

## **Council-In-Committee Meeting – December 14, 2021**

Subject: Economic Recovery Plan Update  
 Report Number: CD 21-127  
 Division: Community Development  
 Department: Economic Development  
 Purpose: For Information

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### **Executive Summary:**



The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the progress of the Economic Recovery Plan. This includes the status of initiatives identified in the plan as well as Recovery Plan funding approved by Council.



### **Discussion:**

#### Background

On June 9, 2020 Council approved the creation of the NCERT (Norfolk County Economic Recovery Taskforce) through Staff Report PD 20-32, Establishing a COVID-19 Economic Recovery Taskforce. After meeting regularly, in December 2020 the taskforce completed development of the County's draft Economic Recovery Plan, which was presented to Council in staff report PD 20-73, and subsequently approved.

The actions within the recovery plan were organized into four parts: Buy Norfolk, Build Norfolk, Innovate Norfolk and Recover Norfolk, as shown below:

 <p><b>BUY Norfolk</b></p>	<p>Actions aimed at promoting "Buy Local" and supporting local small businesses in efforts to increase sales</p>
 <p><b>BUILD Norfolk</b></p>	<p>Actions aimed at creating the conditions for continued growth of the business sector and the community</p>

 <b>INNOVATE Norfolk</b>	Actions aimed at developing Innovative solutions to specific COVID-related business challenges
 <b>RECOVER Norfolk</b>	Actions aimed at funding community-based not-for-profit organizations, to support industries that have been most impacted by COVID-19

The full Economic Recovery Plan is attached as Appendix B.

In addition to passing the plan, Council also approved the allocation of \$250,000 from the Council Initiative Reserve to fund implementation of portions of the plan.

Following approval of the Recovery Plan, the NCERT has continued to meet regularly to oversee the progress of the plan, including implementation of the various concurrent projects and initiatives, and status of the budget.

### Project Status Summary

Below is a summary of the status of various projects within each section of the Recovery Plan.

Over the last year, since the approval of the Economic Recovery Plan, significant progress has been made in virtually all parts of the plan. Below is a summary of the status and highlights of each portion of the plan. A full update regarding each project within the Economic Recovery Plan is included in Appendix A.

### **BUY Norfolk**

- **Status:** The projects within BUY Norfolk have all been implemented. Projects including Shop Norfolk, Visit Norfolk, Digital Services Squad, Patio Program, and Shop Local marketing campaigns are all “live” and well underway. For example, the Visit Norfolk tourism app has had 378 downloads from the Apple and Google app stores, and that’s prior to any external marketing efforts taking place (which will ramp up in 2022).
- **Next Steps:** While most of the past year has been focused on getting these projects up and running and into market, actions in 2022 will prioritize growing, enhancing and improving the outcomes associated with this portion of the plan.

### **BUILD Norfolk**

- **Status:** Key delivery efforts within BUILD Norfolk have started in 2021, with great progress made. This includes the establishment of important plans and funding to support larger implementations and outcomes starting in 2022. For example, in 2021 staff successfully applied for multiple grants that will allow a range of new

Entrepreneurship Support Services to be delivered in 2022, and for staff to continue to put in place technologies, process improvements, and a range of other tools that ease, assist, and create a supportive environment for businesses and developers applying for various approvals.

- Next Steps: The Entrepreneurship Pilot is expected to begin implementation in January 2022, and staff will continue implementation of projects through the Municipal Modernization grant funding (under both the Review and Implementation Streams) along with piloting of a new community engagement platform and additional process review workshops.

### **INNOVATE Norfolk**

- Status: Two primary projects within the INNOVATE Norfolk part of the Economic Recovery Plan (the Digital Collaboration Portal for Businesses and The Skill-Building Training and Workshop projects) were reviewed and planned in 2021, with implementation anticipated in 2022. Additionally, a new monthly business newsletter was launched with valuable business information pertaining to recovery programs, grants, other business and employment opportunities, and economic statistics.
- Next Steps: Project implementations will proceed in 2022, subject to validation of business demand and engagement from employees.

