



## Municipality of North Grenville

To:	<b>COUNCIL</b>	Meeting Date: 2021/01/12
Subject:	<b>Tourism Strategy</b>	Report No: CAO-001-2021
Prepared by:	<b>Matt Gilmer, Economic Development Officer</b>	File No: C7-CAO

### RECOMMENDATION(S)

That Council:

1. Receive the North Grenville Tourism Strategy.
2. Direct staff to report back to Council with a plan for tourism service delivery and budget.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### Purpose

- To present the findings of the Tourism Strategy development process and the resulting plan.

#### Key Findings

- The Municipality has made efforts to support the growth of the tourism industry over the past two years.
- A tourism strategy was completed with grant funding.
- The engagement process revealed community support for growing tourism.
- The tourism strategy provides a suggested structure for tourism delivery and provides recommendations to grow the industry.

#### Financial Implications

- There are no financial implications associated with this report.

### BACKGROUND

In 2019 North Grenville launched a new, dedicated tourism program. This included the launch of a new Explore North Grenville website, the hiring of a tourism summer student, the launch of tourism social media channels, and the creation of the first dedicated visitor guide in 2020.

Regional Tourism Organization 9 (RTO9) provides matching grants through their partnership fund each year to assist destinations in creating new tourism programming and strategies. The Municipality received \$20,000 to create a tourism strategy. A request for proposal (RFP) process was conducted and MDB Insight Inc. was awarded the contract. A steering committee was formed including the North Grenville Chamber of Commerce, the Old Town Kemptville Business Improvement Area (BIA), the Mayor, and staff.

## ANALYSIS

The tourism strategy process included:

- Creation of workplan and charter
- Set-up of a steering committee
- Review of background materials
- Three site visits
- One-on-one stakeholder interviews (14 conducted)
- Resident and business survey (236 completed)
- Industry group consultation (seven attendees)
- Public information session (seven attendees)
- Asset mapping
- Tourism delivery analysis
- Tourism landscape review
- Economic impact assessment
- SOARR assessment
- Benchmarking review

The steering committee reviewed the key findings report in November, and a first draft of the tourism strategy in December.

The strategy has three strategic priorities:

1. Brand the destination as current, innovative, curious, generous, and family-oriented
2. Leverage existing assets as backdrops for high-yield, high-value experiences for tourists and locals
3. Collaborate with business operators and others to build strong, reliable, unique tourism draws

Under each strategic priority steps have been identified that will help the Municipality achieve the mission – *the Municipality of North Grenville demonstrates leadership and supports its businesses and community groups to marshal the assets, infrastructure, administrative capacity, programs, and financial resources to develop and promote the local tourism industry.*

To achieve these steps the Municipality must decide on a budget and service delivery structure for tourism.

The strategy offers four service delivery models:

1. Municipal Tourism Department, with funds from the operating levy and/or MAT, using municipal staff and passive support from the tourism industry support. Council is ultimately in charge.
2. Municipal Tourism Department with Pay-to-Play Program for the industry, with funds from the operating levy and/or MAT, using municipal staff, matching funding from the tourism industry, such as annual fees and other charges, and a Council-appointed Advisory Committee. Council is ultimately in charge.
3. Municipally funded Tourism Contract, with funds from municipal grant and/or MAT, with funds flowing to an existing arms-length organization with their own staff or seconded municipal staff, additional funding from the tourism industry, and an arms-length board of directors reporting annually to Council.
4. Autonomous Tourism Association, an independent non-profit organization, supported financially by tourism businesses, perhaps receiving a small grant from the municipality, operated with little or no staff and/or volunteers, and an independent board of directors.

The tourism strategy recommends option two, Municipal Tourism Department with Pay-to-Play Program for the industry, for the Municipality of North Grenville.

The strategy notes that the Municipality cannot expand its tourism program within the current budget and provides the proposed budget below.

Proposed Annual Tourism Budget	Annual Expense
Salary & Benefits (dedicated tourism staff)	\$75,000
Marketing, Advertising & Promotions (digital & print)	\$60,000
Product Development (photo/video, web dev., fam tours)	\$25,000
Meetings, Workshops, Materials & Supplies	\$25,000
Assoc. Memberships, Conferences, Prof. Dev., & Other	\$15,000
TOTAL	\$200,000

Staff will review the options and recommend a budget and service delivery structure at a future Council meeting.

## Strategic Alignment

Strategic Focus Area 1: Sustainable, Strategic Growth (Goal 5: Become a tourism destination)

- Outcome: Explore development that enhances our tourism potential

## COMMENTS

Following Council's review of the strategy, Staff will analyze the service delivery and budget options and will present a plan to Council to move forward. Once Council approves a delivery structure and budget, resources will be allocated to complete the strategy.

## EXISTING POLICY/BY-LAW

None.

## FINANCIAL IMPACT

This item has been identified in the current budget: Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☒

This item is within the budgeted amount: Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☒

Staffing implications, as they relate to implementing Council's decision on this matter, are limited to the existing staff complement and applicable administrative policies as approved by Council.

## PUBLIC INPUT

Public consultation included a resident/business survey, industry session, and public session. The feedback showed a desire to increase tourism in North Grenville.

## INTERNAL/EXTERNAL CONSULTATION

Key internal staff and external stakeholders took part in one-on-one interviews. RTO9 and the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville's tourism program administrator were consulted in the engagement process.

## CONCLUSION

The Municipality has completed the tourism strategy process, resulting in a document that will guide the growth of the industry over the coming years. Staff are asking Council to receive the strategy and instruct staff to bring back a plan for tourism service delivery and budget.

## SIGNATURE

**Prepared by:**

*Original Signed By*

---

**Name: Matt Gilmer**

**Title: Economic Development Officer**

**Submitted for**

**Council consideration by:**

*Original Signed By*

---

**Name: Gary Dyke**

**Title: Chief Administrative Officer**

## ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: North Grenville Tourism Strategy