



## Wood Buffalo Development Advisory Committee Special Meeting

Conducted Electronically via MS Teams

Wednesday, July 22, 2020  
9:00 AM

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### Agenda

#### Public Participation for July 22, 2020 Wood Buffalo Development Advisory Committee Special Meeting

Wood Buffalo Development Advisory Committee (Committee) will be conducting the July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020 Special Meeting through electronic communications in accordance with the Meeting Procedures (COVID-19 Suppression) Regulation, Order in Council 99/2020.

- Anyone wishing to participate in the meeting is encouraged to do so by registering to speak as a delegate by way of teleconference or by submitting their delegation comments by email.
- To participate by teleconference:
  - Anyone wishing to speak by teleconference to an item on the July 22, 2020 Wood Buffalo Development Advisory Committee Special Meeting Agenda must pre-register by 12 noon, July 21, 2020.
  - To register to speak via teleconference, please email [boardsandcommittees@rmwb.ca](mailto:boardsandcommittees@rmwb.ca) or call 780-743-7001 with your name, the phone number that you will be dialing in from and an email address that you can be reached at prior to and during the meeting.
  - You must provide the name of the agenda item that you wish to speak to.
  - All registrants will be emailed the details on how to participate prior to the start of the meeting.
  - Each registrant will be given a maximum of **5 minutes** to address the Committee.
- To make written submissions as a delegation before or during the live meeting:
  - Please email [boardsandcommittees@rmwb.ca](mailto:boardsandcommittees@rmwb.ca) You must include your name for the record.
  - You must provide the name of the agenda item that you wish to speak to in the subject line.
  - Please note that email comments for an agenda item must be received prior to the start of that item during the meeting. *Emails that are received after the agenda item has been introduced or are not relevant to an agenda item, will not become part of the record of this meeting.*
  - All written submissions are **public** and will be shared with the Committee verbally on the record during the course of the meeting.
  - Each submission will be shared verbally with the Committee for a maximum of **5 minutes**.

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The personal information on this form is collected under the authority of Section 33 (a) & (c) of the Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. The personal information will be used as contact information. If you have any questions about the collection or use of this information contact the Chief Legislative Officer, Legislative Services, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor Jubilee Building, 9909 Franklin Ave. T9H 2K4, or call (780) 743-7001.

**1. Call to Order**

**2. New and Unfinished Business**

2.1. Committee Membership Update

2.2. Review of Action Log

2.3. Matthew Hough, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer - COVID-19 and 2020 Flood Update

2.4. Project Updates

- Kevin Weidlich, Chief Executive Officer, Economic Development - Business Recovery Task Force Report
- Downtown Revitalization Incentives Program
- Downtown Revitalization Tax Incentive Program
- Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan
- Land Use Bylaw

2.5. Review Committee Priorities

2.6. Discussion – Community Survey Status

2.7. Meeting Schedule

**Adjournment**

# BUSINESS RECOVERY TASK FORCE

Final Report | June 19, 2020

It is an extraordinary time for Fort McMurray and the Wood Buffalo region. A global pandemic, the collapse of oil prices and the 2020 flood events have impacted the long-term sustainability of our region's business community. In response, Wood Buffalo Economic Development established a Business Recovery Task Force with 24 recommendations to support businesses during the immediate, short-term and long-term phases of business recovery in our region.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

