

TOURISM STRATEGY

2024 - 2028

It's in our **character**

—
**TOURISM
HAMILTON**

Vision Statement

Hamilton is a top Canadian destination, celebrated for our vibrant tourism districts, captivating nature-based activities, and authentic and sustainable experiences.



Whole City Approach

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.



Alignment with Strategic Plans and Council Priorities

This strategy supports and is supported by numerous City plans, policies, and strategies as well as those from the tourism industry, including but not limited to:

- Council Priorities, Outcomes and Measures of Success (2023)
- Economic Development Action Plan 2021-2025 (2021)
- Downtown Office Report (PED2301, 2023)
- Workforce Strategy (2023)
- Hamilton Civic Museum Strategy (2022-2030)
- Hamilton Urban Indigenous Strategy and Implementation Plan (2019)
- Hamilton Climate Action Strategy (2022)
- Hamilton Parks Master Plan (2022)
- Hamilton Recreation Master Plan (2022)
- West Harbour Recreation Master Plan (2010)

Priority 1. Grow Hamilton’s Reputation as a Leading Tourism Destination

This priority focuses on supporting industry partners, welcoming visitors, and supporting the creation of unique experiences in Hamilton’s neighbourhoods and natural spaces. These actions will be achieved through collaboration with strategic partners, sustainable tourism practices, and a commitment to supporting Indigenous tourism experiences. A ‘whole city’ approach using a lens of Inclusion, Diversity Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) ensures alignment with broader city initiatives, fostering collaboration across departments and partner groups to drive tourism growth.

1. Develop and implement a Tourism Product Development Program, cultivating authentic experiences to showcase the city's diverse cultural, heritage, culinary, and natural attractions.
2. Complete and implement the Indigenous Tourism Experiences Study by 2024.
3. Following recommendations from the Indigenous Tourism Experiences Study, support new and existing Indigenous tourism operators in developing authentic Indigenous tourism experiences.
4. Work with Corporate Communications, HSR, Metrolinx, and other partners to identify and support the promotion of sustainable, destination-focused transportation options for tourists visiting and navigating the city.
5. Complete a digital review project across the T&C department to meet current and future needs.
6. Foster local pride in place encouraging residents to explore their own city and invite friends and relatives to visit.
7. Leverage Tourism Hamilton’s brand, social channels, and in-kind partnerships to develop lure campaigns targeting leisure visitors and promote the city as an attractive destination.
8. To lead by example, Tourism Hamilton will obtain a GreenStep Sustainable Tourism Certification by 2026, which encompasses efforts in responsible tourism, environmental stewardship, accessibility, and diversity and equity.
9. Create a MAT Advisory Group of tourism industry partners by the end of 2024 to collaborate in a transparent manner on MAT spending.

Priority 2. Cultivate Vibrant Tourism Districts

Vibrant tourism districts reflect and nurture a community’s authentic identity. They entice visitors and offer high-quality experiences that are unique to the destination. This priority aims to foster a true ‘sense of place’ in Hamilton’s neighbourhoods, for both residents and visitors. Initiatives such as placemaking, programming and business investment attraction enhance the overall vibrancy of key districts, in alignment with the City's efforts to revitalize neighborhoods and improve safety and cleanliness.

1. 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.’
2. Enhance key tourism locations like the West Harbour and Downtown Entertainment Precinct through urban design and public art.
3. Create and implement a four-year exhibition and community program to use the Visitor Experience Centre as a year-round central hub that also connects to major hosted events.
4. Establish a Night-Time Economy initiative by the end of 2025 to review City policies and bylaws to remove barriers and encourage operators and community organizations to create a healthy and safe night-time economy.
5. Conduct a review of City of Hamilton tourism-related wayfinding signage and implement a program to update with current branding and digital technologies, to be completed by 2028.
6. Execute a tourism business attraction strategy to secure business investments that enhance Hamilton's destination offerings by filling identified gaps in accommodations, attractions, and cultural venues.
7. For identified tourism districts, work with local businesses, BIAs, organizations, and regional partners to co-create curated experiences and authentic itineraries that entice visitors and reflects the district’s unique identity.

