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**Tourism.Defined.**

Haldimand County Economic Development Department has commissioned Twenty 31 Consulting, to complete this Strategic Plan to ensure the tourism sector contributes positively to the County's economic growth.

The information and data found in this report are current as of the date of submission to Haldimand County and subject to change given market forces and external variables.

December 18, 2016

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# Haldimand County Tourism Strategic Action Plan Executive Summary

This document serves as the Tourism Strategic Plan for Haldimand County, to guide tourism development over the next five years. The findings and insights behind the recommendations are drawn from comprehensive desk research, primary research with County business and government officials and stakeholder outreach.

The Plan is meant to serve as a guide to help strengthen the County’s tourism offerings and drive more visitors to the region. This in turn will create and sustain jobs and contribute to the local economy.

Four key pillars form the basis of the Plan, each with priority initiatives. The pillars are:

- Tourism Leadership & Resourcing
- Infrastructure & Support
- Product & Experience Development
- Marketing & Communications

Where possible, the Plan draws on existing County resources and decision points. The Plan is not meant to add unnecessary financial or bureaucratic strain on the County. With this in mind one of the central recommendations is for the set-up of Tourism Haldimand, a Destination Management Office (DMO), utilizing current staff and falling within the remit of the County’s Economic Development and Tourism division.

The DMO’s primary mandate is to steer the Plan forward and coordinate the tourism development and marketing efforts of both the County and its public and private sector partners.

Each of the pillars and associated priority initiatives includes a timeline for implementation/adoption and one or more measurement criteria (i.e., key performance indicators.) Successful tourism strategic plans need to be monitored, measured and re-evaluated on an on-going basis.

By adopting this Plan and ensuring effective leadership is in place to manage it, the County will be able to better harness the growth potential of the tourism sector.

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# Methodology

The Haldimand County Tourism Strategic Plan is based on feedback and observations from two in-market site visits conducted on August 31st, 2016 and October 6th, 2016 encompassing the Cayuga, Dunnville, Caledonia, Hagersville, Jarvis and Selkirk regions with a total of 31 tourism product experience and/or supplier visits.

In addition, 12 in-depth phone interviews with tourism stakeholders also took place between September 26th and October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016. A series of Haldimand County-specific questions were also added on Southwest Ontario Tourism's regular industry outreach survey. Unfortunately, due to a limited response rate, the results were reviewed, but used with caution.

Furthermore, a number of County planning, marketing and policy documents directly and in-directly related to tourism development were reviewed in detail, as were six relevant tourism research and strategy reports:

- 2013 Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport Tourism Statistics for Haldimand and Norfolk
- 2014 Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation Traveller Segmentation Profiles
- 2014-2017 Southwest Ontario Tourism Corporation Three-Year Strategy
- 2010 Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport Ontario Tourism Product Assessment Research Study
- 2007 Haldimand County Premier Ranked Tourist Destination Framework Project
- 2016 Elgin, Norfolk, and Haldimand Alternative Accommodation Study

Lastly, a total of four competitive and four tourism best-practice destinations were reviewed with observations noted on the relevance for Haldimand and rationale for the strategy pillars and recommendations.

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## Haldimand County's Current Tourism Situation and Future Opportunity

Haldimand County is where the waters of the Southern Grand River meet Lake Erie – offering visitors a very unique experience.

For nearly 300 years, the Grand River has been used for commerce and recreation. The Grand's varied resources, its historic echoes, cultural value and uniqueness as a river system are recognized nationally and internationally with its designation as a Canadian Heritage River. The County has established the picturesque "Grand River Scenic Parkway" Tour Route and benefits from Lake Erie's beautiful shoreline offering countless opportunities such as boating, windsurfing, water skiing, swimming and beaches.

Their unique, historical and picturesque communities offer visitors small town Ontario charm and hospitality. Agriculture is also an important aspect of Haldimand County where visitors can enjoy beautiful country vistas or buy farm fresh produce at one of the many farm and roadside markets. Festivals, fairs and events are also in abundance along with numerous museums and historical attractions.

Both the Southern Grand River and Lake Erie make Haldimand County a fishing enthusiast's paradise that is renowned throughout North America, in addition to appealing to golfers, hikers, cyclists, campers, birders, boaters, photographers, artists and sightseers.

