

The Corporation of the City of Kawartha Lakes
Committee of the Whole Report

Report Number ED2019-026

Meeting Date: November 5, 2019

Title: Tourism Strategy Update

Ward Number: All

Author and Title: Laurie McCarthy, Economic Development Officer –
Tourism

Recommendation(s):

That Report ED2019-026, **Tourism Strategy Update**, be received for
information.

Department Head:_____

Financial/Legal/HR/Other:_____

Chief Administrative Officer:_____

Background:

In 2016, the City of Kawartha Lakes Council adopted the Corporate Strategic Plan. A Vibrant and Growing Economy was identified as the first goal in the Strategy with the objective to enhance tourism through the creation and execution of a new Tourism Strategy.

The purpose of this report is to present Council with an update on the progress of the development of the new Tourism Strategy for Kawartha Lakes, and to provide an opportunity for Council input and discussion (presentation to be made.).

Rationale:

The Tourism Strategy project was initiated in August 2019 and will be completed in Q1 of 2020.

Through the corporate procurement process, the consulting firm KWL Advisory has been hired to work collaboratively with the City's Economic Development team to develop the Tourism Strategy.

Destination Development in Kawartha Lakes is the strategic planning and advancement of defined areas to support the growth of Kawartha Lakes as a desirable destination for travelers, by providing compelling experiences, quality infrastructure, and remarkable services to entice investment and repeat visitation.

Through destination development, we envision Kawartha Lakes as a world-class tourism destination which offers remarkable products and experiences that are authentic, driven by visitor demand, and exceed expectations.

The new Tourism Strategy which will be called the Kawartha Lakes Destination Development Plan will be a five (5) year strategic plan for building and managing the visitor economy in Kawartha Lakes.

The strategy development process is built on comprehensive research, strategic option analysis and a consultative framework. Stakeholder engagement sessions, stakeholder interviews and online stakeholder surveys to engage local stakeholder businesses, community groups, partner organizations and City staff are being completed as part of the first phase of the strategy development.

Development of the strategy along with an implementation plan will be completed in phase 2 of the project. The final strategy will be presented by KWL Advisory and Economic Development staff to Council in Q1 of 2020.

Other Alternatives Considered:

No other alternatives have been considered.

Financial/Operation Impacts:

This project is being funded in part by the Regional Tourism Organization 8 (RTO8) Kawarthas Northumberland through the Partnership Allocation Program through funding from the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport. City of Kawartha Lakes is contributing 50% of the total project funding and Kawarthas Northumberland (RTO8) is contributing the remaining 50% of the funding. All of the project funds must flow through Kawarthas Northumberland (RTO8) as per the Partnership Funding Agreement set by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport. The project funds provided by the City came from the existing 2019 Economic Development operational budget and was paid to Kawarthas Northumberland (RTO8) when the project commenced as required in the funding agreement. Kawarthas Northumberland (RTO8) will pay all invoices related to the project.

Additional funds have been earmarked in the proposed 2020 Economic Development budget to begin the implementation of the Strategy and subsequent projects that require additional funding to the general Economic Development budget in future years will be presented to Council for consideration.

Relationship of Recommendation(s) to the 2016-2019 Strategic Plan:

In January 2016, Council adopted a five (5) year Corporate Strategic Plan to establish a vision for the municipality that identified three strategic goals. Of the three strategic goals, A Vibrant and Growing Economy were identified as a Council priority and included the objective to enhance tourism through the development of a new tourism strategy.

In 2017 the Economic Development Strategy was developed and within the goal of growing the tourism business sector the key objectives identified were to;

- increase the volume of year-round accommodations of all kinds, in all markets;
- develop operator experiences to boost tourism traffic;
- develop a guided touring sector;
- expand visitation into the shoulder-season and winter and connect these off peak activities to culture, and;
- identify and support unique and differentiated retail that either generates tourism visits or extends those visits on a community by community basis.

The Tourism Strategy being developed will address these objectives and will include recommendations related to these specific objectives.

Consultations:

Consultations with key stakeholders including tourism business owners, community groups, partner organizations, Economic Development organizations, government partners and visitors to Kawartha Lakes will be included in the upcoming research engagement process.

Attachments:

None

Department Head E-Mail: cmarshall@kawarthalakes.ca

Department Head: Chris Marshall