





**CORPORATION OF THE COUNTY OF GREY  
2015-2019 CAPITAL PROJECT FORM**

**1. Department / Function: Tourism & Economic Development**

**Details of Project/Study: Economic Development Action Plan**

**2. Total Gross Cost of Proposed Capital Project/Study: \$75,000**

Construction	Consultant/Contractor	Equipment	Other (Specify)
			\$75,000

Grey County's first Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan was developed in 2014 and an update of this plan is scheduled for 2019.

**Cost of Proposed Capital Project/Study in 2015-2019 Program:**

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
<b>Gross</b>	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	<b>\$75,000</b>
<b>Net</b>	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	<b>\$75,000</b>

**3. Estimated Useful Life: 5 years**

**4. Location of Project/Study (if applicable):**

Facility Name / Address	Municipality

**5. Need or Benefit(s) of Project (including safety issues):**

Expanding the prosperity base is an important strategic initiative for Grey County. The County is currently involved in a number of partnerships and working groups, all aimed at economic development. The development of an overall strategy for economic development will provide the County with a clear policy road map to follow in focusing the County's efforts. 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 the Bluewater Wood Alliance are included within this initiative. Without a clear action plan the County is not in a position to leverage community resources fully to create or take advantage of opportunities to sustain and grow the regional economy.

**6. Scheduling and Cost of Project/Study in 2014-2018 Capital Plan:** Phase I of the Action Plan was completed May 2012 and implementation is underway.

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
<b>Gross</b>	\$75,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	<b>\$135,000</b>
<b>Net</b>	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	<b>\$75,000</b>

**7. Consequences/Implications of Not Undertaking Project (including alternatives):**

Grey County already supports a tourism department, Grey Agriculture Services, and more recently has hired an Economic Development Officer and an EDO-Local Food. There is still a need to look at where the County's best prospects are for sustainable growth and investment, return on investment and which sectors represent our competitive strengths, what is our competition, what resources are needed, etc. Several Grey County municipalities, as well as neighbouring counties, are completing economic plans and it is a high priority for Grey County to move forward as well. Not completing this project would limit the County's ability to fully realize Goal 1 of the Strategic Plan to Expand the County's prosperity base.

**8. Identify Sources and Amounts of Funding**

		From Reserve -	To Reserve -
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	<b>Taxation</b>	<b>One-Time Funding Reserve</b>	<b>Economic Development</b>
2015	\$0	\$0	\$15,000
2016	\$0	\$0	\$15,000
2017	\$0	\$0	\$15,000
2018	\$0	\$0	\$15,000
2019	\$0	\$0	\$15,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$75,000</b>

**9. Compliance with Council objective/strategic plan (if applicable):**

"Developing and implementing an economic action plan" is action 1.2 under Goal 1 (Expanding the prosperity base) and this initiative supports 3.1, 3.2 and 3.4 under Goal 3 (Securing our place as Ontario's recreation jewel) of Grey County's Corporate Strategic Plan 2012-15, This is also referenced in the County's Strategic Operating Plan 2013-15, and in the Clerk's Department Work Plan 2013-15.

**10. Ongoing Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Implications (if applicable):**

Updating the Economic Development Strategy and the implementing Action Plan is proposed every five years, with \$15,000 put into reserves each year for this purpose. Strategy should be updated every five years and rather than seek a one time increase in the budget, the proposed plan would see ongoing annual support transferred to reserve and then utilized in the sixth year.

1. **Department / Function: Tourism & Economic Development**  
**Details of Project/Study: Tourism Destination Development**  
**Action Plan**

2. **Total Gross Cost of Proposed Capital Project/Study: \$40,000**

Construction	Consultant/Contractor	Equipment	Other (Specify)
	\$40,000		

An update of Grey County's Tourism Destination Development Action Plan (DDAP) is needed. With an overall goal of "increasing sustainable tourism revenues through managing and marketing Grey County as a tourism destination" the current plan is largely complete. With the department completing an overall Economic Development Action Plan in 2014, there will be some elements that are transferable to the DDAP. The DDAP is seen as the equivalent to the implementing Action Plan for economic development, in that it is very action oriented, focuses on how the County can manage and market Grey County as a destination for tourism to bring sustainable economic benefit over a three to five year period.

**Cost of Proposed Capital Project/Study in 2015-2019 Program:**

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
<b>Gross</b>	\$40,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	<b>\$72,000</b>
<b>Net</b>	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	<b>\$40,000</b>

3. **Estimated Useful Life:** Three - Five Years

4. **Location of Project/Study (if applicable):**

Facility Name / Address	Municipality

5. **Need or Benefit(s) of Project (including safety issues):**

Grey County's Tourism Destination Development Action Plan (DDAP) was completed in May 2010, and identified 16 recommendations under 4 pillars ( Roles &Responsibilites, Market Research & Tracking, Demand Generators/Product market match and Destination Positioning/Marketing.) Over the past 4 years, Grey County Tourism, guided by the Tourism Committee and its replacement, the Tourism Advisory Committee has substantially completed most of the actions identified under the 16 recommendations, and can point to many successes. The existing plan created many "tools in the toolbox" which need to be reviewed, and refreshed for today's needs. Just after the DDAP was finished, Ontario instituted Regional Tourism Organizations (RTOs) which have greatly changed how tourism partners work together. At the same time, Grey County has created an economic development department and mandate, and is embarking on an overall economic development strategy and action plan. It is anticipated that the overall strategy will provide better insights into tourism's importance and structure as an industry compared to other sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, education, healthcare, retail, construcion, etc. and will likely provide top level recommendations. Beneath the strategy will be implementing action plans for key economic sectors. Updating the DDAP is seen as the action plan for tourism, and will focus on how Grey County can further develop as Ontario's recreation jewel. Finally, the existing DDAP pre-dated Grey County's Strategic Plan and there is a need for better alignment with corporate goals, values and actions.

