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AGENDA

Economic Development Advisory Group (EDAG)

Location:

Grey Highlands Municipal Office
206 Toronto Street S., Unit #1
Markdale, ON

Tuesday, June 16, 2026 - 1:00 PM

in-person only

Page

1 CALL TO ORDER

2 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

2.1 Recommendation:

That the Economic Development Advisory Group approves the agenda as circulated or as amended.

3 DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

4 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

4.1 Recommendation:

That the Economic Development Advisory Group approves the minutes of 2026-04-21 as amended or as circulated.

[Economic Development Advisory Group \(EDAG\) - 21 Apr 2026 - Minutes - Html](#)

4 - 6

5 ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

5.1 Economic Development Staff Update

That the Economic Development Advisory Group receive the Economic Development Staff Update for information.

5.2 South Grey Chamber of Commerce - Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Renewal
(item deferred from April 21, 2026 EDAG meeting as per resolution EDAG2026-18)

7 - 16

That the Economic Development Advisory Group receive report CTE.2026.02-South Grey Chamber of Commerce – Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Renewal for information;

And further, that the Group provide feedback and recommendations to Council regarding:

The potential renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the South Grey Chamber of Commerce beyond

**December 31, 2026; and
Any desired service levels, reporting requirements, or
alternative partnership models to be considered in future
discussions.**

[CTE.26.02-South Grey Chamber of Commerce – Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\) Renewal - Pdf](#)

- 5.3 2026-05-06 Presentation to Council - South Grey Chamber of Commerce 17 - 38

That the Economic Development Advisory Group receive the South Grey Chamber of Commerce 2026-05-06 Presentation to Council for information.

[GH 2025 MOU Update Presentation](#)

- 5.4 South Grey Chamber of Commerce Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – Future Considerations 39 - 61

**That the Economic Development Advisory Group receive Report CTE.26.05, South Grey Chamber of Commerce Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – Future Considerations, for information; and
That the Group provide feedback and discussion regarding future economic development priorities, partnership opportunities, and the role of the South Grey Chamber of Commerce within the broader economic development framework of Grey Highlands.**

[CTE.26.05-South Grey Chamber of Commerce Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\) – Future Considerations - Pdf](#)

- 5.5 Old Markdale Hospital Update (McQueen)

That the Economic Development Advisory Group receives the Old Markdale Hospital Update for information.

- 5.6 Talisman Update (Allwood)

That the Economic Development Advisory Group receive the Talisman Update for information.

6 MEMBERS PRIVILEGE

7 NEXT MEETING

- 7.1 Economic Development Advisory Group Meeting
Date: August 25, 2026
Time: 1:00pm
Location: Grey Highlands Municipal Office (in-person only)

8 ADJOURNMENT

- 8.1 Recommendation:

That the Economic Development Advisory Group adjourn until

the next meeting or until the Call of the Chair.

Time:

**The Municipality of Grey Highlands
Economic Development Advisory Group (EDAG) Minutes
Tuesday, April 21, 2026**

Members Present:

Chair Member Tom Allwood, Member Paul McQueen, and Member Dane Nielsen

Members Absent:

Staff:

Manager of Economic Development, County of Grey Steve Furness and Committee & Records Coordinator Danielle Thompson

1 Call to Order

Chair Allwood called the meeting to order at 1:02pm.

2 Approval of Agenda

2.1 Motion:

EDAG2026-12

Dane Nielsen - Paul McQueen

That the Economic Development Advisory Group approves the agenda as circulated.

CARRIED.

3 Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

None declared.

4 Approval of Minutes

4.1 Motion:

EDAG2026-13

Paul McQueen - Dane Nielsen

That the Economic Development Advisory Group approves the minutes of 2026-02-17 as circulated.

CARRIED.

[Economic Development Advisory Group \(EDAG\) - 17 Feb 2026 - Minutes - Html](#)

5 Items for Discussion

5.1 Council Resolutions 2026-120 and 2026-121
(follow-up from February 17, 2026 EDAG meeting)

EDAG2026-14

Dane Nielsen - Paul McQueen

That the Economic Development Advisory Group receive Council Resolutions 2026-120 and 2026-121 for information.

CARRIED.

[Council - 04 Mar 2026 - Resolutions 2026-120, 2026-121](#)

5.2 Economic Development Staff Update

- recruitment update for Economic Development Officer vacancy

EDAG2026-15

Dane Nielsen - Paul McQueen

That Economic Development Advisory Group receive the Economic Development Staff Update for information.

CARRIED.

- 5.3 South Grey Chamber of Commerce – Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Renewal

Staff Report CTE.26.02

EDAG2026-16

Paul McQueen - Dane Nielsen

Main Motion:

That the Economic Development Advisory Committee receive report CTE.2026.02-South Grey Chamber of Commerce – Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Renewal for information.

- - - -

EDAG2026-17

Paul McQueen - Dane Nielsen

Amendment to Main Motion:

That the main motion be amended to remove "receive report CTE.2026.02- South Grey Chamber of Commerce – Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Renewal for information" and to insert "defer consideration of report CTE.26.02 South Grey Chamber of Commerce – Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Renewal until the next meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Group."

CARRIED.

EDAG2026-18

Paul McQueen - Dane Nielsen

Main Motion as Amended:

That the Economic Development Advisory Committee defer consideration of report CTE.26.02 South Grey Chamber of Commerce – Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Renewal until the next meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Group.

CARRIED.

[CTE.26.02-South Grey Chamber of Commerce – Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\) Renewal - Pdf](#)

6 Members Privilege

- 6.1 Member McQueen

- current economic observations

7 Next Meeting

- 7.1 Economic Development Advisory Group Meeting

Date: June 16, 2026

Time: 1:00pm

Location: Grey Highlands Municipal Office (in-person only)

8 Adjournment

- 8.1 Motion:

Economic Development Advisory Group (EDAG)
April 21, 2026

EDAG2026-19

Paul McQueen - Dane Nielsen

**That the Economic Development Advisory Group adjourn until the
Call of the Chair.**

Time: 1:42pm

CARRIED.

REPORT

TO: Economic Development Advisory Group
FROM: Shawnette Crouse
DATE: April 21, 2026
REPORT: CTE.26.02
South Grey Chamber of Commerce – Memorandum of Understanding
SUBJECT: (MOU) Renewal

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Economic Development Advisory Committee receive report CTE.2026.02- South Grey Chamber of Commerce – Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Renewal for information;

And further, that the Committee provide feedback and recommendations to Council regarding:

The potential renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the South Grey Chamber of Commerce beyond December 31, 2026; and
Any desired service levels, reporting requirements, or alternative partnership models to be considered in future discussions.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS:

The Municipality of Grey Highlands entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the South Grey Chamber of Commerce for the period of January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2026 .

The agreement provides \$10,000 in annual financial support in exchange for services including business and community events, tourism promotion, marketing, and business engagement initiatives.

The intent of the four-year agreement was to provide stable funding to support the Chamber in establishing operations and working toward long-term sustainability, with the expectation that future Councils would evaluate continuation of the partnership.

Recent Discussions

A municipal partner meeting was held in February 2026 with the South Grey Chamber of Commerce to discuss current activities and future MOU considerations. While Grey Highlands and Chatham were unable to attend, staff followed up with both municipal partners and Chamber representatives to obtain a summary of discussions.

Key points identified include:

- The current MOU is set to expire at the end of 2026 and was intended to align with the current term of Council.
- Renewal of the MOU is not assumed and will require evaluation by each participating municipality.
- Some municipalities are considering alternative models, such as event-based sponsorship rather than a long-term agreement.
- The Chamber outlined planned activities for 2026, including training and tourism promotion.
- Municipal partners noted potential duplication of services already available through Grey County, particularly in areas such as tourism and business support.
- The Chamber was encouraged to identify unique services that would complement, rather than duplicate, existing offerings.

It is noted that no formal minutes were recorded for this meeting.

Discussion

During discussions with the South Grey Chamber of Commerce, municipal partners requested information regarding membership distribution by municipality. The Chamber advised that they do not currently track membership data by municipal boundary. As a result, participating municipalities do not have access to information identifying how many businesses or members from their respective communities are represented within the Chamber.

This limits the Municipality's ability to assess the direct local benefit and overall return on investment of its financial contribution, particularly when responding to Council and community inquiries.

It is also noted that the Municipality is planning to hire an Economic Development Coordinator in 2026. The addition of this role will enhance the Municipality's internal capacity to deliver core economic development functions, including business support, program delivery, and strategic initiatives.

