

Executive Summary

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline a sustainable economic development strategy for Delta. The funding and leadership for development of the strategy has come from the Chamber of Commerce, but the strategy is to be a community strategy and not a Chamber strategy. As such, the development of the strategy is done with input from over 100 community leaders and stakeholders. This document is considered a draft strategy at this point, as it must still be communicated to the community for further feedback before it is finalized.

Approach

Background Economic and Demographic Research



Community Consultations



Prioritization of Opportunities



Development of Draft Strategy



Public Communication

Finalization of Strategy



Implementation of Findings and Recommendations

The approach taken by the consultants in developing the strategy is outlined above.

1. The first step is to review existing documents and statistics on Delta to understand the strengths and key features of the economy and local demographics to get a historical perspective on the local economy. Delta is compared to other similar communities.
2. The consultants then arrange meetings with local companies, associations and community groups to better understand their perspectives on future opportunities.

3. Finally the results are summarized and prioritized into a strategy. Decisions are made by a steering committee. The committee is asked to endorse a 20-year vision for the Delta economy, a set of objectives, a 5 Year Strategy and a One Year Action Plan.
4. A communication plan is developed for public input to the Sustainable Economic Strategy.

Background Analysis

1. While the GVRD is experiencing record growth, Delta is not growing.
2. Delta is not expected to grow in the future.
3. Delta is four very different communities.
4. Delta has a large, diversified manufacturing base.
5. The agricultural industry in Delta is strong and important.
6. The wetlands of Delta offer a key eco-tourism opportunity.
7. Delta is a transportation hub for the region and the country.
8. 75% of Deltans commute to work in another community.
9. Delta is the only municipality in the Lower Mainland without post secondary education.
10. The Agricultural Land Reserve limits land availability for development.
11. South Delta is an affluent community.
12. Delta is an aging community, particularly Tsawwassen.
13. School enrolments are dropping in Delta and are projected to drop faster than the regional or provincial average.
14. Delta experiences retail spending leakages to other communities.
15. North Delta has planned population growth and regional retail potential.

Distinctive Excellence

The distinctive excellence of Delta that sets it apart from other municipalities in the GVRD from an economic perspective is:

Its location, sunny climate, clean environment, open spaces and farmland.

The 20 Year Vision for Delta

- A diverse and vibrant agricultural area where the community actively supports farmers to meet changing market needs.
- A fishing community supported by a well managed and shared fishery
- Successful business parks where manufacturers feel understood and wanted and partner to employ local citizens
- World class port facilities and support services
- Access to local post-secondary education focused on environmental, agricultural and horticultural studies
- Transportation infrastructure that meets the needs of citizens, industrial parks and ports
- Protection of wildlife habitat
- Eco-tourism development and infrastructure including trails, water access and/or bike-paths
- Three distinct town centers, but each with a strong sense of livability and family orientation with strong local retail, low crime, leading schools, good family oriented community services including:
 - Ladner as a destination tourism center with a focus on heritage and eco-tourism
 - North Delta as a safe, culturally diverse community with an updated, regional, retail destination along Scott Road
 - Tsawwassen as a family-oriented community, with a welcoming village core and a diversity of housing options for young and old
- An economic climate that integrates the aspirations of Tsawwassen First Nation
- Development of the Boundary Bay Airport as a regional light aircraft centre.

Objectives

1. To help resolve transportation infrastructure alternatives.
2. To actively retain, expand and attract businesses in the key industries of Delta including tourism, agriculture, transportation and manufacturing.
3. To lessen commuter traffic and create more local jobs.
4. To retain the unique rural/community mix with minimal erosion of the agricultural base.
5. To build an eco-tourism industry.
6. To improve the business climate in Delta such that planned development is welcome.
7. To protect and retain environmentally sensitive areas.
8. To revitalize family makeup of Delta, maintain schools and maintain family oriented retail services.
9. To maintain retail viability in Delta through upgrading of town centers.
10. To engage Tsawwassen First Nation in productive and complementary, long-term community economic development planning.
11. To support small business development.
12. To attract post-secondary education to Delta.
13. To preserve and enhance Delta heritage.

Five Year Sustainable Economic Strategy

Transportation – (Objective 1)

Communication and advocacy of transportation options and impacts to the public with recommendations.

Community leadership in implementation of transportation solutions.

Agriculture – (Objective 2, 3, 4, 7, 13)

Encourage development of a farm strategy for Delta

Business Retention and Expansion – (Objectives 2, 3, 7)

Work with Municipality of Delta and the leaseholder for Boundary Bay airport to help establish a strategy for airport development.

Encourage, help develop and implement a business retention program in Delta to work with existing businesses to understand their issues and remove barriers to growth.

Develop a plan to upgrade servicing of Tilbury Industrial Park including Eco-Industrial Networking, improved transit, retail/commercial development, and greenway transportation options.

Encourage communication of the Deltaport expansion impacts to the public.

Encourage implementation for all businesses to develop a Delta First hiring plan for Tilbury once improvements are made.

Investment Attraction – (Objective 12)

Encourage development and implementation of a strategy to attract post-secondary education to Delta.

Help develop a Delta brand that can be used to promote Delta for business attraction, tourism and new residents.

Residential – (Objectives 8, 9)

Encourage communication of demographic trends and forecasts to the public.

Help develop appropriate population growth targets and strategies for each neighborhood to retain local retail businesses, and demographic mix of each community.

Encourage development of starter family housing strategies for appropriate communities to increase school enrolment and retain family neighbourhoods.

Encourage tracking of success in changing demographics. Help set and track population targets for more young families.

Tourism – (Objective 5, 7, 13)

Encourage development of an Tourism (Eco) strategy for Delta.

Work with the Delta Spirit of British Columbia committee on strategies to communicate purchasing opportunities to Delta businesses, and attract visitors to Delta for the 2010 Games.

Business Climate – (Objective 4, 6, 9)

Encourage review of competitiveness of Delta's development policies and procedures from a customer perspective.

Communication – (Objectives 2, 4, 6, 10)

Encourage the development of an economic development relationship with the Tsawwassen First Nation to increase understanding and pursue mutual goals.

Encourage reduction of urban-rural conflicts that harm the investment climate through public education on key issues.

Retail/Commercial – (Objectives 3, 8, 9, 13)

Help develop and review strategies for downtown development for each of the 3 local town centers/commercial corridors.

Encourage the city to proactively rezone downtown areas to achieve planned development.

Entrepreneurism – (Objective 3, 11)

Encourage support establishment of small business facilitation and mentoring services in Delta

Strategy Communication – (Objectives 1-13)

Communicate the sustainable economic plan to the public and invite

feedback.

Develop ongoing communication milestones and channels to report back to the community on progress on the sustainable economic plan

Key Deliverables for 2005

A recommended solution to the traffic problems in Delta.
Encourage an agreed implementation plan with funders to solve traffic problems.
Agreement on a residential growth strategy for Delta.
Launch development of an agricultural strategy for Delta.
Implementation of action items for development of agricultural industry.
Develop a team and plan to attract post secondary education to Delta.
Encourage the completion of a plan for Boundary Bay airport development.
Assessment, communication of impacts and benefits from Deltaport expansion to the public.
Launch development of an eco-tourism strategy for Delta.
Encourage review of Delta's development policies from a customer perspective.
Encourage development of ongoing economic development relationships with the Tsawwassen First Nation.
Work with the Delta Police on a crime prevention program for businesses in Tilbury and Annacis Industrial Parks.
Communicate the sustainable economic plan to the public and invite feedback. ¹