

<b>To:</b>	Warden Matrosovs and Members of Grey County Council
<b>Committee Date:</b>	December 11, 2025
<b>Subject / Report No:</b>	EDTC-CW-17-25
<b>Title:</b>	Team Grey Memorandum of Understanding
<b>Prepared by:</b>	Savanna Myers, Director EDTC
<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Randy Scherzer, CAO
<b>Lower Tier(s) Affected:</b>	All

## Recommendation

1. That report EDTC-CW-17-25 regarding the Team Grey Memorandum of Understanding be received;
2. That Grey County Council endorse the Team Grey Memorandum of Understanding as presented to support regional economic development and investment readiness;
3. That the Warden and Clerk be authorized to sign the Team Grey MOU; and
4. That this report including the Team Grey MOU be circulated to all Grey County Member Municipalities for consideration and signing.

## Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to present the draft Team Grey Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to Council for consideration and endorsement. The Team Grey MOU is recommended through the Economic Development, Tourism & Culture Master Plan, which was developed with all member municipalities in 2023, to support cohesive regional economic development and investment readiness. The draft MOU was written based on input collected from economic development staff and CAOs from all nine member municipalities and the County, and was reviewed, and amended by the same.

## Background and Discussion

The Team Grey MOU is recommended through the Economic Development, Tourism & Culture Master Plan, which was developed with all member municipalities in 2023. Under Priority 1: Leadership & Collaboration, the action item supports the goal, 'build cohesion':

*1.4 Develop and sign a 'Team Grey' Memorandum of Understanding with member municipalities to clearly define roles, responsibilities, resources and expectations.*

While the Team Grey MOU could encompass a wide scope, the inaugural document is focused only on Priority 1 and Priority 2 of the EDTC Master Plan. This includes:

<b>1.1</b>	Host an <b>Annual Economic Development Leadership Forum</b> to build regional perspective, cohesion and pride among CAOs, senior leadership and elected officials.
<b>1.2</b>	Conduct regular environmental scans to assess trends and pursue strategic <b>advocacy</b> opportunities as Grey County, with the support of municipalities and partners.
<b>1.3</b>	Develop <b>municipal partnership and boundary adjustment case studies</b> to unleash mutually beneficial development and resource sharing opportunities; coordinate research; and site tours of best practice examples.
<b>1.4</b>	Develop and sign a <b>'Team Grey' Memorandum of Understanding</b> with member municipalities to clearly define roles, responsibilities, resources, and expectations.
<b>2.1</b>	Collate, research and prepare data reports to develop a <b>data sharing program</b> to serve member municipalities, partners, and businesses.
<b>2.2</b>	Engage in <b>systems mapping</b> to identify the most relevant municipal, provincial, federal and industry programs that strategically align with our core and emerging sectors.
<b>2.3</b>	Build <b>shared tools and templates</b> at the county level to support municipal and partner efforts, as collectively identified, from policy frameworks, such as the CIP Program, to digital marketing assets.
<b>2.4</b>	Explore options to create <b>municipally owned employment lands</b> , including three large-scale industrial parks strategically positioned across the Region.
<b>2.5</b>	Identify and resource <b>significant regional economic development projects</b> that will generate generational wealth, to positively impact Grey and its member municipalities.
<b>2.6</b>	Strengthen <b>welcoming communities' infrastructure</b> to meaningfully integrate and retain residents.

### Why is an MOU needed?

The MOU sets out a framework for collaboration between Grey County and its nine member municipalities as it relates to economic development and investment readiness, to signal mutual commitment, streamline cooperation and create a clearer, more attractive environment for investors.

From an economic development standpoint, Grey County is fortunate to have strong, collaborative relationships between the County and its member municipalities. This MOU is designed to further strengthen those connections by clarifying roles and responsibilities, while improving continuity during staff transitions through a standardized, transferable framework. The accompanying annual workplans will serve as a mechanism for proposing, evaluating, and implementing projects tailored to individual municipalities.

To date, there has been some uncertainty around leadership, roles, and decision-making in economic development – particularly investment readiness. This lack of clarity can result in inefficiencies and wasted resources, which neither the County nor its municipalities can afford.