6. **Scheduling and Cost of Project/Study in 2014-2018 Capital Plan:**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
<b>Gross</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	<b>\$0</b>

<b>Net</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	<b>\$0</b>
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**7. Consequences/Implications of Not Undertaking Project (including alternatives):**

The existing DDAP has been the guiding strategy for the tourism department over the past 4 years. Not updating the plan would lead to a more ad-hoc approach to tourism, would not allow the opportunity for stakeholder engagement in forming a new plan, and would not leverage the expertise and objective guidance of a specialized tourism consultant and the opportunity to bring in a fresh approach.

**8. Identify Sources and Amounts of Funding**

	<b>From Reserve - One-Time Funding</b>	<b>Taxation - Tourism Operating</b>	<b>To Reserve - Tourism Operating</b>
2015	\$32,000	\$8,000	\$0
2016	\$0	\$0	\$8,000
2017	\$0	\$0	\$8,000
2018	\$0	\$0	\$8,000
2019	\$0	\$0	\$8,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$32,000</b>	<b>\$8,000</b>	<b>\$32,000</b>

**9. Compliance with Council objective/strategic plan (if applicable):**

Grey County Corporate Operating Plan (2014-16): Strategic Goal 3: Securing the County's Place as Ontario's Recreation Jewel Tourism Destination Strategy Update (Strategic Action Items 3.1- 3.4)

**10. Ongoing Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Implications (if applicable):**

Updating Tourism Destinatio Development Action Plan is proposed every five years, with \$8,000 put into reserves each year for this purpose. Action plans should be updated every five years, and rather than seek a one-time increase in the budget, the proposed plan would see ongoing annual support transferred to reserve and utilized in the fifth year.

# Grey County Tourism Tourism Destination Development Action Plan 2010



The Resource Management Consulting Group



With the support of the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario



Canada

**BRUCE**

Community Futures Development Corporation

Saugeen Economic Development Corporation

A Community Futures Development Corporation

*In collaboration with*

**BC Hughes**

**R&P**



The Resource Management Consulting Group  
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April 30, 2010

Bryan Plumstead  
Tourism Manager  
Grey County Tourism  
102599 Grey Road 18, RR#4  
Owen Sound, ON N4K 5N6

Dear Bryan:

**Re: Grey County Tourism Destination Development Action Plan 2010**

It is our pleasure to submit the final report for the **Grey County Tourism Destination Development Action Plan 2010**. The combined efforts of the consulting team of **The Resource Management Consulting Group, B.C.Hughes and R&P**, combined with your knowledge and experience, ensure that this action plan reflects the strengths and opportunities of Grey County and sets a clear course for tourism into future.

The **Grey County Tourism Destination Development Action Plan 2010** is based on solid understanding of visitor markets, input from workshops with tourism stakeholders and depth interviews with industry representatives. The three-year plan includes 16 recommendations within four key areas: collaborative leadership, marketing research, demand generators and marketing. The Action Plan has been prepared as a living document. Its format facilitates annual updating and monitoring of progress, and it includes detailed actions with time frames and annual measures of success.

We are confident that this action plan provides Grey County with foundation it needs to strengthen and grow tourism for the economic and social health of the county. It has been a pleasure with work with you and your team over the past 3 months. We look forward to enjoying many experiences in Grey County as tourism grows.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Wong', written over a horizontal line.

**Robert A. G. Wong, M.A., M.C.I.P., C.M.R.P**  
**Partner**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peggy Staite-Wong', written over a horizontal line.

**Peggy Staite-Wong, M.A.**  
**Partner**

*c.c. B.C. Hughes, R&P*

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# 1 Introduction

## Grey County Tourism Today (2010)

Grey County Tourism (GCT) is a Department of the Corporation of the County of Grey, responsible to the County Clerk's office. The Grey County Tourism Committee directs priorities, projects and budgets, which must be approved by County Council. The Committee is comprised of nine members: the Grey County Warden, two County Councillors and six members-at-large, representing tourism stakeholders within the County. GCT is guided by the following Mission, Vision and Values statements:

### Vision

Welcoming destinations and great experiences make Grey County the natural place to visit and live.

### Mission

The Grey County Tourism Committee will encourage tourism development and marketing across Grey County to contribute to economic prosperity and higher quality of life in our communities. We will undertake this by:

- Actively engaging with industry stakeholders to develop new tourism experiences, strengthen Grey County as a preferred destination, provide excellent customer service and market Grey County to our chosen visitor markets,
- Strategic alignment with partners from Grey, Bruce, Simcoe and beyond to develop and promote regional experiences and destinations,
- Undertaking market research and tracking of our results in our visitor markets and their economic impact upon Grey County.

