

Hamilton Tourism Development Corporation Business Plan 2024 – 2028

Board of Directors Meeting: June 7, 2024

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HAMILTON TOURISM DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Mandate: The Hamilton Tourism Development Corporation (HTDC) is established to drive tourism growth within Hamilton. It aligns and supports the city's Tourism Strategy, which outlines a vision and priorities for tourism development.

Funding Utilization: The HTDC receives funding from the Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT), which is utilized to support various tourism-related initiatives.

Accountability Structure: The Province of Ontario requires the City of Hamilton to share 50% of MAT with a non-profit eligible tourism entity. The Hamilton Tourism Development Corporation (HTDC) is the eligible tourism entity that receives this 50% of funds. As a non-profit corporation, the HTDC is accountable to the City of Hamilton, which serves as the sole voting member. The Board of Directors, consisting of council members and appointed officers, oversee the Corporation's operations, ensuring transparent and effective utilization of funds in accordance with approved policies and regulations.

The HTDC will provide an Annual Report with audited financial statements to Council providing full access to records with transparency and accountability.

Tourism Strategy 2015-2020

The city has grown and made significant gains in tourism development since the previous strategy was adopted. This strategy focused on **Leadership**, **Marketing** and **Communications** and **Destination Development**. The majority of action items have been completed.

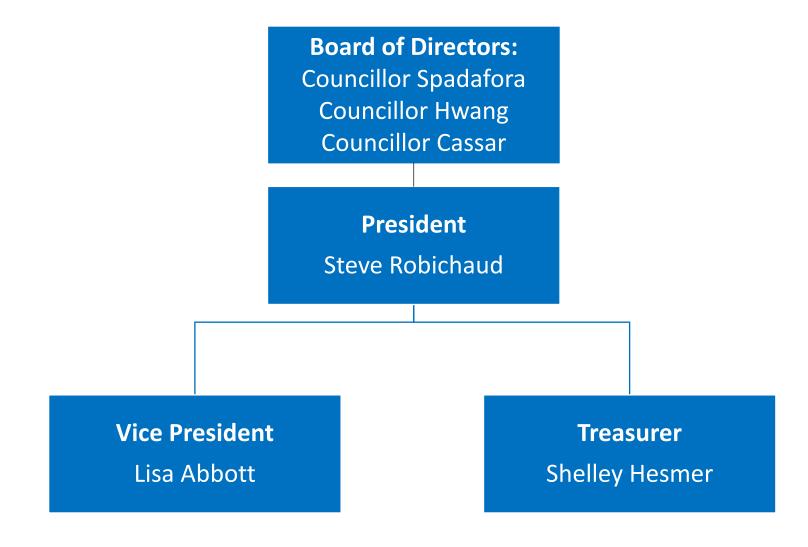
Tourism Strategy 2024-2028

The Draft 2024-2028 strategy builds on previous work and adopts a 'whole city' approach, emphasizing inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility. The strategy is undergoing consultation and will be presented to Council fall 2024. The four priorities identified in the strategy include:

- 1. Grow Hamilton's Reputation as a Leading Tourism Destination
- 2. Create Vibrant Tourism Districts
- 3. Promote and Support the Sustainability of Natural Assets
- 4. Strengthen Major Festivals and Events

The strategy will include action items and an implementation plan that focuses on capacity building in the sector.

HTDC GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



HTDC OFFICER ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Officer	Summary of Responsibilities
President	 Provides leadership and direction to the HTDC Board of Directors. Ensures alignment to mandate and objectives. Approves board reports and materials for HTDC board meetings. Oversees evaluation of funding requests, ensures alignment with legislative requirements, the corporation's founding documents, and Tourism Strategy.
Vice-President	 Leads specific initiatives or projects assigned by the Board; contributes to achieving the HTDC's strategic goals. Assists in reviewing and assessing funding requests, considers alignment with the corporation's objectives and strategic direction. Prepares recommendations for funding allocation and strategic priorities in collaboration with staff.
Treasurer	 Manages finances, oversees budget, financial reporting, and audit processes. Ensures compliance with financial regulations and reporting requirements; maintains transparency and accountability in financial matters. Develops and implements financial policies and procedures to safeguard the corporation's assets and resources. Reviews funding requests, assesses financial implications, provides recommendations on funding allocation and resource management. Provides regular updates to the Board on the financial status, performance, and risks, to inform strategic decision-making processes.

