



Community Development Advisory Committee Meeting
Thursday, May 13, 2021 – 10:00 a.m.
Meeting to be held in Virtual Electronic Format and
live streamed on the County of Frontenac's Youtube
Channel
<https://youtu.be/CpiNEO3pBtE>

AGENDA

Page

1. Call to Order

2. Adoption of the Agenda

- a) **That** the agenda for the May 13, 2021 meeting of the Community Development Advisory Committee be adopted.

3. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and General Nature Thereof

4. Adoption of Minutes

- a) Minutes of Meeting held February 11, 2021
That the minutes of the Community Development Advisory Committee meeting held February 11, 2021 be adopted.

5. Deputations and/or Presentations

- a) **Mr. Alex Jansen of the Kingston Film Office and Mr. J Joly** will address the Community Development Advisory Committee regarding the potential to develop film & television opportunities in the region. [the information being presented, which the County does not have control over, is not in an accessible format but can be provided upon request].

6. Reports to the Community Development Advisory

- a) **2021-042**
Community Development Advisory Committee
May 2021 Update on COVID-19 Response Initiatives
Recommendation

Be It Resolved That the Community Development Advisory Committee endorses the changes to the COVID-19 Response Plan to County Council

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- b) **2021-043**
Community Development Advisory Committee
Open Farms 2021
Recommendation

Be it Resolved That the Community Development Advisory Committee endorses the direction and actions related to Open Farms outlined in Report 2021-043

And Further That County Council authorize the Warden and Clerk to complete relevant agreements associated with grant applications outlined in Report 2021-043

7. Communications

- a) Email from Mary Kloosterman Announcing Community Development Advisory Committee Resignation
[Distributed to Members of Community Development Advisory Committee March 17, 2021]
- b) Email from Barrie Gilbert Announcing Community Development Advisory Committee Resignation
[Distributed to Members of Community Development Advisory Committee March 19, 2021]
- c) Email from Richard Allen, Manager of Economic Development regarding Tourism Research Session
[Distributed to Members of Community Development Advisory Committee April 20, 2021]
- d) Email from Councillor Ron Higgins regarding the Eastern Ontario Business Journal Update
[Eastern Ontario Business Journal](#)
[Distributed to Members of Community Development Advisory Committee May 7, 2021]

8. Other Business

9. Next Meeting

10. Adjournment



FRONTENAC

Minutes of the Community Development Advisory Committee Meeting February 11, 2021

A regular meeting of the Community Development Advisory Committee was held in virtual electronic format, hosted at the County Administrative Office, 2069 Battersea Road, Glenburnie on Thursday, February 11, 2021 at 10:00 AM

Present Electronically:

Betty Hunter, Chair
Wilma Kenny, Vice Chair
Barrie Gilbert
Councillor Alan Revill, Council Liaison
Lisa Henderson
Mary Kloosterman
Deputy Warden Denis Doyle
Greg Rodgers

Staff Present Electronically:

Jannette Amini, Manager of Legislative Services/Clerk
Brianna McEathron, Administrative Clerk (Recording Secretary)
Alison Vandervelde, Acting Manager of Economic Development
Joe Gallivan, Director of Planning and Economic Development

Call to Order

Ms. McEathron called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

Election of Officers

The Election of Officers was conducted by Ms. McEathron

a) **Election of Chair**

Moved By: Councillor Revill
Seconded By: Deputy Warden Doyle

That be Betty Hunter elected Chair of the Community Development Advisory Committee for 2021.

Carried

Moved By: Councillor Revill
Seconded By: Mr. Gilbert

That nominations for the Chair be closed.

Carried

Ms. Betty Hunter accepted the nomination of Chair

b) **Election of Vice Chair**

Moved By: Ms. Hunter
Seconded By: Deputy Warden Doyle

That be Wilma Kenney elected Vice Chair of the Community Development Advisory Committee for 2021.

Carried

Moved By: Councillor Revill
Seconded By: Mr. Gilbert

That nominations for the Vice Chair be closed

Carried

Wilma Kenny accepted the nomination of Vice-Chair

Betty Hunter assumed the Chair

Adoption of the Agenda

Moved By: Deputy Warden Doyle
Seconded By: Ms. Henderson

That the agenda for the February 11, 2021 meeting of the Community Development Advisory Committee be adopted.

Carried

Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and General Nature Thereof

There were none.

Adoption of Minutes

a) Minutes of Meeting held December 10, 2020

Moved By: Councillor Revill

Seconded By: Ms. Henderson

That the minutes of the Community Development Advisory Committee meeting held December 10, 2020 be adopted.

Carried

Deputations and/or Presentations

- a) **Ms. Adrianna Barbary**, Downtown Revitalization Coordinator briefed the Community Development Advisory Committee Regarding the Sharbot Lake Revitalization Project
[See Reports to the Community Development Advisory, clause a)]

Ms. Adrianna Barbary, Downtown Revitalization Coordinator provided an overview of the Sharbot Lake Revitalization Project.

Wilma Kenny exited meeting at 10:12 a.m.

Deputy Warden Doyle asked if the downtown concentration area also includes the Railway Heritage Park.

Ms. Adrianna confirmed that the project includes the park. It is focused on the downtown core which is from Elizabeth Street to Road 38; as well as down by the medical center.

Reports to the Community Development Advisory, clause a) was considered at this time.

