



**Subject:** *2026 Tourism Grant*  
**To:** Parks, Recreation and Culture Committee  
**Date Prepared:** March 4, 2026  
**Related Motions:** N/A  
**Prepared by:** Aurora Douthwright, Tourism & Events Supervisor  
**Approved by:** Alana Tapper, Director of Parks, Recreation & Culture and Adam Clarkson, Director of Corporate Services

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### Summary

This report outlines 2026 Tourism Grant funding recommendations for the applications received by the February 28, 2026 deadline and provides recommendations for funding.

### Financial Impact Statement

The approved Tourism Grant budget for the upcoming fiscal year is \$40,000. The total amount requested by all groups is \$76,385. The groups which staff recommend funding have requested a total of \$68,385. Two applicants are being recommended to pursue Community Grant instead of Tourism Grant (Maitland Days and Maitland Fire Auxiliary Car Show).

After reviewing the applications to follow policy and meet budget, the Staff Grant Review Committee recommends funding \$40,000.

### Recommendation

That the Parks, Recreation and Culture Committee recommend to Council that the Tourism Grant funding recommendations be approved as outlined in the staff report. Staff will release approved funds as confirmation of external funding sources for proposed projects are received from each group, where policy requires.

### Recommended Motion

*Move that the Parks, Recreation and Culture Committee recommends to Council that the Tourism Grant funding recommendations totaling \$40,000 be approved for the following organizations:*

- *East Hants Historical Society - \$12,500*
- *Maitland District Development Association - \$9,500*
- *Come Home East Hants Association (Tide Fest) - \$7,000 toward facility rental costs*
- *Gore Trails - \$6,000*
- *Walton Area Development Association - \$5,000*

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### Background

The Tourism Grant program provides single-year financial support to operate a tourism attraction or facility in East Hants welcoming local, national and international visitors. It aims to build relationships with community groups, assisting them to develop projects, programs, or experiences that enhance visitor experience and align with Municipal strategies (Tourism Strategy, Strategic Plan). Applicants must demonstrate direct ties to East Hants' tourism sector. The grant policy also states the projects should protect and enhance community identity, values and experiences.

Applications are evaluated by the Staff Grant Review Committee referencing the Tourism Grant policy. Policy states that groups must:

- Demonstrate fiscal responsibility, capacity building initiatives, effective management, and show financial need.
- Demonstrate that their available resources including financial, human and physical resources are sufficient to complete the project or program.
- The grant funds awarded to an organization are determined based on an evaluation of the project/program being proposed, demonstrated financial need, alignment with strategic objectives of the municipal tourism strategy, level of risk involved, and demonstrated ability to provide the necessary resources to complete the project/program.

## Discussion

This year, seven (7) organizations applied by the February 28 deadline. Staff Grant Review Committee reviewed the applications using the Tourism Grant Policy and found that two of the applications would be better suited for the Community Grant - Event Hosting stream.

This year, grant requests exceeded the allocated \$40,000 Tourism Grant budget. To follow policy and meet budget, the Staff Grant Review Committee recommends partial funding for most groups.

Applicant	Program/Project Description	Requested Funding	Recommended Funding	Notes
Maitland District Development Association (MDDA)	- <b>Gallery 215:</b> improving shop offerings, new products, merchandising equipment, staff wages, workshops/events, new Village of Maitland website - <b>Beyond the Wharf Artisans:</b> adding wi-fi (currently cash-only)	\$19,000	\$9,500	Partial funding to help meet budget. Full request meets policy.
East Hants Historical Society (EHHS)	- Funds for staffing at the <b>Lower Selma Museum</b> - Facility improvements at the Lower Selma Museum: painting interior walls, siding and window repairs, beam re-enforcement	\$17,935	\$12,500	Funding amount by policy (50% of group's budget).  Will help group to find alternate funding for external/structural capital work.  Also receive \$20,000 in CPF from East Hants
Gore Trails	- <b>Multi-use/mountain biking trail grounds site improvements</b> to increase event capacity, including shelters and sea-can storage	\$16,450	\$6,000	Funding amount by policy (50% of group's cash contribution).