Planning & Economic Development Department

Tourism & Culture Division

Tourism & Events Section

Creative Industries & Cultural Development Section

Placemaking & Public Art Section

Heritage Resource Management Section

Event
Attraction
& Hosting

Tourism Sector Development Tourism Product Development Visitor Experience Centre Tourism Hamilton Marketing

Film

Music

Placemaking

Public Art

Civic Museum Attractions As part of the Tourism & Culture Division, the Tourism & Events section is responsible for:

- **Sector Development**, which includes supporting the businesses and workforce, as well as investment attraction.
- **Event Attraction and Hosting**, including major events, meetings and conventions, sporting, festivals, etc.
- Tourism Marketing, both to individual leisure travelers (B2C) and business development and event attraction (B2B).
- Visitor Services, offered digitally through the <u>TourismHamilton.com</u> website, and physically at the Visitor Experience Centre at 28 James St. N.
- Product Development, this is a new function by which staff curate unique experiences for visitors and co-create Tourism Products with local businesses and organizations.

Responsibilities Related to HTDC

- As subject matter experts, staff make recommendations to request funding for tourism initiatives. Requests are supported by developing business cases, financial modelling, benchmarking, research and measurement of KPI's.
- Staff prepare bid and procurement documents and provide liaison services to third-party tourism entities.
- Staff ensure that funded activities comply with the HTDC's requirements, including reporting and accountability measures.
- Staff execute all deliverables associated with delivering requests which have received funding from the HTDC.

MUNICIPAL ACCOMMODATION TAX RESERVE POLICY & AGREEMENT

Purpose:

The policy provides guidelines to ensure support for initiatives that align with the broader goals of the Tourism Strategy. Identified uses include:

- securing and executing the hosting and promotion of events in Hamilton that are deemed to be a regional, provincial, national and/or international draw;
- developing new and innovative tourism products using equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility as a driver;
- supporting Tourism sector development and capacity building;
- marketing Hamilton as a leading destination for tourism, leisure and business travel with emphasis on promoting overnight stays;
- support staffing and operational expenses reducing dependency on the municipal tax levy

Flexibility should be maintained to ensure that MAT funds can be directed to emerging priorities and opportunities within the tourism sector. Priorities are identified through ongoing consultation and engagement and are reflected in the Tourism Strategy.

Operating Agreement:

The Corporation shall strive to fulfil the following objectives while providing tourism promotion and tourism development services to the City:

- assist in securing and executing the hosting and promotion of events that are deemed to be a regional, provincial, national and/or international draw;
- support the creation of tourism product development which brings new and innovative products, experiences, and services to the market for tourists to enjoy;
- support tourism sector development and capacity-building;
- promote and market Hamilton as a leading destination for tourism, leisure and business travel with an emphasis on promoting overnight stays; and
- undertake its duties using objective decision-making that is accountable and transparent, with a focus on providing Citywide benefits.

FUNDING DECISION MATRIX

In 2024, the Tourism team is looking ahead for opportunities that require commitments from the HTDC Board and CoH Council. The Municipal Accommodation Tax Reserve Policy (FPAP-RE-004) specifies that a minimum of \$2m is required in each reserve account as a measure of fiscal responsibility. Until this base amount has been collected, Council has approved a line of credit attached to the HTDC MAT Reserve Fund to support immediate funding needs. Current funding requests will access the line of credit in addition to existing Tourism reserves. All funding requests must align to priorities designated in the Reserve Policy and in the Tourism Master Plan.

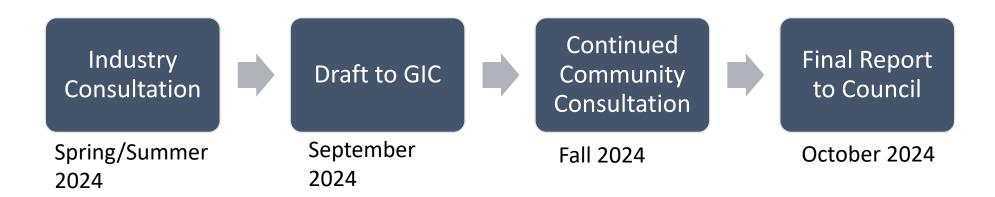
In future, the following priority matrix will be used as a guide to determine which fund is accessed. These priorities reflect the Reserve Fund Policies, the HTDC agreement with the City of Hamilton, the Tourism Master Plan and benchmarking with other municipalities. In summary, the City's Municipal Accommodation Tax Reserve No.108072 would fund opportunities that directly benefit residents whereas the HTDC priorities are focused on attracting visitors.

