

Committee of the Whole (2) Report

DATE: Tuesday, November 12, 2024

WARD(S): ALL

TITLE: TOURISM HOST IN VAUGHAN GRANT – 2024 FALL-WINTER
FUND RECOMMENDATIONS

FROM:

Zoran Postic, City Manager

ACTION: DECISION

Purpose

On behalf of the Tourism Vaughan Corporation (TVC) Board of Directors (TVC Board), this report seeks Council ratification of the recommendations to fund four organizations for projects proposed under the Tourism Host in Vaughan Grant program in the total amount of \$21,525, as funded from revenues collected under the Vaughan Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) and as adopted by the TVC Board on October 23, 2024.

Report Highlights

- Six applications for support from the program were received by TVC between August 27 to September 30, 2024.
- The submissions were reviewed by a committee of adjudicators, including members of the Tourism Vaughan Advisory Committee (TVAC) and representation from the City of Vaughan Events team.
- On October 23, 2024, the TVC Board of Directors adopted the recommendations to fund four organizations for projects proposed under the Tourism Host in Vaughan Grant program in the amount of \$21,525 out of the total \$230,000 available in 2024, subject to the approval of TVC's Voting Member, Vaughan City Council.
- Based on the application details submitted by these four applicants, it is projected that these organizations will invest over \$215,000 in direct spending in the local economy in order to execute on their projects, representing an overall dollar value of investment leveraged ratio of 10:1 on the \$21,525 in contributions that the Host in Vaughan grant program will invest.

Recommendations

1. THAT the four projects presented in Table 2 in this report be approved to receive funding from the Tourism Vaughan Corporation through the Host in Vaughan Grant program, conditional on confirmation with each applicant of satisfactory proof of their: special events permit status, insurance, venue confirmation, prior year financials, and status of good standing with the City of Vaughan; and
2. THAT the Office of Communications and Economic Development utilizes corporate communications resources and channels to promote the approved bylaw and permit compliant activations in Vaughan.

Background

The Tourism Vaughan Corporation (TVC) is Vaughan's destination marketing and development organization (DMO) with the mission to develop and promote Vaughan as a tourist destination for visitors and business travelers. To achieve these goals, the TVC's plan and budget utilize 50% of the revenues generated by the Vaughan Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) pursuant to By-law 029-2019.

As a municipal services corporation, the TVC is operated by city staff within the City of Vaughan's Economic Development Department in the Office of Chief, Communications and Economic Development (City Manager's Office).

The TVC is guided by the following Council-approved initiatives:

- The City of Vaughan's Term of Council Strategic Plan
- The Economic Development Action Plan
- The Tourism Vaughan Action Plan
- The Vaughan Destination Master Plan

On March 19, 2024, Council approved the 2024 TVC Action Plan and the introduction of the inaugural intake for the Host in Vaughan Grant program and on June 25, 2024, Council approved 17 projects in the amount of \$125,000 as a result of that inaugural intake.

The Host in Vaughan Grant aims to enhance tourism across Vaughan by encouraging visitation and participation at local events. It also encourages strong partnerships between stakeholders in the Vaughan tourism sector. This program aims to grow existing events and projects in Vaughan and attract new activations to the city.

Consideration is given to projects that meet the following objectives:

- Delivery of events, product packages and thematic campaigns that support tourism in Vaughan

- Demonstrated traction for the project to draw participants and visitors into Vaughan from greater than 40 kilometres away
- Events, activities and programs must take place in the city of Vaughan
- Proposed events and activations encourage residents to participate in their community and generate a sense of pride of place in the city of Vaughan
- The project promotes inclusivity, cross-cultural collaboration and participation of a diversity of groups and organizations in the city of Vaughan

The full program guidelines are included as Attachment 1.

Council approved that \$230,000 of TVC’s annual budget be set aside for fund recommendations in 2024, which is fully-funded through revenues collected under the Vaughan Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT). The funding categories and corresponding funding levels are identified in Table 1, below.

Table 1: Host in Vaughan Grant funding categories

Category	Available funding per project/applicant
Sports Events (sanctioned)	Up to \$15,000 or up to \$25,000 for International
Business Conferences	Up to \$5,000 or up to \$10,000 for National/International
Tourism Partnerships	Up to \$10,000
Major Festivals and Events	Up to \$10,000
Community Activations	Up to \$5,000

Previous Reports/Authority

[Committee of the Whole \(2\) Report Extract – Tourism Host in Vaughan Grant – 2024 Fund Recommendations \(June 18, 2024\)](#)

[Committee of the Whole \(2\) Report Extract – Tourism Vaughan Action Plan - 2024 \(March 19, 2024\)](#)

[Committee of the Whole \(Working Session\) Report Extract – Vaughan Economic Development Action Plan, 2023-27 \(April 10, 2024\)](#)

[Committee of the Whole \(2\) Report Extract - Strengthening and Advancing Small Business and Entrepreneurship Services \(March 8, 2022\)](#)

[Committee of the Whole \(2\) Report Extract - Vaughan Destination Master Plan \(October 13, 2021\)](#)

[City of Vaughan By-Law 029-2019 - Municipal Accommodation Tax](#)

Analysis and Options

Six applications for support from the program were received by TVC between August 27 to September 30, 2024, and four are being recommended for approval to receive funding support.

