

STAFF REPORT: Administration



REPORT TO: Infrastructure and Recreation Committee
MEETING DATE: April 12, 2011
REPORT NO.: CEDC.11.09
SUBJECT: RTO7 Way Finding and Road Signage Initiative
PREPARED BY: Lisa Kidd, Communications and Economic Development Coordinator

A. Recommendation

THAT Council receive Report CEDC.11.09, "RTO7 Way Finding and Road Signage Initiative" and;

THAT Council endorse the communities of Thornbury and Clarksburg, within the Town of The Blue Mountains, as pilot communities for the Regional Tourism Organization #7 (RTO7) Regional Way Finding and Road Signage Study Project.

B. Background

Regional Tourism Organization #7 (RTO7)

The Ministry of Tourism and Culture supports Ontario's tourism by way of Regional Tourism Organizations in the Province's 13 tourism regions. Each Regional Tourism Organization is independent, industry-led and not-for-profit. Each is responsible for building and supporting competitive and sustainable tourism regions. Each helps attract more visitors, generate more economic activity, and create more jobs across the Province.

Our Region, Region 7, consists of Bruce, Grey and Simcoe counties and comprises a large geographic area with a rich and diverse tourism industry.

By recent count there are well over 100 established organizations actively engaged in tourism or economic activities in which tourism plays a significant role in the Region. All of these maintain, in one form or another, tourism marketing and/or development plans. Most of these organizations also participate in cooperative local, regional, and/or sectoral initiatives that are supported by plans of their own.

In June 2010 it was announced by the Provincial government that the Province would provide \$5,269,000 over a two-year period (2010-2011) to help RTO7 tourism partners develop a new regional tourism organization and enhance destination marketing and management.

RTO7 was incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation in December 2010 and the first board of directors is now in-place, with a mandate to identify, undertake and complete a project program aimed to build and support economically viable and sustainable tourism.

The RTO7 Priority Project Program

The RTO7 Priority Project Program allows tourism regions to apply for funding of projects that will begin working toward increasing the overall economic impact of tourism in the region. In order to qualify for Ministry of Tourism and Culture funding, projects must demonstrate regional benefits, meet specific application and performance criteria.

To date six projects have been approved and are currently underway, one of which is the Way Finding and Road Signage Initiative.

The RTO7 Way Finding and Road Signage Initiative

Current deficiencies in signage across the region negatively impacts visitor satisfaction, tourism receipts and are a barrier to repeat visitation. The lack of effective way finding was identified in the “Discovering Ontario Report”. In the report it states that Ontario needs better signage to help make the Province more welcoming, safe and comfortable.

As such the RTO7 Board of Directors released a Request for Proposals for the completion of a Way Finding and Road Signage Strategy for RTO7. This initiative is the first step in the development of a long-term RTO7 region-wide way finding signage strategy. The intent is to encourage visitors to visit more destinations, provide a consistent and reinforced message and provide an opportunity for the collaboration of Destination Marketing Organizations (one of which is the Georgian Triangle Tourist Association), County and Municipal Governments to accomplish this goal throughout the RTO7.

Part of this project involves the identification and involvement of a pilot community from each County within RTO7 for the implementation of the completed signage system. These communities should be: (1) key tourism destinations; (2) of a manageable scale; and if possible (3) have budget available to begin implementation of their system once designed.

The Town of The Blue Mountains has been asked by the RTO7 Project Coordinator to consider the villages of Thornbury and Clarksburg as Grey County pilot communities for this initiative. A more detailed overview of the project and the requirements of the pilot communities will be detailed in the April 12, 2011 deputation to the Infrastructure and Recreation Committee, presented by the Project Consultant.

As a supplement to the deputation, attached herein is a copy of the "Permanent Directional Signage within Town Right-of-Ways" Policy (see Attachment 1).

Please note that at this time, the Town does not have its own Way Finding Signage Strategy. However, this RTO7 project may be a tool to begin the development of one which takes into account a regional approach. Further, a partnership approach such as this would reduce potential redundancy and associated costs associated with the development of an independent municipal way finding signage system.