Haldimand County has recognized that tourism is a powerful driver of growth. It creates jobs, generates municipal taxes, and can actively contribute to increasing the quality of life for residents. A great experience as a tourist may even persuade a visitor to settle in the community. However, sustainable growth that benefits the community and delivers exceptional experiences must be responsibly managed and well planned.

In commissioning this strategic plan for tourism, the County is ensuring that tourism growth meets the needs of the community as well as delivers competitive product that generates repeat visitation.

Tourism in Canada is a key growth industry. In fact, it is bigger than mining, forestry and agriculture. Currently, the low Canadian dollar encourages Canadians to spend their vacations in Canada and Americans to travel north of the border. Increased interest in local and community based tourism means that regions such as Haldimand County are well-positioned to leverage these trends in order to increase visitation numbers. However, competition is strong and to stand out in a crowded marketplace requires the basics to be firmly in place: a defined unique selling proposition (i.e., the Grand River and Lake Erie waterfront), clear signage welcoming visitors to the destination, market ready experiences, a strong, visible brand, tactical marketing and a coordinated industry working towards a clear tourism vision.

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## Haldimand County's Current Tourism Situation and Future Opportunity cont'd

It is known that the County is currently not fully capitalizing on its tourism potential. We have identified the six main issues currently hindering sustainable tourism growth. This report addresses these issues and makes recommendations for paving the way for sustained benefits from tourism.

**1) Not capitalizing on easy wins and biggest strengths:** The heart of Haldimand County is the Grand River and associated Lake Erie waterfront. For nature-hungry urbanites, a getaway to a serene community incorporating these water assets is a dream, but only if the waterfront is thriving, attractive, and has activity options. Developing and animating the Grand River and Lake Erie waterfront and connecting it with Haldimand's various communities would help to achieve much of what the County needs to do to become a successful tourism destination.

**2) Limited wayfinding and signage directing visitors within Haldimand County:** Clear and attractive signage signifies to a visitor that they have arrived somewhere worth going to. Furthermore, it directs visitors so they do not feel lost and forgotten and directs them to multiple tourism experiences within a destination. Signage is essential to establishing a place as a destination and increasing dispersal within the destination.

**3) Lack of market ready product and experiences:** The County is a wonderful community to live in. It has waterfront access, many charming downtowns, great festivals and events and an abundance of nature-based activities. However, most visitors don't have clear ways to access these elements that make the County an attractive place to live.

**4) Lack of defined brand and coordinated marketing:** Destinations courting the GTA market have significant competition to contend with. Within a two-hour drive of Toronto there are numerous small towns, regions and recreational areas all trading on their quaint ambiance and accessible nature. To stand out in the minds of consumers, a defined brand and a clear offer is required. The goal is to identify Haldimand County's unique selling proposition (USP) and then work to ensure that when people hear the word 'Haldimand' they associate it immediately with the USP (for example, Prince Edward County and culinary excellence). A defined brand is fundamental to the County becoming a more successful tourism destination.

**5) Secondary focus for tourism leadership and delivery:** One of the challenges of tourism development in Haldimand is the limited engagement between the County team and tourism operators and between industry operators. Good tourism planning and development should be both industry-led and market driven. This report recommends a centralized unit for managing tourism in Haldimand County, that actively collaborates with other relevant organizations and tourism businesses.



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## Haldimand County's Current Tourism Situation and Future Opportunity cont'd

**6) No clear tourism vision for Haldimand County:** A common goal will give stakeholders direction and support. The Tourism Strategic Plan will help address this by providing the strategic priorities for tourism development in the County. As part of the branding exercise the County should address the vision – what type of destination does Haldimand hope to be?

**7) Limited commercial 'roofed' accommodation:** With the absence of substantial accommodation options (i.e., beyond select B&B's and seasonal campgrounds), Haldimand County's prospects become limited in driving over-night getaway travellers. At the same time realistic investment in commercial accommodation will be stymied unless demand can be proven especially in shoulder seasons. As a start, this plan will attempt to maximize opportunities with existing visitors to the County including seasonal campers, cottagers and day trippers to build out the tourism potential. Once demand is proven, Haldimand will likely be in a better place to attract a commercial accommodation investor.

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# Haldimand County's Market and Audience Opportunity

## Market Targets.

A review of RTO1's market data and our analysis of stakeholder's perceptions, suggests Haldimand is a draw for both the broader Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and the Hamilton area. While there is an absence of credible statistics and market research for Haldimand County (see next), we believe these two geographic regions should be considered Haldimand County's likely market focus.