This increased capacity may impact the scope and necessity of services currently provided through the South Grey Chamber of Commerce under the existing MOU. As such, it will be important to consider how any future agreement aligns with this in-house role to avoid duplication of services and ensure that municipal funding is directed toward activities that provide clear, complementary value.

In addition, concerns were raised regarding potential duplication of services, as certain supports currently offered by the Chamber may also be accessible through Grey County programs. This reinforces the importance of clearly defining the Chamber's role and value within the broader economic development landscape.

Should Council wish to pursue renewal of the MOU, there is an opportunity to strengthen the agreement through the inclusion of clear and measurable reporting requirements. This would support improved transparency, accountability, and alignment with municipal priorities.

Recommended areas for consideration in a future MOU include:

- Tracking and reporting Chamber membership by municipality
- Participation metrics for Chamber-led events and initiatives
- Identification of services that fill gaps not currently addressed by other organizations
- Annual reporting tied to measurable outcomes and municipal investment
- Clear alignment with municipal and regional economic development strategies

The upcoming expiration of the MOU provides an opportunity for the Municipality to review its partnership with the South Grey Chamber of Commerce and ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the community.

Advice from the Economic Development Advisory Committee will assist in guiding future discussions and potential negotiations related to the renewal or restructuring of this agreement.

OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS:

From an operational perspective, the current MOU requires ongoing staff time to support coordination, communication, and participation in Chamber-led initiatives, as well as review of annual reporting and alignment with municipal priorities.

Should the MOU be renewed, enhanced reporting requirements and clearer service deliverables may increase the level of staff oversight required to monitor performance outcomes and ensure accountability. Conversely, if an alternative model is pursued, such as project-based or event sponsorship, administrative processes may shift toward more transactional planning, evaluation, and coordination.

While these responsibilities are anticipated to be managed within existing staff resources, any significant expansion of reporting or service expectations may require further review of operational capacity.

Next Steps

- The South Grey Chamber of Commerce is scheduled to attend as a delegation at the first Council meeting in May to present on the current MOU and its upcoming expiry.
- Staff are seeking input from the Economic Development Committee in advance of this presentation to help inform:
 1. Municipal expectations for future partnership
 2. Desired service levels and reporting requirements
 3. Direction on whether to continue, modify, or explore alternative partnership models

COMMUNICATION POLICY:

Clear and consistent communication will be important as discussions regarding the future of the MOU progress. This includes maintaining open dialogue with the South Grey Chamber of Commerce, municipal partners, and the local business community.

Should changes to the current agreement be considered, it will be important to communicate the rationale in a transparent and balanced manner, emphasizing alignment with municipal priorities, responsible use of taxpayer funds, and the Municipality's evolving capacity to deliver economic development services.

Messaging should reinforce that this review is part of a regular governance process tied to the expiration of the current agreement and is intended to ensure that future partnerships continue to deliver value to the community.

The Chamber's upcoming delegation to Council provides an opportunity to support open discussion, manage expectations, and ensure that all parties have a shared understanding of next steps.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The current agreement includes an annual municipal contribution of \$10,000, which is included in the approved budget.

Future financial implications will be dependent on Council direction regarding continuation or modification of the agreement

LEGAL IMPACT:

The current MOU outlines roles, responsibilities, funding, and termination provisions between the Municipality and the South Grey Chamber of Commerce .

Any future agreement should clearly define deliverables, reporting requirements, and accountability measures to ensure transparency and protect the Municipality's interests.

Any changes or renewal of the agreement would be undertaken in accordance with municipal policies and applicable legislation.

STAFFING IMPACT:

Clear and consistent communication will be important as discussions regarding the future of the MOU progress. This includes maintaining open dialogue with the South Grey Chamber of Commerce, municipal partners, and the local business community.

Should changes to the current agreement be considered, it will be important to communicate the rationale in a transparent manner, emphasizing alignment with municipal priorities, responsible use of taxpayer funds, and the Municipality's evolving capacity to deliver economic development services.

The Chamber's upcoming delegation to Council provides an opportunity to support open discussion, manage expectations, and ensure that all parties have a shared understanding of next steps.

POLICIES/LEGISLATION::

The current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) aligns with the Municipality’s broader objectives of supporting local economic development, business engagement, and tourism. As the agreement approaches its expiry, there is an opportunity to ensure that any future arrangement continues to align with municipal strategic priorities, existing economic development plans, and regional partnerships.

Consideration should be given to ensuring that any renewed or revised agreement reflects current policy direction, avoids duplication of services, and incorporates clear expectations related to service delivery and performance measurement. Establishing defined roles between the Municipality, regional partners, and external organizations will support a coordinated and efficient approach to economic development.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

N/A

CONSULTATION:

Consultation to date has included follow-up discussions with municipal partners and representatives from the South Grey Chamber of Commerce following the February 2026 meeting.

The Chamber is scheduled to present as a delegation to Council in May, providing an opportunity for further input and discussion.

This report is being brought forward to the Economic Development Advisory Committee to obtain feedback and recommendations to inform Council’s consideration. Additional consultation may be undertaken as part of any future negotiations.

ATTACHMENTS OR REFERENCE:

Current MOU

Approved By:

Amanda Fines-VanAlstine,
Clerk

Status:

Approved - 17 Apr 2026



Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

-Between-

The Municipality of Grey Highlands

"The Municipality"

And

South Grey Chamber of Commerce

"Chamber of Commerce"

Period of Agreement: January 1st, 2023 to December 31st, 2026

The South Grey Chamber of Commerce is a membership-based organization, representing approximately 250 members in the Municipalities of Grey Highlands and West Grey, and will be expanding their catchment area into the Townships of Chatsworth and Southgate in 2023.

South Grey Chamber of Commerce Vision:

To be the hub of the South Grey business community, maintaining an adaptable, cooperative, supportive economic environment for new and existing businesses, their owners, and their operators.

South Grey Chamber of Commerce Mission:

To promote and advocate for local businesses while enriching the social network of our local communities. The South Grey Chamber will support local businesses with marketing, community events, networking, and education, and bridge economic development with strategy, communication, and action.

Obligations of the South Grey Chamber of Commerce:

The South Grey Chamber of Commerce will be seeking annual Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with the Municipality of West Grey and the Townships of Southgate and Chatsworth, to align with the annual commitment made by the Municipality of Grey Highlands to support Chamber of Commerce undertakings.

In consideration of the \$10,000 in annual financial support provided by the Municipality of Grey Highlands (Council Resolution #2023-70), the South Grey Chamber of Commerce agrees to provide the following services:

1. Business & Community Events

The Chamber will organize and host the following events to support businesses across the catchment area:

- 1 x annual spring South Grey area job fair
- 1 x annual fall South Grey area job fair
- Annual Business Awards & Recognition event (to rotate annually between each municipal jurisdiction)

- Annual South Grey Home & Garden Show
- 1 x Business Breakfast (or lunch) with Mayor and Council in each municipal jurisdiction
- 1 x annual signature event in each municipal jurisdiction.
- All-candidates meetings in election years (federal, provincial and municipal)

2. Tourism Services

- Installation of tourism brochure stands/racks in high traffic areas across the South Grey catchment area.
- Responsible for the distribution of tourism brochures for Grey Highlands' tourism businesses to key locations across the South Grey Chamber's catchment area during the peak tourism season.
- Participate in the Grey County tourism ambassador initiative by ensuring all Chamber of Commerce staff (including summer student staffing) are trained in tourism information dissemination for visitors to the Municipality and the broader catchment area.
- Development of a South Grey tourism website with content featuring tourism businesses and tourism events in all four of the municipal jurisdictions.
- Develop a tourism-focused digital app to support visitation to Grey Highlands and the broader catchment area.

3. Other obligations of the Chamber of Commerce

- The Chamber of Commerce will invite the participation of the Municipality of Grey Highlands in all business and economic development related activity, in either a direct or indirect capacity, to ensure alignment of strategic goals and undertakings.
- Provide an annual, complimentary membership for the Municipality with the Chamber of Commerce.
- Provide a ½ page complimentary ad to the Municipality in the Chamber of Commerce's annual business directory (or equivalent publication), if applicable.
- Provide complimentary display space to the Municipality of Grey Highlands at area job fairs.
- Provide 4 complimentary tickets to the Municipality of Grey Highlands for the annual Business Awards & Recognition event.
- Provide complimentary 10' x 20' booth space to the Municipality of Grey Highlands at the annual Home & Garden Show (in exchange for free venue rental).
- Provide 8 complimentary tickets to the Municipality of Grey Highlands at the annual Business Breakfast (or lunch) with the Mayor and Council.
- Obtain and maintain at its own expense, through the terms of this Agreement:
 - Comprehensive general liability insurance with a limit of not less than \$2,000,000 for any one occurrence covering the operations and liability assumed under this Agreement; be endorsed to provide that the policy shall not be eligible to be cancelled or allowed to lapse without 30 days prior

written notice; and naming the Municipality of Grey Highlands as an additional insured.

