

MEMORANDUM

ED-C 1-2020

Subject: Tourism Stakeholder Consultation

Date: January 15, 2020

To: Planning and Economic Development Committee

From: Valerie Kuhns, Acting Director, Economic Development

The purpose of this memo is to update Planning and Economic Development Committee on the request made at the November 6, 2019 meeting related to report ED 12-2019.

At the Committee meeting, Economic Development staff presented Report ED 12-2019 - Analysis of Niagara Region's Role in Tourism. Following the presentation, staff were directed to circulate the report the tourism stakeholders for comment.

The list of stakeholders consulted included the Tourism Partnership of Niagara, representatives from the 5 Destination Marketing Organizations in Niagara, the Niagara Park Commission, and all local area municipalities.

The Clerk's department circulated this report to stakeholders for comment with a deadline of providing comments back to the Economic Development Officer of Friday, December 20, 2019.

The feedback received from the stakeholders includes the attached letter co-written by the Chair of Niagara Parks Commission, Sandie Bellows, and the CEO of the Niagara Parks Commission, David Adames (Attached as Appendix 1).

No other comments were received from the remaining stakeholders that were consulted.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Valerie Kuhns
Acting Director, Economic Development



December 12, 2019

Jim Bradley, Regional Chair
Region of Niagara
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way
Thorold, ON L2V 4T7

RE: Niagara Region's Role in Tourism Report ED 12-2019

Dear Regional Chair:

Niagara Parks would like to thank you and Regional Council for forwarding Report ED 12-2019, Niagara Region's Role in Tourism. The Niagara Parks' Board of Commissioners received a copy of the Report at its meeting of December 12, 2019 and appreciates the opportunity to provide comment.

As you and your colleagues know, Niagara Parks is proud to work with stakeholders like the Region to support and grow tourism in Niagara and very much views collaboration as important to continuing to position Niagara as the leader in tourism in Canada. We concur with the Region that it does have a very important role to play in tourism and that tourism, as a key economic sector and driver for Niagara, must be part of the Region's Economic Development Strategy. As we have previously presented to Regional Council, Niagara Parks' most recent economic impact study shows that our contribution and impact to tourism includes the following:

- Niagara Parks employs over 1,800 staff in high season
- Niagara Parks welcomes over 3.8 million unique visitors
- Economic impact from visitors' spending contributes:
 - Over \$1 billion to GDP
 - 15,900 jobs
 - \$458 million in tax revenue to three levels of government



In terms of Report ED 12-2019, Niagara Parks offers the following comments:

- **Transportation:** For any key tourism destination, transportation, and the access that different modes of transportation provides, is essential to supporting tourism growth. Enhancing transportation options in Niagara will provide more opportunities for both tourists and local residents to explore and take advantage of the rich tourism offerings across the region. It is important to support the four international border crossings into Niagara; the Metrolinx service; intra-regional transit; state of good repair for highways; cycling lanes on regional roads and cycling paths/routes; and future growth of Niagara District Airport, supporting the potential of water access across Lake Ontario to Toronto and encouraging the re-activation of VIA Rail service to Niagara. Niagara Parks has been working with Metrolinx over the past three years on a promotional partnership supporting the weekend tourism train service to Niagara and will continue this relationship, including providing WEGO transit connection to the train station in conjunction with the City of Niagara Falls. Niagara Parks is developing a cycling strategy and will continue to partner with key cycling organizations to support this growing market segment.
- **Wayfinding Signage:** Niagara Parks would like to work with the Region on the development of a wayfinding plan. Over the past year, Niagara Parks has been implementing our wayfinding plan along the 56km Niagara River corridor and will be finishing the final phases over the course of 2020 and 2021.
- **Economic Development Strategy:** Niagara Parks will continue to work with the Region, City of Niagara Falls and Metrolinx on extending the service into Niagara, to ensure a seamless connection for visitors.
- **Facilitation and Coordination/Planning and Policy:** Niagara Parks is a proud supporter of the Niagara 2021 Canada Summer Games and is looking forward to hosting golf at Legends on the Niagara as well as the closing ceremonies at Queen Victoria Park. From an investment attraction perspective, Niagara Parks is moving forward



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with key tourism product development and investment, including the Niagara Parks Marina at Miller's Creek and the adaptive re-use of the de-commissioned hydro-electric power plants located within Queen Victoria Park. These projects are intended to attract significant investment and Niagara Parks welcomes the support of the Region in advancing these important projects.

- Special Event Bid Fund: Sport tourism, already a key part of the tourism industry in Niagara, could be strengthened significantly through the legacy of hosting the Niagara 2021 Canada Summer Games. Niagara Parks would be pleased to support the Region's efforts to bid and host future national and international sport events.

Please contact me at your convenience to discuss this correspondence should you have any questions. We look forward to working with you and staff on advancing tourism for the benefit of Niagara.

Sincerely,

David Adames
Chief Executive Officer

Sandie Bellows
Chair

- c. Niagara Parks Commissioners
Mark Evely, Legislative Coordinator, Office of the Regional Clerk
Kelly Provost, Economic Development Officer, Region of Niagara