### Values

Grey County Tourism values its heritage, natural beauty, clean, healthy environment and rural lifestyle. We value the freedom of the individual and security of the "hometown" community. Grey County Tourism is committed to sustainable, affordable growth through progressive and well-managed planning for the future to enhance tourism initiatives.

Over the past decade, there has been a shift in the organization and delivery of tourism marketing and product development in Grey County and region. In 2000, the Grey Bruce Tourist Association formerly ceased operations and joined the newly formed Southern Ontario Tourism Organization (SOTO.) At the same time, Grey County established a full time tourism department, with a staff of two. The "Joining Forces" study of the changing organizational tourism structure resulted in the Regional Tourism Marketing Partners (RTMP) of Grey and Bruce Counties, which has been an effective product development and marketing collaborative since its inception. In 2005, SOTO ceased operations. The recent emergence of the Georgian Bay Destination Development Partnership, and the significant tourism development in the Collingwood to Wasaga Beach areas have led to new partnerships to the east in Simcoe County and right around Georgian Bay, complementing Grey County's longstanding relationship with Bruce County.

Traditionally, Grey County's tourism industry was comprised of many small attractions, events and accommodations throughout scenic rural countryside, with a hub of winter attractions in the vicinity of Blue Mountain. Since 2000, the partnership of Intrawest and Blue Mountain has put the spotlight on the northeast corner of the County, bringing new residents and visitors and making tourism an important economic driver. At the same time, the Premier-Ranked Assessment of Southern Georgian Bay identified the tremendous potential of this region as a tourist destination. Grey County has a vibrant tourism industry, hosting 1.8 million visitors in 2008 and bringing in over \$331 million in direct expenditures, supporting 3,200 full time jobs<sup>1</sup> and contributing \$10.5 million in municipal taxes.<sup>2</sup>

GCT works with tourism industry stakeholders from within the County to grow the industry and meet visitor needs and expectations. At the same time, GCT has successful partnerships with Bruce County Tourism and the Georgian Bay Destination Development Partnership to grow tourism in the broader region.

The Ontario Ministry of Tourism Regional Tourism Organization (RTO) initiative, arising from recommendations of the 2009 Sobara Report,<sup>[1]</sup> is adding a new dimension to tourism in Grey County. Tourism departments and destination marketing organizations throughout Grey, Bruce and Simcoe Counties (RTO 7) are beginning to work together to increase the quality of tourism management and delivery. The new RTO is in its infancy. However it is anticipated that eventually, the RTO will have responsibilities for regional tourism product development, investment, research and signage, which will result in regional alignment of destination development and marketing. In the meantime, Grey County will continue its activities in these fields, recognizing and implementing opportunities for regional collaboration.

## Need for the Grey County Tourism Destination Development Action Plan

Destination development involves creating memorable experiences for visitors based on a critical mass of attractions, events and services and involves management of the destination's assets in addition to marketing activities. The most successful destinations match their region's demand generators with their market opportunities. Thus, to develop the tourism potential of Grey County, it is important to build on the products and experiences it offers combined with an understanding of its existing and potential markets.

GCT has been guided by an annual marketing plan, which includes a review of the Vision, Values and Mission statements, annual goals, analysis of visitor markets and strategies to reach those markets. The Grey County Tourism Committee determined that an Action Plan is needed to set quantifiable goals with measurable results and to take a broader and longer term view of Grey County's strategic roles in developing Grey County as a tourism destination, for example:

- How GCT interacts with tourism partners and municipal stakeholders,
- Ways to co-ordinate resources for maximum effectiveness with minimum duplication, and
- Opportunities to embrace the broader aspects of destination development.

With this Action Plan, GCT is moving beyond advertising towards developing Grey County as a destination of choice within Southern Ontario. Through collaboration with stakeholders, understanding markets, product development and strategic positioning GCT will build on its assets and experiences to draw visitors to the County.

Through a competitive bidding process, The Resource Management Consulting Group (in association with BC Hughes and R&P Marketing and Communications) was retained to support GCT in preparation of the Action Plan. The project was funded by Saugeen Economic Development Corporation and Bruce Community Futures Development

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<sup>1</sup> Includes direct, indirect and induced jobs

<sup>2</sup> Ontario Ministry of Tourism Regional Profile Data for CD 42 (County of Grey)

<sup>[1]</sup> Sorbara, Greg, 2009, *Discovering Ontario: A Report on the Future of Tourism*, prepared by the Ontario Tourism Competitiveness Study, Queen's Printer for Ontario, 85p.

Corporation, with support of the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, as part of Canada's Economic Action Plan.

