

## Report CCR-TAPS-11-14

**To:** Chair Barfoot and Members of the Transportation and Public Safety Committee

**From:** Sharon Vokes

**Meeting Date:** May 22, 2014

**Subject:** **Recommended Signage Protocols for welcome signs at entrances to the County and for the replacement of current County road signage**

**Status:** Recommendation adopted by Committee as amended to reflect the total project was approved at \$190,000, per Resolution TAPS65-14 May 22, 2014; Endorsed by County Council June 3, 2014 per Resolution CC73-14

### Recommendation(s)

**WHEREAS County Council at its February 4, 2014 session directed staff to develop a signage plan and recommended funding model of county owned road signage and entry way signage along county boundaries;**

**AND WHEREAS it is desirous to refresh county owned road signage by replacing signs that have the old logo;**

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Report CCR-TAPS11-14 regarding a recommended signage plan for county owned roads be received;**

**AND THAT staff proceed to fully implement changing the signage for entrance ways, municipal identification, community identification and route markers in accordance with the criteria outlined in Report CCR-TAPS-11-14 within 2014;**

**AND FURTHER THAT the cost of implementing the new signage, estimated at \$179,300, be funded from the One Time Reserve;**

**AND FURTHER THAT staff develop a comprehensive road signage policy encompassing the criteria within this report as well as such items as directional and assurance signage.**

## Background

At the February 4, 2014 session of Grey County Council, resolution CC22-14 was endorsed as follows:

*THAT Resolution PCD-19-14 regarding the approval of a request for proposal for consulting services for a signage strategy is hereby rescinded;*

*AND THAT staff are hereby directed to develop a signage plan and recommended funding model of county owned road signage and entry way signage along County boundaries.*

Both the Planning and Community Development Committee and the Transportation and Public Safety Committee have an interest in the development of a road signage plan for the County's roads. The Planning and Community Development Committee's interest relates to the County's branding initiative while the Transportation and Public Safety Committee is responsible for the County's roads and road signage impacts road safety and is an ongoing maintenance cost.

This report is therefore being presented to both committees on the basis that the Planning and Community Development Committee will provide input to the report and recommendations prior to it going forward to the Transportation and Public Safety Committee for its review and recommendations to Council.

The Planning and Community Development Committee reviewed the signage recommendations at its March 18, 2014 meeting and recommended that the Transportation and Public Safety Committee adopt the recommendations within the report. The Committee also endorsed staff providing the Planning and Community Development Committee a policy on managing heritage community signage by September 2014.

At the outset it is noted that this report and its recommendations have benefited from input from staff of the Transportation Services Department and Tourism and Economic Development. The "boots on the ground" knowledge of the Transportation Services' staff was instrumental in the development of criteria which strives to find the balance between being informative and having safe roads.

The draft signage plan that is being brought forward for the Committee's consideration does not deal with tourism way finding signage. Although the study conducted by Region Tourism Organization 7 (RTO7) sets parameters for tourism way finding signage, more detailed analysis is required for implementation. Directional and assurance signage as recommended in RTO7's signage plan also needs attention, but is not the subject of this report.

In arriving at a recommended signage plan staff have taken into consideration the following:

1. There needs to be balance between the number of signs needed to provide information and the need to keep roads clean, clear and without clutter.
2. There is a need to promote the brand of the County as well as those of the nine member municipalities.
3. The phrase “Proud Part of Grey County” has remained popular and should be incorporated into a new signage plan.
4. Council has expressed an interest in moving ahead to replace old County signage in a timely manner; preferably within the current year.

### *Entrance Way Signage*

Entrance way signage is defined as signs located on County roads that touch the County’s boundaries. There are 27 points where a county road meets another county’s boundary. If signs are erected on every county road that meets or is adjacent to another county it would be expensive to maintain and could be in conflict with the requirement above to maintain balance between the provision of information and keeping the roads clean and clear without clutter. It is proposed that entry way signage be erected using the following criteria:

1. Average daily volume of traffic of 3,000 or greater; or
2. traverses either the majority of the length or width of the County and serves more than local needs; or
3. Road meets a county road of an adjoining county; or
4. Road meets an adjoining county in a primary settlement area as defined by the respective county’s official plan. (ie Bruce County’s is defined as primary urban community)

Using the above criteria, a total of 12 signs would be erected. These signs will reflect the County’s logo and tagline. Here is an illustration of the entrance way signage:

COUNTY BOUNDARY - 36"x72"



## *Municipal Identification Signage*

With the exception of Hanover and Owen Sound, municipal identification signage is new on county roads, although Georgian Bluffs has initiated some of its own municipal identification signage. Indeed, it is after observing the signage in Georgian Bluffs that the concept of municipal identification signage has been included.

It is proposed that, subject to certain criteria, where a county road crosses lower tier municipal boundaries, that signage be erected which identifies the municipality, including its logo. The County has always received positive comments from people about its signs with the inclusion of the phrase "Proud Part of Grey County". The inclusion of this phrase has set Grey County apart from other counties and has provided a way of connecting the county together. It is recommended that this be included on the municipal identification signage.

