaccine Clinics and Peel's Section 22 Class Order." As of August 31st, the City collaborated in delivery of seven webinars to 862 businesses in Peel.

With support from Strategic Communications, EDO used various tactics to amplify key messages to the business community through the following:

- **Social Media** – Enhanced social media communication to reach new local businesses and share important information through social media channels (Twitter/Facebook/LinkedIn) that have a combined 10,000+ followers.

- **Newsletter** – Increased EDO newsletter frequency from monthly to weekly. The newsletter reaches over 3,100 subscribers.
- **Corporate Press Releases** – Supported Strategic Communications on drafting press releases for programs and services related to EDO's efforts in supporting Mississauga's business community.
- **Paid Promotion** – Promoted EDO services on Social, InSauga and Modern Mississauga Magazine.
- **Signage** – Leveraged Street signs, VHO, and digital reader boards throughout the City to promote services.
- **Partnerships** – Collaborated with Mississauga Board of Trade; Business Improvement Areas; Business Associations; Region of Peel; and internal partners: Tourism Mississauga and Culture Division to share information on EDO programs and services.

Small Business Programs and Initiatives

Small business is a foundational contributor to Mississauga's economy, accounting for 99 per cent of all businesses and nearly half of total employment in the City. COVID-19 has had a disproportionately negative impact upon small business, who due to resource constraints, have also been the most challenged in effectively responding to the pandemic. In recognition, EDO has made supporting small business a priority during the pandemic.

The following programs were introduced or enhanced to help small businesses respond to COVID-19:

- **One-on-One Small Business Consultations** – Provided one-on-one business consultations to help small business owners implement health and safety guidelines, access financial support and pivot business operations in response to the pandemic. As of August 31st, 2021, EDO provided 465 small business consultations, some of which included multiple interactions.
- **Business Advisory Services** – Provided free advisory services with professionals in legal, accounting, business operations, and sales and marketing to support businesses owners struggling with impacts of COVID-19. As of August 31st, 2021, EDO served 133 businesses through this service.
- **Digital Mainstreet** – Renewed EDO's partnership with the Province of Ontario and the Ontario Business Improvement Area Association to deliver the Digital Mainstreet program. The program helps small businesses use the internet to market and sell their products and services online to reach new and existing customers. As of August 31st, 2021, EDO's Digital Squad has served 246 businesses with free one-on-one assistance.
- **[ShopHERE - Mississauga](#)** – Powered by Google Program, ShopHERE provides independent businesses and artists with resources to develop and launch an online store at no-cost. As of August 31st, 2021, 873 Mississauga businesses were signed up for the program.

- **Starter Company Plus Program** – Delivered by EDO, this provincially funded program provides free training, business skills development, mentorship and guidance to new start-ups and existing small businesses or musicians who have been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. Each participant has the opportunity to apply for a program grant of up to \$5,000. Through this program, EDO was able to help 37 businesses and award 18 grants.
- **Summer Company** – Delivered by EDO, this provincially funded youth entrepreneurship program is geared to Ontario students 15 to 29 years old to help them launch and operate a summer business. The program provides free business training and mentorship to help students get their business up and running and opportunity to receive a grant up to \$3,000 to help launch their summer business. Through this program, EDO was able to award 12 grants.

In addition, EDO collaborated with Tourism Mississauga, as well as the City's Culture Division and Planning and Building Department to advance the following initiatives:

- **#MississaugaMade** - Led by Tourism Mississauga, EDO supported the #MississaugaMade shop local campaign promoting Mississauga products, businesses, stories, activities and experiences. As of August 31st, 2021, 713 businesses were listed on the site.
- **Patios Expansion** – Led by Planning and Building, EDO supported implementation of the City's expanded patio program with promotion through our media channels and industry partners, and co-hosted an information webinar with the Mississauga Board of Trade.
- **Temporary Outdoor Business Permit** – This temporary use by-law was passed by Council on December 9, 2020 allowing certain businesses and charitable ventures to operate outdoors in a safe and responsible manner until December 31st, 2021.

EDO will continue to be part of the City's efforts to support local small businesses during these challenging times to ensure that the local economy is able to recover and grow well into the future.