## The Action Plan Framework

The goal of the GCT Destination Development Action Plan is to increase sustainable tourism revenues through managing & marketing Grey County as a tourism destination. The GCT Tourism Action Plan is based on 5 pillars supporting this goal, as follows:



The Action Plan addresses the first four pillars, which have the following objectives:

### Roles & Responsibilities Pillar

- Encourage communication and partnering with and among tourism stakeholders
- Increase efficiency and effectiveness of tourism partners' roles in destination development

### Market Research & Tracking

- Develop a comprehensive market research and tracking system for Grey County to support marketing efforts
- Provide information on key visitor markets and trends for the industry

### Demand Generators and Product Market Match

- Identify key tourism demand generators
- Facilitate the expansion of key demand generators and complimentary experiences

### Destination Positioning

- Recommend positioning and branding for GCT

## Input to the Action Plan

The Action Plan was prepared with guidance from GCT and input from a wide variety of tourism partners, municipal stakeholders, visitors and residents through:

- Five regional stakeholder workshops in 2008/9

<sup>3</sup> The Resources Pillar was not included in the terms of reference for this Action Plan and will be addressed by Grey County Tourism in the future.

- Three Roles and Responsibilities workshops held with 25 representatives of municipalities, business improvement areas, and chambers of commerce in Hanover, Thornbury and Owen Sound (2010)(Appendix B).
- A Demand Generators workshop with 13 tourism partners, representing attractions, festivals, events and parks (2010) (Appendix I).
- Depth interviews with representatives of the key demand generators (2010).
- Telephone interviews with a sample of 14 accommodations, 9 attractions and 9 events (2010).
- Conference call and telephone interviews with members of the Grey County Tourism Committee and the Grey County Chief Administrative Officer (2010).
- A summer visitor survey was undertaken in the summer of 2009, and an online survey of residents and visitors was undertaken in the winter of 2010.
- The Action Plan was presented to industry stakeholders in late May, 2010 with suggestions made for some aspects of implementation (Appendix M).

## Outcomes of the Action Plan

As a result of the Action Planning process, GCT is in a better position to market and manage tourism in the County.

- Preparing the Action Plan was a positive collaborative experience that brought municipalities, BIAs, Chambers, businesses and a wide variety of other organizations together to identify both the strengths and weaknesses of tourism in Grey County, identify opportunities to work together and discuss the role that GCT could most effectively play to fill gaps in tourism marketing and destination development.
- GCT now has recommendations to guide its actions over the next three years, within its four major areas of responsibility: leadership, research, demand generators and marketing (summarized in Section 2).
- GCT has new “Tools in its Toolbox” for its areas of responsibility:

### **Collaborative Leadership**

- Systematic record of tourism roles and responsibilities of stakeholders that can be updated as they evolve and change (summary matrix in Appendix A).

### **Research**

*New research tools guide future decisions:*

- Two visitor surveys (intercept (Appendix C) and online (Appendix K) with results, analysis and reports (Appendix D) that will form the basis for future longitudinal visitor research. *The intercept survey provides the core demographic and behavioural questions that can be used for future co-ordinated events surveys*
- System for reporting and tracking performance indicators based on Ontario Ministry of Tourism Regional Profile Data for 2007 and 2008 that can be updated as new results become available (Appendix E)
- Recommendations for systematic ongoing geographic tracking of promotional activities (Appendix F)
- System for tracking a sample attraction and event attendance and accommodation occupancy, along with results for 2007 to 2009

### **Demand Generators and Product Market Match**

- A strategy to guide Grey County Tourism’s actions to further develop the County’s top demand generators (Appendix G)

***Destination Positioning***

- A new Tourism Branding Design Brief (Appendix J) and Communication Strategy to guide future marketing efforts (Appendix L)

***Planning***

- The Action Plan itself has been set up as a “tool” that can be easily updated on an annual basis: completed actions can be removed, new actions can be added and ongoing actions can be tracked.

## 2 The Destination Development Action Plan

The GCT Destination Development Action Plan has been developed to set quantifiable goals with measurable results. It provides a three-year view of the County's strategic direction in tourism that addresses broad issues such as: interaction with tourism partners and municipal stakeholders, coordination of resources for maximum effectiveness and matching products with markets to further develop Grey County as a recognized tourism destination.

The Action Plan is comprised of recommendations for GCT's four areas of responsibility: leadership, market research, marketing and demand generators, with actions to support each recommendation. This section provides a summary of the recommendations for each area of responsibility, summary of actions for each recommendation as well as annual measures of success and suggestions for annually reviewing and updating the Action Plan.

### Summary of Recommendations for GCT Areas of Responsibility

#### Grow GCT's role as a collaborative tourism leader

##### 1. Continue to strengthen tourism in Grey County by facilitating stakeholder co-operation

Although many tourism partners and municipalities deliver and market tourism throughout the County, GCT is recognized as a regional leader, undertaking tasks that cannot be done by smaller organizations and encouraging collaboration among stakeholders. GCT should continue to work towards helping the tourism industry increase co-operation and reduce duplication of effort.

##### 2. Advocate and demonstrate the importance of tourism in Grey County

GCT is in a better position than any other organization in the county to advocate and demonstrate the importance of tourism: the staff is familiar with the range of tourism offerings and through research, GCT is compiling visitor numbers, expenditures, market demographics, behaviour patterns and attitudes needed to build the business case for tourism.

##### 3. Be recognized as the tourism research resource for Grey County

In summer 2009 and winter 2010, GCT undertook its first visitor surveys and tracked county-wide performance indicators, providing insight into visitor behaviour and demographics. Now, GCT can build on this experience and knowledge to become the resource that tourism organizations and businesses turn to when they want solid, up-to-date tourism information.

