



Staff Report

Strategic Initiatives – Economic Development

Report To: COW- Admin, Corp and Finance, SI, Comm. Services
Meeting Date: April 28, 2025
Report Number: SI.25.020
Title: Local Business Association Funding Program Update
Prepared by: Tim Hendry, Director of Strategic Initiatives

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report SI.25.020, entitled “Local Business Association Funding Program Update”;

AND THAT Council approves the updated list of eligible associations to include:

- Clarksburg Village Association
- Thornbury Business Improvement Area
- Blue Mountain Village Association
- Blue Mountains Chamber of Commerce
- Institute of Southern Georgian Bay

AND THAT Council acknowledges that the criteria and funding principles of the Local Business Association Funding Program remain consistent with what was previously approved by Council in May 2021 as outlined in report FAF.21.073.

B. Overview

This report provides Council with an overview of the Local Business Association funding program and recommends that the Institute of Southern Georgian Bay be added to the list of eligible associations.

C. Background

The Local Business Association Funding Program was established in May 2021 through report [FAF.21.073](#). The program provides a maximum funding allocation of up to \$5,000.00 per business association to support various economic development-related initiatives. Applications received through the program are reviewed by the Town’s Economic Development Advisory Committee, with formal approval granted by Council.

The funding program was created to recognize and support the important work of associations that advance the Town's economic development priorities. Since its inception, the program has allocated approximately \$90,000 in funding to the association in support of events, activities, initiatives and capital items to improve and strengthen the Town of Blue Mountains as a place to live, visit and conduct business. Funding highlights include:

- **Event Support:** Support of key community events in Thornbury, Clarksburg and Blue Mountain Village, including but not limited to: Canada Day, Olde Fashioned Christmas, Apple Pie Trail, Artsburg Days, Apple Harvest Festival, Clarksburg Children's Festival, etc. Activation of downtown Thornbury including musicians and performers;
- **Local Business Support:** Professional development and networking events for the local business community and the launch of shop local promotions, including the "Love Local" initiative through COVID-19;
- **Tourism Support:** Tourism marketing and product development to support tourism operators; and
- **Beautification:** Purchase of seasonal decor and community beautification items (flags, flowers, displays, etc.).

D. Analysis

Council approved the list of eligible business associations in May 2021 through report [FAF.21.073](#). Since that time, South Georgian Bay Tourism has ceased operations. As a result, staff recommend that Council revise the list of approved associations to include the Institute of Southern Georgian Bay.

The recommendation to include the Institute of Southern Georgian Bay was initially discussed during the 2025 Town Budget discussions. Further, the recommendation is based on the history of funding that Council has provided to the Institute through the annual budget process. To formalize the process, staff recommend that the Institute of Southern Georgian Bay be added to the list of eligible associations.

As outlined on its website, the Institute of Southern Georgian Bay is governed by a Board of Directors. The vision and mission statements and key priority areas have been included below for reference.

- **Vision** - Harness the power of people and place in Southern Georgian Bay to grow social, environmental, and economic prosperity and be the smartest, greenest, healthiest and most caring region in Ontario.
- **Mission**- Connect and engage the talent and aspirations of all residents, and leaders in business, government, nonprofits, and philanthropy. We promote collaboration in five interconnected priority areas – arts and culture, social justice, the environment, business and social innovation, and health and wellbeing.

- **Key Priorities**
 - **Business & Innovation** - helps stimulate economic vitality, job creation, and innovation
 - **Regional Arts Network** - promotes community engagement and creativity, contributing to the region's livability and cultural vitality.
 - **Sustainability & The Green Economy** - fosters a balanced, integrated economy with triple bottom lines: social benefits, environmental benefits, and economic benefits. It highlights new directions in ways we “do business” regardless of our sector
 - **Social Finance & Housing** - focuses on the critical issue of affordable and accessible housing and the ongoing viability of our towns. Social Finance offers relatively new tools for producing more positive impact as we spend, lend, and invest our money.

E. Strategic Priorities

2. Organizational Excellence

We will continually seek out ways to improve the internal organization of Town Staff and the management of Town assets.

4. Quality of Life

We will foster a high quality of life for full-time and part-time residents of all ages and stages, while welcoming visitors.

F. Environmental Impacts

No environmental impacts are anticipated as a result of this report.

G. Financial Impacts

\$25,000 was approved through the 2025 Town budget to support the Local Business Association funding program.

Applications will be reviewed by the Town’s Economic Development Advisory Committee, with formal approval granted by Council. A cheque presentation will be scheduled with the recipients to highlight the support and investment made by the Town.

H. In Consultation With

N/A

I. Public Engagement

The topic of this Staff Report has not been the subject of a Public Meeting and/or a Public Information Centre as neither a Public Meeting nor a Public Information Centre are required.

However, any comments regarding this report should be submitted to Tim Hendry, Director of Strategic Initiatives si@thebluemountains.ca.

J. Attached

None.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Hendry
Director of Strategic Initiatives

For more information, please contact:
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Report Approval Details

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Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Apr 14, 2025

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Tim Hendry - Apr 14, 2025 - 2:26 PM