4. Reporting and recognition

- The South Grey Chamber of Commerce will prepare an annual report, and delegate to Council, on the outcomes of their initiatives (due no later than February 28th of each year).
- Inclusion of Municipality of Grey Highlands logo (and website links where applicable), on all Chamber of Commerce materials including (but not limited to), promotional materials, website, newsletters and Municipal recognition at all Chamber of Commerce events.

Obligations of the Municipality of Grey Highlands

In consideration of the South Grey Chamber of Commerce supplying the aforementioned services, the Municipality of Grey Highlands agrees to support the Chamber of Commerce as follows:

- \$10,000 in annual financial support for the period January 1st, 2023 to December 31st, 2026, upon execution of this agreement.
- Recognizing that significant funding for the South Grey Chamber comes from the partner municipalities in the geographic catchment area, the Municipality of Grey Highlands (and the other partner municipalities) agree to provide, where feasible and appropriate, other support (contra or in-kind) that will enhance the strategic priorities of the Chamber of Commerce and the partner municipalities, and will ensure that municipal funding dollars are used to their best advantage in support of the business community in South Grey.
 - Provision of complimentary, in-kind venue space for the Chamber of Commerce's delivery of a Home & Garden Show (dates and location subject to venue availability).
 - Provision of complimentary, in-kind venue space for debates related to municipal, provincial or federal elections, as required (dates and locations subject to venue availability).
 - Provision of complimentary, in-kind venue space for the Chamber of Commerce's delivery of Annual Business Awards & Recognition event (dates and locations subject to venue availability).
 - Provision of complimentary, in-kind venue space for up to one occasion per year for a Chamber of Commerce job fair (dates and locations subject to venue availability).
 - Provision of complimentary, in-kind venue space for the Grey Highlands/Chamber of Commerce Annual Business Breakfast (or lunch) with the Mayor and Council (dates and locations subject to venue availability).
 - Provision of complimentary, in-kind venue space for a mutually agreed upon Grey Highlands signature event (dates and locations subject to venue availability).

Obligations of Both Parties

- Work in a collaborative manner and recognize the mutual value derived from this Memorandum of Understanding.
- Ensure two-way communication between both parties to ensure complementary delivery of services to the business community in Grey Highlands and the larger South Grey catchment area.
- Exploration and evaluation of other partnership or program opportunities not outlined in this MOU that could provide mutual benefit to either party and the broader Grey Highlands community.
- Meet twice a year with representatives of all partner municipalities (West Grey, Southgate, Chatsworth, Grey Highlands), and representatives from the Chamber of Commerce .
- Meet at least twice per year with staff from the Municipality of Grey Highlands and the Chamber of Commerce to review program deliverables and business opportunities.
- Meet annually to review reporting metrics related to this MOU.
- Provide 90-days written notice of termination of this MOU by either party.

Terms of agreement & provisions for amendment

This agreement commences on the date hereof and continues in full force and effect for a period of four years, subject to earlier termination of this agreement, as provided herein.

The terms of this agreement are predicated on the commitment of the South Grey Chamber of Commerce to secure equal and equitable funding from the other three municipalities within the geographic catchment area of the Chamber of Commerce (Southgate, West Grey and Chatsworth).

The Municipality of Grey Highlands reserves the right to reconsider its annual commitment to the South Grey Chamber of Commerce, should the other partner municipalities choose not to support this collaborative undertaking.


The Municipality of Grey Highlands may terminate this agreement if the South Grey Chamber of Commerce is in default of any of its obligations herein provided that the Municipality shall first have given 90-days written notice to the Chamber of Commerce of the nature of the default and provided that such default has not been cured or remedied within the said 90-day period. If such notice has been given, resolutions of the Municipal Council specifying the default and the fact of its occurrence during the 90-day period shall be deemed to be conclusive evidence of the continuing default and this agreement shall thereafter be terminated effective the date of such Council resolution.

Where the Municipality has terminated this agreement in accordance with this provision or any other provision, the Municipality shall be relieved of their obligations at the beginning of the next calendar year.



Notwithstanding the above, the South Grey Chamber of Commerce may, at its option, terminate this agreement at any time after the Municipality defaults in making the required payments or obligation hereunder provided that it shall give 90-days written notice to the Municipality of its intention to terminate the agreement and further provided that the Municipality has failed to cure the default within the said 90-day period.

This Memorandum of Understanding is for the period January 1st, 2023 to December 31st, 2026.



On behalf of the
South Grey Chamber of Commerce
Karen Cox, President

Mar 31/23
Date



On behalf of the
Municipality of Grey Highlands
Michele Harris
Director of Economic & Community Development

31 March 2023
Date

Year in Review



Presented by Karen Cox, President

Continued focus on:

- Economic Growth
- Member & Community engagement
- Tourism development



"2025 was a year of growth, engagement and measurable impact"

Our Mission

To foster:



**Economic
Growth**

**Community
Engagement**

**Local
Prosperity**

Supporting businesses while strengthening the broader community

2025 Strategic Focus

- Enhanced member experience (CRM implementation)
- Expanded marketing communications
- Launch of Explore South Grey
- Growth in digital and social platforms
- Stronger community and business engagement

Digital Growth and Reach

- Website enhancements (mobile optimization + analytics)
- Newsletter growth (primary communication tool)
- 150+ new tourism subscribers
- Expanded Facebook & Instagram presence

Digital platforms are now the core driver of engagement

Digital Communications Performance

Email Newsletter

53%

Open Rate (+12.6% YoY)

441

Email Subscribers (+10.3%)

3.6%

Click Rate (+3.8% YoY)

15,491

Total Email Sends

Chamber Website (Sept–Dec)

1.2K

Active Users

1:18

Avg Engagement Time

42%

Traffic from Organic Social

** Newsletter Explore South Grey launching Q1 2026 – 150+ subscribers already collected*

Social Media Performance – SGCC (Facebook & Instagram)

914.5K

Total Views

11.2K

Content Interactions

7.5K

Link Clicks

659

New Followers

Holiday in the Highlands – Social Media Spotlight (Nov 3 – Dec 21)

112

Posts

101,291

Views

57,949

Total Reach

1,597

Reactions / Comments

6,881

Total Clicks

Explore South Grey Initiative

- Launched Summer 2025
- Tourism-focused website+brand
- Built as a **destination marketing hub**
- Supported by social media channels

Positioning South Grey as a Tourism Destination

Tourism Services – Explore South Grey

Explore South Grey Website (Launched July 2025)

699

Active Users

1:35

Avg Engagement
Time

45+

Ontario
Communities

Strong reach from:

- GTA
- Kitchener/Waterloo
- Guelph
- Owen Sound

Reaching Both Tourists and Regional Audiences

Tourism Services – Social Media Results

Social Media (July–Dec)