#### Use research to build market insight, track performance & guide product development

##### 4. Understand our visitors' behaviour, attitudes and demographics

Obtaining feedback from Grey's visitors is essential for product development and marketing evaluation. As indicated above, GCT has begun primary visitor research with co-operation from visitor information centres and attractions, making it a natural role for GCT to grow. In the future, visitor demographics and behaviour should be compared to the provincial segmentation model.

In summer 2009 and winter 2010, GCT undertook its first visitor surveys and tracked county-wide performance indicators, providing insight into visitor behaviour and demographics. Now, GCT can build on this experience

and knowledge to become the resource that tourism organizations and businesses turn to when they want solid, up-to-date tourism information.

**5. Monitor and report on tourism performance annually**

Tracking regional tourism performance is useful to tourism businesses and organizations. Funding organizations also consider performance indicators as part of their evaluation process. As the tourism research resource for the County, GCT will have an important role in compiling and communicating up-to-date tourism performance indicators on an annual basis to provide the information that tourism businesses and organizations need.

**6. Use Web Analytics to manage website and inquiries and assess marketing efforts**

GCT tracks website traffic using Google Analytics and should continue to use this tool to track site visits, movement through the website and traffic spikes related to marketing efforts. GCT also tracks inquiries for information, generally driven by marketing campaigns. Postal codes for information fulfilments should be linked to the geography of marketing campaigns.

**Support further development of Grey County's top demand generators**

**7. Develop Grey Experiences for Blue Mountain visitors.**

Blue Mountain (the four season destination package of the hill and the village) is a tremendous attraction to the County. GCT should strengthen actions to encourage guests to stay longer and spend more money within the region.

**8. Make Grey County the "go to" place for fall colour and harvest in Ontario.**

Grey County has great potential as a fall colour destination. Backed by strong supporting attractions and diversions, and recognized as one of Ontario's largest producers of apples, Grey County should focus on becoming the fall colour getaway of choice in Ontario.

**9. Support key festivals and events that are or have the ability to become demand generators.**

Key festivals and events have the ability to motivate tourists to visit Grey County, create jobs in the community and have an impact on the local economy. Grey County has several strong festivals and should support their ability to become demand generators.

**10. Continue to support the development of Ride Grey Bruce.**

In recent years, Grey Bruce has become a motorsports destination of choice thanks to the development of the Ride Grey Bruce program. GCT should continue its support of this program by fully developing its potential and hinging on the development of the Georgian Bay Coastal Route.

**11. Continue to support and develop initiatives that recognize the importance of the Escarpment, Georgian Bay and the natural environment to Grey County visitors.**

Research clearly shows that visitors to Grey County love its natural environment and the outdoors. Grey County Tourism must recognize the importance of these natural elements in everything that they do.

**Align Grey County's marketing with communication strategy & demand generators**

**12. Ensure that Grey County's marketing efforts are strategic and aligned**

Many businesses, organizations and municipalities are marketing their activities or jurisdictions in Grey County, not only on the web, but also through print and other media. GCT should encourage stakeholders to align key messages to help clarify Grey as a destination in the minds of visitors.

**13. Make GCT’s website the “go to” source for visitors, residents and the media wanting tourism information**

There is a clutter of over 20 different Grey County organizations with tourism websites or web pages. This represents a tremendous duplication of effort, particularly for event calendars. Visitors and residents (as over half of Grey’s visitors stay with friends and family) need to know where to go for reliable, consistent information. The GCT website has excellent product information and links to events and attractions, but needs to be more attractive and up-to-date, with more links from organizations. Residents and visitors need to know it is the place to go for visitor information.

**14. Grey County should adopt new communication strategy**

The proposed communication strategy with logo and graphic signature will have to go through the process of obtaining support from GCT, Grey County administration and Grey County Council.

**15. Implement new communication strategy**

Once support is attained, Grey County should implement the new communication strategy, logo and graphic signature. It will take several years to implement the strategy across all media, starting with those pieces that are most visible and replaced most frequently.

**16. Develop marketing campaigns for target markets**

The ongoing Getaway to Grey campaign for central and south western Ontario should be aligned with the demand generators and new brand. A new marketing campaign should be developed for the captive resident/seasonal resident market to encourage them to stay in the County and bring family and friends.

**Summary of Actions for the Recommendations**

The following table summarizes the actions and timing for the 16 recommendations described above. More details regarding the rationale for each recommendation and the timing, costs and responsibility for the actions is provided in a separate report. Measures for Success for each year of the Action Plan are listed after this table.

