

**TOWN OF BLACKFALDS
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Civic Cultural Center – 5018 Waghorn Street
Monday, October 5, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.

AGENDA

1. WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

2. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

2.1 *In the Spirit of Truth and Reconciliation, the Blackfalds Economic Development & Tourism Advisory Committee acknowledges that we are on Treaty 6 territory, the ancestral lands of Cree, Saulteaux (So-toe), Blackfoot, Métis, Dene (De-nay) and Nakota Sioux (Sue). We acknowledge all the many First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and non-status peoples whose footsteps have marked these lands since time immemorial.*

We recognize the inherent relationships Indigenous communities have with this land and its creatures and commit to supporting reconciliation and healing. We honour the resilience, culture, and contributions of Indigenous peoples, past and present.

As we gather, we pledge to listen, learn, and take meaningful action toward a future based on mutual respect and understanding as we continue on our journey of truth and healing. We recognize that reconciliation is not a single act but a lifelong journey—one that requires accountability, humility, and the centering of Indigenous voices.

3. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

3.1 Adoption of the October 5, 2026, Agenda

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

4.1 Adoption of the June 8, 2026, Meeting Minutes

5. PRESENTATIONS

None

6. BUSINESS

6.1 Report for Committee, Economic Development Officer Summer Update

6.2 Report for Committee, 2026 Annual Business Walk Results

6.3 Request for Direction, Summer Event Results

6.4 Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Handouts

7. CONFIDENTIAL

None

8. ADJOURNMENT

TOWN OF BLACKFALDS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Civic Cultural Centre – 5018 Waghorn Street

Monday, June 8, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Kala Pandit, Chair
Robert Hogan, Vice Chair
Aaron Hoyte, Town of Blackfalds Councillor
Cory Twerdoclib, Town of Blackfalds Councillor
Darlington Etaje, Member at Large (*remote attendance*)
Jamie Hoover, Member at Large
Justine Loshny, Member at Large
Denise Sumner, Member at Large

NON-VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT

Laura Svab, Town of Blackfalds Mayor (Ex-Officio)
Peter McGee, Economic Development Officer
Jessica Robinson, Executive and Legislative Coordinator

REGRETS

Ken Hubbard, Member at Large
Joline Gurski, Member at Large
Reina LeMieux, Member at Large
Kyle Braithwaite, Member at Large
Trent Kroetsch, Member at Large
Maria Anderson, Member at Large

1. WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Chair Kala Pandit welcomed all guests attending and called the Economic Development & Tourism Advisory Committee Meeting to order at 7:22 p.m.

2. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

A Land Acknowledgement was read to recognize that the Town of Blackfalds is on Treaty 6 Territory.

3. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Town of Blackfalds Councillor Twerdoclib moved That the June 8, 2026, Agenda be adopted, as amended, with the addition of the following item:

- 6.8 Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Report

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**TOWN OF BLACKFALDS
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Civic Cultural Centre – 5018 Waghorn Street

Monday, June 8, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.

MINUTES

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Member at large Hoover moved That the minutes of April 13, 2026, Economic Development & Tourism Advisory Committee be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

5. PRESENTATIONS

None

6. BUSINESS

6.1 Report for Committee, Economic Development Officer Pre-Summer Update

Economic Development Officer McGee presented the Economic Development Officer Pre-Summer Update report for information.

Town of Blackfalds Councillor Hoyte moved That the Economic Development & Tourism Advisory Committee receive the Economic Development Officer Pre-Summer Up-date report for information.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

6.2 Report for Committee, 2026 Business Walk Plan

Economic Development Officer McGee presented the 2026 Business Walk Plan prepared by the Subcommittee for Committee consideration.

Member at Large Sumner moved That the Economic Development & Tourism Advisory Committee members accept the 2026 Business Walk Plan as submitted.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

6.3 Report for Committee, #2A Mural Trail Digital Scavenger Hunt

Economic Development Officer McGee presented the #2A Mural Trail Digital Scavenger Hunt report for information.

Member at Large Loshny moved That the Economic Development & Tourism Advisory Committee receive the #2A Mural Trail Digital Scavenger Hunt report for information.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

6.4 Report for Committee, Economic Development Strategic Plan Draft RFP

Economic Development Officer McGee presented Economic Development Strategic Plan Draft RFP report for information.

**TOWN OF BLACKFALDS
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Civic Cultural Centre – 5018 Waghorn Street

Monday, June 8, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Member at Large Hogan moved That the Economic Development & Tourism Advisory Committee receive the Economic Development Strategic Plan Draft RFP and report for information.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

6.5 Report for Committee, Lacombe and District Chamber of Commerce Digital Sign Update

Economic Development Officer McGee provided an update on the Lacombe and District Chamber of Commerce Digital Sign.

Member at Large Hoover moved That the Economic Development & Tourism Advisory Committee accepts the Lacombe and District Chamber of Commerce Digital Sign Update report for information.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

6.6 Request for Direction, EDTAC and Community Events

Economic Development Officer McGee presented the EDTAC and Community Events report for information.

Town of Blackfalds Councillor Hoyte moved That the Economic Development & Tourism Advisory Committee receive the EDTAC and Community Events report for information, acknowledge that these opportunities are valuable, and that members will commit to signing up to volunteer for these events through the Economic Development Officer; and

Further That the Economic Development & Tourism Advisory Committee direct the Economic Development Officer to send an email regarding Blackfalds Days and Street Dance events, looking for volunteers, and create a template for the committee for future community events.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

6.7 Request for Direction, Lemonade Day – Request for Judges

Economic Development Officer McGee presented the Lemonade Day – Request for Judges report for consideration.

Member at Large Hoover moved That the Economic Development & Tourism Advisory Committee receive the Lemonade Day – Request for Judges report for information and that members select Town of Blackfalds Councillor Hoyte, Town of Blackfalds Councillor Twerdoclib, and Member at Large Sumner from Economic Development & Tourism Advisory Committee to be the Official 2026 Lemonade Day Judges.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**TOWN OF BLACKFALDS
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Civic Cultural Centre – 5018 Waghorn Street

Monday, June 8, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.

MINUTES

6.8 Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Report

Town of Blackfalds Councillor Hoyte shared handouts from Canadian Tourism Data Collective that were received while attending the Federation of Canadian Municipalities conference.

Town of Blackfalds Councillor Twerdoclib moved That Economic Development & Tourism Advisory Committee receive the Canadian Tourism Data Collective information handouts as information; and

Further That this item return to the Fall Economic Development & Tourism Advisory Committee meeting.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

7. CONFIDENTIAL

None

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Kala Pandit adjourned the Economic Development & Tourism Advisory Committee Meeting at 8:39 p.m.

Kala Pandit, Chair

Jessica Robinson, Executive & Legislative Coordinator

MEETING DATE: October 5, 2026

PREPARED BY: Peter McGee, Economic Development Officer

SUBJECT: **Economic Development Officer Summer Update**

BACKGROUND

Comprehensive report detailing the initiatives undertaken by the Economic Development Officer during the period from June 2026 to October 2026.

- Meetings and Events
 - Regional EDO Meeting
 - Training/Webinars (x8)
 - Growing Smart: The Future of Business in Blackfalds Presentation
 - Lacombe Regional Tourism Board Meetings (x2)
 - Central Alberta Regional Innovation Network
 - ACABEX 2026 – African/Canada/Asia Business Exchange
 - Chamber Lunch and Learn - The 24/7 Employee: How to Clone Yourself Using AI and Automation.
 - Blackfalds Days – Chairs for Chairty Booth – \$6,850 raised.
- Rural Entrepreneur Stream Meetings (x15)
- #2a Mural Trail interview – [CTV Edmonton](#)
- 2nd Annual EDTAC Business Walk
- 2026 Lemonade Day – 8 stands
- Awarded Blackfalds Economic Development Strategy to Deloitte LLP (see attachments)

RECOMMENDATIONS

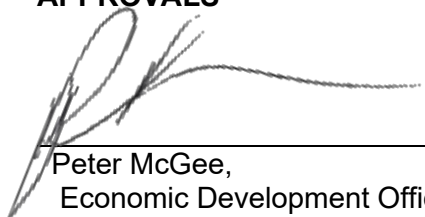
That Economic Development & Tourism Advisory Committee consider the following motion:

That the Economic Development & Tourism Advisory Committee receive the Economic Development Officer Summer Update Report for information.

ATTACHMENTS

- [Deloitte Economic Development Strategy](#)

APPROVALS



Peter McGee,
Economic Development Officer

Town of Blackfalds

Economic Development Strategy 2026–2031

Welcome to
Blackfalds

Prepared by:
Deloitte LLP

Paul Blais, Managing Director
Economic Advisory Practice
pablais@deloitte.ca | (613) 786-7536

August 14, 2026

Submitted in hard copy and electronically

Photo Courtesy Aspen Lakes

Deloitte.
Together makes progress



*Privileged and
Confidential
submitted in hard
copy and
electronically*

Town of Blackfalds
Box 220
5018 Waghorn Street
Blackfalds, AB T0M 0J0

RE: RFP Economic
Development Strategy
for the Town of
Blackfalds

Deloitte LLP
850 2 Street SW
Suite 700
Calgary, AB T2P 0R8a

Dear Peter,

Deloitte is pleased to submit our proposal to develop a five-year Economic Development Strategy for the Town of Blackfalds. Our recent work with municipalities and regional partnerships across Alberta, including Leduc, Lethbridge, Grande Prairie, Cypress County, Westlock County, and the Vermilion River area, provides us with a deep understanding of the economic conditions shaping communities in the province. Through this projects, we have delivered economic development strategies, investment readiness initiatives, and implementation frameworks that help communities capitalize on emerging opportunities.

As a young and fast-growing community, Blackfalds is at an important stage in its development. Sustained residential growth, a supportive business environment, and a strategic location within the Red Deer region provide a strong foundation for expanding the local employment base and pursuing new economic opportunities. The Town now requires a focused approach that identifies where it can compete most effectively, complement regional strengths, respond to investment opportunities, and translate strategic priorities into practical actions.

We understand that economic development extends beyond growth in jobs, businesses, and industrial revenues. A successful strategy should improve residents' economic well-being, build visible momentum within the community, and advance opportunities that reflect Blackfalds' priorities and values. Being familiar with our work in Red Deer, I know you appreciate that we go beyond high-level direction and provide detailed implementation guidance, so that every action has a clear owner, a defined timeline, and a practical path to delivery. The Strategy will be a working tool that you will consistently refer to for implementation guidance and also referenced by your senior management team and elected officials for policy and strategic direction.

We look forward to working with you on this important initiative and supporting the Town in developing an Economic Development Strategy that helps translate growth into lasting benefits for the community.

Sincerely,

Paul Blais, Managing Director
Economic Advisory | Deloitte LLP | pablais@deloitte.ca | (613) 786-7536



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1. Project Understanding

Local insights to drive change.

Project Understanding

Local Context and Emerging Opportunities

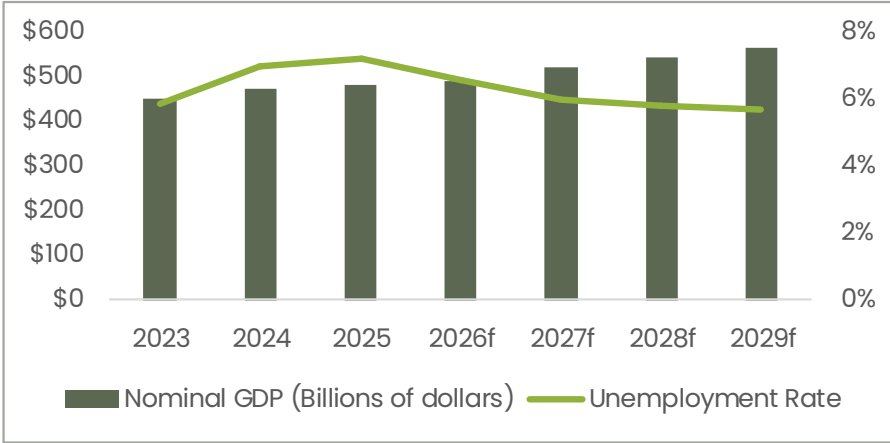
Blackfalds has the potential to strengthen its economic role within Central Alberta and build on its position as one of the region's fastest-growing communities. Located along the QE II Highway and Highway 2A between Red Deer and Lacombe, the town benefits from direct access to Alberta's primary north-south trade corridor while remaining roughly equal distance between Edmonton and Calgary. Proximity to major airports, intermodal rail facilities, and regional markets provides businesses with connectivity to supply chains, customers, and talent. The town's continued population growth, industrial development activity, and strategic location provide the conditions needed to support business growth, attract new investment, and strengthen Blackfalds' role within the regional economy. Industrial land development, particularly Blackfalds Industrial Way, and commercial growth will be a key component of the business attraction strategy.

A young and growing population represents one of Blackfalds' strongest competitive advantages. As Millennials and Generation Z residents advance through their careers and family formation years, the town will face increasing demand for local employment opportunities, commercial services, housing choice, and community amenities. While Blackfalds has successfully attracted residents, many continue to commute elsewhere in the Red Deer region for work. This pattern reflects the community's success as an attractive place to live, but also highlights the need to strengthen the local employment base and expand economic activity within the town.

Like many rapidly growing communities located near larger employment centres, Blackfalds faces the challenge of balancing residential growth with commercial and industrial development. A heavy reliance on residential assessment can place greater pressure on property taxpayers to fund municipal services and infrastructure, potentially reducing one of the community's key competitive advantages: its affordability and quality of life. This Economic Development Strategy should needs to focus on creating the conditions for a more balanced and resilient tax base by attracting investment, supporting business growth, expanding local employment opportunities, and identifying priority sectors that align with the town's assets and future growth trajectory.