The Team Grey MOU is meant to operationalize the discussions and opportunities communicated through the Economic Development Leadership Series, while helping to clearly define roles, responsibilities, resources and expectations between Grey and its municipalities. As Team Grey hones its skills, the MOU can be evaluated and updated to reflect advancement.

### **Why Now?**

Over the first two years of Master Plan implementation, foundational research and preparatory work were essential to reach the stage of a draft MOU. To position our teams for success, we introduced relevant tools, templates, and shared platforms, while deepening our understanding of the opportunities, processes, and perspectives needed to advance economic development across Grey County.

Staff have worked diligently over the past several years to understand the current situation, anticipate future trends, and identify innovative, strategic opportunities that can be started today, to support Grey County Council's long-term goal of building communities for the future. Through research, positioning, and strategic initiatives, staff and Council have aligned priorities and pursued actions that strengthen our collective impact and position the region for sustainable growth.

With this shared understanding and access to common tools, the time is right to formalize collaboration – avoiding duplication of effort and optimizing resources. We also seek commitment to collectively adopt and leverage the tools developed and acquired.

This is a Made in Grey approach to more formalized collaboration, which celebrates and holds on to who we are, both individually and collectively, while we plan and grow together. It's about deciding what we want the County to look like, and taking a proactive, collaborative approach to get there in a sustainable way.

### **Drafting Process**

The 'Team Grey' MOU was formally drafted following three rounds of engagement with economic development staff and CAOs from all nine member municipalities. In October, it was circulated for review and comment by the same.

### **Annual Project Workplans**

Annual project workplans will be jointly developed and shared between the participating municipality(ies) and the County, unless otherwise agreed by all parties. These plans will be project specific and outline program details, timelines, roles and commitments. They will also identify representatives and define mutually agreed supports.

While the MOU applies equally to the County and all member municipalities, annual workplans will only apply to those engaged in a given project. Some municipalities may opt out of projects in a particular year due to resource constraints; however, this does not affect our broader shared commitments and value under the MOU.

### **Definitions**

Terms in economic development are typically subject to many interpretations. To ensure we are all speaking the same language, the following definitions have been agreed:

<p><b>Economic Development (Ec Dev)</b></p>	<p>Economic development is the intentional practice of improving a community's economic well-being and quality of life. It involves activities to attract, create, and retain jobs, foster a resilient and pro-growth tax base, and build an inclusive economy. Economic development is a collaborative effort among industry, government, and community stakeholders, aiming for long-term prosperity and sustainability.</p>
<p><b>Business Retention &amp; Expansion (BR&amp;E)</b></p>	<p>Business Retention &amp; Expansion is a proactive economic development strategy focused on supporting and growing existing businesses within a community. BR&amp;E programs connect with local businesses to understand and respond to their needs, helping them overcome challenges and pursue new opportunities. This approach is typically less costly and more effective than recruiting new businesses and is responsible for up to 80% of net new jobs and capital investment in many communities. BR&amp;E activities include regular check-ins, providing assistance, and developing strategies to improve the local business climate.</p>
<p><b>Investment Attraction (IA)</b></p>	<p>Investment attraction refers to efforts by local economic development organizations to encourage firms from outside their communities to locate operations within their region. It includes domestic relocation within the country and foreign direct investment from international firms. Communities support this by expediting permits, organizing job fairs, sourcing real estate, and facilitating grants. These efforts are essential for diversifying the economy, creating jobs, and growing the tax base.</p>
<p><b>Community Economic Development (CED)</b></p>	<p>Community Economic Development (CED) is a process by which communities work collaboratively to improve economic and social conditions. CED focuses on local empowerment, capacity building, and sustainable development, often involving partnerships among municipalities, businesses, and residents. The goal is to create vibrant, resilient communities that can adapt to changing economic circumstances and foster inclusive growth.</p>
<p><b>Investment Ready Lands</b></p>	<p>Investment Ready Lands are properties that have been prepared and positioned to attract investment. This includes ensuring up-to-date zoning and servicing information (<u>serviced or serviceable</u>), conducting servicing studies, and maintaining inventories of available sites. Investment ready lands are marketed to site selectors and investors, streamlining approvals, and reducing administrative burdens for municipalities and investors.</p>
<p><b>Investor</b></p>	<p>An investor is an individual or organization that provides capital to a business, project or property with the expectation of financial return. Investors may be local, domestic or foreign and include private individuals, corporations and government agencies. In economic development, they are key to funding new ventures, expanding businesses and driving regional growth.</p>

