

## Report CCR-PCD-13-14

**To:** Chair and Members of the Planning and Community Development Committee

**From:** Bryan Plumstead, Manager of Economic Development and Tourism

**Meeting Date:** March 18, 2014

**Subject:** Economic Development Action Plan – Proposed Study Process and (RED) Program Funding Agreement

**Status:** Recommendation 1 adopted by Committee as amended by requiring that one member be from the agricultural community per Resolution PCD38-14; Recommendation 2 adopted by Committee as presented per Resolution PCD39-14; Adopted by County Council April 1, 2014 per Resolution CC48-14;

### Recommendation(s)

**WHEREAS Grey County's 2014 budget includes funding to contract consulting services to undertake an Economic Development Action Plan;**

**AND WHEREAS it is beneficial to have input from stakeholders representing different economic sectors in the development of the Economic Development Action Plan;**

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Report CCR-PCD-13-14 be received;**

**AND THAT the Terms of Reference for the Economic Development Action Plan Steering Committee, including membership from sector stakeholders, is hereby endorsed as presented in Report CCR-PCD-13-14;**

**AND THAT staff are hereby directed to incorporate the deliverables proposed in Report CCR-PCD-13-14 in the Request for Proposal.**

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**WHEREAS the Ministry of Rural Affairs has approved \$37,500 funding for the Grey County Economic Development Action Plan;**

**AND WHEREAS this funding is contingent on the County and the Ministry entering into the Rural Economic Development (RED) Funding Agreement;**

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Warden and Clerk execute the Rural Economic Development (RED) Agreement.**

### *Background*

The completion of an Economic Development Action Plan (EDAP) is in Grey County's approved 2014 budget, and will provide a roadmap in how to best focus its efforts in economic development within Grey County, what partners to work with and what resources are best suited for Grey County. Diversifying the regional economy and growing assessment and jobs supports and expands quality of life for Grey County residents. Supporting Grey County's new branding, business attraction and retention, working on becoming an intelligent county, expanding tourism and our local food and culinary sectors, supporting harbour and rail corridor activities and manufacturing clusters such as the Bluewater Wood Alliance are all current activities that will be examined within this initiative.

### *Approach*

This is an action-oriented strategic plan with an opportunity to strengthen community partnerships. The intent is to engage and inform stakeholders, including municipalities, business, healthcare, education, and key external agencies to forge a vision of the future in Grey County; set goals and objectives to reach that vision; identify actions that are doable, practical and affordable; understand the county's role as well as those of our partners, implement the actions; and monitor, evaluate and update the plan. Creating tools to better understand our economy, to identify key sectors where best bet prospects for growing jobs, investment and economy occur, and for implementation strategies and keeping track of progress help to keep all partners engaged and building towards a shared strategic direction.

### *Proposed Terms of Reference – Economic Development Action Plan*

#### *Steering Committee*

Appendix 1 includes the proposed Terms of Reference for the Steering Committee to oversee and provide direction to the consultant in the preparation of the Plan. After reviewing several options, staff are recommending a committee with a blend of Grey County Council members and members from the broader business and industry, education, and healthcare sectors from across Grey County. Economic Development is a broad and complex field, and this Strategic Action Plan provides an opportunity to

engage leaders from several sectors that are key drivers in building prosperity in Grey County.

Precedents for this kind of committee include the 20 year plan for forest properties and rewriting the forest management by-law governing tree cutting in the County. The Tourism Advisory Committee also includes a number of tourism industry representatives to sit alongside county councilors in helping to guide strategic direction for tourism.

Staff anticipates that stakeholder workshops will be conducted as part of the EDAP process to seek broad input from groups such as local municipalities, businesses, external agencies, education, healthcare, developers, members of the public and neighbouring counties/municipalities, etc. The consultation strategy will be developed with the consultant and the EDAP Steering Committee once the consultant has been hired.

