



CITY OF HAMILTON

PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT Tourism Division

TO: Mayor and Members General Issues Committee	WARD(S) AFFECTED: CITY WIDE
COMMITTEE DATE: March 22, 2011	
SUBJECT/REPORT NO: Tourism Hamilton 2011-2014 Strategic Plan (PED11048) (City Wide)	
SUBMITTED BY: Tim McCabe General Manager Planning & Economic Development Department	PREPARED BY: David Adames 905-546-4132
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION:

- (a) That Report PED11048 respecting Tourism Hamilton's Draft 2011-2014 Strategic Plan, attached as Appendix "A" to Report PED11048, be received.
- (b) That any input, comments or requests for changes by Council to the Draft Strategic Plan be forwarded to the Tourism Hamilton Board of Directors prior to its consideration for final adoption.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2011-2014 Strategic Plan has been prepared with input from the Tourism Hamilton Board of Directors, tourism industry stakeholders and staff. Preparation of the plan also considered changes and opportunities in the tourism industry at the national, provincial and regional levels. The Board of Directors has approved the draft plan pending input and comments from City Council.

City Council approved the establishment of Tourism Hamilton in the Fall of 2001. Tourism Hamilton was formed “to act as the primary, full service visitor, tourism and convention information and marketing agency for Hamilton”. The initial Board of Directors was recruited and began meeting in January, 2002. Tourism Hamilton was incorporated as a not-for-profit organization on June 26, 2002, with the City of Hamilton as its shareholder. The organization has had two strategic plans (2003-2007 and 2008-2010). In addition, Tourism Hamilton has implemented an annual marketing plan from 2003 onwards.

Today, Tourism Hamilton has a 14 member Board of Directors comprising three members of Hamilton City Council, ten representatives of Hamilton’s tourism industry and one ex-officio, non-voting member. The Board’s role is to approve the strategic plan, annual marketing plan, assess effectiveness of programs and services and generally oversee Tourism Hamilton. The staff team for Tourism Hamilton comprises nine full time and three part-time staff. The Lady Hamilton volunteer club works closely with Tourism Hamilton to support conventions, sport events and visitor services.

The following statements comprise Tourism Hamilton’s vision and mission statements:

Vision:

Tourism Hamilton Inc. will be a leading Destination Management Organization in Canada, supporting the development of a vibrant and growing tourism industry in Hamilton.

Mission:

Tourism Hamilton Inc. is an innovative Destination Management Organization dedicated to significantly increasing new and return tourist visitation to Hamilton.

Tourism Hamilton works with and for Hamilton based tourism businesses and organizations. It represents the interests of these businesses and organizations with the national, provincial and regional marketing organizations, the Canadian Tourism Commission, Ontario Tourism and the Hamilton-Halton-Brant Regional Tourism Association, respectively. Tourism Hamilton also works with other tourism-related organizations ranging from the Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Culture to provincial associations including the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario, Attractions Ontario, Festivals and Events Ontario, Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance, Direction Ontario, to name but a few. Tourism Hamilton’s memberships and affiliations are included in the Strategic Plan.

Alternatives for Consideration – N/A

FINANCIAL / STAFFING / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS (for Recommendation(s) only)

Financial: N/A

Staffing: N/A

Legal: N/A

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (Chronology of events)

October, 2007: Council approved Report PED07268, "Tourism Hamilton's draft 2008-2010 Strategic Plan".

June 26, 2002: Tourism Hamilton was incorporated.

September, 2001: Council approved establishing Tourism Hamilton.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Strategic Plan takes the City's Strategic Plan into consideration and how Tourism Hamilton can help fulfil deliverables related to growing the economy, particularly increasing the number of conventions and sport events per year and the number of visitors to the city.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Tourism Hamilton Board of Directors: the Board reviewed the results of the 2008-2010 Strategic Plan; considered the implications and opportunities of changes in the tourism industry, particularly at the provincial and regional levels; held a half-day workshop (November 12, 2010) to provide input on the future direction of the Strategic Plan; the Executive Committee reviewed the initial draft of the Strategic Plan; and the Board of Directors reviewed and approved the draft Plan on January 20, 2011.

Local tourism industry: representatives of the local tourism industry were encouraged to reply to an on-line survey to provide input on their needs and how Tourism Hamilton could assist their business (62 respondents); and tourism stakeholders who serve on committees also provided input to the Plan.

The results of the survey indicated that stakeholders wanted Tourism Hamilton to continue services in convention and sport event sales, leisure tourism marketing and visitor services. Stakeholders indicated strong interest in Tourism Hamilton increasing its on-line or interactive capacity (website; social media) and furthering its work with fostering partnerships among tourism operators in Hamilton.

