

Please accept this letter regarding the Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) to be discussed at the February 7th Committee of the Whole meeting on behalf of Regional Tourism Organization 4 Inc. (RTO4).

RTO4 is one of the 13 regional tourism offices funded through the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries with a mandate to grow the respective tourism economies in Huron, Perth, Waterloo, and Wellington.

We have worked with a wide variety of stakeholders in Guelph for more than seven years on a destination development project (DestinationGUELPH) that has seen considerable resources invested and aligned from RTO4, the City of Guelph, DGBA, Chamber of Commerce and its constituent stakeholders to leverage the city's unique selling points.

One of the early priorities from DestinationGUELPH was to determine the economic impact of tourism to Guelph. In a 2017 study from Ipsos Reid, **Total Economic Impacts of Tourists' Spending** in Guelph were reported as the following:

- ☐ Total number of visitors: **1,738,000**
- ☐ Spending **283,000,000**
- ☐ Stimulates over **\$155 million** in economic output
- ☐ Supports the equivalent **2,100** fulltime jobs
- ☐ Generates **\$83 million** in wages and earnings
- ☐ Contributes **\$59 million** in direct taxes (federal, provincial and municipal)

As seen, tourism is an important contributor to the local economy of Guelph and finding ways to support new initiatives will be key to the success of the overall economy. The MAT is one avenue to grow investment in tourism without increasing taxes for residents.

We have followed the introduction of the MAT in at least 20 other municipalities in Ontario, including Waterloo Region (beginning July 2019) within our geographic boundaries. Through observations we believe funds if collected should not replace existing and consistent sources of tourism funding, but instead grow the investment in the industry. It is also critical to have a transparent and considered use of the funds using previously agreed upon strategies.

Thank you for the opportunity to put forward comments. Our organization is available to support and partner on strategic opportunities moving forward to further invest in the tourism industry in Guelph.

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