An opportunity to translate regional economic strengths into local growth

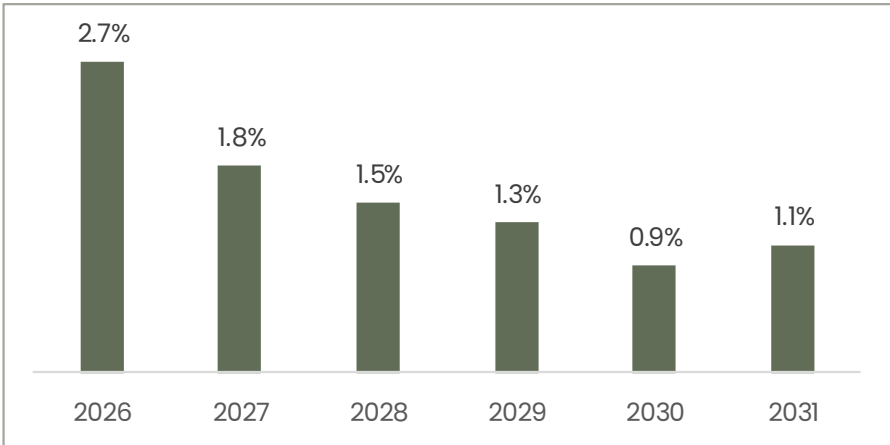
Nominal GDP (billion of dollars) and unemployment rate forecast, Province of Alberta, 2023-2029



Source: Government of Alberta, Economic Outlook | f: forecast

Demonstrated need for more employment opportunities

Projected employment growth (year-over-year), Town of Blackfalds, 2026-2031



Source: Lightcast, Datarun 2026.1

2. Methodology

From evidence to action.

Methodology

An Approach Built for Blackfalds Needs

Why Deloitte is the right partner for Blackfalds

Deloitte's global reach is complemented by extensive, hands-on experience supporting towns, counties, and regional partnerships across Alberta on practical economic development initiatives. Through projects in Leduc, Lethbridge, Westlock, Big Lakes, High Prairie, Rocky Mountain House, Ponoka, Flagstaff, Airdrie, Vermilion River, Bonnyville, Cypress County, and Southeast Alberta, among others, we have helped clients understand their local economies and identify priority sectors, investment opportunities, and develop implementation-focused strategies.

We strategically seek out practitioners and experts who understand the economic and policy landscape well. This includes expertise in municipal administration, regional economic development, sector analysis, trade and market development, and labour market analysis. Together, our team brings the full range of expertise required to address Blackfalds' needs, with a specific focus on the unique conditions that prevail in Central Alberta.

Beyond this breadth of expertise, we bring a distinct focus on the strategic enablers of economic growth, particularly investment readiness and workforce development, which shape whether businesses choose to establish and expand in a community. Many strategies identify priorities; fewer establish a realistic path that takes account of the key requirements for growth and prosperity. With this in hand, we are then able to translate economic analysis and stakeholder input into practical action plans with clear ownership, timelines, and performance measures, so Blackfalds can turn rapid population growth into local jobs, local businesses, and local opportunity.

Situation

Blackfalds is experiencing sustained population and residential growth, supported by a business-friendly environment and a strategic location within the Red Deer region and QE II corridor. The Town now needs to translate this momentum into a stronger local employment base and a more diverse economy. This requires a clear understanding of priority sectors and subsectors, infrastructure and land readiness, workforce capacity, business needs, and opportunities for regional collaboration.

Solution

Deloitte will combine economic baseline and trends analysis, proprietary sector prioritization, land, transportation, and market assessments, as well as targeted stakeholder engagement. The analysis will identify sectors offering the strongest combination of economic potential and local feasibility, assess the conditions required to support them, and translate the findings into clear strategic directions. The final Strategy will include practical actions, timelines, responsibilities, performance measures, and implementation tools.

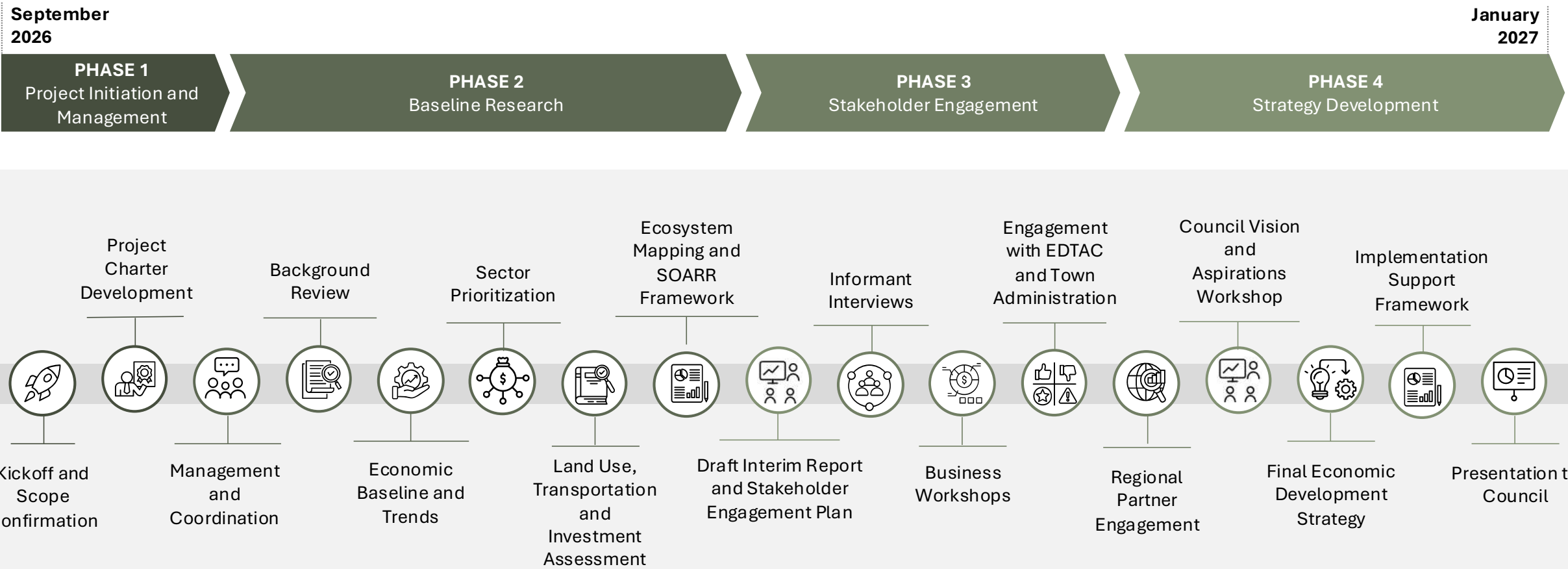
What does success look like?

Success can be measured by the extent to which Blackfalds' growth translates into enhanced investment readiness, new investment, local employment opportunities, and sustained economic benefits for residents and businesses. Over time, implementation of the Strategy should support new business investment and expansion, create more local jobs that enable residents to work closer to home, and increase the utilization of employment and industrial lands.

The ultimate outcome is a more resilient and self-sustaining local economy, where growth creates tangible opportunities for residents, businesses choose to invest and expand in Blackfalds, and the Town is well positioned to manage and benefit from continued growth through 2031.

Timeline

Our workplan is designed to guide Blackfalds from understanding its current economic position to identifying future opportunities and developing a practical Strategy for action. Through a structured process of research, engagement, analysis, and strategy development, we will create an economic development roadmap that reflects local priorities and supports sustainable growth through 2031.



Methodology

Phase 1 – Project Initiation and Management

Objective: Establish project governance, confirm expectations, and create the administrative and project management framework required for efficient delivery.

1.1 Kickoff and Scope Confirmation

We will begin with a kickoff meeting with the Town of Blackfalds project team, to confirm scope, timelines, communication protocols, and deliverables. This will establish a shared understanding of the project's primary objectives as well as desired economic development outcomes following implementation. It will also identify the local data inputs available to the project and any limitations that could shape the scope of analysis.

1.2 Project Charter Development

We will prepare a concise Project Charter that serves as a quick reference document for the engagement, bringing together key information from across all aspects of the project, including an overview of the workplan, key deliverables, team members and their contact information, and the data sources underpinning each task.

It will set out explicit alignment between each task and its data sources, identifying where we will rely on Statistics Canada and the Alberta Regional Dashboard for demographic and labour data, the Town's Business & Investment Intelligence Tool for local business data, and our proprietary and contracted tools including in-house macroeconomic forecasts and input-output models, and data on industry and business dynamics (IBISWorld, D&B Hoovers, Oxford Economics, EMIS), investment (fDi Markets, Economist Intelligence), as well as employment and workforce trends (Lightcast). The intent is to ground our analysis in realistic, accessible information, with appropriate use of assumptions where local data are limited.

Outcomes:

- Establishing shared objectives, confirming responsibilities, and agreeing on communication protocols to ensure a unified start.
- Providing project charter with analytical framework, deliverables, and checking data-source availability and limitations.
- Documented action items to track milestones, address risks early, and enable timely decisions.

Key Interactions:

- A one-hour kick-off meeting with the Town's project leadership (virtual)
- Regular communications and formal bi-weekly project progress meetings (virtual)

Methodology

Phase 1 – Project Initiation and Management

1.3 Management and Coordination

We will maintain ongoing project management through scheduled virtual or in-person check-ins with the Town's project team. These meetings will review progress, validate emerging findings, identify any challenges requiring course correction, and confirm next steps at regular intervals throughout the project.



Methodology

Phase 2 – Baseline Research

Objective: Develop an evidence-based understanding of Blackfalds' current economic conditions, competitive position, growth opportunities, and development constraints to inform sector prioritization and strategic direction.

2.1 Background Review

We will review relevant background material to inform the Strategy, drawing on internal Town documents provided to us as well as regional, provincial, and national reports relevant to our understanding of the local economy and ongoing trends, as identified by the Town or Deloitte. This will include a preliminary assessment of the 2021 Economic Development & Tourism Strategy to determine which priorities remain viable under current economic conditions and which may warrant continuation. In consultation with the Town, we will also consider whether tourism should remain a dedicated theme, as in 2021, or be integrated within broader economic development priorities. This ensures the new Strategy builds on established direction and reflects the Town's evolving priorities rather than being developed in isolation.

2.2 Economic Baseline Analysis: We will build a focused baseline profile of the Blackfalds economy and the forward-looking trends shaping it, across four levels:

- **Local:** We will examine population growth and projections, shifts in age structure, immigration, housing affordability, and educational attainment, alongside labour-market indicators such as unemployment and jobs-by-industry concentration. We will pay particular attention to Blackfalds' commuter dynamic, its reliance on the Red Deer regional job market, and its exposure to oil and gas market cycles and ongoing geopolitical disruptions. We will also profile the local tourism and visitor economy, including the role of key assets such as the Abbey Centre and Eagle Builders Centre in drawing regional visitors and supporting local businesses. This establishes a clear, evidence-based picture of the Town's economic strengths and vulnerabilities, grounding our recommendations in the realities of Blackfalds' workforce, industry base, and community infrastructure.

Outcomes:

- Delivery of an Interim Report covering the Background Review, Economic Baseline and Trends, Sector Prioritization, Land Use and Transportation Assessment, Ecosystem Mapping, and SOARR Assessment.
- Completion of the SOARR assessment, synthesizing the research and laying the groundwork for strategy development.
- Early, evidence-based direction on Blackfalds' competitive advantages and priorities to inform the Town's planning decisions.

Key Interactions:

- Virtual coordination with the Town project team to align on available data and inputs, and to validate the draft Interim Report and priority sectors before proceeding to stakeholder engagement.

Methodology

Phase 2 – Baseline Research

2.2 Economic Baseline Analysis (cont.)

- **Regional:** A comparison of Blackfalds against peer municipalities and growth profile (such as other fast-growing Alberta towns), alongside Central Alberta and provincial benchmarks, to reveal its relative competitive advantages and gaps. This benchmarking will help identify where Blackfalds can differentiate itself and where it can position to complement, rather than compete with, the broader regional economy.
- **National and International:** Investment and macroeconomic trends, drawn from our in-house forecasts and fDi Markets, tailored to the sectors and opportunities most relevant to Blackfalds' goal of a strong and diverse economy and a broader local employment base. This will help ensure recommendations on economic development opportunities are aligned with the broader trends likely to shape Blackfalds' prospects over the life of the Strategy.

2.3 Sector Prioritization

Deloitte will apply its proprietary approach for identifying priority sectors in small urban communities, assessing each sector and subsector against both opportunity, representing its potential economic benefit, and feasibility, representing Blackfalds' ability to develop or attract activity in that sector. The assessment will draw on indicators such as import-substitution demand, municipal-level greenfield and brownfield investment flows, location quotients for employment and business specialization, and projected talent pipelines across occupations and fields of study. This analysis will provide an evidence-based foundation for identifying priority sectors and subsectors and developing practical recommendations for how the Town can leverage the opportunities they present through the final strategy.



Methodology

Phase 2 – Baseline Research

2.4 Land Use and Transportation Assessment

We will review available information on site servicing within Blackfalds and the adjacent rural municipalities of Lacombe County and Red Deer County, including water, wastewater, power, and other on-the-ground infrastructure constraints that may affect development readiness. We will also assess transportation connectivity for moving industrial and commercial goods and compare core development costs across selected nearby jurisdictions to understand Blackfalds’ competitiveness for investment. This analysis will help assess the local and regional feasibility of accommodating priority sectors and inform recommendations related to infrastructure readiness, investment attraction, and future economic development.

