



STAFF REPORT **Municipality of Wawa**

Maury O'Neill, CAO



To: Mayor and Council	Report No.: CAO 2022-02
Date: April 1, 2022	Council Meeting Date: April 5, 2022

WAWA TOURISM PLAN - TERMS OF REFERENCE

Recommendation

THAT Council receive Report No. CAO 2022-02 dated April 1, 2022, and approve the Terms of Reference for the completion of a Five-Year Wawa Tourism Plan, copy attached as Appendix A.

FURTHER that Council approve an application for funding to complete the Study to FedNor under the Tourism Recovery Program.

Purpose and Summary

To recommend to Municipal Council that a qualified consultant be contracted, subject to funding, to assist the community to develop of a **Five-year Wawa Tourism Plan - COVID-19 Recovery Strategy** to assist the local tourism sector to recovery from the adverse impacts of COVID-19 and set-out a community vision with actionable items to improve and increase visitations and spending in the area.

Further, this report recommends the terms of reference for the Study with timelines and budget, with funding dependent on a grant from the Federal Government.

The Wawa Tourism Plan will make recommendations to implement specific actions over the next five years regarding tourism marketing and product development based on current data and information, community input, expected returns on investment and measurable outcomes.

Background

The Municipality of Wawa has not had a comprehensive Tourism Plan for several years. As contained in the Wawa Strategic Plan, Council has identified the completion of a Five-Year Wawa Tourism Strategy and Action Plan (TED-6) as a key priority for 2022-23. This action aligns with the Plan's Tourism and Economic Development Goal:

"To facilitate the development and growth of a diversified and sustainable economy by supporting tourism, growth and entrepreneurship."

The need for the Municipality to understand and plan for how best to attract visitors and lengthen visitor stays in Wawa and to generate revenue and recover tax supported tourism programs and services is critical for sustainable, future development.

The vision of the five-year Wawa COVID-19 Tourism Recovery Strategy is that it be actionable with a set of agreed upon strategies that will be collaboratively developed with tourism partners and local stakeholders. Plan is also needed to leverage existing and future opportunities that are in alignment with Municipal Council priorities, Wawa's Strategic Plan and stakeholder activities within the Region. This will enable the Municipality to support annual budgets for tourism programs and services, hire appropriate staff and execute on initiatives accordingly.

Tourism Plan - Terms of Reference (See Appendix)

The draft Request for Proposal to obtain consultant's bids is attached. The terms of reference were developed over the past six months in consultation with several groups and individuals in Wawa which includes the following as expected outcomes;

- Deliver a strategy that all local tourism stakeholders are provided opportunity to have input into, is realistic and can be implemented over the five-year term;
- Identify opportunities to incorporate regional plans from the Province and Regional Partners such as ATKA into the plan;
- Identify projects and actions that will assist stakeholders to further enhance community and tourism asset development;
- Work with key stakeholders, including elected leaders, government and industry professionals and sector-specific professionals;
- Identify typical demographics for attracting tourists together with a clear plan of how to effectively target and reach these people.
- Create a comprehensive list of tourism products, services and unique assets specific to Wawa and immediate surrounding area.
- Identify gaps and opportunities in tourism product and service offerings.
- Develop a situation analysis from community and stakeholder consultation, research, asset mapping and gap analysis.
- Review the Wawa Tourist Information Center operations and the implementation of a Destination Marketing Fee and for increasing revenues to be used for tourism development.
- Identify key opportunities for tourism product and service development that will boost private tourism investment, job creation, diversification and local tourism revenue.
- Create a tourism identity for Wawa which includes a positioning statement outlining Wawa's unique tourism selling position.
- Recommend marketing materials and tourism marketing strategies to reflect the new tourism identity.
- Prioritize Actionable Items with budget, timelines and responsibility assigned for the short and medium term.

The creation of the Wawa Five-Year Tourism Plan will involve widespread stakeholder input including from the proposed Wawa Economic Development and Tourism Committee (pending), members of Council, local stakeholders and the public through extensive consultation during the development of the Plan through best practices and including surveys, workshops, meetings, face-to-face discussions and special events.

The Wawa Tourism Plan Study estimated cost is \$100,000. An application for funding to the FedNor Tourism Recovery Fund has been submitted for the full amount. It is anticipated that a response will be received by FedNor in June 2022. A Request for Proposals to Consultants will be issued in May with an estimated start date for the Study in July 2022 (pending funding).

It is recommended that the proposed Economic Development and Tourism Committee of Council recommended to be formed in May 2022 be responsible to provide oversight and input into the development of the Five-Year Tourism Plan.

Conclusion

COVID-19 has impacted tourism development and service delivery over the past two years. The completion of a Wawa Tourism Plan will better position Wawa to take advantage of post-pandemic opportunities through strategic planning for medium- to long-term actions, as well as support identified destination development opportunities in line with objectives set out in the Wawa Strategic Plan and Federal Tourism Growth Strategy.

Staff recommends that Council approve that staff issue a Request for Proposals to complete the Five-Year Tourism Plan in May and subsequently report back to Council on the advancement of the Study in June 2022.

Submitted By:



Maury O'Neill
CAO-Treasurer