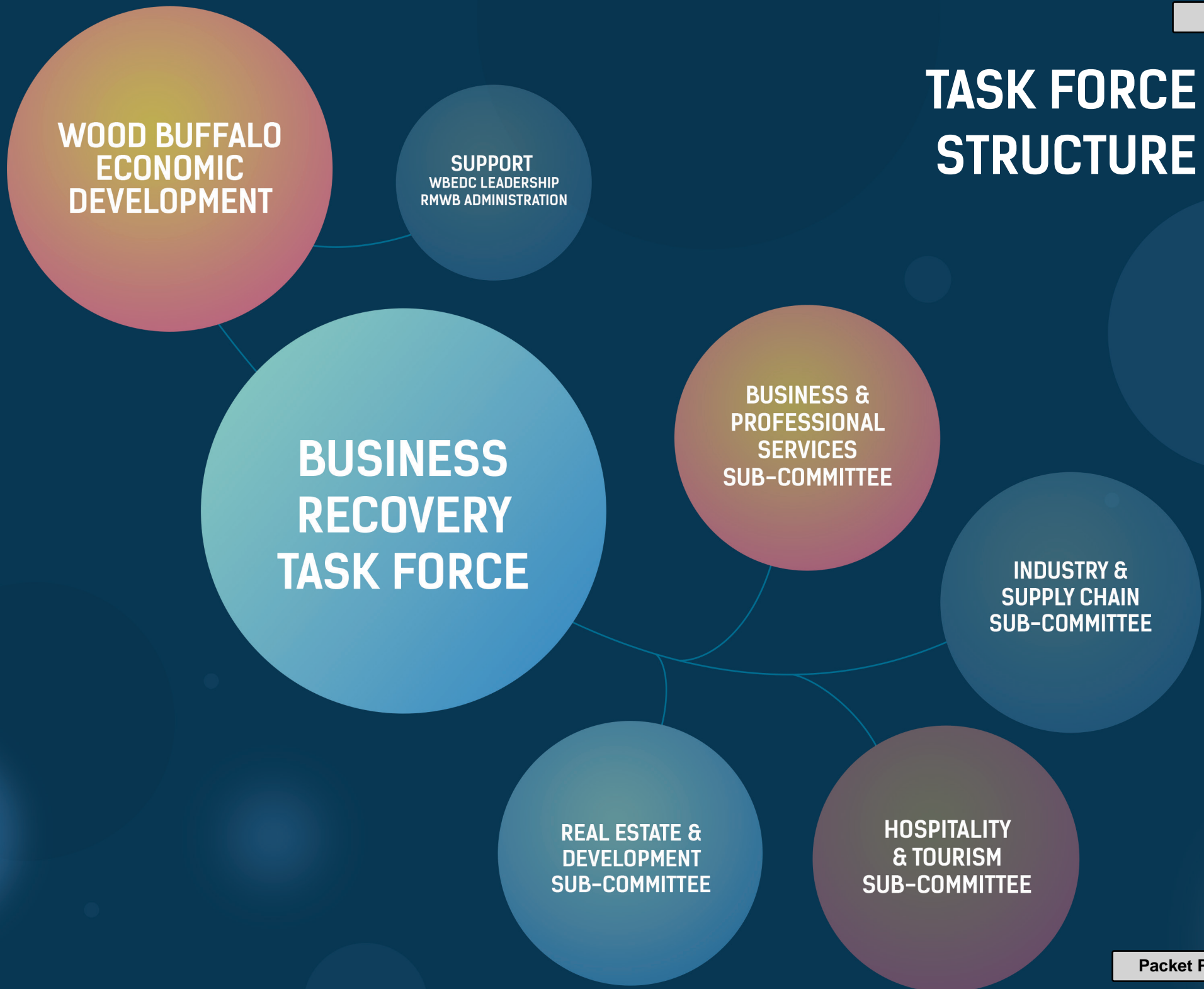
Fort McMurray and the Wood Buffalo region are currently in an extraordinary time. A global pandemic, the collapse of oil prices and the 2020 flood events have impacted the long-term sustainability of our region's business community. As the region's economic development agency, the Wood Buffalo Economic Development Corporation (WBEDC) established a Business Recovery Task Force (the "Task Force") to provide recommendations on programs and supports that could be undertaken by the business community during and post-emergency (see Appendix 1).

The Task Force was supported by the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB) Council during the March 24, 2020 Council Meeting. Over an eight-week period, the Task Force engaged various sectors by hosting virtual focus group sessions and one-on-one engagements with businesses. This led to the development of 24 recommendations to support businesses during the immediate, short-term and long-term phases of business recovery in our region.

## OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Task Force is to identify and recommend programs and supports to assist businesses and economic recovery in our region.

# TASK FORCE STRUCTURE



# TASK FORCE MEMBERS

The Task Force was comprised of local leaders representing a cross-section of the region's business community.

## KEVIN WEIDLICH, CHAIR

President & CEO  
Wood Buffalo Economic  
Development Corporation

## ALETHEA AUSTIN

Co-Founder & CEO  
Achieve Wellness

## CHRIS SEGGEWISS

Regional Manager  
Royal Bank of Canada

## JANE STROUD

RMWB Councillor

## KARIM ZARIFFA

Executive Director  
Oil Sands Community Alliance (OSCA)

## KEITH PLOWMAN

President  
Fort McMurray Construction Association

## KIM RIZZI

General Manager  
Wood Buffalo 2022 Arctic  
Winter Games

## KRISTI HINES

Founder & Director  
Hines Health Services

## MICHELLE TONER

Executive Director  
Northeastern Alberta Aboriginal  
Business Association (NAABA)

## MIKE LAMBERT

Owner  
East Village Pub

## NICK SANDERS

Interim Executive Director  
Fort McMurray Chamber of  
Commerce

## PAUL JONES

President  
Fort McMurray Hotels Association

## RJ STEENSTRA

President & CEO  
Fort McMurray Airport Authority

## VERNA MURPHY

RMWB Councillor



# SUB-COMMITTEES

To identify needs and barriers of local businesses in Fort McMurray and the Wood Buffalo region, the Task Force established four Sub-Committees to inform recommendations.