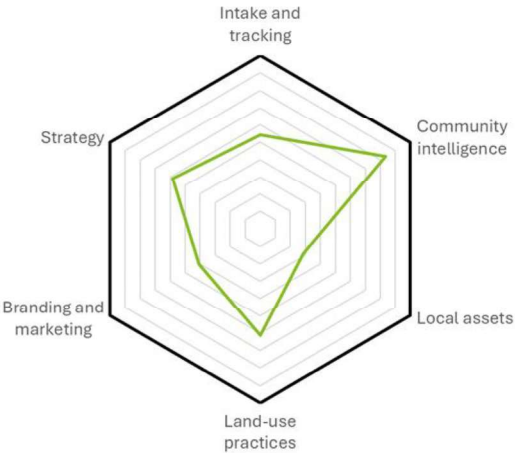
2.5 Investment Readiness Assessment

We will conduct an investment readiness assessment using Deloitte’s proprietary investment readiness framework. The assessment will evaluate Blackfalds’ performance across six key categories that influence investment attraction outcomes: (1) Intake and tracking, (2) Community intelligence, (3) Local assets, (4) Land-use practices, (5) Branding and marketing, and (6) Strategy.

The assessment will examine the Town’s ability to attract, respond to, and facilitate investment opportunities by reviewing existing processes, policies, investor-facing resources, development approval pathways, land-use frameworks, and business support systems. Particular attention will be given to employment lands, infrastructure, zoning and planning processes, asset inventories, investor inquiry management, and collaboration with member municipalities. The assessment will identify both existing strengths and opportunities for improvement, creating a clear baseline from which future investment readiness actions can be developed.

See Appendix 3 for additional details on our approach to Investment Readiness Assessments.

Investment Readiness Diagram



Methodology

Phase 2 – Baseline Research

2.6 Ecosystem Mapping

We will assess the network of organizations and partnerships that support economic development within Blackfalds and the broader Central Alberta region. This review will examine the roles, responsibilities, and relationships among Town leadership, administration, regional economic development organizations, business support providers, and other key partners to understand how economic development activities are currently coordinated. The assessment will identify opportunities to strengthen alignment, clarify responsibilities, improve collaboration, and address service gaps or duplication. The objective is to ensure that limited economic development resources are deployed as efficiently as possible, enabling the Town and its partners to work toward shared priorities and maximize their collective impact on investment attraction, business growth, and job creation.

2.7 SOARR Framework

We will synthesize the baseline findings into strategic insight using a SOARR framework (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Risks, and Results), identifying Blackfalds' strengths to build on, its most promising opportunities, the aspirations it wants to pursue, the risks it must manage, and the desired results to work toward. This consolidates the research into a clear, prioritized view of the Town's economic position, guiding the next phase of stakeholder engagement and informing the direction of the final Strategy.

*The **SOARR framework** allows us to pivot from 'what we have learned' to 'what needs to happen' to support economic development in Blackfalds.*

S	Strengths What is going well and what can we build on?
O	Opportunities Where do we expect growth in the future and are we equipped?
A	Aspirations How do we want the community to change in the future?
R	Risks What challenges do we need to recognize and mitigate?
R	Results How will we know when we have achieved our economic objectives?

Methodology

Phase 2 – Baseline Research

2.8 Draft Interim Report

We will consolidate all completed research into a comprehensive Interim Report. The report will summarize key research findings, identify major opportunities and challenges, describe the economic development ecosystem, highlight emerging sector opportunities, and provide preliminary observations regarding future strategic directions. Importantly, the report will also identify opportunities to strengthen local business retention and expansion processes, consistent with the Town's priorities as outlined in the 2026–2030 Strategic Plan. As part of the drafting process, we will involve our subject matter experts to provide insights on findings to date and recommend areas to explore as part of our in-person stakeholder engagement. This report will serve as the primary discussion document during the engagement phase and establish the factual foundation for Strategy development.

We will also engage preliminarily with key stakeholders including EDTAC, regional partners, and Town administration as part of finalizing our initial research phase to ensure that our findings are grounded in local realities and that any specifications or clarifications required are accounted for the background data.



Methodology

Phase 3 – Stakeholder Engagement

Objective: Engage with key stakeholders to validate research findings, identify priorities and opportunities, and build a shared vision to guide the development of an actionable and locally grounded economic development strategy.

3.1 Stakeholder Engagement Plan

We will begin the engagement phase by developing a clear stakeholder engagement plan that identifies the local businesses, regional partners, government representatives, Town Administration, Council, and EDTAC members to be engaged during the project. To support this, we will prepare draft outreach communications for the Town to distribute, along with tailored interview guides and discussion questions for the project team. This preparation ensures the engagement that follows is coordinated, consistent, and focused on gathering the insights needed to inform the Strategy's direction and priorities.

3.2 Informant Interviews

We will conduct 12 interviews with key stakeholders in the community, including economic development service providers, educational institutions, community organizations, prominent business leaders, and land and property developers. We will aim to hold these interviews in person, supplemented by virtual sessions where scheduling conflicts arise. These engagements will provide practical insights and local perspectives that data alone cannot capture.

All engagements will be attended by at least two members of the Deloitte project team.

Outcomes:

- Local insights and validation gathered through informant interviews, business workshops, a site tour, and engagement with Town Administration and EDTAC.
- A validated What We Heard Report, consolidated with the SOARR findings into a single evidence base to support Strategy development.

Key Interactions:

- A working session and site tour with Town Administration will help validate findings against local knowledge and on-the-ground conditions.
- The Council Vision and Aspirations Workshop will offer an opportunity to share research findings and understand Council's direction for the community's economic future.

Methodology

Phase 3 – Stakeholder Engagement

3.3 Business Workshops

We will facilitate around in-person workshops organized around key clusters of related businesses, grouping those that share similar labour needs, property or servicing requirements, or common concerns. This clustered approach will encourage focused discussion and help identify sector-specific challenges and opportunities. The workshops will be coordinated within the same engagement trip, and the findings will help ground the Strategy's recommendations in the practical realities facing Blackfalds' business community.

3.4 Engagement with EDTAC and Town Administration

We will engage Town Administration and the Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee (EDTAC) through working sessions and advisory meetings to review emerging findings, address information gaps, and refine the priority areas identified through the research. As a follow-on to the sector prioritization work, we will also conduct an in-person tour of key commercial and industrial sites with Town representatives to better understand local servicing, infrastructure, and development constraints. These activities will validate the analysis against local knowledge and on-the-ground conditions, strengthening the feasibility and relevance of the final strategy's recommendations.



Methodology

Phase 3 – Stakeholder Engagement

3.5 Regional Partner Engagement

We will engage key regional partners, including Lacombe County, the City of Red Deer, and relevant regional and provincial economic development organizations, to understand shared priorities and identify opportunities for collaboration. These discussions will identify opportunities for regional collaboration on shared priorities such as industrial land, workforce development, and infrastructure. The findings will help determine where Blackfalds can strengthen partnerships and advance economic development opportunities through coordinated regional efforts.

3.6 Council Vision and Aspirations Workshop

We will present to Council during a regular Council meeting or, if needed, a specially scheduled Council meeting to review the project purpose and research findings to date and to understand Council's vision for the community's future direction. This input will guide the development of the final Strategy by clarifying where the community's elected representatives see key opportunities and challenges.

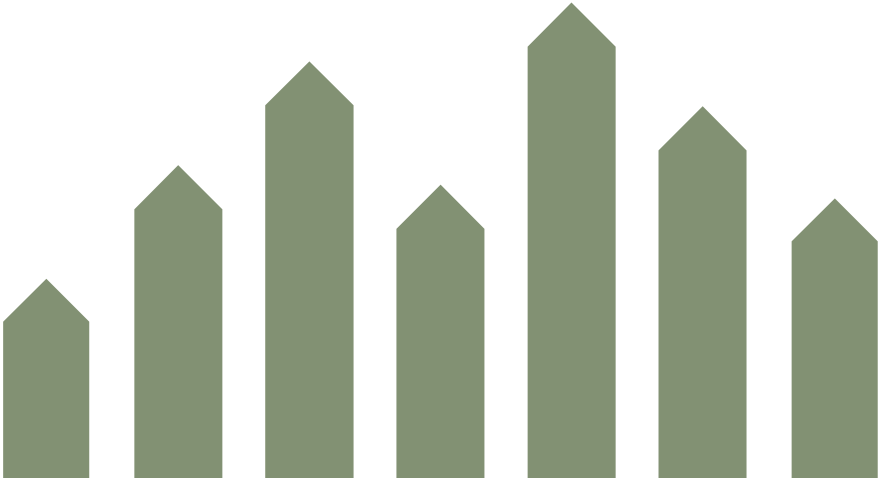


Methodology

Phase 3 – Stakeholder Engagement

3.7 Update Interim Report

Guided by IAP2 principles of transparency, inclusiveness, and accountability, we will prepare a comprehensive What We Heard Report summarizing all completed engagement activities. All participants, including informants, businesses, EDTAC, regional partners, as well as Town administration and leadership will be provided with an opportunity to review and comment on the findings to confirm accuracy, identify omissions, and validate interpretations before strategy development proceeds. We will also distribute the report to our subject matter experts to support the development of strategic directions as a result of the research and engagement completed to date. Following validation, the Interim Findings Report will be updated to incorporate engagement findings, SOARR findings, and any refinements identified through the validation process, creating a single consolidated evidence base to support development of the Strategy.



Deloitte.



**Economic
Development
Strategy**

Interim Report



Methodology

Phase 4 – Strategy Development

Objective: Develop and present a clear and actionable economic development strategy, supported by implementation tools, performance metrics, and reporting mechanisms to guide implementation and measure progress over time.

4.1 Final Economic Development Strategy

We will present the Strategy and package all findings to date as a final report, drawing together the economic context, an evaluation of the previous strategy, current trends affecting the Town, and the inputs gathered through stakeholder consultations into clear strategic directions for the upcoming Strategy, including the key objectives under each direction. The report will also include an implementation plan with step-by-step guidance, KPI tracking, timelines, goals across short, medium, and long-term horizons, measurable results, and practical tools to support implementation management and oversight over time. Our subject matter experts will also play a crucial role in helping to define the recommendations of the strategy according to current trends in their respective sectors. All components of our final reporting will adhere to responsibilities as outlined in the **Municipal Government Act**.

4.2 . Implementation Support Framework

Building on the findings from the previous phases, we will prepare a detailed implementation plan with a set of practical tools to support ongoing implementation, management, and reporting. These tools will help the Town track progress, monitor performance, and report to Council consistently throughout the implementation period.

- **Implementation Gantt Chart:** We will develop a multi-year implementation Gantt chart, organized according to fiscal quarters over the implementation period, that sequences all actions, designed for ongoing use so the Town can track progress and update status as implementation advances.
- **KPI Framework and Tracking Structure:** We will define a KPI framework aligned to actions in the implementation plan, with clear indicators of completion and progress, enabling consistent performance monitoring over time.

Outcomes:

- A final Economic Development Strategy and Implementation Plan with clear directions, objectives, and actions, presented in person to Council and key stakeholders to guide the Town through 2031.
- A set of implementation tools, including a Gantt chart, KPI framework, mid-plan review, and Council reporting template, to track and report on progress.
- A public-facing report and summary that communicate the Strategy clearly to the community.

Key Interactions:

- Review and comment by Town administration and partners.
- Final presentation to Town Council and key stakeholders.

Methodology

Phase 4 – Strategy Development

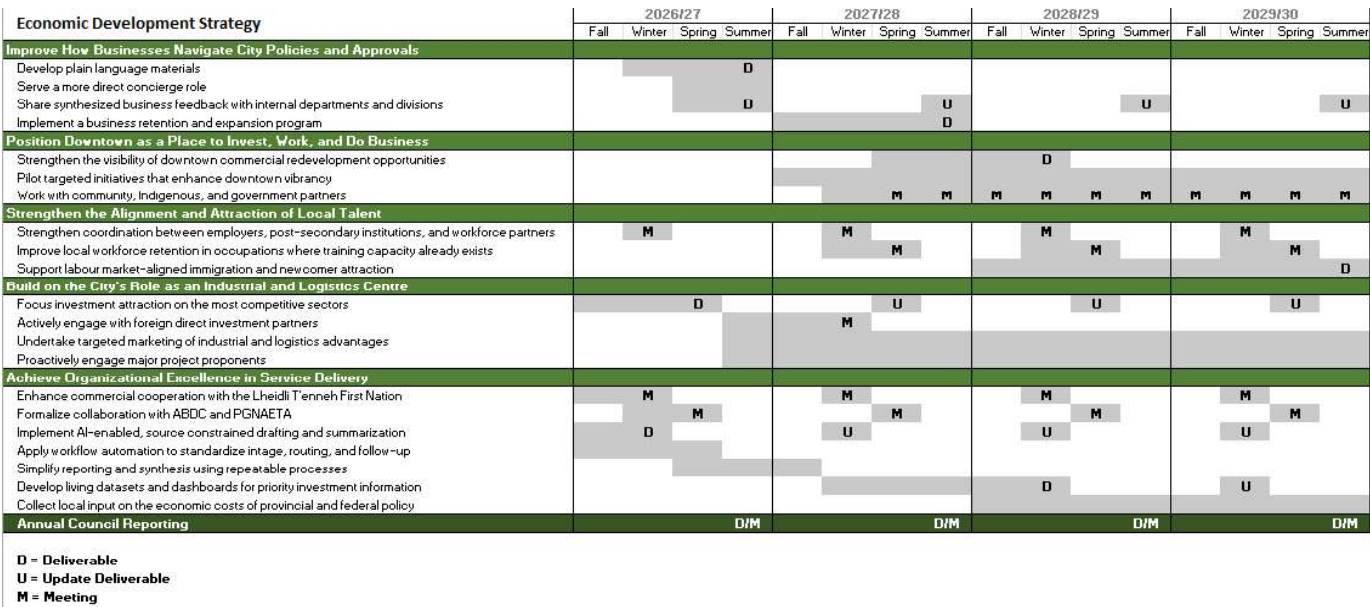
4.2 . Implementation Support Framework (cont.)