ANALYSIS / RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

(include Performance Measurement/Benchmarking Data, if applicable)

The value of tourism to Hamilton's economy:

The last three years of data available from Statistics Canada covers the period 2006-2008 (usually there is a two year gap in receiving this information from the International Travel Survey):

Origin	2006	2007	2008
Total visits	2.4 million	3.5 million	3.2 million
Ontario	2.1 million	3.3 million	2.9 million
Canada (other)	40,000	41,000	56,000
U.S.	189,000	150,000	152,000
Overseas	64,000	73,000	89,000

For visitors arriving in 2008:

- 3.2 million visitors
 - 2.2 million same day visitors
 - 1 million overnight visitors
 - 90% from Ontario
 - 5% from United States
 - 3% from Overseas
 - 2% from other Canada
- Visitors spent \$224 million in Hamilton
- 2,400 people worked in tourism businesses or organizations

The long-term goal for Tourism Hamilton is to grow the number of overnight visitors generally, but more specifically the higher-yield customer. These are customers who spend more than one night in the city and use commercial accommodation. These visitors may be here for a convention, sport event or for leisure tourism (visiting attractions, festivals or exploring our natural areas). The day-trip market is important, comprising the majority of visitors and revenues and it provides a baseline revenue stream. However, tourism can provide more incremental revenue to businesses through increased overnight visitors.

The importance of overnight visitors:

Just under one-third of visitors to Hamilton stay in the city overnight, however, they contribute 55% of the total visitors spend (\$123 million of the \$224 million total).

2008 Data – Overnight Visitors:

Visitor Origin	Total number	Avg. Length of Stay (days)	Avg. Overnight Spend (for visit)
Ontario	757,000	1.6	\$84
(other) Canada	47,000	5.8	\$212
United States	87,000	2.9	\$189
Overseas	60,000	12.1	\$554

2007 Data – Overnight Visitors:

Visitor Origin	Total number	Avg. Length of Stay (days)	Avg. Overnight Spend (for visit)
Ontario	530,000	1.8	\$103
(other) Canada	22,000	4.1	\$243
United States	72,000	2.8	\$233
Overseas	52,000	9.8	\$606

Some of the key tourism product required to support the goal of driving more overnight stays includes: quality hotel product, airline access, convention business, sport events, interesting restaurants and unique attractions and festivals.

Services that Tourism Hamilton has been providing for Hamilton's tourism industry:

Tourism Destination Marketing: to promote Hamilton to provincial, national and international visitors through various activities such as producing an annual marketing plan, coordinating market research, working with travel media, selling Hamilton for conventions and sport events, implementing leisure promotions, executing an interactive strategy (website, social media and customer relationship management program) and facilitating promotional partnerships among tourism operators.

Visitor Information: for the destination through operation of two tourist information centres, facilitating a volunteer program (Lady Hamilton Club), hosting a website, answering email, telephone and in-person visitor questions, fulfilling and servicing information to convention delegates and sport event participants.

Destination Management: develop capacity within local tourism industry by offering education and training workshops, hosting annual Tourism Awards, advocating for tourism in key city developments (ex. Downtown, waterfront, hotel development, initiatives and providing consultation services for tourism businesses for grants and marketing plans.

Specific services include:

1. Destination branding and marketing*
2. Travel media relations*
3. Promotions through www.tourismhamilton.com
4. Listing on www.tourismhamilton.com *
5. Brochure distribution through tourist information centres*
6. Sales leads and inclusion in bid documents for conventions and sport events
7. Access to annual convention and sport event lists*
8. Access to monthly convention and sport alerts*
9. Recognition through annual Tourism Awards
10. Access to coop marketing initiatives
11. Access to trade shows and sales missions
12. Advise on grant programs and support letters*
13. Access to workshops
14. Access to tourism sign programs
15. Representation on Regional Tourism Organization Three*
16. Representation to provincial and national tourism organizations*
17. Advocacy for tourism related issues*

**Free Services available to tourism partners*

The value of tourism to the City and tourism stakeholders includes:

Meetings and Conventions:

Performance Metrics	2009 Actual	2010 Actual	2011 Forecast
City-wide conventions	7	2	8
Hotel room nights	16,059	21,310	20,575
Meetings	71	73	80
Number of Delegates	29,776	35,687	10,287
Economic Impact of Meetings and Conventions	\$15.1 million	\$15.5 million	\$9 million
Trade Shows and Sales receptions	5	4	6

