



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

To: **Mayor Schaffer and Councillors**

Subject **Business Walk Program Update-2016**

From: Development Services & Economic Development  
Department

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## COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the report from the Economic Development Committee be received for information.

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## PURPOSE:

To inform City Council on the progress of the City's Economic Development Committee's Business Walk Program.

## POLICY:

The notion to implement a "Business Walk Program" to obtain a pulse of the local business community and to understand issues and opportunities of the existing business community originated from the *Industrial Business Attraction & Expansion Study*, completed in December 2015.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

On February 11, 2016, the City's Economic Development Committee invited Lindsay Bisschop, Province of British Columbia, Regional Manager Lower Mainland Fraser Valley, Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training and Responsible For Labour,



Economic Development Division to make a presentation on Business Retention & Expansion – Business Walk Programs.

Following the presentation, the Economic Development Committee selected the “Industrial Business Sector” for the first phase of the 2016 City Business Walk Program. Subsequently, staff created an Orientation Package and Business Walk Survey.

The Economic Development Committee partnered with Kwantlen Polytechnic University and conducted the following nine Industrial Sector Business Walks during the month of April, 2016.

- KCS Plastics Ltd.
- Fabrikem Manufacturing Ltd.
- Westman Steel/Canada Culvert
- Nahanni Truck & Trailer Repair Ltd.
- CKF Inc.
- Anotec Industries Ltd.
- Ipex Inc.
- National Glass Ltd.
- Ecco Heating Products Ltd.

Recently, the Economic Development Committee partnered with the Downtown Langley Business Association and conducted the following nine Commercial Sector Business Walks during the month of October, 2016.

- Sports Replay
- Ignite Café
- The Wickertree
- Viva Mexico
- All of Oils
- Wholesale Sports
- Travel Professionals International
- Auld Phillips
- Mastermind Toys



Summary:

In summary, the following common themes were identified through our “Business Walk Program”:

- Current state of businesses is very positive;
- “Location”, “Cost of Doing Business”, “Business friendly local government” and supportive “Downtown Langley Business Association”, were identified as what they liked most about doing business in the City of Langley;
- Most businesses identified they are experiencing recruitment challenges;
- Most businesses indicated that they are not considering future expansion at this time, primarily due to their recent expansion;
- Business Walk Businesses identified several issues leading to the following common themes: Increased business competition, Criminal activity increasing, Desire for freestanding reader-board signage, Union wages too high for small business to complete, Visible Homelessness, Improved Downtown sidewalk and lane maintenance, Negative impact on road construction, Cost of advertising, Desire to develop mentorship program for new businesses, Expand networking receptions and special events to enhance business awareness.

In closing, the 2016 City of Langley Business Walk Program was a very positive and informative initiative. Small business is the cornerstone of our community, driving the economy and creating jobs. We appreciated the participating businesses willingness to offer their respective issues and challenges, to enable us as a local government and business-friendly community to take or direct appropriate action. The Economic Development Committee intends to continue our Business Walk Program in 2017 to further enhance relationships and understanding.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Councillor Gayle Martin  
Chair Economic Development Committee

