

# Action Swift Current Springing into Action

Action Swift Current is attempting to bring into focus the best ways to benefit the city.

The committee recently received a comprehensive research report from Michael Darger from the University of Minnesota. This report, written after a review of the survey results from 200 business surveys, identifies four strategies for the city along with 21 projects that Swift Current should consider acting upon.

"I think it's an excellent document to work from," said Action Swift Current Chairperson Pat Parrott. "In my opinion, most corporations of the world don't plan this well. So I think Swift Current itself as a community has got a competitive advantage over most other communities and municipalities that don't plan this well."

While the report outlines 21 high-level strategy projects, a discussion group was invited to provide their input.

"What we're looking at here tonight is do those make sense, and if not what would make sense."

The group was exploring the validity of the suggestions, prioritizing the list of recommendations and adding new directives to consider. The final step of the evening was to come up with some specific recommendations to act upon.

"We've been talking the talk for the last year, now we're going to walk the walk. The actual physical process is now going to start taking place where we're going to see some projects come out of Action Swift Current and we're going to move Swift Current forward," said Swift Current Chamber of Commerce President Gord Budd.

He said that by narrowing the focus to what they should do right away, and deadline which would be better as long-term projects they will be able to provide an

excellent springboard to moving the community forward.

"There's so much that can be done in Swift Current. It's just a matter of getting out and doing it. We've got the people in this room tonight that will spearhead that movement," Bud said.

Among the general action items in the report were topics ranging from how do you keep youth, to how can the city attract more people to the community.

"It's an absolutely fantastic report. I was really, really impressed when I read it over. Once again, it reinforces the idea that the potential is here, we just have to unleash that potential," Budd said.

Marty Salberg, Director of Business Development for the City of Swift Current, said the discussion generated by the report was encouraging.

"This will be a good addition to help develop a city-wide encompassed plan for the City of Swift Current."

Salberg said one of his personal goals after being hired as Director of Business Development was to be involved in a process where a city-wide economic plan was developed.

He pointed out that a lot of infrastructure requests are currently being presented to the city, so many of the Action Swift Current proposals could end up focusing on the same areas.

"A good hard look will have to be taken at how they could be financed or if it's even in the realm of possibilities."

Salberg felt that the report provides an exciting opportunity to move the community forward, and a series of smaller successes might be the jump start the community needs.

"I think it'll be exciting if we can start with some small successes. One of the comments with Action Swift Current is they'd like to see action, we all do."

Al Chilton, Media and Milestone Chairman for Action Swift Current, pointed out the city should celebrate what has already been accomplished.

"When I read that report I went 'Wow! We have done tremendous things!'"

Swift Current submitted 200 business responses, with the analysts previously never receiving more than 90 completed surveys. Action Swift Current's volunteer survey team of 200 people easily outdistanced the average of 50 that have worked on similar projects.

"What's fantastic when I read the whole thing is that 96 per cent of the

businesses say we have a good community. That they're happy to be here, but that they realize that we are struggling as a community and we need to move forward."

Chilton said local businesses could have been apathetic and chosen to do nothing, but the majority want to do their part to help build the community.

"We just want to help things get going. We want to be part of the answer, part of the solution, not part of the problem."

"It's important to remember that we've come a long way but we still have a lot of work to do. The project is not going to turn around the city tomorrow."

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