



Staff Report to Council

Planning and Development

FILE: 13-6750-01/25

REPORT DATE: March 26, 2025 **MEETING DATE:** April 01, 2025

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Patrick Ward, Director of Planning & Development

SUBJECT: Ridge Meadows Chamber of Commerce 2025-2027 Fee-for-Service Proposal

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER REVIEW/APPROVAL:

RECOMMENDATION(S):

THAT Council:

- A. Authorize staff to execute a 2025-2027 fee-for-service agreement with the Ridge Meadows Chamber of Commerce, as described in the “Ridge Meadows Chamber of Commerce 2025-2027 Fee-for-Service Proposal” report presented at the April 1, 2025 Council meeting; OR
 - B. Other.
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PURPOSE

For Council to consider the terms of the Ridge Meadows Chamber of Commerce 2025-2027 fee-for-service agreement.

- Information Report Decision Report Direction Report

DISCUSSION

Background:

Under the terms of a \$12,000 one-year, fee-for-service agreement for 2024, the Ridge Meadows Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) delivered three initiatives on behalf of the City:

- 1. A Pitt Meadows hiring fair;
- 2. Online business directory of Pitt Meadows businesses; and,

3. A new business information package to help those interested in starting a new business in Pitt Meadows.

These initiatives were included in a list of economic development priorities recommended by the City's Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) for 2024.

Hiring Fair

The Chamber and WorkBC organized a hiring fair held on March 14, 2024, in Heritage Hall. The event attracted 14 employers and over 300 job seekers, with the first hour reserved for job seekers with diverse abilities. Since this event, WorkBC staff have planned additional hiring fairs in Pitt Meadows, including one held on February 26, 2025, at the Pitt Meadows Public Library.

Online Business Directory

Using the City's business licensing data, the Chamber and City jointly launched an online directory of Pitt Meadows businesses on March 12, 2025. The directory will help community members, local businesses, and visitors connect with local suppliers and services for their needs.

The Chamber will maintain the directory, updating it monthly with business licensing information from the City. Businesses wanting to be included in the directory need to have a current City of Pitt Meadows business licence and a Pitt Meadows address.

New Business Information Package

The New Business Information Package was created for individuals looking to establish new businesses in Pitt Meadows. It includes a list of important considerations and requirements, along with links to relevant resources and support agencies. The information package is being finalized and will be available both online and as a handout at the Chamber and City Hall.

More information will be shared via social media when the information package is available.

Relevant Policy, Bylaw or Legislation:

The City's Official Community Plan includes policies outlining the City's ongoing support for economic development and local businesses.

The City's Economic Development Strategic Plan, which is used by staff and the City's Economic Development Advisory Committee to prioritize the City's economic development initiatives, includes strategies that encourage:

- Working with the Chamber and other partner agencies on implementing economic development strategies and initiatives
- Working with partner agencies to coordinate hiring fairs and recruitment initiatives

- Engaging and listening to the business community
- Developing and sharing business resource guides and links
- Developing and maintaining an online local business directory

Analysis:

In July 2024, during the 2025 business planning process, EDAC suggested a number of potential priorities for 2025, including:

- Coordinate another Pitt Meadows hiring fair as a recurring annual item;
- Keep the online business directory up-to-date;
- Facilitate planning for a more unified and aesthetically pleasing City core;
- Explore opportunities for interns and summer students to assist with economic development initiatives;
- Consider the feasibility of an annual Blueberry Festival;
- Investigate the addition of signage along trails and multi-use paths with location information and QR codes for public safety and to identify area attractions and businesses; and,
- Join the Scenic Route 7 Tourism Marketing Collective.

At the time, City and Chamber staff also discussed opportunities for a 2025 fee-for-service agreement based on the above list. The first two listed initiatives were identified to be included: coordinating another hiring fair and maintaining the online business directory.

City staff have also begun work on the other initiatives listed above using funding from the annual budget for economic development initiatives. \$14,500 from the economic development budget has been committed to these, with a remaining available balance of \$5,500.

Fee-for-Service Proposal

Recently, the Chamber proposed an expanded five-year, fee-for-service arrangement, to maintain the business directory, support the annual hiring fair, and partially fund a dedicated business support role (see Attachment A). The City would contribute \$18,000 per year under the agreement to support this enhanced service level. As proposed, the business support person would spend one day a week in Pitt Meadows welcoming new businesses, connecting with existing businesses, collecting and distributing information, and providing outreach for the City.

