



## Report to Council

Department: Development Services  
Division: Economic Development  
Date: January 18, 2021  
Prepared by: Nelson Silveira, Economic Development Officer  
Report Number: Economic Development-2021-03  
Subject: Agri-Tourism Strategy 2021  
Number of Pages: 6

### Recommendation(s)

**That** Economic Development-2021-03 entitled Agri-Tourism Strategy 2021 prepared by Nelson Silveira, Economic Development Officer dated January 18, 2021 be received.

### Purpose

To provide Council with an update on the Agri-Tourism Strategy to be completed in 2021.

### Background and Discussion

The Town of Essex Corporate Strategic Plan has outlined priorities and strategies to be achieved over the term of this Council. In this plan, Council has identified multiple action items that would support the creation of an Agri-Tourism Strategy including:

1. Emphasizing the agricultural economy;
2. Developing a comprehensive tourism strategy; and
3. Developing agri-tourism and eco-tourism offerings.

At the September 8, 2020 Council meeting, Council approved reallocating up to \$25,000.00 in funding from the 2020 Tourism Marketing Budget to create an Agri-Tourism Strategy in 2021. In addition, Council provided a resolution supporting the Town of Essex grant application seeking \$25,000.00 in funding from the Tourism Economic Development Recovery Fund (TEDRF) through the provincial Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries. In December, the Town received confirmation from the Minister that we were successful in our grant application to TEDRF and that funds through this program are to be spent by March 31, 2021.

As per the Town’s Procurement By-law, Administration reviewed five submissions through a competitive Request for Proposals process and has selected the Culinary Tourism Alliance to complete the Agri-Tourism Strategy for the Town of Essex. The Culinary Tourism Alliance (CTA) was established in 2006 to implement the 2005-2015 Ontario Culinary Tourism Strategy and Action Plan on behalf of the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture & Sport. CTA has vast experience working with municipalities in Ontario through research and development of strategies that have supported the growth potential of food and agri-tourism.

**Agri-Tourism Strategy Schedule**

Stage	Activity	Schedule (2021)
Kickoff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CTA will plan and facilitate an initial briefing with Town of Essex Administration to review:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ project goals and objectives</li> <li>▪ approach and methodology</li> <li>▪ activities outputs, and outcomes</li> <li>▪ timeline and milestones</li> <li>▪ roles and responsibilities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Mid-January
Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CTA will conduct supplementary research into the macro-factors affecting agri-tourism development in Essex.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An internal reference document will be produced as part of the background review and supplementary research process.</li> <li>• CTA will conduct research into the agri-tourism landscape of Essex through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ stakeholder databases and product inventories</li> <li>▪ interview guides (structured and/or semi-structured)</li> <li>▪ questionnaires and polls (online and hard copy)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• A living database will be created for inputting relevant information on existing and potential agri-tourism businesses (assets) and related experiences.</li> <li>• Identifying stakeholders that may have the knowledge and motivation to pursue agri-tourism, criteria outlining common characteristics of agri-tourism businesses will be developed (e.g. size, location, crops/product types, family-run etc.)</li> <li>• CTA will recommend a system for rating current product offerings, and use data validation and instructions to assist Administration with categorizing these in the database.</li> <li>• CTA will conduct research into market trends, demands, and supports, towards identifying product gaps and opportunities as well as existing tools and resources to support agri-tourism development.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">Mid-January - Early-February</p>
<p>Stakeholder Engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CTA will conduct virtual public meetings to garner feedback and information from local stakeholders and agri-tourism operators.</li> <li>• Primary research methods and tools, as identified in the research plan, will be used to engage key informants and agri-tourism</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">Mid-February</p>

	<p>stakeholders in conversation around developing agri-tourism in the Town of Essex.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Findings from the research to date will be shared, pressure-tested, and supplemented by stakeholders as part of the process.</li> </ul>	
Agri-Tourism Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CTA will design and develop a strategic framework that may include but is not limited to key areas of opportunity to develop and promote agri-tourism over the short term (i.e. 1-3 years), recommendations along with rationales and anticipated outcomes, alignments, responsibilities and considerations, such as supports required, success factors, and medium-term opportunities.</li> <li>Both the draft strategic framework and table of contents will be reviewed and finalized in conversation with Administration.</li> <li>CTA will prepare a full narrative report that sets forth findings, conclusions, and recommendations for strategically growing agri-tourism in Essex.</li> <li>Both the strategic framework and table of contents will be reviewed and finalized in conversation with Administration.</li> <li>CTA will prepare a full narrative report that sets forth findings, conclusions, and recommendations for strategically growing agri-tourism in Essex.</li> </ul>	<p>Early-March - Mid-March</p>
Implementation Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CTA will prepare the shell of an implementation plan, to be co-developed with Administration and become a part of the finalized agri-tourism strategy report.</li> <li>The implementation plan template will be shared with Administration, for review and comment in advance of a meeting.</li> </ul>	<p>Mid-March -</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CTA will schedule, coordinate and conduct a working meeting with Administration to discuss in detail and plan for the implementation of the strategic actions identified for the Town of Essex.</li> </ul>	Late March
Report Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The draft implementation plan will be further developed and shared with Administration, to ensure that it reflects inputs and feedback from the implementation and stakeholder planning meetings.</li> <li>Any additional feedback will be incorporated into a final version of the implementation plan.</li> <li>The finalized implementation plan will be added to the second draft strategy report, before it is copy- edited and prepared in PDF and HTML formats, becoming the finalized report.</li> </ul>	Late-March
Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CTA will prepare for and present the final agri-tourism strategy report to Town of Essex Council.</li> </ul>	Late-April - Early-May

## Financial Impact

### Project Budget

Funding Source	Amount
Town of Essex (allocation from 2020 Tourism Marketing Budget)	\$25,000.00
Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries (TEDRF)	\$25,000.00
Tourism Windsor Essex Peele Island	\$5,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$55,000.00</b>

## Project Costs

Project	Cost
Complete Agri-Tourism Strategy	\$33,433.88
Implement action items identified in Agri-Tourism Strategy	\$21,566.12
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$55,000.00</b>

## Link to Strategic Priorities

- Manage, invest and plan for sustainable municipal infrastructure which meets current and future needs of the municipality and its citizens.
- Create a safe, friendly and inclusive community which encourages healthy, active living for people of all ages and abilities.
- Provide a fiscal stewardship and value for tax dollars to ensure long-term financial health to the municipality.
- Manage responsible and viable growth while preserving and enhancing the unique rural and small town character of the community.
- Improve the experiences of individuals, as both citizens and customers, in their interactions with the Town of Essex.
- Improve the Town's capacity to meet the ongoing and future service needs of its citizens while ensuring the corporation is resilient in the face of unanticipated changes or disruptions.

## Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Agri-Tourism Strategy 2021 - Economic Development-2021-03.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Jan 13, 2021

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:



**Lori Chadwick, Director, Development Services - Jan 11, 2021 - 3:10 PM**



**Chris Nepszy, Chief Administrative Officer - Jan 13, 2021 - 3:05 PM**