<b>Systems Based Approach</b>	A holistic way of understanding complex problems/geographies by viewing them as interconnected systems rather than isolated pieces and emphasizes the relationships and interactions between them.
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**Mapping the Ecosystem**

Economic Development is a collaborative effort. Each party maintains their autonomy and plays an important role in the broader ecosystem, which when aligned, carries great strength.

Roles & Responsibilities			
Federal & Provincial	Grey County	Member Municipality	Industry Associations/C hambers
Set national & provincial policies	Position region for long term growth & sustainability	Community Vision and Advocacy	Advocacy
International & Interprovincial Trade	Data Collection & Analysis	Community Economic Development	Information sharing, training & education.
Large-scale Innovation	Investment Attraction	Local Infrastructure	Networking
Investing in infrastructure	Tools & Templates	Readiness to support economic development goals	
Foreign Direct Investment Leads	Workforce Development	Business Retention & Expansion	
	Entrepreneurship Support	Business & Landowner Relationship Building	
	Industry & Municipal Support	Local Policies	
	Regional Marketing	Maintain and Expand Lands and Building Inventory	
	Advocacy		

**Grey County’s ‘Team Grey’ Value Proposition to Municipalities**

By signing the Team Grey MOU, municipalities gain access to direct supports, cost savings, and shared resources that strengthen local capacity while reducing duplication and, in some cases, saving expenses.

## **Financial Savings & Resource Efficiencies**

- Cost-sharing opportunities for joint initiatives and strategic projects.
- Potential Seed funding to pilot collaborative projects across multiple municipalities.

## **Capacity Building & Staff Training**

- Access to shared economic development staff and expertise, reducing the need for municipalities to hire specialized roles individually.
- Training programs for new and existing staff, including professional development, leadership training, and succession planning, to build stronger local teams.

## **Data, Research & Marketing Support**

- Exclusive access to regional data tools, dashboards, and sector reports that would otherwise require costly local investment.
- Inclusion in County-wide marketing campaigns, with customized municipal branding and messaging; shared promotional efforts that give municipalities broader exposure without increasing their marketing budgets.
- County-led grant writing to improve funding success. (I.e. CECI Funding for investment strategy and feasibility study; RED for regional marketing programs, etc).

## **Investment Readiness and Advocacy**

- Regional site selector services to ensure all municipalities are represented when investors are looking for opportunities.
- Standardized investment readiness tear sheets and marketing through Invest Ontario where appropriate.
- Stronger advocacy with senior levels of government on shared priorities.

Examples of Additional terms that could be added over time as Team Grey evolves:

- Access to a County-managed pre-approved vendor list with pre-negotiated rates, saving municipalities both time and money on procurement and service delivery.
- County-supported recruitment, internship and succession planning programs to help fill critical skill gaps.
- County-led servicing studies to help municipalities prepare employment lands at a lower cost.
- Standardized planning templates and processes to streamline approvals, reducing administrative burden and consultant costs.

## **Next Steps**

Following Council endorsement, County staff will deliver presentations or delegations to each municipality, accompanied by a corresponding municipal staff report for consideration and endorsement. The start of the term will therefore differ by municipality based on the date of each signature.

## Financial and Resource Implications

There are no direct financial or resource implications related to the adoption of this report for the County or its municipalities. As per the MOU, each party is responsible for its own costs unless otherwise agreed in writing and approved through annual budgets or Council direction. Joint initiatives may be cost-shared on a project-by-project basis. Staff resources will be assigned through annual workplan allocations as appropriate.

## Relevant Consultation

- Internal: CAO, EDTC Staff
  - AODA Compliance (describe)
  - Contribution to Climate Change Action Plan Targets (describe)
- External: All member municipal CAOs, all member municipal economic development staff or designates.

## Appendices and Attachments

[Economic Development Tourism & Culture Master Plan](#)

Team Grey Memorandum of Understanding

Workplan Template