



Committee Report

To:	Warden Hicks and Members of Grey County Council
Committee Date:	October 13, 2022
Subject / Report No:	EDTC-CW-14-22
Title:	Grey Roots Operating Plan Update
Prepared by:	Jill Paterson
Reviewed by:	Savanna Myers
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	All
Status:	Recommendation adopted by Committee as presented per Resolution CW137-22; Endorsed by County Council October 27, 2022, per Resolution CC87-22.

Recommendation

1. **That Report EDTC-CW-14-22 regarding Grey Roots Operating Plan Update be received for information.**

Executive Summary

The Grey Roots Operating Plan Update serves as a progress report on actions and priorities outlined in the Grey Roots Operating Plan that was endorsed by Council in March of 2022. This report provides examples of initiatives and actions taken in the last six months as per the plan, along with an overview of the first 'normal' summer season post-pandemic.

Background and Discussion

As outlined in the Operating Plan 2022-2023, Grey Roots continues to focus on Collaboration, Accessibility, Sustainability and Evaluation as strategic goals. The following items provide examples of initiatives and actions taken in the last six months in support of these goals.

1. **Collaboration:**

Indigenous Advisory Circle (IAC) – The IAC is made up of seven members of the local Anishinaabe community who have an interest or background in education, history and culture. The group have met in April and August of this year and have provided feedback on several projects. Staff look forward to incorporating the Circle's suggestions and advice and coordinating ongoing meetings. Visit <https://greyroots.com/exhibit-event-program/truth-and-reconciliation-resources> to learn more about the members of the circle.

The Grey County Community Cultural Initiatives Fund- The fund, launched in March, supports partnerships and collaborations that create new opportunities and raise awareness of Grey County's diverse cultural history. We send our congratulations to the organizations and individuals who were selected as recipients for the inaugural funding period of 2022. We look forward to following these projects as they take shape. Learn more about the recipients at <https://greyroots.com/community-fund>

Saukiing Anishnaabekiing presents Our Stories – The seven art pieces depict Anishinaabe creation stories while pointing towards reconciliation. The artwork has been created by Nyle Johnston, painter, muralist and storyteller of the Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation.

Volunteer Appreciation Picnic – In May, Grey Roots was able to welcome back volunteers for a long awaited in-person recognition event in Moreston Heritage Village to thank our volunteers for their on-going dedication and support. We look forward to hosting another recognition event in the Fall of 2022.

Durham 150 exhibition at the Durham Art Gallery - Through relevant artefacts, photographs and engaging text panels, visitors explored the human and natural history of Durham. This is a joint exhibit between Grey Roots and the Durham Art Gallery.

Black History in Grey Initiatives -

- **GIS Story Map** – Grey Roots and Grey County Planning staff have been working with the community to create a story map that will highlight locations of significance for Black history in Grey County.
- **Commemorating the No.2 Construction Battalion** – Grey Roots was honoured to host the Grey County Black Heritage Society's commemorative event in advance of the Federal Government's formal apology to the Black soldiers of the No.2 Construction Battalion. Presenters included the Hon. Dr. Jean Augustine, Warden Selwyn Hicks, filmmaker Anthony Sherwood, among others.
- **Emancipation Festival Speakers Corner and Gospel Event** – Celebrating its 160th year, the Emancipation Festival held two events at Grey Roots. On July 29th, Kathy Grant and Diana Braithwaite delivered lectures followed by performances by Bobby Dean Blackburn, Diana Braithwaite and Chris Whiteley. On August 1st, Evangelist Valerie Tillman shared a blessing and Liberty Silver, Diana Braithwaite & Chris Whiteley performed within the grounds of Moreston Heritage Village.

2. Accessibility:

Pay by Donation Days/Events – In an effort to create greater access to the museum, Grey Roots has offered several pay by donation days. These days not only benefit the community, but also give staff the opportunity to observe the difference in revenue and attendance. Early results have been positive.

Welcoming Week - Welcoming Week is a global initiative that encourages individuals and communities to spread the message of inclusion and collective prosperity. In collaboration with colleagues at the Grey Bruce Local Immigration Partnership and Grey Transit Route, the museum offered a pay by donation day on September 10th. Moreston Heritage Village buildings were staffed with dedicated volunteers and the free 'Toddlers Take the Museum' program was

offered for families by Tammy Cruickshank, Early Literacy Facilitator with EarlyON. Additionally, Grey Transit Route offered a free bus ride to and from the Museum.

Grey County Gallery Redesign – Accessibility is one area that will be immediately improved by the new design of the exhibits in the Grey County Gallery. The current reading rail, which presents most of the interpretive text as well as the majority of the graphics and historic photographs, does not currently meet accessibility standards for access or legibility. In the new design, current standards for accessibility have directly influenced the placement, colour and size of the text and graphics to ensure the information presented meets those standards.

Inclusivity was also an important consideration, and the flexible design and increased display capabilities will allow staff to tell more stories about the people, communities, and history of Grey County. As you will see in the comparison chart below the number of artifacts and graphics in ‘Abundance’ will directly correlate to the telling of more stories, with more depth and accuracy. The flexible design will also allow Grey Roots to be more responsive to the changing needs and interests of our community and our partners, allowing staff to change graphics and artifacts more easily and become more relevant and representative.