- **Mid-Plan Review Mechanism:** We will build a mid-plan review point into the implementation plan (at approximately the midpoint of the 2027–2031 horizon) that equips the Town to measure progress against KPIs, reassess priorities against current economic conditions, and adjust actions as needed.
- **Fillable Council Reporting Template:** We will develop a standardized, fillable reporting template the Town can use for regular updates to Council. The template will integrate the implementation plan, Gantt chart, and KPI framework to enable clear reporting on completed actions, work underway, and upcoming priorities

4.3 Final Presentation and Report

We will deliver an in-person presentation of findings and recommendations to Council, Town Administration, project partners, and other invited stakeholders, communicating the project's key findings, strategic recommendations, and implementation priorities in a clear and actionable format. This final in-person session will support decision-making, provide an opportunity for discussion, and help establish momentum for implementation following project completion. We will also provide a final report and summary suitable for public posting, visually engaging with charts, graphs, and infographics and simple to understand. This will ensure the Strategy is both actionable for staff and clearly communicable to the community.

Example: City of Prince George Economic Development Strategy Gantt Chart



3. Firm and Team Qualifications

Expertise for a fast-growing Central Alberta community.

Deloitte's Economic Advisory team members maintain several accreditations and industry qualifications, including:



Why Deloitte?

Firm Expertise

Deloitte Canada is proudly 100% Canadian owned and operated, combining deep local knowledge with access to one of the country's broadest networks of professionals. Deloitte has a longstanding presence in Alberta, supporting municipalities, regional partnerships, economic development organizations, and provincial agencies on initiatives that strengthen competitiveness, support investment, and create conditions for long-term growth. Our recent work across Alberta provides practical insight into the opportunities and challenges facing communities at different stages of growth.

GROUNDING IN ALBERTA



Blackfalds has successfully established itself as one of Central Alberta's fastest-growing communities. The next challenge is not growth itself, but determining where future opportunities exist, how they should be prioritized, and what actions will generate measurable economic outcomes. Deloitte brings experience helping municipalities address these questions and develop strategies that translate opportunity into action.



Through projects in Lethbridge, Leduc, Westlock County, Big Lakes County, High Prairie, Vermilion River, Bonnyville, Cypress County, and Southeast Alberta, we have helped communities identify priority sectors, evaluate investment readiness, strengthen regional partnerships, and develop implementation-focused economic development strategies. These experiences provide practical lessons that can be applied to Blackfalds as it plans for growth through 2031.



For Blackfalds, we will combine economic analysis, stakeholder perspectives, and Alberta-based experience to identify realistic growth opportunities, evaluate strategic priorities, and establish a roadmap for action. The result will be a strategy that supports decision-making today while creating a practical framework for implementation, accountability, and measurable outcomes.



Deloitte's Economic Advisory practice includes more than 65 economists, strategists, and advisors working across Canada. Our team has supported hundreds of projects for municipalities, regions, Indigenous Nations, industry associations, and economic development organizations, delivering economic development strategies, investment attraction initiatives, workforce development plans, market research, tourism strategies, and economic impact assessments that help communities strengthen competitiveness and achieve sustainable growth.

HOW WE WILL HELP BLACKFALDS

- **Prioritize economic opportunities** based on market opportunity, local strengths, and future competitiveness.
- **Evaluate growth readiness** by considering land availability, infrastructure, investment conditions, and workforce factors.
- **Leverage regional positioning** through analysis of collaboration opportunities and competitive advantages.
- **Develop an implementation-focused roadmap** with actions, responsibilities, timelines, and measurable outcomes through 2031.

Why Deloitte?

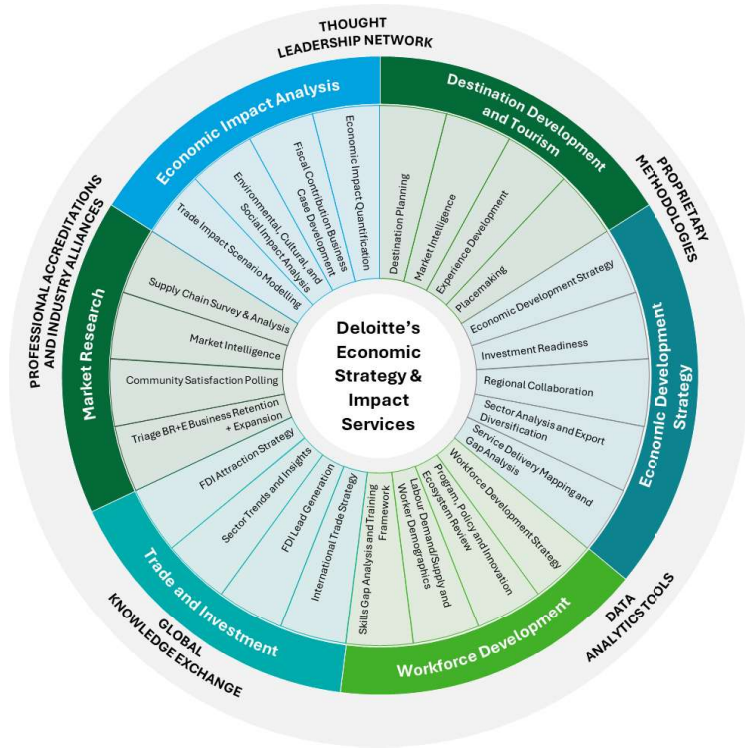
Firm Expertise

Our approach is designed around the decisions Blackfalds needs to make: where to compete, which sectors to prioritise, how land and infrastructure can support growth, how to strengthen regional relationships, and how to convert strategy into measurable action. Every step of our research and engagement aims to uncover tangible and actionable recommendations for Blackfalds to pursue in the coming years.

Economic Development Expertise

Economic & Sector Analysis	We assess economic, demographic, labour market, and industry trends to identify competitive strengths, growth opportunities, and emerging sectors that can support long-term prosperity.
Stakeholder & Community Engagement	We design engagement programs that bring together business, regional partners, Indigenous communities, elected officials, and residents to build consensus and inform decision-making.
Regional Collaboration & Governance	We help municipalities evaluate regional relationships, establish governance models, identify opportunities for collaboration, and align partners around shared economic priorities.
Land, Infrastructure & Investment Readiness	We assess development lands, infrastructure capacity, servicing conditions, and investment readiness factors to understand how communities can support future growth and competitive positioning.
Strategic Planning	We work with communities to establish strategic direction, set priorities, and build implementation roadmaps with clear actions, responsibilities, timelines, and performance measures.

See [Appendix 2](#) for additional details on the tools, datasets, and market intelligence platforms available to support our analysis.



Our Experience

The background necessary to drive change for Blackfalds County.

The projects below demonstrate Deloitte’s direct experience delivering the core components required for Blackfalds’ 5-year Economic Development Strategy. Our recent work has helped municipalities and regional partnerships assess economic conditions, identify priority sectors, evaluate land and investment readiness, engage businesses and partners, and translate findings into practical strategies with implementation plans and measurable results. This experience is directly aligned to Blackfalds’ need for a strategy that reflects local growth, regional opportunities, land suitability, and economic change through 2031.

Project Experience Since 2024	Economic Profiling	Sector Analysis	Land and Infrastructure	Stakeholder Engagement	Strategy Development	Implementation Planning
City of Lethbridge – Economic Development Strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
County of Vermilion River and Villages of Kitscoty, Marwayne, and Paradise Valley – Collaborative Economic Development Framework	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Big Lakes County / Town of High Prairie – Strategic Economic Development Plan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
City of Leduc – Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Westlock County – Economic Development Strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cypress County – Investment Attraction Strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Northern Rockies Regional Municipality – Economic Diversification Strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
City of Prince George – Economic Development Strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
County of Grande Prairie – Regional Economic Development Strategy	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Town of Okotoks – Economic Development Strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
District of Houston – Economic Diversification Strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Municipality of North Cowichan – Economic Development Action Plan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Medicine Hat, Cypress County, Forty Mile, Bow Island, Foremost & Redcliff – Southeast Alberta Regional Economic Opportunity Strategy & Implementation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Our Team

Delivery



Paul Blais
Project Lead

Paul is a Managing Director with more than 35 years of experience in economic development, investment attraction, and community growth. Before becoming a consultant, he spent over a decade working directly in municipal economic development, including leadership roles focused on business attraction and investment. Paul is widely recognized across Canada as one of the country's leading economic development practitioners and brings deep expertise in helping communities strengthen investment readiness, identify growth opportunities, and build practical strategies that lead to investment outcomes.



Chris Knoch
Project Manager

Christopher is a Manager specializing in economic development strategy, investment attraction, and economic policy. Prior to joining Deloitte, he worked within the Government of Canada on regional economic development, trade, and investment initiatives and represented Canada in international discussions on competitiveness and local economic development. His background helps communities translate economic analysis into actions that support investment growth.

Our delivery team consists of leading experts in investment attraction and readiness.



Jose Rodriguez
Research and Engagement

Jose is a Senior Consultant with 10 years of experience in economic development, workforce development, and investment attraction across Alberta and Western Canada (including the City of Grande Prairie, the Couty of Grande Prairie, Lac La Biche, Leduc, Okotoks, Southwest Alberta, etc.). Jose specializes in turning economic, labour market, and sector data into practical insights, and will lead research, sector analysis, and stakeholder engagement for Blackfalds. Jose holds a Master's in Local Economic Development and is a member of the Economic Developers Association of Canada (EDAC), where he is currently pursuing his Ec.D. certification.



Tanya Dawar
Research and Engagement

Tanya is a Consultant with experience supporting economic development, investment attraction, trade, and public policy initiatives. She specializes in economic research, market intelligence, stakeholder engagement, and policy analysis, helping clients translate complex economic and market trends into actionable insights. For Blackfalds, Tanya will support current state research, sector analysis, stakeholder engagement, and the development of evidence-based recommendations that strengthen the Town's long-term economic development strategy.

Our Team

Delivery

Paul Blais,
Project Lead

MA, CEcD, Ec.D. | 35 Years of Experience



Project Experience

- **City of Yorkton** – Sector-Specific Investment Attraction Action Plans (current)
- **Big Lakes County and Town of High Prairie** – Regional Strategic Economic Development Plan (2026)
- **City of Lethbridge** – Economic Development Strategy (2026), Tourism Lethbridge Options Analysis (2026), Municipally Controlled Corporation Development (2025)
- **Cypress County** – Investment Attraction Strategy (2025)
- **Medicine Hat, Cypress, Forty Mile, Bow Island, Foremost and Redcliff** – Southeast Alberta Regional Economic Opportunity Strategy and Implementation Framework (2025)
- **Westlock County** – Economic Development Strategy (2025)
- **City of Brandon** – Foreign Direct Investment Strategy (2025)
- **Flagstaff County** – Business Success Service Delivery Recommendations (2024)
- **City of Grande Prairie** – Investment Attraction Services (Pitch Book and Pitch Decks) (2024)

Paul is a Managing Director with 30 years of experience in economic development, investment attraction, and community growth. Before entering consulting, he spent over a decade working in municipal economic development leadership roles, concluding as Director of Business Attraction and Retention for Kingston Economic Development. This combination of practitioner and consulting experience gives him a strong understanding of how municipalities attract investment, support business expansion, and position themselves for long-term economic growth.

Over the course of his 20-year consulting career, Paul has led investment attraction, foreign direct investment, and investment readiness initiatives for communities across Canada. His experience includes foreign direct investment strategies, investment readiness assessments, employment lands studies, supply chain analyses, investor servicing reviews, and economic development strategies for municipalities, counties, regional economic development organizations, and provincial governments. He is particularly recognized for his work across Alberta and has successfully completed projects in the Blackfalds region including Red Deer and Ponoka and CAEP – helping communities identify realistic opportunities, strengthen their competitive position, and develop practical implementation plans.

Skills & Expertise

- ✓ Economic Development
- ✓ Investment Attraction
- ✓ Investment Readiness
- ✓ FDI Strategy
- ✓ Site Selection
- ✓ Economic Governance
- ✓ Industrial Lands
- ✓ Supply Chain Analysis
- ✓ Implementation Planning

Education

- Wilfrid Laurier University – MA, Geography
- Wilfrid Laurier University – BA, Economic Geography and Business Administration

Our Team

Delivery

Christopher Knoch,
Project Manager

MA | 8 Years of Experience



Project Experience

- **City of Yorkton** – Sector-Specific Investment Attraction Action Plans (current)
- **Government of British Columbia** – Regional Investment Showcase (2026)
- **Northern Rockies Regional Municipality** – Economic Diversification Strategy (2026)
- **City of Prince George** – Economic Development Strategy (2026)
- **Big Lakes County and Town of High Prairie** – Strategic Economic Development Plan (2026)
- **Cypress County** – Investment Attraction Strategy (2025)
- **City of North Vancouver** – Health and Bioscience Investment Development (2025)
- **Westlock County** – Economic Development Strategy (2025)
- **Kingston EDC** – Sub-Sector Analysis (2025)
- **District of Houston** – Economic Diversification Strategy (2025)

Christopher is a Manager in Deloitte's Economic Advisory practice based in Calgary, specializing in economic development across Western Canada. He has worked with a range of rural communities across Alberta, including the County of Vermilion River, Big Lakes County and the Town of High Prairie, Cypress County, Westlock County, and Flagstaff County, among many other clients, supporting the creation of economic development and investment attractions strategies, program reviews, and stakeholder engagement.

Before joining Deloitte, Chris worked as an Economist and Policy Analyst at Pacific Economic Development Canada (formerly Western Economic Diversification Canada) and was responsible for conducting economic analysis to support Government of Canada investments and advocacy. In this role, Chris also served as a managing member of the Canadian delegation to the Regional Development Policy Committee at the OECD, where we represented Canada in international discussions related to regional economic development, urban policy, rural policy, data standards, and multi-level governance.