C. The Blue Mountains' Strategic Plan

3.0 Preserving and enhancing natural and environmental features, and cultural heritage of the community.

D. Environmental Impacts

None.

E. Financial Impact

The Town has no way finding funding dedicated under the 2011 budget for this initiative. However there are operational funds available within the Economic Development Initiatives program. Also, in-kind and direct cost payment may be available within the Roads and Drainage operational budget for the purchase and erection of signage. Staff will be able to provide greater information on potential funding once the actual costs are known.

F. Attached

Attachment 1- Permanent Directional Signage within Town Right-of-Ways Policy

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Kidd

Lisa Kidd
Communications & Economic Development Coordinator
Town of The Blue Mountains

**REGION 7 REGIONAL TOURISM ORGANIZATION
PRIORITY PROJECTS COMMITTEE**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
FOR
Region #7 Road Signage and Way-Finding Study**

RELEASE DATE:

December 15, 2010

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS:

5:00 PM January 14, 2011

INTRODUCTION

On behalf of the Transitional Team for Region 7 Regional Tourism Organization (Region 7 RTO), the Priority Projects Committee invites interested vendors to submit proposals for development of a Road Signage and Way-Finding Study.

Region 7, consisting of Bruce, Grey and Simcoe counties, comprises a large geographic area with a rich and diverse tourism industry. By recent count there are well over 100 established organizations actively engaged in tourism or economic activities in which tourism plays a significant role. This includes over 40 municipal authorities; 7 major DMOs; approximately 40 chambers of commerce, BIAs and DIAs; some 20 major outdoor attractions (provincial and national parks, conservation authorities and trails); and several post-secondary institutions that maintain tourism-related faculties. There are thousands of private operations, each of these organizations maintains, in one form or another, tourism marketing and/or development plans. Most of these organizations also participate in cooperative local, regional, and/or sectoral initiatives that are supported by plans of their own.

The member partner organizations that are steering the Region 7 RTO transition process are:

- Grey County Tourism
- Super 8 Midland
- E'Terra
- Blue Mountain Village Association
- Horseshoe Resort
- Tourism Simcoe County
- Fern Resort
- Scandinave Spa Blue Mountain
- Heidelberg Inn
- Fisherman's Cove Tent and Trailer Park
- Blue Mountain Resort Limited
- Georgian Triangle Tourism Association
- Tourism Barrie

For further information about Region 7 RTO and the transition process, please visit www.region7transition.ca

RTO 7 will conduct this Road Signage and Way-Finding Study as an approved priority project with secured funding from the Ministry of Tourism and Culture.

This request for proposal (RFP) document consists of the following:

1. Scope of work
2. Submission requirements
3. Questionnaire

As detailed below in [Questions and Submission](#), proposals must be submitted to the Priority Projects Committee of the Region 7 RTO Transition Team at the following address: bsullivan@csolve.net

To ensure you are apprised of any additional information as may be provided, please confirm your intention to submit a proposal upon receipt of this RFP.

SCOPE OF WORK

Overview

Current deficiencies in signage across the region negatively impacts visitor satisfaction, tourism receipts and are a barrier to repeat visitation. Way-Finding was identified in the "Discovering Ontario Report" 'Ontario needs better signage to help make the province more welcoming safe and comfortable'. This Study is the first step in the development of a long term strategy for way-finding. 'The strategy would encourage visitors to visit more destinations, provide a consistent and reinforced messaging' and provide an opportunity for the collaboration of DMO's, Tier II and Tier III Governments to accomplish this goal throughout the Region.