(Please refer to page 4)

Briefings

- a) **Community Development Advisory Committee Working Group**, briefed the Community Development Advisory Committee Regarding a Review of Motorized Access to the Verona Corridor of the Frontenac K&P Trail

Councillor Revill provided an overview of the Community Development Advisory Committee Working Group's findings. It was a consensus from the working group members that ATVs be restricted from the Verona Corridor.

Ms. Kenny entered the meeting at 10:37 a.m.

Ms. Kloosterman expressed concern about ATVs' negative impact on safety through a residential town, and cited the lack of enforceable rules for ATVs as a risk.

Deputy Warden Doyle noted that he does not feel comfortable going forward with the use of ATVs in the Verona Corridor due to the contract signed with Trans Canada Trails. Councillor Revill, Ms. Kloosterman, Mr. Gilbert and Ms. Kenny agreed with this statement.

Ms. Vandervelde noted that the legal opinion has been obtained from the County solicitor regarding the proposed change of use as it relates to the 2013 Trans Canada Trail funding agreement that encompassed trail development of the Verona Corridor. Counsel's review did not reveal anything that would compel the County to maintain the trail in accordance with the conditions set out in the Funding Agreement in perpetuity.

Committee members agreed that despite this legal opinion, there is a moral obligation to uphold the intention of the funding agreement.

The committee discussed the possibility of constructing a new parking lot north of the village to allow ATV users easier access to the trail.

Reports to the Community Development Advisory

The below item was considered after Deputations and/or Presentations, clause a)

- a) **2021-014
Community Development Advisory Committee
Sharbot Lake Downtown Revitalization Update**

This report is for information only.

Deputy Warden Doyle noted that County Council had allocated funds towards the revitalization program and he believes that this project would be positive for all

municipalities and wondered how we could roll this out in all of the hamlets in Frontenac.

Ms. Kloosterman asked how difficult it is to obtain a RED Grant. Ms. Hunter answered that it can be quite the process to apply and it does not always go through but, it would be up to each council to move forward with the RED funding application.

Ms. Vandervelde noted that in Central Frontenac the township has funding to cover the contribution needed on their end and in the original application the County contributed a small sum. She noted that OMFRA prioritizes partnerships and – with County Council's approval – County staff would be happy to assist other municipalities with similar applications.

Deputy Warden Doyle asked if Ms. Vandervelde can provide the other townships with a write up on the process to apply for RED Grants.

In regards to Ms. Adrianna Barbary, Downtown Revitalization Coordinator it was noted that some of her skills may be transferrable to help out other communities with Downtown Revitalization programs.

It was noted that the First Impressions Program can be a valuable first step prior to a Downtown Revitalization. Ms. Vandervelde and Ms. Barbary will follow-up with Karen Fisher to see if the program is still active. It was also noted that the program can be time consuming, but rewarding.

Briefings, clause a) was considered at this time.

(Please refer to page 4)

b) **2021-013
Community Development Advisory Committee
Review of Motorized Access to the Verona Corridor of the Frontenac
K&P Trail**

Moved By: Mr. Gilbert
Seconded By: Lisa Henderson

Be it Resolved That the Community Development Advisory Committee recommend that County Council discontinue the pilot project and restrict ATVs from accessing the Verona Corridor of the Frontenac K&P Trail, with ATV access allowed only north of Craig Road.

Carried as Amended

Motion to Amend

Moved By: Mr. Gilbert
Seconded By: Ms. Kloosterman

Be it Resolved That the Committee choose Option 3 and that options 1 and 2 be deleted.

Carried

Communications

Other Business

Next Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Community Development Advisory Committee is scheduled for Thursday, April 8, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.

Adjournment

Moved By: Mr. Gilbert
Seconded By: Ms. Henderson

That the meeting hereby adjourn at 11:20 a.m.

Carried



Report 2021-042

Committee Information Report

To: Chair and Members of the Community Development Advisory Committee

From: Richard Allen, Manager of Economic Development

Prepared by: Richard Allen, Manager of Economic Development

Date of meeting: May 13, 2021

Re: **Community Development Advisory Committee – May 2021 Update on COVID-19 Response Initiatives**

Recommendation

Be It Resolved That the Community Development Advisory Committee endorses the changes to the COVID-19 Response Plan to County Council

Background

On March 17, 2020 the Province of Ontario declared a state of emergency with respect to the COVID-19 Pandemic and on March 26, 2020 the County of Frontenac declared a state of emergency within the County of Frontenac in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. On July 24, 2020, the Provincial Emergency Declaration expired; however the County of Frontenac declared emergency continues.

The economic development team immediately responded to the pandemic and temporary business closures through regular engagement – weekly communications, weekly business videoconferences, an online information hub and multiple one-on-one engagements. The initial response for local businesses was communicated to County Council at its Special Meeting held April 8, 2020 through [Report 2020-041](#).

As the economic shutdown continued, the economic development team revised its 2020 Business plan to respond to the immediate and long term needs of the local business community. These changes were outlined in [Report 2020-050](#) and adopted by County Council at its regular meeting on May 20, 2020.

The economic development team is updating the Community Development Advisory Committee on the progress of the initiatives in response to COVID-19.

