



TOURISM BARRIE

DESTINATION RECOVERY PLAN

BARRIE & AREA

JULY 2020 TO MARCH 2021

Through *Response*, *Recovery* and *Resilience*, and by supporting and working in partnership with the City of Barrie to bring the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Action Plan to fruition, the tourism industry will continue as an economic driver, support and create jobs and brings hundreds and millions of dollars of new money into Barrie's economy.

Tourism Barrie has withstood the financial crisis in the tourism industry and reduction of revenues from the municipal accommodation tax through the assistance from the Government of Canada COVID-19 programs, CEWS, interest free business loan and a grant from the FedDev Ontario Regional Relief and Recovery Fund (RRRF); combined with Tourism Barrie's cost saving measures.

Tourism Barrie has gained its footing and will continue to show leadership in rebuilding Barrie & Area's visitor economies in three general phases over the next ten months:

- **Response:** Community building and aligning with public-private sector strategies and elevating community collaboration in accelerating Barrie's recovery. Tourism Barrie will support the efforts of the tourism community, businesses, and Invest Barrie/City of Barrie to help drive destination performance and elevate the quality of life now and in the future.

Tourism Barrie will play a larger role in building and amplifying community pride and recovery.

- **Recovery:** As the stewards of the visitor economy and the visitor experiences, Tourism Barrie will work with the City of Barrie/Invest Barrie, industry partners, and stakeholders to reopen the visitor economy with clean and safe visitor experiences and following health and safety protocols. Tourism Barrie will follow the City of Barrie's COVID-19 Economic Recovery Action Plan and align strategies to accelerate consumer confidence in supporting local businesses, reopening Barrie's economy, and supporting job growth.
- **Resilience:** Ensure the sustainability and growth of the tourism industry and completing Tourism Barrie's Three Year Strategic Plan and Sales & Marketing Plan. Tourism Barrie anticipates the City of Barrie will be finalizing the Tourism Master Plan in the Fall of 2020, and the organization will follow with the completion of its own long-term plans.

Tourism Barrie will use the findings, outcomes, research, and recommendations of the City of Barrie's Tourism Sector Master Plan to create strategies to market and manage the destination and integrate tourism into the community's social, economic and environmental aspirations. The Three Year Strategic Plan and Sales & Marketing Plan will guide Tourism Barrie in developing a comprehensive 2021 through to 2024 plan that is aligned with the priorities and objectives of the City of Barrie Tourism Master Plan and recommendations from the MAT Tourism Advisory Committee and Barrie Hotel Association.

Barrie's tourism industry is an economic driver and creates jobs. The visitor economy brings in over one hundred and forty million dollars a year of new money into Barrie's economy annually, and Tourism Barrie will work with its partners to support and grow the economy, investments, and jobs for tourism.

Destination Marketing & Management

July 2020 to March 2021

The City of Barrie has taken a lead role in developing an 18-month Recovery Plan for the City of Barrie, which includes the tourism industry. Tourism Barrie was part of the Recovery Plan Tasks Force, which helped shape the strategies, messaging, and marketing to accelerate Barrie's economic recovery. The City of Barrie's COVID-19 Economic Recovery Action Plan was presented to the Mayor and Council on June 22, 2020, and can be found on the city of Barrie website.

Tourism Barrie will work with the City of Barrie in rolling out the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Action Plan to accelerate the reopening of businesses and kick-starting the economy.

Tourism Barrie will have three phases to the tourism industry recovery and a 10-month short-term plan:

- Hyperlocal – Experience Barrie from Home and #RediscoverBarrie, promoting to local residents to get back out into the community and support local businesses, attractions, and outdoor recreation. The messaging and marketing will be in partnership with the City of Barrie's Recovery Plan.

Timelines: June – December.

- Regional - #RediscoverBarrie marketing and messaging will be to invite regional community members from around Simcoe, Grey and Bruce Counties to come into Barrie for a day trip and to promote #StaycationBarrie.

Timelines: September-December (Dates may change in accordance with the City of COVID-19 Recovery Action Plan).

- Ontarians visiting Barrie for a Winter Fun Getaway.

Timelines: November to March 2021

Marketing Campaigns

1. Hyperlocal Marketing to Support Local Businesses & Staycations:

Tourism Barrie will create marketing campaigns and messaging to reach the local community members to building and amplifying community pride and recovery. The campaigns will promote the local tourism industry businesses, attractions, and outdoor recreation opportunities found in Barrie and the surrounding area.

