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Date March 7, 2023 **Report No.** 2023-12

To Chair and Members
Committee of the Whole - Operations

From Sara Munroe
Director of Economic Development, Tourism and Cultural Initiatives

1.0 Type of Report

Consent Item [X]
Item For Consideration []

2.0 Topic Sport Tourism Strategy – 2022 Annual Status Update
[Financial Impact: None]

3.0 Recommendation

A. THAT Staff Report 2023-12 regarding the Sport Tourism Strategy – Annual Status Report (2022) BE RECEIVED.

4.0 Executive Summary

The [Sport Tourism Strategy \(2019\)](#)¹ enhances Brantford’s current sport tourism program by providing strategic direction for the City’s sport tourism efforts over the next 5 to 10 years. The implementation of the Sport Tourism Strategy and its Strategic Priorities were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, however, sport tourism began to regain momentum within the market in 2022. The focus remains on foundational and operating strategies to ensure Brantford

¹ City of Brantford Sport Tourism Strategy 2019. <https://pub-brantford.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=3685>

and its local sport organizations confidently move forward as one of the leading destinations in the sport tourism market.

5.0 Purpose and Overview

The purpose of this report is to update Council on the progress of the implementation of the Sport Tourism Strategy (2019) and its Strategic Priorities. In 2019, Brantford City Council directed staff to report back annually on the implementation of the Sport Tourism Strategy; this report is a result of that direction.

6.0 Background

The City of Brantford is an active community with a strong tradition of sport participation and achievements, and is home to many local and regional sport organizations. In 1998, Brantford was recognized as the Tournament Capital of Ontario and has become one of the leading sport destinations amongst small communities in Ontario.

In 2019, City Council adopted the Sport Tourism Strategy (STS) in order to enhance the City's current sport tourism program by providing strategic direction for the City's sport tourism efforts over the next 5 to 10 years. The STS identified recommended actions to be conducted as short-term (1-2 year), medium-term (3-4 year) and long-term (5+ years) objectives.

The Economic Development, Tourism and Cultural Initiatives Department – Tourism Division has focused on sport as one of its core markets since 2013. Since that time, the economic impact that sport tourism has on the community increases year over year. With the exception of the main pandemic years of 2020 and 2021, Brantford regularly saw over 43,000 attendees at sport tournaments and events annually, resulting in an estimated economic impact of approximately \$5.9 million annually.

7.0 Corporate Policy Context

The implementation of the Sport Tourism Strategy is supported by:

7.1 Economic Development and Tourism Strategy (2016)

The Economic Development & Tourism Strategy sets Department priorities and guides Economic Development and Tourism Department

staff work plans. The Economic Development Strategy is currently being updated.

7.2 Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Goal 3: To promote and provide access to recreation for health, wellness and active living.

Goal 5: To strengthen the City's resources and profile as a sport tourism, recreation and special event destination.

7.3 Sport Bid, Hosting and Servicing Policy (Corporate 032)

The City of Brantford recognizes key considerations of how the municipality will facilitate the bidding, hosting and servicing of sport tournaments and events that could involve regional, provincial, national, and international levels. The policy also identifies the City of Brantford's role with assisting local sports groups who may wish to take the lead in the bid process for these types of events.

8.0 Input From Other Sources

Preparation of this report included staff input from the Economic Development, Tourism & Cultural Initiatives Department and local sport organizations. The Communications, Community Engagement and Customer Service Department designed and ensured accessibility of the BMGA Brochure in the appendix.

Achieving the recommendations in the Sport Tourism Strategy has been supported by several City departments, including Parks and Facilities Services, Community Programs and Recreation and Engineering Services.

9.0 Analysis

Brantford City Council unanimously approved the Sport Tourism Strategy at its meeting on September 24, 2019 with implementation set to commence in 2020.

The Strategic Priorities of the Sport Tourism Strategy, and the implementation plan was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021. However, sport tourism began to regain its momentum within the market in 2022. Local Sport Organizations (LSO) began hosting events again, some to pre-pandemic levels for registrations and some to lower. LSOs focused on holding a manageable amounts of events and did not take on holding new events.

Implementation of the Sport Tourism Strategy continues to centre around foundational marketing and ongoing communication and support to LSOs as they regain their footing and move forward.