The adapted business plan and COVID-19 recovery has four priorities and a number of campaigns within each. The four priorities are:

1. Support Local Businesses via Frontenac Ambassador Program
2. Shop Frontenac Initiatives
3. Make Tourism a Priority
4. Establish Conditions for Investment and Growth

Discussion

The response to COVID-19 was developed in May of 2020, after the first wave of the virus had begun to subside in Ontario. The KFL&A region performed well in the following months between May 2020 and December 2020, however during 2021 subsequent waves have spread the virus and new variants of the virus both locally and across Ontario. These waves have placed new pressure on the local health care system, and businesses located within Frontenac County have struggled with new sets of restrictions put in place to protect the health and safety of our citizens.

The [original response framework](#) anticipated 2021 as a period of economic recovery, as vaccines became available and other public health measures reduced the spread of COVID-19. At the time of writing this update (May 5, 2021), the KFL&A Region has approximately 80 active cases and the province has a 7-day average of approximately 3432 cases, just below the highest level of spread since the start of the pandemic.

It should not be surprising if public health measures that limit travel, in person dining and non-essential retail continue until the spread of COVID-19 is under control. In many ways, the situation in 2021 may be more concerning for local businesses than in 2020, as they may have been expecting lost revenues in 2020 to return this year.

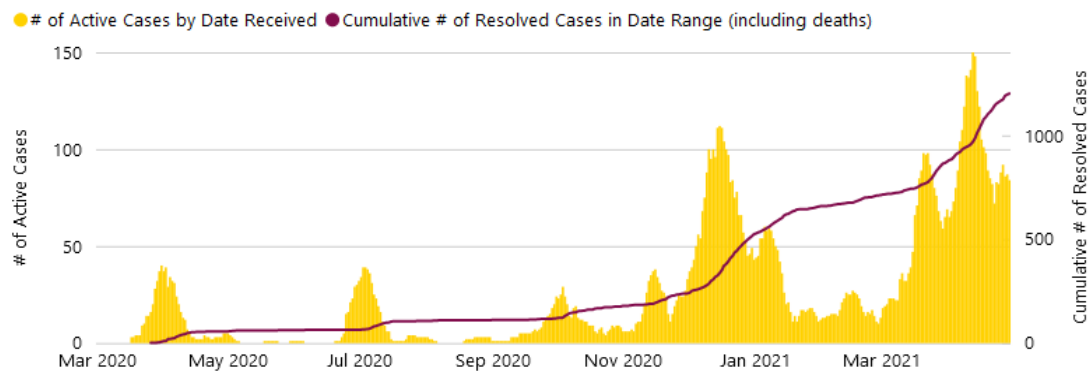


Figure 1: COVID-19 Active Cases by Date in KFL&A as of April 30, 2021. The graph shows a significant increase of local cases in late December of 2020 and April 2021. These increases are two to three times higher than the previous peaks experienced in April and July of 2020.

Vaccines

One significant change in 2021 is the introduction of vaccines to prevent and slow the spread of COVID-19. On April 29, 2021 the province of Ontario released an aggressive plan to make vaccines available to all residents aged 18+ by the end of May, assuming that the supply of vaccines remains available. Most of these vaccines require individuals to have two applications in order to be considered fully inoculated.. As only 44% of KFL&A currently has one shot, and 2.2% are currently fully inoculated, staff anticipate that travel restrictions and public health measures will remain in place throughout the summer. Up to date information on cases and vaccinations can be found on the [KFL&A Public Health COVID-19 Dashboard](#) and [province-wide information](#) is provided by the Government of Ontario.

Tourism Research

According to Destination Canada’s Revisiting Tourism: Canada’s Visitor Economy One Year into the Global Pandemic March 2021 Report:

- Within the Canadian tourism sector, the average decline in number of operating businesses was – 9%
- Canadian accommodation revenues have fallen by 71% year-over-year
- Ontario and BC experienced the greatest losses in revenues from international tourism in 2020 losing \$5.2B and \$4.5B respectively
- Ontario tourism businesses have been the most impacted by declines in the number of operating businesses in the country

Additional research regarding the impact of COVID-19 both locally and across Canada can be found on the [Regional Tourism Organization 9 industry website](#) and the [Ontario’s Highlands COVID-19 Updates](#) web page.

Response

Taking into account the information above, the Economic Development Team has revised the conditions for each “phase” of response below:

Phase	Peak (Waves)	Transition	Recovery
2020 Timeframe Estimate	March 2020 – June 2020	July 2020 – December 2020	January 2021 and beyond
Updated Timeframe Estimate	January 2021 – July 2021	July 2021 – May 2022	May 2022 and beyond
Conditions of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State of Emergency in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State of Emergency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State of Emergency

Phase	Peak (Waves)	Transition	Recovery
Phase:	Place <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restricted travel • Significant restrictions for businesses • Restrictions on gatherings 	downgraded <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local travel permitted • Limited restrictions for businesses • Minor restrictions on gatherings 	ended <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International travel resumes • No / few restrictions for businesses • No / few restrictions on gatherings

The economic development team will continue with efforts associated with the four main actions of COVID-19 Economic Response originally outlined in [Report 2020-050](#), approved by County Council at its regular meeting on 20 May 2020.

1. Business Support

This action area focuses on providing local businesses with up-to-date information regarding support programs and government announcements. This information is delivered via web resources, videoconference and bi-weekly email updates to the Frontenac Ambassador Network.

The Economic Development Team is working with partners such as Frontenac Business Services (formerly the Frontenac CFDC) to provide one-on-one advice regarding marketing, cash flow and business strategy in addition to providing small business loans.