## Audience Targets

The following are the likely audience targets for tourism in Haldimand County (in priority order)

- Residents – to encourage Haldimand County residents to explore more of their region and engage in tourism activities (i.e., including the current festivals and events and exploring the region when friends and relatives visit)
- Cottagers and seasonal campers – consultations with stakeholders suggest this audience group is largely untapped and can be encouraged to explore more of the County and engage in local festivals and events
- Potential Visitors
  - Couples looking for a day or 1+ night active touring getaway
  - Families looking for weekend and week-long Ontario vacation experiences largely in the summer (i.e., June to September) timeframe
- These priority target groups align with the Ontario Segmentation Profiles of the Knowledge Seekers, Mellow Vacationers and Nature Seekers. The following pages provide further detail on the Ontario Segmentation and each of these profiles.



# Ontario’s Traveller Segmentation

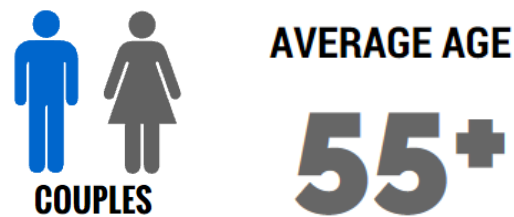
Ontario’s Traveller Segmentation profiles were developed through research and consumer insight to better attract North American visitors based on specific travel needs, interests and motivations. The research divides North American travellers into 12 segments. Our recommendation is that Haldimand County focuses on the three categories below (representing approximately 28% of the North American travel consumer population) which align with the prioritized audience targets recommended. An overview of each segment is provided in the following pages.

Ontario Traveller Segment	Key Profile Highlights	Alignment with Audience Target	Reasoning
Knowledge Seeker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Driven by a desire to explore culture, history, architecture and natural landmarks</li> <li>Often focus on museums, galleries, historical sites and sight-seeing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Residents</li> <li>✓ Cottagers / Campers</li> <li>✓ VFR</li> </ul>	<p>The knowledge seekers are the prime visitor segment to visit Haldimand County’s charming downtowns and historical architecture and County fairs and events. A very cost effective method of engaging this segment is via earned media (both mainstream and ethnic media) and targeted digital and social media ads, largely in the GTA. The themes should highlight the County’s cultural and historical product (e.g., Harvest of Haldimand Country Dinner)</p> <p>This segment, mostly couples 55+ years of age, tend to have an above average travel budget. They will likely visit for the day to learn about the downtown centres, museums, archives, historic sites and the agriculture history.</p>
Mellow Vacationer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek rest and relaxation, often in nature</li> <li>Often visiting friends and family</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Cottagers / Campers</li> <li>✓ Potential Visitors</li> </ul>	<p>Haldimand County currently caters to the mellow vacationer with 57 cottage and vacation rentals (i.e., AirBnB, etc.) accounting for a significant portion of its accommodations.</p> <p>The mellow vacationer’s interests within Haldimand County would include nature, trails and the pristine water way. They are a good target segment for the Lake Erie Waterfront, cycling trails, provincial parks and conservation areas.</p>
Nature Lover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Motivated by outdoor activities and adventures</li> <li>High interest in camping and RVing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Residents</li> <li>✓ Cottagers / Campers</li> <li>✓ Potential Visitors</li> </ul>	<p>Nature lovers are mostly families looking to be active outdoors and create family memories. With lower than average budgets, this segment is a prime target for Haldimand’s numerous campgrounds, provincial parks, conservation areas, outfitters, cycling trails and motorsports.</p>

# Ontario's Traveller Segmentation – Knowledge Seekers

Travellers in this segment are looking to understand and appreciate the places they visit and are more interested in stimulating their minds than resting and relaxing. They are driven by a desire to explore culture, history, architecture and natural landmarks and often focus on museums, galleries, historical sites and sight-seeing.