Agriculture (2004-2022) – current gallery	Abundance – redesigned gallery
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27 artifacts – limited by size of display cases and extremely heavy tops • 21 graphics (only 3 can be considered accessible according to current accessibility standards) • 2 terminal screens – visual only (these were never consistent in their functionality) • 1 static immersive display with looping audio-video (functionality not always consistent) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 101 artifacts – with flexible constructive allowing for easy rotation of artifacts • 38 graphics • 5 interactives - accessible discovery-based learning zones including 1 live bee observatory • 3 hands on activity carts for education and programming

3. Sustainability

Updated fee structure for Grey Roots Kids Camp – With the support of Council, registration fees were raised in 2022. Staff did not receive any feedback on the fee and successfully completed the first camp season in two years, welcoming 138 (nearly filling all 140 spaces) children over the course of eight weeks this summer.

Children’s Gallery Launch - On July 3rd, 2022, Grey Roots was pleased to officially launch Zoos’ Place, our beautiful children’s gallery sponsored by Fairmount Security Services. The event began with children’s activities, followed by remarks and a special appearance from Zoos the security dog. The generous, \$20,000 sponsorship is specifically earmarked for the development and implementation of the Children’s Gallery.

Moreston Heritage Village enhanced admissions fee – To account for the heightened visitor experience during July and August, while Moreston Heritage Village is open to the public and animated with volunteer costumed interpreters and summer students, Grey Roots raised the price of museum admission by \$2.50 across all categories.

Environmental Sustainability –

- Grey Roots was pleased to participate in the Owen Sound Earth Day community event on April 23, 2022.
- Through the development of the 10 Year Capital plan, staff have been able to identify projects with climate change considerations and opportunities to lessen our impact on the environment and to be more energy efficient.
- Grey Roots is also exploring opportunities to incorporate climate education through future exhibits and programs.

4. Evaluation

Visitor Satisfaction Survey

From June to September (and ongoing) Grey Roots surveyed visitors in person and online and received 82 responses. The following summary outlines select questions and some of the feedback:

1. What type of special event would you most like to see?

The majority of responses chose family and kid targeted events. Few chose adult and senior focused events, while youth and all interests were chosen the least.

2. What event(s) would you most like to see happen at Grey Roots? (please be specific)

Most popular responses included; more interactive and hands-on displays; more Indigenous representation, food focused events, music in the village, more outdoor events.

3. What are three topics that would make you come to see a travelling (rented) exhibition at a museum?

There were a wide variety of suggestions but if we break them into categories the most requested topics were Science, Animals, and Local History. Another strongly represented category was Culture which encompassed topics such as art, music, fashion, and food. There were also numerous suggestions of topics focused on the history and culture of Indigenous and Black communities, and environmental issues such as climate change.

5. Are there any improvements you would like to see in the Moreston Village?

Many declined to suggest improvements responding with, “It was fantastic we enjoyed it very much!” or “We loved everything!”. Those who chose to make suggestions included; more opening hours for the buildings with interpreters; a place to buy snacks and water; more interactive or hands on elements; a paved path to improve accessibility, and suggestions for more buildings such as a church or tavern. There were quite a few expressions of excitement for the general store which was great to see.

Volunteer Survey –

Village coverage by volunteers in 2022 amounted to approximately 1,125 hours, or 405 shifts of the 768 available. As skilled positions, this represents a contribution of about \$32,805.

An end of season survey sent to volunteers for their feedback revealed some interesting information to help plan for the 2023 season. All respondents reported feeling safe to return to

regular operations this year. Between vaccinations, the County’s mask friendly policy and their ability to keep distance from visitors, this season’s active volunteers felt comfortable returning to in-building interpretive work.

Every respondent to the survey intends to return in 2023, most to their usual building. When asked, more than 70% of respondents were interested in serving in the General Store and dressmaker’s shop in addition to their current building.

Comparison of Performance Measures – May to September

This summer season is the first for Grey Roots since 2019. Considering the absence of international travel and coach tours, ongoing public health concerns, and further indicators such as rising inflation, staff are content by the returned visitation and performance measures.

Perhaps most inspiring is the fact that these numbers represent local tourism, which continues to be encouraged through the Economic Development, Tourism & Culture Department.

Year	# Paid Admissions	# Through the Door
2022	6108	9316
2019	10,901	19,915

Grey Roots Admissions Revenue 2019 v 2022 Comparative 1 May - 1 September 2022		
Description	2019	2022
Admission	\$34,534	\$25,892
Memberships	\$5,340	\$4,500
Retail Sales	\$18,358	\$15,462
Admissions - Educational Groups	\$5,632	\$4,026
Admissions - General Group	\$941	\$896
TOTAL	\$64,805	\$50,776

* KidsCamp and Special Events are not included in these admissions calculations.

Looking ahead, staff are excited for the return of special events, including Moreston by Candlelight. The first in-person Archives lecture series since 2019 is scheduled for this fall, along with the first in-person meeting of the Grey Bruce Dufferin Museum Network.

Over the past six months, staff have successfully acted on each of the goals, bringing the operating plan to life. This important work has emphasized community building, enhanced the visitor experience, and positively impacted Grey Roots now, and into the future.

Legal and Legislated Requirements

There are no legal or legislated requirements with this report

Financial and Resource Implications

There are no financial or resource implications with this report.

Relevant Consultation

- Internal - Grey Roots Museum & Archives Staff
- External

Appendices and Attachments

[Grey Roots Museum & Archives Operating Plan 2022-23](#)

[Grey Roots Strategic Plan 2016-2020](#)