Summary of Actions for Recommendations	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>Grow GCT’s Role as a Collaborative Tourism Leader</b>				
<b>1. Continue to strengthen tourism in Grey County through collaborative leadership</b>				
Continue and strengthen the Industry Newsletter	X	X	X	X
Expand industry website	X	X	X	X
Continue alignments beyond County borders	X	X	X	X
<i>Let’s Talk Tourism</i>	X	X	X	X
Create Visitor Information Centre Network with Bruce County Tourism		X	X	X
<b>2. Advocate and demonstrate the importance of tourism in Grey County</b>				
Annual Tourism Update	X	X	X	X
Present Tourism Update to GC municipalities	X		X	
Present Tourism Update to GC stakeholders		X		X
Encourage Grey County to consider its roles as a tourism destination when developing infrastructure & protecting natural resources	X	X	X	X
Help municipalities define their roles in destination development	X	X		
Develop local media plan	X	X	X	X
<b>3. Be recognized as the tourism research resource for Grey County</b>				
Base GCT actions on research – lead by example	X	X	X	X
Share top-line research results with stakeholders regularly	X	X	X	X
Make it easy for VICs, attractions and events to do visitor research	X	X	X	X
Special thank you and results sharing with participating organizations	X	X	X	X



	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>Use research to build market insight, track performance and guide product development</b>				
<b>4. Understand visitors' behaviour, attitudes and demographics</b>				
Continue and expand Visitor Survey at VICs	x	x	x	x
Administer Visitor Survey at attractions			x	x
Develop Event Survey		x	x	x
Use surveys to identify and analyze OTMP market segments for additional market insight		x	x	x
Standardize VIC Performance Tracking			x	x
Web Survey			x	x
Share survey results with stakeholders	x	x	x	x
<b>5. Monitor and report on Grey County's tourism performance annually</b>				
MTour Regional Profile Indicators	x	x	x	x
Annual Visitor Survey Indicators	x	x	x	x
Annual Events Survey Indicators	x	x	x	x
Accommodation Tracking	x	x	x	x
Attendance at Attractions & Events	x	x	x	x
Track VIC Performance, # visits, # inquiries			x	x
<b>6. Use Web Analytics to manage website and inquiries tracking to assess marketing efforts</b>				
Track web traffic related to marketing efforts	x	x	x	x
Track inquiries to measure marketing channel, origin, demand for activities	x	x	x	x
Use web analytics results as input to web site redesign		x	x	
Google Analytics optimize for key demand generators, language	x	x	x	x
<b>Support further development of Grey County's top demand generators.</b>				
<b>7. Develop Grey Experiences for Blue Mountain Visitors</b>				
Develop driving tours and off-resort activities to extend stays and expenditures	x	x		
Support third party off-resort packaging		x	x	x
Blue Mountain gateway to Grey County		x	x	x
In-room/resort marketing strategy		x	x	x
Seasonal resident marketing strategy		x	x	x
<b>8. Make Grey County the "go to" place for fall colour and harvest in Ontario</b>				
Support the Apple Harvest Festival and Apple Pie Trail initiatives	x	x	x	x
Fully develop fall colour & harvest tours	x	x		
Support Local Food	x	x	x	x
Ensure high Google rankings for fall colour	x	x	x	x
Fall colour & harvest ad campaign	x	x	x	x
<b>9. Support major festivals and events that are or have the ability to become demand generators</b>				
Develop major events criteria		x		
Enhance major events presence on GCT website			x	
Research at major festivals & events		x	x	x
Support Celebrate Ontario applications	x	x	x	x
<b>10. Continue to support the development of Ride Grey Bruce</b>				
Continue Ride Grey Bruce partnership	x	x	x	x
Continue support of GBDDP motorcycle tour	x	x	x	x
Fully develop motorcycle touring routes and snowmobile loops	x	x		
Go to place for fall motorcycle touring		x	x	x

	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>11. Continue to support and develop initiatives that recognize the importance of the Escarpment, Georgian Bay and the natural environment to Grey County visitors.</b>				
Image for the County focus on outdoors	X	X	X	X
Support protection of natural resources	X	X	X	X
Support GBDDP	X	X	X	X
Public Georgian Bay access	X	X	X	X
Infrastructure for Waterfall Tour			X	
Products for visitors to experience nature		X	X	
<b><i>Align Grey County's marketing with communication strategy &amp; demand generators</i></b>				
<b>12. Ensure that GCT's marketing efforts are strategic and aligned</b>				
Prepare new GCT Marketing Plan	X			
Update Marketing Plan annually (with Action Plan)		X	X	X
Continue and expand collaborative marketing efforts	X	X	X	X
Develop external media relations			X	X
<b>13. Make GCT's website the "go to" for visitors, residents and the media wanting tourism information</b>				
Critically evaluate the GCT website, and County-wide tourism web pages		X		
Redevelop GCT website to reflect the new communication strategy			X	X
Refine online GCT events calendar			X	X
Align online VIC calendars through the VIC Network			X	X
<b>14. Adopt new GCT communication strategy</b>				
Administrative support	X			
Committee support	X			
Political support	X			
<b>15. Implement new communication strategy</b>				
Signage		X	X	X
GCT Tourism Vehicle	X	X	X	X
Stationary		X		
Print advertising		X	X	X
Outdoor billboard	X	X	X	X
Collateral materials		X	X	X
Website components			X	X
Radio		X	X	X
<b>16. Develop marketing campaigns for the target markets</b>				
New marketing campaign for residents & seasonal residents		X	X	X
Align central and SW Ontario campaign with new brand		X	X	X
Blue Mountain campaign		X	X	X

## Measuring Success

Success can be measured in a variety of ways: by numbers, by ratings and by accomplishing certain tasks. The following table sets annual measurable goals for GCT to gauge its progress as it implements the Action Plan for its each of its four roles over the next three years.

