




COMMUNICATION UPDATE

TO:	Mayor and Council
DATE:	December 1, 2025
SUBJECT:	Hamilton's Indigenous Tourism Development Strategy Complete (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
SUBMITTED BY:	Lisa Abbott Director, Tourism & Culture Planning & Economic Development Department
SIGNATURE:	

This communication update will provide information regarding the implementation of the 2024 – 2028 Tourism Strategy. The Tourism and Culture Division, in partnership with the Indigenous Relations Division, is pleased to share that Hamilton's Indigenous Tourism Development Strategy has been completed. This is action #2 of the 2024-2028 Tourism Strategy.

The purpose of this project was to lay the groundwork for the development of authentic Indigenous tourism experiences and businesses in Hamilton. Through this Strategy, the City now has a clear path forward, and partnerships are already forming as a direct result of this work.

Background

The Indigenous Tourism Development Strategy was led by the Tourism & Culture and Indigenous Relations divisions, in collaboration with CES Consulting and with guidance from an Indigenous Tourism Advisory Team.

The Advisory Team included representatives from:

- Six Nations of the Grand River
- Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation
- Urban Indigenous Hamiltonians
- Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC)
- Indigenous Tourism Ontario (ITO)
- Hamilton, Halton, Brant Regional Tourism Organization (RTO3)

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

This collaborative approach ensured the Strategy was grounded in meaningful engagement, authentic representation, and the priorities of Indigenous communities.

The project was funded through the provincial Tourism Development Fund grant and the Hamilton Tourism Development Corporation (Municipal Accommodation Tax).

Strategic Priorities

Hamilton's Indigenous Tourism Development Strategy provides guiding principles for developing authentic, sustainable Indigenous tourism experiences rooted in community values. The Strategy has 24 actions within five priority areas:

1. **Indigenous Tourism Advisory Council – Honouring the Calls to Action:** Establish an Indigenous Tourism Advisory Council to guide initiatives, ensuring collaboration with Indigenous operators and communities while respecting their values and delivering tangible benefits.
2. **Developing Authentic Indigenous Tourism Destinations & Experiences:** The Strategy leverages tourism assets such as the waterfront, escarpment, public spaces, events, and art exhibits to create inclusive hubs for Indigenous businesses, artists, and entrepreneurs. Activities may include Powwows, craft markets, ceremonies, sporting events, and educational storytelling opportunities that integrate Indigenous perspectives, knowledge, and storytelling to foster cultural authenticity, pride, and understanding.
3. **Fostering Meaningful Partnerships:** Build and strengthen collaboration with urban and rural Indigenous communities, centering Indigenous voices in governance and decision-making.
4. **Enhancing Awareness, Connections, & Corridors:** Celebrate Indigenous businesses, artists, and entrepreneurs through marketing, thematic routes, maps, and technology to put Indigenous tourism “on the map” in Hamilton.
5. **Supporting Business Growth, Job Creation, & Infrastructure Development:** Support Indigenous business growth, capacity-building, funding, and infrastructure development to create jobs and ensure sustainability.

Engagement

Engagement activities included:

- Regular collaboration with the Indigenous Tourism Advisory Team
- An online survey (76 responses, with 53% identifying as Indigenous)
- One-on-one interviews

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Feedback from participants demonstrated high satisfaction with the process and outcomes. Several new collaborations and initiatives have already emerged, underscoring the enthusiasm and commitment of partners to co-create future Indigenous tourism experiences in Hamilton and the surrounding region.

Conclusion

The tourism product development groundwork established through the Indigenous Tourism Development Strategy will be sustained by maintaining strong partnerships and improving pathways for collaboration between Indigenous entrepreneurs, communities, and allies.

By prioritizing Indigenous voices, supporting economic opportunity, and fostering strong relationships, the City of Hamilton is committed to ensuring the long-term growth, resilience, and success of Hamilton's Indigenous tourism sector.

For Strategy Document: please visit [Indigenous Relations Webpage: Additional Indigenous Strategies](#) for the [Indigenous Tourism Development Strategy Document](#)

Appendices and Schedules Attached

N/A

Contact

If you require any further information on this matter, please contact Ryan McHugh, Manager Tourism & Events, Planning and Economic Development Division by email at Ryan.McHugh@hamilton.ca.