Meetings and Conventions: *(Continued...)*

Performance Metrics	2009 Actual	2010 Actual	2011 Forecast
Sales Leads generated for partners	254	165	175
Bids won	4	15	16
Bids lost	3	14	14
Site inspections	25	34	30

Sport Events:

Performance Metrics	2009 Actual	2010 Actual	2011 Forecast
Sport Events	108	96	90
Hotel room nights	14,668	19,860	17,121
Number of Event Participants	82,613	63,122	44,500
Economic Impact of Sport Events	\$27.1 million	\$32 million	\$10 million
Trade Shows	2	2	2
Sales Leads generated for partners	202	96	90
Bids generated	8	7	5
Bids won	1	2	3
Bids lost	7	5	2
Site inspections	3	3	5

Visitor Services:

Performance Metrics	2009 Actual	2010 Actual	2011 Forecast
Visitors to TICs	24,661	20,857	26,000
Emails	7,386	6,426	7,800
Phone calls	2,402	2,564	2,800
Web unique visitors	179,966	181,383	220,000

Changes in tourism industry since last Strategic Plan for Tourism Hamilton:

Although there have been many developments that have affected the tourism industry, there is one key change that has shaped or impacted the consideration of this strategic plan. The Ontario Tourism Competitiveness study, tabled in February 2009, and the implementation of its recommendations that began in 2010 such as the establishment of new tourism regions for the province and the “regularization” of destination marketing fees will impact the way that Tourism Hamilton represents Hamilton tourism stakeholders. These changes have been taken into consideration in the Plan. The Plan also follows the four pillars of the Ontario Competitiveness Study.

Within Hamilton, there have been many positive developments over the past three years that create opportunities for future growth in tourism. These developments have included (in no particular order):

- Continued development of Hamilton’s two waterfronts – the West Harbour and Lake Ontario/Confederation Park
- Growth of Hamilton’s trail systems
- Renewed appreciation of Hamilton’s geography – escarpment, waterfalls, natural areas, Greenbelt, and agricultural areas
- Renovation and development of commercial accommodation (hotels and bed and breakfast establishments)
- Growth of Hamilton’s arts and culture sector
- New sports facilities
- Re-introduction of transatlantic flights to Hamilton International Airport
- Public investment in the downtown to improve the public realm
- Growth of festivals and events
- Eight years of experience for Tourism Hamilton – working with, and representing, stakeholders and implementing and evaluating annual marketing plans

The Strategic Plan is organized into “four pillars of success” that follows the model laid out by the Ontario Tourism Competitiveness Study (each is of equal value):

1. Work Collaboratively to build tourism industry capacity and deliver economic growth
2. Set standards for success to become more competitive
3. Invest in product development and innovation to attract and retain investment
4. Reach out for tourism partner and visitor growth by aligning public and private sector goals and create innovative consumer-focused marketing strategies that will increase tourism receipts

The goals and specific actions for each of the four pillars are outlined in the Plan, attached as Appendix A to Report PED11048. The Plan will be monitored and reported on quarterly to the Tourism Board and annually to City Council as part of the Annual Report process.

The 2008-2010 Strategic Plan: Areas of Effort and Accomplishments

The Plan was organized into “three areas of effort” as numbered below and the associated accomplishments are listed with each area of effort:

1. To develop and undertake a sales and marketing strategy that supports industry development
 - a. Developed and executed annual marketing plans, 2008-2010
 - b. Created new leisure marketing campaigns
 - c. Engaged marketing agency of record to execute more effective promotions
 - d. Developed interactive strategy including new web site and implementing a customer relationship management program to serve partners more efficiently for sales and event servicing
 - e. Represented tourism stakeholders with initiatives such as War of 1812 Bicentennial Commemoration, Pan Am Games, Regional Tourism Organization programs (during transition phase)
 - f. Began feasibility study on Gateway Information Centre
 - g. Re-located downtown tourist information centre

2. To create industry development initiatives
 - a. Represented Hamilton tourism stakeholders during Ontario Tourism Competitiveness Study consultations
 - b. Provided tourism input to Economic Development Strategy, Official Plan, Transportation and Cultural Plans
 - c. Represented Hamilton tourism stakeholders with Tourism Industry Association of Ontario, with Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation and MPs and MPPs.