Upon review of the proposal, the new business support role would provide enhanced engagement with the business community; however, there is some overlap with the connections and flow of information provided by members of EDAC. Committee members serve as an important connection between the Pitt Meadows business community and the City. The information they provide enables staff and Council to make informed decisions.

Rather than solely providing weekly in-person business engagement, City staff suggest the business support person could spend a portion of their time developing additional information resources and supporting other economic initiatives (e.g., the proposed Blueberry Festival). Additionally, a three-year term agreement with the potential for an extension may be more suitable than a five-year commitment. An initial three-year term would provide stable funding and allow the City to review its objectives in 2027.

City staff discussed these alternatives with Chamber staff, who agreed to an initial three-year term with the opportunity to extend it following a review. Additionally, it was agreed the specific tasks of the business support person could be adjusted as needed to better support both the City's and the Chamber's goals and priorities for enhancing local business vitality.

Recommendation

The recommendation for Council is to authorize staff to execute a three-year fee-for-service agreement with the Ridge Meadows Chamber of Commerce that will be subject to the following terms:

- \$18,000 per year for three years;
- Potential for an extension following a review in 2027, with consideration to evaluation criteria to be included as part of the agreement or annual work plans;
- For the delivery of:
 - An annual hiring fair in Pitt Meadows;
 - Keeping the Pitt Meadows online business directory updated;
 - Regular engagement with new and existing Pitt Meadows businesses, the frequency of which to be agreed upon by the City, depending on the demands of delivering other priority initiatives;
 - Production of information packages or other resources that support new and existing Pitt Meadows businesses; and,
 - Other Pitt Meadows economic and business support initiatives, as prioritized by the City and agreed to by the Chamber through an annual work plan.

COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

- Principled Governance Balanced Economic Prosperity Infrastructure
 Community Spirit & Wellbeing Corporate Pride Public Safety
 Not Applicable

Regional Partnerships – Proactively connect, collaborate and build strong relationships with our regional partners.

Business Vitality – Cultivate a vibrant and diverse economy where local businesses prosper by attracting visitors and businesses.

Resources – Ensure high-quality and sustainable resources are available to meet the needs of the community.

WORKPLAN IMPLICATIONS

- Already accounted for in department workplan / no adjustments required
 - Emergent issue / will require deferral of other priority(ies)
 - Other
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FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- None Budget Previously Approved Referral to Business Planning
- Other

Following the completion of the Economic Development Strategic Plan, as part of the 2024 budget, Council approved a \$20,000 annual operating budget to support the implementation of economic development initiatives. For 2025, \$14,500 has already been committed to other economic development initiatives, leaving \$5,500 for the proposed \$18,000 fee-for-service agreement; the remaining \$12,500 would need to come from the general operating reserve. Similarly, for both 2026 and 2027, it is currently anticipated that an additional \$12,500 would be required from the general operating reserve in order to fund the fee-for-service agreement and maintain funding for other economic development initiatives, such as the annual costs associated with the Scenic Route 7 Tourism Marketing Collective. The \$12,500 in funding from the operating reserve can be included as part of an amendment to the 2025 five-year financial plan. At the end of 2027, when the agreement expires and an assessment of the service agreement’s value is completed, staff recommend property taxation replace reserve funding should Council wish to continue with an on-going arrangement with the Chamber.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- Inform Consult Involve Collaborate Empower

Comment(s): The 2024 fee-for-service arrangement with the Ridge Meadows Chamber of Commerce was discussed with the City’s Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC), along with the intent to negotiate a 2025 fee-for-service agreement. EDAC members help City staff prioritize which economic development initiatives to focus on each year, and staff determine the best way to action these items in the context of other City priorities.

KATZIE FIRST NATION CONSIDERATIONS

Referral Yes No Other

SIGN-OFFS

Written by:

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Reviewed by:

Patrick Ward,
Director of Planning & Development

Laura Barroetavena,
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ATTACHMENT(S):

- A. 2025-2027 Ridge Meadows Chamber of Commerce Fee-for-Service proposal