



Staff Report

Communications and Economic Development

Report To: Committee of the Whole
Meeting Date: October 2, 2017
Report Number: FAF.17.117
Subject: Rural Economic Development (RED) Funding Application for Thornbury Visitation Study
Prepared by: Elizabeth Cornish, Communications and Economic Development Coordinator

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report FAF.17.117 ‘Rural Economic Development (RED) Funding Application for Thornbury Visitation Study’, for information.

B. Overview

Council is being updated on the Town’s plan to apply for Rural Economic Development (RED) funding for a visitation study in Thornbury. A visitation study would allow Thornbury to understand who is visiting the Town, identify Thornbury’s target markets, and more specifically, direct Thornbury’s digital marketing efforts. The submission date for this application is September 28th, 2017.

C. Background

Many local tourism organizations including the Georgian Triangle Tourism Association, Blue Mountain Village Association, Visit Grey and the Regional Tourism Organization 7 (RTO7) aka “Bruce Grey Simcoe”, have been using marketing profiles to define the specific demographic characteristics and interests of their visitors. This then enables the use of Environics and other data to target individuals from similar locations and with similar characteristics with marketing messages linked to their interests.

With all of the many social media, print media, online media, and radio opportunities to market Thornbury, the challenge for the Thornbury BIA is to determine which of these options will be the most effective way to invest scarce marketing dollars.

Several attempts at getting local businesses to agree to track the postal codes of their visitors have not been successful. These postal codes would have provided the basic information needed to conduct a successful marketing campaign.

A visitation study (also known as an intercept survey) would identify who was visiting our Town, what prompted their visit to the Town, and key demographic and postal code information that

would provide the minimum data points required to support not only marketing done by the Thornbury BIA, but also marketing being done by the Georgian Triangle Tourism Association and Grey County.

This visitation study will give the Thornbury BIA, the GTTA, Grey County Tourism and the Town the ability to leverage more sophisticated marketing tools and support the economic growth of the region.

D. Financial Impact

The Town is contributing \$5,000 from the Economic Development Initiatives section of the Economic Development operating budget, toward this application.

E. In consultation with

In consultation with Shawn Everitt, Acting CAO, Ruth Prince, Director, Finance and IT and the Thornbury BIA Board.

F. Attachments

None.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Cornish
Communications and Economic Development Coordinator

Shawn Everitt
Director, Community Services and Acting CAO