9.1 2022 Strategic Priorities Implementation Highlights

The STS identifies six strategic priority areas – Financial, Operational, Competitive Advantage, Marketing, Partnering and Infrastructure – with 51 recommended actions. These include 26 short-term (1-2 year), 16 medium-term (3-4 year) and 9 long-term (5+ years) objectives. The strategic priority areas are listed below and include initiatives that are ongoing or in progress. All priorities and progress are also outlined in **Appendix A - Strategic Priorities Status Report - Year 3**.

9.1.1 Priority 1: Financial

Priority 1: Financial states, “Brantford will establish a revenue model that supports sport tourism as a market segment with dedicated professional resources, enabling both homegrown and attracted events to be hosted in a financially responsible manner.” The recommended actions related to the Financial priority continued to be impacted after the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly the investigation of a Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT).

- Municipal Accommodation Revenue Tool Task Force was established in 2019, and the investigation of a Municipal Accommodation Tax is being explored. The consultant team hired to complete the 2022 Tourism & Culture Strategy was also tasked with investigating implementing Municipal Accommodation Taxes in neighbouring communities. The strategy will be presented to Council in March 2023 and it is expected that the Task Force investigations will resume shortly after with a target implementation date in Q1 2024 if approved.

9.1.2 Priority 2: Operational

Priority 2: Operational states, “Brantford will make informed decisions and build operational excellence through responsible governance and policies that leverage existing sport hosting assets and talent in order to drive economic, social and

sustainability impacts.” The Operational actions of the strategy take into account the roles of the Parks and Facilities Services and Community Programs and Social Development Departments. Cross-departmental communication, division of responsibilities and best practices are incorporated into the research, planning and delivery of sporting events.

- CORPORATE-032 Sport Bid and Hosting Policy was updated and approved by Council on July 26, 2022 via report [#2022-344](#)² to [CORPORATE-32 Sport Bid, Hosting and Servicing Policy](#)³. This policy ensures that the municipality provides a collaborative approach to bidding and hosting responsibilities. It also recognizes the role of the municipality in the facilitation, when required, of these events.
- Relocation of Visitor Services to Wayne Gretzky Sports Centre (WGSC) increased the opportunity to reach Visiting Friends & Family market and connect visitors with local resources while attending events held at the WGSC.

9.1.3 Priority 3: Competitive Advantage

Priority 3: Competitive Advantage states, “Brantford will capture the content that tells the story of the place, the people, sport readiness, and commitment to hosting.” The Competitive Advantage priority incorporated the ongoing review and inventory of current facilities for their primary purpose and incorporating alternative uses. This priority also leveraged the unique story Brantford has in the people and places that it has to offer.

- Photography was updated to improve the marketing assets that tell the inspiring story of sport tourism in Brantford. Original, local sport organization images are used to welcome large tournaments and sporting events.

² Report #2022-344 Sports Bid and Hosting Policy (CORPORATE-32). <https://pub-brantford.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=13981>

³ Corporate-032 Sport Bid, Hosting and Servicing Policy. <https://pub-brantford.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=13982>

Figure 1 Brantford Aquatic Club members standing on the starting blocks prior to their swim meet.



Figure 2 Brantford Aquatic Club members competing in swim meet.



Figure 3 Brantford Aquatic Club member competing in swim meet.



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- Continued focus for the Brantford and Area Sports Hall of Recognition as a tourism attraction with digital marketing of the facility and highlighting the Inducted members is a priority. Featuring individual Inductees and their connection to Brantford generates significant online engagement and encourages the sharing of personal anecdotes from readers' and their connection to the specific Inductee(s).

9.1.4 Priority 4: Marketing

Priority 4: Marketing states, "Brantford will proactively market and develop the Brantford sport hosting brand through all available channels." The marketing initiatives relate to positioning Brantford as a key destination for major tournaments and special sport events, connecting both newcomers and sport tourists to other community attractions and amenities and highlighting key individuals and groups who contribute to Brantford's identity as a premier sport destination. Some of the key marketing initiatives undertaken in 2022 include:

- Photographer retained to capture original images of Brantford sports teams competing in local tournaments for an updated image library.
- Ongoing social media posts welcome tournaments to promote the event, the local sport organization host, the location as well as the expected number of participants to help provide context, importance and frequency of sport tournaments continually happening in Brantford.
- Tourism Brantford continues to support the Tournament Welcome Bag program. Local sport organizations hosting sporting events are eligible to receive either team or individual participant bags containing information on local dining, shopping and attractions through the inclusion of a Tourism Visitor Guide, map as well as a small gift for each participant branded with the Discover Brantford logo and website.
- Local Sport Organizations have been given content and website links to the Tourism Directory pages to place on their tournament registration pages. This content includes

suggested dining, shopping and activities to do while in Brantford during sporting events. Tournament organizers are able to provide information to their participants to plan their stay before they arrive.

