



Kempenfest Festival Review

Final Presentation

19 November 2025



Land Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge that the lands, waters, and living things on which the City of Barrie and Kempenfest exist and take place today are the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg people, which include the Odawa, Ojibwe, and Pottawatomi Nations collectively known as the Three Fires Confederacy.

These lands, waters, and living things form part of Treaty 16: Lake Simcoe Purchase (1815), which was signed by representatives of the Crown and certain Anishinaabe peoples at Kempenfelt Bay.

Additionally, we acknowledge this place as the traditional territory of the Wendat Nation (Huron), who lived on these lands before the middle of the 17th century and who now live at Wendake First Nation, Wyandotte Nation of Oklahoma, Wyandot of Anderdon Nation in Michigan, and Wyandot Nation of Kansas.

Project Team



James Arteaga
Tourism Developer
Role: Project Manager



Camilo Montoya-Guevara
Partner
Role: Research and Engagement



Ruth Burns
Executive Director of ONCD
Role: Festival and Events Expert

Agenda

1. Project Overview

- Goal & Objectives
- Methodology & Engagements
- The Report

2. Festival Evaluation Tool & Resources Scan

3. Recommendations

- Governance and management
- Operations and marketing
- Partnerships and collaborations



1. Project Overview

Goal & Objectives

Goal: To provide Kempenfest and the City of Barrie with strategic recommendations for the festival's evolution and sustainability to grow as a community and tourism event.

Objectives:

1. To develop a baseline business model of Kempenfest (i.e., 2024).
2. To gather clarity around current marketing efforts.
3. To gather insights and perspectives from key festival ecosystem actors.
4. To gather insights and inspiration from comparator festivals.
5. To develop a future vision business model of Kempenfest.
6. To identify innovations and evolution opportunities.
7. To design and develop a pilot evaluation tool.
8. To conduct a resources scan.

Methodology and Engagement

- Reviewed over thirty (30) background and context, and marketing approaches and materials.
- Facilitated one (1) in-person baseline business modelling session.
- Conducted an in-person festival site review with festival organizers.
- Conducted research into three (3) comparator festivals.
- Conducted eighteen (18) key informant interviews.



The Report

The report is divided into five (5) main sections:

- The Make-up of Kempenfest
- Looking Beyond Kempenfest
- The Future of Kempenfest in 2050
- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges
- Strategic Recommendations



2. Festival Evaluation Tool & Resources Scan

Festival Evaluation Tool: Performance Metrics

Performance Metrics: Annual Snapshot						
	METRICS	PREVIOUS YEAR	CURRENT GOAL	YTD	DESCRIPTION	REFERENCE / PARTNERSHIP SOURCE / OTHER SOURCES/TOOLS
2						
3	ATTENDANCE					
4						
5	Total attendance					
6	Attendance - Day 1					
7	Attendance - Day 2					
8	Attendance - Day 3					
9	Total main stage attendance					
10	Main Stage - Day 1					
11	Main Stage - Day 2					
12	Main Stage - Day 3					
13						
14	REVENUE					
15	Main Stage Tickets					
16	# of Booths					
17	Booth Sales					
18	Food & Beverage					
19	Sponsorships (in-kind)					
20	Sponsorships (cash)					
21						
22	TOURISM (Travelling 40km or more)					
23	% of audience - Ontario tourists/visitors					
24	% of audience - Canadian tourists/visitors					

Festival Evaluation Tool: Promotional Campaign Tracking

Festival Evaluation Tool: Priority Groups

Canadian Heritage Priority Groups	
2	
3	2SLGBTQI+
4	Black
5	D/deaf
6	Person living with a disability
7	Indigenous
8	Official Language Minority
9	Racialized
10	Youth
11	
12	<p>Note: Funders are likely to inquire what percentage of your board and senior leadership are comprised of members from priority or equity-seeking groups. They are also likely to inquire about what percentage of your featured artists are comprised of members from priority or equity-seeking groups.</p>

Resources Scan

2	Resources Scan				
3	Organization Name	Resource Name	Link	Notes	Deadline
4	Canadian Heritage	CAPF Programming: Professional Arts Festivals and Performing Arts Series Presenters	https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/funding/arts-presentation-fund/programming-arts-festivals-series-presenters.html		April 1st and October 15th for projects which will occur after April 1st of the following year
5	Canadian Heritage	Local Festivals - Building Communities through Arts and Heritage	https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/funding/building-napsg/national-festival-localization.html	Strong Kempenfest alignment	
6	FedDev	Tourism Growth Program	https://ontario.canada.ca/en/funding-southern-ontario/tourism-growth-program-southern-ontario	May reopen with new govt.	Closed for 2023-2026.
7	Canada Council for the Arts	Arts Across Canada: Public Outreach - Project grants	https://canadacouncil.ca/funding/grants/arts-across-canada/public-outreach	Strong Kempenfest alignment 2 applicaitons per year (only 1 can be for Kempenfest) A max of \$50,000 per year	09-Apr-25
8	Canada Council for the Arts	Arts Across Canada: Arts Festivals and Presenters	https://canadacouncil.ca/funding/grants/arts-across-canada/arts-festivals-and-presenters	1 core grant from any program	Summer 2028
9	Canada Council for the Arts	Engage and Sustain: Artistic Catalysts	https://canadacouncil.ca/funding/grants/engage-and-sustain/artistic-catalysts	Long term goal	02-Apr-25
10	Government of Ontario	Tourism Economic Development and Recovery Fund		May reopen with new govt.	
11	Government of Ontario	Experience Ontario		Strong Kempenfest alignment	
12	Government of Ontario	Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund	https://www.ocaf.on.ca/application/	Strong Kempenfest alignment	Any time with a min 8 months ahead of the event.
13	Ontario Trillium Foundation	Seed Grant	https://otf.ca/our-grants/community-investments-grants/seed-grant		20-Aug-25
14	Ontario Trillium Foundation	Grow Grant	https://otf.ca/our-grants/community-investments-grants/grow-grant		05-Nov-25
15	Ontario Trillium Foundation	Capital Grant	https://otf.ca/our-grants/community-investments-grants/capital-grant		05-Mar-25
16	Ontario Arts Council	Artists in Communities and Schools Projects	https://www.arts.on.ca/grants/artists-in-communities-and-schools-projects	Strong Kempenfest alignment	April 23 and October 15, 2025
17	Ontario Arts Council	Music Production and Presentation Projects		Strong Kempenfest alignment	
18	Ontario Arts Council	Ontario Arts Presenters Projects	https://www.arts.on.ca/grants/ontario-arts-presenters-projects	Strong Kempenfest alignment	
			https://www.ontariocreates.ca/our-		