CoH MAT Reserve Fund Priorities	HTDC MAT Reserve Fund Priorities
The City of Hamilton's MAT Reserve Fund can be used for:	The Hamilton Development Corporation Reserve Fund can be used for:
 Opportunities to advance City priorities that strengthen communities and enhance events that are focused on attracting Hamilton residents; Opportunities that further cultural development within the city; Opportunities that advance City Strategies such as the Urban Indigenous Strategy, Clean & Green Hamilton, and the Council Priority 2: Safe & Thriving Neighbourhoods; City/community events that require infrastructure enhancement (such as road closures, additional security, street-cleaning etc.); Staff resources and operational costs that could reduce the tax levy. 	 Opportunities to secure and execute the hosting and promotion of events that are deemed to be of regional, provincial, national and/or international significance; Support the creation of tourism product development which brings new and innovative products, experiences, and services for tourists; Support tourism sector development and capacity-building; Opportunities that positively impact hotels, restaurants, tourist attractions Opportunities that focus on providing City-wide benefits.

Hamilton's Draft 2024-2028 Tourism Strategy, currently in development, adopts a regenerative 'whole city' approach, emphasizing inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility. The strategy, which will go to Council in the fall, envisions Hamilton as a top Canadian destination renowned for vibrant tourism districts, captivating nature-based activities, and authentic experiences.

Proposed Strategic Priorities:

- 1. **Grow Reputation as a Leading Tourism Destination:** Enhancing Tourism Hamilton's role to support stakeholders, welcome visitors, and cocreate unique experiences, with a focus on collaboration, sustainability, and Indigenous tourism.
- 2. Create Vibrant Tourism Districts: Fostering authentic 'sense of place' experiences through placemaking, programming, and investment attraction, aligned with city efforts for neighborhood revitalization.
- 3. Promote and Support the Sustainability of Natural Assets: Thoughtful planning and infrastructure improvements to enhance visitor experiences while preserving the environment, in alignment with broader city greenspace protection and waterfront access plans.
- **4. Strengthen Major Festivals & Events:** Securing investments in event infrastructure, leveraging new funding sources, and managing event impacts, integrating with city priorities for cultural vibrancy and economic growth.



2024-2025 TOURISM HIGHLIGHTS

Major Tourism Event Hosting

- RBC Canadian Open (PGA Tour) International
- U Sports Women's Volleyball Championship National
- League 1 Canada Women's Inter-Provincial Soccer Championship National
- Founders Cup Jr. B Lacrosse Championship National
- Players Open Men's & Women's Curling Event International

Meetings and Conventions

- Tourism Industry Association of Ontario Conference (Ontario Tourism Summit): Tourism industry professional development and advocacy.
- Canadian Brewing Awards & Conference: 800 breweries competing for a chance to win a medal in one of 61 categories.
- Ontario Association of Veterinary Technicians Conference: Continuing education for veterinary healthcare professionals.
- Canadian Society for Vascular Surgery Conference: Vascular health professionals' education, research and advocacy forums.

Tourism Marketing

- Launch of a new campaign featuring the characters behind the city's tourism, retail, and hospitality businesses called *Let Me Show You* sharing what they love about Hamilton. In 2025, will continue to leverage this local ambassadorship brand to tell authentic, local stories to leisure and business travelers as well as event organizers with targeted, paid advertising campaigns and collateral.
- Tourism Hamilton partnerships to expand its reach to new audiences including: Metrolinx, Destination Ontario, and in-market partnerships with Tim Hortons Field, FirstOntario Centre, and John C. Munro Hamilton International Airport

Visitor Experience Centre Programming

- Take a Ride with HSR: Celebrating 150 Years of Connections (May-December 2024)
- Tourism Hamilton's Supercrawl Vendor Pop-up (September 2024)
- Summer sidewalk/patio activations (June-August 2025)

HTDC Funding Requests - Estimated Timing of Cashflows

Funding Request:
2026 Brier* (BID)
2026/2027 JUNOS* (BID)
2029 Canada Wide Science Fair** (BID)
2027 Canada Wide Science Fair** (BID)
2026-2029 Winterfest
Waterfall Master Plan
Indigenous Tourism Exercise
Placemaking/Activation/Safety Initiatives
Total

