

# Tourism Service Delivery Review

Presented to: General Committee

January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Invest Barrie

# Purpose

Barrie City Council requested that Invest Barrie staff conduct an analysis of tourism service delivery for the City.

The analysis was to provide a framework of alternative service delivery options for tourism services including;

- partnership with the County of Simcoe
- internalizing the Corporate tourism function
- maintaining or modifying the existing model currently delivered by Tourism Barrie.

# Background

In 2012, Ideas in Motion identified Alignment of the services that contribute to the economic development of the community as 1 of 5 priority actions.

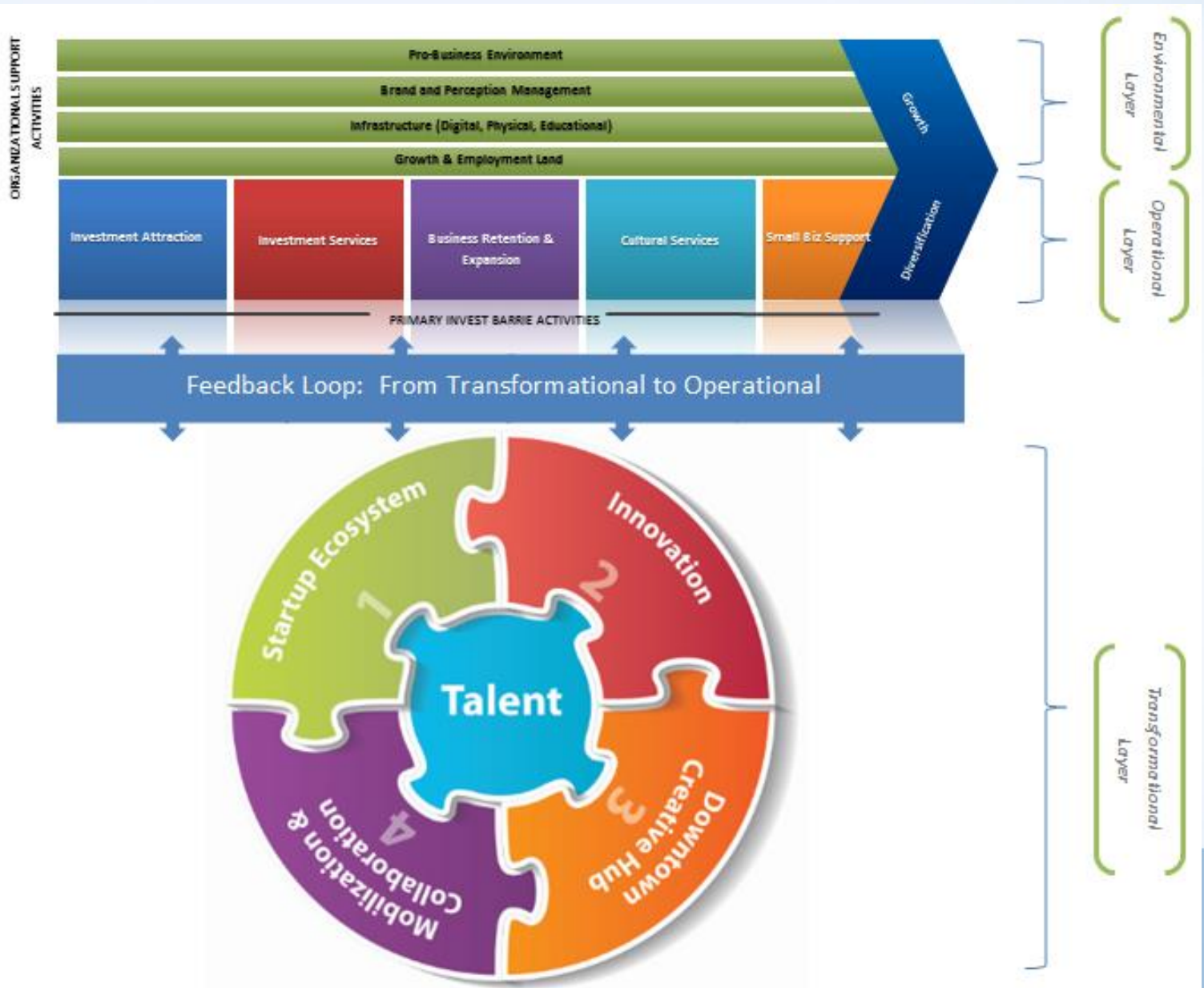
## ACTION:

- Explore a broader Economic Development Service Delivery Model that would bring together all the key foundations for successful economic development including business development, Small Business Centre, Culture, Downtown and Tourism

## OUTCOME:

- Capitalize on the strengths and leverage individual and collective expertise to build confidence among investors and increase results by working in collaboration, and pooling resources where appropriate.