2. Shop Frontenac

In order to get the local economy flowing quickly, it will be important to highlight the importance of buying local to our residents. As travel will continue to be limited, the first markets available to our businesses are our local and neighbouring communities.

3. Prioritize Tourism

Tourism plays a significant role in the Frontenac economy. In January of 2020, Economic Development staff surveyed businesses and discovered that 59% of businesses benefit directly or indirectly from visitors to our region. In 2021, 70% of responding businesses indicated an impact from tourism on their bottom line. Tourism will be one of the last industries to reopen, and the Ontario market will prove very competitive if international borders remain closed and consumers avoid air travel.

4. Establish Conditions for Investment and Growth

It is important to establish momentum as investors and businesses begin to capitalize on opportunities presented in the post COVID-19 landscape in 2021. The Economic Development Team will work with partners at Frontenac Business Services and Townships on programs and service that will make Frontenac County “investment ready.”

1. Support Local Businesses via Frontenac Ambassador Program

Business Surveys

Three separate surveys were issued to local businesses during the peak of the pandemic 1st wave, with results discussed in [Report 2020-050](#) and [Report 2020-074](#).

As part of the annual business survey conducted in January of 2021, a number of questions were included referencing the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic.

Key Findings:

- **The US Border closure has an impact on our local economy**
While many resort and cabin rental businesses were able to find customers from Ontario to replace their American clientele, many businesses noticed the lack of American cottagers who purchase their goods and services. 13% of survey respondents indicated that the border closure had a significant impact on their business, while an additional 42% indicated that the closure has had some impact.
- **33% of respondents saw a revenue drop of 25% or more from 2019 to 2020**
Many businesses indicated that even when they were able to find strategies to create revenue online or through new customers, expenses and effort also increased making many of these new strategies unsustainable in the long term.
- **Local businesses are nimble and adapt to changing conditions**
43% of respondents indicated that they developed new products or found new customers as a result of COVID-19
- **Businesses in Frontenac are unlikely to close due to COVID-19**
Only two (1.4%) respondents indicated that they are likely to close due to COVID-19.
- **Businesses in Frontenac did not need or were not able to access government support**
- **Despite the significant challenges associated with COVID-19, operators in Frontenac maintain a positive outlook.**
Overall, three-quarters of respondents indicated that they have a positive outlook on doing business in Frontenac County in the coming years (49% answered

“positive”, 27% answered “somewhat positive”). Businesses also indicated plans to partner with other businesses, increase marketing efforts and to add new products or services.

It is important to note that the above responses were submitted in January of 2021, before the current “third” wave of COVID-19 infections through Ontario.

The answers above indicate that local businesses continue to adapt in response to COVID-19 but need better access to support programs to support additional expenses or changes made as a result of the pandemic. In response, the Frontenac County economic development team will continue to communicate regularly (two times per month) with local businesses who subscribe to the Economic Development email newsletter. In addition, the team will continue to promote the services and coaching offered by Frontenac Business Services (formerly the Frontenac CFDC).

It is important to note, that several local funding programs were announced after this survey was conducted notably:

- The [Tourism Recovery and Innovation Program](#) from Ontario’s Highlands Tourism Organization
- The Regional Tourism Organization 9 Tourism Adaptation and Recovery Program.
- The Township of South Frontenac [COVID-19 Relief Funding Program](#).

The full results of the business survey will be presented to the Community Development Advisory Committee at it’s regularly scheduled meeting on June 10, 2021. No additional surveys are planned until January 2022 when the annual business survey cycle restarts.

Business Communications

The economic development team continues to communicate with local businesses through a local business update newsletter, two to three times per month, with updated information on support programs, marketing initiatives, workshops and training.

- [April 27, 2021](#)
- [April 14, 2021](#)
- [March 29, 2021](#)
- [March 17, 2021](#)
- [February 17, 2021](#)
- [February 3, 2021](#)
- [January 15, 2021](#)

- [January 11, 2021](#)

2. Shop Frontenac Initiatives

Shop Local, Shop #inFrontenac Video Series

As part of the “Shop Local” initiatives, staff have been working with local businesses to show how they are welcoming customers safely and respectfully. With support from the Communications Officer, the Community Development Officer has coordinated videos with 25 Frontenac Ambassadors from across the region.

These videos can be [viewed on YouTube](#), [on Facebook](#), and on [inFrontenac.ca](#).

In 2021, once the provincial “Stay at Home” is lifted, the staff team will connect with additional businesses to expand on the video campaign, as well as launch a photo-based social media campaign with calls to action for participating ambassadors.

In the meantime, staff are promoting the [recent video series](#) produced by Frontenac Business Services in partnership with Digital Main Street, Launch Lab and Invest Ottawa.

Open Farms

Open Farms continues to be the signature agricultural event in Frontenac, with the goal of creating meaningful and economic connections between local farmers and their customers. This year’s event will include both in person and virtual elements as in previous years, while introducing elements of Farmers’ Markets and Open Farms Menus at local restaurants. In addition to the many agricultural partnerships already established, significant support to the event will also come from the Township of South Frontenac and Tourism Kingston. Details are outlined in Report 2021-043.

3. Make Tourism a Priority

Destination Development Plan

[Report 2021-018](#) provides details on the Destination Development Plan currently underway in partnership with RTO11 and RTO9. Phase One: Initiation, Research and Analysis is ongoing, with the DestinationNext Assessment being open until June 1. In the next few weeks, a Steering Committee will be established and presented with results of the DestinationNEXT Assessment in late June, marking the beginning of Phase Two: Asset & Sector Mapping.