## Knowledge Seeker Demographics



## Knowledge Seeker Interests



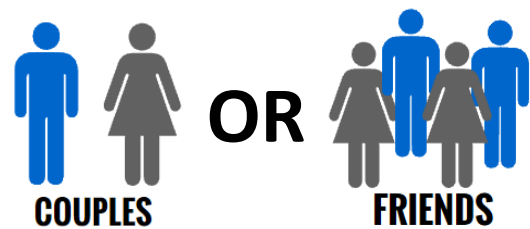
## Knowledge Seeker Engagement



# Ontario's Traveller Segmentation – Mellow Vacationers

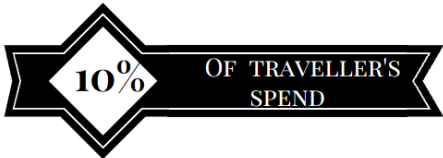
This segment wants a relaxed and low key vacation. They seek rest and relaxation looking for tranquility away from home, often in nature. They are not seeking new experiences or activities as they tend to be fairly quiet and low energy. They often travel with the purpose of visiting friends and family.

### Mellow Vacationer Demographics

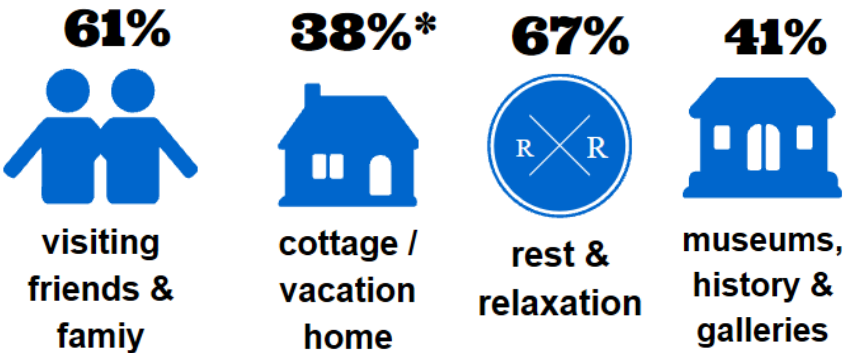


AVERAGE AGE

40+



### Mellow Vacationer Interests:



### Mellow Vacationer Engagement

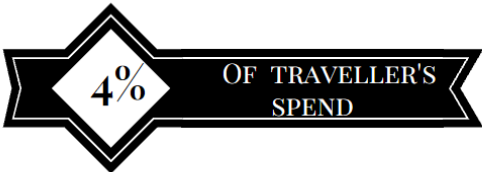
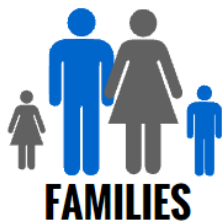


\* This is well above the average of 23%

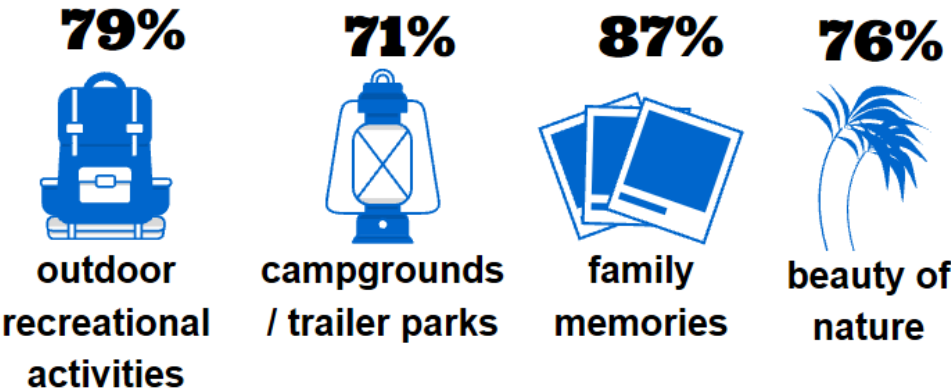
# Ontario's Traveller Segmentation – Nature Lovers

Nature lovers are typically families with kids looking to explore, discover new places and be active outdoors (hiking, canoeing, fishing, visiting beaches). They are inspired by nature and creating family memories. They often have a lower than average travel budget and are very happy to be camping in a tent or RV.

