

To:	Chair and Members of the Economic Development and Planning Advisory Committee
Committee Date:	September 6, 2018
Subject / Report No:	CAOR-ED-19-18
Title:	Economic Development Department Priorities and Staffing
Prepared by:	Savanna Myers, Manager of Economic Development
Reviewed by:	Kim Wingrove, Chief Administrative Officer
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	All Grey County
Status:	

Recommendation

1. That Report CAOR-ED-19-18 Economic Development Department Priorities and Staffing be received and the 2018/2019 operational priorities of investment readiness, people attraction and retention, entrepreneurship and agri-food and the staffing plan be adopted as presented.

Executive Summary

The Grey County Economic Development Department is currently drafting its 2019 work plan. At the same time, staff transitions are being planned to better achieve priority areas and cover vacancies.

Background and Discussion

2018/2019 Priorities

The Grey County Economic Development Working Group met on August 10th to discuss 2018 achievements and 2019 local priorities for the drafting of the Grey County Economic Development work plan.

Municipal EDOs identified the Community Improvement Plan Program, Foreign Direct Investment, Investment Ready inventory, Regional Economic Development Website and Business Directory as the most valuable initiatives of 2018. In addition to these action items, they also reinforced the value of County staff expertise and support in areas such as entrepreneurship through the Business Enterprise Centre, investment and newcomer attraction and retention.

Municipal partners wish to see these activities continue in addition to the following:

- Business succession matching opportunities;
- Staff training for investment and development;
- GIS training and expansion of online real estate listings;
- Regional attraction and retention campaign;
- Regional job fair and local job fair coordination;
- Employee retention communication and training for employers;
- Municipal strengths and opportunities review for development mapping; and
- Regional transportation solutions.

With these priorities identified, the 2019 economic development work plan is being drafted for review by the Economic Development Working Group in October. This will ensure member municipalities are aware of County initiatives and resources prior to determining their own work plans and budgets.

In an effort to maintain the current service level of the department, priority areas are being filtered by theme according to staff expertise. As a result, positions are being intentionally sculpted by theme:

- Investment Readiness;
- People Attraction & Retention;
- Entrepreneurship; and
- Agri-Food.

These themes directly enable implementation of the Economic Development Strategy and Corporate Strategic Plan, ensuring efficiency and effectiveness while remaining flexible enough to adapt to unknown opportunities that may arise more broadly (i.e. Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus, the Province's plan to reform social services, etc.).

Staffing

The economic development team is undergoing some transition due to a combination of retirement, contracts, and maternity leave:

- On June 8, 2018, the part-time administrative assistant retired;
- On October 22, 2018 (approximately), the manager will begin a six month maternity leave returning April 18, 2019 (approximately); and
- On December 31, 2018, funding for the outreach coordinator position will end.

In order to maintain the service level provided by the team, the following transitions are planned for the maternity leave:

- The senior economic development officer will step in to the role of acting manager of economic development from October 2018 to April 2019;
- The outreach coordinator contract will increase from a part-time three day per week role to a full-time five day per week role from September 2018 to December 31, 2018; and
- The part-time administrative assistant hours will be reallocated to the outreach coordinator contract.

The outreach coordinator position was funded from October 30, 2017 to December 31, 2018 by the Ministry of Citizenship & Immigration through an approved pilot project, New to Grey.

Given the success of the pilot program, the changing needs of employers, municipal and community partners and opportunities to advance regional projects proposed for 2019, it is being recommended that the outreach coordinator position be transitioned to an economic development officer beginning in January. This transition would ensure a dedicated focus on people attraction and retention which has been prioritized by municipal staff and employers around the region.

It is anticipated that these staffing transitions will ensure that the leadership and support member municipalities, business leaders and community stakeholders have come to expect from Grey County's Economic Development team will continue and that strategic action items will be advanced in a timely and focused manner.

Legal and Legislated Requirements

There are no legal or legislated requirements.

Financial and Resource Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report. Staffing resources are being reallocated according to area focus and priority. The transition to a full-time economic development officer will be included in the 2019 budget for Council consideration.

Relevant Consultation

- Internal – Chief Administrative Officer, Director of Corporate Services, Human Resources Manager.
- External – Economic Development Working Group.

Appendices and Attachments

None.