Year	Collaborative Leadership	Research	Demand Generators	Marketing
2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Initial Talk Tourism session held</li> <li>- Annual Report created</li> <li>- Present Annual Update to municipalities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 100 visitor surveys completed at each of 3 VICs in south Grey, 2 VICs in Owen Sound and 3 VICs in east Grey</li> <li>- Satisfaction ratings stay the same or increase</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop three driving tours or off resort activities</li> <li>- Become member of Apple Harvest Festival Committee</li> <li>- High Google rankings fall colour &amp; harvest – target increased position over previous year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communication strategy, logo and graphic signature adopted</li> </ul>
2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2 Talk Tourism sessions held</li> <li>- Present annual update to stakeholders</li> <li>- Visitor Information Centre Group met, set goals and working together on 2 initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- VIC research now established and continues annually</li> <li>- Grey County Events survey developed, administered at 2 events, analyzed and reported</li> <li>- Accommodation 5% increase over previous season</li> <li>- Satisfaction ratings stay the same or increase</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In-room/resort marketing strategy in place</li> <li>- Fully develop fall colour and harvest tours</li> <li>- Fall colour and harvest ad campaign in place</li> <li>- High Google rankings fall colour &amp; harvest - target 1<sup>st</sup> page placement</li> <li>- Events criteria developed</li> <li>- Five key festivals &amp; events identified</li> <li>- Fully developed motorcycle and snowmobile tours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New Brand applied to winter marketing materials</li> <li>- Redeveloped and re-branded website</li> <li>- One new marketing campaign</li> <li>- Increase web traffic 10%</li> </ul>
2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2 Talk Tourism sessions held</li> <li>- Present annual update to municipalities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Events survey expanded to 4 events, analyzed and reported</li> <li>- Accommodation 5% increase over previous season?</li> <li>- Gated events 10% increase over previous season</li> <li>- Attractions 10% increase over previous season</li> <li>- Satisfaction ratings stay the same or increase</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Seasonal resident marketing strategy in place</li> <li>- High Google rankings fall colour &amp; harvest – target top five placement</li> <li>- Fall colour and harvest ad campaign</li> <li>- Five key events have presence on GCT website</li> <li>- Two new outdoor experience products in place</li> <li>- Infrastructure for waterfall tour in place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New Brand applied to all marketing materials</li> <li>- One new marketing campaign</li> <li>- Increase web traffic 10%</li> </ul>

Year	Collaborative Leadership	Research	Demand Generators	Marketing
2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2 Talk Tourism sessions held</li> <li>- Present annual update to stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Events survey expanded to 5 key events</li> <li>- Accommodation 5% increase over previous season</li> <li>- Gated events 10% increase over previous season</li> <li>- Attractions 10% increase over previous season</li> <li>- Satisfaction ratings stay the same or increase</li> <li>- Visitor and event surveys continue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High Google rankings fall colour &amp; harvest – target top five placement</li> <li>- Fall colour and harvest ad campaign</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One new marketing campaign</li> <li>- Increase web traffic 10%</li> </ul>

## Annual Review and Action Plan Update

The Destination Development Action Plan should be reviewed and updated annually. The tabular format should make this a straightforward process:

- ✓ Check off actions completed in the past year
- ❖ Consider actions that repeat regularly
  - ? Can they be improved – timing, implementation
  - ? Should any be dropped
  - ? Should any be added
- ❖ Consider actions that were not completed
  - ⇒ Should any be moved to the next year
  - \* Should any be dropped as no longer relevant
- ❖ Look at actions scheduled for the upcoming year
  - ? Are they all doable?
  - \* Should any be dropped as they are no longer relevant?
  - ⇒ Should any be moved to the next year?
- ❖ Consider whether any new actions need to be added for the upcoming year

### 3 Analysis of Grey County Tourism’s Situation

The Destination Development Action Plan was based on extensive primary and secondary research and systematic analysis of Grey County Tourism’s current situation. The supporting reports and documentation are provided in Appendices A through L and summarized in this section of the Action Plan.

#### Roles & Responsibilities

##### RMCG reviewed

- 2008-9 stakeholder workshop outcomes
- Current roles & responsibilities of Grey Tourism and other tourism organizations (Appendix A)

##### Facilitated three workshops with tourism organization representatives (Appendix B)

- Workshops held in Hanover, Thornbury & Owen Sound
- Looked at destination development and marketing
- Considered both organizations’ & visitors’ perspectives
- Discussions focused on aligning areas of duplication & filling the gaps

##### Summary of Workshop Outcomes

##### Suggested Roles for GCT

Destination Development	Destination Marketing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-ordinate regional collaboration to develop synergy among municipalities and stakeholders organizations</li> <li>• Leadership, co-ordination and mentorship for funding applications for events and attractions</li> <li>• Continue to enhance product development and bundling of experiences</li> <li>• Communication with municipalities, stakeholders</li> <li>• Provide leadership for visitor research</li> <li>• Advocate within Grey County and with other organizations for importance of natural resources to visitors</li> <li>• Encourage customer service improvements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update GCT website, making it a county-wide web portal – video capture, event links (differentiate between local and tourism events)</li> <li>• Develop regional marketing campaigns with focus (not everything)</li> <li>• Promote of festivals and events as package, not individually</li> <li>• Provide leadership and mentorship for media relations</li> <li>• Develop consistent messaging and imagery that can be used county-wide</li> <li>• Expand visitor information centre leadership and support</li> <li>• Co-ordinate county-wide collaborative visitor research</li> </ul>

