

Date: 2020-01-13

Subject: **Hotel VISA & BIA E-Gift Card Promotion**

Contact: Jason Tamming, Director Strategic Communications, Culture & Events
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Report Number: Corporate Support Services-2021-116

Recommendations:

1. That the report from Jason Tamming, Director Strategic Communications, Culture and Events, dated January 13, 2021 to the Committee of Council meeting of February 3, 2021 titled Hotel VISA and BIA E-Gift Card Promotion be received;
2. That Council approve the recommendation to financially support this promotion with funds from a tourism grant provided by the Federal Economic Development Agency of Southern Ontario (FedDev); and,
3. That Council approve the promotion be activated in partnership with the Downtown Brampton BIA to support Brampton's economy and tourism.

Overview:

- Brampton's economy and tourism have been significantly impacted by COVID-19.
- A number of tourism offices have participated in a hotel VISA promotion whereby a reservation consisting of a minimum two-night stay is eligible for a VISA gift card.
- The Downtown Brampton BIA, a non-profit association, has offered to partner with the City and act as the delivery organization of this promotion.

- Tourism support funds have been granted to the Brampton Tourism office by the Federal Economic Development Agency of Southern Ontario and are available to cover the project costs of \$11,600.00.
- The promotion will include a VISA gift card valued at \$50.00 plus a Downtown Brampton BIA E-Gift Card of \$25.00 for a minimum two-night stay in Brampton-based accommodation. Hotel guests will also receive City of Brampton's Visitor Guide and Food Guide.

Background:

Support for this project will contribute to Brampton's economy and tourism, which has been severely impacted by COVID-19.

Impacts to the tourism sector have included but, are not limited to:

- The permanent closure of many restaurants;
- Hotel vacancy rates as low as 13.6%;
- The permanent closure of attractions; and
- The temporary but, lengthy closures of other attractions such as PAMA and Playdium.

Minister Lisa MacLeod, responsible for Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries for the Province, has shared that tourism industry in Ontario has been the hardest hit by COVID-19.

Current Situation:

Many tourism offices in Ontario have participated in a hotel VISA gift card promotion whereby guests staying at participating hotels for two nights or more are eligible for a VISA gift card. The card may not be used to cover hotel charges. Mississauga Tourism has offered this promotion and card data confirms that 75% of the VISA gift cards awarded to guests to date have been used at Mississauga businesses. This program has proven to provide direct financial support to the local economy and tourism.

Tourism staff has reviewed the logistics of offering this promotion. In order to do so, a partner organization is required to carry out the operations of the promotion. The Downtown Brampton BIA has agreed to act as a partner and Suzy Godefroy, Executive Director, delegated to Council on December 9, 2020 (CW-312-2020) and provided an overview of the program plan.

The program being proposed for Brampton offers the following incentives for hotel guests staying two or more nights in a participating Brampton hotel:

- \$50.00 VISA Gift Card to use anywhere in the City

- \$25.00 BIA E-Gift Card
- City of Brampton Visitor and Food Guides to support choices for using gift cards

The program will be limited to 125 promotional packs distributed to participating hotels. Costing for the program is as follows:

Item	Cost
Custom Production of Cards 125 Cards @ \$2.50 each	\$312.50
Funds for Cards 125 Cards @ \$50.00 each	\$6,250.00
Vendor Administration Fee	\$500.00
Funds for BIA E-Gift Cards 125 Cards @ \$25.00 each	\$3,125.00
Admin Fee Payable to BIA (20% of program value)	\$1,412.50
TOTAL:	\$11,600.00

The Brampton Tourism Office is in receipt of a tourism support grant from the Federal Economic Development Agency of Southern Ontario with funds available to cover the costs associated with this promotion.

A formal agreement between the City of Brampton and the Downtown Brampton BIA will be drawn up to outline the program responsibilities of each party.

City of Brampton Responsibilities:

1. Develop terms and conditions for visitor participation that will be approved by both parties.
2. Provide funding to the Downtown Brampton BIA to purchase, distribute, track and activate the VISA and BIA gift cards.
3. Promote the program through City of Brampton's *Experience Brampton* digital channels.

Downtown Brampton BIA Responsibilities:

1. Purchase VISA gift cards for distribution to participating hoteliers.
2. Add program information to the Downtown Brampton BIA website to promote the program including a full list of participating accommodation providers – list to be provided by Tourism staff.
3. Activate and track VISA gift cards and BIA E-Gift cards.
4. Submit a final report including card data.

If approved, the program would be strategically rolled out to align with the Provincial COVID Level. The program will continue until all promotional packages have been distributed to guests.

Corporate Implications:

Financial Implications:

Funding for this promotion is available through a tourism grant from the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario.

Term of Council Priorities:

This recommendation aligns with the Term of Council Priorities – Brampton is a Mosaic. Funding tourism projects supports Brampton’s economy and tourism and also furthers Brampton’s identity as a diverse city offering cultural events of great interest to residents and visitors.

Conclusion:

\$11,600.00 to deliver the Hotel VISA and BIA E-Gift Card promotion in partnership with the Downtown Brampton BIA. The program will support both Brampton’s economy and tourism.

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