The Successful bidder will conduct and supply:

1. **Development of a Standards Manual:** The Manual should reflect the design of a way-finding program that is on trial in Bruce County and would be utilized in both the urban and rural areas. An evaluation of the program in Bruce County to address gaps to be undertaken. The manual will provide guidance to municipal staff and outside consultants involved in specifying, fabricating and installing signage. More importantly, it should also be designed to guide the use of municipal signage design standards, to assure that it is correctly and consistently applied.
2. **System Design and Implementation:** Provide a mapping exercise related to the inventorying and installation recommendations as well as a Signage Message Schedule, detailing the exact details for each sign in the system. The intent is that these standards can provide a framework that could be used to expand the system throughout the Counties of Bruce, Grey and Simcoe.
3. **Specifications and Shop Drawings:** Provide a set of specifications / shop drawings on all elements of the signage system. The specifications and shop drawings should be integrated into the Standards Manual.
4. **Pilot Community Design (10-12 Months Per Destination (excluding identity/branding process):** A pilot community from each County (e.g. Creemore, Thornbury, Tobermory) should be selected to have their signage system developed. These communities should be: (1) key tourism destinations; (2) of a manageable scale; and if possible (3) have budget available to begin implementation of their system once designed.
5. **Attractions Inventory:** This process is a detailed analysis of all of the potential public attractions such as: trail access points, canoe routes, museums, downtowns, parking, soccer fields, skate parks, community sports complexes etc. throughout the region. These lists and maps are then vetted through the stakeholders to ensure accuracy.
6. **Signage Message Schedule.** The attractions inventories will then be applied to the various sign types where applicable and then ground-truthed to ensure the system works for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. The signs and locations

will then be built into a Signage Message Schedule that includes all relevant information for both the manufacturer and installer.

7. **Development of Cost Estimate and Tender Package.** For each pilot, once the entire system has been accounted for, Cost Estimates will be created for municipal budgeting purposes along with a Draft Tender Package for use by each Tier II and Tier III Governments. Sections of the system, in part or full, can then be tendered for manufacture and install.

Purpose

This Study is the first step in the development of a long term strategy for way-finding. 'The strategy would encourage visitors to visit more destinations, provide a consistent and reinforced messaging' and provide an opportunity for the collaboration of DMO's and Tier II and Tier III Governments to accomplish this goal throughout the Region.

Goals

The outcomes of this project will provide a foundation for the development of a Road Signage and Way-Finding system that will enhance the sustainability of tourism throughout Region 7. The project will also become a building block for all RTO7 strategies, plans and activities – the purpose of which will be to enhance the appeal of Region 7 to consumers, and to increase the competitive capacity of the region's tourism industry.

Desired Outcomes

This project will provide a long term signage and way-finding strategy:

1. Plan that can be used in both rural and urban settings
2. Manual that will provide guidance to outside consultants involved in specifying, fabricating and installing signage.
3. Manual that will be designed to guide the use of the Regional Tourism Organization 7 Signage Design Standards, to assure that the standards are correctly and consistently applied.
4. A study that will deliver a detailed and documented report of findings and recommendations
5. Actionable findings and recommendations specific to regional products, needs and opportunities

Resources

Region 7 Member Partner organizations have committed in-kind resources to this project including, staff time, tourism industry engagement, market intelligence, marketing products (guides, maps, web sites), databases, GIS/GPS mapping, etc., to support the project.

Deliverables and Timeline

The principal scope of work for this project will be conducted in February through April with the final population of data during the month of May.

A key deliverable for this project is a procedural document that outlines the development and implementation of a Signage and Way-Finding system that can be delivered to Tier II and Tier III Governments, DMO's, Chambers of Commerce, BIA's, DIA's and Stakeholders.

1. The procedural document will be valuable in the creation of
 - 1.1. A standardized way-finding system that will be used throughout the region in the creation of signage that will support the:
 - 1.1.1. Movement of visitors
 - 1.1.2. Encourage more visitors to experience the area by providing a welcome feeling
 - 1.1.3. Encouragement of visitors to try new activities and extend their stay within the region
 - 1.1.4. Distinguish the area as a cohesive tourist area
 - 1.2. Regional Signage Standards Manual
 - 1.2.1. Design and Production Specifications
 - 1.2.2. Review of current Rural and Urban Projects installed to date to provide insight into the expansion of the system and options related to design and specifications of the individual signs
 - 1.3. Pilot Community Design
 - 1.3.1. Establishment of Community Identity
 - 1.3.2. Attractions Inventory
 - 1.3.3. Signage Message Schedule
 - 1.4. Implementation Standards
2. Draft Tender Package for use by Tier II and Tier III Governments.

