

2016 Tourism Annual Report

May 2017

2016 Key Accomplishments:

Website Home Page Redesign

Famous Burlingtonian Features

Launch - Come Home 2 Burlington

Updated Strategic Plan

Taste of Burlington Rebrand

Financial Highlights 2016

Revenue	504,432
Expenses	502,108
Surplus	2,324
Un.Surplus	132,790
Reserve	83,044
Capital	49,018
DMF fund (BHA)	19,937
Taste Reserve	12,434

Tourism Celebrates Canada 150

This report provides details on performance measures, events, marketing, and initiatives undertaken by Tourism Burlington in 2016. Some of our key accomplishments in 2016 are mentioned throughout this report.

At the Tourism AGM we launched a new marketing campaign as part of Canada 150 celebrations called **Come Home 2 Burlington**. Focusing on former residents and the VRF market we are encouraged them to come home and discover revitalized attractions, events and amenities during 2017. Partners were asked to adopt this message and host events and activities to celebrate our 150th birthday.

We are also working with Famous Burlingtonians to obtain testimonials and be interviewed by TV Cogeco.

Our strategic plan was updated with a revised vision and mission and more strategic areas of focus. This plan will guide us until 2020 and information is available on our website.

We were thrilled that Burlington is continued to be recognized as one of the best city of its size to live in Canada, so let's invite visitors to see what our residents are so proud of...our great city!

Tourism Vision

Burlington is seen as a distinctive waterfront destination known for its culture, festivals and outdoor experiences and tourism is recognized as an economic driver.



**COME HOME
2 BURLINGTON**

Volunteers Essential to Tourism Success

Tourism Burlington depends on our board, committees & centre volunteers to help us deliver our services & we appreciate their dedication and support.

Centre Volunteers: Elaine, Lorraine, Wendy, Cheryl

2016-17 Board Members: Gord Langford (Chair),

Nancy Brewer (Treasurer), Jason Stoner, Dave Miller, Duncan Ross, Jaclyn Jones, Jenny Wilkins, Ed Dorr, Robin Ashton, Councillor Jack Dennison, Chris Glenn (COB staff)

Awards Committee: Gord Langford, Judi Scetta, Councillor Rick Craven

Marketing Committee:

Dave Miller, Nancy Helmers, Nick Kondrat, Valerie Amaral, Robin Ashton, Janice DeSilva-Pearsey, Janice Edworthy, Julie Sutton-Yardley, Sheila Wiebe/Andrew Cirtwell, Samantha Statham, Niki Hilton, Maria Gerow, Ty Howie, Michelle Fex, Kendra Wighton, Julia Rodgeron, Nancy Field, Judy Worsley

2016 Tourism Burlington Performance

Information Centre visits/calls/emails	14,842 visits (+4.5%) 1,199 (+3%) calls, 432 emails 183 pkgs mailed
Waterfront—Infomobile visits	8,032 visits (+100%)
Events - Booths	5,409 (+30%)
Website Visits	233,222 Visits (+28%) 58% used mobile devices
Virtual Tour	3,193 Visits
Volunteer Hours	790 hours
Souvenir requests groups/individuals	133 requests
Out of country requests	6 out of country
Pins distributed on behalf of city souvenir program	3,007 City pins 2,275 Canada flag pins
Advocacy—support letters	5 letters
Presentations	6 presentations
Public Relations—Displays/Shows	2 Displays/Shows
Events	90 Events
FAM/tours	9 FAM/tours 4 site visits
Partner contributions— co-op ads, sponsorships, grants, DMF, Taste of Burl.	\$125,651

Working with our partners, we have been tracking performance in a number of areas: Our Centre visitation was up **4.5%** compared to 2015. Travel Counsellors in the Infomobile greeted **5,409** visitors. Our website stats have increased significantly by **28%**. We distributed over **5,000** pins on behalf of the City. We represented tourism at **90** community/regional/provincial events and **4** shows. Average Hotel occupancy is up from 2015 to **66%** for year with 6 months reaching the highest occupancy levels in over the last 10 years.

