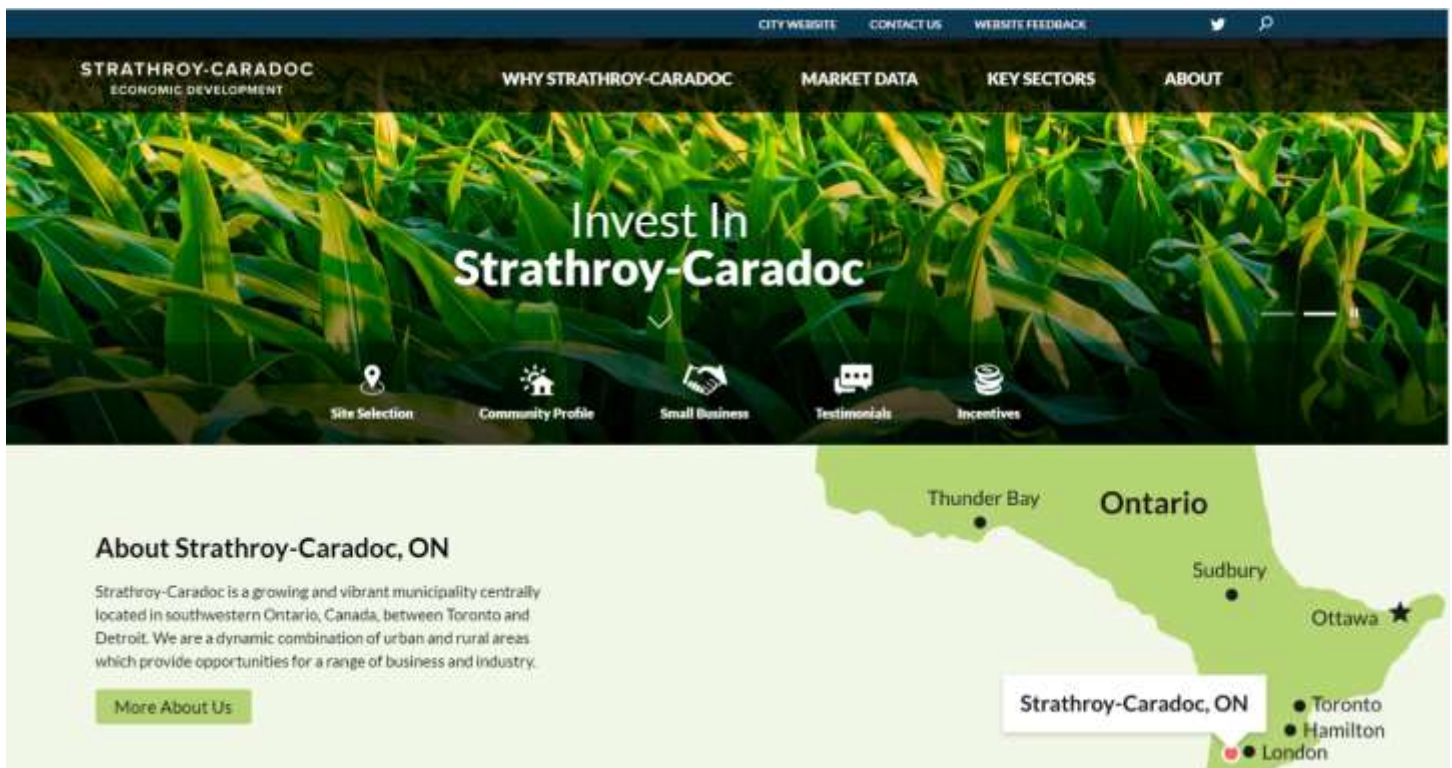


Meeting Date: October 7, 2019
Department: Chief Administrative Officer
Prepared By: Demetri Makrakos, Economic Development Officer
Approved By: Greg McClinchey, Chief Administrative Officer
SUBJECT: Economic Development Website

RECOMMENDATION: That Council receive the information on the launch of the Economic Development Website.



BACKGROUND

In December of 2018, the decision was made to develop a stand-alone Economic Development website. The objective was intended to better leverage the various community assets, projects and happenings within the Municipality, for local economic development creation, business retention and expansion efforts, and as a tool to foster new investment interest and opportunities. This approach would allow staff to share data and information of particular interest to investors and to those within

the business community more rapidly and without diminishing the impact and/or effectiveness of the primary Municipal website as a general tool/interface for residents and visitors.

At the time, the Museum Strathroy-Caradoc website had just launched, so our Municipal service provider (eSolutions) was able to utilize that same basic website template for an Economic Development website. This e-design repurposing facilitated a far more rapid deployment of the site and allowed the end product to be created at a reduced cost (approximately \$10,000). Municipal Communications Committee members (Greg McClinchey, Brianna Hammer-Keidel, Dave Cameron and Demetri Makrakos) worked with the service provider on design and internal content generation and, in September of 2019, the Economic Development website went live.

LAUNCH OF THE WEBSITE

On September 20, 2019 the Economic Development site went live and exists at the url: investStrathroy-Caradoc.ca

The site is designed to prioritize information for site selectors, business expansion and business attraction, and get them the information they need in the fewest clicks. On the site you will find information such as:

- Key Sectors (manufacturing, agriculture, specialty trades);
- Community Profile;
- Demographic, Labour Force and Industry Statistics;
- Certified Site and Industrial Parks;
- Starting or Expanding a Business;
- Tax Rate, Permit and Utility Comparisons;
- Testimonials;
- Major Employers;
- Access to Talent; and
- BIA and Chamber of Commerce.

A strategy to direct traffic towards the new site has been developed and is being deployed. Given the way search engine optimization works on services such as Google, it will take time for this site to make it to first page of search results when someone searches “invest Strathroy-Caradoc”. However, with the proper keywords as well as using social media to drive traffic and increase awareness, we expect to expedite this process.

CONSULTATION

- The Municipal Communications Committee;
- Financial Services; and
- Building and Planning Services.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

All costs associated with this project were anticipated and included in the 2019 Economic Development Budget adopted by Council. Total project costs are approximately \$10,000.00.