2026 Terms of Reference for the Stay, Discover Grow Regional Incentives Program Application Review Committee (RIPARC)

Mandate

The United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry ("SDG Counties") has instituted the Stay Discover Grow Regional Incentives Program (the "Program") to promote the improvement of properties located within the SDG Counties Region in accordance with the Stay, Discover, Grow Regional Incentives Program Policy (March 2021).

As per the Program Policy, the Regional Incentives Program Application Review Committee (the "RIPARC" or the "Committee") is to be the delegated authority responsible for reviewing applications and providing recommendations to SDG Counties Council for approval.

In recommending grant amounts to SDG Counties Council, the Committee shall adhere to the Program Policy parameters, consult accompanying documents (guidelines and promotional tools), and use prescribed evaluation tools.

Final approval for all grants will rest with SDG Counties Council, who shall receive a summary report of all recommended grants as soon as reasonably possible after each Committee meeting. Pending SDG Counties Council approval, the Program Coordinator will advise applicants as to the results of their application and proceed with standard Program administration.

The Committee may recommend amendments to the Program Policy and accompanying documents to ensure the on-going efficiency and alignment of the Program to regional priorities. The Committee may also be called upon to make determinations regarding the administration of the Program or other related matters.

Composition and Term

The composition of the Committee shall be as follows:

- Three (3) members of SDG Counties Council (must include the Warden or Warden's designate), appointed by SDG Counties Council for a four (4) year term.
- One of the members of SDG Counties Council will act as Committee Chair.
- Two (2) lay members appointed by SDG Counties Council for a four (4) year term concurrent with other Council appointments. Lay appointees are intended to provide a community-wide perspective and to advocate for regional needs and priorities. They may represent business representatives who ensure the plan supports the economic vitality of the community. The ideal candidate will have knowledge of building and planning processes or experience working in construction.
- Rules of Procedure and actions relating to Committee composition (appointments, terms, removal, absences, etc.) are subject to the SDG Counties Procedural By-Law No. 5485 (the "Procedural By-Law"), Section 4.

Administrative Support and Delegated Authority

The Program is administered by the SDG Counties Planning and Economic Development Services department and coordinated by the Economic Development Officer or delegated staff (the "Program Coordinator" or "Committee Coordinator").

SDG Counties staff have the authority to conduct an initial review of the applications for program eligibility and completeness prior to sharing with the Committee for review. If an application is deemed ineligible or incomplete as per the Program Policy, the Program Coordinator will not include the application in the Committee review package however, a list of ineligible applications will be provided to the Committee with staff rationale.

If delegated by the Committee prior to the application intake, the Director of Planning and Economic Development Services may review and recommend Program applications directly to SDG Counties Council if they qualify under specific grant streams and have a total requested amount up to $5,000. Approved grant streams could include the Signage Improvement Grant, the Feasibility, Design, and Study Grant, the Planning Application and Building Permit Grant, and or another stream deemed appropriate by the Committee. The approved grant amounts are contingent on the Program budget or surplus in the Program Reserve. As the delegated authority, the Director is expected to adhere to the Program Policy parameters, provide a summary report to the Committee, and present rationale to SDG Counties Council as to their recommendation. The Committee may remove the Director's delegated authority at any time.

All SDG Counties and local municipal staff members are eligible resources for the Committee and may be asked to participate in a Committee meeting to provide clarification, support, or guidance.

Accountability

SDG Counties staff shall be responsible and accountable to SDG Counties Council for proper stewardship of the Program. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing statement, this shall include:

- Ensuring Committee members follow established processes and use approved templates during the review of applications,
- Ensuring members declare conflicts of interest (pecuniary or otherwise) if they exist,
- Reporting to SDG Counties Council, on a bi-annual basis, the distribution of grant money, including the dollar amount, geographic location, and project details,
- Any other action deemed appropriate by the Committee or SDG Counties Council.

Meetings

The Committee shall hold a minimum of one (1) meeting annually to review annual applications. Additional meetings may be scheduled at the call of the Chair as required to address matters within the Committee's mandate. Committee members and resource staff will receive a complete application package a minimum of five (5) business days before the scheduled Committee meeting as per the Procedural By-Law.

As a Committee of Council, all requirements of the Procedural By-Law and applicable elements of the *Municipal Act* shall be followed (i.e. open meetings, public notice, agenda, minutes, etc.). Meeting agendas and minutes shall be drafted by the Program Coordinator and reviewed by the Chair prior to public notice.

Budget and Stipends

SDG Counties Council shall determine annual financial allocations to the Program through Budget deliberations and shall advise the Regional Incentives Program Application Review Committee of the approved amount prior to their review process.

The Committee may recommend grants under the Program up to the allocated amounts. The Committee may recommend the use of additional funds from the Program Reserve in the case of a surplus from previous years.

Travel to meetings shall be reimbursed to participants at the SDG Counties rate in place from time to time. In-person meetings will be minimized where possible via electronic file sharing. Elected officials and lay appointees shall receive the meeting per diem approved by SDG Counties Council.

Review and Amendments

These Terms of Reference may be amended by resolution of SDG Counties Council. The Terms of Reference shall be reviewed by SDG Counties Council periodically or as required to ensure they continue to reflect the Committee's mandate and responsibilities. If SDG Counties Council revokes or does not renew funding for the Program, the mandate of the Committee will be suspended pending review.