### **RECOVER Norfolk**

- Status: With the assistance of the “Recover Norfolk Subcommittee” of the Recovery Taskforce, 3 grant programs were developed and received applications from community-based organizations focused on recovery and resilience projects in the areas of Downtown, the Arts & Culture Industry, and the Agriculture Industry. A total of 8 Recovery Grants were approved by Council. In addition, to support growth and recovery of the Tourism Industry, staff partnered with Ontario’s Tourism Innovation Lab and Haldimand County (together with several sponsors) to launch a Tourism “Spark” program in Norfolk and Haldimand Counties, which will result in 3 new tourism businesses/experiences being developed in each County.
- Next Steps: A 2nd intake of the Economic Recovery Grants is currently underway, which will be brought to Council in Q1 2022. Additionally, the “Spark” program will continue to accept applicants for new tourism experience until January 14 2022, with finalist pitch sessions being held on February 17 2022.

Full details regarding each of the projects in the Economic Recovery Plan are included in Appendix A.

### **Recovery Plan Funding - Status and Outlook**

At the time of the approval of the Economic Recovery Plan, Council had allocated \$250,000 from the Council Initiatives Reserve for project implementation. Staff had anticipated that to deliver the entire Economic Recovery Plan, it would be necessary to apply for additional grant funding and seek sponsorship for various projects. Table 1

below highlights the actual and forecasted grant revenues and expenditures applied against the \$250,000 Economic Recovery Fund budget approved by Council.

**Table 1 – Economic Recovery Fund Forecast (as at November 30, 2021)**

<b>Grant Revenues</b>	
RRRF	\$47,400
DMS Community Collaboration Project	\$25,100
Rural Economic Development Grant	\$62,300
<b>TOTAL GRANT REVENUES</b>	<b>\$134,800</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>	
Patio Offset for 2021 and 2022	\$6,100
Consulting and Contracted Services (Shop Norfolk, Visit Norfolk, Spark Program, Entrepreneurship Services and Business Portal)	\$130,500
Temporary Resources (action-specific)	\$63,400
Marketing and Advertising	\$59,600
Recover Norfolk Economic Recovery Grants – 1 <sup>st</sup> Intake	\$34,100
Recover Norfolk Economic Recovery Grants – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Intake (estimated)	\$50,000
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$343,700</b>
<b>NET EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$208,900</b>

From Table 1, the Economic Recovery Plan implementation will likely be able to come-in under budget at a net cost of \$208,900 (\$41,100 surplus). Additionally, the plan will be able to deliver more than originally anticipated. This is due to various grant programs that will be utilized towards implementation of these project. Staff will continue to apply for grant programs where possible, in an effort to increase what is delivered and/or reduce overall expenditures against the Economic Recovery fund.

In addition to the grants shown in Table 1 above, expenditures have been incurred but are not shown within the table as they are 100% funded by another grant program and therefore do not impact the Economic Recovery Plan funding. As an example, the Digital Services Squad Program that is part of BUY Norfolk, has been entirely funded through a grant.

To highlight the total impact of grants to date, the complete list of grant programs that will be utilized towards Economic Recovery Plan projects are listed in Table 2.

**Table 2 – Total Grant Funding Utilized Towards Economic Recovery Plan Projects**

Grant Name	Funding Amount
Rural Economic Development Program	\$62,350
DMS Community Collaboration Project	\$25,138
Digital Mainstreet – Digital Services Squad	\$99,800
RRRF (portion utilized for the Recovery Plan)	\$47,392
Municipal Modernization Program	\$96,200
Ontario Shop Local Grant (see <b>NOTE 1</b> below)	\$70,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$400,880</b>

**NOTE 1:** The Simcoe Chamber of Commerce was the lead applicant to the Ontario Shop Local grant program, as this Federal program was being administered in Ontario by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. Norfolk County partnered with the Simcoe Chamber on this application, but was not the recipient of the funding. However, the funding is being used to deploy Shop Local campaigns and to create a video library for future Shop Local and other video campaigns that further boost the Shop Local marketing campaigns envisioned in the BUY Norfolk portion of Norfolk County's Economic Recovery Plan.

