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Economic action plan formed

By [John Arendt - Summerland Review](#)

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After months of consultations, workshops and questionnaires, the municipality has a new economic plan.

Scott Boswell, director of community and economic development for the municipality, said the 11-point plan features two strategies for investment attraction and nine for business development and streamlining the municipality to be friendlier to businesses and developers.

The document is 34 pages long and was compiled for the municipality by Vann Struth Consulting Group in association with Market Pulse.

“The range of strategies and actions in the plan are intended to expand local employment opportunities, help Summerland companies grow into new markets, deepen the pool of skilled workers, strengthen the local business climate and much more,” the report says. “All of this is done within the framework of sustainability as no single aspect of economic development is pursued without regard for other aspects of community, the environment and social institutions.”

Forming the plan was an extensive process, taking nine months and with around 225 people contributing.

While the economy remains sluggish, Boswell is optimistic it will improve.

“There is slow economic recovery happening,” he said, “but there is no skyrocketing recovery.”

Three of the 11 points in the new strategy will be addressed immediately.

These are facade improvement, improving the business climate and attracting investors.

Boswell said the facade improvement program is needed to make the downtown more inviting and more interesting.

He said the plan will involve grants to help businesses to improve the look of their facilities.

Improving the business climate will include streamlining to ensure new development applications can be processed quickly.

“It’s sometimes very frustrating to start a new business,” Boswell said. “We’re trying to speed up the process.

Attracting foreign investment is an ongoing concern for the municipality.

Boswell said there is substantial interest in Canada from those in Britain at present.

He added that the marketing efforts are best made from the region instead of from individual communities.

Boswell said the plan has already received support from council and was done in cooperation with the Summerland Chamber of Economic Development and Tourism.

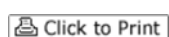
He added that the strategies outlined will only happen when various groups, organizations and departments work together.

“It will require partnerships to complete all the projects,” he said.

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