Tourism Website Enhancement

[Report 2020-073](#) provides details on the economic development website conversion to a tourism-focused site that took place in the summer of 2020. Research conducted by Regional Tourism Organization 9 (RTO 9) in 2020 indicated that travellers seeking

experiences in Southeastern Ontario often discovered local destinations through the destination website.

In 2021, The Digital Marketing Summer Student will lead efforts to improve website visuals and to integrate information to support travel planning, such as articles featured in the 2019 and 2020 Visitor Guides.

Visit Frontenac Social Media

The Visit Frontenac identity was created on major social media platforms in 2020 in order to differentiate messages targeted at external visitor markets from corporate and resident messages featured on the existing Frontenac County channels.

These new tourism channels have been key channels for campaigns aimed at external audiences, such as the Frontenac Farms to Kingston Tables social media campaign conducted in partnership with Tourism Kingston in both 2020 and early 2021.

In 2021, the Digital Marketing Summer Student will use these channels to strengthen the reach of our “Shop Local, Shop in Frontenac” campaigns. Once travel between regions is acceptable for tourists again, these channels will be leveraged to highlight Frontenac tourism assets to target markets primarily in Toronto, Ottawa, the United States and across Canada.

K&P Trail Marketing and Promotion

While development of the Frontenac K&P Trail as a north-south spine continues, in 2021 the Economic Development Team will seek to capitalize on the desire for outdoor recreational experiences by both residents and visitors to our region. Estimates of trail use in 2020 saw an increase of up to 400% more activity on the K&P alone.

Plans in 2021 to promote the K&P Trail include:

- **K&P Trail Virtual Tour Update** - The Frontenac GIS platform hosts a [virtual tour](#) of the Frontenac K&P Trail, primarily from Orser Road to Tichborne. The Economic Development Team plans to update the content of this tour to not only include details on the K&P Trail between Tichborne and Clarendon Station, but additional content promoting local businesses and attractions such as beaches and parks.
- **Frontenac Rail Trails Passport** – This promotional document would feature local businesses as “stations” for trail users to visit for rewards or discounts when the passport is shown. The local business would then “validate” the passport with a customized stamp for the location.
- **Eastern Ontario Rail Trail Loop** – The Frontenac K&P Trail plays a significant role in the development of a 350 km rail trail cycling experience consisting of the K&P, the Cataragui Trail, and The Ottawa Valley recreational trail. Information about the loop has been documented in [this article by Jonas Bonnetta](#).

4. Establish Conditions for Investment and Growth

The Economic Development Service Delivery Review took place through September, October and November. [Recommendations from the review](#) were presented to County Council at its regular meeting on December 16, 2020. While the review did not recommend any specific actions or campaigns be undertaken in response to COVID-19, it did make the following recommendations to improve the effectiveness of economic development activities undertaken by the County.

1. **Confirm a clear statement of economic development objectives.**
Being clear and honest about WHY the County should take part in economic development can provide strong guidance when setting priorities. The consultant observed a broad commitment towards economic development but had difficulty in determining the goals and desired outcomes from undertaking these activities.
2. **Have the County focus on activities that support investment attraction to the region.**
The consultant suggested the County economic development team should be focusing on activities that are more regional in nature, like coordination, attraction, research, and readying for tourism. This recommendation assumes increased investment at the Township level to facilitate local initiatives, for a combined collaborative approach to economic development across the region.
3. **Facilitate Regional Coordination.**
Critical to the role the consultant proposes is close collaboration between County, member municipalities and the CFDC. As a starting point for formalizing the collaboration, the consultant suggests establishing an economic development working group. The purpose of the working group would be to bring together the various stakeholders to help ensure alignment on priorities and to share relevant data and information.
4. **The County should elevate marketing the trail system.**
Economic Development staff are tasked with maintenance and infrastructure development responsibilities for the K&P Trail. This consumes significant resources which could be reallocated to capitalize on the trail and its potential for the region or other economic development activities. The consultant recommends a reallocation of resources with municipal partners to achieve this end.

In 2021, the above recommendations are being pursued in order to improve available resources for economic development activities and to strengthen regional partnerships, better define roles and achieve shared outcomes. The economic development team met with Township staff in March and continues developing an implementation plan that will be presented for County Council's consideration later this year.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Strategic Priority Implications

Priority 1.2: Refine and invest in efforts to accelerate economic development — to grow businesses, attract more visits and expand the tax base.

Priority 3.2: Play a leadership role on communications to promote shared messaging for all regional initiatives such as economic development, tourism and lifestyle opportunities, and broadband and cell services.