### **Financial Services Comments:**

In December, 2020, Council approved report PD 20-73 which outlined the Economic Recovery Plan and a request for \$250,000 from the Council Initiative Reserve to fund portions of the plan. At the time, specific budget allocations had not been communicated, with additional reports to be completed as plans began to develop. The forecast included in Table 1 is the latest update provided to Council on the Economic Recovery Plan.

At this time, staff are forecasting a project surplus of \$41,100. If a surplus is realized by the project's end date, unutilized funds will remain within the Council Initiative Reserve and will be available to be committed towards other initiatives.

### **Interdepartmental Implications:**

Economic Development will continue to work with other departments as we work towards ongoing implementation of the Economic Recovery Plan. Financial Management and Planning will assist with the disbursement of funds for grants, purchasing will assist with sourcing the contracts needed to support project implementation, legal will support with terms of use of technologies as new projects are implemented.

### **Consultation(s):**

Staff have consulted with several individuals and organizations in relation to projects within the Economic Recovery Plan:

- The Norfolk County Economic Recovery Task Force assisted in the creation and implementation of the recovery plan and actions. The group of volunteers and local experts is a guiding sounding board for the various actions and engagement to support our local economy and build resilience for the future.
- The BUY Norfolk Subcommittee of the Economic Recovery Taskforce – The BUY Norfolk Subcommittee guided staff through the development and launch of the Shop Norfolk and Visit Norfolk platforms.
- The RECOVER Norfolk Subcommittee of the Economic Recovery Taskforce – The RECOVER Norfolk Subcommittee were instrumental in the development of the grants' framework for each of the recovery grants. This included development of the objectives, the application criteria, and the evaluation process.
- The broader community were consulted regarding the effectiveness of the Shop Norfolk Platform via an online survey.

- The Tourism and Economic Development Advisory Board (TEDAB) – Content from this update of the Economic Recovery Plan was presented to TEDAB in November 2021. Staff received detailed feedback regarding the BUY Norfolk portion of the plan, and in particular the Shop Norfolk platform. Staff will be incorporating that feedback into the platform and future efforts related to the project.

**Strategic Plan Linkage:**

This report aligns with the 2019-2022 Council Strategic Priorities "Create an Optimal Place for Business" and "Build and Maintain Reliable and Quality Infrastructure".

**Explanation:**

The plan includes both projects that have a short-term and long-term impact on the business and not-for-profit communities in Norfolk County, with a focus on enabling the economy's recovery and ongoing resilience in key industries and areas.

**Conclusion:**

The Norfolk County Economic Recovery Plan remains the focus of the economic recovery of the community and building capacity for the long-term resiliency of Norfolk County. Staff will continue applying for grants for, and implementing projects within, the Economic Recovery Plan.

**Recommendation(s):**

THAT Report CD 21-127, Economic Recovery Plan Update, be received as information.

**Attachment(s):**

Appendix A – Economic Recovery Plan Status Updates  
Appendix B – Norfolk County Economic Recovery Plan

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## Appendix A - Economic Recovery Plan Status Updates