#### Research

##### 2009 Grey County Visitor Survey (Appendix C)

- Survey developed, analyzed and reported by RMCG
- Survey administered by staff at 12 Visitor Information Centres and attractions (8 Georgian Bay survey sites and plus four new survey sites in south Grey County)
- Report prepared and submitted (Appendix D)

### **Performance Indicators**

- Summarized Ontario Ministry of Tourism Regional Profile Data for 2007 and 2008
- 15 performance indicators (Appendix E)
- Format will allow additional years to be added as they become available

### **Geographic Analysis (Appendix F)**

- Cleaned, sorted and analyzed 15,000 postal codes from a variety of promotional activities
- Mapped by FSA and Tourism Regions

### **Visitor Tracking for Accommodations, Attractions & Events**

- Interviewed sample of each to determine how data are currently tracked and willingness to share data
- Recommendations for future tracking

## **Demand Generators**

### **Demand Generator and Product Market Match Analysis (Appendix G)**

- Summarize top five demand generators using workshop results, visitor research and product market match details
- Analysis using the Ministry of Tourism handbook “Understanding Tourism Demand Generators” summarizing:
  - Support for demand generator status
  - Supporting attractions, diversions and basics of travel
  - Target market
  - Visitor and Demand Generator Profile
  - High level SWOT
- Recommendations and actions related to each demand generator

### **2008 Grey County Demand Generator Workshop (Appendix H – Demand Generator Summary from Previous Workshop)**

- Reviewed and summarized

### **Research (Appendix I – Grey County Demand Generator Workshop Presentation)**

- Tourism market trends
- GCT’s existing products
- Areas of potential development
- Visitor’s perspectives

### **Facilitated a 2010 Demand Generator workshop with tourism organization representatives (Appendix I – Grey County Demand Generator Workshop Presentation)**

Workshop held in Owen Sound

- Discussed tourism demand generators and supporting attractions by season
- Discussed current trends
- Discussed product market match areas of opportunity by season

## **Destination Positioning**

### **Input from**

- Branding Design brief (Appendix J)
- 2010 Survey Posted on GCT Website (Appendix K)
  - 80 resident/visitor responses, 7 industry responses
  - Verbatim comments fed into branding
- 30 Grey County tourism stakeholders
  - At Roles & Responsibility and Demand Generators Workshops
- 2009 Grey County Visitor Survey

### **Communication Strategy (Appendix**





1. **Department / Function: Tourism & Economic Development**

**Details of Project/Study: Implementation of Economic Development Action Plan**

2. **Total Gross Cost of Proposed Capital Project/Study: \$0**

Construction	Consultant/Contractor	Equipment	Other (Specify)
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The Grey County Economic Development Strategy will be completed in 2014, and it is anticipated that an Action Plan will provide a series of steps to take to implement the strategy, beginning in 2015. While some of these actions can likely be accommodated within existing budgets and human resources, It would be prudent to plan for some additional budget to meet Grey county's overall strategic goal of Increasing Grey County's prosperity base.

**Cost of Proposed Capital Project/Study in 2015-2019 Program:**

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
<b>Gross</b>	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	<b>\$250,000</b>
<b>Net</b>	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	<b>\$250,000</b>

3. **Estimated Useful Life: Annual Allocation**

4. **Location of Project/Study (if applicable):**

Facility Name / Address	Municipality
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5. **Need or Benefit(s) of Project (including safety issues):**

Grey County has made a good start in economic development by re-aligning some existing resources and adding a full-time and part-time position to support the function. Without pre-judging the strategic plan process and outcomes, there is a strong likelihood that additional resources will be required to realistically move the County towards its stated goal of Expanding the Prosperity Base. With the benefit of a strategic planning process and community/industry engagement completed in 2014, hopefully there will be widespread support built for the direction forward and the case made for additional resources.

6. **Scheduling and Cost of Project/Study in 2014-2018 Capital Plan:**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
<b>Gross</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Net</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	<b>\$0</b>

7. **Consequences/Implications of Not Undertaking Project (including alternatives):**

Grey County can continue to "do" economic development at its current allocation, but is already feeling constraints in stretching a budget of \$45,000 to do marketing, projects and communication, for local food initiatives as well as all other economic development activities.

8. **Identify Sources and Amounts of Funding**

	Taxation
2015	\$50,000
2016	\$50,000
2017	\$50,000
2018	\$50,000

2019	\$50,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$250,000</b>

**9. Compliance with Council objective/strategic plan (if applicable):**

Goal 1 of Grey County's Corporate Strategic Plan is Expanding the Prosperity Base.

**10. Ongoing Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Implications (if applicable):**

As noted, the current budget is constrained in its ability to support economic development at a County level. Once the Economic Development Action Plan for 2014 is completed, future draft capital forecasts and budgets will be adjusted accordingly.