

Analysis on Niagara Region's Role in Tourism

VALERIE KUHNS, (A) DIRECTOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

KELLY PROVOST, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

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NIAGARA
CANADA

Timeline

Prior to 2010

- Niagara Economic Development Corporation had a budget of \$500,000, five (5) staff and additional Gateway staff

2010

- Regional Tourism Organization (RTO) formed, called Tourism Partnership of Niagara (TPN)

March 2012

- Economic Development became a division and no longer has a mandate in tourism, at Council's direction

Feb 2015

- Council ends the Gateway contract and allocated \$50,000 to a study on tourism priorities and the Region's future role

Nov 12, 2015

- The report ED 4-2015 was presented outlining 7 priorities (gaps) in tourism that the Region could advance

Timeline continued

April 28, 2016

- Council received report ED 5-2016 to approve the tourism business case of 7 priorities to initiate the funding of \$100,000, and approve cancellation of the Gateway Centre contract as of Jan 2017

April 19, 2017

- PEDC was presented a tourism report ED 4-2017 to approve the proposed role of Economic Development in tourism

June 2017

- Council approved a motion for Economic Development to allocate \$15,000 annually for lease of the Gateway kiosk

2017-2019

- Annual budget for tourism priorities decreases from \$100,000 to \$15,000 due to budget pressures. Advances on additional tourism priorities as budget and staffing allows.

The approved mandate in tourism

Based on ED 4-2017, the mandate approved through PEDC and Council in April 2017 is as follows:

“to ensure tourism is part of the Region’s Economic Development Strategy by facilitating discussions on transportation access initiatives, developing a Regional Wayfinding plan, promoting five scenic routes and supporting event bids; to advocate on behalf of industry stakeholders; and to undertake investment attraction initiatives which contribute to tourism outcomes for Niagara.”

7 tourism priorities identified

The following tourism priorities were identified:

1. Transportation/Access Infrastructure
2. Wayfinding Signage
3. Economic Development Strategy
4. Facilitation/Coordination
5. Planning and Policies
6. Special Event Bid Fund
7. Marketing as required

How they are being advanced

- Economic Development's ability to advance these 7 priorities is limited by budget allocations and staffing resources.
- The Economic Development Officer position has a 20% time allotment to assist in advancing economic initiatives in support of the Tourism sector.
- Activities funded by Economic Development in addition to the Gateway lease are evaluated based on the potential economic impact of the project and available budget.

Recommendations

- To date, Economic Development has been able to advance this mandate and these priorities without the need for additional budget.
- The exemption is Priority 6 – Special Event Bid Fund. Requests for sport tourism event bids are currently considered by Council on a case-by-case basis.
- As a result of recent discussions on Sport Tourism and the recently completed Brock Centre for Sport Capacity report on the Region's future role in tourism, it is Staff's recommendation that Council consider funding for a Special Event Bid Fund **BE REFERRED** for consideration as part of the 2020 budget process.

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Thank you and Questions