

BESTWR LEADERSHIP TEAM WEEKLY REPORT

April 24, 2020



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OVERARCHING THEMES & COMMONALITIES

KEY THEMES & COMMONALITIES:

- A focus on best practices for **transitioning to working from home and returning to work safely**.
- **Mental health** and **increased domestic violence** is a top topic for discussion with several webinars being held and thought leadership pieces being published.
- **Identifying barriers to employment or resources** and solutions to those barriers. Education of potential employees around personal protection and prevention.
- **Speed of program delivery** is still an issue with the business community.
- **A plan to close the gap in the supply chain** by identifying those gaps and ensuring those gaps are being closed as well as tracking between all BESTWR committees to see what products/supply chain inputs are in shortage.
- **Ensure BESTWR committees are all messaging the same information to our clients and contacts.**



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COMMITTEE ACTION ITEMS & NEXT STEPS

INDUSTRY COMMITTEE

ACTION ITEMS & NEXT STEPS:

- **Current business funding gaps:** Identify businesses that don't meet the criteria for loan programs and work with sub-committees to help them navigate the system.
- **Industry snapshots:** The committee will pull together sector snapshots containing 2-4 bullet points on the current concerns of business in key sectors and will provide this one-pager to the Leadership Team.
 - Waterloo EDC will take the lead on this project and then check with the committee members to check if any gaps remain. To be completed early next week.
- **Identify shovel ready infrastructure projects** as a follow-up to government infrastructure funding announcement.
 - Brian Bennett and James Goodram will take the lead on infrastructure programs to support shovel-ready projects so that they are ready to hit the ground when the federal government disperse supporting funds.
- **Supply Chain Gaps:** A key focus of the Industry Committee will be identifying gaps and ensuring those gaps are being closed.
 - Tracking between all BESTWR committees to see what products/supply chain inputs are in shortage and consult with Invest in Canada on their strategies in this area.

WORKFORCE COMMITTEE

ACTION ITEMS & NEXT STEPS:

- **Promote local Job Board Aggregate:** findyourjob.ca
 - Continue to review content to add job seeker resources.
 - Promote findyourjob.ca and include #BESTWR.
 - Social media channels and members will also reach out to a variety of contacts at the municipal and regional levels, the Chambers of Commerce, networking groups, employment services, local magazines, newspapers and radio stations.
- **Compile and share labour market trend information.**
 - Establish a benchmark that can be used in recovery.
 - Identify gaps and opportunities in labour needs through data.
 - Study of skills required in job seekers commonly requested will be compiled and provided to the Workforce Committee on a monthly basis.
- **Connect job seekers and employers.**
 - Determine employer need through contacting employer groups.
 - Explore virtual opportunities:
 - Virtual interview platforms.
 - Job fair platforms for sector specific fairs.



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COMMITTEE ACTION ITEMS & NEXT STEPS

GR & ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

ACTION ITEMS & NEXT STEPS:

- **The Government Relations & Advocacy Committee will share insight and information** from its sources with the other BESTWR committees and sub-committees
- **A rolling list of key priorities** will be kept up-to-date by this committee with input from the Leadership Team.
- **The GR & Advocacy Committee will stand ready to support the other BESTWR committees** in preparing or advising on advocacy materials.

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

ACTION ITEMS & NEXT STEPS:

- **The Government Relations & Advocacy Committee and the Communications Committee will support the Leadership Team** in its creation of a new advocacy letter to the Prime Minister and Premier. The Communications Committee will continue to be on call to assist with any copywriting or content creation for the BESTWR Leadership and Committee Leaders.
- **The Communications Committee will continue to promote and support #BESTWR hashtag content from all Committee/Sub-committee members**, including:
 - Continual updating of committee team members' COVID-19 Resources pages.
 - Support Workforce Committee in sharing/promoting resources for employers and job-seekers.
 - Support Tourism & Culture Sub-Committee resources for local businesses.
- **The Communications Committee will support and share information on upcoming webinars/town halls/events for local businesses.**
 - Region of Waterloo upcoming webinar with public health on April 28th
 - Waterloo EDC "Top 5 Business Questions" regarding COVID-19 resources taped webinars.
 - GKWCC Town Halls & Webinars.