3. Recommendations

Strat. Recommendations: Governance & Management

Short-term (2025-2026)

1. Conduct an organizational strategic plan to reset the organizational structure and review (Kempenfest) Barrie Inc.'s governance, roles and responsibilities, priorities, financial management, and partnerships, as well as formally set the organization's values, vision, and mission.
2. Review and strengthen (Kempenfest) Barrie Inc.'s existing governance policy to formally set and familiarize the Board of Directors as a governance board, instead of a working board.
3. Work with Admiral Live to strengthen their services agreement so that their work with (Kempenfest) Barrie Inc. supports the organization's system and viability.

Strat. Recommendations: Governance & Management

Medium-term (2027-2030)

4. Clearly position and raise the profile of (Kempenfest) Barrie Inc. as the lead organizer and main organization responsible for festival administration, programming, and relationship management, including partnership development.
5. Develop a multi-year festival strategy that provides long-term direction and guidance for the festival organizers, including the festival's goals, planning priorities, value proposition, programming and audience engagement innovations, opportunities for potential partnerships, etc.

Strat. Recommendations: Governance & Management

Long-term (2031-2040)

6. Create a social- and environmental-returns fund that all festival partners and participants can contribute to financially to support local initiatives, NFPs, and NGOs in the name of Kempenfest.
7. Develop a minimum local goods procurement requirement for vendors.
8. Expand (Kempenfest) Barrie Inc.'s mission and monitoring efforts to include environmental contributions and benefits as part of the festival's focus.

Strat. Recommendations: Operations and Marketing

Short-term (2025-2026)

1. Review and reassess festival organizers' roles and responsibilities to identify potential gaps and overlaps and identify human resource needs.
2. Strengthen the festival operations plan
3. Develop a multi-year festival marketing strategy to provide long-term direction and guidance for marketing and promotion efforts, including increasing visitor number (i.e., 40km or more).
4. Continue to develop and strengthen the yearly festival marketing plan to identify the strategic marketing and promotional tactics to implement that year and align the plan with key marketing partners such as Tourism Barrie.

Strat. Recommendations: Operations and Marketing

Medium-term (2027-2030)

5. Baseline the festival's waste and emissions to plan for a data-based transition and explore alternative energy solutions.
6. Establish relationships with environmental protection and revitalization organizations to help inform festival planning and suggest environmental programs (e.g., Pollinate Barrie, Clean Up Barrie, etc.).
7. Identify ways to reduce the environmental impact of the festival.
8. Collaborate with the City of Barrie on vendor familiarization and single-use plastic reduction/removal initiatives, such as information sharing, fee reduction for waste-cap.

Strat. Recommendations: Operations and Marketing

Long-term (2031-2040)

9. Set a goal to be a single-use and waste-free festival by 2031, and celebrate initiatives and progress.
10. Facilitate a space or platform (e.g., advisory committee) for festival organizers to inform city planning processes and future infrastructure projects and improvements based on their needs and festival/event locations. **(City of Barrie)**
11. Encourage environmental protection and enhancement of festivals through grant incentives with dedicated environmental targets **(City of Barrie)**
12. Work with festival organizers to develop waste-free policies and set a city-wide goal for fully removing single-use plastics and other waste from festivals by 2030, **(City of Barrie)**
13. Collaborate on a communications campaign to highlight the social and environmental benefits of festivals and events in Barrie, **(City of Barrie)**

Strat. Recommendations: Partnerships and Collaborations

Ongoing (Continuous)

1. Strengthen existing and explore new partnerships with local Indigenous leadership, groups, and communities.
2. Continue to explore opportunities to improve transportation options to the festival (e.g., shuttle service, Metrolinx, Ontario by Bike, etc.).
3. Continue to work and explore new opportunities with industry associations, organizations, and groups (incl., local cultural groups).

Strat. Recommendations: Partnerships and Collaborations

Medium-term (2027-2030)

4. Grow local economic impact by partnering directly with local businesses and representative organizations to develop festival packages, etc.
5. Formalize the relationship with the City of Barrie by developing a memorandum of understanding for clarity on support and expected reporting needs.
6. Formalize the relationship with Tourism Barrie by developing a memorandum of understanding for support with marketing planning and inclusion in marketing efforts.
7. Formalize the relationship with the Downtown Barrie BIA through a memorandum of understanding for clear network access to local businesses and potential support in package or special promotion creation.

Strat. Recommendations: Partnerships and Collaborations

Long-term (2031-2040)

8. Collaborate with social representation organizations to provide vendor and volunteer opportunities to underrepresented community members (incl. Barrie Pride, Barrie Native Friendship Centre, Women and Children's Shelter of Barrie).

Thank You!

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