341.5K

Total Views

8.4K

Link Clicks

1.5K

Interactions

564

New Followers

Cost-effective and High-Impact Marketing Tool

Business & Community Events



Home & Garden Show



Business Awards Gala



Snap & Shop Campaign



Networking Events



All Candidates Debates



Signature Events

Home & Garden Show



- 1800+ Attendees with Exhibitors and Vendors on the Arena and Kinplex floor

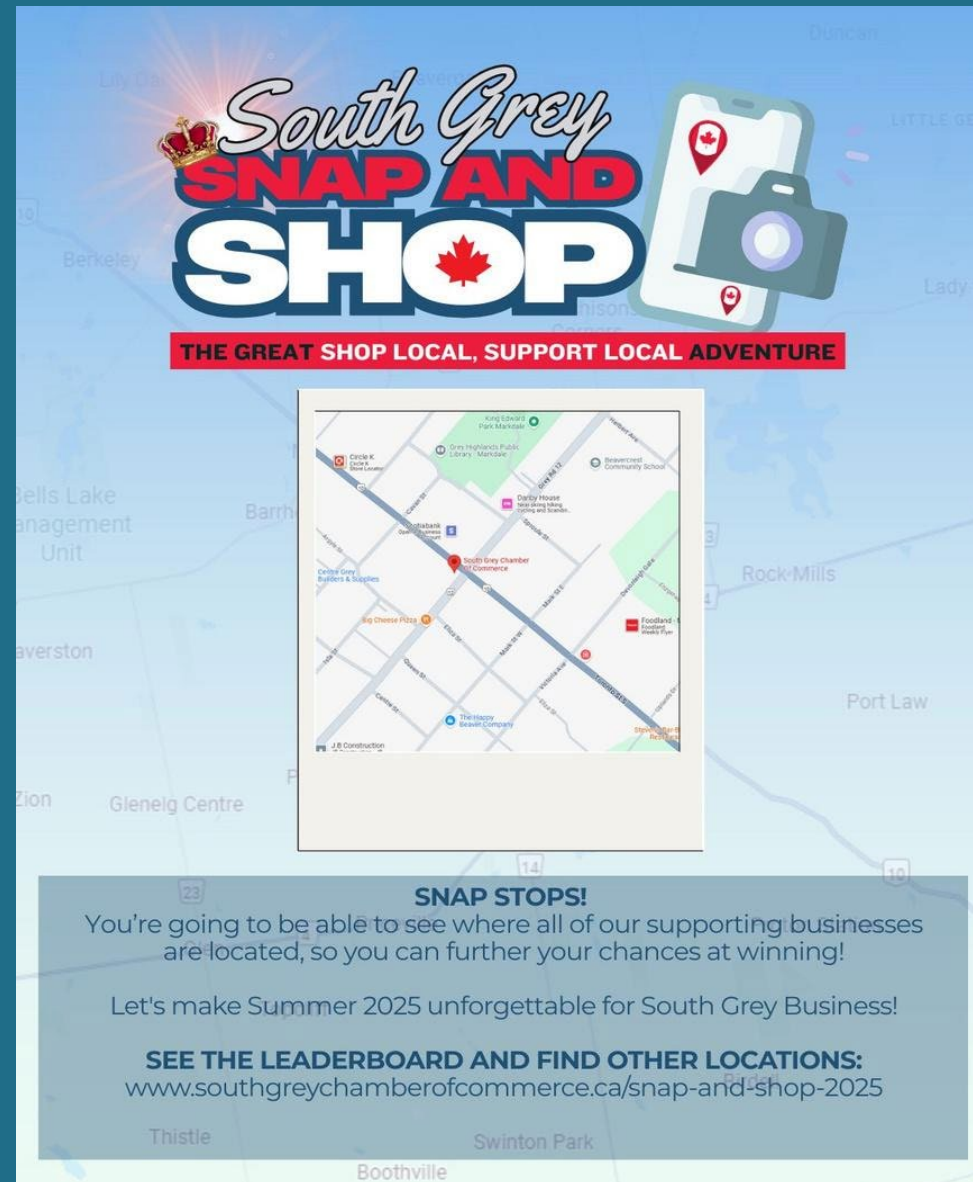
Business Excellence Recognition



- 80 Attendees
- Public voting system
- Increased social engagement
- Keynote: Senator Robert Black

- Celebrating and Elevating Local Business Success

Snap & Shop Campaign



- 42% increase in business participation
- Expanded to 8 weeks
- Regional representation
- 7 Prize Packages were given away

- Driving “Shop Local” Behaviour

Community & Business Engagement



- Networking events building local supply chains
- Lunch, Share & Learn collaboration
- Provincial & Federal debates (100+ in attendance each)

- **Strengthening Local Connections and Civic Engagement**

Holiday in the Highlands Impact



- New Elf on the Shelf Hunt

Holiday in the Highlands Social Media



57,949

Total Reach



101,291

Views



6911

Total Clicks

Tourism Services Delivered

- Brochure Services Delivered
- Tourism office engagement
- Participation in regional tourism initiatives

- Last summer over 71 in person tourism inquiries
- Many more tourism inquiries received online

Tourism Innovation & Challenges

- Driftscape App implementation challenges
- Limited user accessibility
- Lack of measurable engagement

Forward Focus

- New Platform selection (Q1 2026)
- Launch improved tours (Q2 2026)

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2025 In Review

- Strong collaboration
- Increased business engagement
- Expanded marketing reach
- Continued advocacy for local business

A Year Defined by Connection, Resilience, and Growth

Looking Ahead to 2026

- Expanded member engagement
- Strengthen regional partnerships
- Enhance tourism tools
- Support business innovation

THANK YOU

We appreciate your continued support and membership



"2025 was a year of growth, engagement and measurable impact"

REPORT

TO: Economic Development Advisory Group
FROM: Shawnette Crouse
DATE: June 16, 2026
REPORT: CTE.26.05
South Grey Chamber of Commerce Memorandum of Understanding
SUBJECT: (MOU) – Future Considerations

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Economic Development Advisory Group receive Report CTE.26.05, South Grey Chamber of Commerce Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – Future Considerations, for information; and
That the Group provide feedback and discussion regarding future economic development priorities, partnership opportunities, and the role of the South Grey Chamber of Commerce within the broader economic development framework of Grey Highlands.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS:

The Municipality of Grey Highlands entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the South Grey Chamber of Commerce (SGCC) for the period of January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2026. The agreement was established as a regional partnership involving Grey Highlands, West Grey, Southgate, and Chatsworth and included an annual municipal contribution of \$10,000 in exchange for services related to business engagement, tourism promotion, events, networking, and economic development activities.

The original intent of the agreement was to provide stable funding to assist the Chamber in expanding its operations throughout the South Grey region while establishing a sustainable organization supported through memberships, sponsorships, events, and other revenue-generating activities.

Since entering into the agreement, the Chamber has contributed positively to the region through business recognition programs, networking opportunities, tourism initiatives, job fairs, community events, and regional collaboration efforts. The Chamber has played an important role in supporting businesses and fostering partnerships throughout South Grey.

As the current MOU approaches its expiry on December 31, 2026, participating municipalities have begun reviewing their future involvement and considering how economic development services can best be delivered moving forward.

A significant development occurred in May 2026 when the Township of Southgate completed a review of its participation in the Chamber and passed a resolution indicating it will not renew its Memorandum of Understanding beyond December 31, 2026. Southgate Council resolved:

"That Council will not renew its current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the South Grey Chamber of Commerce (SGCC) upon its expiry on December 31, 2026; and That Council refer the SGCC to other sources of community funding to support its events and activities like those provided to other local not-for-profit community groups and organizations."

This decision is noteworthy as the current agreement was intended to be a collaborative regional undertaking among all four participating municipalities.

The current MOU specifically states that the agreement is predicated on the South Grey Chamber of Commerce securing equal and equitable funding from the other participating municipalities and further states that Grey Highlands reserves the right to reconsider its annual commitment should the other partner municipalities choose not to support the collaborative undertaking.

At this time, staff are not seeking direction regarding renewal or non-renewal of the MOU. Rather, staff believe it is appropriate to begin discussions regarding future economic development priorities and how various organizations and partnerships can best support those priorities.

An important consideration is the Municipality's recent recruitment for an Economic and Community Development Officer. Interviews for this position are expected to begin shortly.

The addition of this position represents a significant investment by Council in building internal economic development capacity. The role will focus on business retention and expansion, investment attraction, tourism development, stakeholder engagement, grant opportunities, downtown revitalization initiatives, and implementation of economic development priorities.

One of the key initiatives anticipated for the new Economic and Community Development Officer will be the development and implementation of a Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) Program.

A BR&E Program is a structured economic development initiative designed to engage directly with existing businesses to better understand their needs, opportunities, challenges, and future plans. Through business visits, surveys, and ongoing engagement, the Municipality can gather information regarding workforce challenges, infrastructure needs, regulatory concerns, investment opportunities, succession planning, and future growth opportunities.

The purpose of a BR&E Program is to support and strengthen existing businesses while identifying opportunities for economic growth. The information gathered assists municipalities in developing targeted programs, addressing barriers to growth, and ensuring economic development initiatives reflect the actual needs of the business community.

As Grey Highlands builds its internal economic development capacity, the findings of a BR&E Program may provide valuable information regarding the types of services businesses value most and where organizations such as the South Grey Chamber of Commerce can provide complementary support.

For this reason, the Committee may wish to consider whether additional information gathered through the BR&E Program should help inform any future recommendations regarding economic development partnerships.

OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The recruitment of the Economic and Community Development Officer will significantly increase the Municipality's ability to deliver economic development services directly.

This position will provide enhanced capacity for business engagement, investment attraction, tourism development, community partnerships, and implementation of strategic initiatives.

The relationship between internal economic development services and external organizations such as the South Grey Chamber of Commerce will be an important consideration moving forward to ensure efforts are complementary and provide value to businesses and taxpayers.

GREY HIGHLANDS STRATEGIC PLAN:

Vibrant Economy - Continue to work with regional partners to address workforce challenges and transportation issues related to business growth and development.