SUB-COMMITTEE ACTION ITEMS & NEXT STEPS

TECHNOLOGY SUB-COMMITTEE

ACTION ITEMS & NEXT STEPS:

- **Ensure we are all messaging the same information to our customers re: government updates.**
 - All key customer messaging regarding government updates shared will be forwarded to all others in the group to use at their discretion.
- **Collect questions, identify gaps, etc., re: government funding to share with the government.**
- **Share any responses amongst committee to maintain the same messaging across all customers.**
 - Unanswered questions, identified gaps, etc., will be shared with the Tech Sub-Committee and the Government Relations & Advocacy Committee.
- **Pull together the local investment community for a meeting to make sure we are all on the same page.**
 - Lisa will ask Evan Clark to pull together those most closely connected to investment in the community for a meeting and notes from that meeting will be shared with the group.

MANUFACTURING & AGRICULTURE SUB-COMMITTEE

ACTION ITEMS & NEXT STEPS:

- Continue to **triage companies** through BESTWR and track concerns.
 - Given new changes to programs, revisit advocacy tracking and identify what are still concerns and provide those to advocacy committee for review/consideration.
- **Create an updated curated list of companies** that are actively looking for funding support for those looking to manufacture items with shortages in the fight against COVID-19.
 - Cities and Townships to pull together their own lists to look at the bigger named companies that are looking to support the cause.
 - Cambridge has a bit of a list that has companies looking to help.
 - Action item is having conversations with those companies and seeing how we can help.
- Begin to track/identify **supply chain gaps.**
 - How did this disrupt Auto? Packaging?
 - Do we need to look towards the West of Canada to see what we can bring over?
 - What do we need to bring in to bolster supplies?
 - This is a long-term list that we'll start tracking now.
 - Should also look at the companies that are temporarily supplying the needs and those that will be looking to permanently retro-fit for sustainability going forward.



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SUB-COMMITTEE ACTION ITEMS & NEXT STEPS

TOURISM & CULTURE SUB-COMMITTEE

ACTION ITEMS & NEXT STEPS:

- **Financial Aid, Not Debt Deferral**
 - Government addresses shortcoming in support offered and reconsiders how liquidity for businesses can be supported through banks and BDC. More granting and forgivable loans that are accessible for medium size business. Provincial legislation to enable longer term temporary layoffs.
 - Letter sent to MPs and MPPs outlining concern and requesting review of delivery plan through BDC.
- **Getting people back to work safely and building vibrant communities in the new reality**
 - Clear steps outlined for phased reopening plans for attractions, restaurants, bars, theatres and festival/events. Detailed information on capacity restrictions, relaxed regulations on patio and outdoor food services.
 - Letter sent. Ongoing discussion with Tourism Industry Assoc. of Ontario (TIAO) and Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC) to express concerns and request their support. Also communicating with the Restaurant Assoc. of Canada and the Ontario Restaurant, Hotel & Motel Association (ORHMA) to if capacities or guidelines are being developed for food service facilities once travel restrictions are relaxed.
- **Recovery**
 - Municipal partners commit to directing their 50% of the Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) toward the regionalized marketing efforts to rebuild tourism in Waterloo Region – in collaboration with Explore Waterloo Region.
 - Gain support from the CAOs across Waterloo Region for this initiative, and get the support of Mayors and Councils.

DEVELOPMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

ACTION ITEMS & NEXT STEPS:

- **Committee is the funnel for projects that are impacted by the Provincial Construction Order.**
 - Re-instatement of Project.
 - If warranted, refer to the Region of Waterloo for adjudication.

SMALL BUSINESS & NFP SUB-COMMITTEE

ACTION ITEMS & NEXT STEPS:

- **Weekly advocacy to speed up government funding and actions.**
 - Small business - immediate access to government funding and rent abatement for landlords and tenants.
- **Professional advice for small business and sole proprietors.**
 - Onboard professionals. Sharable booking system – Chris, Art, Linda, Tracy to determine feasibility/partners.
- **Non-profits, charities, small business grants.**
 - United Way grants. Messaging to urge charities, non-profit, to apply for local United Way funds.



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