2024	2025	2026	2027		2028		2028		2028		2027		2029	Total
\$ 1	\$ -	\$ 300,000	\$	-	\$	-	\$ -	\$ 300,000						
\$	\$ -	\$ 300,000	\$	-	\$	-	\$ -	\$ 300,000						
\$ 50,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$	205,000	\$	-	\$ -	\$ 255,000						
\$ 50,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$	-	\$	-	\$ 205,000	\$ 255,000						
\$ -	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	\$	40,000	\$	40,000	\$ 40,000	\$ 200,000						
\$ 50,000	\$ 200,000	\$ -	\$	-	\$	-	\$ -	\$ 250,000						
\$ 50,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$	-	\$	-	\$ -	\$ 50,000						
\$ 50,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 50,000	\$	-	\$	-	\$ -	\$ 200,000						
\$ 250,000	\$ 340,000	\$ 690,000	\$	245,000	\$	40,000	\$ 245,000	\$ 1,810,000						

Notes:

Note:

- The above funding requests do not represent the Tourism & Culture Division's entire work plan.
- The above requests are high-priority, high-impact requests that would not be fully funded without HTDC funds.

^{*} Payable only if we are successful in securing the event

^{**} Venue deposits required in 2024, remaining funds applied to eligible expenses in 2027 & 2029

HAMILTON TOURISM DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION 2024 DRAFT OPERATING BUDGET

FISCAL PERIOD: January 1 to December 31, 2024

	Draft Budget
Revenue	
Municipal Accommodation Tax - Hotel	1,057,000
Municipal Accommodation Tax - Short Term Rental ¹	-
Interest Income	60,000
Total Revenue	1,117,000
Expenses	
Bid Fees	250,000
Software Subscription	2,000
Professional Fees:	
Consulting	5,000
Audit Fees	9,000
City Staff	29,295
Insurance	7,218
Legal Fees	716
Financial Charges	1,000
Total Expenses	304,229
Net Income	812,771

¹ It is anticipated HTDC will receive revenue from the Municipal Accommodation Tax collected from Short Term Rentals (STR) beginning in Q4 of 2024. Municipal Accommodation Tax STR revenue forecasts not currently available

2024-2028 FORECASTED BUDGET

Cash Flow:	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Opening Balance	1,027,920	2,090,691	2,854,101	3,322,681	4,044,190	5,281,525
Add: Total Revenue	1,117,000	1,172,850	1,231,493	1,293,067	1,357,720	1,425,607
Add: Funding from Line of Credit	250,000					
Less: Repayment of Line of Credit				(250,000)		
Less: Bid Fees	(250,000)	(340,000)	(690,000)	(245,000)	(40,000)	(245,000)
Less: Other Expenses	(54,229)	(69,440)	(72,912)	(76,558)	(80,386)	(84,405)
Net Cumulative Balance	2,090,691	2,854,101	3,322,681	4,044,190	5,281,525	6,377,726

APPENDIX A – FUNDING REQUESTS

Notes:

- 1. The following funding requests do not represent Tourism & Culture's entire work plan.
- 2. The following funding requests are high-priority, high-impact requests that would not be fully funded without HTDC funds.
- 3. <u>City of Hamilton MAT Reserve Fund Policy</u>

The MAT Reserves shall be used for the promotion and execution of tourism activities including but not limited to bidding fees; tourism sales; marketing initiatives and the development of tourism products. In the case of extraordinary and unforeseen operating expenditures in the Tourism and Culture Division, the General Manager of the Planning and Economic Development Department shall consult with the General Manager of Finance and Corporate Services to determine if funds from the MAT Reserve can be used to offset the Operating Budget.

