

Strengthening Running Tourism in Toronto

Date: March 23, 2018

To: Economic Development Committee

From: General Manager, Economic Development and Culture

Wards: All

SUMMARY

This report responds to a motion passed by City Council at its meeting on July 4, 5, 6 and 7, 2017 that requested the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture to establish a working group composed of staff from the Economic Development and Culture Division (EDC), other appropriate City staff and representatives from local marathons, Running Canada and the business and tourism sectors to develop a strategy to strengthen running tourism in Toronto. Information on the state of running tourism internationally, nationally, and locally, and a summary of the ways EDC currently supports running tourism in Toronto is included in this report. It also presents the stakeholder recommendations on how to strengthen running tourism in Toronto, based on suggestions provided during a stakeholder meeting held on January 17, 2018.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manger of Economic Development and Culture recommends that:

1. The Economic Development Committee direct the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture to report back in 2019 to the Economic Development Committee on the evaluation and status of the recommendations made by stakeholders listed in Attachment 1 of this report.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial impacts associated with the adoption of the recommendations in this report. Resources required to support running tourism can be accommodated within the Economic Development and Culture Division's 2018 Operating Budget.

The Acting Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meetings on July 4, 5, 6 and 7, 2017, City Council requested that City Council request the General Manager, Economic Development & Culture to establish a working group composed of staff from the Economic Development and Culture Division, other appropriate City staff and representatives from local Marathons, Running Canada and the business and tourism sector to develop a strategy to strengthen running tourism in Toronto, and to report to the Economic Development Committee by April 2018 on the recommended strategy.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.ED22.13>

COMMENTS

Running tourism is a booming global business with marathons becoming increasingly popular. The number of marathon runners globally increased by 13% between 2009 and 2014, including 11% growth in Canada and 14% growth in the United States. Organized marathons constituted a \$1.4 billion USD industry as of 2015.¹ In North America specifically, those on running-related trips in 2016 spent an average of \$587 USD per person. This included \$213 on lodging, \$147 on airfare, \$123 on meals, and \$104 on transportation (USD).²

The six full marathons, widely considered to be the most prominent in the world because of their designation as "Abbott World Marathon Majors", are held annually in London, Berlin, Tokyo, New York, Chicago and Boston. Most of these marathons attract between 30,000 and 50,000 runners and between 500,000 and 2 million spectators.³ These events generate hundreds of millions of dollars in charitable and economic activity for their host cities. The London Marathon is the largest one-day charitable event in the world and generated \$79 million USD for various charities in 2017.⁴ The New York City Marathon is estimated to have generated \$415 million USD in economic impact for the city in 2014.⁵

Furthermore, many international marathons have large budgets which allow for additional events and activities that both help to attract runners and tourists from other

¹ Phil Wahba, "Why Big Business Loves Marathons," <http://fortune.com/2015/10/26/business-marathons/>

² Rae Ann Fera, "The Marathon Economy is Bigger than you Think," <https://www.billyytz.com/912/the-marathon-economy-is-bigger-than-you-think>

³ Joe Hall, "London Marathon 2015: How does it compare to New York, Berlin, Chicago and Boston?" <http://www.cityam.com/213869/how-does-london-marathon-compare-new-york-berlin-tokyo-chicaho-and-boston>

⁴ Sports Destination Management, "Marathon Announces Record-Breaking Economic Impact for Charity," <http://www.sportsdestinations.com/management/economics/marathon-announces-record-breaking-economic-impact-13489>

⁵ Kurt Badenhausen, "NYC Marathon 2017: By The Numbers," <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kurtbadenhausen/2017/11/04/nyc-marathon-2017-by-the-numbers/#70cb925041a2>

countries, and encourage further participation and support from members of the local community. For example, each year the New York City Marathon features a week of events and activities known as "Race Week." This includes an official Marathon Pavilion, which is an entertainment hub with, "...food and drinks, official TCS New York City Marathon merchandise, race strategy sessions, film screenings, athlete appearances, panels, giveaways, interactive photo opps, classes, workshops and more." There is also a Parade of Nations, which, "...showcases runners from around the world as they parade across the finish line." Another event is the New York City Marathon Eve Dinner, a dinner prepared by local chefs intended for runners and their friends and families to enjoy the night before the main event. After the marathon, a "Marathon Monday" event provides an opportunity for runners and their families to celebrate their accomplishments and socialize with other participants.⁶