Earlier in his career, Chris worked with Global Affairs Canada's Regional Office for Alberta and the Northwest Territories where we coordinated with embassies and consulates abroad to identify export opportunities for companies involve in agriculture, energy, and ICT.

Skills & Expertise

- ✓ Project Management
- ✓ Economic Analysis
- ✓ Investment Attraction
- ✓ Sector Prioritization
- ✓ Trade Development
- ✓ Competitiveness Analysis
- ✓ Strategic Planning
- ✓ Public Engagement

Education

- Carleton University – MA, International Economic Policy
- University of Calgary – BA, Political Science
- University of Calgary – BA, International Relations

Our Team

Delivery

Jose Rodriguez,
Research and Engagement

MEDI | 10 Years of Experience



Project Experience

- **City of Prince George** – Economic Development Strategy (2026); Central BC Hydrogen Hub Study (2024)
- **Work Northwest Alberta** – Update of Key Sector Workforce Profiles (2025)
- **Bancroft-Minded Forest Company** – Forestry Sector Study (2025)
- **Community Futures Eastern Ontario** – Community and Regional Economic Profiles (2025)
- **City of Grande Prairie** – Regional Investment Attraction & Tactical Plan (2024)
- **Government of Alberta** – Job Attraction Study (2024)
- **Alberta Advanced Education** – Supporting Participation in Industry Pathways (2024)
- **City of Brandon** – Investment Attraction Study (2024)
- **Saskatoon Regional Economic Development Authority** – Life Sciences Sector Study (2024)
- **Valley Regional Enterprise Network** – Target Sector Data Update (2024)
- **City of Markham** – Economic Development and Cultural Strategy (2023)

Jose is a Senior Consultant in Deloitte's Economic Advisory practice with 10 years of experience helping communities across Alberta and Western Canada make sense of complex economic, workforce, and sector trends. Drawing on previous experience as both a labour market analyst and economic development consultant, Jose specializes in translating data into practical insights that support investment attraction, workforce planning, and economic growth in resource-driven and diversifying regional economies.

His work spans rural, northern, and mid-sized communities throughout Alberta and the western provinces, where he has supported economic development strategies, sector studies, workforce assessments, and economic opportunity analyses. Known for his analytical approach and ability to distill large volumes of information into clear findings, Jose helps clients move beyond data collection to understand what it means for their community and where future opportunities exist. His experience includes supporting Alberta and Western Canadian municipalities, regional partnerships, workforce organizations, and economic development agencies on initiatives related to economic competitiveness, labour force development, and sector growth.

Skills & Expertise

- ✓ Economic Development
- ✓ Sector Opportunity Analysis
- ✓ Labour Market Insights
- ✓ Community & Regional Profiling
- ✓ Investment Readiness
- ✓ Business Retention & Expansion
- ✓ Stakeholder Engagement

Education

- University of Waterloo – Master of Applied Environmental Studies (Local Economic Development)
- Universidad del Norte – Bachelor of International Relations (International Economy)

Our Team

Delivery

Tanya Dawar,
Research and Engagement
MA | 5 Years of Experience



Project Experience

- **Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada** – Energy & Fertilizer Supply Chain Diversification Strategy (2026)
- **Bilateral Dialogue on Critical Minerals** – Strengthening Critical Minerals Value Chains Through Sub-National Partnerships (2025)
- **Canadian National Committee for Pacific Economic Cooperation** – Digital Trade Modernization and Economic Competitiveness (2025)
- **Environment and Climate Change Canada** – Low-Carbon Construction Materials for Net-Zero Building Development (2025)
- **BC Government** – Community Resilience and Disaster Governance Planning (2024)
- **Indigenous Governance Review** – Indigenous Partnership Models in Economic Development (2024)
- **Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation** – Digital Economy Strategies for Regional Growth (2024)

Tanya is a Consultant in Deloitte Canada's Economic Advisory practice with experience spanning government, academia, consulting, and think tanks across Canada, Asia, and Africa. Her background includes economic research, trade and investment analysis, market intelligence, and public policy, with work across sectors such as agriculture, mining, energy, transportation, and emerging technologies. She is experienced in translating complex economic issues into practical insights that support strategic planning, investment decisions, and long-term growth.

Prior to joining Deloitte, Tanya worked with the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, the UBC Sustainability Hub, and India's Ministry of Commerce and Industry. She contributed to approximately 30 publications on trade, investment, and economic competitiveness, with her work cited by The Globe and Mail, Financial Express, and Canada's National Newswatch. Her experience includes engaging with government, business, and community leaders, including Government of Alberta officials and municipal governments, supporting economic development initiatives, contributing to policy dialogues, and developing analytical dashboards and tools to inform policy and business decisions.

Skills & Expertise

- ✓ Economic Research
- ✓ Policy Analysis & Development
- ✓ Sector Intelligence
- ✓ Comparative Benchmarking
- ✓ Regulatory Assessment
- ✓ Trade Diversification
- ✓ Investment Attraction
- ✓ Stakeholder Engagement

Education

- University of British Columbia– MA, Public Policy & Global Affairs
- Indian Institute of Foreign Trade– MA, Economics (Specialization in Trade & Finance)
- University of Delhi– BA, Mathematics

Our Team

Subject Matter Experts

We will supplement the core project team with subject matter experts who bring deep sector-specific expertise in industries that align closely with Blackfalds' economic strengths. These experts can be engaged at strategic points throughout the project to provide guidance, review findings, validate emerging recommendations, and help ensure sector-specific considerations are appropriately reflected in the final Strategy. Their involvement will strengthen the quality of the analysis by incorporating perspectives from leaders with direct experience in investment attraction, industry development, and sector growth.



Tina Beaudry
Agriculture & Agri-Food

Tina Beaudry brings extensive expertise in agriculture, agri-food processing, and agtech investment across the Prairies. She was a founding member of Canada's first venture-backed agtech accelerator, contributed to Saskatchewan's Ag Growth Fund, and later helped secure more than \$3.2 billion in canola crushing investments as Chief Economic Growth Officer for Economic Development Regina. Tina will provide insight into value-added agriculture, food processing, agtech commercialization, and investment attraction opportunities relevant to prairie communities.



Andrew Botterill
Energy & Industrial Services

Andrew Botterill is Deloitte Canada's National Oil and Gas Leader and advises across the energy sector on market strategy, investment decisions, acquisitions, and growth opportunities. He combines deep technical expertise with extensive knowledge of industry trends and is the author of Deloitte's Quarterly Oil and Gas Price Forecast for North America. Andrew will provide guidance on opportunities related to oil and gas support services, industrial construction, energy supply chains, and the broader growth outlook for Alberta's energy sector.



4. Select Project Experience

The project history necessary to drive impact.

Select Project Experience

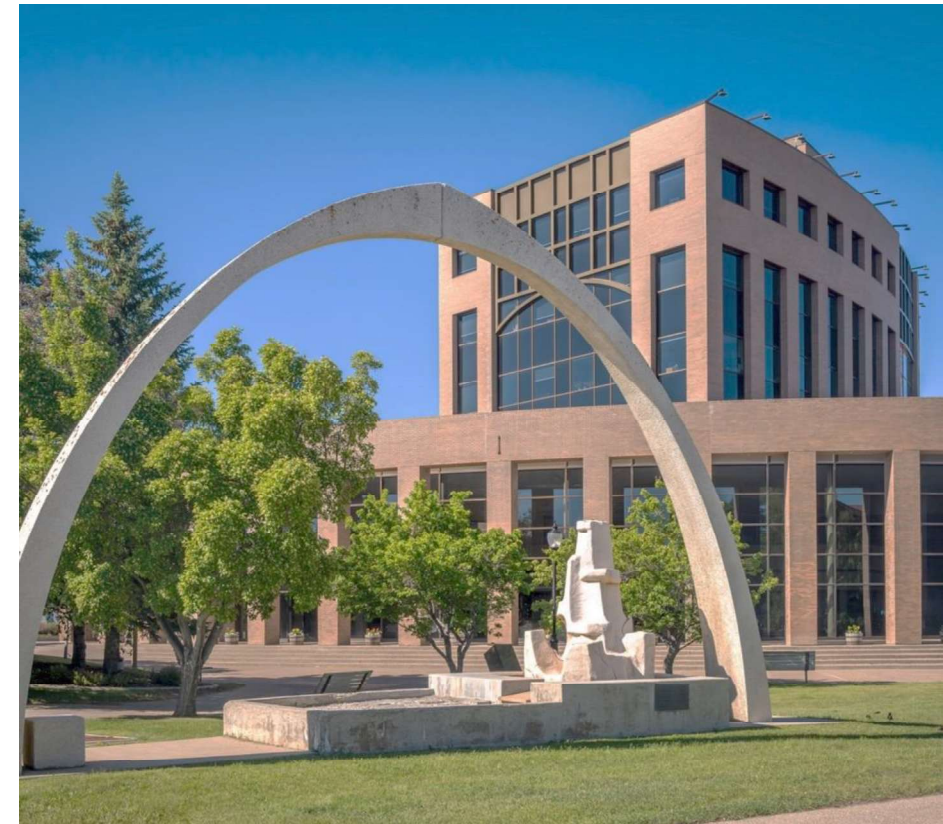
City of Lethbridge – Economic Development Strategy (2026)



Deloitte was engaged by the City of Lethbridge to develop its first standalone Economic Development Strategy and Implementation Plan. The City sought a coordinated approach to economic development that could align multiple departments and partner organizations around a shared vision for economic growth, investment attraction, workforce development, and long-term competitiveness. The engagement was intended to establish a clear roadmap for economic development and create a stronger foundation for implementation, accountability, and decision-making.

Deloitte completed a comprehensive assessment of the local economy, labour market, industry structure, infrastructure, and investment readiness conditions. The project included a review of existing plans and policies, interviews with 39 stakeholder groups, engagement with more than 150 community participants, and dedicated engagement with Indigenous partners. Economic and engagement findings were consolidated into a Research and Engagement Report that informed the development of strategic directions, implementation actions, governance recommendations, and performance measures.

For Blackfalds, we will apply the same progression from evidence gathering to implementation planning. The Economic Baseline Analysis, Background Review, stakeholder interviews, business workshops, Regional Partner Engagement, and SOARR assessment proposed in Phase 2 and Phase 3 reflect the same analytical and engagement activities undertaken in Lethbridge. The Research and Engagement Report completed for Lethbridge is a direct precedent for the Interim Report proposed for Blackfalds, while the implementation plan, performance measures, and governance recommendations developed for Lethbridge mirror the Final Economic Development Strategy, KPI Framework, Implementation Support Framework, and Council reporting tools proposed in Phase 4.



Select Project Experience

County of Vermilion River and the Villages of Kitscoty, Marwayne, and Paradise Valley – Collaborative Economic Development Framework (2026)



Deloitte was engaged by the County of Vermilion River and the Villages of Kitscoty, Marwayne, and Paradise Valley to establish the VERV Economic Alliance and develop a collaborative framework for regional economic development. The municipalities were seeking a more coordinated approach to economic development delivery, stronger regional collaboration, improved investment readiness, and a clearer structure for supporting business growth and investment attraction across the region.

Deloitte assessed the existing economic development environment, including governance structures, service delivery models, stakeholder relationships, business retention and expansion practices, and regional economic development assets. The project included stakeholder engagement, governance analysis, operational planning, branding development, development of a vacant buildings program, creation of business retention and expansion processes, and preparation of an implementation toolkit to guide future execution and monitoring.

The work completed in Vermilion River will directly inform our approach to the Ecosystem Mapping and Regional Partner Engagement tasks proposed for Blackfalds. We will use the same process of evaluating organizational roles, partnerships, service delivery responsibilities, and areas of overlap or duplication to understand how economic development activities are coordinated across the Central Alberta region. The implementation toolkit developed for VERV also reflects the approach proposed through the Blackfalds Implementation Support Framework, which includes practical implementation tools, KPI tracking structures, reporting mechanisms, and clear accountability for delivery.



Photo Courtesy County of Vermilion River

Select Project Experience

Big Lakes County and Town of High Prairie – Strategic Economic Development Plan (2026)



Following the creation of a joint Regional Economic Development Committee, Big Lakes County and the Town of High Prairie retained Deloitte to develop a shared Strategic Economic Development Plan. The project was intended to identify common economic priorities, strengthen regional competitiveness, improve investment readiness, and establish a coordinated approach to economic development across both municipalities.

Deloitte completed a comprehensive current-state assessment that included economic analysis, municipal benchmarking, land use and infrastructure review, sector analysis, and a SOARR assessment. The project also included Council visioning sessions and stakeholder engagement activities to identify shared priorities, opportunities, and challenges. Findings were used to develop sector-specific recommendations, investment attraction priorities, strategic directions, implementation actions, measurable performance indicators, and a detailed roadmap for execution.

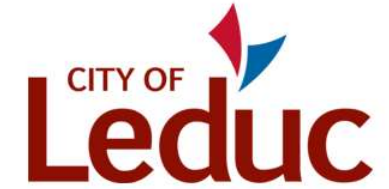
This project closely reflects the sequencing of activities proposed for Blackfalds. The Economic Baseline Analysis, Land Use and Transportation Assessment, Sector Prioritization, SOARR Framework, stakeholder engagement activities, and Council Vision and Aspirations Workshop proposed in our methodology follow the same process used in Big Lakes and High Prairie. The implementation roadmap and performance measures developed for that project are also directly comparable to the implementation plan, KPI Framework, Gantt chart, and performance monitoring tools proposed for Blackfalds.



Photo Courtesy South Peace News

Select Project Experience

City of Leduc – Economic Development Strategy (2025)



The City of Leduc retained Deloitte to develop a new Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan to strengthen its position within one of Alberta's most competitive investment corridors. The City sought to support continued economic growth, attract new investment, diversify its economy, and balance residential growth with commercial and industrial development opportunities.

