

To:	Warden Milne and Members of Grey County Council
Committee Date:	April 25, 2024
Subject / Report No:	EDTC-CW-02-24
Title:	Beaver Valley Sustainable Tourism Strategy - Project Partner Memorandum of Understanding
Prepared by:	Savanna Myers
Reviewed by:	Randy Scherzer
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	
Status:	Resolution deferred from October 26, 2023 until MOU is presented following budget discussions

Recommendation

1. That report EDTC-CW-02-24 regarding the Beaver Valley Sustainable Tourism Strategy - Project Partner Memorandum of Understanding be received; and
2. That partners, Grey County, Municipality of Grey Highlands, Town of The Blue Mountains and Regional Tourism Organization 7: BruceGreySimcoe develop a formal memorandum of understanding (MOU) that outlines partner commitment to achieving the goals and allocating and/or securing resources to achieve desired outcomes of the strategy; and
3. That any financial commitments associated with the MOU or Strategy be included annually in the budget process for Council consideration.

Executive Summary

This report is in follow up to report EDTC-CW-18-23 presented on October 26, 2023 regarding the Beaver Valley Sustainable Tourism Strategy and the deferred recommendations. Staff are seeking Council endorsement to make the resolution whole and proceed with development of the Memorandum of Understanding between Project Partners, Grey County, Municipality of Grey Highlands, Town of The Blue Mountains and Regional Tourism Organization 7: BruceGreySimcoe (RTO7). Project Partner staff have drafted proposed content for the MOU, with consensus among all parties, and are now seeking Council consideration of the same.

Background and Discussion

On October 26, 2023, County Council approved the Beaver Valley Sustainable Tourism Strategy through report EDTC-CW-18-23. The motion on the floor was divided as part of the

approval; with recommendation three to develop a formal memorandum of understanding (MOU) with project partners, and recommendation four to include any financial commitments associated with the MOU or strategy annually in the budget process for Council consideration, deferred pending budget deliberations. That deferred motion is being presented as part of this staff report.

Following the report to County Council, Grey Highlands and The Blue Mountains approved the strategy and complete recommendations regarding MOU development and any financial contributions for annual budget inclusion on November 1 and November 6 respectively. See appendix for complete resolutions.

The project partners have continued to meet monthly to share relevant information and discuss possible next steps. From here, two key priority actions took place.

1. Project Partners and Destination Stewardship Core Group held their inaugural meeting to share status updates and set a baseline of understanding about roles and future collaboration potential.
2. Project Partners discussed and built consensus around suggested content for the Project Partner MOU.

While the Strategy sets out the project goals and tactics, the MOU outlines guiding principles. The proposed MOU is outlined below for Council consideration:

Beaver Valley Sustainable Tourism Strategy Project Partner MOU (Proposed)

Strategic Plan (2024-2028) Vision:

The Beaver Valley provides a world-class experience for visitors and locals alike, all of whom value the spectacular geography of the region and respect the need to create a long-term legacy of economic and social vibrancy and environmental sustainability.

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is intended to outline the principles the project partners will use to guide their work and implementation of the Beaver Valley Sustainable Tourism Strategy (2024-2028).

Project partners: The County of Grey, the Municipality of Grey Highlands, the Town of the Blue Mountains, and Regional Tourism Organization 7: BruceGrey Simcoe.

There are currently many stakeholders involved in tourism throughout the defined project area, as well as the emergence of a number of related tourism initiatives. As such, the Beaver Valley Sustainable Tourism Strategy, and the actions identified within the Strategy, are focused on recommendations that can be undertaken by the project partners to move forward the larger vision for sustainable tourism development in the Beaver Valley, while respecting and being informed by the work being done by other stakeholders throughout the area.

The project partners agree to abide by these guiding principles related to the Beaver Valley Sustainable Tourism Strategy (2024-2028):

- That all partners agree to work collaboratively to implement the actions and goals outlined in the Strategy.
- That the project partners agree to respect the roles & responsibilities of the other partner organizations.
- That the project partners agree to share information with other project team members, to ensure that all partners are fully informed related to items that could impact the project implementation.
- That all partners recognize that no one organization is deemed to be the lead for this project, and that all partners share equal responsibility in working to achieve the desired outcomes.
- That all partners ensure that the principles of the Beaver Valley Sustainable Tourism Strategy are considered in any work undertaken by the respective partners outside the parameters of this project.
- That all partners commit to exploring opportunities to leverage resources (cash and in-kind) to achieve greater impact and increase the collective impact of projects being undertaken.
- That all partners agree to work collaboratively to source grants and funding to enhance the project outcomes.
- That this MOU does not preclude any of the project partners from undertaking their own work in this space.

Next Steps

Following Council endorsement of this report, Project Partners will formally draft the MOU for signature by the Project Partners' Warden, Mayors and CEO. Staff will also work with Clerks to determine the best approach for a joint meeting of senior Project Partner representatives and corresponding public meeting for public comment.

Project Partners will continue to meet monthly to prioritize next steps and will meet twice more with Destination Stewardship Core Members to continue dialogue and seek collaborative opportunities over the coming months.

Financial and Resource Implications

None.

Relevant Consultation

- Internal: Deputy CAO, Clerk
 - AODA Compliance (describe)
 - Contribution to Climate Change Action Plan Targets (describe)
- External: Grey Highlands, The Blue Mountains, RTO7

Appendices and Attachments

Resolutions of Grey Highlands and Town of The Blue Mountains – Memorandum of Understanding

Grey Highlands – November 1, 2023

Please be advised that the following resolution was passed at the November 01, 2023 meeting of the Council of the Municipality of Grey Highlands.

2023-877

That Council adopt the Beaver Valley Sustainable Tourism Strategy, as presented; and

That Council authorize staff to enter into a formal memorandum of understanding (MOU) with project partners Municipality of Grey Highlands, Grey County, Town of The Blue Mountains, and Regional Tourism Organization 7: BruceGreySimcoe, that outlines partner commitment to achieving the goals and allocating and/or securing resources to achieve desired outcomes of the Strategy; and

That any financial commitments associated with the MOU or Strategy be included annually in the budget process for Council consideration; and

That the draft MOU and a presentation from staff be presented at a collective meeting to be held with the Councils of the Town of The Blue Mountains, the County of Grey and the Municipality of Grey Highlands which shall include a public meeting portion at the beginning of the meeting to facilitate public comments.

CARRIED.

The Blue Mountains – November 6, 2023

B.4.1 Beaver Valley Sustainable Tourism Strategy, FAF.23.170

Moved by: Councillor Hope

Seconded by: Councillor Ardiel

THAT Council receive Staff Report FAF.23.170, entitled “Beaver Valley Sustainable Tourism Strategy”;

AND THAT Council endorse the Beaver Valley Sustainable Tourism Strategy as presented;

AND THAT Council supports that the project partners being, Town of The Blue Mountains, Grey County, Municipality of Grey Highlands, and Regional Tourism Organization 7: BruceGreySimcoe develop a formal memorandum of understanding that outlines partner commitment to achieving the goals and allocating and/or securing resources to achieve desired outcomes of the strategy;

AND THAT Council directs that any financial commitments associated with the memorandum of understanding or strategy be included annually in the Town’s budget process for Council consideration.

Yay (5): Deputy Mayor Bordignon, Councillor Ardiel, Councillor Hope, Councillor Maxwell, and Councillor McKinlay

Absent (2): Mayor Matrosovs, and Councillor Porter

The motion is Carried (5 to 0)