<b>BUY Norfolk</b>	
<b>Project</b>	<b>Status</b>
<p><u>Shop Norfolk (Online Marketplace)</u></p> <p>Shop Norfolk is a virtual marketplace platform that allows individuals to search for and purchase products from multiple Norfolk-based retailers on one website, including no cost product delivery (within Norfolk County). This allows retailers to pool resources and be competitive with large online retailers in terms of delivery convenience and cost.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shop Norfolk went live in June 2021, after staff worked with a “BUY Norfolk” subcommittee of the Economic Recovery Taskforce.</li> <li>• Statistics:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 38 vendors currently live with 20 additional vendors that have setup profiles but not yet switched their store to live status as of mid-November 2021.</li> <li>○ Over 1000 published products on the platform.</li> <li>○ Approximately 1800 users have visited Shop Norfolk since September 13 (the date that Google Analytics was installed), with an average engagement time of 3 minutes.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Issues:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Shop Norfolk currently has a low visitor-to-sales conversation rate. In total, less than 10 orders have been placed.</li> <li>○ To address the issue, staff established an online questionnaire (in the form of a contest) to try and understand what barriers exist that prevent the purchase conversation rate from being higher. As of mid-November, over 1000 responses had been received (with approximately 40% of responses going through the entire questionnaire), and staff are putting in-place actions to address the key issues that were identified.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Next Steps             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Shop Norfolk is integrated into the County’s Shop Local Holiday Promotional campaign this year.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Staff are implementing enhanced online promotions, continue to work to add new vendors and products, and work to address challenges identified through the questionnaire.</li> <li>○ Shop Norfolk is also being considered as a tool for sales of tourism product bundles. For example, Shop Norfolk’s ability to check out multiple vendor products through a single shopping cart provides an opportunity for staff to partner with the County’s tourism stakeholders to create “Stay &amp; Play” packages that include a combination of products such as dining, accommodations, and experiences. This type of bundling will be a key asset for the County’s live entertainment plan known as “Project Microphone”, which will offer visitors the opportunity to purchase live entertainment tickets with bundled tourism products.</li> <li>○ Finally, Shop Norfolk is an important tool for building long-term resilience supports for small businesses. As small businesses engage in online ecommerce and sales, even at a small volume to start, it builds expertise and capacity to help with preparedness against future economic shocks (such as that experienced through the Covid-19 pandemic). Additionally, this platform can help many small businesses by providing a relatively low risk way of starting their ecommerce operations from a small scale and building from there. By being able to service customers comfortably through both in-store and online channels, small retail businesses can find multiple sources of revenue and competitive differentiation.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Visit Norfolk</u></p> <p>Visit Norfolk is a digital “Destination Guide” mobile application, which was implemented to replace the previously printed Experience Guide Magazine that was produced by the department on an annual basis. Visit Norfolk was not included in the original version of the Economic</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Visit Norfolk app went live on October 4, 2021).</li> <li>• Statistics (as of mid-November 2021):             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Total Downloads: 378 as of mid-November in both the Apple and Google app stores. This is based on local promotions only, as outward-focused marketing has not yet started.</li> <li>○ Total number of live business listings: 155</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Next Steps</li> </ul>

<p>Recovery Plan, but was subsequently added to increase the flexibility and reach of Norfolk County's Tourism promotional efforts, increase tourism spend, and reduce costs for the County's tourism operators (there is no cost for tourism vendors to be included in the app. Visit Norfolk was established as a 2-year pilot project that would test and validate the effectiveness of a digital solution.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Continue to grow the number of active business listings. The planned number of total listings is approximately 300.</li> <li>○ Engage in outward-focused promotions of the app, as part of a comprehensive and targeted tourism marketing campaign in 2022. These promotions will be built on tourism marketing and brand strategy work that was completed in 2021. During 2021 outward facing tourism promotions were limited due to Covid-19 and the various limitations on inbound tourism travel.</li> <li>○ Leverage Visit Norfolk as part of a marketing toolbox that Norfolk County will provide to tourism operators. The toolbox was identified by tourism operators (during a set of strategy consultations sessions in 2021) as one of the key areas that tourism stakeholders would like the County to provide. For example, Visit Norfolk can be made available on a prominently displayed mobile tablet within each tourism operator's place of business, which would allow the operators to show their customers other things to do while in Norfolk, thereby enabling cross promotion of businesses and increasing length of stay. This would also increase awareness of the app, which in turn increases the value for each tourism operator's profile on the app.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Digital Services Squad (DSS)</u></p> <p>The Digital Services Squad, part of the Digital Main Street Program, is intended to help small businesses use digital technologies (social media, digital marketing, Google My Business profile, web presence, etc.) to adapt to the rapidly changing environment created by the pandemic and to increase opportunities for growth as the economy recovers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The DSS Program launched in Norfolk County in Jan, 2021.</li> <li>• Norfolk County has successfully implemented 2 rounds of the grant-funded Digital Services Squad program, resulting in over 550 businesses being contacted and 188 businesses being helped.</li> <li>• Next Steps: The Digital Services Squad is currently expected to continue until the end of February 2022.</li> <li>• Digital Transformation Grants secured by small businesses - 22 grants of \$2500 each (\$55,000 total grant funding)</li> </ul>