Travel

Primary research will require travel to tourism venue sites across Region 7. Engagement meetings will be conducted at various locations throughout the region. The use of your personal vehicle for transportation purposes will be required.

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Key Work Steps / Milestones:

Process

Dec 15/10	RFP released
Jan 14	Deadline for RFP submissions
Week of Jan 17	Interviews and Vendor selection
Jan 31	Finalize Work Plan
Feb 2	Project Commences
Mar 15	Initial Research, consultations completed, interim report and recommendations issued
Apr 30	Conduct Industry Research (surveys, focus groups) completed by
May 15	Preliminary Report and recommendations due by
May 31	Final Report due by
May 31	Results / Final Reports – Budget (expenditures and lessons learned)
May 30	Population of data completed and tested/manuals and procedures provided, passwords assigned
May 31	Results/Final Reports – Budget (expenditures, deliverables and lessons learned)

Region 7 RTO reserves the right to alter this schedule at its sole discretion.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Terms and Conditions

Region 7 RTO reserves the right, at its sole option, and for its convenience, to accept and/or reject any proposal, in whole or in part, for any or no reason. By making this RFP, Region 7 RTO does not imply or give any assurance whatsoever that any proposal will be accepted. No contractual or other legal obligations arise on the part of Region 7 RTO to any proponent by this RFP until such time as a final, written agreement, if any, is subsequently entered into with a proponent.

Region 7 RTO may or may not award the business that is the subject of this RFP to any proponent or proponents at Region 7 RTO's sole discretion. Region 7 RTO reserves the right to negotiate with proponents, seek clarification from proponents regarding their proposal responses and invite modifications to the proposal responses submitted.

Region 7 RTO retains the right to withdraw or modify this RFP at any time without notice and without obligation to proponents. Region 7 RTO may waive compliance with the requirements of this RFP and consider a proposal response that does not meet all of the requirements of this RFP.

Your proposal is submitted at your own risk. If, prior to the deadline for submission of proposals you fail to notify Region 7 RTO of an error and your proposal is selected, you shall not be entitled to any compensation or time by reason of the error or its later correction.

No part of this RFP will become part of any final agreement between Region 7 RTO and the provider unless specifically incorporated into a final, written agreement. Any or all contents of your proposal may become part of the final agreement.

Your proposal response, including fees, shall constitute a binding offer capable of acceptance in whole or in part by Region 7 RTO, and if selected will remain valid until such time as a final agreement is negotiated and executed.

Region 7 RTO shall not be in any way responsible for or liable for any costs associated with your proposal and you shall not make claim to Region 7 RTO for any such cost or expenses. By submitting a proposal response, you agree to waive any right to claim damages against Region 7 RTO for any reason, cause, or thing arising out of the RFP process.

If you are selected you may be required to provide satisfactory proof of maintenance of relevant insurance coverage (including commercial, professional, general liability and automobile insurance).

Evaluation Criteria

Criterion	Weight
Demonstrated experience with successful execution of projects of similar nature, scope and timelines	20%
Demonstrated qualifications and expertise as evidenced by quality of work samples and quality of client references	20%
Demonstrated understanding of key requirements and deliverables as evidenced in proposed approach and work plan	25%
Competitiveness of proposed fees	18%
Thoroughness of proposal	17%

Proposal Guidelines

Your proposal must:

- Be submitted electronically (Adobe PDF file). Your submission should not exceed 10 pages in length. This does not include any work samples or media you may wish to attach.
- Be accompanied by a cover letter and/or e-mail signed by an authorized representative of your company certifying the accuracy of all information contained in your submission and acknowledging your company's offer of services according to the terms of this RFP.
- Include responses to all questions. Please cite each question in framing your responses and provide clear and concise answers. Ambiguous statements such as "all reasonable effort to provide" must be avoided.