Responsible Governance - Practice good public sector management, adhere to the legal framework for governance, accountability, transparency, and the free flow of public information.

COMMUNICATION POLICY:

The review of the South Grey Chamber of Commerce MOU should be communicated as part of a normal governance and partnership review process associated with the expiry of the current agreement.

Communication should recognize the positive contributions of the Chamber while emphasizing Council's responsibility to evaluate partnerships, investments, and service delivery models to ensure alignment with municipal priorities and community needs.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The current agreement provides for an annual municipal contribution of \$10,000 through December 31, 2026. No financial changes are being proposed through this report.

Future financial implications will depend on Council direction and any future partnership models considered.

LEGAL IMPACT:

The current MOU remains in effect until December 31, 2026.

The agreement identifies that municipal participation is based on equitable contributions from participating municipalities and provides Grey Highlands the ability to reconsider its commitment should other municipalities choose not to participate.

STAFFING IMPACT:

The recruitment of the Economic and Community Development Officer will increase the Municipality's internal capacity to deliver economic development initiatives and support future business engagement activities.

POLICIES/LEGISLATION::

The review of the MOU aligns with the Municipality's responsibility to regularly evaluate partnerships, funding agreements, and economic development initiatives to ensure alignment with Council priorities and strategic objectives.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

N/A

CONSULTATION:

Consultation to date has included discussions with municipal partners, review of the South Grey Chamber of Commerce Memorandum of Understanding, review of Southgate's recent staff report and Council direction, and previous discussions with the Economic Development Advisory Group.

Further consultation may occur through the future Business Retention and Expansion Program and ongoing discussions with regional partners.

Approved By:

Amanda Fines-VanAlstine,
Clerk

Status:

Approved - 02 Jun 2026



Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

-Between-

**The Municipality of Grey Highlands
"The Municipality"**

And

**South Grey Chamber of Commerce
"Chamber of Commerce"**

Period of Agreement: January 1st, 2023 to December 31st, 2026

The South Grey Chamber of Commerce is a membership-based organization, representing approximately 250 members in the Municipalities of Grey Highlands and West Grey, and will be expanding their catchment area into the Townships of Chatsworth and Southgate in 2023.

South Grey Chamber of Commerce Vision:

To be the hub of the South Grey business community, maintaining an adaptable, cooperative, supportive economic environment for new and existing businesses, their owners, and their operators.

South Grey Chamber of Commerce Mission:

To promote and advocate for local businesses while enriching the social network of our local communities. The South Grey Chamber will support local businesses with marketing, community events, networking, and education, and bridge economic development with strategy, communication, and action.

Obligations of the South Grey Chamber of Commerce:

The South Grey Chamber of Commerce will be seeking annual Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with the Municipality of West Grey and the Townships of Southgate and Chatsworth, to align with the annual commitment made by the Municipality of Grey Highlands to support Chamber of Commerce undertakings.

In consideration of the \$10,000 in annual financial support provided by the Municipality of Grey Highlands (Council Resolution #2023-70), the South Grey Chamber of Commerce agrees to provide the following services:

1. Business & Community Events

The Chamber will organize and host the following events to support businesses across the catchment area:

- 1 x annual spring South Grey area job fair
- 1 x annual fall South Grey area job fair
- Annual Business Awards & Recognition event (to rotate annually between each municipal jurisdiction)

- Annual South Grey Home & Garden Show
- 1 x Business Breakfast (or lunch) with Mayor and Council in each municipal jurisdiction
- 1 x annual signature event in each municipal jurisdiction.
- All-candidates meetings in election years (federal, provincial and municipal)

2. **Tourism Services**

- Installation of tourism brochure stands/racks in high traffic areas across the South Grey catchment area.
- Responsible for the distribution of tourism brochures for Grey Highlands' tourism businesses to key locations across the South Grey Chamber's catchment area during the peak tourism season.
- Participate in the Grey County tourism ambassador initiative by ensuring all Chamber of Commerce staff (including summer student staffing) are trained in tourism information dissemination for visitors to the Municipality and the broader catchment area.
- Development of a South Grey tourism website with content featuring tourism businesses and tourism events in all four of the municipal jurisdictions.
- Develop a tourism-focused digital app to support visitation to Grey Highlands and the broader catchment area.

3. **Other obligations of the Chamber of Commerce**

- The Chamber of Commerce will invite the participation of the Municipality of Grey Highlands in all business and economic development related activity, in either a direct or indirect capacity, to ensure alignment of strategic goals and undertakings.
- Provide an annual, complimentary membership for the Municipality with the Chamber of Commerce.
- Provide a ½ page complimentary ad to the Municipality in the Chamber of Commerce's annual business directory (or equivalent publication), if applicable.
- Provide complimentary display space to the Municipality of Grey Highlands at area job fairs.
- Provide 4 complimentary tickets to the Municipality of Grey Highlands for the annual Business Awards & Recognition event.
- Provide complimentary 10' x 20' booth space to the Municipality of Grey Highlands at the annual Home & Garden Show (in exchange for free venue rental).
- Provide 8 complimentary tickets to the Municipality of Grey Highlands at the annual Business Breakfast (or lunch) with the Mayor and Council.
- Obtain and maintain at its own expense, through the terms of this Agreement:
 - Comprehensive general liability insurance with a limit of not less than \$2,000,000 for any one occurrence covering the operations and liability assumed under this Agreement; be endorsed to provide that the policy shall not be eligible to be cancelled or allowed to lapse without 30 days prior

written notice; and naming the Municipality of Grey Highlands as an additional insured.

4. Reporting and recognition

- The South Grey Chamber of Commerce will prepare an annual report, and delegate to Council, on the outcomes of their initiatives (due no later than February 28th of each year).
- Inclusion of Municipality of Grey Highlands logo (and website links where applicable), on all Chamber of Commerce materials including (but not limited to), promotional materials, website, newsletters and Municipal recognition at all Chamber of Commerce events.

Obligations of the Municipality of Grey Highlands

In consideration of the South Grey Chamber of Commerce supplying the aforementioned services, the Municipality of Grey Highlands agrees to support the Chamber of Commerce as follows:

- \$10,000 in annual financial support for the period January 1st, 2023 to December 31st, 2026, upon execution of this agreement.
- Recognizing that significant funding for the South Grey Chamber comes from the partner municipalities in the geographic catchment area, the Municipality of Grey Highlands (and the other partner municipalities) agree to provide, where feasible and appropriate, other support (contra or in-kind) that will enhance the strategic priorities of the Chamber of Commerce and the partner municipalities, and will ensure that municipal funding dollars are used to their best advantage in support of the business community in South Grey.
 - Provision of complimentary, in-kind venue space for the Chamber of Commerce's delivery of a Home & Garden Show (dates and location subject to venue availability).
 - Provision of complimentary, in-kind venue space for debates related to municipal, provincial or federal elections, as required (dates and locations subject to venue availability).
 - Provision of complimentary, in-kind venue space for the Chamber of Commerce's delivery of Annual Business Awards & Recognition event (dates and locations subject to venue availability).
 - Provision of complimentary, in-kind venue space for up to one occasion per year for a Chamber of Commerce job fair (dates and locations subject to venue availability).
 - Provision of complimentary, in-kind venue space for the Grey Highlands/Chamber of Commerce Annual Business Breakfast (or lunch) with the Mayor and Council (dates and locations subject to venue availability).
 - Provision of complimentary, in-kind venue space for a mutually agreed upon Grey Highlands signature event (dates and locations subject to venue availability).

Obligations of Both Parties

- Work in a collaborative manner and recognize the mutual value derived from this Memorandum of Understanding.
- Ensure two-way communication between both parties to ensure complementary delivery of services to the business community in Grey Highlands and the larger South Grey catchment area.
- Exploration and evaluation of other partnership or program opportunities not outlined in this MOU that could provide mutual benefit to either party and the broader Grey Highlands community.
- Meet twice a year with representatives of all partner municipalities (West Grey, Southgate, Chatsworth, Grey Highlands), and representatives from the Chamber of Commerce .
- Meet at least twice per year with staff from the Municipality of Grey Highlands and the Chamber of Commerce to review program deliverables and business opportunities.
- Meet annually to review reporting metrics related to this MOU.
- Provide 90-days written notice of termination of this MOU by either party.

Terms of agreement & provisions for amendment

This agreement commences on the date hereof and continues in full force and effect for a period of four years, subject to earlier termination of this agreement, as provided herein.