PRIORITY: STRENGTHEN REPUTATION AS A LEADING TOURISM DESTINATION

Event/Initiative	Indigenous Tourism Experiences Study
Description:	• Consultation with Indigenous communities, product-market match assessment, and best practice research.
Objectives:	 Establish innovative tourism products and experiences. Increase domestic and/or foreign private-sector tourism investment; attract and support new tourism investments.
Benefits:	 Indigenous tourism experiences in Canada have seen exponential growth and have outpaced pre-pandemic levels, ahead of many other tourism products (Source: Destination Canada and ITAC); There is high consumer demand for Indigenous tourism experiences (Source: Destination Canada, ITAC, the Conference Board of Canada, and Insignia Marketing Research); There are currently no Indigenous experiences in Hamilton; 5 available within a three-hour drive of Hamilton (3 in Toronto, 1 in Brantford, 1 in Ohsweken) (Source: Destination Indigenous).
Total Cost:	\$ 75 K (to be spent over 2024 and 2025)
HTDC Request:	\$ 50 K
Other Funding:	\$ 25 K – Secured through the Province's Tourism Development Fund

PRIORITY: CREATE VIBRANT TOURISM DISTRICTS

Event/Initiative	Hamilton Winterfest (2026-2030)
Description:	 Increase budget for this event to bring in line with industry standards. Issue an RFP to secure a producer for 5 years to grow the event to provide funding that will build the capacity of the event.
Objectives:	 Develop Winterfest into a signature winter attraction, drawing visitors from both local and regional markets; Enhance the liveliness and attractiveness of the downtown area during the typically quieter winter season; Encouraging residents and visitors to explore and enjoy the city's urban core; Activate public spaces, streets, and storefronts in the downtown area through Winterfest programming, including interactive installations, performances, and events, to create a lively and engaging atmosphere for residents and visitors alike.
Benefits:	 Engagement of 230+ local artists across all Winterfest Events; assist in producing/marketing 70+ community events; attract 40,000+ in-person attendees; grow the Family Day Event with partners Art Gallery of Hamilton and Hamilton Public Library; Animate Jackson Square December to March
Total Cost:	\$79 K annually (\$395 K over 5 years)
HTDC Request:	\$40 K annually (\$200 K over 5 years)
Other Funding:	\$39 K annually (\$195 K over 5 years); funding through Tourism and Culture Operating Budget

PRIORITY: CREATE VIBRANT TOURISM DISTRICTS

Event/Initiative	Placemaking, Activation, and Safety Initiatives
Description:	 Through the Downtown West Harbourfront Coordinating Committee, implement safety, cleanliness, and activation initiatives in the Downtown and West Harbourfront areas, focusing on programming, placemaking, and strategic investments to enhance vibrancy and co-create an authentic 'sense of place.'
Objectives:	 Activate key tourism locations like the West Harbour and Downtown Entertainment Precinct through placemaking, programming, and public art. Create and implement a program to use the Visitor Experience Centre as a year-round central hub through, for example, community pop-ups, activation in line with major hosted events, or a summer patio program. Utilize Municipal Accommodation Tax to develop and implement micro-grant program to incentivize the activation of tourism and business districts during LRT construction and the renovation of the downtown entertainment assets.
Benefits:	 Increased foot traffic and visitor spending in downtown businesses, leading to economic growth and vitality. Attraction of new businesses and investments due to improved perceptions of safety and vibrancy. Creation of vibrant and engaging public spaces that attract residents, workers, and visitors, fostering a sense of community and belonging. Creation of a safe and welcoming environment through improved security measures, and pedestrian infrastructure, encouraging residents and visitors to explore the downtown and West Harbour.
Total Cost:	• \$600 K (to be spent over 2024, 2025 and 2026)
HTDC Request:	• \$200 K
Other Funding:	 \$400 K approved through report Downtown Hamilton Office Report (PED23081) for the development and implementation of placemaking and animation projects and programs in the Downtown Core.