Questions and Submission

Questions and final proposals must be submitted to the attention of the Priority Project Committee of the Region 7 RTO Transition Team at the following address:

bsullivan@csolve.net

Region 7 RTO will ensure responses to questions (without attribution) are provided to all interested vendors to ensure all proponents have the benefit of additional information as may be provided.

To ensure you are apprised of any additional information as may be provided, please confirm your intention to submit a proposal upon receipt of this RFP.

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Provide a brief overview of your company. Provide full contact information. Describe your core service offerings, experience and qualifications.
2. Provide a brief bio of key personnel who would be assigned to this project. Provide at least two client references that can speak directly to their expertise with similar projects.
3. Briefly describe your knowledge of Road Signage and Way-finding system products and experiences with specific emphasis on Region 7 tourism assets and opportunities.
4. Has your company ever performed work either directly or indirectly for any Region 7 RTO Transition Team Partner Organization? If so, provide details.
5. Outline your proposed approach to delivery, referencing the requirements set out in the scope of work.
6. Provide a detailed project plan. Specify key work steps, resource requirements and deliverables and include a timeline.
7. Provide a detailed quotation. Indicate applicable hourly or per diem rates and proposed terms for travel and expenses. Indicate clearly any assumptions.
8. Provide work samples, web site addresses, etc. and any additional information you believe will be helpful in assessing the capabilities of your company.
9. Complete and Sign the following Conflict of Interest Declaration:

Conflict of Interest Declaration

Each vendor is required to declare any actual or potential conflict of interest including situations or circumstances that could give a vendor an unfair advantage during a procurement process or compromise their ability to perform. RTO7 reserves the right to disqualify a vendor's quote due to a conflict of interest. RTO7 requires vendors to avoid and disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest during the performance of their contractual obligations. This declaration allows the RTO7 to terminate an agreement where a vendor fails to disclose an actual or potential conflict or where such a conflict cannot be resolved.

I/ We hereby confirm that there is not nor was there any actual or potential Conflict of Interest relating to the preparation of our submission nor do we foresee any actual or potential Conflict of Interest in performing the contractual obligations contemplated in the RFP.

[or if applicable, strike out the above and include the following:]

The following is a list of actual or potential Conflicts of Interest relating to the preparation of our submission or the performance of the contractual obligations contemplated in the RFP:

Authorized Signature

Printed Name

Company/Consultant

Date

Reminder: deadline for proposal submission is January 14, 2011

TOWN OF THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

POLICY

Subject Title: Permanent Directional Signage within Town Right-of-Ways

Corporate Policy:

Policy Ref. No.:

Administrative Policy:

By-law No.: N/A

Department Policy:

Name of Dept.: Engineering & Public Works

Date Approved:

Staff Report: N/A

Policy Statement(s)

1. The Town of The Blue Mountains intends on discouraging and restricting the proliferation of signs within Town right-of-ways however, acknowledges that some permanent directional signage within public right-of-ways are desirable to assist the travelling public in arriving as directly and expeditiously as possible at the desired location.
2. It is the Town of The Blue Mountains Policy that permanent directional signs within public right-of-ways be principally located in the Provincial and/or County road system right-of-ways in accordance with the applicable policies of the Province and County however it is acknowledged that in some instances further, more detailed, permanent directional signage may be required within the Town's right-of-ways.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines related to the orderly provision of permanent directional signs within Town Right-of-Ways.

Application

This policy applies to those interested in erecting permanent directional signs within Town right-of-ways.

Definitions

Collector Road – As defined and set-out in the Official Plan for The Town of The Blue Mountains and includes the Highway #26 "Connecting Link" located within the (former) Town of Thornbury:

“Collector Roads are designed to collect and carry local traffic to the Provincial Highway, Arterial Roads, and other Collector Roads, or to distribute traffic to local roads, as well as provide limited access to abutting properties. Existing Collector Roads generally have an existing right-of-way width of 20 metres and expanded where possible. New Collector Roads as shown on Appendix Map G may be required to provide a wider right-of-way width of 26 metres, based on an established engineering standard that shall also incorporate design features.”

Directional Sign – Means a sign utilized for the purpose of directing the travelling public to an area, place or building.