Broader Industry Programs and Initiatives

Mississauga is home to a diverse community of over 94,000 businesses, including over 1,400 multinational companies and 76 Fortune 500 companies. The Mississauga Economic Development Strategy (2020-2025) identified four priority industries in Mississauga: Advanced Manufacturing (Aerospace, Automotive, Cleantech and Food & Beverage), Higher Value Business Services (Finance, Insurance and Information and Communications Technology), Life Sciences and Smart Logistics. Together these sectors employ over 178,000 people, accounting for 42.9 per cent of Mississauga's total employment base.¹

¹ Source: Economic Development Office calculation based on custom sector lists using 2018 Employment Survey data. Advanced Manufacturing can be broken down by subsector with the following employment amounts; Aerospace (30,800), Automotive (19,500), Cleantech (16,300), Food & Beverage (29,500)

EDO focuses on the following initiatives to sustain and grow our key sectors during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic:

- **Business Investment Attraction and Retention** – EDO continued to generate and secure business investment during the pandemic. Business investment in 2020 exceeded annual performance targets, and is on track to exceed 2021 targets as well. Investments occurred within a number of sectors including Advanced Manufacturing, Life Sciences, Information and Communications Technology and Film (see Table 1: EDO Investment Key Performance Indicators). Investment activity

• **Table 1: EDO Investment Key Performance Indicators**

	2019	2020	2021
<i>New & Retained Taxable Assessment</i>	\$2,419,245	\$2,420,438	\$2,017,759
<i>Number of Jobs New & Retained (Min – Max)</i>	2,856-4,389	3,777-3,805	1,024-1,149

- **Sector Support** – EDO engaged with our key sectors through one-on-one consultations and working groups to address impacts related to COVID-19 and advance additional priorities identified by sector stakeholders. As of August 31st, 2021, EDO delivered 12 sector-focused events on a variety of topics including continuous improvement, COVID-19 impacts on the aerospace industry (with Federal Transport Minister Omar Alghabra's participation), and equity and diversity in life sciences.
- **B2B Connections** – EDO, with support from the City's IT department, developed and implemented a B2B platform for businesses and entrepreneurs to crowdsource best practices and build strategic partnerships in response to COVID-19. Topics covered included implementing physical distancing in business operations and sourcing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). As of Aug 31st, 2021, 76 industry users were engaged on the B2B platform.
- **Workforce Development** – EDO is addressing local workforce challenges by facilitating collaboration between post-secondary institutions and local industry, connecting local businesses to workforce development programs and funding, and connecting new graduates, students and workers in transition to local employment opportunities. A Training, Hiring and Talent webpage was created to support workforce development initiatives.
- **Equity and Diversity Collaborative** - Workforce development efforts have continued with an increased focus on Inclusive Recovery initiatives including Women in Mississauga Manufacturing and Life Sciences Equity and Diversity Collaborative. Through these initiatives, EDO has been working collaboratively with local companies towards shared goals of increasing gender balance, as well as diversity and inclusion of underrepresented populations in Mississauga's local workforce.
- **Digital Marketing Campaigns** – EDO deployed a number of digital marketing campaigns to promote Mississauga's key industry sectors, including Life Sciences and Advanced Manufacturing. Both campaigns outperformed industry standards, increasing traffic to EDO's

sector webpages by 25 percent and strengthening the identity of Mississauga's Life Sciences and Advanced Manufacturing sectors.

Entrepreneurship and Innovation

EDO has continued to develop and enhance the innovation and growth potential of local start-ups, scale-ups and established businesses in Mississauga. The *Entrepreneurship and Innovation Study* (2019) and *Economic Development Strategy* (2020) endorsed by Council established the priority to strengthen Mississauga's innovation performance through the key initiatives listed below. The challenges and opportunities emerging across the economy from COVID-19 have made supporting local innovation in Mississauga even more critical to achieving sustained economic prosperity.

- **Innovation Marketing Campaign** – To advance the development of Mississauga's Entrepreneurship & Innovation Ecosystem, EDO is working with partners on an entrepreneurship and innovation marketing campaign. The campaign will organize branding efforts across Mississauga's innovation and business investment ecosystem. As a part of this campaign, the Mississauga Business Enterprise Centre (MBEC) will be positioned as a central coordinating hub for innovation activity. EDO is planning to launch the campaign in early 2022.
- **Downtown Innovation Hub** – EDO has developed a business case for a central space within Mississauga to promote, connect, and develop innovation activity. The Innovation Hub will bring entrepreneurs, established companies and innovation service providers together to share challenges, collaborate and support innovation and entrepreneurial activity in Mississauga. EDO is planning to bring the business case forward as part of the 2021 budget planning process.
- **Lakeview Innovation District Activation Project** – EDO is prioritizing investment opportunities aimed at building out the Lakeview Innovation District to maximize its potential as a smart and sustainable site. EDO has engaged the City's Leadership Team to move ahead with a project plan for 2021 to advance the vision for the site including identifying key potential investment leads and strategic partnerships to operate and govern the site, and creating media exposure of the development opportunity.

