

Background and Previous Council Direction

Background

There are many ways to encourage economic growth and attract investment in Calgary. All orders of government offer some incentives, including grants and tax incentives, training, entrepreneur support, improving service delivery and building communication channels with the business community. Over the last few years, The City of Calgary put in place multiple efforts to support businesses and local economy. Some of these efforts include work done through the Financial Task Force program, Business Advisory Committee collaboration and partnership efforts accomplished by the Business and Local Economy team.

The Financial Task Force team investigated making Calgary more competitive, livable, and attractive. Cross-corporate teams worked on different programs and implemented improved communication with the business community, increased advocacy The City did for local businesses and helped improve customer service for restaurants and breweries.

The Business Advisory Committee (BAC) has worked to facilitate a more collaborative relationship between The City and the business community. Through this collaboration, we have seen improvements in how The City meets and responds to the business community's needs.

The Business and Local Economy team (BLE) supports cross-corporate collaboration and coordination of business-friendly efforts. Further, BLE works with external partners such as Calgary Economic Development (CED) and other orders of government when needed. For example, when CED is looking to attract a particular business to Calgary or has a client considering opening a business in Calgary, they contact the BLE to gain an understanding of what The City can provide for a specific industry/business. Through this process, BLE is building a consistent response that is fair, open and transparent. BLE collaborates with business units to tailor needed supports. Some of the examples of collaboration efforts this year include:

In Q1 2022, the BLE reviewed available supports for urban agriculture businesses and worked with Development, Building and Business Services to include urban agriculture businesses into Business Experience Representative program – a concierge service for select industries helping applicants navigate permit requirements and applications.

In Q2 2022, the BLE coordinated cross-corporate efforts to scope a grant program to incentivize industrial development. Engagement with subject matter experts indicated that the impact of such a grant would be minimal due to current market conditions, and the work has been put on hold.

Throughout 2022, BLE has worked closely with Arts & Culture to advance efforts to become a more Film Friendly City.

The inventory of tools and processes currently available and presented in the report and in Attachment 2 will help navigate future requests to support economic development and provides a foundation for future incentives design.

Previous Council Direction

On 2022 March 29, Council had an in-camera discussion that led to a question about what kinds of processes currently exist to support economic investment in Calgary and how these processes are coordinated and communicated.

DATE	REPORT NUMBER	DIRECTION/DESCRIPTION
2022 March 29	EC2022-0383	Economic Development Discussion (verbal) Council directed the Administration to work to ensure that the existing processes for encouraging economic investment in Calgary including the work of the Financial Task Force are coordinated and communicated in a manner that is fair, open and transparent and to report back to Council no later than 2022 December 31.