## Nature Lover Demographics



## Nature Lover Interests:



## Nature Lover Engagement



# Haldimand County’s Tourism Development: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

*This SWOT analysis was informed by the consultant’s research, site visits and stakeholder engagement.*

<div><div>STRENGTHS</div><div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Beautiful waterfront along the Grand River and Lake Erie</li><li>• Charming downtowns with examples of historical and picturesque Ontario architecture (Caledonia, Dunnville, Hagersville, Jarvis and Cayuga)</li><li>• Historical sites and museums including links to Canada’s formation</li><li>• Robust and diverse festivals and events</li><li>• Close proximity to GTA – Canada’s largest outbound tourism market</li><li>• The repeat visitors that come to Haldimand annually during the summer at their cottage/camping etc.</li></ul></div></div>	<div><div>WEAKNESSES</div><div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Limited product and experiences visitors can purchase and engage with</li><li>• Limited accommodation options</li><li>• Less-frequent interaction and engagement between the County and tourism businesses and between tourism businesses</li><li>• No defined County brand position and identity</li><li>• Almost non-existent County and industry statistics and research on the health of the Haldimand County tourism industry and overall size</li><li>• Limited funds dedicated to tourism development and promotion</li></ul></div></div>
<div><div>OPPORTUNITIES</div><div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improve the waterfront experience (including soft adventure activities and dining options) and connect it to the broader County</li><li>• Continue to build on Haldimand’s quality of place</li><li>• Education and training for tourism providers</li><li>• Enhanced product and experience development</li><li>• Enhanced marketing around festivals and events</li><li>• Develop visitor research through surveys to better plan and market</li><li>• Leverage seasonal camping communities’ presence in County to encourage them to explore more within the County</li></ul></div></div>	<div><div>THREATS</div><div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Competition from other Ontario destinations with well established tourism development and marketing activities including: Niagara on the Lake; Kitchener-Waterloo; Explorers' Edge (including Muskoka and Algonquin) and Kingston</li><li>• Under utilization of the Grand River and Lake Erie waterfront (and significant access is private)</li><li>• Norfolk County’s and Hamilton’s continued tourism development and investment – and possible draw for Haldimand residents and likely visitors</li></ul></div></div>

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## The Tourism Strategic Plan – The Main Goal and Medium-Term Objectives

The goal of this Tourism Strategic Plan is to **set the ground work to improve the quantity and quality of tourism within Haldimand County over the next five years**, with the eventual objectives of 1) being able to effectively measure and assess tourism's impact on the County's economy as a key revenue generator and job provider; and 2) build the business case to **possibly** attract one or more commercial accommodation investors/providers based on an identified and growing tourism demand.

**Goal:** Setting the ground work to improve the quantity and quality of tourism within Haldimand County

- Rationale: Haldimand County recognizes the power of tourism to be an active contributor to the local economy including creating and sustaining jobs; providing and circulating new revenue within the County; having sustainable and profitable tourism business contributing to the tax base. For this to happen the County needs a plan in place to effectively develop and grow tourism. A key part of this is product and experience development.

### Objectives:

1. Being able to effectively measure and assess tourism's impact on the County's economy as a key revenue generator and job provider
  - Rationale: In order to assess tourism's impact the County needs to first benchmark key metrics (i.e., total visitors; visitor profiles; etc.) and then track annual performance against the benchmark results. Sound tourism development and management in Canada needs to be research based.
2. Build the business case to **possibly** attract one or more commercial accommodation investors/providers
  - Rationale: A four-season, commercial accommodation asset (i.e., a hotel and/or motel with 100+ rooms) will be a game changer for Haldimand County. It will provide a much needed accommodation option for visitors to Haldimand County to spend one or more nights exploring the County. Many operators (e.g., Ruthven) believe their businesses will greatly benefit from a permanent accommodation provider where their guests/patrons can stay longer and experience more in the County as opposed to staying in Hamilton or only coming to the County as day-trippers. Furthermore, all of Haldimand's peer and competitive destinations have at least one four season commercial accommodation asset – this in essence will put Haldimand on a more equal footing.

# Tourism Strategic Plan – Main Pillars

The report is organized in four thematic pillars. Under each pillar are actionable recommendations designed to pave the way for sustainable, valuable and long-term tourism growth.