Deloitte undertook an investment attraction assessment, sector-specific PESTLE analyses, economic service delivery mapping, and stakeholder engagement program to evaluate Leduc's economic position and future growth opportunities. The team also addressed limitations in local data through the use of proprietary datasets and incorporated economic forecasts and forward-looking analysis to account for changing market conditions and emerging economic risks. The resulting strategy established strategic directions supported by implementation actions, resource recommendations, and performance measures.

In Blackfalds, we will apply the same analytical approach to evaluating economic conditions, investment opportunities, and future growth potential. The Economic Baseline Analysis, Sector Prioritization, informant interviews, business workshops, and implementation planning tasks included in our methodology build directly on work completed in Leduc. The use of external datasets, forecasting tools, and opportunity-based sector assessment in Leduc also reflects the approach proposed for evaluating regional, national, and international trends, identifying priority sectors, and assessing future economic opportunities for Blackfalds through 2031



Photo Courtesy City of Leduc

Select Project Experience

Westlock County – Economic Development Strategy (2025)



Westlock County retained Deloitte to develop an Economic Development Strategy that would identify future growth opportunities, support investment attraction, and establish a clear framework for economic development decision-making. A key objective of the project was determining which sectors offered the strongest opportunities for growth and where future development activity should be directed.

Deloitte conducted stakeholder engagement with investors and businesses, analyzed the County's economic base, assessed sector opportunities, and reviewed infrastructure, servicing conditions, utility availability, and tax competitiveness. In collaboration with Colliers, potential development sites were evaluated based on servicing capacity, labour availability, transportation access, and industry suitability. The resulting strategy identified priority sectors, development opportunities, implementation actions, and performance measures organized around four strategic pillars.

The work undertaken in Westlock County directly informs our proposed Sector Prioritization and Land Use and Transportation Assessment for Blackfalds. We will use a similar approach to evaluate which sectors present the strongest combination of opportunity and feasibility, assess whether available employment lands and infrastructure can support those sectors, and identify constraints that may affect future development. The implementation framework developed for Westlock also reflects the approach proposed for Blackfalds, where sector analysis, infrastructure assessment, stakeholder input, and market analysis will be translated into measurable actions, timelines, and performance indicators.



Photo Courtesy Westlock County

5. References

Satisfaction in driving economic development impact.

References

The three references included in our proposal are all Alberta-based communities that have worked directly with members of our economic development team in 2026. Each reference can speak to our team's experience delivering economic development projects in Alberta, including our collaborative approach, responsiveness, and ability to develop practical, implementable strategies that reflect local priorities and opportunities.

Reference No. 1

Organization name: City of Lethbridge

Contact person: Perry Stein

Phone number: (403) 393-4445

Email: perry.stein@lethbridge.ca



Reference No. 2

Organization name: County of Vermilion River

Contact person: Wendy Wagner

Phone number: (780) 846-0158

Email: wwagner@county24.com



Reference No. 3

Organization name: Big Lakes County

Contact person: David Reynolds

Phone number: (780) 525-5955 (ext. 2225)

Email: dreynolds@biglakescounty.ca



6. Timeline and Fee Structure

Delivering value and impact on schedule.

Timeline

^^^ Virtual *** In Person MS Milestone

Date of in-person activities subject to change based on client preference.

Phases and Tasks by Week	Sep				Oct					Nov					Dec				Jan			
	7	14	21	28	1	8	15	22	29	2	9	16	23	30	7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25
Phase 1 – Project Initiation and Alignment																						
1.1. Kickoff and Scope Confirmation	^^^																					
1.2. Project Charter Development																						
1.2. Management and Coordination			^^^		^^^		^^^		^^^		^^^		^^^		^^^		^^^		^^^		^^^	
Phase 2 – Baseline Research																						
2.1. Background Review																						
2.2. Economic Baseline Analysis																						
2.3. Sector Prioritization																						
2.4. Land Use and Transportation Assessment																						
2.5. Investment Readiness Assessment																						
2.6. Ecosystem Mapping																						
2.7. SOARR Framework																						
2.8. Draft Interim Report																						
Phase 3 – Stakeholder Engagement																						
3.1. Stakeholder Engagement Plan																						
3.2. Informant Interviews																						
3.3. Business Workshops																						
3.4. Engagement with EDTAC and Town Administration																						
3.5. Regional Partner Engagement																						
3.6. Council Vision and Aspirations Workshop																						
3.7. Interim Report Update																						
Phase 4 – Strategy Development																						
4.1. Final Economic Development Strategy																						
4.2. Implementation Support Framework																						
4.3. Presentation to Council																						

Fee Structure

Our proposed budget and timeline are designed to deliver a rigorous, implementation-focused Investment Attraction Strategy within the Town of Blackfalds’s required project window, from September 2026 through January 2027. The workplan balances research, stakeholder engagement, investment readiness assessment, and strategy development activities, ensuring that resources are directed toward producing actionable recommendations while maintaining clear project milestones and regular collaboration with County staff.

Phase	Key Activities	Cost
Phase 1 – Project Initiation and Management	- Kickoff and Scope Confirmation - Project Charter Development - Management and Coordination	\$5,900
Phase 2 – Baseline Research	- Background Review - Economic Baseline Analysis - Ecosystem Mapping - Sector Prioritization - Land Use and Transportation Assessment - Investment Readiness Assessment - Ecosystem Mapping - SOARR Framework - Draft Interim Report	\$17,020
Phase 3 – Stakeholder Engagement	- Stakeholder Engagement Plan - Informant Interviews - Business Workshops - Engagement with EDTAC and Town Administration - Regional Partner Engagement - Council Vision and Aspirations Workshop - Interim Report Update	\$17,300
Phase 4 – Strategy Development	- Final Economic Development Strategy - Implementation Support Framework - Presentation to Council	\$29,880
Total project costs (excluding GST)		\$72,100

Appendix 1

Proposal Overview

Bidder/Company Name: Deloitte LLP

Contact: Paul Blais, Managing Director, Economic Advisory

Address: 850 2 Street SW, Suite 700, Calgary, AB, T2P 0R8

Phone/Fax: (613) 786-7536 Email/Website: pablais@deloitte.ca

Item	Cost/Hour	Total Hours	Total Cost
Paul Blais	\$360	30	\$10,800
Christopher Knoch	\$270	82	\$22,140
Jose Rodriguez	\$220	87	\$19,140
Tanya Dawar	\$170	106	\$28,020
Tina Beaudry	pro bono	5	\$0
Andrew Botterill	pro bono	5	\$0

References

1. City of Lethbridge, Perry Stein, (403) 393-4445, perry.stein@lethbridge.ca
2. County of Vermilion River, Wendy Wagner, (780) 846-0158, wwagner@county24.com
3. Big Lakes County, David Reynolds, (780) 525-5955 x2225, dreynolds@biglakescounty.com

Authorized Signature: 

Title: Managing Director, Economic Advisory

Date: August 14, 2026

Appendix 2

Research, Data & Analytical Tools

Rather than relying on a single dataset, Deloitte draws from multiple economic, industry, workforce, investment, and business intelligence sources. This allows us to validate findings across datasets, identify emerging opportunities, and provide Blackfalds with recommendations grounded in robust evidence and local context.

Market & Investment Intelligence

	• Tracks global greenfield investment activity across sectors, companies, and geographies. • Identifies investment trends, target markets, and opportunities relevant to Wellington County.
	• Provides intelligence on private capital markets, investors, and high-growth companies. • Helps identify emerging industries, innovation clusters, and prospective investment targets.
	• Provides economic forecasts, investment climate assessments, and global market intelligence. • Supports comparative analysis and evaluation of emerging investment opportunities.
	• Provides market intelligence and industry research across emerging economies. • Supports international benchmarking and analysis of global growth opportunities.

Deloitte combines proprietary methodologies, premium research platforms, economic databases, labour market intelligence tools, and industry-leading market data to support economic development strategy development. These tools enable our team to assess economic and demographic trends, evaluate priority sectors, understand labour market conditions, benchmark communities, identify growth opportunities, and develop evidence-based recommendations tailored to local conditions.

Economic & Sector Analysis

	• Provides industry outlooks, market trends, and competitive intelligence. • Supports sector assessments, target industry identification, and opportunity analysis.
	• Provides economic indicators, benchmarking data, and forecasting tools. • Supports economic analysis, trend assessment, and regional competitiveness reviews.
	• Provides economic forecasts, industry outlooks, and market intelligence. • Supports growth projections, economic benchmarking, and investment opportunity assessment.

Workforce & Supply Chain Analysis

	• Provides employment, workforce, occupational, and supply chain intelligence. • Supports target sector identification, labour market analysis, and cluster mapping.
	• Provides detailed company, industry, and supply chain intelligence. • Identifies major employers, industry clusters, prospective investors, and key stakeholders.

Appendix 3

Investment Readiness Methodology (detailed)

Deloitte’s **investment readiness methodology** provides a structured assessment of a community’s ability to attract, support, and secure new investment opportunities. The objective is to evaluate the investor experience, identify barriers to investment, and assess the effectiveness of the policies, processes, and resources that support economic development activities.

The assessment combines two components: an investor-perspective review and an internal process review. Deloitte conducts a detailed review of the community’s website, investment attraction materials, and other public-facing resources to evaluate how easily investors can access information, understand local opportunities, identify points of contact, and navigate the investment process. By viewing the community through the lens of a prospective investor, we can identify points where opportunities may be lost due to unclear information, missing resources, or a poor user experience.

The desktop review is complemented by interviews with municipal staff. These discussions provide insight into how investment inquiries are managed, coordinated, and advanced internally, while helping to identify operational strengths, bottlenecks, and areas for improvement. Comparing local practices against leading approaches from communities across Canada and internationally allows Deloitte to identify opportunities to improve investor servicing and organizational effectiveness.

The assessment is organized around six dimensions of investment readiness: (1) strategy, (2) intake and tracking, (3) community intelligence, (4) local assets, (5) land-use practices, and (6) branding and marketing. Each dimension is evaluated against a set of criteria representing leading practices for a community of comparable size and capacity. Findings are scored to establish a baseline measure of investment readiness, highlighting strengths, competitiveness gaps, and priority improvement areas. The result is a practical roadmap of recommendations designed to strengthen investment attraction capabilities, improve the investor experience, and increase the community’s ability to capture new investment.



Disclaimer



Disclaimer

We understand and accept in principle the terms and conditions included in the RFP provide an outline of certain provisions that the Town of Blackfalds intends to include in the contract.

We expect that the final terms of the contract will be detailed and precise with respect to the respective rights and obligations of each party and that each party will have the right to negotiate clarifications, changes and additional provisions to cover the circumstances of the engagement as finally awarded.

In addition, we believe that both parties' interests would be served by including mutually acceptable terms in the contract that address the following topics: A cap on liability; the nature of the services; clarifications on the indemnity provisions; terms relating to the license and ownership of the intellectual property and deliverables; warranty and limitations on warranty; and a provision relating to retention of documents in support of working papers.

If requested, we can provide for your reference, a copy of our standard General Business Terms.

If Deloitte is successful in its bid, we anticipate discussion and negotiating with the Town of Blackfalds in good faith to reach agreement on the above-mentioned clauses, any differences between the terms provided in the RFP and our General Business Terms and any additional provisions required covering the circumstances of this unique engagement.

www.deloitte.ca

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Our global Purpose is making an impact that matters. At Deloitte Canada, that translates into building a better future by accelerating and expanding access to knowledge. We believe we can achieve this Purpose by living our shared values to lead the way, serve with integrity, take care of each other, foster inclusion, and collaborate for measurable impact.

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MEETING DATE: October 5, 2026

PREPARED BY: Peter McGee, Economic Development Officer

SUBJECT: **2026 Annual Business Walk Results**

BACKGROUND

The Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee (EDTAC) identified the Annual Business Walk as a key initiative under its Business Support and Attraction strategic pillar. The Business Walk serves as a community engagement and business retention tool, providing EDTAC and Administration with an opportunity to gather direct feedback from local businesses through structured face-to-face conversations and surveys.

For communities the size of Blackfalds, obtaining reliable and relevant local economic data can be challenging and cost prohibitive. Traditional economic data sources often do not provide the level of detail required to understand the unique conditions of a local business environment. As a result, the Business Walk has become an effective and affordable method of collecting meaningful business intelligence directly from local business owners and operators.

A Business Walk is a structured process where community leaders engage with local businesses to better understand their successes, opportunities, concerns, and challenges. The information gathered helps establish relationships with the business community while providing valuable data that can be used to shape future programs, services, and economic development initiatives. The process also creates a baseline of information that can be measured and compared year over year, allowing EDTAC and Administration to track trends and evaluate the effectiveness of economic development activities.

Following the successful completion of Blackfalds' inaugural Business Walk in 2025, EDTAC established a subcommittee to plan and implement the second annual Business Walk in 2026. The subcommittee was tasked with developing survey questions, coordinating volunteers, organizing data collection, and providing direction on reporting and recommendations. The committee's objective was to gain an intimate and accurate understanding of the current business environment in Blackfalds while strengthening relationships with the local business community.

The 2026 Business Walk sought to:

- Gather consistent and factual information regarding the current opportunities and challenges facing Blackfalds businesses.
- Create a reliable baseline of business data that can be tracked and compared over time.
- Increase awareness of EDTAC, the Economic Development Officer, and available economic development programs and services.
- Improve EDTAC's understanding of local economic conditions and emerging business trends.
- Gather both quantitative survey results and qualitative business feedback to inform future decision-making and program development.

The Business Walk also supports EDTAC's broader commitment to business retention and expansion (BRE). Research consistently demonstrates that most of the net new job creation within a community comes from existing businesses. By maintaining regular contact with local business owners, the Town can better identify opportunities for growth, address emerging challenges, and ensure municipal policies and programs continue to support a vibrant and resilient local economy.

