



COUNTY OF WELLINGTON

COMMITTEE REPORT

To: Chair and Members of the Economic Development Committee
From: Christina Mann, Manager of Economic Development
Date: Tuesday, April 25, 2023
Subject: **County BR+E Municipal Implementation Fund**

Background

Implemented in 2016, the Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) Local Implementation Fund provides member municipalities the opportunity to access funding for the direct execution of BR+E activities to enhance the local economy. A request for 2023 BR+E municipal funding has been received from the Townships of Centre Wellington, Guelph/Eramosa, Wellington North and the Town of Minto.

Township of Centre Wellington

Centre Wellington has submitted their application for \$25,000 to cover 70% of the Elora-Fergus Shuttle Bus Programme. The service will allow visitors to park in areas outside of the downtown cores and be transported to various areas in Elora and Fergus. This will decrease the parking pressures in core areas and encourage visitors to experience other attractions in the area, such as the Wellington County Museum and Archives.

The service will start on May 20, 2023 and run until September 4, 2023. The shuttle will operate on weekends and holidays between 11am and 6pm. The township is also in discussions to run a “coach” shuttle with a capacity for 24 passengers at a time. One rotation of the route will take approximately 1 hour to complete, and this year there will be signage with QR codes at each of the stop locations. The route will have the following 8 stops this year:

1. OLG Facility (Elements)
2. Downtown Elora (1 MacDonald Square) - **new location**
3. Bissell Park, Elora
4. Wellington County Museum, Aboyne
5. Parking Lot, 739 St Andrew St W, Fergus. - **new stop**
6. Downtown Fergus (Fergus Marketplace)
7. Parking Lot, 739 St Andrew St W, Fergus. - **new stop**
8. O'Brien Park, Elora

The project supports downtown revitalization, helping downtown businesses, creating positive tourism experiences, and amplifying attractions such as the Wellington County Museum and Archives.

Township of Guelph/Eramosa

The Township of Guelph Eramosa requests \$25,000 to cover fifty percent of funding for the Community Improvement Plan Implementation, programme promotional materials and a business networking breakfast. The Community Improvement Plan provides support and funding to existing and new businesses to grow and enhance the local economy. The programme strengthens existing business value, supports growth, employment, increases assessment and encourages economic activity.

Township of Wellington North

The Township of Wellington North requests \$25,000 to cover 10% of funding for the following three projects:

- 1. Mount Forest and Area Health Professional Recruitment*

The past year has been challenging for the rural health system staff and physicians due to labour shortages. Wellington North is proposing to use \$10,000 of their BR+E funding to provide financial support for 2023. The funds will be used to aid health professional recruitment by deploying a new recruitment video, executing a new social media campaign, launching a new website, and targeting medical trainees to have a rural experience.

- 2. BR+E Mayor's Roundtables*

In 2022, Wellington North held roundtables with large employers to encourage discussion on workforce challenges, housing requirements, transportation, and talent/immigration. They are proposing to use \$5,000 of their BR+E Funding to relaunch these roundtables to readdress those problems and continue to bring major employers together.

- 3. Lynes Blacksmith Shop Restoration Project*

The Township recently completed their Municipal Cultural Plan which identified Lynes Blacksmith Shop as one of their most unique and important cultural assets. The total costs of restoration are estimated to be \$150,000 - \$200,000, which includes replacing the roof, establishing entrances up to building code requirements, and providing electrical security lights. Wellington North is proposing to use \$10,000 of their BR+E funding to aid these revitalization efforts to Lynes Blacksmith Shop.

Town of Minto

The Town of Minto requests \$25,000 to cover twenty-two percent of funding for the LaunchIt Business Exploration Centre. Since opening in 2014, LaunchIt has provided support to local businesses by providing access to training, mentors, networking and valuable resources. Programming is available to business in Northern Wellington (Minto, Mapleton and Wellington North) and continuing to grow and build on the success of the co-working spaces will be a focus for 2023.

Recommendation:

That the Economic Development Committee approve the 2023 BR+E Municipal Implementation Fund for the Townships of Centre Wellington, Wellington North, Guelph/Eramosa and the Town of Minto.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ch. Mann', is positioned above the printed name.

Christina Mann
Manager of Economic Development