



AGENDA

In-person meeting at Hilton Home2 Suites
and online via Zoom
on **Tuesday, November 19, 2024, 2:00 p.m.**
[Click here to join via Zoom](#)



	Page #
1. Welcome and agenda approval <i>Motion: To accept the agenda as presented.</i>	1-2
2. Welcome Linda Fraser, Front of House Manager, Canvas Brewing Co. (new HLOBARA representative)	
3. Declaration of conflict of interest	
4. Approval of meeting minutes <i>Motion: To accept the minutes from the October 15, 2024 and November 4, 2024 meetings as presented.</i>	3-7
5. Financial update – Andrew Buwalda 5.1. YTD and cash flow report 5.2. Audited financials	8-10
6. ED report – Kelly Haywood 6.1. Marketing report review – October 6.2. Tourism Advisory Panel discussion 6.3. Downtown lights and rink update 6.4. 2025/26 funding application intake period 6.4.1. Application form review 6.4.2. Intake presentation and support 6.5. MCI – October Fam Tour 6.6. KPI discussion 6.7. Biannual meeting with Town staff – November 28, 2:30-3:30 p.m. (The HUB Boardroom, 1 Crescent Road, all Board members welcome to attend)	11-14 15-17 18-23
7. Previous business 7.1. Draft procurement policy <i>Motion: To adopt the procurement policy as presented.</i> 7.2. 2024 Charitable Donation <i>Motion: To donate \$30,000 to Huntsville Hospital Foundation as HMATA’s 2024 charity of choice.</i> 7.3. Eclipse Walk With Light - Subcommittee Site Recommendation <i>Motion: To accept the Eclipse subcommittee’s recommended host and location, Sandhill Nursery, and direct staff to begin developing a legal agreement with the proponent.</i>	50-55 56-57 58-59
8. Closed session	
9. Business arising from closed session	



AGENDA

In-person meeting at Hilton Home2 Suites
and online via Zoom
on **Tuesday, November 19, 2024, 2:00 p.m.**
[Click here to join via Zoom](#)



10. Next meetings and adjournment

10.1. Next meetings:

Tuesday, December 10, 2024 at 12:00 p.m., Deerhurst – social only (note new date)

Tuesday, January 14, 2025 at 2:00 p.m., Zoom – 2025/26 application intake

Tuesday, January 21, 2024 at 2:00 p.m., Hilton Home2 Suites – regular meeting

10.2. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the meeting.

IMPORTANT DATES

2024

November 28: Town/HMATA biannual touchpoint

December: HMATA AGM

2025

January: Annual business & marketing planning commences

January 14: Community tourism sponsorships - application review (intakes close January 10)

January 21: Partnership presentations (Festival of the Arts, Chamber of Commerce, BIA)

February 18: MTMA partnership presentation and 2nd community tourism sponsorship application review

February 18: Initial budget discussions

April: HMATA budget approval

May 31: Year-end

May: Town/HMATA biannual touchpoint (launch TPA preliminary discussion)

June: TPA draft

July: Begin strategic planning

September: Final draft TPA to Town staff for General Committee

December: Final TPA due

December: Strategic plan expires



MINUTES

In-person meeting at Hilton Home2
and online via Zoom
October 15, 2024, 2:00 p.m.



Present: In person: Jeff Suddaby, Andrew Buwalda, Steve Carr, Chirag Patel
Via Zoom: Scott Morrison, Chandler Jolliffe

Regrets: none

Staff: In person: Dawn Huddleston
Via Zoom: Kelly Haywood, Torin Suddaby, Rhonda Christenson

Guests: In person: Halley Clover (Chamber), Lauren MacDermid (Town of Huntsville)
Via Zoom: Rachel Hunt (BIA)

1. Welcome and agenda approval

The meeting was called to order at 2:02 p.m.

Motion: *To approve the agenda as presented.*

Moved by: Andrew Buwalda

Seconded by: Steve Carr

CARRIED

2. Steve Campbell resignation and recognition

Chair, Jeff Suddaby, noted that Steve Campbell has resigned from the Downtown BIA Board and is therefore no longer eligible to sit on the HMATA Board. He thanked Steve for his contributions.

3. Welcome Chandler Jolliffe (Cedar Canoe Books), Downtown Huntsville BIA representative

Chair, Jeff Suddaby, welcomed new Board member Chandler Jolliffe as the Downtown BIA representative.

4. Declaration of conflict of interest

Andrew Buwalda declared a conflict for 9. Eclipse subcommittee discussion.

5. Approval of meeting minutes

Motion: *To accept the minutes from the September 10, 2024 meeting as presented.*

Moved by: Steve Carr

Seconded by: Andrew Buwalda

CARRIED

6. Financial update

6.1. Cash flow – Treasurer, Andrew Buwalda, provided an overview of YTD financial statement and forecast.

6.2. Audited financials – Have not yet been received from the auditor. To be presented at the next meeting if complete. In future, Board to discuss using an RFP process for auditors for next fiscal year.

An additional discussion was had regarding Revenue Canada filing, which has been resolved.

7. Winter funding intake

MINUTES

In-person meeting at Hilton Home2
and online via Zoom
October 15, 2024, 2:00 p.m.

7.1. Huntsville Girls Hockey Association annual tournament

Motion: To provide the Huntsville Girls Hockey Association with a \$2,500 community tourism sponsorship for its 2025 tournament.

Moved by: Steve Carr

Seconded by: Chirag Patel

Discussion: Separate from this ask, HMATA should have a protocol related to how/whether to help fund established, profitable tournaments or other recurring events. They do bring people to town, but HMATA's contribution would not necessarily drive additional visitors. Prefer to support new rather than mature events.

CARRIED

ACTION: Staff to draft a protocol for sports tournaments and recurring events for Board consideration.

7.2. Arrowhead Nordic – Ontario Youth Championships

Motion: To provide Arrowhead Nordic Ski Club with a \$12,000 community tourism sponsorship for the 2025 Ontario Youth Championships.

Moved by: Andrew Buwalda

Seconded by: Steve Carr

Discussion: New winter event that has the potential to help attract further winter events.

Funding will also create assets (banners and flags) that promote Huntsville, which will be used in many future events.

CARRIED

7.3. Snowfest

Motion: To allocate \$12,000 for Snowfest activities.

Moved by: Steve Carr

Seconded by: Chirag Patel

Discussion: Value-add for visitors. Like that it is being spread over three weekends. There is a need for rental skates for the rink – Chamber looking into a skate drive.

CARRIED

8. ED report

8.1. September marketing report review

Astrotourism campaign has been well-received, with registration for many of the free events filling up in advance. Marketing stats to come.

8.2. Tourism Advisory Panel

Draft terms of reference were presented, along with suggested panel composition. STRA rep still to be determined. To be motioned at next meeting to allow staff to proceed with building the panel. Terms of reference will also be reviewed by the panel, once established, and will return to Board for approval. Panel members will be welcome to attend Board meetings, or could include an alternate. Consider including member roles and responsibilities in terms of reference.

8.3. Downtown lights (King St and River Mill Park) update



MINUTES

In-person meeting at Hilton Home2
and online via Zoom
October 15, 2024, 2:00 p.m.



Canopy lights will be installed in the King St walkway before the end of October. Installation of singing trees still to come. River Mill Park canopy lights will hopefully be installed this year – engineer’s drawings are complete; per Town staff, awaiting input from Rotary regarding affixing the lights to the bandshell.

8.4. Draft procurement policy

Staff presented updated draft procurement policy. To be motioned at next meeting.

8.5. River Mill Park rink update

To be installed once canopy lights are in place.

8.6. 55+ Winter Games

Site visit went well. Only other applicant is Orillia (who hosted last year). Announcement will be made in November.

8.7. Proposed 2025 meeting schedule

Staff presented a draft meeting schedule for 2025. Dates are primarily the third Tuesday of each month to allow for preparation of financial statements.

8.8. 2024 charitable donation – discussion

Charities need to align with HMATA’s mandate, and could include healthcare, mental health, housing. In the past, staff and the Board have created a shortlist. In future, consider drafting specific criteria and putting out a call for interested and eligible charities. Proposed charity for 2025: Huntsville Hospital Foundation. Could also consider a small donation to another charity, such as Mind-Aid. To be motioned at next meeting.

ACTION: Staff to redraft charitable donation policy and eligibility criteria for future Board discussion.

8.9. Revised funding formula for 2024/25 intake period

Staff presented draft funding formula revised based on Board input. The formula is one tool that the Board can use when evaluating and comparing applicants, but the final decision on funding remains at Board discretion.

ACTION: Staff to add calculation for full MAT generated to formula.

8.10. Document repository – Google Drive

ACTION: Staff to set up the repository and provide access to Board members.

8.11. MCI – Fam Tour

Familiarization tour with about 12 meeting planners happening this weekend (Oct 19-20) in conjunction with Deerhurst Resort. Kelly Haywood will host a lunch for the planners, and will highlight additional information about Huntsville and potential meeting space. Attendees will receive a gift bag.

8.12. KPIs

Staff presented KPIs for measurement of campaigns throughout the year. Board to review for discussion at next meeting. To be motioned at the next meeting. Final version will be shared with Town staff as well.

8.13. December social – proposed date Monday, December 9 at 12:00 p.m. at Deerhurst

9. Eclipse subcommittee

Andrew Buwalda recused himself from discussion.



MINUTES

In-person meeting at Hilton Home2
and online via Zoom
October 15, 2024, 2:00 p.m.



Motion: To accept the Eclipse partnership agreement outline as amended and to approve the budget of \$395,000 to be transferred from reserve.

Moved by: Steve Carr

Seconded by: Chirag Patel

Discussion: Initial two proponents remain. Amended partnership agreement outline discussed. With Steve Campbell's resignation, Steve Carr has been added to the subcommittee.

CARRIED

ACTION: Subcommittee to meet again prior to next regular meeting to discuss next steps and make a recommendation to the Board.

10. Closed session

Motion: To enter closed session at 3:25 p.m.

Moved by: Steve Carr

Seconded by: Andrew Buwalda

CARRIED

Discussion (recorded by Secretary, Steve Carr): Thank you given to the Eclipse subcommittee members for all their work. General discussion in regards to the direction of the MAT Board.

Motion: To exit closed session at 3:45 p.m.

Moved by: Chirag Patel

Seconded by: Andrew Buwalda

CARRIED

11. Business arising from closed session

None

12. Next meetings and adjournment

12.1. Next meetings:

Tuesday, November 19, 2024 at 2:00 p.m., Hilton Home2 Suites – regular meeting

Monday, December 9, 2024 at 12:00 p.m. at Deerhurst – social only

Tuesday, January 14, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. via Zoom – 2025/26 application intake

Tuesday, January 21, 2024 at 2:00 p.m., Hilton Home2 Suites – regular meeting

12.2. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 3:45 p.m.

Moved by: Chirag Patel

Seconded by: Andrew Buwalda

CARRIED



MINUTES

Special meeting in-person at 3 Guys and a Stove
and online via Zoom



November 4, 2024, 2:00 p.m.

Present: In-person: Jeff Suddaby, Steve Carr, Chandler Jolliffe; via Zoom: Chirag Patel, Scott Morrison
Regrets: Andrew Buwalda
Staff: In-person: Torin Suddaby; via Zoom: Kelly Haywood, Dawn Huddlestone
Guests: none

1. Welcome and agenda approval

The meeting was called to order at 2 p.m.

Motion: To approve the agenda as presented.

Moved by: Scott Morrison

Seconded by: Chirag Patel

CARRIED

2. Eclipse subcommittee presentation

Steve Carr provided an overview of final responses from the two proponents and the subcommittee's recommended host for the project.

Discussion included the budget, operations considerations, and value-adds offered by both parties.

Board members were asked to bring additional questions, if any, to the next regular board meeting where a decision on the Eclipse host will be made.

3. Next meeting and adjournment

3.1. Next meeting:

Tuesday, November 19, 2024 at 2:00 p.m., Hilton Home2

3.2. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 2:20 p.m.

Moved by: Steve Carr

Seconded by: Scott Morrison

CARRIED



FORECAST - HUNTSVILLE MUNICIPAL ACCOMMODATION TAX ASSOCIATION

Actual to October 31, 2024

REVENUE

	June Actual	July Actual	August Actual	September Actual	October Actual	November Forecast	December Forecast	January Forecast	February Forecast	March Forecast	April Forecast	May Forecast	Total	Budget	Act/Fcst 23/24
Projected MAT for 2024/2025		-	157,878		-	300,000			270,000			167,000	894,878	900,000	1,078,104
Grants & Funding	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short Term Investment Interest	4,220	3,987	3,916	3,963	4,033	4,000	4,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	43,119	35,000	30,028
Projected Reserve - Strategic Initiatives (10% of Projected M	-	-	(15,787.76)			(30,000)			(27,000)			(16,700)	(89,488)	(90,000)	(107,810)
TOTAL REVENUE	4,220	3,987	146,006	3,963	4,033	274,000	4,000	3,000	246,000	3,000	3,000	153,300	848,509	845,000	1,000,322

OVERHEAD EXPENSES

Operating:

Bank Fees	-	-	-	-	-	6	8	8	8	8	8	8	56	100	39
Consultants (Strat, Conflict of Interest & Governance)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Insurance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,400	-	-	-	-	2,400	2,400	1,363
Professional Development & Conferences	-	-	-	-	-	1,250	742	1,250	4,250	1,250	2,250	1,250	12,242	15,000	10,783
Overhead (Office Supplies, Advertising, Telephone, Dues	196	1,708	1,032	1,667	495	1,216	1,216	1,216	1,216	1,216	1,216	1,216	13,606	14,586	11,248
Professional Fees - Accounting & Legal	360	360	360	630	383	650	650	650	650	650	650	13,143	19,136	20,000	30,598
Directors & Executive Meetings	-	-	-	350	10	200	650	200	200	200	200	200	2,210	2,400	2,126
Payroll- Wages & Benefits	17,111	15,912	16,743	17,199	19,859	26,622	17,250	17,250	19,200	19,200	19,200	19,200	224,746	225,000	64,758
Chamber Admin (July-Dec)													-	-	28,250
Subtotal Operating Expenses	17,667	17,981	18,135	19,846	20,747	29,943	20,516	22,974	25,524	22,524	23,524	35,017	274,396	279,486	149,166

Marketing:

Destination Awareness	4,227	7,751	8,298	26,652	5,884	7,531	30,000	7,531	7,531	7,531	7,531	7,533	128,000	118,000	
Meetings, Conventions, Associations		1,398	3,478	-	610	10,000	-	10,000	10,000	20,000	10,000	34,514	100,000	100,000	
Market Research New Initiatives		553	395	3,189	415	1,469	1,469	1,469	40,000	1,469	1,469	1,469	53,366	90,000	
Subtotal Marketing Expenses	4,227	9,702	12,171	29,842	6,909	19,000	31,469	19,000	57,531	29,000	19,000	43,516	281,367	308,000	93,185

Product Development Expenses

Downtown Lights Operating	3,241	290			251	500	1,893	1,893	1,893	1,893			11,852	-	
Downtown Lights Insurance				1,648		13,096	(1,648)						13,097	-	
Subtotal Product Development Expenses	3,241	290	-	1,648	251	13,596	245	1,893	1,893	1,893	-	-	24,948	-	-

Total Overhead Expense	25,135	27,972	30,306	51,336	27,907	62,540	52,229	43,866	84,947	53,416	42,524	78,533	580,711	587,486	242,351
Net Available for Disbursement	(20,915)	(23,985)	115,700	(47,373)	(23,874)	211,460	(48,229)	(40,866)	161,053	(50,416)	(39,524)	74,767	267,798	257,514	757,971

	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	Total	Budget	Act/Fcst 23/24
FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR DISBURSEMENT															
<u>Annual Partnerships</u>															
Chamber (Maple, Campfire, Tourism Services)			50,000										50,000	50,000	18,000
BIA Annual Partnership				-	32,000			-					32,000	32,000	50,000
HFA Annual Partnership	45,000												45,000	45,000	-
HLOB - Rink Operations							20,000						20,000		50,000
HFA Snowfest/Snow Village Activities													-	20,000	-
Subtotal Annual Partnerships	45,000	-	50,000	-	32,000	-	20,000	-	-	-	-	-	147,000	147,000	118,000
<u>Community Tourism Sponsorships</u>															
Knights of Columbus-2025 Tournament										1,500			1,500		
Huntsville and Area Historical Society - Walking App					2,500								2,500		
Muskoka Pride		2,000											2,000		
Rotary Dockfest		1,500											1,500		
All Mountain Productions		3,500											3,500		
Trisport Athletics - Ironman	20,000												20,000		
Gripped & Ripped - Disc Golf Championships				10,000									10,000		
Muskoka Hornets - New Batting Cages (2of2)	3,250			-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,250		
Astronomy Muskoka Collective					10,000								10,000		
Girls Hockey								2,500					2,500		
Arrowhead - Nordic Ski								12,000					12,000		
Snowfest								12,000					12,000		
Avail for Disbursement - New Product Development													-	80,514	144,150
Subtotal Community Tourism Sponsorships	23,250	7,000	-	10,000	12,500	-	-	26,500	-	1,500	-	-	80,750	80,514	144,150
<u>Charities & Not for Profits</u>															
Local Charity							30,000						30,000	30,000	55,000
Subtotal Charities & Not for Profits	-	-	-	-	-	-	30,000	-	-	-	-	-	30,000	30,000	55,000
Total Disbursements	68,250	7,000	50,000	10,000	44,500	-	50,000	26,500	-	1,500	-	-	257,750	257,514	317,150
Total Overhead Expenses + Disbursement Funds	93,385	34,972	80,306	61,336	72,407	62,540	102,229	70,366	84,947	54,916	42,524	78,533	838,461	845,000	559,501
Net Revenue & Overhead+ Disbursement	(89,165)	(30,985)	65,700	(57,373)	(68,374)	211,460	(98,229)	(67,366)	161,053	(51,916)	(39,524)	74,767	10,048	-	440,821
+Infusion Strat Rsrve / (XFR to Strat Rsrve)	89,165	30,985	(65,700)	57,373	68,374	(211,460)	98,229	67,366	(161,053)	51,916	39,524	(74,767)	(10,048)	-	(440,821)
2023/2024 OPERATING BUDGET SURPLUS/DEFICIT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Cash Flow															
Surplus Cash	1,488,221	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,488,221		
10% of 2024_25 MAT to Strategic Initiatives	-	-	15,788	-	-	30,000	-	-	27,000	-	-	16,700	89,488		
Projected Reserve - Payroll	-	-	-	-	-	-	(150,000)	-	-	-	-	-	(150,000)		
Surplus Cash Infusion to balance CY Operating Bdgt	(89,165)	(30,985)	65,700	(57,373)	(68,374)	211,460	(98,229)	(67,366)	161,053	(51,916)	(39,524)	74,767	10,048		
(Less) In-town DT installation (King St.) 2024/25	-	-	-	-	(7,615)	(45,985)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(53,600)		
(Less) In-town DT installation (River Mill) 2024/25	-	-	-	-	(550)	(41,700)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(42,250)		
(Less) Chamber ice rink chiller 2024/25	-	-	(54,240)	-	(58,760)	(2,446)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(115,446)		
(Less) Eclipse offsite partner install & procurement costs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(395,000)	(395,000)		
Subtotal Surplus Cash	1,399,057	(30,985)	27,248	(57,373)	(135,300)	151,329	(248,229)	(67,366)	188,053	(51,916)	(39,524)	(303,533)	831,460	-	-

Funds Available for Disbursement	Actual	Budget	Available
Annual Partnerships	147,000	147,000	-
Community Tourism Sponsorships	80,750	80,514	(236)
Charities & Not for Profits	-	30,000	30,000
TOTAL	227,750	257,514	29,764

Huntsville Municipal Accommodation Tax Association

Statement of Cash Flows

June - October, 2024

	TOTAL
OPERATING ACTIVITIES	
Net Income	-275,087.03
Adjustments to reconcile Net Income to Net Cash provided by operations:	
Accommodation Tax Receivable	140,282.50
Accounts Payable	22,344.27
Accrued Expenses	-550.00
Direct Deposit Payable	-5,526.32
GST/HST Payable	-3,903.21
Payroll Liabilities	-14,373.45
Payroll Liabilities:Federal Taxes	9,870.79
Payroll Liabilities:Vacation Pay	2,953.58
Total Adjustments to reconcile Net Income to Net Cash provided by operations:	151,098.16
Net cash provided by operating activities	\$ -123,988.87
INVESTING ACTIVITIES	
Asset - Computers & Equipment:Camera	-2,405.97
Furniture and Equipment:King Street 2024	-7,615.40
Furniture and Equipment:Rivermill 2024	-550.00
Net cash provided by investing activities	\$ -10,571.37
NET CASH INCREASE FOR PERIOD	\$ -134,560.24
Cash at beginning of period	1,344,551.38
CASH AT END OF PERIOD	\$1,209,991.14

November 2024 Marketing & Product Development Report (Since October 10, 2024)

Product Development:

1. Astronomy
 - Campaign wraps November 17
 - Attendee & MTMA marketing campaign statistics to follow at next board meeting
2. Downtown Lights
 - King St. Walkway canopy has been installed
 - Will be operational week of November 18
 - Metal “Singing Tree” installation will be installed spring 2025 - artist and design have now been selected
3. River Mill Skating Rink
 - Electrical work has begun – will be finished December 6
 - Rink mural is complete
 - Rink will be built with refrigeration unit December 6-8 (weather dependent)
 - Lights to be hung prior to the end of November – just before rink installation



Website:

- Website migration has begun - launch prior to end of 2024

Blogs:

1. Girlfriends' Getaway Weekend
<https://huntsvilleadventures.com/2024-girlfriends-getaway-weekend/>
2. Oktoberfest Muskoka
<https://huntsvilleadventures.com/oktoberfest-muskoka-at-canvas-brewing-co/>
3. Holiday Season Arrives in Huntsville
<https://huntsvilleadventures.com/the-holiday-season-arrives-in-huntsville/>

Ads:

In-market:

1. Late Fall Hiking
2. Holiday Season is Coming to Huntsville

Completed + Stats:

1. 2024 Fall Festival Engagement Ad (META)

- Impressions: 254,557
- Engagements: 122,255
- Link Clicks: 3,493
- Cost per Engagement: \$0.00409

Explore Huntsville
Sponsored · 🌐

Embrace the magic of fall at the Sandhill Nursery Fall Festival from Sept. 14 – Oct 27.



huntsvilleadventures.com
2024 Sandhill Nursery Fall Festival | Huntsvill... [Learn more](#)

2. HFA Fall 2024 Engagement Ad (META)

- Impressions: 148,372
- Engagements: 73,780
- Link Clicks: 640
- Cost per Engagement: \$0.00678

Explore Huntsville
Sponsored · 🌐

A season of incredible live music awaits in Huntsville, Muskoka.



huntsvilleadventures.com
Huntsville Festival of the Arts Autumn Shows I... [Learn more](#)

3. Family Farm Fun Engagement Ad (META)

- Impressions: 75,942
- Engagements: 5,953
- Link Clicks: 3,383
- Cost per Engagement: \$0.0714

 **Explore Huntsville**
Sponsored ·  

From petting farm animals to scenic wagon rides, Huntsville offers a variety of opportunities for fall family fun in Muskoka.



huntsvilleadventures.com
Family Farm Fun | Huntsville, Muskoka [Learn more](#)

4. Oktoberfest Muskoka Engagement Ad (META)

- Impressions: 11,724
- Engagements: 415
- Link Clicks: 329
- Cost per Engagement: \$0.24

 **Explore Huntsville**
Sponsored ·  

Raise your steins and say "Prost!" Oktoberfest Muskoka is back in Huntsville October 25!



huntsvilleadventures.com
Oktoberfest Muskoka at Canvas Brewing Co. I... [Learn more](#)

5. Stargazing Engagement Ad (META)

- Impressions: 516,401
- Engagements: 15,114
- Link Clicks: 11,523
- Cost per Engagement: \$0.09



6. Girlfriends' Getaway Weekend Engagement Ad (META)

- Impressions: 123,003
- Engagements: 71,467
- Link Clicks: 807
- Cost per Engagement: \$0.00699



(Current META average - November 2024: \$0.091)

Upcoming:

1. Winter



Proposed Tourism Advisory Panel & Terms of Reference

October 2024



This document serves as a foundational guideline for the functioning of the HMATA Tourism Advisory Panel and is designed to foster collaboration and enhance tourism in Huntsville.

1. Introduction

The Tourism Advisory Panel (TAP) is established to provide guidance and strategic advice to enhance and promote tourism in Huntsville. This document outlines the purpose, objectives, structure, roles, and responsibilities of the TAP.

2. Purpose

The primary purpose of the TAP is to:

- Advise the HMATA Board and staff on tourism policies and initiatives.
- Foster collaboration among stakeholders in the tourism sector.
- Identify opportunities for sustainable tourism development.
- Enhance the community's tourism offerings to benefit the local economy and residents.

3. Objectives

The specific objectives of the TAP include:

- To assess and address tourism-related challenges and opportunities within the community.
- To promote sustainable tourism practices that respect local culture and the environment.
- To facilitate communication and partnerships among diverse sectors, including hospitality, transportation, attractions, and local businesses.
- To support marketing efforts that promote Huntsville as a tourism destination.

4. Composition

The TAB will be comprised of representatives from various sectors, including but not limited to:

- Local government representatives
- Tourism operators and businesses
- Cultural and heritage organizations
- Environmental groups
- Transportation providers
- Community members with expertise in tourism and hospitality

The HMATA Board will aim for a diverse representation to ensure varied perspectives and expertise.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1. Member

Each TAP member will:



Proposed Tourism Advisory Panel & Terms of Reference

October 2024



- Attend meetings regularly and participate actively in discussions.
- Provide insights and feedback based on their sector's perspective.
- Collaborate on projects and initiatives related to tourism.
- Serve as a liaison between the TAP and their respective sector.

5.2. Chairperson

The TAP Chair will:

- Facilitate meetings and set the agenda.
- Ensure that all members have the opportunity to contribute.
- Act as the spokesperson for the TAP.

5.3. Secretary

The TAP Secretary will:

- Organize meetings and prepare agendas and minutes.
- Manage communications and logistics for the TAP.
- Maintain records of decisions and actions taken by the panel.

6. Meetings

- The TAP will meet quarterly at a designated location.
- Special meetings may be called as necessary.
- A quorum for decision-making shall be defined as 51% of members.

7. Decision-Making

- Decisions regarding recommendations to the board will be made by consensus where possible. If a consensus cannot be reached, decisions will be made by majority vote.
- The TAP will strive for transparency in its processes and decision-making.

8. Reporting

The TAP will report to the HMATA Board on its activities, recommendations, and findings. Reports will be submitted quarterly, or as required.

9. Review

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually to ensure they remain relevant and effective in meeting the needs of the community and the tourism sector.

10. Adoption

These Terms of Reference were adopted by the Tourism Advisory Panel on [date].

Proposed Sectors and Panel Members

Representative Sectors

- Local business organizations (Chamber, BIA)
- Arts, culture & heritage
- Sport & recreation
- Local service clubs (Rotary, Kiwanis, etc.)
- Industry marketing professionals
- Attractions
- Short-term rental accommodations

Tourism Advisory Panel

- Jacqueline Surette, Town of Huntsville incl. Algonquin Theatre and MHP (*arts/culture/heritage*)
- Dan Watson, HfA (*arts/culture, live music, performing arts, events*)
- John Cowan, Arrowhead Nordic (*sport/recreation, youth engagement*)
- Rob Saunders, Rotary (*arts/culture, service clubs*)
- Marcie Juliao, Deerhurst, Chamber (*industry marketing professional*)
- Brent Ellerson, Algonquin Outfitters, BIA (*industry marketing professional, sport/recreation*)
- Lindsay Buttus, That Little Place, BIA (*local restaurant*)
- Noreen Mitchell, Huntsville Art Society (*arts/culture*)
- Denise Powers, retired (*industry marketing professional, arts/culture*)
- Val Hamilton, MTMA (*industry marketing professional*)



HMATA Funding Application

This document is for reference only. Please complete the form at huntsvillemat.com. Emailed submissions will not be considered.

Welcome! We are excited to hear about your upcoming tourism event or project.

Before you complete the application, please read the notes below thoroughly.

Where funding comes from

We receive a portion of the Municipal Accommodation Tax collected by the Town of Huntsville from local accommodators (resorts, hotels, motels, and short-term rental accommodations).

What we fund

As Huntsville's designated Destination Marketing and Management Organization (DMMO), we are tasked with increasing awareness of Huntsville as a tourism and visitor destination (in particular during shoulder seasons and the less-busy winter months), as well as developing or supporting initiatives that contribute to the success of Huntsville's tourism economy. This is broken down into four areas:

- Marketing via our public-facing tourism entity, Explore Huntsville
- Tourism product development (such as the Eclipse Walk With Light attraction)
- Collaboration with our tourism partners (Muskoka Tourism, the Huntsville Lake of Bays Chamber of Commerce, Huntsville Festival of the Arts, and the Downtown Huntsville BIA)
- Community tourism sponsorships (this is where you come in!)

How much funding is available for community tourism sponsorships?

Our funding cap for this category is \$20,000 per event/project, however most approved applications will receive much less than this amount. When we are assessing applications, we consider many factors, including the timing of the event (shoulder season/winter and weekday events are preferred), the number of out-of-town visitors the event/project will attract and the potential for overnight stays, the profile of the event (local, provincial, national, or



international), its environmental impact, and the number of applications received in a given intake period. Given our other obligations, the total amount available in this category is typically less than \$100,000 per year for ALL applications.

Note: Applicants are expected to invest at least 20% of the funds required in their own project (this may include monetary or in-kind donations) — HMATA will not fund a community project or event in its entirety.

When can my organization apply?

HMATA has one application intake period annually. Applications will not be reviewed until after the intake period has closed. After review, applications for events or projects that meet HMATA’s criteria for funding may be invited to present to HMATA’s Board.

For HMATA’s 2025-26 fiscal year (June 1, 2025 – May 31, 2026), the intake period will be December 1, 2024 - January 10, 2025.

Disclaimer

The Huntsville Municipal Accommodation Tax Association cannot guarantee funding to all applicants, nor can it ensure that the total amount requested by successful applicants will be granted. Past funding does not guarantee program funding. There is no appeal process for unsuccessful applicants.

About your organization

Your organization’s operating name:

Your organization’s legal name (if different from operating name):

Organization address:

Organization website:

Main contact name, phone number, email:

What is your role with the organization? (staff, volunteer, owner, or I am requesting funds for myself)

How is your organization classified? (charity, non-profit, for-profit, unregistered)



About your event/project

Event/project name:

Event/project category:

- New event hosting
- Returning event hosting
- Event bid submission
- Marketing
- New tourism product development
- Existing tourism product enhancement
- Enhancement of visitor experiences

Event/project description:

Event/project start date:

Event/project end date:

Event/project location:

What permits and/or approvals are necessary for this project? Please provide the status of each.

Assessment and performance measures

What are the goals and objectives of your event/project? (Could include: ticket sales, number of visitors, room nights, website traffic, newsletter subscriptions, etc.)

How does your event/project support the [strategic mission and vision](#) of the Huntsville Municipal Accommodation Tax Association?

Provide a description of how your proposed event/project...

...is collaborative

...is creative



...is progressive

...is inclusive

...focuses on our natural environment

Estimated number of event attendees from outside Muskoka:

Estimated number of local (Muskoka) event attendees:

What impact will this event/project have on the Huntsville community? (Could include awareness, economic growth, job creation, innovation, enhancement of visitor experience, etc.)

How will this project help develop or promote tourism in Huntsville?

How will you measure the success of your event/project?

What is your capacity to develop and deliver this event/project?

Outline your contingency/cancellation plan. (**Note:** Should there be substantial deviation from the event/project as outlined in this application, you may be required to return all or part of any funding received from HMATA.)

Economic benefits

How will funding from the Huntsville Municipal Accommodation Tax Association result in overnight stays in Huntsville at accommodations which collect the MAT?

Estimated number of overnight stays (number of rooms per night):

How will you measure actual overnight stays for your event/project?

What other economic spillover will your event/project have?

Who are your partner organizations for this event/project? (Could include hotels, restaurants, tourism operators, etc.)

Optional for events: Include a [Tourism Regional Economic Impact Model \(TREIM\)](#) report to accompany your submission.



Communications/marketing plan

How will you attract out-of-town participants/visitors to your event?

What marketing/promotional tactics will you use?

When and how will you share your event/project stories with HMATA?

Event/project budget and funding

Please upload your event/project budget.

What other sources of funding or in-kind donations have you secured for your event/project? (Include federal, provincial, and regional/municipal grants or subsidies; private sponsorships or donations; and in-kind donations.)

What is your organization's financial contribution to this event/project?

What amount are you requesting from HMATA?

Please specify which elements of your event/project HMATA funds would be used for.

Note: Should HMATA funding be approved, you will be required to:

- Provide proof of commercial general liability insurance of \$5M+ that names HMATA as an insured party.
- Recognize HMATA's support in media releases and with logo visibility at the event and on your website.

Certification

I am authorized to sign on behalf of this organization. I certify that the information contained in this application and all supporting documentation is accurate and complete. I agree to provide any additional information that may be reasonably required for the purposes of assessing this application and administering funding. I also agree to submit a final report (guidelines will be



provided to successful applicants) upon completion of this event/project. I acknowledge that if any of this information is misrepresented, this application shall be deemed to be withdrawn.

Signature of authorized representative:

Date:

Executive Summary: November, 2024

Strategic Focus Areas

1. Destination Awareness

- Digital marketing campaign targeting four-season appeal
- Content creation: 25 blog posts, 5 videos, 5 photo locations
- Website rebranding to explorehuntsville.ca
- Target of 250 email database opt-ins
- Media engagement: 10 releases, 5 influencer partnerships
- Event marketing: 20 events marketed, 3 sponsored events

2. Meetings, Conventions & Incentive (MCI) Marketing

- Market penetration through 5 trade shows and 2 conventions
- Launch of Huntsville Explorer Card program
- Development of comprehensive venue inventory
- Creation of 360° virtual reality experiences
- "Stay an Extra Night" campaign targeting 250 packages
- Engagement of 10 participating accommodations

3. Partnership Development

- Community Tourism Sponsorship Program
- Target of 5 new strategic partnerships
- Collaboration with Chamber of Commerce, BIA, and Festival of the Arts
- Integration with Muskoka Tourism seasonal campaigns

4. Product Development

- Enhancement of downtown lighting attractions
- River Mill Park Skating Rink season extension
- Group of Seven Outdoor Gallery expansion
- Implementation of visitor satisfaction surveys

5. Governance & Oversight

- Development of 2026-28 Strategic Plan
- Biannual meetings with Town staff
- Annual Council presentation
- Regular stakeholder engagement
- Formation of local advisory panel

Key Success Metrics

- Website traffic and engagement benchmarks
- Customer satisfaction scores
- Partnership program participation
- Event attendance and economic impact
- MCI market penetration
- Digital marketing performance (CTR, engagement)
- Tourism business participation (250 listed businesses)

This plan emphasizes sustainable tourism growth through digital innovation, stakeholder collaboration, and product development, positioning Huntsville as a premier four-season destination for both leisure and business travelers.

Huntsville
MUSKOKA • CANADA

**2024/2025
KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

explorehuntsville.ca



DESTINATION AWARENESS

Destination Awareness is a crucial aspect of our tourism business plan, as it directly influences the success of our marketing efforts and the overall attractiveness of the destination we promote.

Our strategy for destination awareness involves leveraging our partnership with Muskoka Tourism to enhance a multi-channel approach that combines traditional marketing tactics with innovative digital strategies to reach and engage our target audience effectively.

Through compelling storytelling, captivating visuals, and immersive experiences, we aim to raise awareness about the unique cultural heritage, natural beauty, and diverse attractions of Huntsville, positioning us as a must-visit destination for travellers seeking authentic and memorable experiences.

By fostering greater awareness and understanding of Huntsville, we seek to inspire curiosity, evoke emotions, and ultimately drive visitation, contributing to the sustainable growth and development of the tourism industry in our region.

MEETINGS, CONVENTIONS + INCENTIVE MARKETING

At the heart of our destination development plan lies a commitment to diversifying our offerings and capturing a broader spectrum of the travel market. To this end, we are dedicated to developing a comprehensive strategy aimed at cultivating a robust presence in the meetings, conventions, and incentive (MCI) travel sector.

This strategic focus area represents a significant opportunity for growth and revenue generation, as MCI travellers often seek destination options that offer both business facilities and unique leisure experiences.

PARTNERSHIPS

Partners play a key role in this strategy. Through the Community Tourism Sponsorship Program, we support stakeholder efforts to improve the quality, diversity, and authenticity of visitor experiences in Huntsville. This involves introducing new tourism products and services, implementing destination branding and marketing campaigns, and fostering cultural and environmental stewardship to create memorable and sustainable tourism experiences for visitors.

We will engage with local stakeholders, including residents, businesses, government agencies, and Indigenous communities, to ensure their active participation and support in Huntsville's development efforts. This involves consultation, collaboration, and capacity-building initiatives to foster a sense of ownership and pride in Huntsville.

This also includes the development and continuation of partnerships with the Huntsville/Lake of Bays Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Huntsville BIA, and the Huntsville Festival of the Arts.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Developing a robust strategy for tourism attraction product development entails a meticulous approach aimed at enhancing visitor experiences, diversifying offerings, and maximizing Huntsville's appeal. Central to this strategy is a thorough analysis of current attractions, market trends, and visitor preferences to identify areas for improvement and innovation.

By engaging stakeholders, including local communities, businesses, and tourism organizations, in the planning process, the strategy will ensure alignment with destination goals and values.

Leveraging insights gained from market research, the strategy will prioritize the creation and enhancement of attractions that resonate with target audiences, emphasizing authenticity, sustainability, and cultural enrichment.

Through strategic partnerships, investment in infrastructure, and incorporation of technology where appropriate, the strategy will aim to elevate existing attractions and introduce new experiences that captivate visitors and foster repeat visitation.

Continual evaluation and adaptation based on visitor feedback and performance metrics will enable Huntsville to stay agile and competitive in our dynamic tourism landscape, ultimately driving growth and prosperity for Huntsville and its stakeholders.



DESTINATION AWARENESS



DIGITAL MARKETING + SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

OBJECTIVES

Engage with audiences, share captivating content, showcase Huntsville highlights, and foster community engagement.

Highlight Huntsville as a 4-season destination.

Increase Huntsville's visibility and attract potential visitors.

KEY ACTIVITIES / TACTICS

Produce targeted Google Ads.

Produce targeted social media campaigns on Facebook and Instagram.

Advertise on relevant websites.

Conduct email marketing campaigns.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Sustain engagement metrics (likes, shares, comments) on content.

Sustain current click-through rate (CTR) on links within content.

Sentiment through comments and feedback.

Number of consumer email database opt-ins (target 250).

CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGY

OBJECTIVES

Create high-quality, informative, and visually appealing content that showcases Huntsville's attractions, activities, culture, and experiences, thereby engaging and educating potential visitors while driving organic traffic and enhancing search engine rankings.

KEY ACTIVITIES / TACTICS

Produce blog posts.
Increase short-form video database.
Increase photo database.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Target the creation of 25 blog assets, 5 video assets, and 5 photo asset locations to enhance the diversity and richness of regional content.
Sentiment through comments and feedback.

BRAND AWARENESS STRATEGY

OBJECTIVES

Develop a cohesive brand identity that encapsulates the unique attributes and values of Huntsville, implementing branding initiatives across various touchpoints including logos, slogans, messaging, and visual assets, and consistently reinforce brand presence through strategic marketing efforts.

KEY ACTIVITIES / TACTICS

Execute a brand launch campaign in coordination with the launch of the redesigned explorehuntsville.ca.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

On-time delivery of brand launch event.

PR STRATEGY

OBJECTIVES

Cultivate positive media coverage to enhance visibility, credibility, and reputation within target markets.

KEY ACTIVITIES / TACTICS

Produce media releases.

Create influencer partnerships.

Participate in industry events and trade shows.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Number of media releases produced (target 10).

Number of influencer partnerships created (target 5).

Number of industry events attended (target 2).

PARTNERSHIP + COLLABORATION STRATEGY

OBJECTIVES

Forge strategic partnerships to amplify marketing efforts, expand distribution channels, and cross-promote complementary products and services, thereby reaching broader audiences and maximizing exposure.

KEY ACTIVITIES / TACTICS

Create Winter 2024/2025 & Spring 2025 marketing campaigns in partnership with Muskoka Tourism.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Number of tourism partnership campaigns created (target 2).

Sustain engagement metrics (likes, shares, comments) on marketing partnerships.

Sustain current click-through rate (CTR) on links within partnership content.

Sentiment through comments and feedback.

EVENT MARKETING STRATEGY

OBJECTIVES

Support events, festivals, conferences, cultural celebrations, and sporting events that showcase Huntsville's unique offerings, attract visitors, and generate buzz, serving as platforms for experiential marketing, networking, and community engagement.

KEY ACTIVITIES / TACTICS

Sponsor events, festivals, conferences, cultural celebrations and/or sporting events.

Market events, festivals, conferences, cultural celebrations and/or sporting events.

Submit event, festival, conference, cultural celebration, and/or sporting event bids.

Promote a weekly event guide on social media channels.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Number of events sponsored (target 3).

Number of events marketed (target 20).

Number of event bids submitted (target 1).

On-time delivery of weekly event guide.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE ENHANCEMENT STRATEGY

OBJECTIVES

Deliver exceptional customer experiences, personalized services, and memorable interactions, fostering positive word-of-mouth recommendations and repeat visits to Huntsville.

Leverage customer feedback to continually refine and enhance Huntsville's offerings and services.

Raise awareness, capture attention, and position Huntsville as a compelling and desirable travel destination in the competitive tourism marketplace.

KEY ACTIVITIES / TACTICS

Place tent cards and/or mirror stickers with a QR code leading to a visitor satisfaction survey in every hotel room in Huntsville.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Number of consumer email database opt-ins (target 250).

Benchmark responses collected through surveys and polls.

MARKET RESEARCH

OBJECTIVES

Gather reporting aimed to provide premium data, analytics, performance benchmarking, and market insights.

Conduct surveys to determine travel plans of Ontarians, as well as previous traveller impressions of Huntsville.

KEY ACTIVITIES / TACTICS

Sign up for CoStar Reports.

Conduct surveys on traveller intentions & perceptions of Huntsville.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Benchmark responses collected through surveys and polls.

Benchmark the extent to which various stakeholders are involved in the data collection process.

Number of views / downloads of online research findings (target 50).

Number of research presentations (target 1).

WEB DESIGN

OBJECTIVES

Rebrand huntsvilleadventures.com to explorehuntsville.ca with a new modern and visually appealing design that better showcases what Huntsville has to offer to potential visitors.

KEY ACTIVITIES / TACTICS

- Website rebrand and launch.
- Use SEO to boost website page ranking.
- Provide AI chat support on website.
- Provide multi-language support on website.
- Ensure website is fully accessible (AODA level 2.0 AA).
- Conduct surveys to find out what visitors thought about their visit to Huntsville.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- On-time delivery of website launch.
- Number of tourism businesses listed on website (target 250).
- Benchmark responses collected through surveys and polls.
- Benchmark website traffic.



MEETINGS, CONVENTIONS + INCENTIVE MARKETING



MARKET ANALYSIS + TARGET SEGMENTATION

OBJECTIVES

Conduct a thorough analysis of the MCI travel market, identifying key segments, trends, and preferences among corporate clients, meeting planners, and incentive travel organizers.

Identify target markets and tailor Huntsville's offerings to meet their specific needs and preferences to fit with current offerings.

KEY ACTIVITIES / TACTICS

Attend conferences/conventions and trade shows to gain insight into trends, emerging technologies, and consumer preferences along with developing relationships with planners.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Number of conferences, conventions and trade shows attended (target 5).

Number of conferences, conventions and trade shows hosted (target 2).

VENUE INVENTORY

OBJECTIVES

Develop a comprehensive inventory of current and potential meeting spaces (traditional and otherwise) in Huntsville.

KEY ACTIVITIES / TACTICS

Contact businesses with current and potential meeting space to confirm interest and inventory.

List venue inventory on explorehuntsville.ca.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

On-time delivery of venue inventory collection.

Benchmark number of meetings and conventions hosted.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS + INDUSTRY COLLABORATIONS

OBJECTIVES

Forge strategic partnerships with local businesses, hotels, event planners, and industry associations to create comprehensive MCI packages that combine meeting facilities with leisure activities, cultural experiences, and entertainment options.

Offer unique value propositions that differentiate Huntsville and attract MCI travellers seeking unforgettable experiences.

KEY ACTIVITIES / TACTICS

Introduce a town-wide gift card – the Huntsville Explorer Card.

Produce a dedicated digital marketing campaign to promote the Huntsville Explorer Card.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

On-time delivery of Huntsville Explorer Card launch.

Benchmark number of Explorer Cards (total dollars) sold.

Benchmark the extent to which tourism businesses are participating.

Sustain engagement metrics (likes, shares, comments) on marketing content.

Sustain current click-through rate (CTR) on links within content.

MARKETING + PROMOTION CAMPAIGNS

OBJECTIVES

Launch targeted marketing and promotional campaigns aimed at raising awareness of Huntsville as a premier MCI travel destination.

KEY ACTIVITIES / TACTICS

Participate in industry trade shows and events.

Enhance Explore Huntsville trade show booth with a 360 video / virtual reality enhancement showcasing Huntsville as a summer destination with a canoe video and Huntsville as a winter destination with a Nordic ski video.

Host familiarization tours for MCI planners.

Create a dedicated meetings section on explorehuntsville.ca.

Leverage digital marketing channels to reach corporate decision-makers and influencers.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Sustain engagement metrics (likes, shares, comments) on marketing content.

Sustain current click-through rate (CTR) on links within marketing content.

Number of videos produced (target 2).

Number of trade shows attended (target 5).

Number of familiarization tours hosted (target 2).

CUSTOMIZED SERVICES + INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

OBJECTIVES

Develop and promote customized packages and incentives to attract and retain corporate clients and meeting planners.

KEY ACTIVITIES / TACTICS

Encourage MCI visitors to extend their visit in Huntsville through the Stay an Extra Night Campaign.

Produce a dedicated digital marketing campaign to promote the Stay an Extra Night Campaign.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Number of Stay an Extra Night packages sold (target 250).

Number of participating accommodations (target 10).



PARTNERSHIPS



PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

OBJECTIVES

Support stakeholder efforts to improve the quality, diversity, and authenticity of visitor experiences in Huntsville.

Introduce new tourism products and services, implement destination branding and marketing campaigns, and foster cultural and environmental stewardship to create memorable and sustainable tourism experiences for visitors.

KEY ACTIVITIES / TACTICS

Engage with local stakeholders, including residents, businesses, government agencies, and Indigenous communities, to ensure their active participation and support in Huntsville's development efforts.

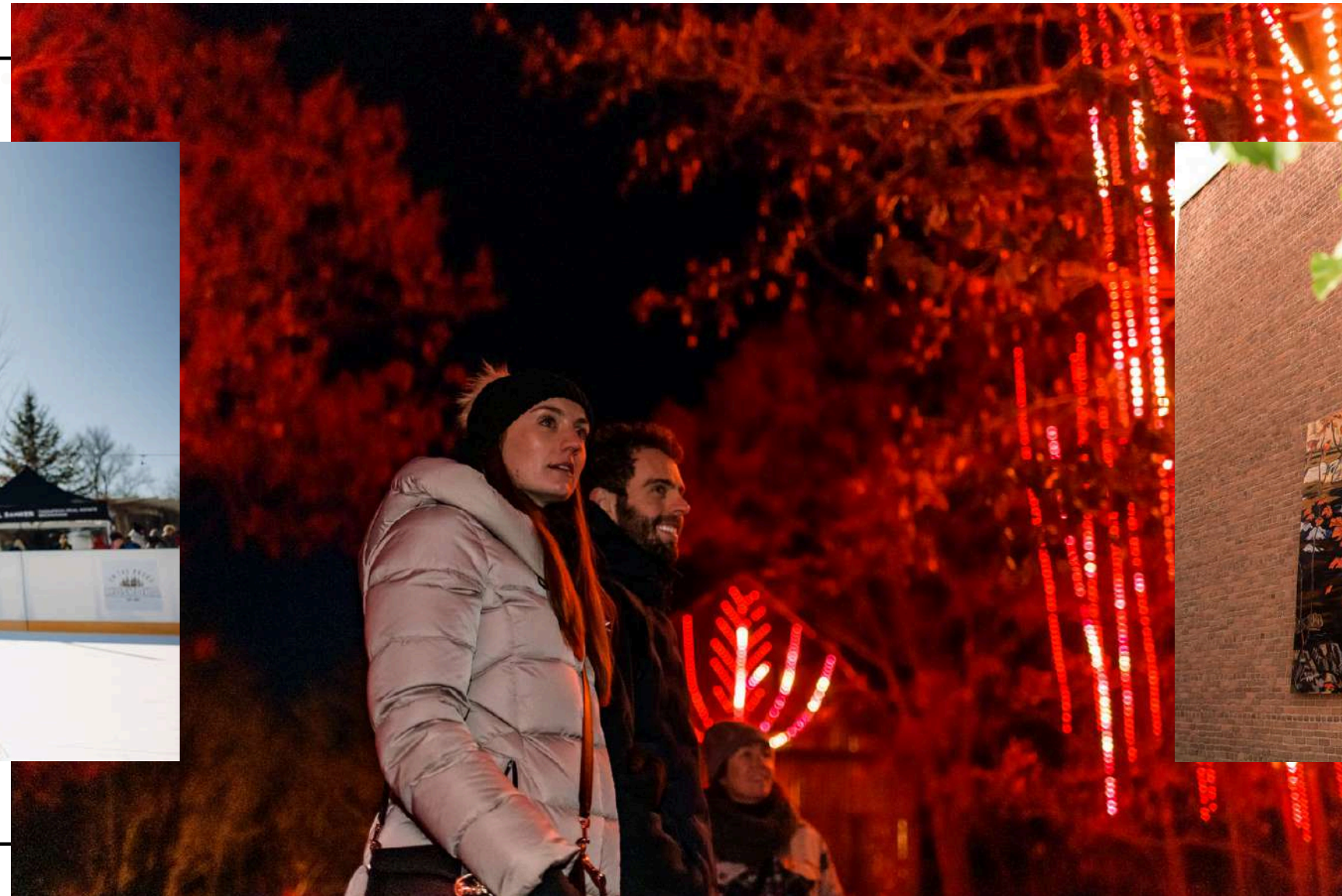
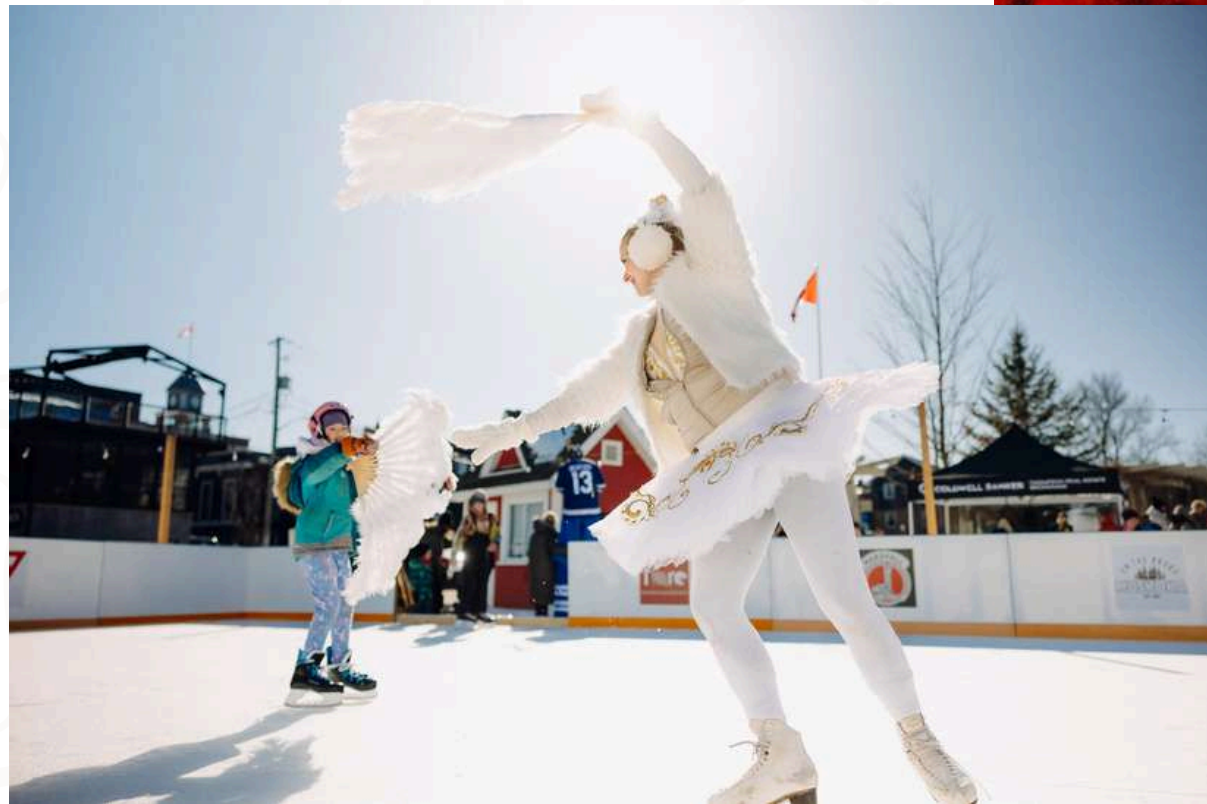
Gather partnership program applications through the annual intake period.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

Number of partnerships created (target – 5).



PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT



PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

OBJECTIVES

Elevate existing Huntsville attractions and introduce new Huntsville experiences that captivate visitors and foster repeat visitation.

KEY ACTIVITIES / TACTICS

Uniquely showcase downtown Huntsville through additional lighting attractions installed above the King St. Walkway and River Mill Park, and maintenance of current installations on Town Hall and above Kent Park.

Extend the River Mill Park Skating Rink season through the installation of a refrigeration system.

Develop the Group of Seven Outdoor Gallery through installation of additional murals and maintenance of current murals.

Produce customer satisfaction surveys at applicable attractions.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

On-time delivery of attractions.

Benchmark responses collected through surveys and polls.



GOVERNANCE + COMMUNITY OUTREACH



GOVERNANCE + COMMUNITY OUTREACH

OBJECTIVES

Inform and gather input from Town staff, Town Council, and partner organizations on HMATA's activities.

Engage stakeholders to inform and adapt HMATA's tourism marketing and product development opportunities to industry and market needs.

Create and implement an advisory panel of local stakeholders with terms of reference.

KEY ACTIVITIES / TACTICS

Engage third-party contractor to develop a Strategic Plan every three years (next: 2026-28 plan to be developed in 2025).

Prepare a biennial Tourism and Business Operations Plan (next: 2026-27 plan to be developed in 2025).

Prepare and present an annual report to Town Council which includes:

- A review of accomplishments based on metrics as determined by HMATA.
- Initiatives/organizations that have received funding.
- An overview of the business plan.
- Annual financial statements prepared by a certified accountant.

Meet with Town staff biannually (November and May) to review the business plan, HMATA's activities since the last meeting, and progress related to the strategic plan.

Present to partner Boards of Directors annually (BIA, HFA, Chamber, Muskoka Tourism).

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

2026-28 Strategic Plan completed by December 2025.

2026-28 Tourism and Business Operations Plan completed by December 2025

Annual presentation to Town Council completed.

Biannual meeting with Town staff completed in May and November.

Annual presentations to partners completed.



Procurement Policy

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the cost-effective procurement of goods and services on behalf of the Huntsville Municipal Accommodation Tax Association (HMATA). Our aim is to ensure that goods and services are acquired through a process that is fair, open, transparent, competitive, and accessible to qualified vendors.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all HMATA employees and Board members involved in the procurement process and procedures.

3.0 Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

“Consulting Services” means the provision of expertise or strategic advice that is presented for consideration and decision-making.

“Goods and Services” means any goods, construction, and services, including but not limited to information technology and consulting services.

“Information Technology” means the equipment, software, services, and processes used to create, store, process, communicate and manage information.

“Procurement Value” means all costs and conferred value associated with a contractual relationship with a third party.

“Request for Proposal” (RFP) means a procurement document that requests vendors to supply solutions for the delivery of complex products or services or to provide alternative options or solutions. The RFP process uses predefined evaluation criteria, in which price is not the only factor.

“Supplier/Vendor” means any person or organization that, based on an assessment of that person’s or organization’s financial, technical, and commercial capacity, is capable of fulfilling the requirements of procurement.

4.0 Principles

HMATA must conform to the following key principles:

- The procurement process must focus on value for money. Goods and services will be procured only after consideration of HMATA business requirements, alternatives, timing, supply strategy, and procurement method.
- Notwithstanding the availability of budgeted funds, all expenditures committed to by HMATA will be made in a manner of utmost fiscal prudence.
- Access for qualified vendors to compete for HMATA business must be open, fair, and transparent, providing equal treatment to vendors.

- Conflicts of interest, both real and perceived, must be avoided during the procurement process and the ensuing contract.
- HMATA requires individuals participating in the evaluation of bid responses to immediately declare any potential conflict of interest and immediately address any declarations.
- The procurement of goods and services must be responsibly and effectively managed through appropriate organizational structures, systems, policies, processes, and procedures.
- All purchases made on behalf of HMATA will be carried out honestly, objectively, and with integrity.
- In carrying out its purchasing responsibilities, HMATA will have regard for the development of an environmentally sustainable operation.
- HMATA will consider and/or look for opportunities that embrace its commitment toward diversity in all its business processes and with its external relationships.
- In conducting its purchasing activities, HMATA will comply with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and the standards mandated by it through enacted regulation.

5.0 Procurement methods

Open competitive procurement is achieved by using an open tendering process that is publicly accessible, such as a Request for Proposals (RFP).

- **Goods or services valued at greater than \$10,000 require a Request for Proposal (RFP).**
- **The selection of goods or services valued at more than \$50,000 requires approval by the Board or a committee of the Board, as applicable.**

Non-competitive procurement must be supported by a business case that aligns with an allowable exception (as noted below) or seeks approval for an exemption where no allowable exception exists. Allowable exceptions for non-competitive procurement are:

- **Goods or services less than \$10,000**
Where the total value of the goods or services is less than \$5,000, the requirement for a competitive procurement process may be waived at the discretion of staff. **For a total value of \$5,000-10,000, staff must obtain three quotes from qualified suppliers.** This exception does not preclude situations that would best be served by a fair, transparent, and competitive tender process such as procurement of a consultant.
- **Ad hoc service requirements**
From time to time, HMATA will require specialized professional services to support its activities. Given the nature of these activities, it will not be possible to determine in advance the value of the contract. Further, time constraints in dealing with such matters may make it impossible to meet the full requirements of this policy.
- **An unforeseen situation of urgency**
An unforeseen situation of urgency does not occur where HMATA has failed to allow sufficient time to conduct a competitive procurement process.
- **Expense**
The expense of a competitive process would clearly outweigh the prospective savings to be achieved by using a competitive process for the cost of the goods or services being sought.
- **Confidential or privileged information**
Where the services revolve around confidential or privileged information and the disclosure of those matters through a competitive procurement process could reasonably be expected to compromise confidentiality, cause economic disruption, or otherwise be contrary to the public interest.

- **Absence of bids**

Where there is an absence of any other bids in response to a competitive procurement process.

- **Only one supplier able to meet requirements of procurement**

There may be circumstances where competition is not possible, such as:

- Only one supplier may be able to meet the requirements of the procurement to ensure compatibility with existing products
- The supplier is a statutory monopoly
- The vendor may have a strong track record with HMATA and the particular service is part of an on-going exercise for which continuity of services is in the best interest of HMATA
- The vendor is the only provider for a particular service under a previous contract
- **The vendor has gift-in-kind considerations (in which case, the circumstances should be documented and receive Board approval)**

- **Follow-on agreements**

A follow-on agreement is one that follows and is related to an already completed agreement. Follow-on agreements allow HMATA to structure a procurement into several smaller portions for reasons of complexity, size, uncertainty, or improved management control. Follow-on agreements are permitted only where an open competitive procurement or Vendor of Record (VOR) arrangement has been used to select a vendor. The total value of the agreements, where under a VOR arrangement is used, must not exceed the value of the VOR ceiling limit, where it exists. Prior to entering into a follow-on agreement, the following activities will take place:

- Appropriate approval has been obtained in writing prior to entering the original agreement
- The terms of the original contract were fulfilled, and vendor performance was satisfactory
- The appropriate procurement method was used for the original contract
- The procurement documents for the original work disclosed the total potential scope of the work to be completed. A documented justification is required for any non-competitive procurement. In circumstances where a non-competitive procurement process is required, the justification must be documented in a written business case by the requisitioning department manager and maintained on file. The business case must be approved by the CEO and the Board of Directors. 9.3

6.0 Sustainable procurement practices

HMATA recognizes the social, economic, and environmental implications of its procurement decisions. Following sustainable procurement practices helps support its responsibilities to the community and planet, and to maintain open, fair, and transparent procurement processes.

It is the policy of HMATA to, whenever possible:

- Purchase products that minimize toxins, hazards, and environmental impacts to visitor, employee and community safety.
- Purchase products that reduce greenhouse gas emissions in their production, shipping, use and discard, as well as by purchasing locally.
- Purchase products that include recycled content, conserve energy and water, use unbleached or chlorine-free manufacturing processes, are lead and mercury-free, etc.
- Purchase products that are locally sourced and produced by minority, Indigenous, and/or women-owned vendors.
- Consider environmental factors during procurement decisions, including:
 - Pollutant releases
 - Toxicity, including the use of PBT chemicals

- Waste generation
- Water efficiency
- Energy efficiency
- Use of renewable energy
- Greenhouse gas emissions
- Durability
- Ability to reuse or refill
- Recyclability or compostability
- Recycled or reused contents
- Impacts on the natural environment, including biodiversity and depletion of natural resources
- Third party certifications
- Consider social factors during procurement decisions, including:
 - Human health impacts
 - Environmental justice (disproportionate environmental and health impacts on different population groups)
 - Fair labour practices, health and retirement benefits, safety, livable wages, and human rights
 - Use of local vendors and businesses whenever possible
 - Use of minority, women-owned, and Indigenous vendors whenever possible
- Consider economic factors during procurement decisions, including:
 - Product-use reduction and purchasing efficiency
 - Product performance, quality, and durability
 - Cost (dollar and non-dollar)
 - Leveraging buying power
 - Long-term financial and market changes

7.0 Consulting services and consultant expenses

Consulting services refers to the provision of expertise or strategic advice that is presented for consideration and decision-making. Whenever possible, HMATA will require consultants to incorporate all costs into their quotes for service so that no additional expenses will be added. Where providers of consulting services are to be reimbursed for reasonable expenses, the details regarding what expenses will be considered will be set out in the contract with the service provider depending on the requirements of the particular project.

Selection of consultants for projects will be undertaken using the competitive process outlined in this policy, recognizing that the project may warrant an extended search to identify potentially suitable consultants that may not already have identified themselves to, or been identified by, HMATA. In specific cases, a sole source contract may be awarded without a competitive process if specific requirements are met and where the value of the proposed contract does not exceed C\$10,000. A sole source contract can be awarded if: i. the suitably qualified consultant is identifiable because of a limited pool of experts with the required subject matter expertise and/or unique engagement in existing processes and/or outstanding credentials; ii. the cost of a competitive process would be disproportionate to its value; or iii. due to unforeseen circumstances, the schedule to complete the work would not be met if a competitive process were to be undertaken.

8.0 Procurement process

8.1 Procurement documents

To enable fair comparison of vendor submissions, procurement documents must be in writing and include sufficient

details concerning the submission requirements. Procurement documents should include the following information, where applicable:

- (a) A description of the required goods or services
- (b) Disclosure of the evaluation criteria and the process to be used in assessing submissions. For example, in addition to the price or cost, factors such as quality, quantity, delivery, service, experience of the vendor or service provider, and other criteria related to the procurement may be taken into account in evaluating submissions. No process should unduly favour or disadvantage any vendor.
- (c) The name, telephone number and location for the person to contact for additional information on the procurement documents.
- (d) Conditions that must be met before obtaining procurement documents such as confidentiality agreements, if appropriate.
- (e) The method, address, date and time limit and system access, encryption or other delivery instructions required for submitting responses to procurement documents. Responses received after the closing date and time must be returned unopened.
- (f) Declaration that the vendor has not given, directly or indirectly, a benefit of any kind to anyone employed by, or otherwise connected with HMATA, for the purpose of receiving favourable treatment or otherwise obtaining an advantage in connection with a HMATA procurement activity.
- (g) Conflict of interest provisions that:
 - i. define conflict of interest to include situations or circumstances that could give the vendor an unfair advantage during the procurement process or compromise the ability of the vendor to perform its obligations;
 - ii. reserve the right of HMATA to solely determine whether any situation or circumstance constitutes a conflict of interest;
 - iii. reserve the right to disqualify prospective vendors from a procurement process due to conflict of interest;
 - iv. require prospective vendors participating in a procurement process to declare any actual or potential conflict of interest;
 - v. require vendors to avoid any conflict of interest during the performance of their contractual obligations for HMATA;
 - vi. require vendors to disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest arising during the performance of an agreement;
 - vii. reserve the right to prescribe the manner in which a vendor should resolve a conflict of interest;
 - viii. allow HMATA to terminate an agreement where a vendor fails to disclose a conflict of interest; and
 - ix. allow the agreement to be terminated where a conflict of interest cannot be resolved.
- (h) Other information or policy requirements as appropriate.

8.2 Evaluation process

HMATA will evaluate the responses received in accordance with the evaluation criteria set out in the procurement document. Lowest price or cost may not be the main factor in assessing responses. Other considerations such as quality, quantity, delivery, customer service, experience of the vendor or service provider, or other criteria related to the procurement may be taken into account as well. Ultimately, the contract shall be awarded to the most qualified and responsive vendor or service provider whose proposal meets the requirements and criteria set out in the procurement document and whose bid is determined to be the most advantageous for the organization. HMATA requires individuals participating in the evaluation of bid responses to immediately declare any potential conflict of interest and immediately address any declarations. HMATA will not discriminate or exercise preferential treatment in awarding a contract to a supplier as a result of a competitive procurement process.

9.0 Agreements for goods and services

Any agreement or contract for goods or services between HMATA and a vendor must be in writing and include the following:

- A description of the goods or services to be provided.
- The total cost for the specified goods or services, if known.
- If it is a consulting or professional services agreement or contract, it should state the hourly rates or fees for service.
- If it is a consulting or professional services agreement or contract, it should outline any expenses of the consultant that HMATA is expected to cover.
- Payment terms.
- Time frame for delivery or completion of the project.
- Confidentiality provisions.
- Conflict of interest provisions.
- Dispute resolution clauses – ideally, there should be opportunities to remedy any issues that could arise informally or through mediation prior to commencing legal action.
- Appropriate termination clauses.
- Appropriate mechanisms for amending the agreement or contract if necessary.

10.0 Amendment

This policy may be amended by the Board when and as necessary.

Approved by the Board of Directors on XXXX.



Staff Report

Meeting Date: November 19, 2024

Subject: 2024-25 charitable donation

Recommendation: It is recommended that HMATA select the Huntsville Hospital Foundation as its charity of choice for the 2024-25 fiscal year and direct a \$30,000 donation to the organization.

Background: The HMATA Board has expressed desire to donate a portion of its annual operating funds to a local charity that is impacted by tourism in the Huntsville area.

HMATA's mandate, as defined by provincial legislation, is tourism promotion: "Any amounts paid to the eligible tourism entity under subsection (2) shall be used by the eligible tourism entity for the exclusive purpose of promoting tourism." [[O. Reg. 435/17: TRANSIENT ACCOMMODATION TAX, 4. \(3\)](#)] HMATA must, therefore, be able to establish that support of its charity of choice will enhance the promotion and development of tourism in Huntsville.

The HMATA Board has discussed two possible organizations for receipt of a charitable donation for its 2024-25 fiscal year: Huntsville Hospital Foundation, the primary fundraising entity for Huntsville District Memorial Hospital, and Mind-Aid, a local non-profit providing free mental health support for youth.

Huntsville Hospital provides physical and mental health services to both local residents and visitors to Huntsville and surrounding areas. Visits to the emergency department, in particular, swell during the busy summer months, in part due to an influx of visitors. Proximity to emergency healthcare could impact decisions on whether or not to visit an area, and when care is needed, its quality could impact a decision to return to the area.

Mind-Aid serves young people under the age of 30 who are primarily residents of Muskoka. While a worthy and much-needed local charity, its impact on or due to tourism is minimal.

Options:

Option 1: The Huntsville Hospital Foundation be selected as the sole recipient for HMATA's 2024-25 charitable donation, in the amount of \$30,000. **(recommended)**

Option 2: HMATA's 2024-25 charitable donation be split between two local non-profits, with \$25,000 directed to the Huntsville Hospital Foundation and \$5,000 directed to Mind-Aid.
(not recommended)

Option 3: HMATA does not make a charitable donation for its 2024-25 fiscal year. (not recommended)



Staff Report

Meeting Date: November 19, 2024

Subject: Selection of Eclipse Walk With Light host

Recommendation: It is recommended that HMATA accept the Eclipse Walk With Light Selection Subcommittee recommendation and select Sandhill Nursery as the host for the attraction under a five-year agreement commencing in 2025.

Background: Eclipse Walk With Light launched in November 2021 at Muskoka Heritage Place as a seasonal attraction under the management of the Huntsville Lake of Bays Chamber of Commerce in partnership with HMATA, and continued for a second year in winter of 2022-23. During that time, 59,529 visitors passed through its gates.

Eclipse was paused in 2023-24 when HMATA took over full responsibility for the attraction and determined, during discussions with Town staff, that a new location was needed in order for Eclipse to evolve.

In April 2023, staff were directed to remove the entire Eclipse light installation from Muskoka Heritage Place, and to consult with the Downtown Huntsville BIA and Town staff to explore options and obtain approvals for installing Eclipse-like lights downtown for winter 2023-24. Downtown lighting will continue for 2024-25.

In March 2024, HMATA issued a Request for Expressions of Interest from parties interested in partnering with HMATA to host Eclipse under a five-year agreement. The parameters included a free site within Huntsville's municipal boundaries with space for a minimum one-kilometre trail where lights could remain installed year-round and an additional five kilometres available for activity trails (Nordic ski, snowshoe, fat bike, etc.). Proponents are required to host/operate Eclipse at no cost to HMATA, including assuming all costs for hydro, site maintenance (snow removal, etc.), and on-site storage.

Two responses to the REOI were received: Deerhurst Resort and Sandhill Nursery.

In October 2024, the Board accepted the Eclipse partnership agreement outline and directed that the previously approved Eclipse budget of \$395,000 be transferred from reserve in anticipation of host selection. Staff circulated the partnership agreement outline and a final questionnaire to the proponents to confirm eligibility and value-add options. Sandhill Nursery accepted the agreement outline as-is and suggested a number of value-add options. Deerhurst Resort proposed amendments to the agreement, including additional HMATA investment for hydro installation.

Based on final responses from the proponents, the Eclipse subcommittee recommends that Sandhill Nursery be selected as the host.

Options:

Option 1: Align with the Eclipse subcommittee recommendation and select Sandhill Nursery as the host, and direct staff to develop a legal agreement with the proponent.

(recommended)

Option 2: Reject the Eclipse subcommittee recommendation and select Deerhurst Resort as the host, and direct staff to develop a legal agreement with the proponent. (not recommended)

Option 3: Reject the Eclipse subcommittee recommendation and seek other potential hosts for the attraction. (not recommended)