# Invest Barrie Strategy



# Process Undertaken

- Invest Barrie engaged Christine Dodd, Tourism Industry Advisor with the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport to conduct a review.
- Using a strategic framework for tourism service delivery, the following was considered:
  - Complete inventory of tourism-related services provided within Barrie;
  - Assessment of duplication and gaps;
  - Summary of short, medium and long-term priorities;
  - Opportunities and challenges identified by partners.
- Assessment was based on in-depth interviews with City staff, external partners and service providers, including Tourism Barrie.

# Tourism Program Elements

## Destination Marketing

- How we communicate with potential visitors to influence their destination preference, intention to travel and their final destination and product choices.

## Destination Development

- The amenities, facilities, products and services that create the experiences for visitors and their continuous development to drive unique, quality experiences.

# Findings

ORGANIZATION	ROLE						
	MARKETING				DEVELOPMENT		
	Tourism Website & Social Media	Tourism Printed Publications	Sector Marketing (e.g. golf, ski)	Product Development (including Festivals)	Industry Development	Destination Management (including Visitor Information)	Regional Collaboration
Tourism Barrie (TB)	X	X	X			X	
Tourism Simcoe County (TSC)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Regional Tourism Organization 7 (RTO 7)	X		X	X	X	X	
Barrie and District Chamber of Commerce					X		
Barrie Hotel Association					X		
Ontario Travel Centre							X
Access Barrie	X						
Invest Barrie	X			X	X	X	X

# Current Situation - Development

## Product Development:

- City-run festivals & events are locally focused and aren't being well used to effectively build our brand outside of the City/County.
- New tourism products can be strategic tools in developing our creative economy and are not being explored to their fullest potential.

## Destination Development:

- The City's destination 'brand' is not clear and the development of a new brand was identified as one of the top 5 ideas through Ideas in Motion.
- Tourism-related destination development needs to be aligned with the brand and the City's investment strategy and needs to have a single and clear lead.



# Current Situation - Marketing

- The majority of Barrie tourism activity focuses on marketing member destinations.
- Duplication in marketing activities and inconsistent messaging exists between RTO 7, Tourism Simcoe County and Tourism Barrie through all marketing venues
  - Digital marketing
  - Printed Publications (visitor guides and maps)
  - Marketing campaigns
- Marketing programs operate on a pay-to-play basis, driving focus on stakeholder priorities versus sector priorities.

# Current Situation – Regional Collaboration

- Regional collaboration is a significant gap in tourism sector development, both in marketing and development activity.
- Regional collaboration provides the opportunity to leverage dollars, resources, assets and experiences to build greater opportunities to attract tourists to the area in targeted segments, for longer periods of time.
- Significant opportunity to multiply Barrie's tourist investment dollars by collaborating with partners, including Tourism Simcoe County and RTO-7 on tourism development projects.

# Tourism Report Recommendations

## Opportunities & Future Direction

1. Clearly define Tourism Barrie's, City of Barrie's and the County of Simcoe's role in Tourism.
2. Develop a House of Brands approach to destination marketing.
3. Insure visitors and residents can access visitor information easily.
4. Develop a creative, innovative destination.
5. Improve regional partnerships and avoid duplication.

# Opportunities & Future Direction

- 1. Clearly define roles for Tourism Barrie, City of Barrie and the County of Simcoe in Tourism**
  - Each organization has an important role in fostering a robust tourism sector.
  - As the largest urban centre in the tourism region, the City has a unique and supportive role.
  - Identifying the strengths and key role for each partner organization will better leverage funding and resources to fill the gaps and grow the tourism sector.
  - Clear roles will increase visitor clarity and experiences.

# Opportunities & Future Direction

## 2. Develop a House of Brands approach to destination marketing

- Tourism success and investment attraction are largely dependant on the City's 'brand promise'.
- The City's brand promise must be consistently reflected through all partner communications.
- A 'House of Brands' approach would allow each organization involved in tourism marketing to have their unique identity while reflected the brand promise of each partner.
- This approach triples the exposure of each organization.

# Opportunities & Future Direction

## 3. Insure visitors and residents can access visitor information easily

- Several visitor centres and visitor websites offering visitor information services exist throughout Barrie and surrounding area.
- Lack of strategic focus, regional collaboration, alignment, and brand management results in mixed and/or conflicting messaging for the visitor.
- Need to determine how and best to deliver visitor information across both digital and in-person mediums.

