



# Staff Report

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## Strategic Initiatives – Special Projects & Strategic Initiatives

**Report To:** COW- Admin, Corp and Finance, SI, Comm. Services  
**Meeting Date:** October 6, 2025  
**Report Number:** SI.25.032  
**Title:** Destination Strategy 2025 – 2026 Work Plan  
**Prepared by:** Tim Hendry, Director of Strategic Initiatives

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### A. Recommendations

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THAT Council receive Staff Report SI.25.032, entitled “Destination Strategy 2025 – 2026 Work Plan”;

AND THAT Council endorses the 2025 – 2026 Destination Strategy workplan in principle as presented;

AND THAT Council directs staff to include \$150,000 from the Town’s share of Municipal Accommodation Tax to implement the Destination Strategy Workplan into the 2026 budget for consideration;

AND THAT Council directs staff to apply for available grant funding opportunities to support the implementation of the Destination Strategy;

AND THAT Council acknowledges that staff will provide an annual report regarding the implementation progress of the Destination Strategy.

### B. Overview

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This report seeks Council endorsement of the 2025 – 2026 Destination Strategy workplan, which is based on the 2025 – 2030 Destination Strategy that was approved by Council in May 2026.

### C. Background

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The [2025 – 2030 Destination Strategy](#) is the Town’s first formal strategy to guide and manage tourism in The Blue Mountains. The strategy was approved by the Committee of the Whole on May 26, 2025, through report [SI.25.015 “Approval of 205 – 2030 Destination Strategy”](#).

The strategy was developed through a collaborative relationship with the Blue Mountain Village Association, serving as the Town's Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) and was informed through direct public and tourism sector stakeholder engagement.

The project work plan included both a public and industry survey assessing the role and perception of tourism, two public open houses and multiple industry roundtable events to engage directly with local tourism businesses and operators, accommodation providers and hospitality sector leaders. Importantly, the development of the Destination Strategy drew from past tourism-focused work for the Town, including the Municipal Accommodation Tax research study and the Beaver Valley Sustainable Tourism Strategy. Through this feedback and engagement, the Destination Strategy provides a robust framework that addresses key tourism-related issues and aims to position the Town to succeed as a leading destination through proactive planning, management and infrastructure investment.

Through the recommended actions, the strategy provided examples of key projects to achieve the expected objectives and outcomes and to enhance the experience of both visitors and residents. This report provides Council with in-depth information regarding the work plan and implementation details for 2025 and 2026.

## **D. Analysis**

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Following the approval of the strategy in May 2025, staff have continued efforts to support the local tourism sector and worked collaboratively with project partners to develop a detailed work plan to guide implementation throughout 2025 and 2026. The proposed work plan is summarized below with the full details available in attachment #1 to this report.

### **2025 Actions**

- A3.1- Establish a Destination Advisory Committee
- A2.3 - Establish a monitoring and evaluation framework
- A1.1 - Revise by-laws to support tourism and agritourism innovation and encourage sector diversification
- B1.1 – Streamline wayfinding and interpretive signage

### **2026 Work Plan**

- A2.1 – Conduct a carrying capacity study
- A1.4 – Establish a workforce housing reserve fund and explore solutions to support attainable housing
- A1.2- Revise Town decision-making processes to ensure that impacts to tourism are considered
- A2.4 – Develop tourism sentiment and experience surveys to engage residents and visitors
- A3.3 - Foster collaboration with indigenous communities
- B2.2 – Ensure consistency and access to visitor information services

- A2.2 – Create dedicated initiatives for tourism opportunities: agritourism, cultural tourism and sports tourism

### **Implementation Details**

As explained in the work plan, not all actions are the sole responsibility of the Town. Many actions will leverage the partnership and resources of the Blue Mountain Village Association (BMVA), which serves as the Town’s Destination Marketing Organization. The Strategic Initiatives department will lead implementation with support from various Town departments, including By-law Enforcement, Planning and Community Services.

In addition, many actions will be supported through the collaborative efforts and expertise of the Destination Advisory Committee, including community groups and external organizations.

Funding to support the Destination Strategy will be allocated through the Town’s Share of Municipal Accommodation Tax. As many of the budget figures referenced in the work plan are estimates and presented in ranges, it’s recommended that Council allocate an overall amount to the implementation of the Destination Strategy. The report recommends allocating \$150,000 to implement the 2025/2026 work plan. Project-specific staff reports with further details will be presented to Council based on the work plan implementation schedule.

In addition, the Town and DMO will actively monitor and apply for available grant opportunities to support implementation. Details regarding the status of grant applications will be shared with Council through the annual progress report.

## **E. Strategic Priorities**

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### **1. Communication and Engagement**

We will enhance communications and engagement between Town Staff, Town residents and stakeholders

### **2. Organizational Excellence**

We will continually seek out ways to improve the internal organization of Town Staff and the management of Town assets.

### **3. Community**

We will protect and enhance the community feel and the character of the Town, while ensuring the responsible use of resources and restoration of nature.

### **4. Quality of Life**

We will foster a high quality of life for full-time and part-time residents of all ages and stages, while welcoming visitors.

## **F. Environmental Impacts**

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The principles of sustainability are embedded within the goals, anticipated outcomes and recommended actions of the strategy. Staff understand and acknowledge the importance and significance of preserving the natural landscape both for the quality of life for residents and future generations and to ensure the best interests of the Town's tourism sector.

The natural environment of the Niagara Escarpment and Georgian Bay is a significant attraction for visitors and residents and forms the essence of their experience here. Through this Strategy, the Town is committed to managing tourism responsibly and sustainability to help ensure the long-term health and viability of the community.

## **G. Financial Impacts**

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The recommendation of this report is for Council to support the allocation of \$150,000 from the Town's share of Municipal Accommodation Tax into the 2026 budget process for consideration. As detailed through the Municipal Accommodation Tax report ([SI.25.030](#)), the use of the Town's share of MAT will be considered through a formal evaluation process completed by the Senior Management Team using the Council approved evaluation criteria.

Given the detailed work undertaken as part of the Strategy Development process, staff recommend that Council preliminarily supports the allocation of the \$150,000 from the Town's share of Municipal Accommodation Tax, with formal approval considered through the follow-up staff report that will be presented in November 2025, with the outcomes of the evaluation process.

## **H. In Consultation With**

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Patti Kendall, Blue Mountain Village Association & Town Destination Marketing Organization

Camilo Montoya-Guevara, Bannikin, External Tourism Consultant

## **I. Public Engagement**

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The topic of this Staff Report has not been the subject of a Public Meeting and/or a Public Information Centre as neither a Public Meeting nor a Public Information Centre are required. However, any comments regarding this report should be submitted to Tim Hendry, Director of Strategic Initiatives [si@thebluemountains.ca](mailto:si@thebluemountains.ca).

## **J. Attached**

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1. 2025 and 2026 Destination Strategy Work Plan

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Hendry  
Director of Strategic Initiatives

For more information, please contact:  
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**Report Approval Details**

Document Title:	SI.25.032 Destination Strategy 2025 - 2026 Workplan.docx
Attachments:	- Attachment 1 - 2025-2026 Destination Strategy Work Plan.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Sep 29, 2025

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

**No Signature - Task assigned to Tim Hendry was completed by workflow administrator Carrie Fairley**

**Tim Hendry - Sep 29, 2025 - 1:40 PM**