Pillar 1. Tourism Leadership & Resourcing	Pillar 3. Product & Experience Development
1. Formal design and set up of Tourism Haldimand.	1. Support Haldimand County businesses to participate in tourism product development.
2. Outline the governance structure of Tourism Haldimand.	2. Create Grand River and Lake Erie waterfront activities and itineraries that are compelling for tourists.
3. Build a simple Stakeholder Communications Plan.	3. Build Touring tourism experiences that encourage visitors to explore more of the County.
4. Implement a system to collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative metrics on Haldimand’s tourism industry and impact.	4. Build History & Culture experiences that draw visitors to Haldimand.
5. Identify a distinct budget for Tourism Haldimand.	5. Build Festivals & Events packages that encourage visitors to stay more than a day in Haldimand.
Pillar 2. Infrastructure & Support	Pillar 4. Marketing & Communications
1. Embrace the Grand River and Lake Erie waterfront as the County’s key demand generator and tourism experience – forming the basis of the Country’s tourism brand positioning.	1. Undergo a brand positioning exercise for Tourism Haldimand.
2. Improve signage & wayfinding.	2. Market Haldimand County as a destination.
3. Improve visitor experiences & visitor information services.	



# The Haldimand County Context

We understand that the mission of Haldimand County is to embrace the cultural heritage of the area and build municipal foundations on the values of the community. This Plan is developed around your mission and aligns with the County’s three key corporate pillars by providing recommendations encompassing:

- Investing in high-quality experiences within the natural environment;
- Investing in a visible, positive image of the County; and
- Enhancing community support and engagement of the tourism industry.

Haldimand County Key Corporate Pillars	Tourism Strategic Plan Pillars and Alignment
1. Growing our Local Economy by Creating Economic Opportunity	Pillar 2: Investing in infrastructure Pillar 3: Building history and culture experiences for visitors to explore the County
2. Community Vibrancy & Healthy Community	Pillar 3: Investing in high-quality experiences within the natural environment
3. Corporate Image & Efficient Government	Pillar 4: Investing in a visible, positive image of the County Pillar 1: Enhancing community support and engagement of the tourism industry.

Focusing on the above pillars and recommendations are steps toward addressing the mission of Haldimand County. However, the strategic pillars of the County’s mission incorporate a variety of positive initiatives that need to be made easily and clearly visible to potential visitors. This reinforces the recommendation that Haldimand County needs to develop a cohesive brand that highlights the County’s assets, infrastructure and experiences through a positive reputation and exciting image that attracts visitors and inspires them to return.

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## Pillar 1: Tourism Leadership & Resourcing

There is a direct correlation between providing clear and direct tourism leadership and realizing upward growth in tourism arrivals, improved dispersal of tourism receipts and the creation of viable tourism jobs. Destinations currently realizing this include Vancouver and Whistler in BC, Banff in Alberta, Kingston in Ontario, and the Explorers' Edge region in Ontario. Tourism development in a region such as Haldimand County benefits from having a central manager and/or organizer, following a strategy and regularly measuring performance to ensure adherence to the strategy and overall vision.

We have observed that the current tourism leadership at the County is committed to tourism development, however, beyond select suppliers and operators, there is limited engagement and interaction between tourism businesses. Sound tourism development in Canada heavily relies on cooperation and collaboration between the public and private sectors. If the present environment continues, the County's tourism potential will not be realized, which translates to slow or stagnant growth in tourism arrivals and receipts, limited job creation and limited net benefit of tourism to Haldimand's tax base.

Regional and municipal organizations currently involved in travel and tourism development, marketing and delivery, require a clear set of guidelines and accountability measures in order to best deliver on their mandate. Haldimand County and its partners, are no exception and recognize this.

We recommend the formal set-up of a central tourism management organization (i.e., working title 'Tourism Haldimand') operating as a Destination Management Organization within the County's Economic Development and Tourism Division that will lead and coordinate Haldimand's overall tourism development and be responsible for its competitiveness. To be clear this is not a major change beyond what is currently happening, but rather a formal statement. The DMO will coordinate all tourism related topics including festival permits, welcoming, accessibility, sustainability, product development, promotion, etc. This follows a similar trend of other Ontario and Canadian small and mid-size cities and regions where one separate division of the city/regional government and/or a stand-alone tourism Destination Management Organization (DMO) has been set up to guide tourism growth.

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## Pillar 1: Tourism Leadership & Resourcing, cont'd

Tourism Haldimand will be responsible for leveraging, rather than re-creating, existing resources both in the County government structure and clarifying these roles which will include clear performance measures for Year 1, 2 and 3 of the Plan, in respect to delivery of tourism services specifically for the County.

The objective of this pillar is to establish a clear tourism leadership organization in the form of a Destination Management Organization for Haldimand County and provide the County with the ability to steer tourism delivery towards a cohesive plan, management and performance assessment.