A total of 82 business surveys were completed during the 2026 Business Walk, representing approximately 64% of the bricks and mortar businesses in Blackfalds. The information collected provides a valuable snapshot of the current business climate in Blackfalds and will assist EDTAC, Administration, and Council in developing programs and initiatives that support business retention, expansion, and investment attraction efforts.

DISCUSSION

Question 1: How many years have you been in business?

The largest group of respondents (34%) have been operating between two and five years, while approximately 29% have been in business for more than eleven years.

What We Learned

Blackfalds has a healthy mix of new and established businesses. The results suggest the community continues to support both business retention and new business development.

Question 2: How many employees do you currently have?

Approximately 72% of surveyed businesses have five or fewer employees, while 87% have twenty or fewer employees.

What We Learned

Blackfalds is a small business community. Future programs and supports should be designed with the needs of small business owners in mind.

Question 3: In the past 12 months, has your team grown, shrunk, or remained the same?

Nearly half of respondents reported growth in staffing levels, while most remaining businesses reported no change.

What We Learned

Staffing levels are generally stable or increasing. This suggests many businesses experienced positive operating conditions over the past year.

Question 4: In the next 12 months, do you anticipate your team growing, shrinking, or remaining the same?

More than half of respondents expect to add staff over the next year, while only one respondent anticipates reducing staff.

What We Learned

Business confidence remains strong. Many business owners are optimistic about future growth and expansion opportunities.

Question 5: Where do you receive the best return on investment for your marketing dollars?

Facebook was identified as the most effective marketing platform, followed by other digital advertising channels such as Google and YouTube.

What We Learned

Digital marketing continues to outperform traditional advertising methods. Businesses are increasingly relying on online tools to reach customers.

Question 6: What type of business training would you find valuable?

Marketing was the most requested training topic, followed by Human Resources, Managing Growth, and Artificial Intelligence.

What We Learned

Businesses are looking for practical support in attracting customers, managing employees, and preparing for growth. Interest in AI suggests emerging technologies are becoming more relevant to local businesses.

Question 7: Do you know who the Town of Blackfalds Economic Development Officer is?

Approximately 62% of respondents indicated they were not familiar with the Economic Development Officer.

What We Learned

Awareness has improved but remains lower than desired. Additional outreach and business engagement opportunities should continue to be a priority.

Question 8: Are you aware of the services available through Economic Development?

Approximately 76% of respondents indicated they were unaware of, or unsure about, the services available through Economic Development.

What We Learned

Awareness of available services remains low. Improving communication and promotion of these services represents a significant opportunity moving forward.

Key Takeaways

The 2026 Business Walk identified several clear themes:

- Blackfalds continues to support both new and established businesses.
- Small businesses remain the foundation of the local economy.
- Business confidence is strong, with many businesses anticipating future growth.
- Digital marketing continues to be the preferred method of reaching customers.

- Marketing, Human Resources, and Growth Management are the most requested training topics.
- Awareness of Economic Development services remains low and presents the greatest opportunity for improvement.
- The Business Walk continues to be an effective tool for gathering business intelligence and strengthening relationships with the local business community.

DISCUSSION

2027 ACTION

- 1) Share this report with the Lacombe and District Chamber to assist with relevant workshop planning.
- 2) Work with the Chamber to host a keynote speaker focusing on how to create Facebook content and include a competition with a business development prize.
- 3) Work with the Town's marketing and communications team to create a "What is Blackfalds Economic Development?" video series about the EDO for Blackfalds to post during Economic Development Week.
- 4) Work with the Town's marketing and communications team to create a "Who's here to help?" video series about the Central Alberta entrepreneur support ecosystem to post on Small Business Week.
- 5) Conduct the 3rd annual Business Walk in August 2027.

RECOMMENDATIONS

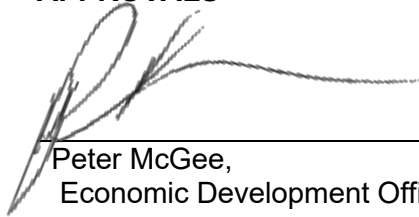
That the Economic Development & Tourism Advisory Committee consider the following motions:

1. That the Economic Development & Tourism Advisory Committee receives the 2026 Annual Business Walk Results for information.

ATTACHMENTS

- *2026 Business Walk Plan*
- *4.2 RFD, 2025 Business Walk - Oct Meeting*
- *2026 Business Walk Results Summary*

APPROVALS



Peter McGee,
Economic Development Officer

MEETING DATE: June 8, 2026
PREPARED BY: Peter McGee, Economic Development Officer
SUBJECT: 2026 Business Walk Plan

BACKGROUND

BUSINESS

The 2026 Business Walk Sub Committee has created the following for this years business walk.

Dates

Monday August 17 – 9:00 am – 11:00 am

Tuesday August 18 – 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm & 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Wednesday August – 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm & 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Additional follow up day – Tuesday August 25th – Peter will block day to return to businesses that were missed or requested a later visit.

Questions

- 1) How many years have you been in business?
- 2) How many employees do you currently have?
- 3) In the past 12 months has your team, grown, shrunk or stayed the same?
- 4) In the next 12 months do you anticipate growing, shrinking or staying the same?
- 5) Where do you feel you are getting your best return on investment from your marketing dollars? (multiple choice answers)
- 6) What type of business training would you find valuable and would want to attend? (multiple choice)
- 7) Do you know who is the Town of Blackfalds Economic Development Officer?
- 8) Are you aware of the services he can provide?

Surveys

Survey will be done this year via Survey Planet. This should allow us to use our devices to gather information and will evaluate the data easier for us. [Follow this link to test.](#)

RECOMMENDATIONS

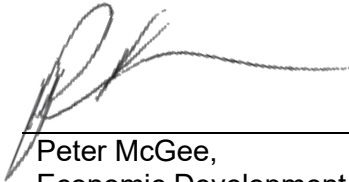
That the Economic Development & Tourism Advisory Committee consider the following motion:

That the Economic Development & Tourism Advisory Committee members accept the 2026 Business Walk plan as submitted.

ATTACHMENTS

- *2026 Business Walk Plan*

APPROVALS



Peter McGee,
Economic Development Officer

EDTAC Annual Business Walk (2026)

Strategic Pillar – Business Support and Attraction

Details

A business walk is a community engagement strategy where local leaders and officials visit businesses in person to understand their needs, challenges, and successes. This helps build relationships, identify areas for improvement, and foster economic development. It's a way to gather direct feedback from the business community and tailor support and resources accordingly.

In Blackfalds the EDTAC will conduct the 2nd annual business walk with a small sub-committee who will be responsible for the planning, organizing and implementing of the business walk. This sub-committee will create roles and delegate to the rest of the EDTAC members for execution.

Background

Data is king to all decisions in life and in business. Community Economic Development is the same. Reliable and relevant data can be difficult and expensive to get. For a town of our size, it could be close to impossible as statistics don't cover such a small market. One affordable and reliable way to gather data about our local businesses and economy is to conduct a Business Walk.

A Business Walk is a structured process where individuals engage with local businesses for face-to-face conversations and surveys. The conversations and surveys will give the committee and administration a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities that exist in Blackfalds and ultimately strengthen our relationship with the business community allowing us to better serve them and foster more economic activity.

Business Walks are a great way to access the economic environment in a community, establishing base line data which can be used to measure the success of different Economic Development Activities.

At the April 2026 EDTAC meeting, the committee selected a lead and members of the 2nd Annual Business Walk in Blackfalds. This small sub-committee will plan the walk and delegate EDTAC members for execution. This plan is being developed to assist the sub-committee in the planning of the walk.

Goals/Objectives/Tactics

To gain an intimate and accurate understanding of the current business environment in Blackfalds. Providing EDTAC with 1st hand knowledge and expertise to create programs and supports to best serve our business community.

1. Recruit 10+ volunteers from EDTAC to conduct the surveys allowing us to meet with more than 45% of brick-and-mortar businesses operating in Blackfalds to

build relationships and create a baseline of data that can be compared year over year. a. Create quick and easy survey questions to be used to identify a point in time base line and can be repeated with similar questions and compared year over year. b. While visiting businesses gather anecdotal stories to help influence successful program creation and implementation. c. Using the business walk opportunity to ensure businesses are aware of EDTAC, EDO McGee and the services and programs provided. 2. Gain a consistent and factual picture of the current challenges and opportunities that all Blackfalds businesses are facing allowing EDTAC to become the experts on the Blackfalds micro-economy. a. Elevate EDTAC members understanding of the current, past and future of Blackfalds economy. b. Increase the opportunity and reach of programs offered in the region to connect with our businesses with more individuals they associate with town economic development. c. Gather information and data in a way to specify sectors/industries and commercial areas allowing to identify sector or area specific challenges or opportunities.	Stakeholder(s) • EDTAC • Local Business Community • Lacombe and District Chamber of Commerce • Town of Blackfalds Staff and Council
Sub-Committee To Do: 1) Sub-committee decisions a. Meetings – coordinate and call b. Confirm goals and objectives for 2026 business walk c. Questions to ask (2026 suggestions below) d. Direction to EDO McGee on reporting e. Execution of business walk i. Timeline to complete – i.e. single day, over a week or month ii. Divided by area or sector, or combination. iii. Coordinate EDTAC business walk team and delegate tasks.	Deliverables – (subcommittee to provide EDO McGee with direction) • Report – including recommendations
Questions 2025 Questions 1) When did you open?	

- a. Was it in this location? – if no – where?
- 2) How many employees do you have?
 - a. Do you anticipate hiring more in the next 12 months?
- 3) Are you aware of EDTAC and what we do?
- 4) What do believe is Blackfalds biggest opportunity? (create a list to choose from to make it easier to answer and record – i.e. sports tourism, proximity to Red Deer, young population, etc.)
- 5) What is your biggest challenge in business right now, what keeps you up at night? (create list – i.e. staffing, global events, lack of customers, etc.)

2026 Questions (suggested) – updated questions below

- 1) How many years have you been in business? – answers – 1 year, 2 – 5 years, 6 – 10 years and 10+ years
- 2) How many employees do you currently have? – 0 -1, 2 – 5, 6 – 10, 11 – 20, 21 – 30, 31+
- 3) In the past 12 months has your team – grown, shrunk or stayed the same
- 4) In the next 12 months do you anticipate – growing, shrinking, or staying the same
- 5) What do you feel is your most successful marketing option – create options
- 6) What type of business training would you find valuable – create list of options (i.e. AI, marketing, HR, etc.)
- 7) Do you know of the Town of Blackfalds EDO? y/n
- 8) Do you know what services he can provide? y/n

Subcommittee Notes – May 25th 2026 – attendees – Peter McGee, Denise Sumner, Cory Twerdoclib, Jamie Hoover, Kala Pandit

Dates

Monday August 17 – 9am – 11am

Tuesday August 18 – 1pm – 3pm & 3pm – 5pm

Wednesday August 19 - 1pm – 3pm & 3pm – 5pm

Extra follow up date – August 25, 2026 – Peter to return to businesses that were missed

Updated Questions

Q1	How many years have you been in business?	Multiple Choice	   
Q2	How many employees do you currently have?	Multiple Choice	   
Q3	3) In the past 12 months has your team	Multiple Choice	   
Q4	4) In the next 12 months do you anticipate	Multiple Choice	   
Q5	Where do you feel you get the best ROI on your marketing dollars?	Multiple Choice	   
Q6	6) What type of business training would you find valuable and would want to attend (between 1 and 3)?	Multiple Choice	   
Q7	Do you know who is the Town of Blackfalds Economic Development Officer?	Multiple Choice	   
Q8	Are you aware of the services they can provide?	Multiple Choice	   

MEETING DATE: October 6, 2025

PREPARED BY: Peter McGee, Economic Development Officer

SUBJECT: **Completed 2025 Business Walk**

BACKGROUND

In the spring of 2025 EDO McGee proposed that EDTAC undertake a Business Walk in Blackfalds to collect reliable data in a cost-effective manner. This proposal was approved. EDO McGee then presented 2 options in June 2025 to effectively coordinate and conduct the 1st Annual Business Walk. The committee selected option 2 (see attached report from June 2025) and a sub committee was struck to complete the 2025 Business Walk. This report includes the findings from the 2025 Annual Business Walk and a request for direction of next steps.

To clarify and stay consistent, a Business Walk is a structured process in which individuals engage with local businesses through face-to-face conversations and surveys.

BUSINESS

Survey Parameters

- The survey was conducted in person by physically stopping in each business without an appointment.
- Survey was collected through paper surveys and compiled in a spreadsheet for review.
- 78 out of 179 businesses were surveyed during 3 days over a week. 43% completed.
- 7 questions were asked to each business
 - When did you open?
 - Did you open in this location?
 - How many employees do you have?
 - Do you anticipate hiring more people in the next 12 months?
 - Are you aware of EDTAC?
 - In your opinion, what is the biggest opportunity in Blackfalds?
 - What is the biggest challenge in business for you right now?
- Surveys were conducted on a Monday, Thursday and Friday afternoon with 2 2-hour shifts per day (1:00 – 3:00 & 3:00 – 5:00)
- Community was broken up in 5 areas to conduct surveys
- Surveys were completed by 7 members of EDTAC

Results/Assessment

Question 1 14% of surveyed (11) businesses opened this year which tells me that we have a strong and attractive market for new businesses.
31% of businesses opened between 2016 – 2021. What was driving growth at that time?