- Strategies were discussed with local hotel accommodations to provide information to sport event participants for dining, shopping and activities to do. Marketing pieces actioned for completion in spring 2023.
- The ADRENALIN Sport Event Research Portal features a [Destination Show Stopper](#)⁴ profile for Brantford. This resource is for Sport Event Rights holders and the industry as a whole during the prospecting and planning process for their sport events. The subscription communicates the features of Brantford as it pertains to the sport market through customized articles, videos, galleries and downloads. Through this portal, Brantford was showcased in 7,260 search results and our profile was viewed 30 times.
- 36 blogs and social posts featuring local sport organizations, their events and milestones and individual athletes of recognition were prepared, shared on the Discover Brantford website and distributed through the Discover Brantford e-newsletter.

9.1.5 Priority 5: Partnering

Priority 5: Partnering states, “Brantford will foster a hub of shared purpose that supports the future success of sport tourism and engages all residents of the community.” Communication with local sport organizations helped to gauge their return back to tournaments and events as well as provide support when needed. Working relationships continued with the County of Brant on adapting joint projects.

⁴ ADRENALIN Sport Event Research Portal Destination Show Stopper profile for Brantford.
<https://sporteventresearch.ca/profile-details/city/Brantford/87>

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- The City of Brantford continued to work towards co-hosting the Ontario 55+ Games with the County of Brant. The ongoing pandemic prompted their second postponement, however, the province offered an alternate option that is presented later in this report.
 - The City of Brantford partnered with the Hamilton Bulldogs of the Ontario Hockey League to provide information and data for possible relocation to the Brantford and District Civic Centre for a minimum of three years due to the renovations at the Bulldogs home arena. Staff provided cost estimates for facility upgrades and potential community economic impact.
 - Economic Development, Tourism and Cultural Initiatives provided a letter of support in principal to the Brant Disc Golf Club for their bid application to host a provincial championship in Brantford and the County of Brant in 2023.
 - Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) meetings held with 5 sport organizations and businesses.

9.1.6 Priority 6: Infrastructure

Priority 6: Infrastructure states, “Brantford will invest in the continued maintenance, development and supports required for its sport tourism infrastructure so that the City and Local Sport Organizations can host events with confidence.” Pandemic-delayed location builds and upgrades were able to move forward in 2022. With several new projects currently underway, there is renewed importance in sport tourism consideration during the consultation and design stages.

- Sport tourism now has a voice at the table for City facility development to provide sport tournament input for upgrades and new builds. Staff provided input to the Woodman Park pool project, the Southwest Community Centre and Park and was also involved in a visioning session for collaborative future facility needs with the County of Brant.

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- The City is moving ahead with the long-delayed development of a community centre and large community park on Shellard Lane. The Southwest Community Centre is being constructed as a joint project with the Grand Erie District School Board as the lead on the project and the Brantford Public Library as a third partner. The project will include a gymnasium and other community space and is on track to be finished by mid-2025. The adjacent community park is in the design stage, also with a 2025 completion timeline. In September 2022, Council directed that the park include a cricket pitch and a rectangular multi-sport field suitable for soccer or football. Concepts prepared to date also include purpose-built pickleball courts.
 - Coordination of facility and field assessment data gathered to accurately gauge the sport inventory based on technical standards by sport for provincial, national and international standards.
 - Tourism Division remains responsible for the Brantford & Area Sports Hall of Recognition, including maintenance and exhibits, and continues in-person customer service adjacent to the space through the Tourism Information desk at the Wayne Gretzky Sports Centre.

9.2 2023 Ontario 55+ Summer Games

Having postponed the 2021 and 2022 Ontario 55+ Winter Games due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport recognized the excellence of the City of Brantford and County of Brant as co-hosts to large-scale sporting events, and offered the two communities the opportunity to host the Ontario 55+ Summer Games in August 2023. The Summer Games have a larger number of potential athletes and sport competitions, with the opportunity to host all competitions within the two municipalities and showcase our outdoor amenities during the summer months.

The Ontario 55+ Games (the Games) is supported by a hosting grant through the Province of Ontario and its Games Ontario unit.