## Business & Professional Services

Engage with businesses providing products and services to the region including, but not limited to: entertainment, retail, professional services, grocery and home-based businesses.

### Focus:

- Products
- Services



## Industry & Supply Chain

Engage with oil sands producers and companies whose main activities include the provision of a product or service to supply the oil sands industry within the region.

### Focus:

- Oil Sands Producers
- Oil Sands Supply Chain Businesses



## Real Estate & Development

Engage with businesses that encompass commercial, industrial & residential investment and development activity within the region.

### Focus:

- Real Estate Brokers
- Construction Companies
- Developers
- Property Owners



## Tourism & Hospitality

Engage with businesses that provide excellent customer service while providing an experience where accommodations, food & beverage, tourism, recreation and travel is involved.

### Focus:

- Festivals & Attractions
- Hotels & Lodgings
- Restaurants
- Transportation

# SUMMARY OF ENGAGEMENT

Engagement with the business community involved 14 targeted virtual focus group sessions, three public virtual focus group sessions and 24 one-on-one engagements. In total, 171 people participated in the engagement sessions.

## BUSINESS & PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Virtual Focus Group (6)

**21**

participants

## INDUSTRY & SUPPLY CHAIN

Virtual Focus Group (2)

**27**

participants

## REAL ESTATE & DEVELOPMENT

Virtual Focus Group (4) / One-on-One

**21 / 24**

participants

## TOURISM & HOSPITALITY

Virtual Focus Group (5)

**78**

participants

**TOTAL**

**171**

participants

## Themes emerged through the engagement process:

- Strengthening the Local Business Community
- Maintaining a Culture of Safety
- A Business-Friendly Environment
- A Stronger Voice
- Long-Term Competitiveness

# OUTCOMES

The Task Force met for eight consecutive weeks beginning April 8, 2020; resulting in 24 recommendations. Recommendations were developed by the Task Force members and the information gathered from the business community through the engagement of the Sub-Committees. The recommendations have been, or will be, actioned by various organizations whose mandate includes providing support to business.

The Task Force concluded business recovery will occur in three phases; the immediate, short-term and long-term:

## IMMEDIATE RESPONSE PHASE

Recommendation  
executed or resolved.

### Immediate

(Provincial/local emergency orders still in effect)

## RECOVERY PHASE

Recommendation currently in-progress  
and being further developed.

### Short-Term

(Provincial/local emergency orders lifted)

## RESILIENCY PHASE

Recommendation is a concept to be developed.

### Long-Term

(New normal)

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## IMMEDIATE RESPONSE PHASE (EXECUTED OR RESOLVED)

- 1 WBCentral.biz Portal: In partnership with Community Futures Wood Buffalo, Fort McMurray Chamber of Commerce, Fort McMurray Construction Association, NAABA and WBEDC, a centralized portal was created for businesses to access information and programs available for both COVID-19 and the 2020 flood events.
- 2 A “Return to Work Safely” campaign was delivered by WBEDC to address the fear of returning to work as the economy re-opens.
- 3 On behalf of the Task Force, WBEDC worked closely with RMWB administration to confirm its 2020 capital program was moving forward without delay or cancellations due to the pandemic, assuming work can be undertaken safely, and that administration brought forward capital projects that could be deemed ‘shovel-ready’ and started in 2020.
- 4 On behalf of the Task Force, WBEDC sent a letter to the Government of Alberta supporting the RMWB’s request that funding be allocated from the recently announced Government of Alberta’s \$1.9B capital infrastructure program for shovel-ready projects.
- 5 The Task Force considered making a request to amend the 2020 RMWB Tax Rate Bylaw to forgive regional commercial property taxes for an eight-month duration. However, the RMWB Council subsequently reduced regional property taxes by \$168 million.