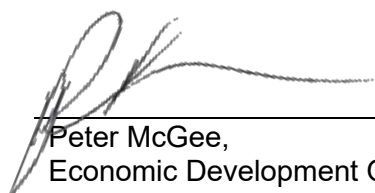
- Question 2 Over ¾ of surveyed businesses are in the same location they opened in. Our turnover rate is low and/or our retention level is high.
- Question 3 Approximately 75% of our businesses have under 10 employees. Or more than 90% of businesses have less than 20 employees. Any programs we implement should be geared towards businesses with 20 or less employees.
- Question 4 Very close to half of the surveyed businesses are looking to hire in the next 12 months, this is a good indication that business is going well and the local economy is thriving.
- Question 5 Well over half of the businesses surveyed have not heard of EDTAC. We should focus on sharing our message of who we are and what we do.
- Question 6 Our location in the province and proximity to Red Deer in the opinion of our businesses are the most impactful opportunity for our community. Our population and demographics are also major benefits to doing business in Blackfalds. The combo of population/demographics and the comments lead me to believe that the major benefit is our quality of life. How do we leverage this?
- Question 7 These results show that the number 1 & 2 challenge our businesses are facing is inflation and proximity of competitors, both of which we have little to no control over. The 3rd challenge is lack of customers, which is something we are currently working on and based on this survey we should continue to work on.

ATTACHMENTS

- [RFC, April 2025 Business Walk](#)
- [RFD, June 2025 Business Walk](#)

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Economic Development & Tourism Advisory Committee members accept the results of the 1st Annual Blackfalds Business Walk.
2. That the Economic Development & Tourism Advisory Committee members advise next steps to EDO McGee.



Peter McGee,
Economic Development Officer_____
Author

MEETING DATE: October 5th, 2026

PREPARED BY: Peter McGee, Economic Development Officer & Lyla Thygesen Summer Event Assistant

SUBJECT: **Summer Event Results**

BACKGROUND

Administration conducted visitor and participant surveys throughout the 2026 summer event season to evaluate visitor origin, economic impact, facility satisfaction, accommodation usage, and community engagement associated with Town-supported events. Provincial and national sporting events attracted visitors from communities across Alberta, as well as participants from Ontario, Saskatchewan, Quebec, and British Columbia. These events contributed to increased awareness of Blackfalds while generating impacts for local accommodations, businesses, and recreation facilities.

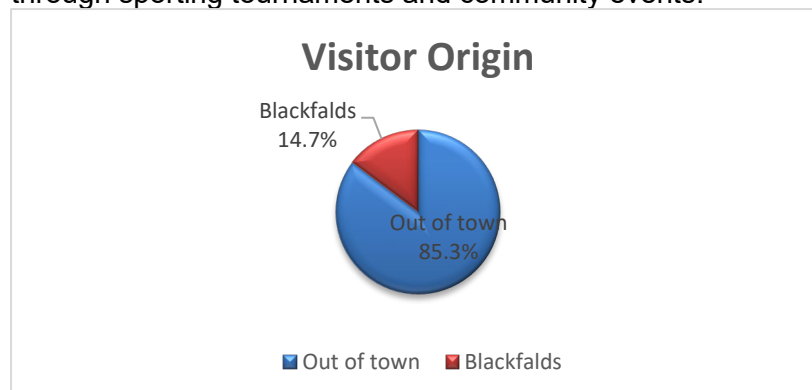
Survey data was collected during the following events: Kinsmen Slo-Pitch and Cornhole Tournament, Blackfalds Days, U13 Softball Provincials, U15 Softball Provincials, U17/U19 Softball Provincials, Women's Intermediate A, B & C Championships, and Women's Fast Pitch Nationals.

A total of approximately 512 survey responses were collected throughout the season, providing insight into visitor demographics, spending patterns, accommodation use, and visitor satisfaction. This insight will be used to help identify the most impactful events and gauge our level of support where Blackfalds event space excels, and areas of improvement.

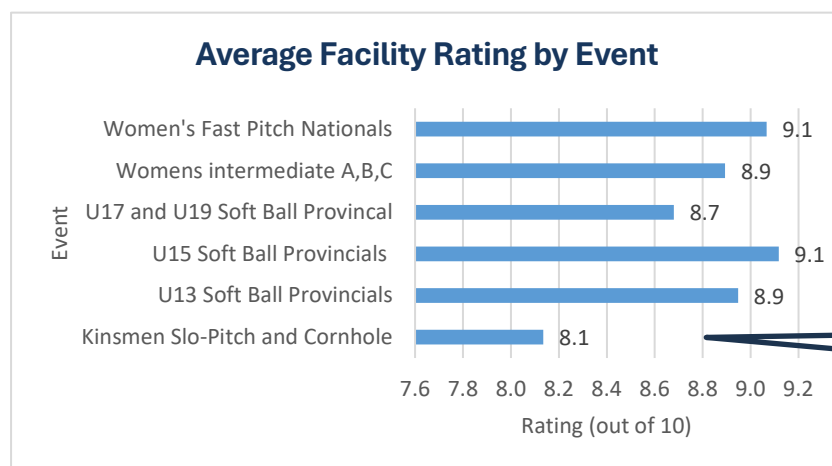
Results

Survey results demonstrate that Town events continue to provide significant community, tourism, and economic benefits. Here are some of the important stats.

Approximately 85% of respondents indicated they were visiting Blackfalds from outside the community, demonstrating the Town's ability to attract regional, provincial, and national visitors through sporting tournaments and community events.



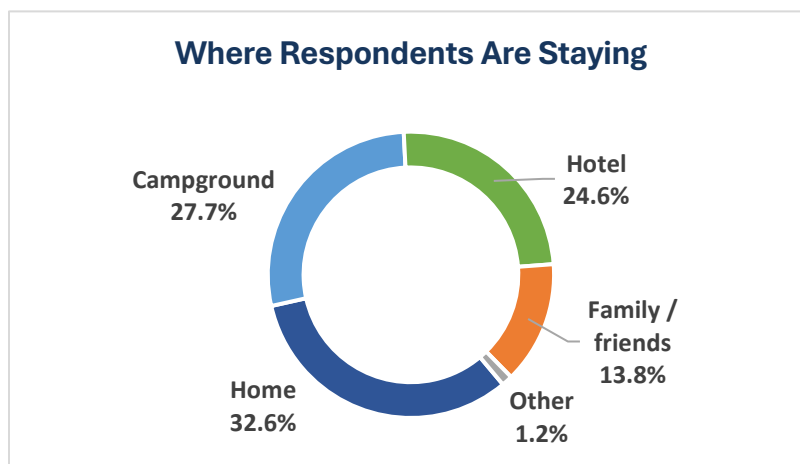
Facility satisfaction ratings were consistently high across all surveyed events, ranging from 8.1 to 9.1 out of 10. The highest rating was received during the U15 Softball Provincials with an average score of 9.12/10. With an overall average score of 8.8 out of 10.



Average Overall Score – 8.8/10

Event visitors generated economic activity throughout the community:

- Hotels and motels were utilized by visitors attending all major tournaments.
- The Blackfalds Campground was a significant accommodation provider, particularly during softball tournaments.



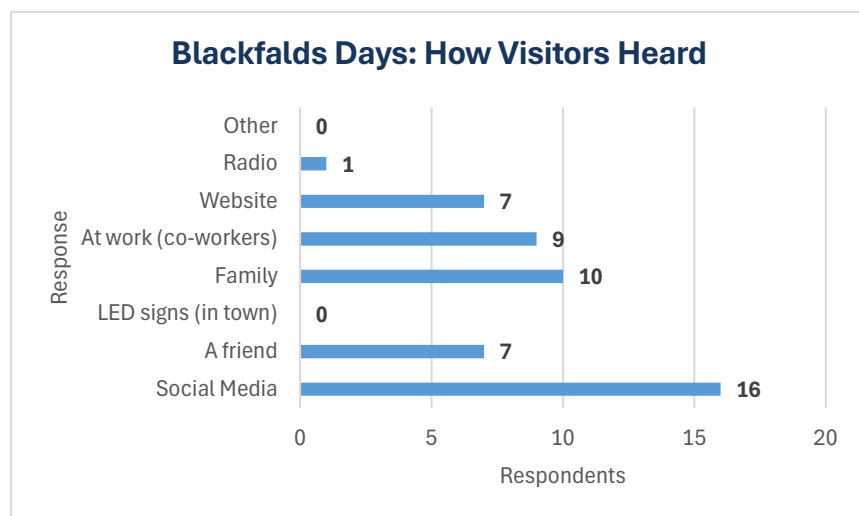
Visitors reported spending at convenience stores, grocery stores, restaurants, fast-food establishments, and retail businesses. Women's Fast Pitch Nationals participants reported some of the highest anticipated expenditures, with 63% expecting to spend more than \$700 during their stay.

Event	Total Responses High-Spend Visitors*	
U15 Softball Provincials	35	18 (51%)
U17/U19 Provincials	25	16 (64%)
Women's Intermediate A,B,C	66	44 (67%)
Women's Fast Pitch Nationals	30	25 (83%)

Community Events

Community events also demonstrated strong success. During Blackfalds Days, 100% of surveyed attendees indicated they would recommend the event to family and friends.

Social media was identified as the primary promotional source, followed by family and workplace referrals.



Respondents identified the Abbey Centre, trails, local community events, and community atmosphere as some of their favourite aspects of Blackfalds.

RECOMMENDATIONS

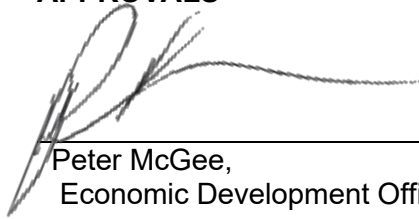
That the Economic Development & Tourism Advisory Committee consider the following motions:

1. That the Economic Development & Tourism Advisory Committee receives the Summer Event Results report for Information.
2. That the Economic Development & Tourism Advisory Committee recommends Blackfalds Council to continue to support national and provincial level sport tourism at _____ (the existing level, an increase, or decrease)
3. That the Economic Development & Tourism Advisory Committee recommends that Council investigate opportunities to increase accommodation in Blackfalds, including hotels, short-term rental options and upgrades to the Blackfalds Campground.

ATTACHMENTS

- *Blackfalds 2026 Summer Events Appendix*

APPROVALS



Peter McGee,
Economic Development Officer

Blackfalds 2026 Summer Events Appendix

Key Performance Indicators and Event Ratings

Metric	Result
Average Out-of-Town Attendance	85.3%
Average Facility Rating	8.8 / 10
Average Business Engagement	66.3%

Event	Rating
Kinsmen Slo-Pitch & Cornhole	8.1
U13 Softball Provincials	8.9
U15 Softball Provincials	9.1
U17/U19 Softball Provincials	8.7
Women A/B/C	8.9
Women's Fast Pitch Nationals	9.1

Visitor Profile

Lodging Category	Share
Home	32.6%
Campground	27.7%
Hotel	24.6%
Family/Friends	13.8%
Other	1.2%

Blackfalds Days

Days Attending	Respondents
One	32
Two	15
All Three	3

Group Size	Respondents
Solo	3
2-4	26
5-10	18
10+	3

Visitor Spending & Event Impact

Event	Spending Pattern
U15 Provincials	\$100+ most common
U17/U19 Provincials	\$100-\$400 most common
Women A/B/C	\$100-\$300 most common
Women's Fast Pitch Nationals	Strong \$700+ spending

Key Findings

85.3% of respondents were from outside Blackfalds. Facilities received an average rating of 8.8/10. Business engagement averaged 66.3%.

Traveller Quiz

Travel is an intensely personal experience for everyone. Our Traveller Quiz gets to the heart of what makes a traveller tick with thoughtful questions. At the end of the quiz, you'll see your travel profile along with experiences, motivators, and destinations paired to your preferences.



Destination Quiz

Use our Destination Quiz to identify the traveller segments most likely to be drawn to your destination or tourism business's current offerings. Confidently plan your product or marketing mix by understanding which experiences, accommodations, and motivators resonate with your audience. Explore opportunities to attract new traveller segments with information about which segments align with Destination Canada's national travel strategy.



The Destination Quiz helps you understand which of Destination Canada's traveller segments would best align with your municipality's specific tourism experiences and offerings.

By answering questions about the types of activities, attractions, and overall atmosphere your municipality provides, the quiz will suggest segments that are most likely to be interested in visiting.

For your economic development committee, this means you can:

- Identify Best-Fit Segments:** Quickly discover which traveller segments are naturally inclined towards what your municipality has to offer, saving time and resources.
- Validate Existing Strategies:** Confirm if your current marketing and development efforts are targeting the most receptive audiences.
- Discover Untapped Potential:** Uncover segments you might not have considered but who have a strong affinity for your municipality's unique selling points.

After taking the quiz, your committee could engage in discussions about refining your tourism product development, optimizing your marketing spend by focusing on the most relevant segments, and ensuring your visitor services cater to the specific needs and desires of these identified travellers.

(Source: <https://www.tourismdatacollective.ca/aurora-ai>)

1. What is the Canadian Tourism Data Collective?

The Canadian Tourism Data Collective is a centralized, accessible, and secure national platform that will serve as a two-way street for accessing and sharing data within the tourism ecosystem, unifying data silos across tourism demand and supply intelligence.

2. Who is working on the Data Collective?

The Data Collective is a collaboration between founding partners Destination Canada (DC), Statistics Canada (STC) and the Department of Innovation, Science and Economic Development (ISED). The platform is powered by Google.

3. Why was the Data Collective developed?

During the pandemic, a critical data gap was highlighted – the absence of a trusted central source of collective tourism intelligence to influence decision making during downturns, accelerate recovery, and facilitate industry resilience. The Data Collective was created as a response to that gap.

The Data Collective will make finding and sharing tourism intelligence easier and more accessible, providing timely data, actionable insights, tools and resources to empower tourism leaders and stakeholders to confidently make more informed and impactful decisions.

The Data Collective was also developed to serve as a central and trusted source of Canadian tourism data, eliminating the need for industry stakeholders to spend valuable time consulting multiple data sources.

(Source: <https://www.tourismdatacollective.ca/about>)