<p><u>Covered and Heated Patios</u></p> <p>This project sought to explore opportunities for covered and heated temporary outdoor patios in Norfolk County, for the purpose of extending restaurant seating capacity during the shoulder seasons.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 17 temporary patio permits were issued in 2021.</li> <li>• Staff were able to issue these permits to cover the period May 1<sup>st</sup> – Oct 31<sup>st</sup>, but unfortunately it was not possible to safely extend patio permits beyond the end of October due to winter maintenance requirements and potential liability for Norfolk County.</li> <li>• However, with the support and approval of Council, staff from the Community Development Division took several additional steps to assist seated food and beverage establishments through the patio program. These included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Offset the cost of the fixed application fee and the “per square metre per day” rental rate (for encroaching patios) for 2021 through funding available via the Economic Recovery Plan.</li> <li>○ Suspended the requirement respecting public notice in 2021 prior to approval of a patio permit.</li> <li>○ Patio permits issued in 2021 would be valid for the 2021 and 2022 seasons, subject to validation of insurance and fee payments (for 2022).</li> <li>○ Standardized the temporary patio application process, including a fulsome staff circulation for comments and a dedicated webpage, allowing for a more consistent and clear process.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Next Steps: Staff will continue to look for ways to expand the temporary patio program, particularly in downtown areas, given that downtown patios have been shown to be a significant contributor to downtown vibrancy and vitality in other municipalities.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Shop Local Branded Marketing Campaigns</u></p> <p>A branded County-led marketing campaign and website aimed at</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A number of campaigns have been run, many of which were grant funded. Campaigns included:</li> </ul>

promoting Norfolk County, enhancing “Buy-Local” and “Visit-Local” messaging, highlighting business successes, and generally increasing consumer confidence.

- Shop Local Holiday video and brochure in 2020 and 2021. The 2020 video received 24.9K views on the Norfolk County Facebook page, and an additional 668 views through the County’s YouTube account.
- Social Media campaigns to promote Shop Norfolk and Visit Norfolk. These campaigns promoted the Shop and Visit platforms, but also highlighted individual vendor stories and specific products available through local retailers.
- Advertorial in local media that promoted Shop Norfolk and local retailers.
- Shop Local video campaign in partnership with the Simcoe Chamber of Commerce (under development currently).
- Extensive digital and print advertisements.
- Next Steps: Continue promoting local businesses, particularly in conjunction with Visit Norfolk as the focus on outward-targeted tourism promotion ramps up in 2022.



