

To:	Chair Gingras and Members of the Tourism Advisory Committee
Committee Date:	November 1, 2018
Subject / Report No:	CAOR-TAC-23-18
Title:	2019 Tourism Destination Development Action Plan Priorities
Prepared by:	Bryan Plumstead
Reviewed by:	Kim Wingrove
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	
Status:	Recommendation adopted by the Committee as presented as per Resolution TAC10-18; Endorsed by County Council on November 22, 2018 as per Resolution CW286-18.

Recommendation

- 1. That Report CAOR-TAC-23-18 be received and that the Priorities for 2019 under the Tourism Destination Development Action Plan be supported.**

Executive Summary

Grey County's Tourism Destination Development Action Plan is half-way through its mandate, about two and a half years with an equal time remaining. The Action Plan confirmed Grey County Tourism's existing goal to "Increase sustainable tourism revenues through managing and marketing Grey County as a tourism destination".

Background and Discussion

Key accomplishments in 2018 included:

- creating a Marketing Strategy
- assisting with the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail through Grey County
- assisting with implementation of OMCC (Ontario Municipal Commuter Cycling) funded projects including purchase of five cyclist counters, and initiation of a Cycling and Trails Master Plan
- another successful ColourItMyWay campaign

- working with Blue Mountain Village Association and regional partners on an attainable housing strategy for South Georgian Bay.

Ongoing activities include:

- hosting five “Let’s Talk Tourism” industry sessions
- hosting 6 media visits
- regular industry and visitor communication and marketing activities
- updating Grey County’s tourism performance and metrics measures
- directing our summer students in visiting over 40 events, delivering tourism materials and conducting our most active and engaging summer social media presence to date

Priorities for 2019

Successful implementation of the Action Plan’s proposed activities will result in tourism growth and value, and the development of a strong, collaborative tourism community in Grey, further solidifying its reputation as a destination of choice in Ontario. The chart below highlights the phasing of activities.

Pillar 1: Stakeholder Engagement

Research indicated that stakeholders are keen to hear from Grey County often and seek greater opportunities for networking with industry peers. The County’s role is to facilitate collaboration between stakeholders and ensure stakeholders are well informed of County activities.

Recommendations for 2019

In consultation with industry partners, implement market-ready criteria which provide Grey County tourism industry with “best practice” criteria to maintain a competitive approach in today’s global marketplace. Continue to deliver timely and relevant industry education and networking sessions. Continue to improve the industry newsletter to include timely editorial features on key topics. Updating the industry website is planned to coincide with work on the consumer site.

Key Activities	Results
Implement market-ready criteria for tourism industry	Provide “best practice” criteria to maintain a competitive approach in today’s global marketplace and increase consumer confidence.
Continue “Tourism Talks”	Bi-Monthly networking events that benefit all stakeholders.
Update Stakeholder Communications	Provide a steady flow of valuable news and

	information.
Make the industry website a useful tool and resource	Updated site navigation and content.

Objective: To create a collaborative tourism community in Grey County.

Pillar 2: Destination Development

At the core of the Action Plan is the product development and marketing of Grey County that differentiates the County from its competition. Grey County Tourism’s marketing strategy brings the brand to life through innovative marketing and communications channels, including #ColourItMyWay, a visiting friends and relatives (VFR) campaign. The Action Plan recommends coordinating product and experience development that is in line with market needs through identification of key experiences.

Recommendations for 2019

The ColourItMyWay summer and fall campaign continued to be very successful in telling the stories of our “ambassadors” to build community engagement and pride. A new component in 2018 was the introduction of two Grey County “Insiders” who focused on our tourism assets with their insights. Staff are looking at expanding this part of the campaign to feature more “places” in 2019 to complement the “people” that currently comprise our campaign and also plan better integration of our media relations. Working with our municipal DMO partners, we would like to initiate a communications campaign to highlight the importance and benefits of tourism in our local communities and economy. Visitgrey.ca is now three and a half years old, and in need of a facelift to keep up with today’s social media and mobile-driven standards. This includes bringing social media onto the front page, more video and story-telling. This is a capital project funded from reserve and estimated at \$20,000.

Development of packages and itineraries will focus in three themes: outdoor adventure (including cycling) food/culinary and arts and culture. Outcomes from the Cycling and Trails Master Plan will also drive development activities in 2019. Some of these include: identifying key cycling routes for infrastructure investment including signage, and identifying key trails for inclusion in a Grey County Trails guide. Also new for 2019 is to begin looking at US and overseas markets for a partnered or direct approach.

