

<b>To:</b>	Warden Milne and Members of Grey County Council
<b>Committee Date:</b>	October 12, 2023
<b>Subject / Report No:</b>	EDTC-CW-16-23
<b>Title:</b>	Economic Development, Tourism & Culture Master Plan
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<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Randy Scherzer
<b>Lower Tier(s) Affected:</b>	All
<b>Status:</b>	

## Recommendation

1. That report EDTC-CW-16-23 regarding the Economic Development, Tourism & Culture Master Plan be received; and
2. That the Economic Development, Tourism & Culture Master Plan be adopted as presented.

## Executive Summary

Following an intensive consultation process, staff are pleased to present the final draft of the Economic Development, Tourism & Culture Master Plan to Committee of the Whole for consideration and endorsement. The Plan has been unanimously supported by EDTC staff, the EDTC Working Group, inclusive of all nine member municipalities and key community partners, and the strategic themes endorsed by the Planning and Economic Development Advisory Committee (PEDAC). The strategy has been coined the Grey't Reset, and provides a 10-year vision, alongside five-year action plans for both Economic Development and Tourism and Grey Roots Museum & Archives.

## Background and Discussion

The EDTC Master Plan journey began in February 2023. Staff founded the process on thinking in detail about our role, the environment we work in today and the changing needs of our partners. The plan was coined the **Grey't Reset**, seeing the opportunity to account for all the changes and collectively determine the best way forward through programs and support. The plan seriously considers the available resources, priority needs and what actions will bring the most value to our member municipalities and partners.

### Consultation Process

The consultation process used to develop the EDTC Master Plan was meaningful and intensive. Participants from across the region actively engaged, representing all our department's key partners and the community at large. The honest input, vision, knowledge, and experience from all those consulted, helped to shape our path forward. It involved three feedback loops to ensure alignment and buy-in between internal and external partners. These loops were purposefully designed to gather and review input and prioritize and refine actions through each cycle, until we reached a place where goals and output merged to create a focused set of priority actions, considered to be realistic, achievable and bring the most value to the County and its partners.

The time, input, and direction EDTC staff dedicated to developing this plan and its actions, gives great confidence, that together, we'll move forward in a meaningful and impactful way, to care for our people and place – past, present, and future.

Following final EDTC team review and endorsement, on September 29, 2023, staff presented the strategic themes to the Planning and Economic Development Advisory Committee through report EDTC-PEDAC-15-23. Immediately following, staff presented the proposed actions to the EDTC Working Group, inclusive of all nine member municipalities and key community partners. The day was filled with excited nods. We are proud to share that the Economic Development, Tourism & Culture Master Plan received unanimous support from all parties – EDTC staff, PEDAC and EDTC Working Group, inclusive of all nine member municipalities and key community partners.

### **The Grey't Reset**

The Grey't Reset is not about starting from scratch. It's about recognizing the foundation we have collectively built and work from today. The Plan carries the best work forward, adds new focus where needed and presses pause or even ends other projects that are no longer a priority or cannot be a priority given this point in time.

The purpose of this Master Plan is to assess how the Economic Development, Tourism and Culture Department collaborates with member municipalities and community partners, to become more “proactive” rather than “reactionary”. The plan seriously considers the available resources, priority needs and what actions will bring the most value to our member municipalities and partners.

Throughout the process, a conscious effort was made to look inward at Grey County. We chose not to engage in a comparative analysis beyond our immediate borders, where we are formally linked through cross-border programs (i.e.. RTO7 and Clean Energy Frontier). We were looking, specifically and strategically, at who we are and what we have to offer. The people, the pride and the resources available here, in Grey County. External influence—regional, provincial, national and global—was considered throughout, but only as it applied to what is happening and what could happen locally.

This is a Made in Grey plan. There are 21 economic development and tourism action items and 22 Grey Roots action items. In some cases, the actions are specific and detailed, in other cases they are broad and allow for flexibility to maneuver workplan as work progresses. All the actions that made it to this Plan, however, are strategically intended and well supported by staff at the County and its member municipalities as well as key community partners.

The Plan leans on its collective actions to support core and emerging sectors. Outside of tourism, the strategy does not include individual, sector specific actions. Tourism carries significant weight in this strategy – as both economic driver, and foundational community and culture building, retention tool. It is also an area where our municipalities are seeking further support and leadership.

**What is Our Role?**

This is a question we asked ourselves at every step in this journey. Given our position as Grey County, what can we do with the resources we have, to bring the most value?

We are the great connectors. Our municipal and community partners are localized, drawing insight and direction from the ground up. We are constantly scanning the regional environment, listening, and facilitating connections to find innovative and meaningful solutions. While we share the same geography, we offer a different view. We thrive on a systems approach. When we think about the ecosystem of players in economic development, tourism and culture, the list is long.

Collaboration as a core mandate means we are collectively and succinctly rising the tide to float all boats as they say. Together, we provide the services and set the environment for success.

As the EDTC team, we will foster a systems approach and work in concert with our colleagues and partners to share resources, build capacity and bring value. We will focus on internal and external communications and be the best leaders, ambassadors, and champions we can possibly be.

**Priority Areas**

The priority areas were endorsed by PEDAC on September 29<sup>th</sup>. The report and minutes are attached below, along with the fulsome EDTC Master Plan.

**The Grey’t Reset Priority Areas**

<b>Economic Development and Tourism</b>	<b>Grey Roots Museum &amp; Archives</b>
Priority 1: Leadership and Collaboration	Priority 1: Leadership and Collaboration
Priority 2: Investment Ready	Priority 2: Inclusive Storytelling
Priority 3: Business Retention and Expansion	Priority 3: Interactive Experiences
Priority 4: Entrepreneurship and Innovation	Priority 4: Destination Development
Priority 5: Destination Development	Priority 5: Innovative Practices

Priority actions to accompany each of the priority areas are included in the Master Plan, attached below. Implementation of the Plan is proposed to begin January 2024, with items included in the 2024 budget for Council consideration.

## Financial and Resource Implications

None. Development of the Master Plan was included in the approved 2023 capital budget. Implementation of the plan will be included in the 2024 budget for consideration.

## Relevant Consultation

- ☒ Internal: EDTC Team, Deputy CAO, CAO, Planning, Community Transportation, Climate Change
  - ☒ AODA Compliance (the document is AODA compliant)
  - ☒ Contribution to Climate Change Action Plan Targets (describe)
- ☒ External: McSweeney & Associates, all Member Municipalities, PEDAC, Ag Advisory Committee, EDTC Working Group, Indigenous Advisory Circle, Business Leaders, Community Partners, Volunteers, Community at Large

## Appendices and Attachments

Economic Development, Tourism & Culture Master Plan

EDTC-PEDAC-15-23 Economic Development, Tourism & Culture Master Plan Preface

[Planning and Economic Development Advisory Committee minutes dated September 29, 2023](#)