# Opportunities & Future Direction

## 4. Develop a creative, innovative destination

- Tourism entrepreneurship is a cornerstone to diversifying a destination, attracting new markets and extending length of stay.
- Invest Barrie identified entrepreneurship as a cornerstone in the City's investment strategy and robust programming has been developed to support this initiative – tourism can benefit from this.
- Engaging the tourism sector in the entrepreneurial ecosystem will contribute to the creation of unique, innovative, tourism experiences and attraction of targeted talent.

# Opportunities & Future Direction

## 5. Improve regional partnerships and avoid duplication

- Partnerships are critical to reaching new markets and developing new products in a time effective, fiscally responsible manner.
- To effectively build the new Barrie brand, a co-ordinating body is needed to provide strategic direction and drive collaboration and consistency amongst tourism partners.
- Partner based campaigns will leverage regional funds and increase exposure for local tourism businesses.



# Alternatives

Alternative	Cost	Service Area			
		Destination Management	Marketing Management	Regional Collaboration	Alignment with Invest Barrie Strategy
1. Maintain Tourism Barrie	\$213,500* (plus pay to play – estimated \$10,000**)		✓		
2. Outsource to Simcoe County	\$100,000 (proposed)	✓ Regional Focus	✓	✓	
3. City-led strategy with partnership model	\$150,000 (proposed)	✓	✓	✓	✓

\*2017 Budget Request \*\* Culture Department Contribution

# Recommended Alternative

## City led Strategy with Partnership Model

- Incorporate a tourism focus within Invest Barrie to re-position and leverage tourism as part of the creative economy and increase its contribution to the City's overall economic growth.
- Focus on development and management of the new City brand by strengthening relationships and increasing collaboration with all tourism partners.
- Leverage partners' tourism expertise and areas of focus to increase product development and maximize market exposure and impact.

# Recommended Alternative

## Program Allocation:

Invest Barrie	Tourism Barrie	County of Simcoe
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Brand development and management to support new City brand.</li> <li>- Destination development that aligns with the brand and focuses on the creative economy and talent attraction.</li> <li>- Leverage funding for asset development through regional collaboration.</li> <li>- Increase BR+E for the tourism sector.</li> </ul>	<p>Pay-to-Play initiatives including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support of digital assets (ie. website, management of Trip Advisor website)</li> <li>- Marketing initiatives ie. destination guides, tradeshow, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pay-to-Play initiatives including regionally collaborative projects to tie Barrie into regional destination experiences and marketing initiatives.</li> <li>- Opportunity to leverage Barrie’s urban environment to build regional tourism experiences.</li> <li>- Shared economic development agenda aligns with City. Share tourism as a lever.</li> </ul>

# Outcomes

- Tourism will be re-positioned within the City's investment strategy with focus on growing tourism entrepreneurship to increase its role in the creative economy.
- Grow the profile of the City through brand management and consistent messaging among all partners.
- Leverage and develop our unique asset as the largest urban centre in the region to grow tourism locally and regionally.
- Reduce service duplication, increase exposure, strengthen visitor clarity and maximize funding and resourcing through regional collaboration.
- Increase fiscal accountability through performance based funding model for marketing services with our tourism partners.

# Proposed Implementation

## 2017 – Transition Year

### Tourism Barrie

- Transition Tourism Barrie from an annual operating funding to a fee-for-service model.
- Tourism Barrie to provide funding request to support transitional activities for which a demonstrated commitment had been made (ie. Spring Visitor Guide), and a proposed contribution to maintain digital assets.

# Proposed Implementation

2017 – Transition Year

## County of Simcoe

- Participate in pay-to-play initiatives to integrate Barrie into regional destination experiences and marketing initiatives.
- Re-allocate a portion of current tourism funds to allow participation with County of Simcoe on collaborative regional projects that leverage partnership funds to further destination and market development.
- Funding to be provided on a project specific basis and performance based.

# Proposed Implementation

2017 – Transition Year

## Invest Barrie

- Develop a workplan related to integrating tourism in the Invest Barrie strategy.
- Recruit a resource to support the integration to tourism and develop a tourism partnership and services model.
- In collaboration with Access Barrie, explore ‘house of brands’ approach to include tourism as part of City’s broader brand management strategy.
- Complete visitor services review to determine best delivery and value of in-person visitor services.

# Next Steps

- Should General Committee be in support of this approach, Staff will develop a full implementation plan for Tourism programming for 2017 and report back to Council.