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PLANNING FOR GROWTH



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Today's Objective

The purpose of this presentation is to provide an overview of the growth that is expected in our region over the next few years and to start a conversation about how the Local Municipalities and the County would like to respond to that growth. While we will not ask for final decisions on any of the discussion items today, we would like to know what information you need and what the timeline looks like for making these decisions.



Introduction

- How should the County set up planning and economic development to make sure we get the most out of the Amazon Fulfillment Centre, the PowerCo SE Gigafactory, and other related investments that are expected to boost our community and economy?
- These developments are generating significant economic activity and increasing land demand in the area.
- We would like to maximize the benefits for our community through careful planning.
- The goal of today's presentation is to help you define the growth that you want in your local municipalities and Elgin County.

THE POWERCO SE GIGAFACTORY EFFECT

- The PowerCo SE Gigafactory is not just a factory; it's a catalyst for economic change.
- It's expected to create 3,000 direct jobs and thousands more indirect jobs. There could be as many as 30,000 new jobs.
- Increased job competition and population growth will have a regional impact.



Competition for Investments & Skilled Labour

- Elgin County, St. Thomas, London, and beyond will be competing for ancillary-type industrial investments.
- As businesses flock to our region, skilled labour competition will intensify.
- This influx of jobs will attract a diverse range of people.
- Assessing workforce needs and investing in training are crucial.
- Existing businesses need support amid all this development.

Factors for Consideration

- To support this growth, careful financial and land use planning is essential to support the demands of housing, business (industrial and commercial), and recreation.
- Infrastructure upgrades are necessary for accommodating population and business growth.
- Housing affordability and supply, transportation, education, healthcare, public safety, recreation, and other social services must be addressed.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Aligning developments with community priorities is vital.
- Welcoming newcomers and immigrants ensures our communities remain safe and inclusive places, where all residents thrive.
- Community engagement plays a pivotal role in achieving this.



Benefits of Growth

- Industrial growth offers tax revenue, job creation, economic stimulation, and improved infrastructure.
- An increase in industrial tax revenue will support the increase in service levels required by population growth.
- It enhances property values and fosters community vibrancy.
- Sustainable and well-planned growth is essential for long-term benefits.

Preparing for Industrial Development

- We need to understand the type and level of growth desired and the investment needed to make it happen so we can develop and implement a plan to get there.
- Do we want to attract and grow industry related to the electric vehicle supply chain?
- What kinds of incentives will be needed to attract these investments?
- Is the proximity to PowerCo SE sufficient incentive or are additional incentives needed to compete with neighbouring municipalities?

Discussion

- What is the appetite in your community to welcome investment?
- How aggressively would you like to pursue growth?
- In terms of incentives to attract businesses, how aggressive do you think we should be?
- How welcoming will our communities be to newcomers? What steps can we take to ensure inclusivity and a smooth transition for newcomers?

Costs

- Growth involves costs to different levels of government and across the public and private sector.
 - Municipal – water, wastewater, planning, roads, cultural services, emergency services, parks and recreation, etc.
 - School Boards – planning for and building new schools, recruiting staff for new schools
 - Private – housing development, commercial development, industrial development
- Economic development expenses include business attraction efforts and workforce development initiatives.
- Effective financial planning is crucial for project sustainability.

Funding Sources

- Diverse funding sources are essential to support growth.
- Funding sources for infrastructure development include property taxes, grants, debentures, development charges, and user fees.
- Partnerships with other municipalities.
- Public-private partnerships and regional initiatives can also provide funds.
- What expectations should we have regarding financial support from the provincial and federal governments?

Discussion

- How much are you willing to invest to drive growth forward?
- Where do you see opportunities for collaboration between the Local Municipalities, the County, and the City; and when might we find ourselves in competition?
- When it comes to infrastructure, do you think it's feasible for us to make shared investments in key areas like water, wastewater, road networks, rail, public transportation etc.?

Supporting Existing Businesses: Business Retention & Expansion

- Growth presents opportunities and challenges for our existing businesses.
- They may have opportunities to supply PowerCo SE with materials, but they may also be in competition for employees.
- Launching in October 2023, **the BR+E program will support existing businesses.**
- The goal is to understand local business challenges and opportunities through business visits and confidential interviews.
- The program aims to **strengthen relationships** with existing businesses and **address immediate concerns.**
- The BR+E program will focus on various sectors, including, industrial, commercial, and agriculture.
- The program will be overseen by a dedicated Leadership Team comprised of representatives from each Local Municipality.

Creating an Investment Attraction Roadmap

- We are pursuing a FedDev grant to develop and implement an investment attraction strategy.
- The goal is to work with the Local Municipalities to position Elgin County as a hub for the manufacturing of electric vehicles, foster investment, and stimulate business growth.
- The project includes:
 - clarifying goals with our Local Municipal Partners,
 - updating vacant land inventory,
 - completing a master servicing study,
 - identifying parcels ready for development,
 - addressing servicing gaps,
 - updating incentives,
 - streamlining planning processes,
 - developing a workforce attraction and retention plan, and
 - creating a marketing and lead generation strategy.

Next Steps

- In terms of timeframes, it's essential to start thinking about answers and action plans. **Is there any other information that we can provide to help facilitate decision-making?**
- Regarding the FedDev application, would you like to go ahead with an application to develop and implement an investment attraction strategy? (The application deadline is November 7, 2023)
- What process or framework should we employ to determine the desired level of growth, and when will you be prepared to make this decision?
 - At the County level, are there any other conversations that you would like to have around planning for growth (e.g. Development Charges)?
 - How can we facilitate conversations about growth with our Local Municipalities? Are you interested in a series of facilitated conversations with each Local Council?
- What structure and investments in planning and economic development are needed to support the desired growth? (next presentation)