Objective: To increase the competitiveness of Grey County as a tourism destination.

Key Activities	Results
Expanding #ColourItMyWay campaign	Campaign to leverage the many relatives and family friends who visit Grey County and to motivate our potential visitors
Closer integration of media and influencers with campaign.	Reinforcement of campaign through external channels

Key Activities	Results
Update visitgrey.ca – mapping, mobile-friendly	Robust information portal for travel consumers to use pre-trip and in-market
Facilitate Creation of Packages and Itineraries	Development of experiences under broad themes with itineraries/packages
Create a Simple Experiential Outbound Tour Operator Strategy	Increased US/overseas market exposure and interest by tour operators

Pillar 3: Market Research and Tracking

The Action Plan is measurable. The scorecard identifies key performance indicators and data sources for Grey County Tourism to measure its success on an on-going basis and compare annually. Besides measuring the progress of the Action Plan, the report recommends surveying industry on an annual basis to develop a snapshot of the ‘State of Tourism in Grey’ and sharing that data with stakeholders.

Recommendations for 2019

A tourism metrics workshop is scheduled for mid-November to share existing research and metrics and obtain input for business and partner needs going forward. Outcomes will inform the business survey to go out before the end of 2018. The Research and Data Analyst project has been rescheduled and budgeted for 2019.

Objective: To measure the Action Plan and provide strategic data to stakeholders.

Key Activities	Results
Track success of the Action Plan	Quarterly scorecard circulated to Tourism Advisory Committee and annual report to County Council.
Track key quantitative and qualitative metrics and economic impact of tourism	Dashboard on the state of tourism produced based on available data and industry surveys
Create profiles of target market audience groups (demographics/psychographics)	Provide tools to stakeholders to help them target their marketing

Pillar 4: Resource Allocation

Grey County Tourism has a dedicated team, and investing in their professional development should be a priority.

Recommendations for 2019

The tourism department experienced some changes in staff in 2018. All staff develop work plans that align with Grey County’s four seasons and provide feedback on Action Plan deliverables as well as ongoing service delivery. The team also identifies training needs required to meet Action Plan objectives.

Objective: To create the most effective tourism team at Grey County.

Key Activities	Results
All staff complete annual work plans with quarterly deliverables and metrics.	Create the most effective structure able to support stakeholders and Grey County's strategic initiatives.
Invest in professional development	Ensure staff is always on top of the trends

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Grey County Tourism Priority Calendar for DDAP - 2019					
Priority Levels: 1 = Year 1 (Urgent) 2 = Accomplish in Year 1 (Immediate) 3 = Accomplish in Year 2 (Timely) 4 = Accomplish in Year 3 (Extended)	Priority Level	Year 3 - 4 : 2019			
		Q1: Jan- March	Q2: April- June	Q3: July- Sept	Q4: Oct- Dec
Pillar 1: Community Engagement					
1. Clean Up and Maintain the Grey County Tourism Stakeholder Database	1				
2. Build Stakeholder Communications Plan - ongoing Communication	2				
3. Relaunch "Tourism Talks" - ongoing sessions	2				
4. Make the Industry Website a Useful Tool and Resource	2				
Pillar 2: Destination Management					
1. Create Marketing and Communications Plan - update for 2019	1				
2. Embrace the Brand	2				
3. Create a Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) Marketing and Communications Campaign - Update campaign for 2019	2				
4. Create a Grey County Tourism Mobile Application - Update Website	3				
5. Facilitate Creation of Packages & Itineraries	4				
6. Create a Simple Experiential Outbound Tour Operator Strategy	4				
Pillar 3: Market Research and Tracking					
1. Track the Success of the DDAP	1				
2. Track Key Quantitative and Qualitative Metrics and Economic Impact of Tourism	2				
3. Create Profiles of Target Market Audience Groups Using Both Demographics and Psychographics	3				
Pillar 4: Resource Allocation					
1. Reorganize Tourism Staff Functions	1				
2. Invest in Professional Development	3				

Legal and Legislated Requirements

None.

Financial and Resource Implications

Implementation of the Tourism Action Plan is contained within the proposed budget and staffing allocations for 2019.

There are also some recommendations that involve information technology (IT) and may involve a combination of use of County IT staff where possible and some outside resources. The largest impact is the updating of visitgrey.ca and ensuring continued mobile compatibility. Further research will be undertaken to determine the scope, costs and ability of the IT department to do this work. This is a capital project funded from the tourism reserve and estimated at \$20,000, with no net budget impact.

Relevant Consultation

Internal – CAO

External – none

Appendices and Attachments

None.