3. To develop an organizational capacity plan for Tourism Hamilton
 - a. Updated Tourism Hamilton Inc.'s By-Laws
 - b. Adopted greater use of technology in the organization
 - c. Worked closely with Lady Hamilton Volunteer Club
 - d. Adopted Destination Marketing Association International's Performance Reporting Standards
 - e. Re-organized Visitor Services section of Tourism Hamilton
 - f. Grew revenue from cooperative marketing initiatives and provincial grants

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:

(include Financial, Staffing, Legal and Policy Implications and pros and cons for each alternative)

N/A

CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN (Linkage to Desired End Results)

Focus Areas: 1. Skilled, Innovative and Respectful Organization, 2. Financial Sustainability, 3. Intergovernmental Relationships, 4. Growing Our Economy, 5. Social Development, 6. Environmental Stewardship, 7. Healthy Community

Skilled, Innovative & Respectful Organization

- ◆ More innovation, greater teamwork, better client focus
- ◆ Strategic Plan enables staff to meet tourism industry needs

Financial Sustainability

- ◆ Generate assessment growth/non-tax revenues
- ◆ Tourism industry supports over \$7 million in municipal taxes annually

Intergovernmental Relationships

- ◆ Influence federal and provincial policy development to benefit Hamilton
- ◆ Acquire greater share of Provincial and Federal grants (including those that meet specific needs)
- ◆ Maintain effective relationships with other public agencies

Growing Our Economy

- ◆ A visitor and convention destination

Environmental Stewardship

- ◆ Natural resources are protected and enhanced
- ◆ Tourism Hamilton works with and promotes the natural environment

Healthy Community

- ◆ An engaged Citizenry
- ◆ Local residents are employed and involved with tourism

APPENDICES / SCHEDULES

Appendix "A" - Tourism Hamilton 2011-2014 Strategic Plan



Strategic Plan 2011-2014

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Introduction and Background

Hamilton City Council approved the establishment of Tourism Hamilton in the fall of 2001. Tourism Hamilton was formed “to act as the primary, full service visitor, tourism and convention information and marketing agency for Hamilton”. The initial Board of Directors was recruited and began meeting in January, 2002. Tourism Hamilton was incorporated as a not-for-profit organization on June 26, 2002, with the City of Hamilton as its shareholder. The organization has had two strategic plans (2003-2007 and 2008-2010). In addition, Tourism Hamilton has implemented an annual marketing plan from 2003 onwards.

Today, Tourism Hamilton has a 14 member Board of Directors comprising three members of Hamilton City Council, ten representatives of Hamilton’s tourism industry and one ex-officio, non-voting member. The Board’s role is to approve the strategic plan, annual marketing plan, assess effectiveness of programs and services and generally oversee Tourism Hamilton. The staff team for Tourism Hamilton comprises nine full time and three part-time staff. The Lady Hamilton volunteer club works closely with Tourism Hamilton to support conventions, sport events and visitor services.

Tourism Hamilton works with and for Hamilton based tourism businesses and organizations. It represents the interests of these businesses and organizations with the national, provincial and regional marketing organizations, the Canadian Tourism Commission, Ontario Tourism and regional tourism organization three respectively. Tourism Hamilton also works with other tourism related organizations ranging from the Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Culture to provincial associations including the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario, Attractions Ontario, Festivals and Events Ontario, Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance, Direction Ontario, to name but a few. Tourism Hamilton’s memberships and affiliations are included in this plan.

The Picture of Tourism in Hamilton

In 2008 (latest data available from Statistics Canada, International Travel Survey), tourism in Hamilton resulted in:

- 3.2 million visitors to Hamilton
- 2,400 Hamiltonians working in tourism
- \$224 million in tourism receipts from visitors

What’s changed since the last strategic plan (2008-2010) was created for Tourism Hamilton?

Although there have been many developments that have affected the tourism industry, there is one key development that has shaped or impacted the consideration of this strategic plan. The Ontario Tourism Competitiveness study and the implementation of its recommendations such as the establishment of new tourism regions for the province and the “regularization” of destination marketing fees will impact the way that Tourism Hamilton represents Hamilton tourism stakeholders. These changes have been taken into consideration in the plan.

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Within Hamilton, there have been many positive developments over the past three years that create opportunities for future growth in tourism. These developments have included (in no particular order):

- Continued development of Hamilton’s two waterfronts – the West Harbour and Confederation Park
- Growth of Hamilton’s trail systems
- Renewed appreciation of Hamilton’s geography – escarpment, waterfalls, natural areas, Greenbelt, and agricultural areas
- Renovation and development of commercial accommodation (hotels and bed and breakfast establishments)
- Growth of Hamilton’s arts sector
- New sports facilities
- Public investment in the downtown to improve the public realm
- Growth of festivals and events
- Eight years of experience for Tourism Hamilton – working with, and representing, stakeholders and implementing and evaluating annual marketing plans

At the same time, there are challenges that also need to be considered that may impact tourism growth in the coming years. These challenges include (in no particular order):

- Development of new convention centres across Canada, but particularly in Niagara Falls, Ottawa and Windsor
- Hamilton’s image as a tourist destination
- Hotel investment
- Increased competition for sport tourism business

The City of Hamilton: The Shareholder

The City of Hamilton approved the formation of Tourism Hamilton in the fall of 2001. Three members of Hamilton City Council are part of the governance structure for Tourism Hamilton including the Mayor and two City Councillors. The City provides an annual funding allocation, staff and services including human resources and finance to Tourism Hamilton.