Campaigns will focus on:

- i. Experience Barrie From Home
- ii. #RediscoverBarrie, #Supportlocal and #Staycation promoting all the things to do and places to eat in Barrie for you to enjoy while social distancing. Campaigns include, patios, restaurants and takeout, Farmers Markets and Pick Your Own, golf, cycling, hiking, tours and regional attractions.

Timelines: June 22- September 27, 2020

Outcomes: To create enhanced public awareness through comprehensive and integrated marketing campaigns that will result in community members gaining confidence to shop local and engage in social distancing outdoor activities and accelerating Barrie's recovery.

2. Regional & Hyperlocal Marketing to Support Local Businesses & Staycations September – October 2020:

Tourism Barrie will create marketing campaigns and messaging to reach the local and regional community promote the local tourism industry businesses, attractions, and outdoor recreation opportunities found in Barrie and the surrounding area.

- Invite the regional community from surrounding townships, cities, and towns to come back and visit Barrie to enjoy "Barrie Experiences."
- Encourage Barrie residents to explore attractions, farms, and businesses in the surrounding region to explore.

Campaigns will focus on:

- i. #RediscoverBarrie, #Supportlocal and #Staycation promoting all the things to do and places to eat in Barrie for you to enjoy while social distancing. Campaigns include, patios, restaurants and takeout, Farmers Markets and Pick Your Own, golf, cycling, hiking, tours, regional attractions and shopping.
- ii. Halloween, pumpkin patches, haunted experiences, haunted walks, drive-by haunted houses and neighbourhoods and other regional haunted events.

Timelines: September 21st to November 2nd , 2020

Outcomes: To create enhanced public awareness to regional community members from surrounding townships, cities, and towns back to visit Barrie through comprehensive and integrated marketing campaigns that will result in people gaining confidence to shop local, eat out and engage in social distancing outdoor activities during the fall.

3. Great Taste of Ontario Road Trip

In partnership with Tourism Industry Association of Ontario and the Culinary Tourism Alliance, Tourism Barrie will participate in the Great Taste of Ontario Road trip for 2020 and into 2021 to promote all the fantastic places to eat and unique flavours found in Barrie.

Timelines: September 2020 - 2021

Outcomes: To create culinary experiences found in Barrie for Ontarians to come and savour.

4. Winter Fun Barrie

Tourism Barrie has been the leader in marketing Barrie & Area as a winter destination and Winter Weekend Getaway for over 20 years. The Winter Fun Barrie & Area Marketing Program is a collaboration of the twelve Barrie hotels and the regional ski resorts, and local retailers.

Integrated marketing campaign include:

- Website: www.winterfun.ca promoting ski resorts, Barrie hotel Stay & Play overnight packages, coupons, Winterfest, and discovering winter sports;
- Radio advertisements: Promote Barrie as a Weekend Getaway;
- Social Media Posts: digital advertisements and E-Newsletters;
- Video: 10 to 15-second video clips to inspire and stimulate travel to a local ski resort and experiences outdoor winter recreation.

Timelines: November 2020 to March 31, 2021

Outcomes: The overall goal is to start to get people to stay overnight in hotels and give them the confidence to take weekend getaways in Ontario.

5. Industry Training

Continue to offer/sponsor industry training/webinars as the opening stages progress, and further health and safety procedures are required. This will, in turn will provide confidence to the consumer that Barrie businesses are receiving information and procedures to keep patrons safe.

6. Leadership in Sport Tourism:

Tourism Barrie will take a leadership role in assisting in the rebuilding of the sport tourism sector in Barrie and be ready for the 2021 tournament season.

Tourism Barrie will support the amateur sports organizations through the recovery by providing webinars and guest speakers to assist in building a stronger organization and planning for the future and keeping the organizations updated in National, Provincial and regional trends and best practices. We will be working with other Ontario DMOs' Sport Tourism Departments to develop further strategies for rebuilding the industry.

7. Resilience: Ensure the sustainability and growth of the tourism industry and Tourism Barrie by Completing a Three Year Strategic Plan and Sales & Marketing Plan that aligns with the priorities and objectives of the City of Barrie's Tourism Sector Master Plan and recommendations from the Tourism Advisory Committee and Barrie Hotel Association.

Conclusion:

Having weathered the financial crisis brought on by a pandemic, Tourism Barrie has taken on the challenge to rebuild, renew and strengthen its role in tourism and the stewardship of the visitor economy and experiences. Tourism Barrie will continue to support its websites and social media platforms and maintaining its digital footprint dominances in destination marketing.