Organizations, Departments and Individuals Consulted and/or Affected

Businesses in Frontenac County
Joe Gallivan, Director of Planning and Economic Development
Information Services Department
Matt Mills, Communications Officer
Ontario Highlands Tourism Organization (RTO11)
Southeastern Ontario (RTO9)
Tourism Kingston
Anne Prichard, Frontenac Community Futures Development Corporation

2021 COVID-19 Response Initiatives (Click here to view 2020 Initiatives)				2020 Outcomes
Response Initiative	Peak Original Timeline Estimate May → July 2020 Revised May → July 2021	Transition Original Timeline Estimate August → December 2020 Revised August 2021 → May 2022	Recovery Original Timeline Estimate 2021 and beyond Revised May 2022 and beyond	
1. Support Local Businesses via Frontenac Ambassador Program	1. Business Support (via Ambassador Program) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-on-one support in collaboration with Frontenac Business Services Coordinate workshops and training opportunities to assist with new skills development Regular email updates Expand Ambassador network to ensure as many businesses as possible are connected to above resources Evolve Frontenac Ambassador program to a regional support / concierge program 			1. Business Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 Monthly COVID-19 Surveys 1 Annual Survey One-on-One Digital Support Workshops 43 Newsletter Emails 20 Videoconference calls 20 New Ambassadors
2. Shop Frontenac Initiatives	1. Expand Open Farms to a regional event, exploring new partnerships & strengthening market opportunities for local farms 2. Continue "Shop in Frontenac" photo & video social media campaign 3. Provide support to the Sharbot Lake Downtown Revitalization Program	1. Host Open Farms Event 2. Evolve Open Farms to a digital campaign seeking to attract small scale farmers and food businesses to Frontenac 3. Evolve Frontenac Ambassador program to a regional support / concierge program	1. Continue Open Farms / Farm-to-Table transformation	2. Shop Frontenac <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 24 Shop Local Videos Successful conversion of Open Farms to a 4-week virtual event highlighting 14 local farms Two 6 week Farm-to-Table digital campaigns in partnership with Tourism Kingston Efforts to work with HeyLocal search platform to support online businesses "Look Local First" Holiday Campaign
3. Make Tourism a Priority by elevating Destination Marketing & Development	1. Engage the community in the creation of a Destination Development Plan 2. Strengthen www.infrontenac.ca as a tourism resource for potential visitors. 3. Expand on "Visit Frontenac" social media reach by engaging the local community and seasonal residents on collaborative campaigns	1. Complete Destination Development Plan 2. Create 2022 marketing campaigns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Themes – Road Trips, Art Studios, Fishing, Cycling, Hiking, Trails, ATVs, Backcountry Camping (Content must link to spending) 3. Complete planned Improvements to the K&P Trail – Trail benches, safety barriers, improvements to access points and parking	1. Begin implementation of the Destination Development Plan 2. Execute 2022 marketing campaigns	3. Make Tourism a Priority <ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.infrontenac.ca converted to a tourism attraction website (August) Phase 5 K&P Construction completed to Clarendon Station Trails Marketing Campaign executed in July & August 2020 Love Letter Campaign Destination Development Plan process launched in March 2021
4. Establish conditions for investment and growth for existing and emerging businesses	1. Proceed with Implementation of 2020 Economic Development Review <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Set priorities through an integrated strategic process Form an Economic Development Collaboration group of stakeholders Determine strategies to reduce staff time dedicated to K&P Trail infrastructure. 	1.	1. Implement integrated Economic Development Strategy 2. Develop a Regional Community Improvement Plan 3. Support Broadband Expansion	4. Establish Conditions for Investment and Growth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Economic Development Services by Blackline Consulting presented to County Council in December 2020.

Ms. Alison Vandervelde, Community Development Officer has communicated with the following organizations with respect to establishing and strengthening partnerships for the Open Farms event:

- Township of South Frontenac
- City of Kingston
- Tourism Kingston
- Frontenac Federation of Agriculture
- The National Farmers' Union Local 316
- The Frontenac Farmers' Market
- The Sharbot Lake Farmers' Market
- The Farmers' Market at the Wolfe Island Commons
- The Frontenac County Plowmen's Association
- South Frontenac Museum, and
- KFL&A Public Health.

All organizations are supportive of early plans for this year's Open Farms, and South Frontenac Township and Tourism Kingston have both confirmed their participation as formal partners in Open Farms 2021.

Comment

Partnerships

The Township of South Frontenac: Many of the farms that participate in Open Farms are located in South Frontenac, and municipal staff have expressed their support for the event as an economic development endeavor. The connections made at Open Farms provide an opportunity for relationship building between consumers and producers, creating customer loyalty and growth in one of South Frontenac's leading industries. The event directly aligns with South Frontenac's 2019 – 2022 Strategic Plan, specifically the priority to "be a catalyst for the creation of vibrant, complete communities".

South Frontenac Township's contribution to the event will be through in-kind support. Ms. Amanda Pantry, the Program, Events & Education Coordinator will assist with event coordination, the Township will waive the rental fee for Centennial Park in Harrowsmith, and will lend necessary equipment as available (i.e., signage, blockades, two-way radios, etc.).

Tourism Kingston: Frontenac has collaborated with Tourism Kingston on a number of initiatives, recognizing the value of regional destination marketing. Most recently, our organizations partnered on a farm-to-table social media campaign that profiles the connection between Frontenac farms and Kingston's culinary scene. The Open Farms partnership will build on that campaign and will bolster the event toward its potential as a strong shoulder season attraction. Open Farms aligns with Kingston's culinary strategy and tourism trends like 'authentic and immersive travel', 'sustainability', and 'short-haul and regional travel', which will be essential for recovery of the tourism industry.

Tourism Kingston will contribute \$8,000 towards the execution of Open Farms. Additionally, the organization will lend expertise and support in developing a marketing plan and contribute efforts towards marketing the event through the well-established

Tourism Kingston social media channels. Tourism Kingston staff will also assist in coordinating event components that involve Kingston restaurants and chefs.