Going Forward

The impacts of COVID-19 and capacity to respond those impacts have varied widely across Mississauga's business community. In response to the evolving nature of the pandemic and evolving federal, provincial and regional public health and economic policy interventions, EDO will continue to adapt and prioritize its support for the local business community through the above-mentioned areas:

- Outreach and Communication;
- Small Business Programs and Initiatives;

- Broader Industry Programs and Initiatives;
- Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

As Mississauga's economic recovery progresses, EDO expects to shift focus within each area towards actions that align with the Growth Phase of the Economic Recovery Plan for Small Business and Economic Recovery Plan for Broader Industry. Growth Phase actions are intended to build sustained and inclusive economic prosperity within Mississauga. Actions include:

- Downtown Innovation Hub
- Lakeview Innovation District Activation Project
- Sector & Workforce Development Initiatives
- Business Investment Retention, Attraction & Expansion
- Downtown Investment & Development
- Main Street Recovery Initiatives

Strategic Plan

Priorities identified in the Economic Recovery Plans for Small Business and Broader Industry align with the priorities outlined in the City's Economic Development Strategy (2020-2025) and support all five pillars for change in the City of Mississauga Strategic Plan (2009) in the following ways:

- **Cultivating Creative and Innovative Businesses:** EDO efforts need to focus on supporting globally-minded businesses, which includes harnessing innovation potential within priority sectors, entrepreneurs and scale-ups;
- **Completing our Neighbourhoods:** EDO efforts need to focus on working with its partners to develop distinct places to attract people and businesses as the City moves into its next phase of growth;
- **Ensuring Youth, Older Adults and New Immigrants Thrive:** EDO efforts need to focus on working with its partners to develop people-centred spaces anchored in inclusive growth opportunities for its diverse community of residents and creating distinct places to engage and develop a stronger identity for the City;
- **Developing Transit-Oriented City:** EDO efforts need to focus on working with its partners to deliver durable infrastructure, which includes transit driven growth;
- **Living Green:** EDO efforts need to focus on working with its partners to develop distinct places and that can transition into sustainable and accessible transit modes.

Financial Impact

The Economic Recovery Plans for Small Business and Broader Industry outline a set of actions for EDO to lead in building awareness of the City's economic priorities. (Appendix 1: Economic Recovery Plan Implementation Update: Small Business & Broader Industry). The resource requirements for delivering the actions will be managed primarily through EDO's existing operations. However, actions that require additional resources will be considered through the City's budget and business planning processes.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to have an unprecedented and evolving impact upon the global economy, creating unique challenges and opportunities across Mississauga's business community. EDO's response to date has reflected both the urgent and evolving needs of the business community in response to the pandemic, while continuing to advance strategic priorities that will guide the City towards sustained economic prosperity through inclusive growth. To achieve this balance, economic recovery plans were structured to address priorities within four overarching areas; Outreach and Communication; Small Business Programs and Initiatives; Broader Industry Programs and Initiatives; and Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

To inform our economic recovery priorities and actions, EDO sought guidance from the Economic Resiliency Task Force (the "Task Force"), which endorsed priority recommendations put forward by staff through the Economic Recovery Plan for Small Business and the Economic Recovery Plan for Broader Industry.

EDO began implementing the plans last summer and met with the Task Force to provide a progress update on April 19th, 2021 (Appendix 1: Economic Recovery Plan Implementation Update: Small Business & Broader Industry). Overall, the Task Force provided positive feedback and a commitment to assist in delivering the actions.

Attachments

Appendix 1: Economic Recovery Plan Implementation Update: Small Business & Broader Industry



Andrew Whittemore, M.U.R.P., Commissioner of Planning & Building

Prepared by: Aleksandra Allen, Manager, Business Initiatives and Planning, Economic Development Office