Council approved switching the hosting opportunity to a summer Games in 2022 via report #[2022-133](#)⁵ as well as incorporating the following City support toward the Games:

- \$25,000 from the Economic Development and Tourism Marketing Reserve to support the Games.
- Fees related to hosting Games competitions, registration, special events and other sanctioned events in City-owned facilities be held to 2022 rates subject to the following reductions:
 - Community Programs and Social Development facilities at 50% reduction.
 - Parks and Facilities Department at 50% reduction.
 - Golf Operations at no reduction (existing senior's rate).
 - Fees related to hosting related events in the Sanderson Centre for the Performing Arts lobby were waived in favour of recovering the cost of staff time.
- Transit services provided by the municipality in the amount of up to \$50,000 for transport of participants from accommodation locations to various events hosted including sport competitions and other sanctioned events.

The proposal, which included an updated budget and business plan, was accepted by Games Ontario. A recruitment process was conducted to hire a new Games Coordinator as the previously hired Games Coordinator for the 2021 Winter Games had moved on to another position. The new Games Coordinator was hired and began on September 6, 2022.

On October 7, 2022, the Honourable Neil Lumsden, Ontario Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, formally awarded the 2023 Ontario 55+ Summer Games to Brantford and the County of Brant during an announcement held with local dignitaries, media and the Games Organizing Committee at the Brantford and Area Sports Hall of Recognition.

Figure 4 Games Organizing Committee for the 2023 Ontario 55+ Summer Games

⁵ Report 2022-133: 2023 Ontario 55+ Summer Games Co-Hosting Opportunity. <https://pub-brantford.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=10210>



Brantford looks forward to co-hosting the participants in the summer of 2023 and showcasing the Tournament Capital of Ontario.

9.3 Brantford and Area Sports Hall of Recognition

The Tourism Division continued the administration and marketing of the Brantford and Area Sports Hall of Recognition (Sports Hall) in 2022 with the day-to-day operations overseen by the Sport Tourism Coordinator.

Located in the Wayne Gretzky Sports Centre, the Sports Hall is a 3,000 square foot space which proudly recognizes hometown heroes through features such as Inductee artefact and memorabilia displays, an Honour Wall of Recognition, Interactive Inductee touch screen zone, Trivia Game, Broadcast Booth, Mini Theatre and Wayne Gretzky tribute area.

The realignment of the Sports Hall into the Tourism Division portfolio in 2020, along with relocation of Visitor Services in December 2021, increased the opportunities for motor coach tours and on-site customer service for tournament participants, the Sports Hall Executive Committee, Sports Hall inductees and visitors interested in learning more about sport excellence in Brantford.

Tourism Division staff continued to incorporate the Sports Hall into their marketing efforts to increase its exposure online as well as through partnerships, events and recognition programs.

9.3.1 Marketing

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- #SportHallHighlight is a monthly social media post that features an inducted member of the Sports Hall. These features share the stories of the people that helped to shape the culture of sport in Brantford and area and generates significant online engagement and positive comments from readers. A total of twelve #SportsHallHighlight posts reached 36,966 people and engaged 3,454 in 2022. (Facebook statistics: Reach (R): the number of people who saw the posts. Engagements (E): the number of people who liked, commented, shared or clicked on the post). Notable posts included:
 - Jimmie Wilkes for Black History Month (R:8,505 /E: 960)
 - Ross and Gaylord Powless for National Indigenous Peoples Day (R: 2,921/E: 178)
 - Bill Morgan (Reach: 7,752/E: 1,012)
 - Ron Finucan in Memorium (R: 4,357/E: 482)
 - Aaron Carpenter (R: 3,113/E: 305)
 - The Sports Hall eNewsletter was launched by City Staff as a quarterly publication to provide direct news and content to the database of Sports Hall Inductees, members and supporters. The publication has been positively received. On average, a MailChimp email marketing campaign in the sports industry has an average open rate of 24.57% and an average click rate of 3.09%. By comparison, the Brantford and Area Sports Hall of Recognition's email newsletter has an average open rate of 69% and an average click rate of 14%.
 - The Sports Hall YouTube Channel features interviews with recent Sports Hall Inductees. Members of the Sports Hall Executive Committee have conducted these interviews over the years after each Induction Ceremony. Since there are many Inductees who were not interviewed prior to the YouTube channel being launched six years ago, a partnership was created with Rogers TV Brantford to help catch up on those not yet completed. These interviews capture the stories of the Inductees as a lasting legacy.

The interviews are now part of the monthly social media schedule. A recently uploaded interview conducted with the late Walter Gretzky at his home in 2017 was featured on Mr. Gretzky's birthday on October 8, 2022. The video interview had a 4,837 reach and 291 engagement on Facebook. It has since been viewed 88 times on the YouTube channel.

