

# FORMAL REPORT

<b>To:</b>	Mayor Stratthdee and Members of Council
<b>Prepared by:</b>	Brent Kittmer, CAO/Clerk
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	26 September 2017
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>CAO 35-2017 Authorize RED Grant (Wayfinding Signage Strategy)</b>

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is for Council to consider accepting a \$17,775.00 grant from the Province under the Rural Economic Development (RED) Program. The grant that has been received is to fund 50% of the costs to develop a Wayfinding Signage Strategy as identified in Council's Strategic Plan.

## RECOMMENDATION

THAT CAO 35-2017 regarding the Wayfinding Signage Strategy RED Grant be received, and,

THAT Council accepts the RED funding of \$17,775.00 provided by the Province of Ontario to fund the proposed Wayfinding Signage Strategy; and,

THAT By-law 84-2017 authorizing the Mayor and the Clerk to sign the associated contribution agreement be approved.

## BACKGROUND

In 2016, the reconstruction of Queen St in the downtown was completed. Through temporary signage during construction, we heard how beneficial and helpful clear and coordinated signage is to residents and visitors. Building on this success, Strategic Pillar 2 of the Town's Strategic Plan lists Wayfinding & Identity as Strategic Priorities and Goals. An integrated and coordinated Wayfinding Signage Strategy that supports both visitors and the community (residents, tourism, and business) is the goal. Currently, there is no design/strategy for signage and wayfinding in St. Marys. Signs have been implemented over the past number of years, but none of these sign projects have design elements in common, nor are they connected to an overall system. This has resulted in an uncoordinated collection of signs, messages & directions.

To advance Council's strategic priority, staff applied for a RED Grant to help fund the cost of a developing a wayfinding signage strategy. The purpose of the Wayfinding Signage Strategy is to:

- create a system that reinforces the sense of place, identity, and interconnectedness of the Town and its features;
- illustrate how to improve navigability and wayfinding to and within St. Marys for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers;
- develop a strategy that will assist with creating and promoting a distinct and cohesive design to enhance the Town's image as a welcoming, current, and friendly community;
- develop methods to improve safety through clarifying directions to destinations;
- illustrate how to better communicate and promote the many features and assets in the Town for the community and visitors;

- illustrate how to connect key assets and features through signs and messaging;
- leverage the success of signage projects completed in other rural Ontario areas like Bruce County; tie St. Marys to that successful model to support a consistent Provincial Standard, and visually connect St. Marys to other Ontario communities

They key deliverables of the project would be:

- a strategy that when implemented, will improve communication of how to get to key features and amenities and therefore, improve navigability;
- increased collaboration and connections with key stakeholders through consultation and the project framework (e.g. project team consisting of business, heritage, tourism, culture, youth etc.)
- an increased understanding of what signs and wayfinding is needed in St. Marys, and the priorities for signage and wayfinding;
- a strategy for a unique and place-specific design for a cohesive family of signs with a phased implementation plan;
- a strategic system for connecting key assets and features through identification and wayfinding signage;
- a strategy to increase visitors to specific features and assets (due to clear communication and connected wayfinding);
- incorporating the youth voice into municipal projects, decision-making, and processes; the interest of youth to be involved in this is a preliminary finding of the Perth4Youth Project that St. Marys is currently working on;

The RED grant application proposed a total scope of project valued at \$35,550.00 with the Province providing funding for 50% or \$17,775.00 of the cost. On July 31, 2017 the Town received notice that our grant application was successful and that a contribution agreement from the Province would be forthcoming.

## **REPORT**

The Province requires the Town to pass a by-law accepting the funding and execute the agreement by September 29, 2017. This report presents the contribution agreement that the Province requires the Town to sign so the funds can be provided. The form of agreement is attached to this report, and is the standard form that the Province uses for funding programs. The funding agreement requires regular reporting from the Town as well as acknowledgment of the Province's generous contribution in all project materials.

## **SUMMARY**

Staff are recommending that Council accept the RED Grant of \$17,775.00 for a way finding signage strategy as this course of action advances Council's strategic priorities.

Once the contribution agreement is signed, the project can commence. The scope of the project was to hire a consultant to complete a way finding signage strategy for the Town, with input from a Project Team. The vision for the project team is for it to consist of key stakeholders from the business, tourism, heritage, and culture communities and youth. The role of the Project Team will be advisory in nature to the consultant that is ultimately hired.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The scope of the proposed project is \$35,550 with a 50/50 contribution from the Province and the Town respectively. The Town's portion of the costs will be funded using funds from the 2017 Economic Development operating budget.

## STRATEGIC PLAN

- ☐ Not applicable to this report.
- ☒ This initiative is supported by the following priorities, outcomes, and tactics in the Plan.
  - Pillar #2 Communications and Marketing: Wayfinding and Identity
    - Outcome: A comprehensive approach to identity promotion - including wayfinding - will help St Marys in terms of both promoting itself as a destination to the outside world (tourism and attracting new residents), and supporting a sense of common community with current residents.
    - Tactic(s): Develop a signage program at key sites along the highways advertising Town amenities, and further establish/reinforce its brand with in-town signage and wayfinding.

## OTHERS CONSULTED

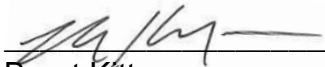
None

## ATTACHMENTS

1. RED Contribution Agreement

## REVIEWED BY

**Recommended by the CAO**



Brent Kittmer  
CAO / Clerk