BUILD Norfolk	
Project	Status
<p><u>Improved internet &amp; mobile service in underserved parts of the County</u></p> <p>Advocate and identify opportunities for improved broadband and cellular service underserved parts of the County</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• With the COVID-19 pandemic, and the reliance of reliable broadband connectivity for business, work, and school, new Federal and Provincial funding programs have been announced or expanded. The landscape in this regard continues to evolve, but staff have engaged this priority in the following ways:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Engaged the Ministry of Infrastructure about possible options that Norfolk can pursue, beyond the Provincial and Federal funding programs, to incent private sector Internet Service Providers to invest in fiber and mobile infrastructure development.</li><li>○ Wrote letters of support for companies applying to various broadband funding programs for Norfolk-based projects.</li><li>○ Regular contact with Internet Service Providers that have applied for funding to support Norfolk projects.</li></ul></li><li>• Next Steps: With the existing projects underway and various projects still in application phase through various funding programs, staff will continue to monitor progress and engage with stakeholders wherever possible.</li></ul>

Supports for businesses and developers applying for various approvals, permits, and licenses

Implementation of various initiatives aimed at providing greater support for business and development applications – including process efficiencies in development applications as well as supportive tools and technologies.

- Led by the broader Community Development Division, including planning, building services, the following actions have been taken:
  - Received Municipal Modernization grant funding under both the Review and Implementation Streams (\$96,200) to assist with Build Norfolk development process.
  - Online portal system for building permit applications, payments and tracking prepared with soft launch Nov. 15/21 and more fulsome system launch targeting January. Planning development applications targeting January/February for online portal launch.
  - Quicks wins for streamlining and delegation of certain application types: telecommunication towers, Holding provisions, Deeming by-laws and Part-lot control
  - Formal process reviews underway for pre-consultation and site plan processes with recommendations expected January.
  - New engagement platform acquired (Bang the Table – Engagement HQ). Training currently underway.
  - New planning report approach, presentation and application delivery to Public Hearing Committee and Council established in 2021
  - Engineering Design Criteria, including thresholds for technical study requirements as part of development applications, under review.
  - Review of building permit process, average timelines and resourcing in Q2 2021 yielded reduction in building permit review timelines for Q3 2021 despite highest volumes (October average from complete zoning review to permit decision = 6.6 days).
  - In process of shifting zoning review to be part of the building permit “completeness” statutory law requirement (essentially running concurrent with other reviews such as lot grading/exemptions to reduce length of timelines if sequential reviews)

- Workshops in process include Committee of Adjustment workshops and workshop with industry representatives planned for spatial separation topic review.
- Review of development agreement templates partially completed.
- Shifted approach in late October/November to recording, compilation and distribution of pre-consultation comments and minutes to reduce timeframes from on average 2+ weeks to months, to instead be 1 day to 2 weeks.
- Undertook Development Industry Session in June 2021 to connect representatives of the industry/consultants with County development-related senior staff.
- Follow-up development industry workshop sessions planned for a) Planning – Port Dover Secondary Plan and b) Building – Permit application process
- Checklist prepared and distributed in late 2020/early 2021 for owners wishing to build an Additional/Second Dwelling Unit
- Revised and dedicated system for planning inquiries
- Website overhauls in progress, drafted and finalization pending for Planning, Development applications, and Building
- Next Steps:
  - Continue implementation of projects through the Municipal Modernization grant funding (under both the Review and Implementation Streams).
  - Additional process reviews scheduled including plan of subdivision and condominium processes.
  - Further streamlining of reports and applications to Statutory Public Meeting scheduled for early 2022.
  - Bang the Table – Engagement HQ platform - piloting of the system via planning and other projects scheduled for early 2022.
  - Additional process review workshops expected.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Additional legal review of development agreement templates expected in 2022</li> <li>○ How-to videos to assist proponent of development applications with submissions expected in 2022</li> <li>• New engagement platform acquired (Bang the Table – Engagement HQ), training underway and piloting of the system via planning and other projects scheduled for early 2022</li> </ul>
<p><u>Entrepreneurship Support Services and Business Startup Accelerator</u></p> <p>Build a pilot entrepreneurship support program designed to assist small business owners and scalable startup founders with high-value, targeted training, mentorship and acceleration programs, a regional entrepreneurship support network (ecosystem), programs that can engage youth in entrepreneurship options, and other specialized programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Received grant for 1 year entrepreneurship centre/accelerator pilot project.</li> <li>• Established partnership with Venture Norfolk to deliver this project.</li> <li>• The project will include 3 specialized, multi-week, cohort entrepreneurship training programs that will focus on developing, funding, and growing businesses and products in the following 3 areas: (a) Farm-to-Retail, (b) Innovation-based businesses, and (c) ecommerce business looking to grow substantially and expand their current geographic reach. These programs will include mentorship support.</li> <li>• Additional project programming will focus on various business skills development workshops, intrapreneurship programs for larger businesses and potentially other skill development options.</li> <li>• Next Steps: Project kickoff anticipated in January 2021.</li> </ul>



