



City of Moose Jaw

COMMUNICATION # CC-2019-0242

TITLE: Economic Development Initiatives

TO: City Council

FROM: Department of Planning and Development –
Economic Development Services

DATE: November 14, 2019

PUBLIC: PUBLIC DOCUMENT

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the City of Moose Jaw contract with MDB Insight to carry out the Business Retention and Expansion (BR + E) Triage Project, with a focus on value-add Agriculture and Food Production, with the source of funding being the 2020 Operating Budget in the amount of \$15,000.

THAT the City of Moose Jaw financially support the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP) Program with the source of funding being the 2020 Operating Budget in the amount of \$5,000.

THAT City Council support the inclusion of funding to facilitate participation in trade missions with the source of funding being from the Land Reserve in the amount of \$10,000.

TOPIC AND PURPOSE

Economic Development Services is presenting two new initiatives for consideration in the 2020 Budget year, including the BR + E Triage Project, and funding support for the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP) Program.

BACKGROUND

Economic Development Services continuously looks for opportunities to enhance its activities in order to grow the City's business and industry sector, as well as the labour market in order to support and sustain this growth. Business retention, expansion and workforce development are key strategic priorities in our economic development strategies.

During the time the South Central Enterprise Region program was in effect, a strategic business expansion and retention program was carried out through funding support from the provincial government. This program achieved critical engagement with the business community in order to identify barriers to growth and at the same time identify opportunities for growth. The program provided value in this respect and was well received by the business community.

Since 2012 there has been no BR & E Program in the City due to lack of capacity to support the program. MDB Insight is a nationally respected Economic Development entity that offer a BR + E Triage Project (Attachment 1).

Workforce attraction and attention to labour market needs is an equally critical priority for the City. With the loss of labour due to baby boomers exiting the workforce over the next number of years, it is of critical importance to attract and retain workers. The RNIP Program (Attachment 2) is a federal government initiative that supports the attraction and retention of immigrants to rural and northern cities. The City of Moose Jaw is one of eleven (11) communities across Canada that has been successful in offering the pilot program and has targeted an April 2020 roll out. There were no funding dollars provided to support the pilot program by the federal government.

DISCUSSION

TRIAGE BR + E

A key and critical tool of any economic development program is a **Business Retention & Expansion (BR&E)** strategy that takes the pulse of local businesses. We currently achieve this through visitations, along with business and industry engagement on a modest level based on capacity challenges. The proposed MDB Insight BR&E Triage program offers a new way to better predict future business opportunities and challenges. It is a community/sector outreach plan with 80-100 completed interviews (a critical aspect of BR&E). Real time insight is acquired, barriers to growth identified (red flags), benchmarks established, and opportunities identified (green flags). The value-add agriculture/food processing sector is a key focus and would be our target area, particularly as we attract ag value-added/food processing industry to our industrial park. This project would support growing existing business where more than 70% of a City's economic growth comes from. The cost of this initiative would be \$15,000.

RNIP PILOT PROGRAM

The Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP) program has been initiated to help spread the benefits of economic immigration to smaller communities in Canada. Moose Jaw is among eleven (11) communities selected to participate under the pilot that will:

- use immigration to help meet local labour market needs and support regional economic development (a key focus of the City's economic development strategy). How many positions are required in Moose Jaw? What type of population would come from those jobs?
- test a new pathway to permanent residence in rural Canada for skilled foreign nationals at various skill levels; and
- create welcoming environments that encourage and help new immigrants to stay in their new communities

According to *The Conference Board of Canada Mid-Sized Cities Outlook 2019*, the City of Moose Jaw's economy generated a total of 1,600 jobs over the past three years, but it is expected to shed 500 jobs this year before recovering with the addition of 200 net new jobs in 2020. It is expected that with the SaskPower project coming on stream and the need for 700 plus construction workers, labour demands will increase over the next few years. The accommodation, service and retail sectors will see a demand in labour needs over the next few years with the RNIP program helping to address this demand.

There are no federal financial resources available for the pilot communities and as a result local securing of funds will be required. The yearly cost to administer and carry out the program is anticipated to be \$75,000 per year. The Manager of Economic Development is a member of the leadership team that is leading the project. The pilot in Moose Jaw's case will be rolled out in April of 2020. Since no funds were provided by the federal government, local initiatives are required to raise funds to support the pilot. Resources from the federal government are being provided to assist in establishing the project and training the leadership team.

There are however, concerns with the ability to fund the pilot project as a great deal of administration and organization will be involved. It is anticipated that a full-time administrator will be required for the duration of the pilot program.

In order to effectively attract business and industry, direct approaches to companies through visitations is a desirable strategy. Our commitment to Carpere Canada includes supporting and participating in missions to meet with potential investors and companies outside of the City. It was also addressed through the strategic planning process that there was value in the City participating in trade missions. We are projecting a cost of \$10,000 to help achieve this goal and believe that land sales will be enhanced by this kind of activity, therefore funding from this account can be justified. This initiative can be considered an investment in future land sales.

OPTIONS TO RECOMMENDATION

- Not approve the funding of the BR + E Triage project at a cost of \$15,000.
- Not approve the RNIP Pilot funding request at a cost of \$5,000.
- Not approve the trade missions funding request at a cost of \$10,000.

PUBLIC AND/OR STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

The Leadership Team coordinating the RNIP Pilot project includes the Moose Jaw and District Chamber of Commerce, South Central Regional Immigration Partnership, Moose Jaw Multicultural Council and Accola Immigration Services. The Leadership Team has been very active in the application process and planning of the initiative and will perform ongoing oversight during the pilot project.

STRATEGIC PLAN

The City's updated Community Strategic Plan identifies that new opportunities, actions and tactics are required in order to successfully advance the community into the future. Both these initiatives would contribute to achieving that goal.

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

According to Section 15 of The Official Community Plan, Bylaw No. 5345, the RNIP proposal meets the following objective:

15.1 OBJECTIVES

- d) To develop and promote a positive employment environment in Moose Jaw which will retain and increase the numbers of young residents in the work force.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- Approval of one or both will have an impact of up to \$20,000 on the 2020 City budget.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public Notice pursuant to the Public Notice Policy is not required.

PRESENTATION

VERBAL: The Manager of Economic Development will be presenting the report.

ATTACHMENTS

- i. Overview of MDB Insight's BR + E Triage project.
- ii. BR + E Triage Presentation.
- iii. Overview of the RNIP pilot project.

REPORT APPROVAL

Written by: James Dixon, Economic Development Manager
Reviewed by: Michelle Sanson, Director of Planning and Development
Tracy Wittke, Assistant City Clerk
Approved by: Jim Puffalt, City Manager
Approved by: Fraser Tolmie, Mayor

To be completed by the Clerk's Department only.

Presented to Regular Council or Executive Committee on _____.

No. _____ Resolution No. _____

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	EDC Initiatives - CC-2019-0242.docx
Attachments:	- MDB Insight BRE Triage.pdf - Presentation - Triage BR+E.pdf - RNIP Overview.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Nov 21, 2019

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

No Signature - Task assigned to Sue Brabant was completed by workflow administrator Maureen Latta

Sue Brabant

No Signature - Task assigned to Michelle Sanson was completed by workflow administrator Maureen Latta

Michelle Sanson

No Signature - Task assigned to Tracy Wittke was completed by assistant Maureen Latta

Tracy Wittke



Jim Puffalt



Fraser Tolmie