



Report to Council

Department: Development Services
Division: Economic Development
Date: April 19, 2021
Prepared by: Nelson Silveira, Economic Development Officer
Report Number: Economic Development-2021-05
Subject: Agritourism Development Strategy
Number of Pages: 4, plus attachments

Recommendation(s)

That Economic Development-2021-05 entitled Agritourism Development Strategy prepared by Nelson Silveira, Economic Development Officer dated April 19, 2021 be received; and

That Council adopt the Town of Essex Agritourism Development Strategy and direct Administration to begin the implementation process.

Purpose

To present Council with the Town of Essex Agritourism Development Strategy.

Background and Discussion

The Town of Essex Corporate Strategic Plan 2019-2022 has outlined priorities and strategies to be achieved over the term of this Council. In the Strategic Plan, Council identified multiple action items that would support the creation of an Agritourism Development 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 Agritourism Development 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 **Ontario's** Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries. In December 2020, 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.

At the January 18, 2021 Council meeting, Administration informed Council that Culinary Tourism Alliance (CTA) had been selected **as per the Town's Procurement Policy and By-law** to complete the Agritourism Development Strategy for the Town of Essex. Administration provided Council with the proposed work plan, which identified a targeted completion date for preparing the Strategy by March 31, 2021.

As required under the project's work plan, CTA has conducted extensive research into market trends, demands, and supports, towards identifying product gaps and opportunities as well as existing tools and resources to support agritourism development in the Town of Essex. This research included conducting virtual public meetings to garner feedback and information from local stakeholders and agritourism operators, since stakeholder input and feedback was crucial in the development of this strategy.

The Agritourism Development Strategy includes key areas of opportunity to develop and promote agritourism over the short term (1-3 years).

CTA has prepared a full narrative report that sets forth findings, conclusions, and recommendations for strategically growing agritourism in Essex. Please refer to the attached

document “Town of Essex Agritourism Development Strategy”.

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 Pelee Island	\$5,000.00
Total	\$55,000.00

Project Costs

Project	Cost
Complete Agritourism Development Strategy	\$33,433.88
Implement action items identified in Agritourism Development Strategy	\$21,566.12
Total	\$55,000.00

Consultation

The draft strategic framework and implementation plan have been reviewed and finalized in conversation with Administration including the Manager, Strategic Communications and Manger, Planning Services. Agricultural property owners and agritourism operators were engaged during the virtual industry forum and their feedback was crucial in the creation of this strategy. Stakeholders including Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island, Essex County Federation of Agriculture, Essex Region Conservation Authority, Colchester South and Harrow

Agricultural Society, and others were involved in the stakeholder engagement process.

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:	Agritourism Development Strategy - Economic Development-2021-05.docx
Attachments:	- SX - Agritourism Development Strategy - Report - 7 Apr 2021.pdf - SX - Agritourism Development Strategy - Appendix A+B - 27 Mar 2021.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Apr 13, 2021

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



Lori Chadwick, Director, Development Services - Apr 13, 2021 - 9:46 AM



Chris Nepszy, Chief Administrative Officer - Apr 13, 2021 - 12:25 PM