

BUSINESS SUPPORT PROGRAMS

UPDATED JUNE 9



On April 1, 2020 Council approved the creation of the COVID-19 Response Reserve through the transfer of approximately \$960,000 for use to offset unbudgeted expenses experienced by the Municipality related to the COVID-19 pandemic and also for the development of community and business support programs. Municipal staff are engaged with members of the community as well as the local business community on an ongoing basis to explore other potentially needed community support initiatives during this period of local and provincial emergency. As new support programs are identified, they will be brought before Council for review and consideration.

The Business Support Group (BSG) formed to identify options for business support programs (BSP) for Council to review. The programs (except the security and funding program) would come from a dedicated \$150,000 pot.

Group Members

Deron Johnston, Old Town Kemptville BIA

Heather Lawless, Grenville Community Futures Development Corporation

Robert Salm, North Grenville Business Builders

Terri-Lyn McEvoy, North Grenville Chamber of Commerce

Tracy MacDonald, CSE Consulting

Wendy Onstein, Leeds Grenville Small Business Enterprise Centre

William Pearl, Steven Creek Shutter Company

Matt Gilmer, Economic Development Staff

Hillary Geneau, Economic Development Staff

Since the start of the pandemic, the Economic Development team has been working to connect with the business community to support them. The following programs have been implemented.

Creation of the business support portal on Invest site

Business calls to connect businesses with available programs

Coordination with County, OMAFRA, and business groups

Launch of #LoveNG campaign

Multiple rounds of business outreach

The aforementioned group was formed to suggest additional programs to support businesses. All programs are to support the following two goals:

1. Support businesses through the challenges they face in the pandemic
2. Promote and support businesses as the economy opens as we come out of the pandemic

The following programs have been suggested, and are being put before council for approval. A summary chart is below, and each program is laid out in more detail afterwards. The following timelines are used to indicate the suggested starting date of the program:

- Short-term: immediately to 1 month out
- Mid-term: 1-3 months out
- Long-term: 3 months out

The suggested programs and respective budgets would utilize \$95,000 of the \$150,000 allotted (excluding the security and funding program which are separately budgeted).

Program	Description	Goal	Budget	Status	Timeline
Love NG Website	A website dedicated to showcasing the operating status of NG businesses	Goal 1 & 2	\$10,000	Operating with ongoing updates, to be reviewed under marketing contract	In progress
Security	A security firm was hired to patrol the commercial areas in the evenings	Goal 1	\$30,000	Operating, contract to be reviewed July 15	In progress
Webinars	A webinar series to review topics pertinent to businesses	Goal 1 & 2	\$5,000	Three webinars complete, two more being scheduled	In progress
Funding	Funding could be distributed by the municipality in a variety of ways to cover different needs of businesses	Goal 1 & 2	\$100,000	Announcement to be made	Mid-term
Co-op Ad Share	Provide discounted ad space for businesses with local advertisers	Goal 1 & 2	\$20,000	Contacting local advertisers	Mid-term

Program	Description	Goal	Budget	Status	Timeline
#LoveNG Marketing Campaign	A marketing campaign would largely be facilitated by a hired company	Goal 2	\$50,000	Proposal deadline June 12	Short-term
Local Currency	An “NG bucks”/gift certificate program would allow people to purchase bucks that can only be used at local businesses	Goal 2	\$10,000	Program being drafted	Mid-term
Buying Local Partnerships	Work with industry partners (school board, hospital) to agree to purchase locally	Goal 1 & 2	None	BSG to create plan	Long-term
PPE & Safety Support	Work with businesses to help them get the information and supplies required	Goal 1 & 2	TBD	Staff connecting businesses with suppliers where needed on an ongoing basis	Short-term

Program: Love NG Website

The LoveNG website was launched March 30th with the aim to encourage North Grenville residents to support local by providing them the operating status of local businesses. Limited Facebook ad campaigns have also been running to support it as well as promotion on other social media platforms.

Partners	Budget	Timeline
Businesses Business Groups	\$10,000 from LoveNG fund	Short-term

Considerations

- Use after pandemic, an e-mail function has been added to the back-end to potentially use as a directory for future use
- Tie ins to other municipal websites

The website will be reviewed as part of the marketing contract.

Next Steps

Action	Timeline/Status	Lead
Continue adding businesses	Ongoing	Ec Dev-Hillary
Add links to other sites/actions	June 8-12	Ec Dev-Hillary

Program: Security

A security firm was hired to patrol the commercial areas in the evenings. Their contract is in place until July 15th. So far the program has been successful in resolving several minor issues.

Partners Businesses	Budget \$30,000	Timeline Short-term
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Considerations

- Extension of contract

Next Steps

Action	Timeline/Status	Lead
Review contract extension	July 15	Ec Dev-Matt

Program: Webinars

The Municipality will be hosting a series of webinars. The first three covered the following topics: business planning, re-opening safely, and available government programs. Future webinars topics include mental health.

