

GREY COUNTY COUNCIL

2026-04-23

A UNIFIED VOICE FOR RURAL
WESTERN ONTARIO

WHO WE ARE

- ▶ 15 Upper and Single Tier Municipalities
- ▶ 300 Communities, 117 municipalities
- ▶ More than 1.6 million residents
- ▶ 250, 000 businesses
- ▶ 1/2 million square kilometers
- ▶ 90% rural



WHAT WE DO

- ▶ WOWC works collectively to:
 - ▶ Advocate with one unified voice
 - ▶ Advance shared regional priorities
 - ▶ Provide research and evidence-based solutions
 - ▶ Build strategic partnerships
 - ▶ Strengthen local government capacity



OUR MISSION

- ▶ Advocating with a unified voice to advance common needs and opportunities, supporting sustainable economies and prosperous communities across Western Ontario.



STRATEGIC GOALS

- ▶ Voice for the Region
- ▶ Information Source
- ▶ Asset for Counties
- ▶ Valued Partner of Government



VOICE FOR THE REGION: STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



Priority #1: Infrastructure Development and Funding



- ▶ Infrastructure drives growth
- ▶ Rural municipalities lack per-capita revenue capacity
- ▶ Investment needed for roads, bridges, broadband, transit
- ▶ Growth without infrastructure creates economic barriers

Priority #2: Housing Affordability and Availability



- ▶ Rural housing supply and affordability
- ▶ Infrastructure capacity to support growth
- ▶ Tools that recognize rural development realities

Priority 3#: Workforce Development & Preservation



- ▶ Retaining and attracting talent
- ▶ Aligning training with employment demand
- ▶ Supporting agriculture, manufacturing, skilled trades
- ▶ Infrastructure + housing = workforce capacity

Priority #4: Mental Health, Services and Support



- ▶ Dedicated rural supports
- ▶ Wrap-around models
- ▶ Funding relief
- ▶ A sustainable approach to health and housing services

INFORMATION SOURCE



OUR ROLE AS A RESEARCH & INFORMATION SOURCE

- ▶ Key initiatives:
 - ▶ Workforce research
 - ▶ Housing and infrastructure data
 - ▶ Regional analytical tools
 - ▶ Partnerships with post-secondary, government and industry



ASSET FOR COUNTIES



COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVES

- ▶ Western Ontario Workforce Strategy
- ▶ Rural housing systems research
- ▶ Supply chain mapping (TICP)
- ▶ Broadband partnerships
- ▶ Post-secondary research partnerships
- ▶ Western Ontario Municipal Conference
- ▶ Fall Funders Forum



WESTERN ONTARIO
WOWC
WARDENS CAUCUS

WESTERN ONTARIO
MUNICIPAL
CONFERENCE

VALUED PARTNER OF GOVERNMENT



VALUED PARTNER OF GOVERNMENT

STRONG ENGAGEMENT

- ▶ Minister meetings
- ▶ Submissions
- ▶ Legislative analysis
- ▶ Pre-budget advocacy
- ▶ Provincial & federal partnerships
- ▶ Policy briefings
- ▶ Attendance at major conferences (ROMA, AMO, FCM)



2026 AND BEYOND



OUR PATH FORWARD

- ▶ Strong engagement with senior governments
- ▶ Continued regional research
- ▶ Data-informed advocacy
- ▶ Advancing solutions, not just asking for support





THANK YOU

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