The full marathons held in Canada do not compare in size and scope to the six largest marathons. The Ottawa Marathon is the largest in the country and had 4,564 runners and about 200,000 spectators in 2017.⁷ ⁸ The Montreal and Vancouver marathons attract around 3,500 to 4,000 runners.⁹ Estimated economic impacts range from approximately \$15.1 million in Montreal to \$58.8 million in Vancouver.¹⁰ ¹¹

There are two full marathons held in Toronto annually, the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon and the Toronto Marathon (formerly Goodlife Fitness Toronto Marathon) as well as many other smaller running events. The two full marathons attract over 5,000 runners combined annually.¹² According to event organizers, all of the Toronto running events combined (including the two full marathons and smaller events) attract over 100,000 spectators and approximately 55,000 total participants, raise over \$55 million for charity, and generate over \$36 million in economic impact annually. More detailed statistics for some of the Toronto running events are highlighted below:

⁶ All event information comes from TCS New York City Marathon's website:
<https://www.tcsnycmarathon.org/race-week>

⁷ Sportstats: <https://east.sportstats.ca/display-results.xhtml?raceid=42854>

⁸ Run Ottawa: <http://www.runottawa.ca/torw/media/media-centre/quick-facts>

⁹ Sportstats: Montreal: <https://east.sportstats.ca/display-results.xhtml?raceid=30885>, Vancouver:
<https://east.sportstats.ca/display-results.xhtml?raceid=44620>

¹⁰ Scott Minto, "2016 Rock 'n' Roll Oasis Marathon & ½ Marathon de Montreal," <https://nr30-compgroup.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/sites/33/2016/12/2016-rock-n-roll-oasis-montreal-marathon-and-half-marathon-economic-impact-report-english.pdf>

¹¹ Government of British Columbia, "Boost for BMO Vancouver Marathon,"
<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2017JTST0101-000836>

¹² Sportstats: Toronto Marathon: <https://east.sportstats.ca/display-results.xhtml?raceid=42638>,
Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon: <https://east.sportstats.ca/display-results.xhtml?raceid=43500>

Event	Runners (Full Marathon)	Total Participants	Spectators	Charitable Impact	Economic Impact
Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon (2017)	4,101	25,043 (8% from outside of Canada, 30% from outside Toronto)	100,000	\$3.2 million	\$35 million
Sporting Life 10K (2017)	N/A	25,000 (5% - 10% from outside Canada)	5,000	\$2.2 million (Camp Ooch)	Over \$1 million
Toronto Women's Run Series (2017)	N/A	4,000 (3-10% from outside Canada)	500	\$35,000 (for Pediatric Oncology Group of Ontario)	\$100,000
Toronto Marathon (2017)	1,213	14,000	N/A	N/A	N/A
Toronto Triathlon Festival	N/A	1,406	N/A	N/A	N/A

*Above data provided by race organizers and accessed through Sportstats.ca

City of Toronto - Tourism Services Support

Tourism Services assists in supporting running tourism in Toronto through several programs. The INFOTOGO unit has participated in both the Toronto Marathon and Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon expos for a number of years, helping hundreds of runners make the most of their Toronto experience. The Toronto Tourist Information Centre (TTIC) at Union Station provides tourism information year-round and can be used as a resource by all runners visiting Toronto. The Festival and Events Calendar is a comprehensive information resource on events, exhibits, and festivals, and has often included many significant Toronto running events. The monthly We've Been Expecting You (WBEY) eNewsletter keeps industry members up to date with current event information, industry tips and helpful resources, and has included the Toronto Marathon and Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon in past editions.

Running Tourism Stakeholder Meeting

When compiling a list of contacts to invite to join the Running Tourism Stakeholder Meeting, the goal was to include both internal City staff and external partners and stakeholders who could provide insight on the internal and external challenges faced when planning these events.