Since the establishment of Tourism Hamilton, the City has also created a new strategic plan that includes tourism under the focus area of growing the economy (visitor and convention destination), with specific deliverables for Tourism Hamilton including:

- increasing the number of visitors to Hamilton by 2% per year and
- increasing the number of conventions and sport events by three per year

In the business plan for the Planning and Economic Development Department, there are also deliverables for Tourism Hamilton including

- creation of a hotel investment plan
- development of a new sport tourism action plan
- creation of a visitor services plan

The City of Hamilton also established Tourism Hamilton to work with Hamilton’s tourism industry to leverage its annual investment in tourism marketing funds with investments from tourism stakeholders. Over the course of the past eight years, there has been growth in leveraged funds, both cash and value-in-kind (VIK) contributions from local and provincial stakeholders.

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Tourism Hamilton will continue to leverage the City’s investment with an overall goal of lessening dependence on the City contribution by continuing to grow the value proposition of services it provides to tourism stakeholders.

Source	2007	2008	2009	2010
City of Hamilton (Actual)	\$1,474,003	\$1,375,273	\$1,426,768	\$1,402,117
City of Hamilton (Budget)	\$1,458,320	\$1,517,214	\$1,554,933	\$1,456,476
Tourism Partners - DMF	\$353,134	\$360,083	\$339,580	\$87,112
Tourism Partners	\$50,539	\$64,681	\$139,637	\$207,831
Province	\$262,233	\$26,241	\$58,000	\$48,800
Province – DMF Transition				\$292,000
Province - other (Brier)	\$125,000			\$50,000 (War of 1812)
Other (Federal)	\$1,400			

The Tourism industry and Tourism Hamilton’s Role

Tourism Hamilton is Hamilton’s destination management organization and its primary focus is to work with, and represent, Hamilton based tourism businesses and organizations in order that they may grow their tourism receipts. To help, Tourism Hamilton brokers and assesses information and opportunities with travel influencers (meeting planners, sports organizations, travel media, tour operators) as well as the CTC, Ontario Tourism, RTO and other tourism associations. Tourism Hamilton also provides a conduit to visitors to the city through visitor services functions.

Tourism Hamilton promotes Hamilton for meetings and conventions, sport events, leisure visitors and provides visitor services such as a tourist information centres and services. Tourism Hamilton also provides support for tourism stakeholders that are applying for grants or considering development plans.

Specifically, Tourism Hamilton provides the following services for local tourism stakeholders:

- Destination branding and marketing (meetings and conventions, sport events and leisure tourism)
- Travel media relations
- Promotions through www.tourismhamilton.com
- Listing on www.tourismhamilton.com
- Brochure distribution through tourist information centres

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- Sales leads and inclusion in bid documents for conventions and sport events
- Access to annual convention and sport event lists
- Access to monthly convention and sport alerts
- Recognition through annual Tourism Awards
- Access to coop marketing initiatives
- Access to trade shows and sales missions
- Advise and support for grant programs
- Access to workshops
- Access to tourism sign programs
- Advocacy for tourism related issues
- Representation to provincial and national tourism organizations including RTO 3, Ontario Tourism, Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Culture, TIAO, provincial associations, Canadian Tourism Commission and TIAC



Tourism Hamilton Memberships and Affiliations

- American Bus Association
- Attractions Ontario
- Bi-National Tourism Alliance
- Canadian Sport Tourism Alliance
- Canadian Society of Association Executives
- Canadian Tourism Commission
- Destination Marketing Association of Canada
- Destination Marketing Association International
- Economic Development Council of Ontario
- Festivals and Events Ontario
- Flamborough Chamber of Commerce
- Hamilton Chamber of Commerce
- Canadian Society of Professional Event Planners
- Meeting Planners International
- Mohawk College Travel and Tourism Program, Recreation Leadership Program and Continuing Education
- National Tour Association
- Ontario Ministry of Tourism
- Ontario Motorcoach Association
- Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation
- Society of American Travel Writers
- Stoney Creek Chamber of Commerce
- Tourism Toronto
- Travel Gay Canada
- Travel Industry Association of Canada
- Tourism Industry Association of Ontario
- Travel Media Association of Canada