The terms of this agreement are predicated on the commitment of the South Grey Chamber of Commerce to secure equal and equitable funding from the other three municipalities within the geographic catchment area of the Chamber of Commerce (Southgate, West Grey and Chatsworth).


The Municipality of Grey Highlands reserves the right to reconsider its annual commitment to the South Grey Chamber of Commerce, should the other partner municipalities choose not to support this collaborative undertaking.

The Municipality of Grey Highlands may terminate this agreement if the South Grey Chamber of Commerce is in default of any of its obligations herein provided that the Municipality shall first have given 90-days written notice to the Chamber of Commerce of the nature of the default and provided that such default has not been cured or remedied within the said 90-day period. If such notice has been given, resolutions of the Municipal Council specifying the default and the fact of its occurrence during the 90-day period shall be deemed to be conclusive evidence of the continuing default and this agreement shall thereafter be terminated effective the date of such Council resolution.

Where the Municipality has terminated this agreement in accordance with this provision or any other provision, the Municipality shall be relieved of their obligations at the beginning of the next calendar year.

Notwithstanding the above, the South Grey Chamber of Commerce may, at its option, terminate this agreement at any time after the Municipality defaults in making the required payments or obligation hereunder provided that it shall give 90-days written notice to the Municipality of its intention to terminate the agreement and further provided that the Municipality has failed to cure the default within the said 90-day period.

This Memorandum of Understanding is for the period January 1st, 2023 to December 31st, 2026.



On behalf of the
South Grey Chamber of Commerce
Karen Cox, President

Mar 31/23
Date



On behalf of the
Municipality of Grey Highlands
Michele Harris
Director of Economic & Community Development

31 March 2023
Date

REPORT

TO: Economic Development Advisory Group
FROM: Shawnette Crouse
DATE: April 21, 2026
REPORT: CTE.26.02
South Grey Chamber of Commerce – Memorandum of Understanding
SUBJECT: (MOU) Renewal

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Economic Development Advisory Committee receive report CTE.2026.02- South Grey Chamber of Commerce – Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Renewal for information;

And further, that the Committee provide feedback and recommendations to Council regarding:

The potential renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the South Grey Chamber of Commerce beyond December 31, 2026; and
Any desired service levels, reporting requirements, or alternative partnership models to be considered in future discussions.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS:

The Municipality of Grey Highlands entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the South Grey Chamber of Commerce for the period of January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2026 .

The agreement provides \$10,000 in annual financial support in exchange for services including business and community events, tourism promotion, marketing, and business engagement initiatives.

The intent of the four-year agreement was to provide stable funding to support the Chamber in establishing operations and working toward long-term sustainability, with the expectation that future Councils would evaluate continuation of the partnership.

Recent Discussions

A municipal partner meeting was held in February 2026 with the South Grey Chamber of Commerce to discuss current activities and future MOU considerations. While Grey Highlands and Chatham were unable to attend, staff followed up with both municipal partners and Chamber representatives to obtain a summary of discussions.

Key points identified include:

- The current MOU is set to expire at the end of 2026 and was intended to align with the current term of Council.
- Renewal of the MOU is not assumed and will require evaluation by each participating municipality.
- Some municipalities are considering alternative models, such as event-based sponsorship rather than a long-term agreement.
- The Chamber outlined planned activities for 2026, including training and tourism promotion.
- Municipal partners noted potential duplication of services already available through Grey County, particularly in areas such as tourism and business support.
- The Chamber was encouraged to identify unique services that would complement, rather than duplicate, existing offerings.

It is noted that no formal minutes were recorded for this meeting.

Discussion

During discussions with the South Grey Chamber of Commerce, municipal partners requested information regarding membership distribution by municipality. The Chamber advised that they do not currently track membership data by municipal boundary. As a result, participating municipalities do not have access to information identifying how many businesses or members from their respective communities are represented within the Chamber.

This limits the Municipality's ability to assess the direct local benefit and overall return on investment of its financial contribution, particularly when responding to Council and community inquiries.

It is also noted that the Municipality is planning to hire an Economic Development Coordinator in 2026. The addition of this role will enhance the Municipality's internal capacity to deliver core economic development functions, including business support, program delivery, and strategic initiatives.

This increased capacity may impact the scope and necessity of services currently provided through the South Grey Chamber of Commerce under the existing MOU. As such, it will be important to consider how any future agreement aligns with this in-house role to avoid duplication of services and ensure that municipal funding is directed toward activities that provide clear, complementary value.

In addition, concerns were raised regarding potential duplication of services, as certain supports currently offered by the Chamber may also be accessible through Grey County programs. This reinforces the importance of clearly defining the Chamber's role and value within the broader economic development landscape.

Should Council wish to pursue renewal of the MOU, there is an opportunity to strengthen the agreement through the inclusion of clear and measurable reporting requirements. This would support improved transparency, accountability, and alignment with municipal priorities.

Recommended areas for consideration in a future MOU include:

- Tracking and reporting Chamber membership by municipality
- Participation metrics for Chamber-led events and initiatives
- Identification of services that fill gaps not currently addressed by other organizations
- Annual reporting tied to measurable outcomes and municipal investment
- Clear alignment with municipal and regional economic development strategies

The upcoming expiration of the MOU provides an opportunity for the Municipality to review its partnership with the South Grey Chamber of Commerce and ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the community.

Advice from the Economic Development Advisory Committee will assist in guiding future discussions and potential negotiations related to the renewal or restructuring of this agreement.

OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS:

From an operational perspective, the current MOU requires ongoing staff time to support coordination, communication, and participation in Chamber-led initiatives, as well as review of annual reporting and alignment with municipal priorities.

Should the MOU be renewed, enhanced reporting requirements and clearer service deliverables may increase the level of staff oversight required to monitor performance outcomes and ensure accountability. Conversely, if an alternative model is pursued, such as project-based or event sponsorship, administrative processes may shift toward more transactional planning, evaluation, and coordination.

While these responsibilities are anticipated to be managed within existing staff resources, any significant expansion of reporting or service expectations may require further review of operational capacity.

Next Steps

- The South Grey Chamber of Commerce is scheduled to attend as a delegation at the first Council meeting in May to present on the current MOU and its upcoming expiry.
- Staff are seeking input from the Economic Development Committee in advance of this presentation to help inform:
 1. Municipal expectations for future partnership
 2. Desired service levels and reporting requirements
 3. Direction on whether to continue, modify, or explore alternative partnership models

COMMUNICATION POLICY:

Clear and consistent communication will be important as discussions regarding the future of the MOU progress. This includes maintaining open dialogue with the South Grey Chamber of Commerce, municipal partners, and the local business community.

Should changes to the current agreement be considered, it will be important to communicate the rationale in a transparent and balanced manner, emphasizing alignment with municipal priorities, responsible use of taxpayer funds, and the Municipality's evolving capacity to deliver economic development services.

Messaging should reinforce that this review is part of a regular governance process tied to the expiration of the current agreement and is intended to ensure that future partnerships continue to deliver value to the community.

The Chamber's upcoming delegation to Council provides an opportunity to support open discussion, manage expectations, and ensure that all parties have a shared understanding of next steps.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The current agreement includes an annual municipal contribution of \$10,000, which is included in the approved budget.

Future financial implications will be dependent on Council direction regarding continuation or modification of the agreement

LEGAL IMPACT:

The current MOU outlines roles, responsibilities, funding, and termination provisions between the Municipality and the South Grey Chamber of Commerce .

Any future agreement should clearly define deliverables, reporting requirements, and accountability measures to ensure transparency and protect the Municipality's interests.

Any changes or renewal of the agreement would be undertaken in accordance with municipal policies and applicable legislation.

STAFFING IMPACT:

Clear and consistent communication will be important as discussions regarding the future of the MOU progress. This includes maintaining open dialogue with the South Grey Chamber of Commerce, municipal partners, and the local business community.

Should changes to the current agreement be considered, it will be important to communicate the rationale in a transparent manner, emphasizing alignment with municipal priorities, responsible use of taxpayer funds, and the Municipality's evolving capacity to deliver economic development services.

The Chamber's upcoming delegation to Council provides an opportunity to support open discussion, manage expectations, and ensure that all parties have a shared understanding of next steps.

POLICIES/LEGISLATION::

The current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) aligns with the Municipality's broader objectives of supporting local economic development, business engagement, and tourism. As the agreement approaches its expiry, there is an opportunity to ensure that any future arrangement continues to align with municipal strategic priorities, existing economic development plans, and regional partnerships.

