

To:	Warden Hicks and Members of Grey County Council
Committee Date:	February 25, 2021
Subject / Report No:	EDTC-CW-05-21
Title:	Wayfinding Signage Policy
Prepared by:	Bryan Plumstead, Manager of Tourism
Reviewed by:	Pay Hoy, Director of Transportation Savanna Myers, Director of Economic Development, Tourism & Culture
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	All
Status:	Recommendation adopted by Committee as presented per Resolution CW50-21;

Recommendation

1. **That Report EDTC-CW-05-21 be received and the Wayfinding Signage Policy #12-5 be endorsed; and**
2. **That the 2020 fees for Grey County Tourism Oriented Destination Signage (GC TODS) be written off, or the Operators provided with a reimbursement due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic impacts, totaling approximately \$12,000 in lost revenue, to be offset by utilizing the Federal-Provincial Safe Restart Municipal Operating funding.**

Executive Summary

The Wayfinding Signage Policy has been developed over several years to provide conformity and guidance for signage on Grey County's roadways. Based on a system of directing visitors and residents through the county and local roads to their preferred destination, the wayfinding policy describes primary, secondary, and tertiary circulation routes. The policy also describes many different types of signage to welcome and orient travelers to the county, its municipalities, and communities, to public destinations, and to private tourism operations.

Background and Discussion

Grey County's wayfinding system is organized to direct visitors and residents travelling to communities, major destinations, attractions, and public facilities. For wayfinding purposes, Grey County's road network is organized into a hierarchy of circulation routes, reflecting traffic volumes, preferred travel routes and connections to communities and points of interest. These include Primary (provincial highways), Secondary (county roads) and Tertiary (municipal roads) routes. Along these circulation routes, wayfinding and tourism signage is strategically located to direct visitors to communities, public destinations, and tourism operations. Wayfinding signage is based on various types of designs taking into consideration Ontario Traffic Manual specifications, existing Grey County signage, and the RTO7 Wayfinding Signage Standards & Specifications. This gives consistency throughout Grey County and bordering Bruce and Simcoe Counties, to support the development of a sense of place for the region. The policy includes sections for Gateway or Entrance Signage, Community Wayfinding Signage, Special Interest Destinations (Public Tourism and Municipal Signage.)

As this policy was developed iteratively over the past few years, Transportation Staff have been placing new signage to conform to the intent of the policy. Feedback from municipal staff in transportation, economic development and tourism was received and the draft policy attached amended to include further recommendations.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Implement a Wayfinding and Tourism Destination Signage Program for Grey County.
- Promote local businesses and tourism destinations within Grey County.
- Develop a consistent visual aesthetic for directional signage in Grey County.
- Establish eligibility requirements for participation in the program.
- Establish standards for the design and location of program signage.
- Establish formal procedures for administering the program.

Gateway / Entrance Signage

Gateway signage introduces destination entryways into the County, its municipalities, and its communities. This includes the existing "Welcome to Grey County" signs on County roads, municipal boundary and community signs, historic community signs and personalized entrance signage installed by municipalities off the road right of way. Route markers and Named Road Signage are also included in this section.

Community Destination Signage

A necessary component of developing a wayfinding system is the identification of the destinations that will be included in the system and these are organized into three sections.

Communities – Community Destination Signage - Grey County contains a wide variety of communities with varying population, services, tourism, and recreational destinations as well as many historic communities. Many communities contain multiple destinations, and in this case, travelers are first directed to the community, and then to specific destinations. The policy contains criteria and specifications for Community Destination Guide Signs and Community Destination Fingerboards.

Special Interest Destinations (Public Tourism and Municipal) Signage

This section of the policy provides policies, criteria and sign types for public destinations that will be signed to by the wayfinding system. This includes municipal and public, recreation and tourism facilities. Sign types include Major Special Interest Directional, Trailblazer Directional, Urban Directional and Special Interest Destination Markers, Public Services Directional and Historical Markers.

Private Tourism Operations (Grey County Tourism Oriented Destination Signage (GC TODS))

A tourist operation serves the primary function of satisfying tourism needs by providing accommodation, educational, recreational, cultural, scientific, environmental, entertainment, or related activities. As part of Grey County's wayfinding system, this Policy enhances wayfinding to private and some public establishments by providing owners with the opportunity to purchase signage. This policy integrates with the provincial Tourism Oriented Destination Signage (TODS) program to ensure consistency with tourism signage on provincial highways. This section provides policies, criteria and sign types including GC TODS Fingerboards and GC TODS Major Attraction Signage.

Legal and Legislated Requirements

This policy provides direction, policies, criteria, and specifications for wayfinding signage on County Roads in Grey County by Grey County Transportation Services. The policy may also be used by member municipalities to inform their own wayfinding signage to provide consistent direction to travelers. Regulatory and Warning signage has higher priority over directional signage.

All signage installations will continue to conform with the Ontario Traffic Manual regarding location, heights, visibility etc.

Financial and Resource Implications

Transportation Services will work towards bringing existing signage into alignment with this policy over time as signage is replaced and within annual budgets. Tourism will work towards signing public tourism destinations on a priority bases and within annual budgets. Transportation Services administers Grey County's Tourism Oriented Destination Signage (formerly Rural Tourism Signage Program) through a permit application and payment of annual fees.

As a result of the pandemic, the tourism sector has been especially impacted. Many tourism businesses hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and regional and provincial health measures required them to close or greatly reduce their operations. Staff are requesting the 2020 fees for Grey County Tourism Oriented Destination Signage (GC TODS) be written off, or the Operators provided with a reimbursement due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic impacts. This COVID-19 relief measure would impact Transportation Services as a loss of revenue of approximately \$12,000. This loss of revenue is being recommended to be to be offset by utilizing the Federal-Provincial Safe Restart Municipal Operating funding.

Relevant Consultation

- Internal – Tourism, Economic Development, Transportation, Planning, Finance
- External – Municipal transportations/public works staff, Municipal tourism and economic development staff.

Appendices and Attachments

[Wayfinding Signage Policy](#)

Primary & Secondary Circulation Routes (attached below)