PRIORITY: PROMOTE AND SUPPORT THE SUSTAINABILITY OF NATURAL ASSETS

Event/Initiative	Waterfall Destination Master Plan
Description:	 Tourism & Culture Division seeks to undertake a Waterfall Destination Master Plan to improve visitor experience, enhance safety, increase capacity, and address enforcement issues around present and higher levels of visitation. The Master Plan will be completed by a third-party consultant and the development of the Master Plan will involve extensive stakeholder engagement with (but not limited to) residents, the Hamilton Conservation Authority, community and environmental groups, and City departments.
Objectives:	 Implement a regenerative tourism strategy to manage increased visitor numbers at waterfalls responsibly, ensuring positive outcomes for residents and the environment; Develop a capital plan to improve visitor experience, safety, and capacity at waterfalls, addressing enforcement issues and ensuring sustainable management; Provide recommendations to enhance accessibility and trail usage for all user groups, promoting inclusivity and enjoyment of Hamilton's waterfalls; Create cohesive branding, wayfinding, and signage plans to enhance the visitor experience and navigation at Hamilton's waterfalls; Develop a risk management strategy to prioritize visitor safety at waterfalls, focusing on those with the capacity to accommodate visitors safely.
Benefits:	 Tourism Hamilton has completed a high-level economic impact assessment using the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport TREIM model for outdoor activities. Using the estimated 112,348 new visitors and \$14,441,717 in new visitor spending (as described in the Financial Projections section), the new waterfall tourism products would sustain 81 direct jobs and a further 20 indirect and induced jobs in Hamilton
Total Cost:	\$500 K (to be spent over 2024, 2025, and 2026)
HTDC Request:	\$250 K
Other Funding:	\$250 K application for matching funding submitted to the Tourism Growth Fund.

PRIORITY: STRENGTHEN HAMILTON'S MAJOR EVENTS & FESTIVAL SECTOR

	2026 or 2027 JUNO Awards (March 2026 or 2027)
Description:	 The JUNO Awards is Canada's largest music & culture property, with a reach of over 16 million fans. 5-day series of music events across all genres of music, presented by the Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences; culminates in a live Canada-wide broadcast (CBC) of the Awards recognizing outstanding achievements in Canada's music industry.
Objectives:	 Boosts tourism, benefiting local businesses and hospitality sectors, leading to economic uplift within the city; Continues to build Hamilton's reputation as a leading cultural city in Canada; Fosters a sense of pride among residents, contributing to the city's overall livability; Builds capacity in the music sector, advancing music strategies and cultural plans.
Benefits:	 5 days of music and cultural JUNO events 4,302+ room nights required over 10 days for production crews, musicians/bands, music industry professionals, media, and CARAS staff (does not include rooms booked by fans) Average attendance - 20,000 unique attendees throughout the 5 days Economic Impact approximately \$12 Million+
Total Cost:	\$ 2 – 2.2 M (funds would be fully spent by June 2026 or 2027)
HTDC Request:	\$300 K (payable only if we secure the bid)
Other Funding:	\$1m – 1.5m from Province \$150 K, Hamilton Tourism Development Investment Group (HTDIG) \$500 K, City of Hamilton Conventions/Sports/Events Reserve

PRIORITY: STRENGTHEN HAMILTON'S MAJOR EVENTS & FESTIVAL SECTOR

Event/Initiative	2026 Montana's Brier (March 2026)
Description:	Annual Canadian men's curling championship, sanctioned by Curling Canada; 10 days of competition; 70+ hours of live television coverage; winner represents Canada at the World Curling Championships.
Objectives:	 Boosts tourism, benefiting local businesses and hospitality sectors, leading to economic uplift within the city; Reinforces Hamilton's reputation as a premier sporting destination in Canada; Fosters a sense of pride among residents, contributing to the city's overall livability.
Benefits:	 200+ room nights required per day (11-12 days) for television crew, athletes and staff (does not include fans/supporters) Estimated attendance – 100,000-120,000 throughout the 10-day event Economic Impact approximately \$10million+
Total Cost:	\$1.0 M (funds would be fully spent by June 2026)
HTDC Request:	\$300 K (1 – time; payable only if the bid is successful)
Other Funding:	\$200 K, Hamilton Tourism Development Investment Group (HTDIG) \$500 K, City of Hamilton Conventions/Sports/Events Reserve

PRIORITY: STRENGTHEN HAMILTON'S MAJOR EVENTS & FESTIVAL SECTOR

Event/Initiative	2027 & 2029 Canada Wide Science Fair
Description:	Hosted annually by Youth Science Canada, this event brings together our nation's brightest young minds, celebrating their passion for science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and innovation.
Objectives:	 Boosts tourism, benefiting local businesses and hospitality sectors, leading to economic uplift within the city; Reinforces Hamilton's reputation as an educational center and one of the most diversified economies in Canada; Promoting interest and participation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) among students across Canada.
Benefits:	 7-day event in May 548 Overnight attendees 3,836 Estimated room nights 3595 Day Attendees Estimated Economic Impact of \$ 3.8 M (based on City of Edmonton's economic impact reporting)
Total Cost:	2027 \$255 K 2029 \$255 K Total: \$510 K for 2 events
HTDC Request:	Total: \$510 K
Other Funding:	n/a