



Committee Report

To: Councillor Steve Hammell, Chair and
Members of the Planning and Development Committee

From: Claire Dodds
Director of Planning and Development

Date: April 20, 2023

Re: Regional Support Economic Development Pilot Outcomes

Staff Recommendation:

The Regional Support Economic Development Pilot Outcomes report is for information;

Background:

In September 2022, the Committee approved the creation of the Regional Support Economic Development Pilot. This pilot focused on providing coordination and assistance on key economic projects as identified by local municipalities across Bruce County. Memorandums of Understanding were developed with the municipalities of Arran-Elderslie and Northern Bruce Peninsula to help scope the projects in lieu of having local full-time economic development staff over a six-month period. Both municipalities received the equivalent of two days a week of support in lieu of having local full-time economic development staff. The remaining day of capacity each week was provided to support other local municipalities as needed.

The Regional Support Economic Development Coordinators position came to an end on April 17, 2023, and with that began the wind down of the formalized pilot program. During this time a significant number of projects were undertaken.

In the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie the pilot project supported the redevelopment of the community improvement plan, completed a community-wide business census, supported the development of branding and design guidelines for the communities of Tara and Chesley and created an actionable work plan for the previously developed economic development strategic plan. To encourage a seamless transition to local staff on each of the projects, a focus was put on providing guiding documents for each of these projects. Additional smaller projects were also supported during the time. It is estimated that there was a savings of approximately \$80,000 dollars of consulting services work that otherwise may have been utilized for these projects.

In the Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula, the pilot project supported developing a framework for a new economic development strategic plan, support towards development of a downtown revitalization plans for Tobermory and Lions Head and the redevelopment of a community wide community improvement plan. To encourage a seamless transition to local staff on each of the projects, a focus was put on providing guiding documents for each of

these projects. Additional smaller projects were also supported during this time with an estimated savings of approximately \$110,000 in consulting services work that otherwise may have been utilized for these projects.

During the time of the contract, additional work completed included support on Community Improvement Plan redevelopment for the municipality of South Bruce and lead generation list development for the Town of Saugeen Shores. While not completed by this position, the hiring of this position created additional capacity at both the management and Economic Development Officer level of the division which allowed for more direct support of local municipality priorities. This included support for local events such as the workforce development consultations developed by South Bruce Peninsula and the Community Improvement plan in both Brockton and Kincardine. Estimated savings of approximately \$48,000 dollars were realized that otherwise may have been used to hire outside expertise for these projects.

To gauge the success of the project, consultations were held with both municipal CAOs and other municipal staff impacted by the project. There was widespread support for the project, and all deemed it a success. Overall, the project drove an estimated savings of \$238,000 in potential expenditures for local municipalities various third-party support.

Internally several lessons were learned through the program. First, this project, while aimed at supporting local municipalities, supported several a number of components of the County Economic Development Strategic plan, including further development of the Macro approach. The project showed the strength that comes with working together. Secondly, the project highlighted that there is an opportunity for additional and ongoing support from the County's Economic Development division to support local municipal projects.

Given the positive outcomes of the pilot program, a number of options were considered to ensure ongoing support for projects is made available. Given the types of projects undertaken during the process it was determined that support should continue to be available for local municipalities related to economic development facilitation, strategy development, policy support and joint training. These types of projects provided the greatest level of benefit for both the County and the local municipalities. Projects, including collaborative work around redevelopment of Community Improvement Plans, recently undertaken in South Bruce Peninsula, Kincardine and Brockton showed the importance of continuing this type of work.

Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:

The Department will review the existing 2023 Economic Development budget and workplan to find opportunities to maintain in-house capacity to support local project work for the balance of 2023.

Interdepartmental Consultation:

CAOs from Northern Bruce Peninsula and Arran-Elderslie municipalities were consulted on the development of these recommendations and provided an opportunity to debrief on the program. Comments from those meetings were considered when developing this report.

Link to Strategic Goals and Elements:

Goal #1 - Develop and implement tactics for improved communications B - One County, unified voice;

Goal #6 - Explore Alternate Options to improve efficiency C - Look for economies of scale or shared services among our departments and our communities.

Report Author:

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Departmental Approval:

Claire Dodds
Director of Planning and Development

Approved for Submission:

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