



CITY OF
ST. CATHARINES

Corporate Report

Report from Economic Development and Customer Service, Economic Development and Tourism and Recreation and Community Services

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Subject: Sport Tourism Strategic Review

Recommendation

That Council direct Economic Development and Tourism Services and Recreation and Community Services staff to develop a Sport Tourism Strategy for the City of St. Catharines. FORTHWITH

Summary

Sport tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors in the tourism economy. The Corporation of the City of St. Catharines has many existing first class sports facilities in its asset inventory with a significant addition in the Spectator Facility due to be completed in 2015. The growth of sport tourism as an economic activity, and the attractiveness of the City's location and assets, is generating increasing demand on the Corporation by a variety of stakeholders to provide greater access to facilities or to actively participate in Sport Tourism programming. Some strain is being observed in terms of the traditional mandate to support local community users and the growing demands of the City to more actively engage in sport tourism.

Developing a strategy and formalizing an approach to Sport Tourism is an opportunity for the City of St. Catharines to determine how it can maximize economic impacts from sport tourism while also servicing community use and access objectives. Staff are proposing that a Sport Tourism Strategy be jointly developed by Economic Development and Tourism Services and Recreation and Community Services.

Background

In late 2008 the City implemented a Sport Tourism Grant specifically to support and incentivize the staging of sports events that demonstrably attract visitors to St. Catharines. These events have significant positive impacts with respect to facility rentals and broader economic impacts to the City.

Partly as a result of our attractive facilities, the success of the Sport Grant program, and reflective of national and international trends in the sport tourism sector, the City as a

primary facility and asset owner/manager is experiencing an increase in requests to accommodate and service sporting events within St.Catharines.

In order to meet obligations to support community groups and the growing sport tourism sector, it is recommended that a Sport Tourism Strategy be developed. The process would clarify internal and external roles and responsibilities, assess capacity and allocation priorities and provide a strategic framework for developing sport tourism in St.Catharines. Stakeholders in this process would include, but not be limited to:

- Community user groups and local sport associations including the Niagara Sport Commission
- Recreation and Community Services (RCS), Economic Development and Tourism Services (EDTS), and other relevant departments
- Event/tournament organizers and sport commissions
- SMG/Spectator Facility
- Academic institutions and private facility operators
- Hotel, hospitality and related retail partners including the Greater St. Catharines Niagara Accommodation Partnership

Report

Sport tourism is increasingly emerging as a key sector of interest within the tourism economy. The Canadian Sport Tourism Association (CSTA) cites spending associated with sport tourism to have reached \$3.6 billion in 2010, an 8.8% increase over 2008 at a time when overall national tourism receipts declined by 0.7%.

Since the introduction of the Sport Tourism Grant in 2008, the City has processed 45 applications. These applications are all assessed under the Sport Tourism Economic Assessment Model (STEAM), a summary of which is in the following table. Sport events have positive impacts on the local economy in terms of participants coming to St.Catharines re hotel/accommodation stays, related meals and retail purchases. Furthermore, the tracked events have generated over \$800,000 in facility revenues.

	Grants disbursed	Facility revenues related to events	Room nights attributed to events	Visitor Exp.	Total Industry Output	Wages supported
Total 48 Events (both streams) since 2007	\$145,829	\$807,487	17,418	\$10,258,783	\$15,674,556	\$5,028,928
2012 Public Facility Stream	\$27,254	\$159,060	2,716	\$1,763,981	\$2,703,019	\$887,825
2012 Private Facility Stream	\$2,065	-	612	\$417,649	\$504,915	\$204,158
2012 Total (9 events)	\$29,319	\$159,060	3,328	\$2,181,630	\$3,207,934	\$1,091,983

Economic impacts generated using Sport Tourism Economic Assessment Model (STEAM) program – Canadian Sport Tourism Alliance)

It should also be noted that while the Corporation of the City of St.Catharines is a significant owner of sport tourism infrastructure, there are many private and institutional providers of these facilities. For example, private soccer fields, tennis courts, curling and other facilities in addition to the range of facilities under the control of educational institutions from both boards of education, Ridley and Niagara College and Brock University. With such a wide variety of stakeholders there is some fragmentation in how sport tourism is delivered in St.Catharines. From marketing assets and inventory, event bidding, supporting existing events, promotion and community engagement, exploiting business opportunities, coordinating volunteers, etc., many events are developed in isolation from the expertise and resources that exists within the community.

Notionally, a Sport Tourism Strategy would provide direction to:

- establish priorities and objectives,
- inform roles and responsibilities,
- facilitate stakeholder coordination,
- generate more economic benefits, and
- balance community user and event organizer needs.

Financial Implications

Not Applicable.

Conclusion

Sport Tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors of the tourism economy. To better position the City of St.Catharines in this increasingly competitive market while accommodating community user needs, a Sport Tourism Strategy is proposed to be developed by Economic Development and Tourism Services and Recreation and Community Services staff. In addition to improving the City's role and competitiveness in the sport tourism economy, it is proposed that the consultation process and the final strategy will identify opportunities for better coordination among all stakeholders.

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Approved by:

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