Vision and Mission

Vision:

Tourism Hamilton Inc. will be a leading Destination Management Organization in Canada, supporting the development of a vibrant and growing tourism industry in Hamilton

Mission:

Tourism Hamilton Inc. is an innovative Destination Management Organization dedicated to significantly increasing new and return tourist visitation to Hamilton

Four Pillars of Success for 2011-2014

The four pillars follow the Ontario Tourism Competitiveness Study. Tourism Hamilton’s strategic plan has been developed with the following assumptions:

- Tourism Hamilton’s principal focus is marketing and that the vast majority of the staff team’s time is allocated to delivering the annual marketing plan
- Regional Tourism Organization #3 will be in place and resourced throughout the duration of this strategic plan

Pillar: Work Collaboratively to build industry capacity and deliver economic growth

Goals:

- Ensure role clarity for Tourism Hamilton and that Hamilton’s tourism stakeholders needs are being met at various levels of the tourism industry
- Establish targets together with tourism stakeholders

Actions:

- Tourism Hamilton to represent tourism stakeholders interests with City of Hamilton, RTO 3, Ontario Tourism, Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Tourism Industry Association of Ontario, provincial tourism associations and Canadian Tourism Commission
- Tourism Hamilton to play a leadership role in the formation and implementation of RTO 3
- Each year, Tourism Hamilton will consult with tourism stakeholders on the marketing plan and any tourism developments to foster alignment of, and support for, targets

Pillar: Set standards for success to become more competitive

Goals:

- Tourism Hamilton to be a leader in tourism locally, provincially and nationally
- Create a higher profile for Hamilton’s tourism industry, locally and provincially
- Promote the importance of tourism locally
- Support local tourism workforce
- Advocate for service and quality standards

Actions:

- Tourism Hamilton will achieve accreditation through Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI)
- Participate in Tourism Week annually
- Implement a local tourism awareness public relations campaign
- Leverage annual Tourism Awards program
- Facilitate partner networking opportunities
- Work with TIAO, TIAC, RTO 3, MPs, MPPs and City Council to promote tourism
- Work with the RTO and the Ontario Tourism Education Council (OTEC) to provide workshops and training opportunities for tourism stakeholders
- Work with the RTO and TIAO to advocate for and support the development of provincial service and quality standards

Pillar: Invest in product development and innovation to attract and retain investment

Goals:

- Identify tourism product strengths to leverage those for incremental tourism growth
- Work with tourism stakeholders to identify investment opportunities
- Advocate for investments in transportation infrastructure

Actions:

- Implement recommendations from Hamilton’s premier-ranked destination framework, including developing a tourism strategy for Hamilton
- Facilitate a “demand generator” workshop to identify best growth potential tourism products for Hamilton
- Continue to invest in digital strategy
- Develop an accommodation investment plan
- Work with the RTO and the Investment Development Office, Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Culture to include Hamilton’s tourism investment opportunities
- Work with local attractions and festivals and events to create more “trip demand generation”
- Work with the City and Province on encouraging inter-regional transit; new airlines to Hamilton International Airport and local transport infrastructure (ex. Rapid transit; cycling infrastructure; and trails)

Pillar: Partner and Visitor Growth - Reach out to align public and private sector goals and create innovative consumer-focused marketing strategies that will increase tourism receipts

Goals:

- Leverage digital opportunities
- Increase content generation (tell more of Hamilton’s story)
- Focus marketing initiatives on needs of tourism stakeholders
- Represent tourism stakeholders marketing needs with the RTO and Ontario Tourism
- Leverage demand generators to grow tourism receipts

Actions:

- Develop annual marketing plan in collaboration with tourism stakeholders
- Continue to develop and leverage e-marketing and on-line booking capabilities
- Market strategically – focus on unique products and core markets
- Work with tourism stakeholders to identify stories
- Work with tourism stakeholders to develop leisure tourism packages
- Develop a long-term local tourism promotion program
- Develop visitor services plan
- Improve way-finding – both signage and on-line capacity
- Develop new sport tourism action plan

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Tourism Hamilton Strategic Plan 2008-2010

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STRATEGIC PLAN
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

For approximately five years, Tourism Hamilton, Inc. (Tourism Hamilton) has been evolving as the Destination Marketing Organization for the tourism industry within the City of Hamilton. The organization is a public-private partnership involving the City of Hamilton and representatives of tourism industry sectors across the City.

In the early development of the organization, a Strategic Plan was developed for the 2003 to 2007 period. It involved a Vision, Mission, Objectives and an ambitious work program.