These partnerships will allow Open Farms to evolve beyond a local food celebration, to become:

- a driver of regional culinary tourism,
- a shoulder season tourism attraction,
- an incentive for new agri-tourism product development by local farms and food producers,
- an important tool for attracting new agricultural operations and food businesses, and
- a platform to develop new relationships and expand on existing relationships between farms and local restaurants.

2021 Event Implementation Plan

1. Goals

The core goals of Open Farms remain the same as they have been since 2018. A few adjustments have been made to reflect the event's growth and evolution:

1. Educate consumers about small scale agriculture
2. Increase awareness of farms and restaurants that serve local food
3. Provide the opportunity for producers to connect directly with consumers
4. Provide the opportunity for producers to start new long-term relationships with customers, restaurants, and other producers
5. Grow our region's reputation as a local food destination, to:
 - a. Create interest among visitors
 - b. Attract new agricultural operations and food and beverage businesses
 - c. Drive new opportunities for culinary and agri-tourism product development

2. COVID-19 Implications

Open Farms 2021 is being planned as a three day event, from Friday September 10 until Sunday, September 12 and will include both virtual and in-person components.

While a virtual event format is possible and does offer value, Open Farms is designed to be an in-person event. To this end, staff are planning a mostly in-person event with a few virtual components. The in-person event is proposed on the basis that a significant percentage of Ontarians will be vaccinated by September and that an outdoor event – with all the necessary health and safety precautions in place – will be appropriate at this time.

Released on April 29, 2021, [this Ontario Newsroom Backgrounder](#) outlines a schedule to expand COVID-19 vaccine booking eligibility over the next month. Due to a stable and reliable increase in vaccine supply, the province is providing accelerated timelines. The schedule anticipates vaccine booking eligibility will expand to all Ontarians age 18+ beginning the week of May 24, 2021. This [this Ontario Newsroom Statement](#) dated May 1, 2021 states that Ontario is on track to offer first dose vaccinations to ten million

people by the end of June with a steady supply of vaccines from the federal government.

The current province-wide [Stay at Home Order](#) is in place until at least May 19, during which time [the COVID-19 Response Framework](#) (colour-coded zones) is paused. It is anticipated that the Response Framework will come back into effect once the Stay at Home Order is lifted. The in-person components of Open Farms will be planned in compliance with the Response Framework.

Erin Vretteas, Enforcement Officer with KFL&A Public Health has recommended using the province’s [COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan](#) to develop a safety plan for Open Farms.

For all in-person components, a detailed event plan will be developed that includes a description of the site and visitor services, protocols to ensure the health and safety of attendees, and efforts to ensure accessibility. All site managers will be required to use timed entry and/or preregistration to manage visitors.

If it becomes apparent that an in-person event is no longer appropriate, the virtual components will be expanded and the in-person components will be cancelled.

3. Event Framework

Following is a draft event schedule and preliminary description of all event components.

Friday, September 10	Saturday, September 11	Sunday, September 12
Virtual School Q&A Sessions		
Virtual Farm Tours + Chef Sessions		
Open Farms Feature Menus		
Virtual Engagement Platform		
	Wolfe Island Plowing Match (Tentative)	Frontenac County Plowing Match
	Farmers Markets	
	Frontenac Farmers’ Market at Centennial Park	
	Farm Tours	
	South Frontenac Museum	

Virtual Q&A Sessions:

- September 7 – 10
- Goal: two or three interactive sessions, 1 hour each

Designed for school children, the virtual Q&A Sessions will provide young people the opportunity to talk with real farmers. This component will build on the highly successful 2020 series, and will inspire teachers to introduce agricultural activities and build food literacy in the classroom. Recordings will be released as part of social media marketing.

Open Farms Feature Menus:

- September 10 – 12
- Goal: five to 10 restaurants in Kingston and Frontenac

A collection of local restaurants will offer Open Farms themed menus. After exploring real working farms, visitors will cap off their day by diving into a taste of the region through expertly-prepared dishes featuring exclusively Open Farms ingredients. Distilling these experiences into a single day will really bring to life the farm-to-table theme. These meals will elevate the entirety of the Open Farms visitor experience, and encourage visitors to stay in the region overnight.

Virtual Farm Tours & Chef-Led Cooking Demonstrations:

- September 10 – 12
- Goal: Four sessions, produced in advance and released over the weekend

Offering a virtual alternative to farm visits and menu tasting will increase our reach, allowing more farmers, chefs, and visitors to participate. Virtual farm tours will be followed by virtual chef-led cooking demonstrations that feature ingredients from local farms. Packaging these two high-value components creates a multiplier effect that results in significant collective impact and increased affinity for the farms and restaurants involved. This virtual component can easily be scaled up if in-person components need to be scaled back or canceled.

Farm Visits:

- September 11 and 12
- Goal: five to 10 farms
- Advance registration required

Farm visits have been the cornerstone of Open Farms, and they will once again play an important role in the event, offering visitors an authentic experience on a real working farm. Being welcomed to a private farm is a very special experience and visitors will be encouraged to slow down to honour the people, the land, animals, crops, and each other while making new life-long memories. Farms can decide if they will charge a fee for

visits or not and will be encouraged to offer a value-added activities and create opportunities to spark long-term relationships with visitors.

