

## **TOWN OF WINDSOR AGENDA REPORT**

**Joint Windsor Town Council, Windsor Redevelopment Successor Agency and Windsor Water District Meeting Date:** March 19, 2025

**To:** Mayor and Town Council  
**From:** Tim Ricard, Economic Development Manager  
**Subject:** Presentation of the Draft Economic Development Strategic Plan for Council Feedback

### **Recommendation to Council:**

Receive a presentation on the Draft Economic Development Strategic Plan (EDSP) and provide feedback to staff.

### **Strategic Plan Element:**

The recommended action supports the goal of Fiscal Health. Goal Statement: Ensure the economic health and long-term financial viability of the Town.

### **Background:**

Recognizing the need to update the outdated 2008 Economic Development Strategic Plan (EDSP), the Town Council allocated funding in the FY 2023-24 and FY 2024-25 budgets for the development and implementation of the EDSP. The vision for the document is to serve as a dynamic roadmap for fostering economic growth, supporting businesses, and enhancing the community's quality of life.

Following an extensive selection process, the Town entered into a Professional Services Agreement with Economic Growth Strategies to assist in developing the plan.

The development of the Town of Windsor's Strategic Plan followed a comprehensive and inclusive process, designed to reflect community priorities while addressing Windsor's unique economic challenges and opportunities. This work began with data collection and analysis, which was used to inform a robust community and stakeholder engagement process.

### Data Collection and Analysis

The consulting team compiled and analyzed updated economic datasets, providing a quantitative foundation for assessing current economic conditions and trends. Key economic insights include:

- Retail Leakage & Taxable Sales – Windsor's taxable sales per capita are among the lowest in Sonoma County, with 24% of resident spending leaking to other jurisdictions. Expanding local retail, particularly in motor vehicles and specialty goods, can reduce revenue loss.
- Employment & Workforce Trends – More than 85% of Windsor's workforce commutes outside the town, primarily to Santa Rosa. Key industries losing workers include healthcare, professional services, and manufacturing, highlighting the need to attract more local employers.
- Industry Strengths & Opportunities – Windsor's largest retail generators include Home Depot and Walmart, while growth sectors include boutique hospitality, specialty businesses, and light industrial enterprises.

- Demographics & Housing – Windsor’s population declined by 3.1% since 2020, and housing affordability remains a challenge. With a high homeownership rate (75.7%), expanding rental and workforce housing is crucial for economic sustainability.

### Community and Stakeholder Engagement

Community input played a central role in shaping the EDSP. The engagement process included multiple opportunities for residents, businesses, and key stakeholders to contribute their insights.

- Community & Stakeholder Meetings – Round 1 (August 2024)
  - Two meetings were held: one for the general community and another for key stakeholders, focusing on Windsor’s economic vision, strengths, and concerns.
- Community Survey (August–September 2024)
  - A town-wide survey in both English and Spanish was distributed to residents and businesses, collecting data on economic development priorities, challenges, and opportunities.
  - The survey results provided quantitative and qualitative insights to inform the plan’s development.
- Stakeholder Interviews (September–October 2024)
  - One-on-one interviews with business leaders, community organizations, and government officials provided detailed perspectives on specific economic challenges and opportunities.
- Community & Stakeholder Meetings – Round 2 (November 2024)
  - Two follow-up meetings were held: one for the general community and another for key stakeholders, allowing participants to:
    - Review insights from previous meetings, surveys, and interviews.
    - Discuss initial recommendations for the EDSP, including vision, strategy themes, and potential action items.
    - Provide feedback to ensure alignment with community priorities.

### **Discussion:**

#### Economic Development Action Plan:

The Draft EDSP includes a structured Action Plan outlining specific initiatives to support each goal, as well as metrics for measuring performance and outcomes. This plan focuses on actionable strategies to drive economic development, enhance business support, and improve Windsor’s overall economic resilience. Key elements include:

- Business Retention & Expansion (BRE) Programs – Strengthening engagement with local businesses through proactive outreach, support services, and workforce development initiatives.
- Infrastructure & Development Support – Streamlining permitting processes, enhancing infrastructure investments, and encouraging strategic land use planning to support business growth.
- Targeted Industry Attraction – Identifying and recruiting key industries such as advanced manufacturing, tourism, and boutique hospitality to align with Windsor’s economic strengths.
- Marketing & Branding Initiatives – Expanding efforts to promote Windsor as a premier destination for businesses, residents, and visitors through coordinated marketing and regional partnerships.
- Workforce Housing & Affordability – Supporting policies and initiatives to expand workforce

housing options and improve affordability for local employees and residents.

- Performance Metrics & Accountability – Establishing measurable benchmarks to track economic development progress, including job creation, business growth, and revenue generation.

Next Steps:

Following Town Council feedback, staff will refine the Draft EDSP based on input received and return with a final version for adoption at a future meeting.

**Fiscal Impact:**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this Council direction. The Professional Services Agreement allocates up to \$97,500 for the EDSP and is supported through sufficient appropriations in the FY 2023-2025 budget.

**Environmental Review:**

This action does not constitute a "project" within the meaning of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15378 and required no environmental review.

**Attachment(s):**

1. Draft Economic Development Strategic Plan  
Appendix A- Goals Table  
Appendix B - Community Engagement Report  
Appendix C- Dataset Report  
Appendix D - Cowork Space Opportunity Analysis  
14.1 PowerPoint (Distributed 2025-03-19)

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