



**SUBJECT: Hamilton Halton Brant Tourism Relief Funding Approval**

**TO: Mayor and Members of Council**

**FROM: Corporate Strategy**

Report Number: CS-08-22

Wards Affected: 2

File Numbers: 155-03-01

Date to Committee: N/A

Date to Council: June 21, 2022

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**Recommendation:**

Authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute on behalf of The Corporation of the City of Burlington the transfer payment, and any other ancillary document (s) or amendment(s), between the City of Burlington and the Hamilton Halton Brant Regional Tourism Association regarding the Hamilton Halton Brant Tourism Relief, to the satisfaction of the Executive Director of Legal Services and Corporation Counsel.

**PURPOSE:**

**Vision to Focus Alignment:**

- Building more citizen engagement, community health and culture

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**Background and Discussion:**

In April, the Hamilton Halton Brant Regional Tourism Association (HHBRTA) received a non-repayable contribution of \$5 million from the Government of Canada through the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario), to deliver the Tourism Relief Fund to tourism businesses in this region.

The goal of the Tourism Relief Fund is to position Canada as a destination of choice as domestic and international travel rebounds by:

- empowering tourism businesses to create new or enhance existing tourism experiences and products to attract more local and domestic visitors
- helping the sector reposition itself to welcome international visitors, by providing the best Canadian tourism experiences we have to offer the world.

Program funding was available to both businesses and not-for-profit organizations including municipalities in Hamilton Halton Brant region. Businesses could apply for non-repayable contributions of up to \$100,000 for up to 50 percent of eligible project costs and not-for-profits could apply for non-repayable contributions of up to \$100,000 for 100 percent of eligible costs.

### **Strategy/process**

Projects that were considered eligible for funding were required to focus on:

- Product development: for example, projects that enhance tourism experiences; help tourism businesses adapt to the "new normal", to modernize their offerings; and, encourage the adoption of more environmentally sustainable and inclusive practices.
- Destination development: for example, projects that position communities to take advantage of post-pandemic opportunities through strategic planning for medium- to long-term investments, as well as supporting destination development prospects in line with objectives set out in the Federal Tourism Growth Strategy.

Priority consideration was given to projects that supported the Indigenous tourism sector.

The City of Burlington submitted a funding request for Walk to the Water, an Indigenous themed art walk that links downtown tourist destinations such as Spencer Smith Park, Joseph Brant Museum, Art Gallery of Burlington and Spencer's at the Waterfront. Walk to the Water will increase the representation and participation of Burlington's Indigenous community. Local and regional Indigenous artists and storytellers will be invited to design a crosswalk, art installations and activations. The City of Burlington will have a new year-round tourism product to market in the off-season to visitors.

Walk to the Water supports economic and social benefits for equity seeking groups by providing paid commission opportunities to Indigenous artists. The exhibit will be installed in areas of Spencer Smith Park that are accessible via a paved path, making the experience accessible to pedestrians, cyclists and individuals using assistive devices.

The program affirms the City of Burlington's commitment to diversity, inclusion and accessibility.

Recreation, Community and Culture staff were recently notified that our funding request was approved.

**Project timeline:**

**2021**

- May:** Project start; signed agreement with David General
- June – August:** Development of detailed project design, permits and approvals
- September:** Begin sculpture fabrication

**2022**

- February:** Walk to the Water project start-up, determine project scope of art walk with Indigenous resident group
- June:** Develop call to artists, identify community leaders and connections
- July - August:** Promote calls to artists, community outreach, engage Indigenous consultants (design and sign content)
- September:** Production of vinyl wraps, signage and templates for crosswalk; prepare and print all marketing materials
- October:** Crosswalk installation, artwork installation & project launch with artist talk by David General.

A printed Walk to the Water guide will be distributed through Tourism Burlington and select downtown businesses and cultural organizations. It is anticipated that an initial run of 2,000 guides will be distributed.

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**Financial Matters:**

There is no municipal cost sharing required for this program. The City of Burlington's application for \$100,000 of funding was approved. This funding will cover all costs associated with the program.

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**Climate Implications**

N/A

### **Engagement Matters:**

This project was initiated by a group of Indigenous residents who connected with the public art program to explore ways to increase Indigenous representation within the city's downtown core and through its public art collection. This ad hoc group will act as the Steering Committee throughout the project and will assist with overall project design and artist selection. The call for artists will be distributed publicly via City of Burlington social media channels as well specialized artist networks (i.e., Akimbo, etc.).

Indigenous consultants (curator and designer) will be engaged to help write and design content for this project. A public event and artist talk with David General will be held in collaboration with Joseph Brant Museum and tourism marketing materials will be distributed through Tourism Burlington and Indigenous Tourism Ontario.

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### **Conclusion:**

The City of Burlington is grateful for this funding program administered by the Hamilton Halton Brant Regional Tourism Association on behalf of the Government of Canada. With this funding the City of Burlington will not only be able to provide a unique year-round accessible visitor experience we will also be able to engage and work with members of our Indigenous community.

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Respectfully submitted,

Helen Walihura

Government Relations Manager

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### **Report Approval:**

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, the Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Director of Legal Services & Corporation Counsel.