Local Roads – As defined and set out in the Official Plan for The Town of The Blue Mountains.

“The remainder of the roads in the Town under municipal jurisdiction are classified as Local Roads. Existing and future Local Roads are generally intended to provide access to abutting properties and to discourage through traffic. Existing rights-of-way are normally 20 metres in width. The minimum right-of-way width for all new Local Roads shall generally be 20 metres.”

Permanent Directional Signs – Mean signs that are supported by one or more uprights, poles, braces or located on a structural base, placed in or upon the ground.

Policy

It is the Town's Policy that:

- A. Permanent directional signs are permitted within Collector Road right-of-ways subject to the following criteria:
 - i. Directional signs must be directional in nature only and be associated with areas/places/buildings of significant public assembly/occupancy within the municipality such as: Conference/Meeting Centres; Ski Clubs; Golf Courses; Community Centres; Hotels/Motels/Bed & Breakfast Establishments all containing accommodation for greater than 50 guests; Arenas; Swimming Pools; Parks; etc.;
 - ii. Directional signs must not be located within 9.0 metres of a driveway/laneway;
 - iii. Directional signs must not be located within 9.0 metres of an intersection of the travelled surfaces of two or more roads or the intersection of the travelled surface of a road and a walkway/pathway/trail;
 - iv. Directional signs must not be located within the projected front yard/boulevard area/space of a place of residence;
 - v. Directional signs must be spaced a minimum of 100 metres apart (on one side of the road);
 - vi. Individual directional signs must not exceed 30 cm x 120 cm (1' x 4');

- vii. The maximum number of directional signs on one post is 4;
- viii. Lettering size shall be restricted to 200 mm in height;
- ix. Graphics are permitted provided they are consistent with those utilized by the Provincial TODS Program (see www.canadiantods.ca) and do not exceed a height of 254 mm (10");
- x. All directional signs shall be non-illuminated;
- xi. All directional signs shall be set on a blue background and contain white letters;
- xii. All directional signs are to be fabricated by, or under the direction of, the Town of The Blue Mountains;
- xiii. All directional sign copy must be approved by the Director, Engineering & Public Works (including text);
- xiv. A permit must be obtained from the Engineering & Public Works Department prior to the erection of the directional sign;
- xv. All directional signs are to be installed by the Engineering & Public Works Department; and,
- xvi. Directional sign permit fees in accordance with the Town's Tariff of Fees By-law are to be paid prior to the erection of the directional sign; and,
- xvii. Annual directional sign fees in accordance with the Town's Tariff of Fees By-law are to be paid to cover the maintenance of such sign and the administration and enforcement of this policy.

The above noted are guidelines only. The permissibility and actual location of a directional sign proposed to be located within the Town right-of-way is at the sole discretion of the Director, Engineering & Public Works, or his designate.

- 2. Permanent directional signs within Local Road right-of-ways are generally not permitted however, directional signs proposed for the purposes set out in 1. A. i. may be considered by the Director, Engineering & Public Works provided same comply with the criteria identified.
- 3. Permanent directional signs proposed to be located within the Niagara Escarpment Development Control Area must conform to the policies set out in this Bulletin and the policies of the Niagara Escarpment Commission.
- 4. Permanent directional signs that are in place and do not conform to this policy may remain for a period of one year following the adoption of this policy. Owners of such directional signs will be advised in writing six months in advance of the date that such sign must be removed to allow for other means of communicating with their clientele.

Exclusions

See Section 2 under the heading of "Procedures".

References and Related Policies

Please also see the Town's Sign By-law and Sign By-law Policies, County of Grey Directional Sign Policies and the Ministry of Transportation Tourism-Orientated Directional Signing (TODS) Policies.

Consequences of Non-Compliance

Any and all permanent directional signs erected without the Town right-of-ways without the Town's explicit written authorization will be removed without notice or warning.

Review Cycle

This Policy will be reviewed on a yearly basis by the Director, Engineering & Public Works and, if warranted, submitted to the Public Works & Engineering Committee for approval.

Document2