



# REQUEST FOR DECISION

Meeting: November 25, 2024

---

## SCOP Grant Application – Website Updates

---

### **DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:**

With our current website, the capabilities for creating new landing pages or dedicated pages for Economic Development and Tourism is limited, as well there is little we can do to edit the general layout to make these pages more eye catching or accessible.

The Small Communities Opportunity Program provides grants for small communities to help build capacity in agriculture, small business and local economic development. The application deadline is December 20, 2024. Eligible projects must align with one or more of these strategic directions in the Economic Development in Rural Alberta Plan which includes rural business support and entrepreneurship, support for labour force and skills development, marketing and promoting rural tourism, rural economic development capacity building.

Small communities may apply if they meet the following characteristics of rural communities:

- have a population less than 20,000
- have a limited geographic proximity (100 km or further) to population centres with more than 25,000 people that could provide employment and services\*
- may be remote or have in them, or around them, a significant amount of nature, natural resources, agricultural land and wilderness areas
- have a workforce largely focused on primary economic activity, including oil and gas, agriculture and forestry

\*We have contacted the program administrators to inquire if Claresholm is eligible despite not meeting this program requirements, as we are only ≈90km away from Lethbridge, they stated that they assess multiple factors to define what is considered “rural”, and since they do not know the nature of the project, they encourage us to still apply, they will evaluate the project and if it is deemed ineligible, they will forward our application directly to NRED.

### **DISCUSSION/OPTIONS:**

Administration has viewed a handful of companies and compared them regarding use and accessibility, ease of updating and maintaining, look and branding, features, and cost, and have concluded that Loop is the best fit to meet all our needs.

A new website platform with Loop would allow us to easily customize and enhance the accessibility and attractiveness of pages to keep things up to date and provide essential information for quality of life for residents and business owners. It will also allow us to adapt the website to reflect changing economic development priorities and improve service delivery for residents and businesses. Dedicated Economic Development, Event or Tourism landing pages can be added, as well as other landing pages and tabs that promote and focus on things such as business retention, investment attraction, business support, tourism, agriculture, and more. We will also have the ability to seamlessly link to key stakeholders such as the Chamber of Commerce and the MD of Willow Creek.

At the Economic Development Committee Meeting on November 18<sup>th</sup>, the Committee made a motion to support administration's proposed application to this grant.

**COSTS/ SOURCE OF FUNDING (if applicable):**

Applicants may apply for grants between \$20,000 and \$100,000 for each project. The grant may fund up to 90% of eligible project costs and the applicant must fund at least 10%.

**The estimated total cost for the website updates are \$23,325:** The annual cost for the Loop predesigned theme Plus plan is \$3,750 annually. There are added features that increase this cost if selected, up to a total of \$14,825, additionally we have the option to set up an app as well, up to a total of \$4,750, the total cost could be up to \$23,325. As the SCOP grant is 90% funded, our share of 10% would be \$2,332.50 and we would apply for a grant of \$20,992.50.

Within the 2024 budget there is an allocation for website updates, so our share of the costs will fall within budget.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Recommend Council pass a motion to instruct administration to apply for the Small Communities Opportunity Program grant for the proposed website updates project.

**PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS:**

Moved by Councillor \_\_\_\_\_ to instruct administration to submit an application to the Small Communities Opportunity Program grant for the website updates project.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- 1.) <https://www.looponline.co/>
- 2.) Loop Pricing Plan

**Other Munis using LOOP:**

- 1.) <https://www.canmore.ca/>
- 2.) <https://www.drumheller.ca/>
- 3.) <https://www.stettler.net/>
- 4.) <https://www.edson.ca/>
- 5.) <https://www.crowsnestpass.com/>
- 6.) <https://www.sicamous.ca/>

PREPARED BY: Economic Development Coordinator, Ali Hemmaway

---

APPROVED BY: CAO, Abe Tinney

DATE: November 20, 2024

---