Consideration should be given to ensuring that any renewed or revised agreement reflects current policy direction, avoids duplication of services, and incorporates clear expectations related to service delivery and performance measurement. Establishing defined roles between the Municipality, regional partners, and external organizations will support a coordinated and efficient approach to economic development.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

N/A

CONSULTATION:

Consultation to date has included follow-up discussions with municipal partners and representatives from the South Grey Chamber of Commerce following the February 2026 meeting.

The Chamber is scheduled to present as a delegation to Council in May, providing an opportunity for further input and discussion.

This report is being brought forward to the Economic Development Advisory Committee to obtain feedback and recommendations to inform Council's consideration. Additional consultation may be undertaken as part of any future negotiations.

ATTACHMENTS OR REFERENCE:

Current MOU

Approved By:

Amanda Fines-VanAlstine,
Clerk

Status:

Approved - 17 Apr 2026



Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

-Between-

**The Municipality of Grey Highlands
"The Municipality"**

And

**South Grey Chamber of Commerce
"Chamber of Commerce"**

Period of Agreement: January 1st, 2023 to December 31st, 2026

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The South Grey Chamber of Commerce will be seeking annual Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with the Municipality of West Grey and the Townships of Southgate and Chatsworth, to align with the annual commitment made by the Municipality of Grey Highlands to support Chamber of Commerce undertakings.

In consideration of the \$10,000 in annual financial support provided by the Municipality of Grey Highlands (Council Resolution #2023-70), the South Grey Chamber of Commerce agrees to provide the following services:

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 - 1x Business Breakfast (or lunch) with Mayor and Council in each municipal jurisdiction
 - 1x annual signature event in each municipal jurisdiction.
 - All-candidates meetings in election years (federal, provincial and municipal)
2. **Tourism Services**
- Installation of tourism brochure stands/racks in high traffic areas across the South Grey catchment area.
 - Responsible for the distribution of tourism brochures for Grey Highlands' tourism businesses to key locations across the South Grey Chamber's catchment area during the peak tourism season.
 - Participate in the Grey County tourism ambassador initiative by ensuring all Chamber of Commerce staff (including summer student staffing) are trained in tourism information dissemination for visitors to the Municipality and the broader catchment area.
 - Development of a South Grey tourism website with content featuring tourism businesses and tourism events in all four of the municipal jurisdictions.
 - Develop a tourism-focused digital app to support visitation to Grey Highlands and the broader catchment area.
3. **Other obligations of the Chamber of Commerce**
- The Chamber of Commerce will invite the participation of the Municipality of Grey Highlands in all business and economic development related activity, in either a direct or indirect capacity, to ensure alignment of strategic goals and undertakings.
 - Provide an annual, complimentary membership for the Municipality with the Chamber of Commerce.
 - Provide a ½ page complimentary ad to the Municipality in the Chamber of Commerce's annual business directory (or equivalent publication), if applicable.
 - Provide complimentary display space to the Municipality of Grey Highlands at area job fairs.
 - Provide 4 complimentary tickets to the Municipality of Grey Highlands for the annual Business Awards & Recognition event.
 - Provide complimentary 10' x 20' booth space to the Municipality of Grey Highlands at the annual Home & Garden Show (in exchange for free venue rental).
 - Provide 8 complimentary tickets to the Municipality of Grey Highlands at the annual Business Breakfast (or lunch) with the Mayor and Council.
 - Obtain and maintain at its own expense, through the terms of this Agreement:
 - Comprehensive general liability insurance with a limit of not less than \$2,000,000 for any one occurrence covering the operations and liability assumed under this Agreement; be endorsed to provide that the policy shall not be eligible to be cancelled or allowed to lapse without 30 days prior

written notice; and naming the Municipality of Grey Highlands as an additional insured.

4. **Reporting and recognition**

- The South Grey Chamber of Commerce will prepare an annual report, and delegate to Council, on the outcomes of their initiatives (due no later than February 28th of each year).
- Inclusion of Municipality of Grey Highlands logo (and website links where applicable), on all Chamber of Commerce materials including (but not limited to), promotional materials, website, newsletters and Municipal recognition at all Chamber of Commerce events.

Obligations of the Municipality of Grey Highlands

In consideration of the South Grey Chamber of Commerce supplying the aforementioned services, the Municipality of Grey Highlands agrees to support the Chamber of Commerce as follows:

- \$10,000 in annual financial support for the period January 1st, 2023 to December 31st, 2026, upon execution of this agreement.
- Recognizing that significant funding for the South Grey Chamber comes from the partner municipalities in the geographic catchment area, the Municipality of Grey Highlands (and the other partner municipalities) agree to provide, where feasible and appropriate, other support (contra or in-kind) that will enhance the strategic priorities of the Chamber of Commerce and the partner municipalities, and will ensure that municipal funding dollars are used to their best advantage in support of the business community in South Grey.
 - Provision of complimentary, in-kind venue space for the Chamber of Commerce's delivery of a Home & Garden Show (dates and location subject to venue availability).
 - Provision of complimentary, in-kind venue space for debates related to municipal, provincial or federal elections, as required (dates and locations subject to venue availability).
 - Provision of complimentary, in-kind venue space for the Chamber of Commerce's delivery of Annual Business Awards & Recognition event (dates and locations subject to venue availability).
 - Provision of complimentary, in-kind venue space for up to one occasion per year for a Chamber of Commerce job fair (dates and locations subject to venue availability).
 - Provision of complimentary, in-kind venue space for the Grey Highlands/Chamber of Commerce Annual Business Breakfast (or lunch) with the Mayor and Council (dates and locations subject to venue availability).
 - Provision of complimentary, in-kind venue space for a mutually agreed upon Grey Highlands signature event (dates and locations subject to venue availability).

Obligations of Both Parties

- Work in a collaborative manner and recognize the mutual value derived from this Memorandum of Understanding.
- Ensure two-way communication between both parties to ensure complementary delivery of services to the business community in Grey Highlands and the larger South Grey catchment area.
- Exploration and evaluation of other partnership or program opportunities not outlined in this MOU that could provide mutual benefit to either party and the broader Grey Highlands community.
- Meet twice a year with representatives of all partner municipalities (West Grey, Southgate, Chatsworth, Grey Highlands), and representatives from the Chamber of Commerce .
- Meet at least twice per year with staff from the Municipality of Grey Highlands and the Chamber of Commerce to review program deliverables and business opportunities.
- Meet annually to review reporting metrics related to this MOU.
- Provide 90-days written notice of termination of this MOU by either party.

Terms of agreement & provisions for amendment

This agreement commences on the date hereof and continues in full force and effect for a period of four years, subject to earlier termination of this agreement, as provided herein.

The terms of this agreement are predicated on the commitment of the South Grey Chamber of Commerce to secure equal and equitable funding from the other three municipalities within the geographic catchment area of the Chamber of Commerce (Southgate, West Grey and Chatsworth).

The Municipality of Grey Highlands reserves the right to reconsider its annual commitment to the South Grey Chamber of Commerce, should the other partner municipalities choose not to support this collaborative undertaking.


The Municipality of Grey Highlands may terminate this agreement if the South Grey Chamber of Commerce is in default of any of its obligations herein provided that the Municipality shall first have given 90-days written notice to the Chamber of Commerce of the nature of the default and provided that such default has not been cured or remedied within the said 90-day period. If such notice has been given, resolutions of the Municipal Council specifying the default and the fact of its occurrence during the 90-day period shall be deemed to be conclusive evidence of the continuing default and this agreement shall thereafter be terminated effective the date of such Council resolution.

Where the Municipality has terminated this agreement in accordance with this provision or any other provision, the Municipality shall be relieved of their obligations at the beginning of the next calendar year.



Notwithstanding the above, the South Grey Chamber of Commerce may, at its option, terminate this agreement at any time after the Municipality defaults in making the required payments or obligation hereunder provided that it shall give 90-days written notice to the Municipality of its intention to terminate the agreement and further provided that the Municipality has failed to cure the default within the said 90-day period.

This Memorandum of Understanding is for the period January 1st, 2023 to December 31st, 2026.



On behalf of the
South Grey Chamber of Commerce
Karen Cox, President

Mar 31/23
Date



On behalf of the
Municipality of Grey Highlands
Michele Harris
Director of Economic & Community Development

31 March 2023
Date



Report Presented To:	Township of Southgate Council Meeting
Meeting Date:	2026-05-20
Department:	Economic Development
Report Number	EDO2026-006
Title:	South Grey Chamber of Commerce MOU Expiry
Open/Closed Session:	Open Session
Prepared By:	Brenna Carroll Economic Development Officer
Approved By:	Kenneth Melanson, RPP, MCIP Director of Development Services
Approved By:	Taylor McMann Treasurer
Approved By:	Jim Ellis Chief Administrative Officer

Executive Summary:

This report recommends that Council does not renew the current MOU with the South Grey Chamber of Commerce (SGCC) upon its expiry on December 31, 2026. Staff surveyed Southgate businesses to elicit feedback about their engagement with the SGCC and interest in other structural options for business support organizations. As support for and engagement with the SGCC was found to be low, staff recommend that Council does not renew the MOU upon its expiry. However, the Township should encourage the SGCC to apply for funding sources available to other Southgate not-for-profit organizations to support popular community events like the Hopeville Kite Festival.

