



Report to Committee of the Whole

From: Carolyn Krahn, Manager of Economic Development, Tourism & Strategic Initiatives

Date: June 10, 2025

Subject: Elgin County Tourism Content Policy

Recommendation(s):

That Council approve the Elgin County Tourism Content Policy.

Introduction:

In March 2025, Elgin County Tourism launched a new tourism website. A report on the launch was presented to Council, where a question was raised about how businesses and events are selected for promotion. Until now, Elgin County Tourism has used informal guidelines and staff judgment. To make the process more consistent and transparent, staff have developed a formal policy to guide which tourism businesses and events are included on the website and in printed tourism materials.

Background and Discussion:

The Tourism Content Policy sets clear criteria to help determine what qualifies as a tourism-related business or event. A “visitor” is someone who travels more than 40 km to Elgin County or stays overnight. A “tourism event” is one that draws people from outside the area and offers a meaningful experience. The goal is to promote high-quality, visitor-focused experiences that draw tourists to the region.

Key points of the policy include:

- Only tourism-focused businesses and events will be featured on ElginTourism.ca and in promotional materials.
- Eligible businesses must be located in or near Elgin County, have consistent hours, meet safety and service standards, and appeal to visitors.
- Restaurants and shops should operate for at least six months of the year and highlight local food or products.
- Farm-based businesses must offer hands-on, authentic experiences such as tastings or pick-your-own activities.

- Events must be open to the public, tourism-focused, and capable of attracting visitors. Local-only events are not eligible.
- All listings will be reviewed before being added to the website.

Financial Implications:

There are no financial impacts from adopting this policy.

Advancement of the Strategic Plan:

Promoting Economic Development While Respecting Rural Heritage – This policy supports the County’s goal of encouraging tourism-related activities and festivals. It helps attract visitors, support local businesses, and grow the economy while protecting Elgin’s rural charm and character.

Local Municipal Partner Impact:

There are no direct impacts on local municipal partners. Staff will continue to promote tourism across all communities in Elgin County.

Communication Requirements:

The policy will be shared on the County’s website and with local tourism operators.

Conclusion:

This policy gives staff clear direction when deciding which businesses and events to include in tourism promotions. It makes the process more transparent and ensures we are showcasing the best experiences Elgin County has to offer. By focusing on high-quality, tourism-related content, we can better meet the expectations of potential visitors. If our tourism promotional materials include too many less relevant listings—such as businesses or events that do not offer a unique experience or product for visitors—users may lose interest and choose not to engage with our promotional content. This policy helps ensure that we provide meaningful, engaging content that encourages people to explore Elgin County.

All of which is Respectfully Submitted

Approved for Submission

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Blaine Parkin
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