Similar to entrance way signage, there is a need to include criteria or the number of municipal identification signs could be overwhelming and costly to erect and maintain. The recommended criteria for municipal identification signage are:

1. Municipal identification signage to be erected wherever county entrance way signage is located; or
2. Average daily volume of traffic of 3,000 or greater; or
3. On county roads where the road traverses the majority of the county in either its length or width and serves more than local needs.

It should be noted that Hanover is the only municipality within Grey County without a provincial highway running through it. This is mentioned as provincial highway signage does include the population of municipalities. As such, it is recommended that municipal identification signage located on County Road 4 for Hanover include the population. County Road 4 has been chosen as it was a provincial highway prior to the mid 1990's.

Municipal identification signage has been designed to be 24 inches by 72 inches. The samples included in this report include the title of the municipality, for example town or township, with the exception of Hanover and The Blue Mountains, to ensure coordination with their local branding requirements. Here are examples:



### *Community Identification Signage*

The community identification signage covers everything from tertiary settlement areas such as Ravenna and Allan Park to primary settlement areas such as Markdale and Dundalk.

It is recommended that community identification signage, with the exception of Owen Sound and Hanover which are covered under municipal identification signage, be linked to the County's Official Plan. Signs would range in size and the determination of the size of the sign would be based on how the community is identified in the County's Official Plan. The sign would include the community name only.

Signage for primary and secondary settlement areas will be 20 inches by 72 inches and tertiary settlements will have signs that are 12 inches by 48 inches. Here are examples:

PRIMARY / SECONDARY SETTLEMENT - 28" x 72"



TERTIARY SETTLEMENT - 12" x 48"  
(Type Style: Clearview F 1/8" letter height)



It is recognized that in addition to the County signage that some communities wish to have personalized gateway signage. Currently gateway signage ranges from more traditional signage using posts to full structures made of concrete. Protocols for this type of signage will be dealt with in the development of a comprehensive signage policy by the Transportation Services staff.

### *Route Marker Signage*

The Transportation Services Department has already begun the process of transitioning the new logo to its route marker signage. As signs need to be replaced, the new route markers have included the County's logo. It is a subtle, yet effective way, of providing a consistent message that a person is in Grey County and the County's logo and tagline are reinforced without intruding on the member municipalities' identities. The question for the Committee is whether there is merit in moving towards replacing route markers all at once, or making the transition as the signs need replacement.



## *Other*

Council has requested that historical community signage be addressed and this is not included at this time. Examples are Peabody and Victoria Corners. As mentioned previously, the tourism directional signage as set out in RTO7's signage strategy isn't being tackled in this signage protocol either. It has also been identified that cycling is growing and the addition of signage for cycling routes would be beneficial.

While all these are important to include in a signage plan, it is recommended that the initial plan not include them although they should not be forgotten. Staff will come back with a plan for the historical signage and as lower tier municipalities begin implementation of tourism directional signage, the County can participate as well on its roads within the respective municipalities.

Signage currently existing on county roads for historical locations will be left in place until such time as a policy can be brought forward for consideration.

## *Next Steps*

Based on discussion at the February council meeting, it is staff's understanding that there is a desire on the part of council to proceed with the replacement of any signage with the County's old logo as soon as possible. It is therefore recommended that if the Committee is supportive of this report that the recommendation be for staff to proceed based on the criteria established in this report. Staff would then begin working on a more detailed policy which would include the criteria within this report as well as addressing directional and assurance signage and gateway signage. The policy would also consider who has authority to erect signage on county owned roads, along with responsibility for maintenance.

The implementation of the signage protocols outlined in this report will refresh signage which is outdated and in poor condition. The County's new logo and tagline will be reinforced without impinging on the identities of the nine member municipalities, and in fact, there will be a heightened awareness of the municipalities through the implementation of municipal identification signage.

In terms of other components of RTO7's signage plan, County staff can work with individual member municipalities to ensure a coordinated approach. County staff are also currently working with Bruce and Simcoe staff on signage for cycling routes to ensure a coordinated approach.

## Financial / Staffing / Legal / Information Technology Considerations

There are no information technology considerations related to this report. Signage can create liability and it will be important as staff work on the development of a comprehensive signage policy that consideration be given to mitigate the County's liability.

There will be both financial and staffing implications as replacement signage, beyond the annual replacement of worn out signs, is not included in the 2014 budget.

The estimated cost of implementation of the signage program outlined in this report, including the replacement of route markers is \$179,300 and includes a ten percent contingency. The cost would be reduced to \$80,300 if the route markers are not included. The implementation will be done by Transportation Services' staff.

It should be noted that the costing above reflects signage on county owned roads only. In the past, the County had been requested to erect signage with the County's logo on roads owned and operated by the member municipalities. It is not recommended that the County do this in the future and no funding has been included to take down any current signs that fall in this category.

## Link to Strategic Goals / Priorities

The updating of the County's road signage is directly linked to Goal 6.6 of reviewing and updating the County's corporate branding. Additionally, the provision of consistent signage throughout the county on county owned roads, supports the goal of RTO7 for consistent signage that assists the visitor.

## Attachments - *None*

Respectfully submitted by,

Sharon Vokes  
Clerk/Director of Council Services