

Terms of Reference – Huron County Economic Development Board – Government Service System Delivery Research

Purpose:

Undertake fact-based independent research on the effectiveness of Huron County's current service delivery systems, and determine if there are appropriate alternatives to be considered so that the economic potential of the County can be fully realized. The Huron County Economic Development Board has become concerned that the current structures / service delivery mechanisms may not create the optimal environment to support the economic growth needed to create a vibrant business, employment and social environment.

The Huron County Economic Development Board wants to understand the consistency and timeliness of the governmental decisions and actions required in the attraction and expansion of individual businesses and other types of development (e.g. residential developments). We need to create an environment which highlights our unique attributes, and attracts internal and external investment. Ultimately, every decision is an economic development decision as it impacts the business and social environment of the County.

The key question to be answered is: Is the current structure optimal in order to enhance the future economic development potential of the county when considering factors such as: cost effectiveness, efficiency, ability to capitalize on opportunities, sustainability of services and infrastructure.

List of Participants:

The research would include senior staff within Huron County and the Huron County Economic Development Board, Upper Tier Councils and would welcome the participation of Partner (Lower Tier) Councils / senior staff. As well, the research should include data and best practices from other municipalities of similar size and composition, both within and outside of Ontario, in order to highlight best practices and/or lessons learned if they have also undergone structural change.

Intended Users/Audience:

The results of the research will potentially provide alternate service delivery and / or governance approaches that could be implemented by the Upper and Partner tier governments, and will provide the taxpayer information regarding the value proposition of service delivery in Huron County accompanied by relevant indices or metrics which can be used by all levels of government.

Questions to be answered:

- What is the most effective way to deliver current municipal government services to the public?
- Are there specific anecdotal examples which could be provided to council which suggest that the current structure is less than optimal?
- What are the opportunity costs associated with the current structure?
- Are there any barriers to economic development created by the current structure?
- What efficiency or effectiveness advantages could be realized by implementing an alternative service delivery model?
- How can Huron County ensure delivery systems keep pace with the changing needs of County residents and businesses in a dynamic market increasingly influenced by national and global influences.?
- The research will explore how economies of scale, engendered through creative partnerships, can be utilized to deliver services in a more effective manner
- What is the range of alternative structures which could be considered; what are the major pros and cons associated with each alternative?

Guiding Principles:

- This research will aid Councils in making decisions about how to provide optimal services to their ratepayers.
- This research will respect that each municipality maintains self-determination and individualism.
- This research will engage in an open and transparent process where a fact based collective vision is encouraged and all services are open for discussion.
- This research will foster a supportive team environment through critical evaluation of our work and group processes.
- Participants will work together respectfully and in a professional manner.
- Participants will communicate openly and honestly and be open-minded about potential opportunities.

Methodology:

1. Evaluation of current service operations, organizations, and service delivery standards
2. Comparative Analysis of other Ontario municipal service delivery models, and other Canadian examples if relevant and comparable, identifying the benefits, impediments, best practices, risks and impacts of these governance and or service delivery models.
3. Identification of alternatives or confirmation of the effectiveness of the current governance and / or service delivery models. This will include a review of potential governance and / or service delivery models that can be realistically implemented in Huron County and their implications.
4. Any regulatory / legislative hurdles will be identified in conjunction with alternatives recommended.

Final reporting:

Deliverables:

Final report that includes analysis of various options, and recommended service delivery models

Roles and Responsibilities of Participants and Stakeholders

Huron County to provide the necessary background information for the research to be completed. Partner municipalities will be invited to supplement County level information to enhance the quality of the analysis.

Reporting Requirements:

The results of the research study will be made available, once finalized, to the Huron County Economic Development Board for their review and then forwarded to Huron County council within a 14 day period, once the board has approved the report/ensured that the report meets the deliverables specified

Decision-making Process/Responsibilities:

The Huron County Economic Development Board to accept the final report and refer to Huron County Council. Upon receipt from the Economic Development Board the Huron County council may choose to endorse the report.

Estimation of Costs:

Consultants' cost to be complete the research study is estimated at up to \$60,000; which will be paid from the Huron County Economic Development Board budget.

Timeline and Milestones:

Consultant to be engaged in May 2017 with work completed by September 2017.

Dissemination of Information/Data:

Information will be disseminated through the Huron County Economic Development Board.