Establish Infrastructure Priorities for Economic Recovery and Growth

In anticipation of possible Federal and Provincial funding, the taskforce identified shovel-ready infrastructure projects that should be prioritized in the event that infrastructure development funding is released. The taskforce identified the Inter-Urban Water Supply Project and the construction of Haycock Way in the Judd Industrial Park as the 2 primary projects that would have a significant impact on economic recovery and growth.

- With the negotiation pertaining to the sale of several parcels of land within the Judd Industrial Park, the construction of Haycock Way is no longer required.
- While portions of the Inter-Urban Water Supply project are currently underway, any future applications to infrastructure stimulus programs will have the benefit of being able to identify these project as having been selected as a priority by the community-led Economic Recovery Taskforce.
- Next Steps: While the Economic Recovery Taskforce continues to meet, there will be an opportunity to refine the plan, adjust as needed, and even select additional infrastructure priorities that may emerge.

INNOVATE Norfolk	
Project	Status
<p><u>Digital collaboration portal for businesses and community-based organizations</u></p> <p>Leverage technology solutions to connect businesses and community organizations to one another through a common portal, providing a platform for addressing common challenges (e.g. labour sharing, local procurement, volunteer matching, joint solutions to shared business challenges).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Held meetings with a group of large employers to begin the conversations of collaboration and technologies for enabling shared-solutions, particularly in the areas of labour sharing or technology-enabled shared transportation systems. As a complex initiative, this project will require an iterative approach that will start with a pilot that will focus on 1 or 2 specific areas/solutions, and incrementally develop new functionality.</li> <li>Next Steps: The collaboration portal was identified as a medium-term project in the recovery plan and will begin work towards a proof-of-concept pilot in 2022. Timing will depend on availability of resources to pursue the project relative to other priorities in the 2022 Economic Development workplan.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Training and workshops</u></p> <p>Support business owners with in-demand training for themselves and their employees, as well as for individuals looking to build new skills and be part of a work-ready labour pool.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skill-building training and workshops, for business owners and their employees, as well as individuals looking to build new skills, are intended to be integrated into, and piloted through the entrepreneurship centre project (subject to demand), in partnership with Venture Norfolk.</li> <li>Next Steps: Once the entrepreneurship centre project has launched, various skill-building programs will begin to be offered through the schedule of the pilot program, utilizing various sources of existing and newly sourced content and trainers.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Central COVID-19 Resources and Information Portal</u></p> <p>Develop a COVID-19 information portal that provides reliable and up-to-date information including listings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By the time the Economic Recovery Plan was passed and projects started their implementation process, there were a number of portals providing various Covid-19 related information. This fact, together with the understanding that the staff resources required to develop and effectively maintain a portal would be significant (and would reduce available resources for other Economic Development Projects), staff made a decision to launch a monthly business newsletter that would include high value</li> </ul>