Representatives from the Toronto marathons, as well as other significant running events, were included in the stakeholder meeting. Other running tourism representatives were invited to provide insight into national and international expectations.

For City of Toronto working group members, those who are involved with issuing permits and the logistics of planning and supporting running events were invited. Please see Attachment 2 for a full listing of participants.

Stakeholders made a series of recommendations during the meeting (see Attachment 1 for a full listing). Key challenges discussed include the routing of races in the city and the inconsistent timing of the races each year. There are challenges in finding the right balance between race participants, fans and local residents.

Conclusion

Running tourism in Toronto is successful. The world class running events held in Toronto attract runners from around the world. The meeting with stakeholders was vital for understanding the issues facing those involved with running tourism in Toronto and for determining their needs and wants in regards to further strengthening it.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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General Manager
Economic Development and Culture

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Recommendations from Running Tourism Stakeholder Group

Attachment 2: Stakeholder Meeting Participants

Attachment 1: Recommendations from Running Tourism Stakeholder Group

- The creation of a specific office within EDC to handle the running file (or sports file generally), similar to that of the film office or the music office.
- More communication and collaboration between City Council and City Staff in regards to organizing running events.
- More buy in and consistency from the Mayor, City Council and City Staff in regards to the importance of - and support for - running events.
- Running events should be positioned as an economic driver in order to generate further support from EDC and City Council.
- Create extra incentives within and surrounding running events to attract more attention and runners (such as Rock n Roll Marathon series' usage of bands playing music along the marathon route).
- Integrate different areas of City Culture properties within running (for example, tying music to running by bringing in bands to play marathon routes).
- There should only be one full marathon event each year in Toronto.
- Running events should be guaranteed consistent dates and routes each year.
- Running events should be able to sign multiyear partnership deals with venues (such as the Enercare Centre for marathon expos).
- Bring in celebrity runners to help bring more attention to running events.
- Marathon organizers should increase the size of their prize purses to attract more elite runners.
- Focus on creating an immersive, City-wide positive and welcoming experience for runners from the moment they arrive in Toronto to the moment they leave (such as branding the airport and public transit, local media buy in, etc.)
- TTC subway lines should open earlier to cater to the early start times of running events.
- One big calendar should be created that notes all of the big anchor running events and then use that to plan when best to situate smaller running events.
- Set up a group of stakeholders to examine what is most important to running events specifically from a tourism perspective (could include groups like the City, Pearson International Airport, Tourism Toronto, TTC, marathon organizers, etc.)
- Other cities with large marathons should be studied to determine how they are able to successfully host these large events.
- Measurable goals should be agreed upon to help properly determine the positive impacts of large running events.
- There should be banners welcoming runners into each neighbourhood as they run through marathon routes.

Attachment 2: Stakeholder Meeting Participants

The following individuals attended the Running Tourism stakeholder meeting held on January 17, 2018:

Name	Title	Organization
Dawn Ainsworth	Superintendent Ps Planning	Toronto EMS
Emily Assuncao	Manager – Closures and Diversions	TTC
Mary Fragedakis	Councillor	Toronto City Council
Cathy Hargreaves	Supervisor Client Support	PFR
Harold Mah	Manager, Event Support	EDC
Candice Martins	Supervisor Right of Way Management	Transportation
Justine Palinska	Supervisor Special Events	EDC
Phyllis Berck	Director	Toronto Office of Partnerships
Gerrard Vinet	Coordinator Transportation Row Mgmt	Transportation
Alan Brookes	Race Director	Canada Running Series
Charlotte Brookes	Race Director	Canada Running Series
Jeff Chong	Founder and President	Sports Focused Consulting
Shelley Crawford	Account Director, Sport	Tourism Toronto
Michael Doyle	Editor-in-Chief	Canadian Running Magazine
Cory Freedman	CEO/Founder/Race Director	Toronto Women's Run Series/Sporting Life 10K
Heather Gardner	Founder	Tribe Fitness
Doug McLauchlan	Citizen	
Ian Ser		Toronto Marathon
Doug Smith	President	Ontario Masters Athletics