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MEDIA RELEASE

STRATFORD'S ECONOMIC RESPONSE AND RECOVERY TASK FORCE MEETS ON ECONOMIC GROWTH AND JOB CREATION PLAN

TASK FORCE DEVELOPING POST-PANDEMIC PLAN TO SUPPORT PEOPLE AND BUSINESSES

Stratford, ON – MAY 8, 2020... **This week investStratford convened the second meeting of the Stratford Economic Response and Recovery Task Force (SERRT), focused on impact assessment and development of an action plan to stimulate economic growth and job creation in the weeks and months ahead.** In the early days, as public health remained a top priority, Task Force activities centred around information sharing & gathering. Today, the Task Force continues to plan, prepare and coordinate a large group of stakeholders, associations and business-facing organizations, forming working groups which will support best practices in the COVID operating environment, assess and develop plans for events & activities to prepare ourselves for a safe and successful summer and fall season, and identify and highlight opportunities to help our workforce and charitable sector.

To date, task force partner members have created and launched projects and initiatives amounting to more than \$50,000 Stratford and Provincial dollars into the community. Task force partners have launched programs including a #LoveStratford video and social campaign, the Mental Wellness for Business Owners program giving free mental health counselling to business owners and the new "Digital Accelerator" a grant program to help businesses pivot and transition to digital revenue streams via the Stratford Perth Centre for Business. www.stratfordperthbusiness.ca

Outreach is underway and members of the Task Force currently include: investStratford, Lori DeGraw, Stratford Tourism Alliance, Ryan Erb, United Way Perth Huron, John Kastner, Stratford Perth Museum, Joelle Lewis, United Way Perth Huron, Eddie Matthews, Stratford & District Chamber of Commerce, Jeff Orr, investStratford Board, Orr Insurance, Rob Russell, Stratford City Centre BIA, The Scottish Shop, Rebecca Scott, Stratford City Centre BIA, Joan Thomson, City of Stratford and members of the investStratford team. More volunteers and leadership are always appreciated. Please reach out to the committee if you'd like to volunteer by contacting info@investstratford.com.

City of Stratford Mayor Dan Mathieson stated: "In a time of crisis, especially during the pandemic, we need to all work together in an effort to build solutions. As a community, we need to see beyond the problems and work towards finding solutions. I encourage anyone who has an idea or feels like they can positively contribute to step forward and join one of the sector-specific committees to offer their ideas, time and talent. Collectively, we will make Stratford stronger and better positioned to help our families, friends, community and businesses now and in the future."

Joani Gerber, CEO, investStratford stated "We have a long road ahead of us, and we have started on a path for recovery. I am confident the groups at the table and those willing to roll up their sleeves to help will make a huge impact"

Further information can be found on a dedicated Economic Response and Recovery Task Force page at investStratford.com website along with meeting minutes and a feedback form for anyone interested in providing suggestions.

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