The program received submissions under the following categories:

- Two Community Activations (one recommended for funding)
- One Tourism Partnership
- Two Major Festivals (two recommended for funding with one of those re-evaluated as a Community Activation)
- One Sports Event (one recommended for funding)

The submissions were reviewed by a committee of adjudicators, including members of the Tourism Vaughan Advisory Committee (TVAC) and representation from the City of Vaughan Events team.

On October 23, 2024, the TVC Board of Directors adopted the recommendations to fund four organizations for projects proposed under the Tourism Host in Vaughan Grant program in the amount of \$21,525 out of the total \$230,000 available in 2024, subject to the approval of TVC's Voting Member, Vaughan City Council.

The four organizations and associated projects recommended for funding support by the committee of adjudicators are summarized in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Host in Vaughan Grant funding recommendations

Applicant/Organization	Project/Event Name	Amount Recommended
The ChaBaD House	Unity Simchas Bais Hashoeva	10,000
Jewish Russian Speaking Community of Toronto	Chanukah Wonderland – Festival of Light	5,000
Kleinburg BIA	Tree Lighting	5,000
Steel Peak Climbing & Ninja	Canadian Ninja League Stage 1 Qualifier	1,525

The disbursement of funds for any approved applicant is conditional on confirmation with each applicant of satisfactory proof of their: special events permit status, insurance, venue confirmation, prior year financials, and status of good standing with the City of Vaughan.

This is in alignment with the Council-approved recommendation on March 22, 2022, that the Manager, [Economic Services] (or designate) or City Clerk be authorized to execute agreements, as required during the 2022-2026 time frame related to awarding grants and/or sponsorship funding to eligible individuals and organizations through programs funded by the Federal Government, Province of Ontario, Regional Municipality of York, or non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and administered by the City of Vaughan.

Approved recipients will receive an initial disbursement of 75 per cent of the approved funding amount which will be released to the recipient no earlier than 45 days prior to the start of the project. The remaining 25 per cent will be held back and will only be released upon receipt and successful acceptance of the final report.

Based on the application details submitted by these four applicants, it is projected that these organizations will invest over \$215,000 in direct spending in the local economy in order to execute on their projects, representing an overall dollar value of investment leveraged ratio of 10:1 on the \$125,000 in contributions that the Host in Vaughan grant program will invest.

It is anticipated that demand for funding support will only continue to increase and that the amount of funding requested from the Host in Vaughan grant will continue to exceed the available funding envelope.

During both the current and inaugural cycles of intake for the 2024 program year, applicants requested a total of \$335,367 out of the \$230,000 total available funding envelope. As the demand increases, the program will have to seek additional sources of funding to keep up with demand. This should also be taken as a reminder that current funding recommendations should not be seen to set a precedent for subsequent decisions in future years. Increasing demand will result in increasing competition which implies that organizations selected to receive funding in one particular intake period may not end up qualifying in the same way in a future intake period, especially if other applicants can demonstrate better alignment to the fund objectives.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact to the municipal tax base. Fund recommendations are allocated from the Council-approved 2024 TVC Action Plan and budget, which is fully-funded through revenues collected under the Vaughan Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT).

Operational Impact

None.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

Grant support programs for festivals, events and projects offered by municipalities and tourism destination development and marketing organizations are available Provincially as well as in many neighbouring municipalities from Toronto, Mississauga, Brampton, Markham, York Region and beyond. The launch and continuation of the Host in Vaughan grant program in 2024 aligns with best practice in other communities.

Additional funding sources will need to be identified in future years in order to keep up with the anticipated increase in demand for support and to maintain competitiveness with neighbouring municipalities who currently commit an even greater allocation of funds than the \$230,000 funding envelope in the Host in Vaughan grant program.

Conclusion

As the sole voting member of the Tourism Vaughan Corporation, Council has the responsibility to approve the Host in Vaughan grant recommendations, as discussed in this report.

With approval of the recommendations in this report, Council will continue to support the growth of the local tourism industry.

Upon Council approval, Staff will contact applicants to inform them of the decisions. Approved applicants will be provided with standardized reporting requirements and be required to enter into a written agreement with the City of Vaughan.

A new funding cycle for the 2025 program year will open in Q1 2025. The new program year will make available \$230,000 for proposals of projects to take place during 2025.

For more information, please contact: Don De Los Santos, Senior Manager, Economic Services, ext. 8874.

Attachments

1. Host in Vaughan Grant program guidelines, March 18, 2024

Prepared by

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