

Meeting Date: June 3, 2019
Department: Economic Development
Prepared By: Demetri Makrakos, Economic Development Officer
Submitted By: Greg McClinchey, Chief Administrative Officer
SUBJECT: **Downtown Strathroy Market Advertising**

RECOMMENDATION:

- Option 1:** That Strathroy-Caradoc Council decline to approve an additional \$35,000 for the development and roll out of a digital media marketing strategy for the Downtown Strathroy Market.
- Option 2:** That Strathroy-Caradoc Council approve an additional \$35,000 for the development and roll out of a digital media marketing strategy for the Downtown Strathroy Market.

BACKGROUND

The Strathroy Downtown Market has been around since 2014 and started off in the municipal parking lot at City Hall. In late 2017, the Market Coordinator decided to step away from the position and the Market was left without a manager. In an effort to assist the Market and to place it on a stable footing for growth, the Municipality opted to take on the responsibilities of managing the Market for a short-term, as the local economic impact of losing the market would be undesirable. A committee was established and plans were made to continue the market into 2018. Two Market Coordinators were appointed and compensated from Market funds for running the market. Most advertising was done through the Facebook page, with posts on the Instagram platform as well. The 2018 Market was a resounding success and all involved agree that there is tremendous potential for additional growth. The 2019 season begins on Saturday, June 15, 2019.

One of the main ways to increase the success of the Market is to attract more foot traffic. This could be done by marketing to more people who might not know there is a market each Saturday from June to September in downtown Strathroy. The Municipality currently has an advertisement spot on CTV, however, a good portion of the population does not have cable. Statistics Canada data from 2017 show that 44.5% of people under 30 and 31.2% of people aged 30-39 do not have cable. The majority of this demographic is increasingly on social media, so it would make sense to target them across different social media platforms. See Appendix A for survey data on social media use in Canada.

Currently there is a Downtown Strathroy Market Facebook and Instagram page, but no targeted marketing strategy for using these platforms. The Facebook page has 2,700 followers and Instagram has just over 1,000 followers. This is a significant amount of people, and this following has been built as a consequence of an informal social media effort (minimal time sharing and posting content without a strategic focus). With a more targeted approach, the numbers and reach of the accounts can grow substantially, hence attracting more people to the market. This is not suggesting the coordinators have not been doing a good job sharing content, rather that targeted resources will be required to increase marketing efforts above what has already been undertaken.

COMMENTS

Growth potential can be realized using strategies such as Geofencing: a location-based digital marketing tool that lets you advertise to social media or internet users in a defined geographic area. For example, if someone is in Strathroy-Caradoc for a sporting event, day at the pool, visiting a store, or visiting the hospital, they would enter the geofenced area and would be hit with Downtown Strathroy Market advertisements while they browse social media or the internet.

Another possible strategy might involve targeting Instagram micro-influencers to promote the Market. This would involve finding someone with a modest social media following that would share pictures of them at the Market walking around, making a purchase, exploring the area, or more.

It's strategies like this, used in conjunction with other techniques, that will help increase the social media audience and attract more people to downtown Strathroy. This additional \$35,000 will pay for the development as well as the rolling out of a marketing strategy for the 2019 and 2020 market seasons.

If this project is approved by Council, staff also recommend that the Municipality make application to the Canadian Experiences Fund (CEF). The CEF provides non-repayable contributions to eligible recipients for projects that create, improve or expand tourism-related infrastructure, such as accommodations, local attractions and new tourism products or experiences. The CEF will normally target investments that range from \$25,000 to \$500,000 for projects that focus on one or more of the following priority segments:

1. Tourism in rural and remote communities;
2. Indigenous tourism;
3. Winter and shoulder season tourism;
4. Inclusiveness, specifically for the LGBTQ2+ community; and
5. Farm-to-table tourism, also known as culinary tourism.

To be considered eligible for funding, applicants must demonstrate:

1. Evidence of project funding.
2. Managerial, technical, operational and financial capacity to achieve the project's stated objectives in a timely manner.
3. Evidence of opportunities for sector/industry growth.
4. How the project addresses a gap, including evidence of economic opportunities for tourism sector.
5. A viable project plan with achievable outcomes, supported by verifiable cost estimates.

This means approval of the project cannot be contingent on funding from the CEF as the CEF will only fund if the Municipality has provided project funding already.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

To complete this project in full scope, \$35,000 will be required.

Given the nature of the project, the funds could be taken from the Economic Development resources set aside by Council in 2018 and 2019.

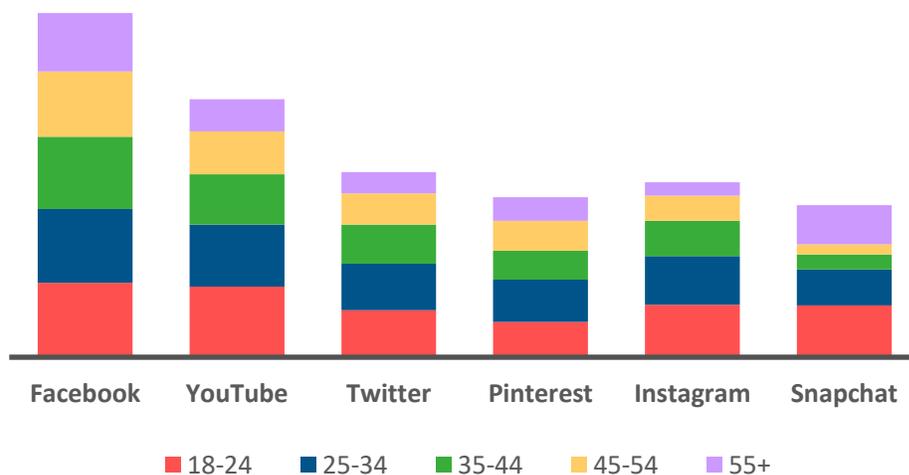
It is hoped that funding will be obtained via the CEF program.

Attachments

Survey Data on 2017 Social Media use by Age

Total Respondents		1500				
Age	Facebook	YouTube	Twitter	Pinterest	Instagram	Snapchat
18-24	95%	90%	60%	45%	67%	66%
25-34	94%	79%	59%	54%	62%	46%
35-44	92%	64%	50%	37%	45%	19%
45-54	83%	55%	40%	38%	32%	13%
55+	75%	41%	27%	30%	17%	50%

*respondents were asked whether they have an account on any of the above social media sites



Source: [Social Media Lab](#). Ryerson University

Survey Link: <https://dataverse.scholarsportal.info/file.xhtml?fileId=62708&version=1.3>