2016 Performance Measures continued

- **1158** Cyclists (VIC/Events)
- **226** New Resident Packages
- **14** media stories/ interviews
- **20+M** marketing impressions (includes Taste & Chocolate)
- **11** photo requests
- **576** partners
- **700,000*** event attendance
- **1.125m** total attraction attendance (not all provided)
- **67.72%** aver. hotel occupancy (up significantly from 2015)

NOTE: Not all partner information provided on a consistent basis. Group tour, socials, weddings are from attractions only.

* City of Burlington figures

Halton Tourism Profile

Stats Canada 2014

4.3m visitors 3 of 4 were same day visits

\$272m spent in Halton

Majority of visitors are Ontario residents taking same day trips

1,889 Tourism Businesses & 24,491

Tourism Jobs

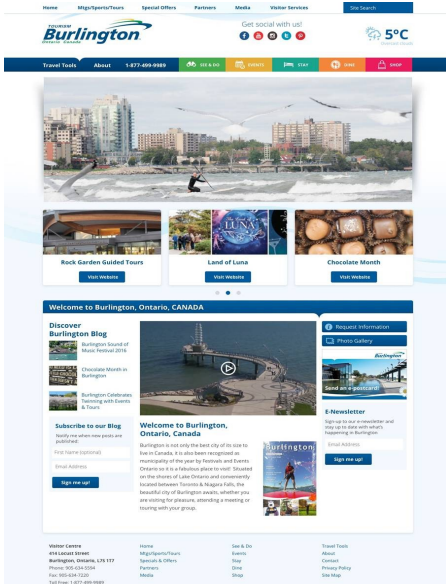
Hamilton, Halton, Brant Regional Tourism

Burlington is part of Regional Tourism Organization #3 which includes Hamilton, Halton and Brant. In 2016 HHBRTA took the lead on coordinating participation in the Outdoor Adventure Show and marketing the Nature Unexpected campaign. Tourism Burlington provided visitor services staff and some financial support. RTO#3 helped fund the spring FAM tours for

Social media influencers. RTO# hosted a Tourism Symposium at the Ron Joyce Centre in Burlington with over 70 industry partners attending. They also offered social media workshops which Burlington staff attended. Staff from Tourism participate on the RTO board and various committees and task groups as appropriate.

HAMILTON | HALTON | BRANT
NATURE
— UNEXPECTED —
ourtruenature.ca

Digital & Social Media



Home Page Redesign

This year we redesigned the website homepage to make it more current and streamlined and updated some of the internal pages and feature boxes. This included adding a media image request page to make it more convenient to respond to photo inquiries. Also in preparation for the Come Home 2 Burlington program we updated our Famous Burlingtonians section enabling us to highlight quotes and videos. Stats as of May 1 2017- **Twitter—BurlingtonTour** has **11,010 followers**, our most popular platform. **Facebook—Discover Burlington Ontario** has **4,056 likes**. Make sure you like us! Our Instagram site is growing with **2,974 followers**. Numerous tourism videos are posted and had **45,770 lifetime views**. Check them out &

share with friends. A blog subscribe is on to our home page and new blogs are added regularly with **93,035 total views**. We have worked with guest bloggers for special features and can link to external blogs directly. Our Pinterest site has **23 boards** and **296 followers**. Our **Visitor ENews** has **1,200 subscribers** and is sent to visitors, residents and partners **5 x/yr.** highlighting events, attractions and specials for each season. It is a very useful tool for front line staff who greet visitors, so print and post. Subscribe by visiting our website. Our partner Enews goes out twice a month to **395 local partners and stakeholders**. We also send out targeted Enews to sport organizers **304**, meeting planners **175** and group tour operators **230**.

2016 Events

The Ambassador Award presented in 2016 recognized Burlington Gymnastics Club for hosting a number of gymnastics competitions over the past 20 years including the largest invitational meet the Spring Cup.