Priority 3. Promote and Support the Sustainability of Natural Assets

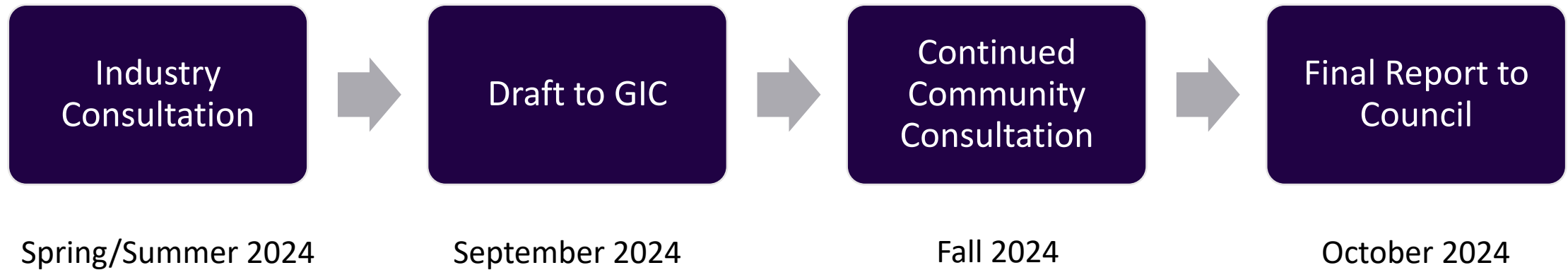
Recognizing Hamilton's abundant natural assets, this priority emphasizes the importance of thoughtful planning and infrastructure improvements to enhance visitor experiences while preserving the environment. Initiatives include developing a Waterfall Destination Master Plan, facilitating recreational waterfront activities, and leveraging federal funding for trail enhancements. The strategy aligns with broader city plans focused on greenspace protection and waterfront access, ensuring a cohesive approach to stewarding Hamilton's natural assets.

1. Complete a Waterfall Destination Master Plan by 2028 to improve infrastructure, address safety, signage, and enforcement issues to enhance the visitor experience.
2. Work with Climate Office, Active Transportation, Corporate Communications, and industry partners to identify and support the promotion of eco-tourism, environmental rehabilitation efforts, and responsible enjoyment of Hamilton's natural assets.
3. With Planning and Economic Development partners, investigate tourism opportunities for the redevelopment of Wild Waterworks and surrounding Confederation Beach Park lands as a top destination, to have a plan to Council by 2028.
4. Leverage federal and provincial programs as they become available to accelerate capital investments to enhance Hamilton's trail systems and natural assets by 2028 (waterfalls, trails, escarpment, rural agritourism, waterfront).
5. Work with the Land Development Office to establish the physical infrastructure (e.g., docks) and governance structure to facilitate additional recreational and leisure water-based activities and on-water operators at the waterfront by 2026.

Hosting major events and festivals is crucial for attracting visitors and enhancing Hamilton's reputation as a destination. This priority focuses on securing investment in event infrastructure, leveraging new funding sources for event attraction, and implementing strategies to manage the impact of major events on local communities. There is additional opportunity to actively seek out and support major festivals geared towards equity deserving groups that expand the diversity of audiences. The strategy aligns with Council priorities for enhancing the city's reputation as a center of culture, sport, and tourism, and integrates with economic development goals to attract investment and stimulate year-round vibrancy.

1. Implement sales campaigns to secure sporting and cultural tourism events that leverage investments in Hamilton's entertainment assets and other public spaces.
2. In line with the Federal Tourism Strategy, implement a sales campaign to secure international, national, and provincial meetings and conventions that provide year-round activity for industry partners.
3. Work with local Indigenous communities to host major sports events for Indigenous athletes. (Urban Indigenous Strategy Item #35).
4. Working with Indigenous Relations and Indigenous Communities, support and promote National Indigenous People's Day (June 21).
5. Enter a memorandum of understanding with the Hamilton Sports Group (Tiger-Cats) by the end of 2025 to formalize a partnership to increase the number of sports, culture, and community events and activations hosted at Tim Hortons Field.
6. Work with appropriate partners to leverage federal and provincial programs as they become available, to accelerate capital investments in event and festival infrastructure in public spaces (enhance power, washrooms, lighting, connectivity to airport/transit, etc.).
7. Utilize a portion of the Municipal Accommodation Tax and other non-levy funding sources for bid fees for securing and executing major events, in collaboration with industry MAT Advisory Group.
8. Implement tailored neighborhood strategies for communities heavily impacted by major events (e.g., Stipley during the Grey Cup) to mitigate effects on residents through effective communication and coordination of essential City services.

2024 TIMELINE



Reporting & Processes

- To remain transparent and collaborative, tourism staff will provide an annual informational update to council.
- Tourism staff will continue to host quarterly Team Hamilton meetings and provide updates to industry partners.
- Wherever possible, tourism staff will look to leverage MAT funds or other non-levy sources to achieve new initiatives.





Feedback, Comments, Questions?