



BURLINGTON DOWNTOWN

Tuesday October 29th, 2019

Chair, Committee of the Whole

On behalf of the Board of Directors for the Burlington Downtown Business Association (BDDBA) please accept this letter of support for our Team Burlington colleague Tourism Burlington.

Tourism Burlington has drawn to our attention that they want the City of Burlington to implement a Municipal Accommodation Tax at a rate of four per cent. The BDDBA has been briefed on this initiative and believes that it will help increase visitation to the city and tourism receipts for local partners.

The BDDBA is a not-for-profit organization representing the interests of 430 small business members in the Downtown core.

In 2007 the BDDBA Board supported the implementation of a Destination Marketing Fee which was voluntarily collected by the Burlington Hotel Association until 2010. Tourism Burlington played a pivotal role in the execution of a DMF marketing plan which saw positive dividends to several downtown businesses. This was seen as a very successful partnership and we expect that Tourism Burlington will engage a similar consultative approach for the delivery of MAT funding.

Burlington's City Council recognized the DMF funding as incremental revenue for Tourism Burlington and maintained its core funding at that time. We support the collection of a Municipal Accommodation Tax with the proviso that Tourism Burlington's core funding by the City of Burlington should remain in place.

As a key destination for the City of Burlington the downtown business district is a partner with Tourism in the delivery of several collaborative marketing campaigns designed to attract new customers and visitors. We are confident that the collection of a Municipal Accommodation Tax will further enable growth in our local tourism sector and increase tourism's economic impact.



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If approved, we appreciate that a minimum of fifty per cent of the MAT revenue must be shared with our local tourism entity: Tourism Burlington. The remaining fifty per cent can be utilized by the municipality, in support of tourism-related "destination development".

BDBA supports this following recommendation cited in Report Number: CM-23-19:

Implement the MAT and direct 100% of funds to tourism related destination development initiatives as follows:

Fifty per cent of the funds are provided to Tourism Burlington for enhanced tourism promotion and development (as per regulation).

Direct the 50 per cent municipal portion of the funds to destination development and tourism related initiatives.

The BDBA will continue to actively participate in Tourism's Marketing Committee toward the development of packages, new experiences and bulk media buys that complement our organization's marketing investments Downtown. We would also like to open a more formal channel with the municipality and share our strategic plans for the development of the downtown as a destination in partnership.

In sum, we concur with Tourism Burlington's assessment that our city would be at a competitive disadvantage without a MAT as neighbouring municipalities are collecting these funds to expand their marketing and tourism reach.

Burlington's tourism industry relies on the participation of many partners, both for profit and those in the not-for-profit sector. We anticipate support from all sectors regarding the implementation of the proposed Municipal Accommodation Tax. In this way we can be poised to collaborate more effectively and promote Burlington as the best City in Canada.

Respectfully submitted,

per Mark Eade, Chair
Board of Directors
Burlington Downtown Business Association

cc: Councilor Lisa Kearns (Chair), Councilor Kelvin Galbraith (Vice-Chair)

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