Our May AGM was held at the beautiful new Rock Centre at the RBG and the theme was Canada 150 celebrations with a panel of local partners who highlighted their plans. **43 partners** attended this event and many joined the tour of the gardens.

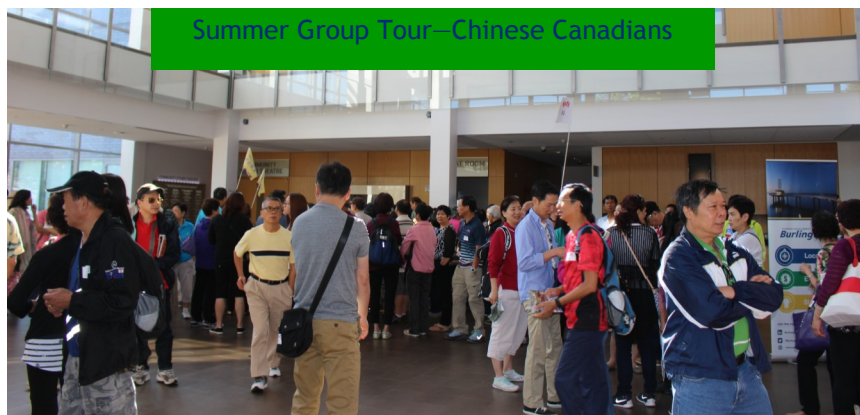
At the Tourism Ambassador Training, **35** front-line hotel, attraction and service industry staff and volunteers were trained as **ambassadors**. This event included a tour of downtown attractions, attraction highlights from speakers, ideas for Canada 150 and finished with a customer service video.

Working with Burlington Economic Development Corp we hosted over 1,300 Chinese Canadian visitors over two weekends in July. They enjoyed the Downtown Car Show, the waterfront,

Performing Arts Show and the Art Gallery of Burlington.

We provided **visitor information** at events during the spring/summer season, greeting over **5,409** visitors over **10** days including helping to promote the 20th anniversary of Children's Festival.

2017
Congratulations to VRPro—Kelly Arnott who was recognized with a **Tourism Ambassador Award** in April 2017.



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Tourism Burlington Team

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Culinary Tourism

Taste of Burlington The prix fixe dining program was reviewed in 2016 and participating restaurants recommended that only one program be offered in the winter since restaurants were busy during the summer season. Taste also underwent a brand refresh and revamp of the marketing plan to attract a younger audience. Taste has a financial impact for restaurants of **\$250,000/program** and **350** attend the sold out launch.

Social media stats for Taste of Burlington- **1,505** FB likes, **4,249** TW & **1,226** Inst followers & **5,045** Enews subscribers. **The Burlington Chocolate Trail** was restructured focusing on the month of May rather than a year long initiative. The website (**1,735** visits) was redesigned and other marketing included flyer, site signs, blogger tour and social media. This program has been sunsetted as there was dwindling partner engagement.

2017 Marketing Initiatives

The official **Burlington Visitor Guide** was redesigned this year with less text, more visuals and more social media references. This included a revamp of the events section to feature the major festivals plus some special features on Canada 150, Quintessentially Canadian and Deliciously Healthy or the Sweetest Thing. This guide is distributed to visitor centres across Ontario, plus locally through partners and is downloadable online. Thanks to Al Pettman from Just a Click Photography for sharing the beautiful front cover photo taken of Daniel Secord from the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation.

We are celebrating **National Tourism Week** by hosting social media influen-

cers on June 2-5. Thanks to our local partners for working with us to provide a great experience.

With Canada 150 events happening this summer will be providing marketing support and our summer travel counselors will assist with welcome services. In addition we have marketing interns who we will be out and about taking photos and videos and helping us with numerous other marketing initiatives.

We are working with local and regional partners on various bids and providing referrals and welcome services for confirmed events.

For more details refer to our **Tourism ENews** or marketing@tourismburlington.com

