



100 John West Way
Aurora, Ontario
L4G 6J1
(905) 727-3123
aurora.ca

Town of Aurora
Council Report
No. PDS20-065

Subject: Explore Aurora Campaign Funding Request

Prepared by: Nick Kazakoff, Economic Development Officer

Department: Planning and Development Services

Date: September 29, 2020

Recommendation

- 1. That Report No. PDS20-065 be received; and,**
- 2. That Council approve funding in the amount \$12,000 from the Economic Development Reserve Fund to support Phase 2 of the Explore Aurora marketing campaign.**

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval in supporting the Aurora Economic Development Corporation's recommendation for the Town to fund the Aurora Chamber's request of \$12,000 towards phase 2 of the Explore Aurora marketing campaign.

- The AEDC has reviewed the proposal and supports phase 2 of the campaign.
- Funding is required for website redevelopment and social media development and implementation.
- Digitalization of Explore Aurora Guide will provide opportunity for all businesses in Aurora to have an online presence.

Background

In May 2020, the Aurora Business Continuity (ABC) Task Force, a joint initiative of the Town, Aurora Chamber of Commerce, the Aurora Downtown BIA, the Aurora Economic Development Corporation and the private sector initiated a marketing campaign entitled Explore Aurora. The Explore Aurora campaign was designed to ensure the economic viability and continuity of Aurora-based businesses following during the pandemic and after the reopening of the economy.

The first phase of the campaign was managed by the Aurora Chamber of Commerce with the support of a marketing agency. Phase 1 ran for three months from June to August 2020 and was funded by private sector contributions which ran for three months from June to August 2020. As a result, the campaign has generated local momentum for shopping and supporting local business within Aurora and has provided a vehicle for spotlighting local businesses through the ExploreAurora.ca website and social media campaign. To continue the momentum a new phase of Explore Aurora is proposed and is the subject of this report.

Analysis

AEDC recommends Town financially support phase 2 of Explore Aurora's campaign

On September 22, 2020, the AEDC Board of Directors reviewed Explore Aurora's phase two proposal (see Attachment 1) on behalf of the Town as this proposal has significant economic development benefit. With the suspension of the ABC Task Force and the AEDC inheriting the responsibilities of the Task Force going forward, the AEDC is in support of continuing to support the Explore Aurora campaign for the economic benefit of the Town.

Explore Aurora seeking funding to continue phase 2 of the campaign

Phase 2 of the Explore Aurora campaign is expected to run from September, 2020 to February, 2021. The total estimated cost for this phase is \$34,000. The Aurora Chamber of Commerce has already agreed to contribute \$12,000 in support of a new Plan Management contract position and magazine software.

The Explore Aurora campaign requires \$22,000 in funding in support of its website redevelopment, further social media development and implementation, as well as the development and on-going management of a key stakeholder e-mail list. This funding is being sought from the Town. The Town has already budgeted \$10,000 in 2020 towards the print version of Explore Aurora which will be reallocated to this campaign, however an additional \$12,000 is being requested from the Town.

The Explore Aurora website redevelopment is intended to pivot the website and become an extension of the Explore Aurora print guide and magazine, by:

- Continuing to offer free listings to all businesses regardless if they are Chamber members;

- Continuing to improve the functionality of the website to make it as user friendly as possible for both consumers and businesses;
- Removing business support from the website and moving them to the Aurora Chamber of Commerce website to delineate the difference between the two – the Chamber for business information and Explore Aurora as a Consumer and Business directory of available goods and services in Aurora; and,
- Developing a plan to gather consumer emails as a way to promote local businesses directly to consumers.

The Explore Aurora Social Media Marketing Strategy and implementation intends to be managed by a 3rd party and provide the following:

- Builds on the solid base of community engagement developed through the Explore Aurora campaign;
- Continues to spotlight local businesses and keeps them front of mind for consumers; and,
- Utilizes Key terms - Explore Aurora; Shop Local; Support Local

The Chamber is planning a digital version of the Explore Aurora Guide for 2020

In light of the pandemic, the Chamber is planning a digital version of the Explore Aurora guide this year as the current guide was produced just prior to the pandemic and did not receive the ad hoc distribution normally gained through the Home Show and the Street Festival. The Chamber intends to shift to a digital version of the Explore Aurora Guide and to provide every business a listing and not just Chamber members. The Town and Chamber have previously partnered on the Explore Aurora Guide and the funding request is part of this ongoing relationship to promote the local economy of the Town.

Advisory Committee Review

None

Legal Considerations

None

Financial Implications

A total of \$12,000 in funding has been requested in support of Phase 2 of the Explore Aurora campaign. Should Council approve the Town's support of this request, staff recommend that this request be funded through a contribution from the Town's Economic Development Reserve Fund. This reserve has sufficient funds available to support this request, with a present value of \$379,000.

Communications Considerations

The Town of Aurora will support this initiative through communications activities, including: promoting the Explore Aurora website through the Town's website and social media, and working together with Explore Aurora to support Aurora's business community.

Link to Strategic Plan

The funding of the Explore Aurora campaign supports the Strategic Plan goal of ***Enabling a Creative, Diverse and Resilient Economy by promoting the economic opportunities that facilitate growth of Aurora as a desirable place to do business***

Alternative(s) to the Recommendation

1. That Council provide direction.

Conclusions

The Aurora Economic Development Corporation on behalf of Council has reviewed the Explore Aurora phase 2 proposal and is recommending that Council fund the requested amount of \$12,000. The funds are intended to support the second phase of the campaign with the redevelopment of the website and continued social media marketing that promotes buying and supporting Aurora's local economy.

Attachments

Attachment 1: Explore Aurora Phase Two Proposal

Previous Reports

None

Pre-submission Review

Reviewed by the Chief Administrative Officer and Director of Planning and Development Services

Approvals

Approved by David Waters, Director, Planning and Development Services

Approved by Doug Nadorozny, Chief Administrative Officer