- 6 The Task Force recommends the Fort McMurray Chamber of Commerce collaborate with community partners to lobby the Government of Canada for an amendment to Canada's Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance Program.
- 7 The Task Force will provide RMWB administration, the Wood Buffalo Development Advisory Committee, the Downtown Revitalization Advisory Committee and the Wood Buffalo Waterfront Advisory Committee with a summary of key findings derived from engagement.
- 8 The Task Force will provide the Tourism & Hospitality industry with key findings and a detailed review of all action items raised from engagement.
- 9 On behalf of the Task Force, WBEDC will register as a delegate at the June 23, 2020 Council meeting and write a letter in support of expanding the boundary of the RMWB's Downtown Revitalization Incentive Program.
- 10 The Task Force recommends the Fort McMurray Chamber of Commerce collaborate with community partners to lobby the Government of Canada and the Government of Alberta for personal bankruptcy protection for small business owners.
- 11 The Task Force recommends WBEDC partner with Community Futures Wood Buffalo to seek funding from all levels of government and develop a program that will provide eligible businesses with one-on-one coaching support and/or access to professional business services.
- 12 The Task Force recommends community partners host a forum or series of events to help small and medium-sized businesses plan and prepare for the future.
- 13 The Task Force recommends WBEDC collaborate with community partners to seek funding from all levels of government to develop a grant program that will provide financial assistance to small businesses impacted by COVID-19 or the 2020 flood events.
- 14 The Task Force recommends the Fort McMurray Chamber of Commerce seek funding from all levels of government to develop a program that incentivizes customers to shop local.

- 15 The Task Force recommends membership-based organizations such as the Fort McMurray Chamber of Commerce, NAABA and Fort McMurray Construction Association seek funding from all levels of government to build capacity, ensuring their respective organizations can support their memberships during business recovery.
- 16 The Task Force recommends WBEDC collaborate with community partners to deliver a consumer market confidence campaign in 2020.
- 17 The Task Force supports WBEDC's priority to undertake a Business Inventory & Gap Analysis including a Commercial Retail Analysis in early 2021.

## RESILIENCY PHASE (TO BE DEVELOPED)

- 18 The Task Force recommends community partners collaborate to identify a stimulus project for Fort McMurray and the Wood Buffalo region and lobby all levels of government for support.
- 19 The Task Force recommends WBEDC partner with Tourism & Hospitality stakeholders to create a framework that fosters collaboration within the industry.
- 20 The Task Force recommends WBEDC promote the region's safety culture by attracting conferences that focus on safety.
- 21 The Task Force recommends WBEDC collaborate with community partners to provide educational opportunities on competitiveness.
- 22 The Task Force recommends community partners explore hosting an oil sands innovation and climate summit in Fort McMurray in 2021.
- 23 The Task Force recommends community partners explore opportunities to update the Oil Sands Discovery Centre to ensure it is relevant to reflect the current and future environment.
- 24 The Task Force recommends OSCA lead the development of a Travelling Exhibit which educates Canada on innovation in the oil sands.

# NEXT STEPS

This Task Force Report will inform the region's Business & Economic Recovery Plan as it reflects what was heard from the local business community. Recommendations are intended to be actioned by business support organizations in the region.

# APPENDIX



# **BUSINESS RECOVERY TASK FORCE RESPONSE TO COVID 19 & 2020 FLOOD EVENTS TERMS OF REFERENCE**

# BACKGROUND

The Wood Buffalo Economic Development Corporation (WBEDC) was established in 2018 through a unanimous resolution passed by the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo Council to increase the growth, innovation, prosperity and resilience of the local economy. WBEDC is a wholly-owned entity of the RMWB, governed by an independent Board of Directors and managed by an entrepreneurial team.

RMWB is currently in an unprecedented time. It is imperative that we consider the significant economic implications COVID-19, the collapse of oil prices and the 2020 flood events will have on the well-being of our business community. In our role as the region's economic development agency, we have the expertise, connections and fluidity to be able to act quickly and spearhead

the development and implementation of a Business & Economic Recovery Plan. As the region moves from emergency reaction to long-term recovery, WBEDC's role will be instrumental in working collaboratively with other business support organizations to execute programs and services that support the recovery of our economy.

On March 24, 2020 Kevin Weidlich, President & CEO of WBEDC, recommended to RMWB Council that they support the development of a Business Recovery Task Force (the "Task Force"). RMWB Council resolved that WBEDC would create a Task Force of committee members that would focus on developing programming and specific business supports that can be executed immediately following the lifting of the last of any provincial or local emergency orders.