Recommendation:

Be it resolved that Staff Report EDO2026-006 be received for information; and
That Council will not renew its current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the South Grey Chamber of Commerce (SGCC) upon its expiry on December 31, 2026; and
That Council refer the SGCC to other sources of community funding to support its events and activities like those provided to other local not-for-profit community groups and organizations.

Background:

The SGCC is a regional Chamber of Commerce representing businesses in the four municipalities of Grey Highlands, West Grey, Southgate, and Chatsworth. The Township of Southgate became a municipal member of the SGCC for one year under a joint MOU in the 2023 calendar year.

Staff Report EDO2026-006 – South Grey Chamber of Commerce MOU Expiry
 DATE: Wednesday, May 20, 2026

At the September 4, 2024 Council meeting, [Staff Report EDO2024-009](#) was presented to Council regarding the renewal of a modified [MOU](#) between the Township and the SGCC. Both the report and the accompanying MOU by-law were approved as follows:

No. 2024-408

Moved By Councillor Shipston

Seconded By Councillor John

Be it resolved that Council receive Staff Report EDO2024-009 for information; and

That Council approve the renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the South Grey Chamber of Commerce (SGCC) from January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2026.

Carried

No. 2024-409

Moved By Councillor Ferguson

Seconded By Deputy Mayor Dobreen

Be it resolved that by-law number 2024-108 being a by-law to authorize a memorandum of understanding between the South Grey Chamber of Commerce and the Corporation of the Township of Southgate be read a first, second and third time, finally passed, signed by the Mayor and the Clerk, sealed with the seal of the Corporation and entered into the by-law book.

Carried

In signing the joint MOU, the Township committed to providing the SGCC with \$10,000.00 annually from 2024-2026 on the condition that the SGCC deliver business services, community events, tourism supports, and other obligations as outlined in the document. This financial commitment was meant to help support the initiatives of SGCC while it expanded to include businesses in the four municipalities of the South Grey area.

On February 18, 2026, staff presented report [EDO2026-004](#) providing a summary of SGCC's activities in 2025 and requesting that Council give staff direction about the future of the Township's relationship with the SGCC when the MOU expires on December 31, 2026. Council directed staff to discuss options with Southgate businesses, Chamber members, and other municipal partners, reporting back to Council by August or September of 2026.

Staff developed a survey to gather more information and circulated it to Southgate business members for feedback on March 23, 2026. Staff also met with the representatives from the other municipal parties to the SGCC MOU to discuss options on Monday, May 4, 2026. The other municipal staff representatives will also be seeking direction from their Councils about the future of their MOUs with the SGCC beyond their 2026 expiry.

In examining the survey results, staff recommend that the Township does not renew the current MOU with the Chamber upon its expiry on December 31, 2026. Due to a lack of strong support and participation from the Southgate business community, staff suggest that some type of informal local groups to support events and beautification be investigated. Staff point to the challenge of entering a multi-year MOU with a membership-based organization while other impactful local organizations are left to apply for municipal funding for their projects on an annual basis.

Staff Report EDO2026-006 – South Grey Chamber of Commerce MOU Expiry

DATE: Wednesday, May 20, 2026

2 | Page

Even if the MOU is not renewed, Southgate will remain within the service-area of the SGCC and Southgate-based businesses and non-profits can still be members.

Please note: Staff emailed the Chamber on Tuesday, April 28 to ask the Chamber for its 2026 count of Southgate SGCC members. No response was received so Township staff are unsure of the current number of Southgate SGCC members.

Analysis:

The survey entitled: "Business Organizations in Southgate" (Attachment 1) was circulated to businesses based in the Township. The goal of the survey was to evaluate business engagement with the SGCC and interest in other organizational structures to advance the needs of the business community. Online surveys were circulated to businesses via email starting Monday, March 23, 2026, and the survey was closed on Tuesday, April 29, 2026. A total of 24 responses were received. Businesses were permitted to skip questions as they saw fit. Any confidential or self-identifying information was removed from the attached results to protect respondent privacy.

Survey results showed that engagement with the South Grey Chamber of Commerce (SGCC) among Southgate businesses is relatively low:

- Only 6 respondents reported being current SGCC members (Q9). Three respondents indicated that they were members in the past but did not renew as they did not see the benefit (Q11).
- When asked about their frequency of interacting with the SGCC, 5 businesses said never, 6 businesses said rarely, 3 said sometimes, and only 3 said that they were interacting with the SGCC often or very often (Q12).
- In the open-ended question asking about why businesses had not become SGCC members, 4 stated that they did not know about the SGCC or had not been asked to become members (Q11). This seems to indicate that there is a lack of direct outreach being conducted by SGCC staff to increase Southgate business participation in SGCC activities.
- Satisfaction with the SGCC is mixed with 4 respondents saying that they are satisfied or very satisfied, 6 selecting neutral, and 6 stating that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied (Q13).
- While 8 respondents claimed not to receive any of the listed support from the SGCC, 5 stated that they utilized the SGCC for events and festivals (Q14). The most utilized MOU activity that businesses utilized was the Hopeville Kite Festival, with 9 respondents saying that they had participated as vendors, volunteers, or attendees (Q15). It is important to note that while the annual Home & Garden Show and the Business Awards are activities covered by the MOU, they still require businesses to pay to participate.
- When asked about the type of organization that would most benefit individual businesses, the majority of respondents chose either a Business Improvement Area (BIA) or "not sure" (Q18). Nine businesses said that they would be likely or very likely to participate in a new business organization if established with 6 saying that they were neutral on the subject (Q19).
- When asked about the Township's future relationship with the SGCC, only 3 respondents said that they wanted the Township to renew its MOU, while 4 wanted a new MOU with new deliverables, and 4 were not sure. Respondents were also interested in other options like

Staff Report EDO2026-006 – South Grey Chamber of Commerce MOU Expiry
DATE: Wednesday, May 20, 2026

forming new event and/or beautification groups or continuing to support community groups in organizing events (Q25).

Overall, the data suggests that while some businesses are involved in the SGCC, the majority are either not members or are neutral/unsure about its role. The surveyed businesses demonstrated that there is interest in new approaches to organizing events and beautification projects locally. It is possible that the existence of the MOU draws the SGCC focus away from actively recruiting and conducting outreach to businesses and towards organizing MOU outlined regional events that are not well attended by Southgate businesses. It appears that the MOU activities do not align with the interests of local businesses and for this reason, very few Southgate businesses have been active participants in SGCC events.

For this reason, staff recommend that Council does not renew the current MOU with the SGCC. While other options are being investigated in collaboration with the business community, staff recommend that the SGCC be referred to the Southgate Community Fund as well as the Township "Policy for Donations, Funding & Grants" for financial support for events taking place beyond 2026. This will support the continued delivery of popular events like the Hopeville Kite Festival, which are free and open to the public to attend.

Internal Policy and Legislated Requirements:

This report and attached documents align with [By-law Number 2024-108 – South Grey Chamber of Commerce Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#). As per the MOU, the Township "reserves the right to reconsider its financial commitment to the South Grey Chamber of Commerce." The Township is not bound to any agreement beyond the period of January 1, 2024, to December 31, 2026. Providing notice of non-renewal at this juncture gives the SGCC ample time to evaluate its funding options beyond the 2026 calendar year.

Financial and Resource Implications:

If this report is approved by Council, the Township will not be obligated to provide financial support to the Chamber beyond 2026. As per the agreement with the SGCC, the Township has been providing \$10,000.00 annually to the SGCC upon fulfillment of its MOU obligations.

Strategic Priorities:

Priority: A Thriving Economy

Goal: Goal 1: Support the Growth and Development of Existing Businesses in Southgate

Action Item: 1 c). Ensure the Distribution of Technology and Services to Local Businesses by Referring Them to the Correct Supports

Attachments:

EDO2026-006 Attachment 1 - Questions, Southgate Business Organizations Survey

EDO2026-006 Attachment 2 - Results, Southgate Business Organizations Survey