Council Report

Report Number:	**ED2026-008**
Meeting Date:	July 21, 2026
Title:	**Municipal and Tourism Wayfinding Strategy**
Description:	The Municipal and Tourism Wayfinding Strategy for Council adoption
Author and Title:	Carlie Arbour, Economic Development Officer - Community

Recommendations:

That Report ED2026-008, **Municipal and Tourism Wayfinding Strategy**, be received;

That the Kawartha Lakes Municipal and Tourism Wayfinding Strategy as outlined in Appendix B be adopted;

That Council request that the Ministry of Transportation Ontario work collaboratively with the Municipality to support the recommendations of the Municipal and Tourism Wayfinding Strategy; and

That Council authorizes staff to budget for project implementation through the 2027 Special Projects budget process.

Department Head: _____

Financial/Legal/HR/Other: _____

Chief Administrative Officer: _____

Background:

The City of Kawartha Lakes has identified the need for a comprehensive and coordinated approach to municipal and tourism signage. Existing signage throughout the municipality has been developed over time for a variety of purposes, including municipal entrance signs, community entrance signs, tourism wayfinding, community event signage, and other directional signage. As a result, signage styles, standards, and maintenance practices vary across the municipality.

Over several years, Council has received recommendations through various initiatives identifying the need for improved and consistent signage, wayfinding, and community identification. This direction has included recommendations related to downtown revitalization, community signage standards, tourism wayfinding, and service club signage. Previous Council resolutions related to these matters are included in Appendix A.

In response to these recommendations, staff identified the need for a comprehensive, coordinated signage strategy for Kawartha Lakes. At the Council Meeting of November 19, 2024, Council Adopted the following resolution:

CW2024-191

> **That** Report ED2024-042, **Community Signage Update**, be received for information.

Carried

Following Council's receipt of Report ED2024-042, funding for the development of a Municipal and Tourism Wayfinding Strategy was approved through the 2025 Special Projects Budget.

Through a competitive procurement process, Cygnus Design Group was retained to undertake the project. Staff worked with the consultant to undertake community and staff engagement, review existing signage conditions, and develop the recommendations contained within the new Municipal and Tourism Wayfinding Strategy (Appendix B).

This report addresses that direction.

Rationale:

The Municipal and Tourism Wayfinding Strategy was developed through a comprehensive review and engagement process. and has been consistently viewed through a visitor experience and community placemaking lens. A background assessment was completed to understand existing wayfinding conditions throughout the municipality, including current signage, key destination categories, user experience insights, and opportunities to improve navigation, consistency, and visitor experience.

Engagement was undertaken with both internal and external stakeholders to inform the development of the Strategy. Internal staff consultation was completed with relevant City Departments, while external engagement included the Lindsay Downtown Business Improvement Association, Chambers of Commerce, tourism stakeholders, in-person public engagement sessions, an online public survey, which received 111 contributions, and in-person site audits.

Feedback received through the engagement process informed the development of the Strategy and its recommendations for a coordinated municipal and tourism wayfinding system, signage standards, implementation priorities, and governance recommendations.

The project scope included a review of municipal entrance signs, community entrance and event signs, service club signs, and tourism wayfinding opportunities. Regulatory and warning signage were excluded from the scope of the Strategy.

The project was undertaken to establish criteria for signage placement, develop design and technical standards, create a framework for municipal and tourism wayfinding, identify implementation and maintenance considerations, and provide a long-term approach to signage throughout the municipality.

The Municipal and Tourism Wayfinding Strategy responds to recommendations and actions identified in several Council-approved plans and strategies. Collectively, these documents recognize the need for a cohesive municipal signage, tourism, and municipal asset wayfinding system that improves navigation, supports economic development and tourism, strengthens community identity, and enhances access to cultural, recreational, and commercial destinations.

Key supporting policies and actions include:

- **Economic Development Strategy 2025-2029** – Action 4.1.2 calls for the development of a municipal signage and wayfinding strategy to support placemaking and attract residents, visitors, and businesses.
- **Cultural Master Plan** – Recommends improving signage to better promote cultural businesses, venues, and assets, particularly in rural areas and outside downtown cores.
- **Tourism Destination Development Plan** – Identifies the development of a municipal wayfinding strategy as an action to support tourism infrastructure and visitor experiences.
- **Downtown Parking Strategy** – Recommends a wayfinding and signage strategy to be completed with considerations to support visibility of and accessibility of municipal parking assets.
- **Downtown Fenelon Falls Action Plan** – Recommends improving downtown signage and exploring a unified wayfinding system to help visitors navigate key destinations.
- **2017-2022 Downtown Revitalization** – Identifies highway signage, wayfinding, business directional signage, parking signage, public infrastructure, and community asset signage as ongoing priorities.

The Municipal and Tourism Wayfinding Strategy provides a coordinated framework to address these long-standing recommendations and priorities. By establishing a consistent and recognizable signage system throughout the municipality, the Strategy will improve navigation, strengthen community identity, support local businesses and tourism operators, enhance visitor experiences, and contribute to broader economic development and placemaking objectives.

Implementation of the Strategy will require a phased approach over multiple years. The Strategy includes a detailed implementation plan and recommended maintenance approach to guide future work. Adoption of the Strategy establishes a long-term vision for municipal and tourism wayfinding and provides the framework necessary to guide future decision-making, prioritize investments, and enhance the visibility and accessibility of destinations throughout the municipality.

The Strategy is comprised of the following components:

- Summary of Initial Findings
- Guiding Principles and Methodology
- Content and Messaging
- Graphic Standards
- Sign Family
- Installation, Materials and Maintenance

- Governance
- Implementation

Other Alternatives Considered:

No alternative options are being recommended.

Alignment to Strategic Priorities:

For reference the four strategic priorities within the 2024-2027 Kawartha Lakes Strategic Plan are:

1. Healthy Environment
2. An Exceptional Quality of Life
3. A Vibrant and Growing Economy
4. Good Government

The development of a municipal and tourism wayfinding signage strategy, supports the Vibrant and Growing Economy and Good Government priorities, and is the culmination of objectives and direction from companion plans and strategies.

Financial/Operation Impacts:

There are no immediate financial implications associated with the adoption of the Municipal and Tourism Wayfinding Strategy.

Implementation of the Strategy will require future capital and operational resources to support the phased installation, replacement, and maintenance of signage throughout the municipality. As such, staff are recommending that Phase 1 implementation projects be considered through the 2027 Special Projects Budget process at a cost of approximately $1,466,300.

The successful implementation of the Strategy will require ongoing Council support and appropriate budget allocations. Future budget requests will be brought forward for Council consideration as implementation priorities are advanced. The total estimated cost to implement the Signage Strategy is $3,789,200. Implementation will occur over multiple years and will be phased through future Special Projects budget processes, subject to Council approval and budget allocation.

Consultations:

Senior Management Team
Chief Building Official
Manager, Communications, Advertising, and Marketing
Manager, Corporate Assets
Manager, Customer Experience
Manager, Municipal Law Enforcement
Manager, Realty Services
Manager, Roads
Supervisor, Policy Planning
Planner II – Policy Planning
Strategy and Performance Specialist
Fire Prevention Officer
Inclusion, Equity, Diversity and Accessibility Officer
Economic Development Officer – Tourism
Economic Development Officer – Curatorial Services
Economic Development Officer – Arts and Culture
Communications, Advertising and Marketing Officer
Marketing Assistant

Attachments:

Appendix A – Previous Supporting Motions

Previous Council Resolutions.docx

Appendix B – Municipal and Tourism Wayfinding Strategy

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