- Updated photography was completed for all current artefacts on display in the Sports Hall. These new images will provide a consistent look for the member profile pages on the Sports Hall website and touchscreen Inductee Interactive Zone located within the Sports Hall.

Figure 5 Victory Cup trophy won by Rick Mannen at the 1987 Hong Kong International Marathon.



Figure 6 Shoes worn by Terry Summerhays throughout his



boxing career.

Figure 7 Wrestling mask worn by Joe Kayorie during his wrestling career as "The Masked Marvel".



9.3.2 Partnerships

- The Sports Hall was successful in receiving a Young Canada Works grant to hire a summer student. The Sports Hall Assistant wrote content for the eNewsletter and social posts, input updates to the database and collections software, wrote a script for welcoming group tour and motor coach visitors and assisted with the coordination of new photography of artefacts on display.
- The Sports Hall is an active member of the Brant Museum & Galleries Association (BMGA). The BMGA seeks to entertain, engage, educate and inspire people through the collective power of arts, culture and heritage to tell the stories of Brantford and area. The Sports Hall was included in two joint marketing projects with the BMGA. The Discover Culture in Brantford brochure features all the BMGA members and is available at all participating sites as well at the Tourism Information Desk located in the Wayne Gretzky Sports Centre. The May is Museum Month Brant Museum Passport was sold for \$5 and upon visiting the site, passport holders could get their passport stamped to gain admission to the site. Each destination is featured on a different page of the passport with a unique site-specific question per location. Visitors were encouraged to look for clues at each location to answer the question. Approximately 100 passports were sold. The passport was fully-funded by a grant received by Brant Historical Society from the Hamilton Halton Brant Regional Tourism Association (RTO3) and revenue from the sales of this passport will be put towards a future BMGA project in 2023. **See Appendix B – BMGA Discover Culture in Brantford brochure.**
- The Sports Hall joined the Canadian Association for Sports Heritage (CASH) as a member in 2022. This is a national association of institutions, organizations and individuals dedicated to the preservation of Canada's rich sports heritage. The association is committed to assisting members in achieving and maintaining excellence in the

recognition, preservation and presentation of sports heritage.

9.3.3 Events and Recognition

- The 2022 Brantford and Area Sports Hall of Recognition Induction Ceremony returned to an in-person event in June 2022 after the one year hiatus, and virtual Induction Ceremony of 2021 due to the pandemic. Over 150 people attended the event that honoured the following inductees and honourees:
 - Rod Davidson: Honouree - Builder, Hockey.
 - Paul Wilson: Honouree - Builder, Special Olympics.
 - Fred Hunt: Inductee - Builder, Hockey (posthumous).
 - David Hearn: Inductee - Athlete, Golf.
- The Sports Hall lapel pins were a new project introduced by staff in 2022 as way to further recognize and identify Sports Hall Inductees. These custom designed pewter pieces depicting the Sports Hall logo were created to present to past and future Inductees. The lapel pins are affixed to a branded card that indicates the name of the Inductee, the year they were inducted and the sport for which they were recognized.

Figure 8 Pewter lapel pin and card for Brantford and Area Sports Hall of Recognition Inductees.



10.0 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications as a result of this report.

11.0 Climate and Environmental Implications

There are no direct climate and environmental implication as a result of the recommendations in this report.

12.0 Conclusion

The Sport Tourism Strategy provides strategic directions for the City of Brantford to pursue in order to continue to grow this market, balance the needs of tournament play with those of local user groups, and strengthen the economic and social benefits that sport tourism provides to the community. Economic Development, Tourism & Culture Initiatives staff will continue to focus on the priorities outlined in the Sport Tourism Strategy to position Brantford as a positive and proactive location for tournament play and other tourism sporting events.



Sara Munroe, MMSt, BAH, Dipl. MM
Director of Economic Development, Tourism & Cultural Initiatives

Prepared By:

Ela Stypa Jones, Sport Tourism Coordinator
Kara Davey, MBA, Manager of Tourism, Culture & Sport

Attachments (if applicable)

Appendix A - Strategic Priorities Status Report - Year 3

Appendix B - Discover Brantford in Culture Brochure

In adopting this report, is a by-law or agreement required? If so, it should be referenced in the recommendation section.

By-law required yes no

Agreement(s) or other documents to be signed by Mayor and/or City Clerk yes no

Is the necessary by-law or agreement being sent concurrently to Council?

yes no