	- 300-400 members, over 70% of which come from outside East Hants			
Come Home East Hants	- Grant to help offset facility rental for <b>Tide Fest</b> - Multi-day (July 24-26) homecoming event at East Hants Sportsplex with music, community fair, sports events. 3,000+ attendees.	\$10,000	\$7,000	Grant by way of covering \$7,000 in facility rental costs. Group to pay remainder. Full request meets policy.
Walton Area Development Association	- Wage costs for staffing at the <b>Walton Lighthouse</b> - 10,000+ visitors annually	\$5,000	\$5,000	Full request meets policy.  Municipally-owned property operated by WADA.  Also receive other grants from East Hants totaling approx. \$9,000.
Maitland Fire Auxiliary Car Show	- 14 <sup>th</sup> annual car show (August 22) held in Maitland to benefit the Fire Hall with BBQ, music, prizes - 100 cars/drivers and 300-400 attendees	\$2,000	Recommend redirecting to Community Grant - Event Hosting (\$250-\$750)	Similar events are funded through Community Grant.
Maitland Days	- Single day (July 11) community event with free kids fun area, music, and some cultural activities. - 300 attendees	\$6,000	Recommend redirecting to Community Grant - Event Hosting (\$250-\$750)	Similar events are funded through Community Grant.
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$76,385</b>	<b>\$40,000</b>	

### STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

The Tourism Grant program aligns with the strong community key strategy within the East Hants Strategic Plan as tourism opportunities help showcase what the area has to offer, creating a sense of pride of place. Supporting tourism opportunities also enriches the quality of life for both residents and visitors. This grant program also aligns with the East Hants Tourism Strategy, which aims to enhance East Hants' tourism industry and attract visitors to this region of Nova Scotia.

### FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The approved Tourism Grant budget for the 2026/2027 fiscal year is \$40,000. The table below shows each group recommended to receive funding; their original request; the funding they could be allotted as per policy; and the final recommended funding amount in order to meet the \$40,000 budget.

The current balance of the Tourism Grant reserve is \$124,441.

Staff have recommended funding based on program policy, level of risk, and strategic alignment. However, Council may consider proportionately funding groups to the amount of 58.5% each to meet budget instead.

Applicant	Requested Funding	Recommended Funding (% of ask)	Alternative 1. Each group receives 58.5% of request to meet budget	Alternative 2. Funding per policy
MDDA	\$19,000	\$9,500 (50%)	\$11,113	\$19,000
EHHS	\$17,935	\$12,500 (70%)	\$10,490	\$12,500
Gore Trails	\$16,450	\$6,000 (36%)	\$9,622	\$6,000
Tide Fest	\$10,000	\$7,000 (70%)	\$5,849	\$10,000
WADA	\$5,000	\$5,000 (100%)	\$2,926	\$5,000
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$68,385</b>	<b>\$40,000</b>	<b>\$40,000</b>	<b>\$52,500</b>

Recommended to pursue Community Grant - Event Hosting (up to \$750 in funding):

- **Maitland Days Committee** - requested \$6,000
- **Maitland Car Show (Maitland Fire Auxiliary)** - requested \$2,000

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## Alternatives

### 1. Funding groups proportionately at 58.5% each to meet budget:

*Parks, Recreation and Culture Committee recommends to Council that the Tourism Grant funding recommendations totaling \$40,000 be approved for the following organizations:*

- *Maitland District Development Association - \$11,113*
- *East Hants Historical Society - \$10,490*
- *Gore Trails - \$9,622*
- *Come Home East Hants Association (Tide Fest) - \$5,849 toward facility rental costs*
- *Walton Area Development Association - \$2,926*

### 2. Funding groups at the full amount that policy allows, drawing \$12,500 from reserve:

*Parks, Recreation and Culture Committee recommends to Council that the Tourism Grant funding recommendations totaling \$52,500 be approved for the following organizations, with \$12,500 drawn from the Tourism Grant reserve:*

- *Maitland District Development Association - \$19,000*
- *East Hants Historical Society - \$12,500*
- *Come Home East Hants Association (Tide Fest) - \$10,000 toward facility rental costs*
- *Gore Trails - \$6,000*
- *Walton Area Development Association - \$5,000*

### 3. That the Parks, Recreation and Culture Committee recommend to Council alternate funding amounts for the Tourism Grant applicants.