On April 26, 2020, the Athabasca River break up occurred resulting in flooding and subsequent mandatory evacuation of Draper, Waterways, Taiga Nova Industrial Park and the Lower Townsite of Fort McMurray. Over 1,200 structures in these areas were impacted. All businesses located in these areas were impacted, in addition to the implications of COVID-19.

# PURPOSE

The purpose of the Task Force is to provide insights and information to WBEDC for the development and execution of a Business & Economic Recovery Plan. The Task Force will make recommendations for programming and specific business supports that can be executed immediately during the public health emergency related to COVID-19 and the local state of emergency related to the 2020 flood events and following the lifting of the last of any provincial or local emergency orders.

# DECISION MAKING/AUTHORITY

The Task Force members will be expected to make collective decisions on recommendations through a consensus model. Consensus means a generally accepted opinion. Most people will agree on a decision.

Recommendations shall include which business support organization should execute the program and support.

WBEDC is directed by their board of directors.

# ROLES & RESPONSIBILITY

## ROLE OF WBEDC:

- Identify, invite and convene the Task Force members;
- Chair the Task Force;
- Develop a Business & Economic Recovery Plan that will include ongoing recommendations on programming and supports that could be executed by business support organizations and the business community;
- Support the needs of the Task Force members;
- Work with RMWB administration to provide subject matter expertise as required;
- Manage and oversee Task Force activities;
- Summarize Task Force meetings;
- Provide updates to RMWB Council;
- Make recommendations to other business support organizations to execute business recovery activity;
- Request funding, if necessary, from RMWB Council; and
- Approve and execute recommendations made by the Task Force.

## ROLE OF THE TASK FORCE:

- Provide recommendations to WBEDC for immediate and post emergency action, for their consideration;
- Identify what business support organization are being recommended to lead/execute the programs and supports;
- Seek to obtain input from across all sectors of the business community;
- Participate in Task Force meetings;
- Establish and participate in one of each of the following Sub-Committee's:
  1. Business & Professional Services
  2. Industry & Supply Chain
  3. Real Estate & Development
  4. Hospitality & Tourism
- Seek input from subject matter experts including, but not limited to WBEDC staff, RMWB administration, community members, local business owners and other industry sector advisors.

## ROLE OF SUB-COMMITTEES:

WBEDC identified four sectors that will be most impacted by current economic conditions. Therefore, the Task Force will establish four Sub-Committees that will require input from across all sectors of the business community. The four Sub-Committees are:

1. Business & Professional Services
2. Industry & Supply Chain
3. Real Estate & Development
4. Hospitality & Tourism

Each Sub-Committee shall:

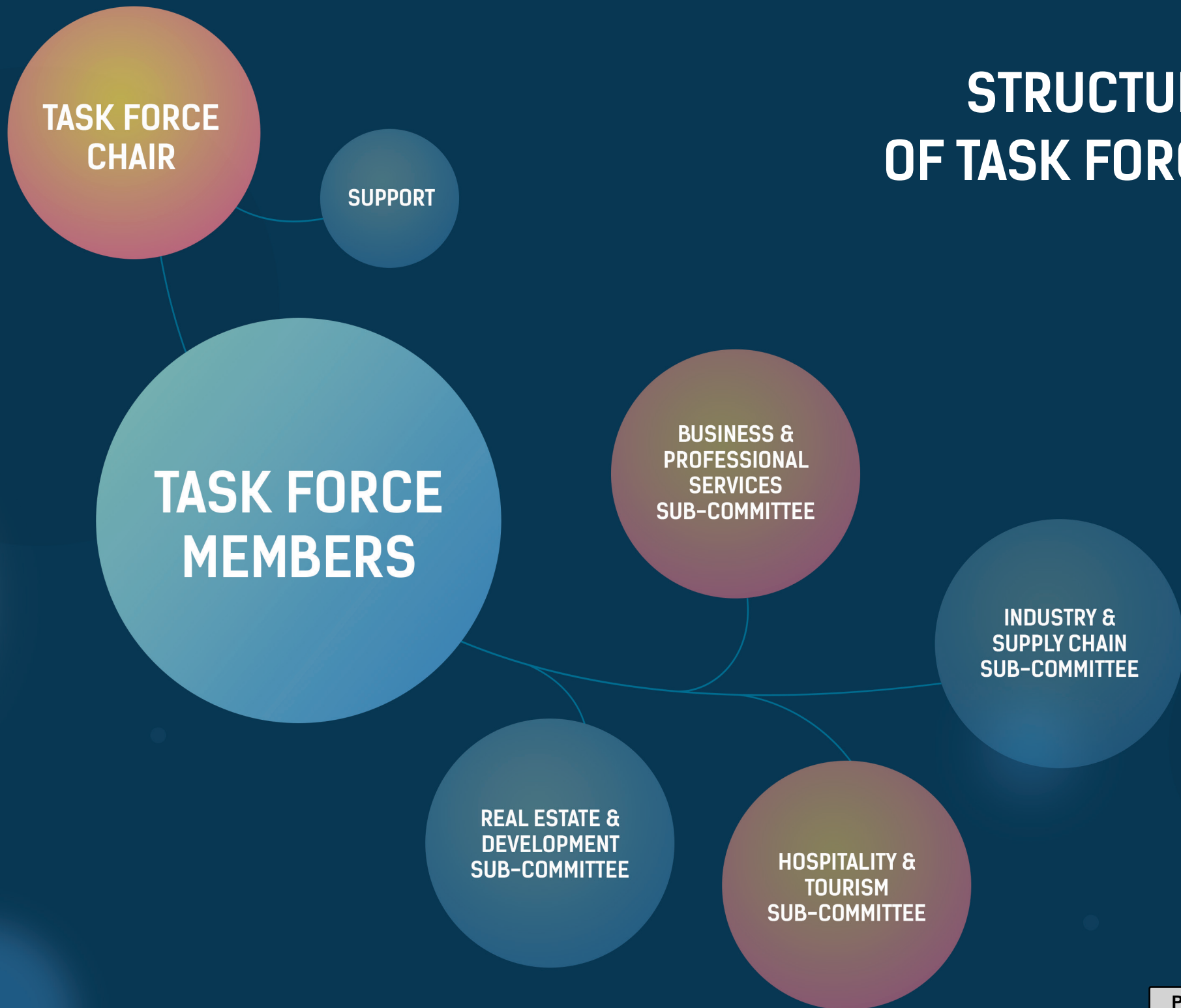
- Establish a process to indentify, invite and convene Sub-Committee members;
- Provide input to support recommendations;
- Participate in engagement/Sub-Committee meetings (ie. Virtual round tables) as directed by the Sub-Committee Co-Chairs; and
- Provide subject matter advice and make recommendations on programming and supports for business recovery.

## FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

The Task Force members will meet on a weekly basis.

Each Sub-Committee will determine their meeting frequency and schedule.

# STRUCTURE OF TASK FORCE



# TASK FORCE MEMBERS

WBEDC selected each Task Force member based on their respective positions and representation of specific industry sectors in the region.

## TASK FORCE CHAIR

### Kevin Weidlich

President & CEO, Wood Buffalo Economic Development Corporation

## BUSINESS & PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

### Alethea Austin

Co-Founder & CEO, Achieve Wellness

### Chris Seggewiss

Regional Manager, Royal Bank of Canada

### Nick Sanders

Interim Executive Director, Fort McMurray Chamber of Commerce

## REAL ESTATE & DEVELOPMENT

### Keith Plowman

President, Fort McMurray Construction Association

## HOSPITALITY & TOURISM

### Jane Stroud

RMWB Council Member

### Kim Rizzi

General Manager, Wood Buffalo 2022 Arctic Winter Games

### Mike Lambert

Owner, East Village Pub

### Paul Jones

President, Fort McMurray Hotels Association

### RJ Steenstra

President & CEO, Fort McMurray Airport Authority

## INDUSTRY & SUPPLY CHAIN

### Karim Zariffa

Executive Director, Oil Sands Community Alliance (OSCA)

### Kristi Hines

Founder & Director, Hines Health Services

### Michelle Toner

Executive Director, Northeastern Alberta Aboriginal Business Association (NAABA)

### Verna Murphy

RMWB Council Member



# TASK FORCE SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Task Force Sub-Committee members shall consist of CEO's, Managers, Business Owners and Executive Directors within Fort McMurray and the Wood Buffalo region and shall be selected by Sub-Committee Co-Chairs; and

Participation in Sub-Committee engagement (i.e. focus groups) shall be expressed through an open call to the business community.

# GOING BACK TOGETHER

[choosewoodbuffalo.ca](http://choosewoodbuffalo.ca)

WOOD BUFFALO  
ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT