



Report 2019-082

Committee Information Report

To: Chair and Members of the Community Development Advisory Committee

From: Alison Vandervelde, Community Development Officer

Date of meeting: July 11, 2019

Re: **Community Development Advisory Committee – Big Sandy Bay Shuttle Bus Reallocation of Grant Funds To Wolfe Island Farm to Table Event**

Recommendation

THAT the Council of the County of Frontenac endorse the “Wolfe Island Farm-to-Table Tour” project;

And Further That any unused funds for the Big Sandy Bay bus program be reallocated to the development and implementation of the “Wolfe Island Farm-To-Table Tour”

Background

CDAC received [Report 2019-052 Ferry by Foot 2019 Implementation Plan](#) at its May 2019 meeting.

Since that time, the Big Sandy Bay Beach has been [experiencing record high water](#) levels. As of the writing of this report, the beach is virtually non-existent and remains closed to visitors. As such, the Big Sandy Bay Shuttle Bus is not operating as planned for the 2019 season.

Comments

Frontenac County staff are staying in close communication with the contracted bus company, who will remain on standby to provide the Big Sandy Bay Shuttle Bus Service if and when the beach opens to the public later this summer. At this point, the service has been postponed by two weeks, with the expectation that there will be no service at all for the month of July.

While this is an unfortunate situation, it does present an opportunity to reallocate the unused funds set aside by project partners: Regional Tourism Organization 9 “South Eastern Ontario” (RTO 9), Kingston Tourism, Frontenac Islands Township, and

Frontenac County. It is proposed that these funds be used to execute a new initiative to pilot a farm-to-table culinary experience on Wolfe Island. Staff have consulted with the funding agency, who has been supportive of an amended approach to promoting tourism on Wolfe Island.

On April 16, Frontenac County staff met with members of the Wolfe Island agricultural community to discuss the possibility of island locations participating in Open Farms.

Ferry capacity was discussed as a major barrier to hosting this kind of event on the island, an issue that is exasperated by the vehicle-reliant nature of the event and the event date (Sunday, September 8), which falls during a time when the village and ferry are both still quite busy with seasonal activity.

The weekend itself is also a busy time for many farmers on Wolfe Island, especially given its close proximity to the annual Kingston Fall Fair. While there was obvious interest in being involved, simply expanding Open Farms to Wolfe Island is not feasible.

Alternative: Wolfe Island Farm to Table Tour

Island producers and businesses are interested in participating in a Wolfe Island version of Open Farms – a guided bus tour that would occur later in the year and include a farm tour and locally produced meal. This event would have a cost to participants, who would purchase tickets in advance online. While staff are working to confirm details, following is the preliminary event plan, with a tentative event date of Saturday, October 5, 2019:

- In the early afternoon visitors meet a “tour guide” at the ferry dock and walk on the ferry together.
- The tour boards a bus on the island side in Marysville.
- The tour group visits three to four farm locations, where they enjoy an experience hosted by the farm business owner, with the opportunity to purchase products at each stop.
- The tour returns to the village of Marysville to enjoy a meal made with locally produced ingredients.

Staff are coordinating with a partner that would administer ticket sales, and also in discussion with a Marysville restaurant that will to host the local meal. Several Island producers have communicated interest in hosting visitors on their farms.

Frontenac County staff will manage the event coordination and marketing efforts for the first year of this Wolfe Island version.

Strategic Priorities

At its meeting on June 19, 2019, County Council approved [Frontenac County Strategic Plan 2019-2022](#). This project is aligned with the intent of the priority listed below.

Priority 1.2: Refine and invest in efforts to accelerate economic development — to grow businesses, attract more visits and expand the tax base.

This event has potential to become a regular agri-tourism product for Wolfe Island, and would expand opportunities to increase visitation with a relatively low impact on Ferry traffic. It may become a key product to support visitor attraction and local businesses while the Marysville ferry terminal is under construction over the next few years. .

Financial Implications

Frontenac County has already secured funding in partnership with the Township of Frontenac Islands, Visit Kingston and Regional Tourism Organization 9.

It is not known how much of this funding will be required to operate the Big Sandy Bay Shuttle Bus this year, if any at all.

It is anticipated that the costs associated with the coordination of the Wolfe Island Open Farms event (i.e., branding, bus service, ticket administration, etc) could range between \$1,000 and \$2,500. It is proposed that any unused portion of RTO 9 funding, be reallocated for the development and promotion of the Wolfe Island Farm to Table Event.

RTO 9 and staff at Frontenac Islands Township are supportive of this project, including the reallocation of funds to support the Wolfe Island Farm-To-Table Tour. Both organizations have requested a brief summary proposal of the event and suggested financial reallocations.

Organizations, Departments and Individuals Consulted and/or Affected

Community Development Advisory Committee
Frontenac County Councillors and Staff
Township of Frontenac Islands
Big Sandy Bay Management Committee
Ministry of Transportation of Ontario
Tourism Kingston and Kingston Accommodation Partners
Wolfe Island farms and businesses
Regional Tourism Organization 9 (RTO 9)