In the spring of 2007, the Board of Directors identified a need for the organization to develop the next generation of its Strategic Plan, building on the experiences of the first years of its development and the ongoing transitions and opportunities within the market environment.

A four part strategic planning process was undertaken as follows:

- Prior to the first Strategic Planning Workshop, members of the Board were invited to provide comments and perspectives on their strategic considerations for the future of tourism in Hamilton. Approximately eleven responses were received. Also, some preparatory work was completed by the Executive Committee and others.
- On Friday, April 26, 2007, at the offices of the Hamilton Conservation Authority, twelve members of the Board of Directors and two staff of Tourism Hamilton undertook to initiate preparation of the next generation of the organization’s Strategic Plan. This session involved a review of the input received from Board members; a review of the current Vision, Mission and Objectives; and the development of an inventory of possible Areas of Effort/Priorities for the next three years, 2008-2010.
- On Friday, May 25, 2007 at the Staybridge Suites Hotel in Hamilton, eleven members of the board and two staff, along with the Consultant, completed a review of the draft Strategic Plan materials. The draft Plan had been circulated prior to the session. The discussions for this session involved amending various components of the Plan, with the focus being on recalibrating the proposed Areas of Effort.
- The final part of the process involved:
 - Preparation by staff and the Executive Committee of a prioritization strategy for the sixteen actions within the Areas of Effort. Once these are approved, the finalization of a work program to support ongoing implementation of the Strategic Plan can be completed by staff. The final Strategic Plan will be presented to Hamilton’s tourism industry at Tourism Hamilton’s Summit on November 7, 2007.

2.0 VISION

A Vision typically establishes a horizon towards which the organization is moving and which inspires its stakeholders to work collectively towards the ultimate achievement of that Vision. A Vision needs to both give direction and some measure of what is to be achieved, along with being able to inspire an organization’s stakeholders to work collectively towards its common goal.

The following Vision was developed based on an extensive discussion around what a Vision is, the current state of development of the organization, who its customers are and the focus that needs to be established to move forward.

Tourism Hamilton Inc. will be a leading Destination Management Organization in Canada, supporting the development of a vibrant and growing tourism industry in Hamilton.

The key perspectives of the Vision are as follows:

- Will be a leading Destination Management Organization in Canada – Defines the organization’s horizon as developing the capacity, credibility and outcomes that would establish it as a leading Destination Management Organization in Canada. The change from a “Marketing” organization to a “Management” organization also emphasizes a leadership role that Tourism Hamilton should play within the community in supporting and developing tourism in Hamilton.
- Supporting a vibrant and growing tourism industry in Hamilton – Establishes the second key dimension of the organization’s Vision, which is working in partnership with industry operators, partners, community groups and others in developing a vibrant and growing tourism industry that benefits the community, the work force, industry partners, community organizations and other stakeholders.

3.0 MISSION STATEMENT

A Mission Statement outlines to the reader the key focuses, purposes and characteristics of an organization. In application terms, every strategic and operational decision the organization makes needs to align with its Mission. If a decision does not align with the Mission, the organization needs to ask itself why it would make a decision that does not advance the Mission or if it is time for a new Mission Statement to be developed.

The following Mission Statement was developed for Tourism Hamilton based on the workshop participants’ input and discussions.

Tourism Hamilton Inc. is an innovative Destination Management Organization dedicated to significantly increasing new and return tourist visitation to Hamilton

The following perspectives assist in further interpreting and applying the Mission Statement:

- Acting as a Destination Management Organization – Defines the principal focus of the organization which is as a Destination Management Organization that works within a private-public partnership mode. Therefore, its focus is on collective and targeted marketing initiatives that supports tourism generally or sectors of tourism within Hamilton as a basis to significantly increase new and return tourist visitation to the City. This component of the Mission Statement also indicates what Tourism Hamilton is not, which is a facility or industry operator. Rather, it is a facilitator, supporter, enabler, promoter and capacity-builder for the industry and the City.
- Innovative – including the word innovative will provide the Board and staff with a “term of reference” to benchmark initiatives, ensuring that the appropriate rigour is brought to the discussions and about new initiatives for the organization and that Tourism Hamilton will drive innovation in tourism marketing.
- Significantly increase new and return tourist visitation – This component of the Statement specifically identifies the primary focus and intent of the organization relative to all the actions and initiatives it undertakes. Tourism Hamilton’s success will be measured based on its ability to significantly increase tourism visitation, whether new or return trip, to the City on an annual basis.
- To Hamilton – Clearly identifies the geographical focus of the organization in terms of the beneficiaries of Tourism Hamilton’s work, investments and strategies, i.e. Hamilton.