<p>of Provincial and Federal funding and relief programs.</p>	<p>information including new grant and other support programs (local, Provincial and Federal), new tools and options available to businesses and the local community, updated economic statistics, business news and announcements, and more. Staff felt that this breadth of information on a monthly basis, delivered directly to individuals' inboxes, would be of greater relative value than a portal. The business newsletter is currently delivered 840 recipients every month, with an open rate of 47%.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Next Steps: The newsletter will continue to be developed, and likely will be followed with greater promotional efforts to continue to grow the newsletter's reach.</li></ul>
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RECOVER Norfolk	
Project	Status
<p><u>Recovery Grant Programs (Downtown Stimulus Fund, Arts &amp; Culture Recovery and Resilience Fund, Agriculture Industry Solutions Fund)</u></p> <p>Investigate the possibility of establishing 3 grant programs with defined criteria, for the purpose of enabling strategic initiatives that (a) support and enhance economic vibrancy in Norfolk County's downtowns, (b) increase the sustainability of the arts &amp; culture community and industry in Norfolk, and (c) address labour-related and other challenges in the agriculture industry. Funding would be available to Chambers of Commerce, Boards of Trade, BIAs, Agriculture Associations, Arts and Culture Councils, and other not-for-profit organizations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With the assistance of a Recovery Taskforce Subcommittee, which dedicated to the development of a comprehensive grants framework, the 3 grant programs were made public and accepted applications from July 6 to August 20, 2021. A total of 13 applications were received from across various parts of the County, consisting of 3 agriculture grants, 7 arts and culture grants, and 3 downtown vibrancy grants. The Economic Recovery Taskforce reviewed the 13 applications and recommended to Council that 8 of those applications be approved. Council approved the 8 applications, each ranging between \$2000 to \$5000 for a total of \$34,100 in grant funding. Council also approved a second intake of the Recovery Grants, which are currently underway.</li> <li>Next Steps: The second intake of the Recovery Grants is completed, and applications will be reviewed by the Recovery Taskforce in early 2021. Recommendations from the taskforce will be brought to Council for final deliberation about each application. Additionally, staff will be maintaining contact with all grant recipients, and final reports on the outcomes of the projects will be send to Council in 2023.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Incentives for increasing overnight accommodations and tourism destinations</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following an investigation into the overnight accommodation and tourism designations grant program, it was determined that the key determinant for the development of new overnight accommodations is a series of industry-specific metrics that gauge the demand for accommodations throughout various parts of the year, the revenue per available room, and the average daily rate. Put another way, the key to increasing</li> </ul>

<p>Investigate the potential to create incentives for increasing the total amount of overnight accommodations and tourism experiences in Norfolk County</p>	<p>overnight accommodations is by increasing demand and revenue metrics. Additionally, unlike the other recovery grants, most accommodation providers and tourism experiences are not operated by not-for-profit organizations, thereby limiting a municipality's ability to make grants to those organizations. With these considerations, staff looked for ways to develop new experiences in Norfolk County, which would enhance our total offering to tourists and increase the potential for greater overnight stays (thereby increasing demand and revenue metrics). Staff from the Economic Development Department partnered with the Ontario Tourism Innovation Lab, SWOTC (Southwest Ontario Tourism Corporation) and Haldimand County, along with sponsors from Venture Norfolk, the Grand Erie Business Centre, and Libro Credit Union to launch the Tourism "Spark" program in Norfolk and Haldimand Counties. The "Spark" programs will lead to the creation of 6 new and innovative tourism offerings and experiences in Norfolk and Haldimand Counties (3 in each County). The program will match the selected candidates, from a pool of applicants, with a tourism mentor and provide a source of financial support to help take these new tourism ideas to the next level of development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Next Steps: The program officially launched on November 23, 2021, and will be accepting applications until January 14, 2022. Applications will then be reviewed by a jury including local and provincial tourism innovators and leaders, and the Norfolk County's finalists' pitch sessions will be held on February 17, 2022. Haldimand County finalists will have separate pitch sessions on a different date.</li></ul>
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## Appendix B – Norfolk County Economic Recovery Plan