### *Proposed Project Deliverables*

The Economic Development Action Plan falls under Goal 1 “Expanding the Prosperity Base of Grey County’s Strategic Plan, and thereby should also “Enhance and diversify economic opportunities within the county, by becoming investment ready and ensuring the foundation is in place for sustained success.” The following are a set of broad deliverables proposed for this plan, and if accepted by the committee, would be incorporated by staff into a Request For Proposal.

1. Conduct an environmental scan and review of available data, reports, studies, plans and economic development strategies relevant to Grey County. Produce a background report outlining Grey County’s existing situation and regional context in southwestern Ontario.
2. Update and complete Grey County economic profile that highlights trends and change in key demographic/socio-economic indicators.
3. Undertake a broad-based regional consultation with partner agencies, municipalities, business and industry, education, healthcare to gather information on key issues and to strengthen community partnerships.
4. Provide a detailed assessment of the region’s economy to: determine key issues impacting attraction and retention of business investment and to identify key sectors and regional opportunities that will drive future economic growth.
5. Identify a vision, goals, strategies and actions comprising an Economic Action Plan for Grey County over a three-five year time frame. Recommend “tools in the toolbox” key actions to undertake and key performance indicators to track. Outline key marketing messages and communication strategies. Ensure Economic Action Plan

is fully aligned with County's vision and goals identified in other County plans and strategies.

## Financial / Staffing / Legal / Information Technology

### Considerations

Receipt of funding is contingent on Grey County entering into an agreement with the Ministry of Rural Affairs and will reduce Grey County's commitment in its 2014 budget. Staff resources required to support this project are available within existing departmental work plans.

The draft agreement has been vetted through the County's agreement process with the final agreement still to be reviewed once received.

### Link to Strategic Goals / Priorities

"Developing and implementing an economic action plan" is action 1.2 under Goal 1 (Expanding the prosperity base) and this initiative supports Goal 3 (Securing our place as Ontario's recreation jewel) and Goal 5 (Listening and Working Together) of Grey County's Corporate Strategic Plan 2012-15. This plan is also in the County's Strategic Operating Plan 2014-16.

Establishing funding agreements will ensure that Council's goals of ensuring financial sustainability and ongoing public accountability are maintained.

### Attachments:

Appendix 1

Respectfully submitted by,

Bryan Plumstead  
Manager of Economic Development and Tourism

Director Sign Off: *Sharon Vokes*

## *Appendix 1: Terms of Reference*

### Economic Development Action Plan Steering Committee

#### Purpose:

To oversee and provide direction to the Consultant undertaking the Economic Development Action Plan for the County of Grey.

#### Scope of Responsibility:

- To review the Request for Proposal Submissions, interview and select the services of a qualified consultant to prepare the Economic Development Action Plan;
- To represent the broader interests of the many sectors involved in growing prosperity in Grey County and to provide the Consultant with an understanding of the County's roles, responsibilities and needs;
- To work with the Consultant to formalize the work plan for the preparation of the Economic Development Action Plan;
- To review and provide comments to the consultant on key deliverables/milestones throughout the preparation of the Economic Development Action Plan;
- To insure input and guidance are available as needed from Grey County staff and any outside organizations to support the work of the EDAP Steering Committee.

#### Membership:

- Warden
- Chair of the Planning and Community Development Committee
- County Councillor
- Four members from Business/Industry/Health Care/Education representing the broader interests of Grey County
- Quorum for the meetings will be majority of members;
- The Steering Committee will appoint a Chair and Vice-Chair

#### Resources

- CAO
- Director of Council Services
- Director of Planning and Development
- Director of Information Technology
- Manager of Economic Development & Tourism
- Economic Development Officers

Purchasing Staff and Finance Staff, when required.

External agencies will be approached when required.

#### Financial Support

- The Economic Development Action Plan is budgeted within the Economic Development Department budget for 2014.
- Individual Departments will absorb any staff costs relating to the Economic Development Action Plan.

#### End Date

The Economic Development Action Plan Committee will disband following completion of the Economic Development Action Plan.