4.0 OBJECTIVES

Objectives delineate the scope and directions the organization will concentrate its efforts on.

- To develop, implement and evaluate annual sales and marketing program.
- To support tourism industry development through:
 - Ongoing tourism research and evaluation programs;
 - Facilitating access to and/or the delivery of industry-based customer service training initiatives, customer satisfaction assessments and other visitor services support programs;
 - Representing the tourism industry’s interests in broader community initiatives, plans and strategies that affect destination development;
 - Advocating on behalf of the Hamilton tourism industry at local, provincial and national levels

- To undertake communication and educational programs that:

- Create awareness amongst industry partners of the role of the organization and the benefits of collective participation in its activities;
 - Build awareness amongst community members of the benefits and opportunities that tourism offers the community;
 - Ensure visitor servicing programs exist to provide visitor information to prospective tourists and those attending events
- To actively develop and participate in strategic partnerships locally, regionally, provincially and nationally that enhance tourism opportunities and development in Hamilton;

The Objectives identify four defined areas of Endeavour that shape the scope, allocation of resources priorities and focuses for Tourism Hamilton.

5.0 AREAS OF EFFORT

Areas of Effort represent the first level in operationalizing a Strategic Plan. They identify the priorities an organization feels it needs to work on over the three-year planning period to support the achievement of its Vision and Mission.

The following Areas of Effort have been developed for Tourism Hamilton, for the 2008 to 2010 period.

- 1. To develop and undertake a sales and marketing strategy that supports industry development that:**
 - Develops an annual tourism marketing plan;
 - Refines Tourism Hamilton’s brand;
 - Develops a visitor services plan;
 - Develops, implements and evaluates strategic partnership initiatives with local, regional, provincial, national and international tourism organizations

- 2. To create an industry development initiative that focuses on the following tasks:**
 - Develops a corporate communications plan
 - Develops an advocacy policy and implementation plan for tourism in Hamilton
 - Establishes a mechanism for Tourism Hamilton to provide input/comment on major initiatives within the community that could impact the future development and success of tourism in Hamilton
 - Advocates for a greening initiative within Tourism Hamilton and promotes one across the tourist industry in Hamilton

- 3. To develop an Organizational Capacity Plan for Tourism Hamilton that:**

- Reviews industry sector representation and engagement, developing strategies to enhance the active participation of all industry sectors
- Determines ‘baseline’ services for tourism partners
- Determines what Tourism Hamilton’s core services will entail and their alignment with the Service Agreement with the City of Hamilton.
- Prepares a multi-year revenue generation strategy to enhance organization financial capacities to achieve the Mission
- Embraces technology
- Develops an annual performance measurement capacity to assess organizational achievement
- Develops a process to review Tourism Hamilton’s by-laws, policies and related documents
- Undertakes a volunteer and staff development strategy to recruit and retain the human resources necessary to fulfill the directions of the Strategic Plan and the Mission of the organization

6.0 IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 Implementation Plan Development

An Implementation Plan develops the roadmap for achieving the Areas of Effort within the Strategic Plan. It is recognized that the Implementation Plan continually needs to be reviewed and will change as one moves forward through time and events unfold within the operating environment.

For Tourism Hamilton, the following steps have been identified for the development of the Implementation Plan:

- Staff will examine the sixteen actions within the three Areas of Effort and prioritize them as follows:
 - ‘A’ – Actions that have high priority for the organization and the industry, and/or need to be completed in order for other actions to be initiated/launched;
 - ‘B’ – Actions of moderate priority that do not have to occur in the first year or so. They may also need to occur before future actions can be undertaken;
 - ‘C’ – Actions that have the least priority, or are dependent on other actions to be completed first. They could also be deferred if the organization does not have the resources or capability to pursue them within the three-year timeframe of the Strategic Plan

7.0 STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW

The following Strategic Plan review framework is identified for Tourism Hamilton:

- Quarterly, the Executive Director, or other individuals leading specific dimensions of the Strategic Plan, will report to the Board on the progress made, the barriers being experience, changes that may need to be considered and the overall state of Strategic Plan’s implementation.
- Annually, the Board will assign potentially up to a two hour block of time to review the Strategic Plan in terms of its progress, new considerations coming into the operating environment and other perspectives that would establish the basis for the following year’s work program and any required amendments to the Plan.
- At the three year anniversary of the Strategic Plan, a comprehensive review will be undertaken of the Strategic Plan, probably in the form of one or a one and a half day Board strategic planning workshop. Such a process may or may not involve focus groups and other preparatory work depending on the state of the current operating environment, resources available and related considerations.