A Showcase of Regional Farmers Markets:

- September 11 and 12

New this year, Open Farms will showcase Farmers’ Markets across our region. Markets will be encouraged to make the most of increased traffic by enhancing their offerings with special vendors, live music, and value-added activities. Visitors will be encourage to maximize their discovery of local food by “market hoping” – visiting multiple markets over the weekend. The Frontenac Farmers’ Market at Centennial Park will be a major hub of activity, and the brand new Market at Wolfe Island Commons will benefit from the increased exposure. Markets in Sharbot Lake and Kingston may also participate.

Plowing Matches:

- September 11 and 12

The Wolfe Island Plowing Match is planned for September 11 on Wolfe Island and the Frontenac County Plowing Match is planned for September 12 in South Frontenac Township. Both will attract plow competitors from across the province, and offer lots of opportunities for visitors to learn about agricultural history and support local businesses at on-site vendor villages. Marketing the matches under the Open Farms umbrella positions the back-to-back experiences as a two-day visit for the region. It is anticipated that the Ontario Plowmen’s Association will provide direction soon regarding the fate of local matches in 2021.

A Celebration of Agricultural Heritage at the South Frontenac Museum:

- September 11 and 12

The South Frontenac Museum will host visitors for an exploration of our region’s rich agricultural roots through interactive displays, both inside and outside of the renovated schoolhouse museum space.

Virtual Engagement Platform:

- September 7 – 12
- EngageFrontenac.ca

Open Farms creates so many valuable in-person connections. Introducing a virtual engagement platform will create a vibrant space to encourage online conversations and enhance the overall visitor experience and event reputation.

Reconnect Festival and Event Program

The 2021 Reconnect Festival and Event Program supports innovative programming and marketing for festivals and events, to help create great Ontario staycation experiences for visitors and to stimulate local community economic development and recovery.

The Frontenac County Economic Development Team has submitted an application to the Reconnect Festival and Event Program, leveraging the combined funds from Frontenac County and Tourism Kingston of \$16,000 for a possible total event budget of up to \$32,000.

The preliminary event plan as outlined above is dependent on successful receipt of the Reconnect grant and it will be scaled back if funding is not received. The funding announcement is anticipated in early summer.

Evolution of Open Farms: The Healthy Communities Initiative

The Healthy Communities Initiative provides 100% funding for projects, programming and services that help communities create safe and vibrant public spaces, improve mobility options and provide innovative digital solutions to connect people and improve health.

The Economic Development Team has submitted an application to the Healthy Communities Initiative, in the amount of \$150,000 to expand upon the momentum generated by Open Farms towards local food and agriculture in Frontenac County.

If awarded, the Healthy Communities Initiative grant will allow Frontenac County to hire a coordinator for a one-year contract to explore and introduce digital solutions to adapt the core goals of Open Farms beyond that of an annual event. The Coordinator would engage the community to evaluate several options for implementation, develop a sustainable action plan, and implement the selected digital initiatives.

Digital initiative options:

- **Centralized Online Sales and/or Local Food Directory:** This initiative isAn online sales platform or directory could become a community hub that connects consumers directly with farmers and encourages the production, sale and consumption of healthy local food, creating resilience in the local food system. Building on the initial success of the 2020 virtual Open Farms, the Coordinator would engage with the local Farmers' Markets while evaluating this possibility.
- **Local Food Education and Marketing Programs:** The Coordinator will maximize the accessibility of online information about local food to empower our residents in obtaining fresh, healthy food. Engaging with school teachers, the Coordinator will evaluate the possibility of developing an ongoing education program for youth. They will also develop and begin execution of associated marketing and communication campaigns.
- **Supporting Growth of the Agriculture Industry:** Evaluating digital solutions to grow Frontenac's reputation as a region that produces good food will contribute to the growth and resilience of Frontenac's agricultural community. The Coordinator will engage with agricultural organizations while exploring possible tools (like an app) that connect new farmers with established farmers for land pairing and mentorship opportunities.

In addition to this program development work, the Coordinator would support the execution of the 2021 Open Farms event, with a focus on digital components like timed-entry / pre-registration, Virtual Q&A Sessions, and virtual engagement activities.

Financial Implications

The County of Frontenac’s operating budget for Open Farms 2021 is \$8,000. Tourism Kingston is contributing an additional \$8000 towards the event. The Economic Development Team has submitted a funding application to the Reconnect Festival and Event Program for a possible total event budget of up to \$32,000.

The Healthy Communities initiative would cover 100% of the expenses related to hiring a coordinator and developing new digital solutions and programs as outlined above.

Strategic Priorities

At its meeting on June 19, 2019, County Council approved [Frontenac County Strategic Plan 2019-2022](#). This project is aligned with the intent of the priorities listed below.

Priority 1.2: Refine and invest in efforts to accelerate economic development — to grow businesses, attract more visits and expand the tax base.

Priority 2.1: To meet the needs of future capital projects, explore new sources of funding support (current and future programs), cost-sharing options and other potential economies.

Priority 3: Champion and coordinate collaborative efforts

Organizations, Departments and Individuals Consulted and/or Affected

- Community Development Advisory Committee
- Frontenac County Council and Staff
- South Frontenac Township
- Tourism Kingston
- City of Kingston
- Frontenac Federation of Agriculture
- National Farmers’ Union
- Frontenac Farmers’ Market
- The Market at Wolfe Island Commons
- Sharbot Lake Farmers’ Market
- Frontenac County Plowmen’s Association
- KFLA Public Health
- Frontenac County residents
- Kingston residents
- Local farms and businesses
- Regional Tourism Organization 9
- Ontario Ministry of Food and Rural Affairs