Partners Business Groups	Budget \$5,000 from LoveNG fund	Timeline Short-term
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Considerations

- How many sessions to run?
- Getting appropriate presenters
- Low attendance 3/4 webinars

Next Steps

Action	Timeline/Status	Lead
Schedule, promote, run mental health webinar	June 8-19	Ec Dev-Hillary

Program: Funding

Many municipalities have created funding programs to support their businesses through these challenging times. Most are facilitated by single or upper-tier municipalities. Programs range from giving money for broad use such as covering operating expenses to a more narrow focus such as transitioning a business to an online model.

Partners	Budget	Timeline
Businesses Business Groups	\$100,000	Mid-term

Considerations

- There are a few options for providing funding to businesses:
 - CIP: this would require the province altering how CIPs work
 - Pulling CIP or using other budget: this money could be either funneled to a not-for-profit organization (GCFDC) or used to pay for services directly (web design, training, etc)
- Municipal funding should be structured as to avoid excluding recipients from other funding (CEBA, CERB, etc.)
- Who should the funding be geared to (ie. those that cannot access current programs?)
- Businesses have noted forgivable funding would be best

Next Steps

Action	Timeline/Status	Lead
Announce funding and begin intake	June 8-15	Ec Dev-Matt

Program: Co-op Ad Share

The BSG decided to move from a virtual tradeshow program to an co-op ad initiative. This would entail buying ad space with local advertisers. Local businesses would then be able to purchase ad space at a discounted rate.

Partners Businesses Business Groups	Budget \$20,000 from LoveNG Fund	Timeline Mid-term
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Considerations

- Promotion of the opportunity will be done by the Municipality, advertisers, and networks of the BSG members

Next Steps

Action	Timeline/Status	Lead
Coordinate plan with local advertisers	June 8-19	Ec Dev-Hillary

Program: #LoveNG Marketing Campaign

A marketing campaign would largely be facilitated by a hired company, and could contain several components including:

- Continued LoveNG messaging
- Window clings
- Promotion of day trips
- Giveaway packages
- Co-op paper ad buys
- Add a call to action for the #LoveNG campaign eg. Shop Local Pledge
- Made in North Grenville campaign

This campaign would focus on promoting spending in North Grenville as businesses re-open. It would target both locals and non-locals. We would also work collaboratively with our Regional Tourism Organization 9 (RTO9) to align with their promotion of the region.

Partners	Budget	Timeline
Hired Contractor Business Groups RTO9	\$50,000 from LoveNG Fund	Short-Term

Considerations

- Procurement policy
- The BSG will be the sounding board for the hired contractor

Next Steps

Action	Timeline/Status	Lead
RFP closes	June 12	Ec Dev-Hillary

Program: Local Currency

There are two options for running this program:

Option One: Isolated Giveaway

This would involve giving out the local currency to encourage people to shop local. An example was done in Prescott, \$2,500 was given out with a date to be used by and \$1,800 was used.

Pros: defined time period

Cons: Municipality effectively distributing tax-payer money to businesses rather than encouraging new local spending

Option Two: Ongoing Program

This would involve setting up a system for people to buy currency to use or give as a gift. An example of this is done in Downtown Brockville, they sell \$15k-25k a year.

Pros: residents keeping money local, opportunity for companies to use for employee incentives

Cons: large program to maintain long-term

Partners	Budget	Timeline
Businesses Business Groups	\$10,000 from LoveNG Fund	Mid-Term

Considerations

- Would need to onboard businesses, this would require time to reach out to nearly 2,000 businesses, for which we do not have a complete database
- Can all businesses participate (eg. home-based, virtual)?
- Finance department believes both options are feasible

Next Steps

Action	Timeline/Status	Lead
Decide on option 1 or 2	June 15-19	BSG

Program: Buying Local Partnerships

This program would involve working with industry partners (school board, hospital) to encourage local procurement. This would be done once most businesses have re-opened.

Partners	Budget	Timeline
Industry Leaders	None	Long-term

Considerations

- Internal buying procedures and procurement policy
- Analysis needed of industry needs and local availability of supplies

Next Steps

Action	Timeline/Status	Lead
Draft list of potential partners	July	BSG

Program: PPE and Safety Support

Many businesses have expressed concerns about the procedures they need in place to be able to re-open and operate safely. The aim of this program is to work with businesses to help them get the information and supplies required. This would include collecting and distributing information, as well as looking into the purchase of bulk PPE orders.

Partners Businesses Business Groups Industry Experts County	Budget TBD	Timeline Long-term
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Considerations

- The County Economic Development team is updating a list of local suppliers
- Sharing correct information
- Availability of resources

Next Steps

Action	Timeline/Status	Lead
Connecting businesses with suppliers	Ongoing	Ec Dev, Chamber, BIA