### Why is Tourism Haldimand important?

- Given the County's limited tourism infrastructure and number of tourism operators, Tourism Haldimand has an important role to play as both a catalyst for tourism development and capacity builder with local tourism businesses – the County is likely the only organization of sufficient size (i.e., budget and staff resources) to provide leadership, training and coordination to the Haldimand tourism industry.
- The relatively limited business to business interaction among the County's tourism operators would greatly benefit from a coordinating body.
- Tourism Haldimand would be able to engage with tourism operators to ensure adoption and embrace of the proposed tourism brand and clearly outline the business benefits.

# Pillar 1: Tourism Leadership & Resourcing cont'd

Recommendation	Key Objective	Context & Reasoning	How to Measure
1. Design and set up of Tourism Haldimand as a Destination Management Organization within the County's Economic Development and Tourism Division.	Establish a 'one-stop shop' for tourism decision making, planning, development, marketing and promotion and performance assessment for the County under Tourism Haldimand with a dedicated professional resource person.	<p>There is currently a number of resources at the County coordinating and marketing tourism. While Tourism Haldimand currently exists, the intention of this Pillar is to formalize under a DMO. Tourism Haldimand will provide a forum to coordinate all of these efforts under a centralized plan resulting in more structured and effective growth. Furthermore, where events and assets are justified as a tourism investment, they should be directed by Tourism Haldimand.</p> <p>Our recommendation is for Tourism Haldimand to fall within the mandate of the Economic Development and Tourism Division and be led by the current Manager, Economic Development &amp; Tourism. This manager will lead the tourism development efforts for the County and be responsible for the execution of this Plan.</p> <p>In practical terms this means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting up the industry and consumer microsites under Tourism Haldimand (i.e., Pillar 3, recommendation 2)</li> <li>• Setting up a budget line item within the Economic Development and Tourism Division budget (i.e., accounting for all tourism related items)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation after Year 1, 2 and 3 of how Tourism Haldimand has performed as a coordinating unit based on assessment of all concerned internal and external stakeholders</li> </ul>

## Pillar 1: Tourism Leadership & Resourcing cont'd

Recommendation	Key Objective	Context & Reasoning	How to Measure
2. Outline the governance structure of Tourism Haldimand including formalizing an industry/County advisory board.	Establish a governing body with mandate to advise on Tourism Haldimand's annual plan (subject to Council's review and approval), advise on strategic direction, monitor and evaluate annual progress	<p>Progressive tourism development in Canada is a result of research-based and industry-led decisions. Tourism Haldimand should be led and informed by an advisory board ideally comprised of five to seven experienced professionals drawn from Haldimand-based tourism organizations and businesses (ideally drawn from a balanced sample of accommodation, attractions, events and food and retail operators). The individuals on the advisory board can be selected for rotating two year terms. The intention of the advisory board is to provide Tourism Haldimand with informed and factual opinions and advice; and possibly help co-create and/or vet the annual workplan stemming from this strategy.</p> <p>Note: To avoid duplication with any planned advisory board for Economic Development, this Tourism Haldimand advisory board should be a sub-set committee – the individuals can be drawn from the existing Tourism Network and likely include four to five tourism stakeholders.</p>	<p>Establishment of Advisory Board</p> <p>Evaluation of how the Advisory Board functions in its role (self-assessment survey)</p>
3. Build simple Stakeholder Communications Plan for Haldimand's tourism industry.	Create a steady flow of information from Tourism Haldimand to stakeholders (i.e., including the Tourism Network), to provide valuable news and information – all designed to boost product and experience development	<p>An annual stakeholder communication plan which includes pre-planned distribution to the County's database of tourism stakeholders will go a long way to helping boost tourism development in Haldimand. This plan should align with economic development communications and allow for economic development events, newsletters and communications.</p> <p>The plan should include all industry facing platforms such as newsletters, social media and the (proposed) Tourism Haldimand industry website. In all these channels the content should focus on industry trends, next big trends, relevant research, emerging traveller profiles, data on the value tourism brings, case studies supporting collaboration and packaging, marketing tips, new tourism products and operators in the County and upcoming industry workshops.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Tourism Network quarterly meeting should continue to take place and be combined with Pillar 2, recommendation 1 – i.e., training presentations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set up of the plan and evaluation of impact in boosting communications between the County and businesses</li> </ul>

## Pillar 1: Tourism Leadership & Resourcing cont'd

Recommendation	Key Objective	Context & Reasoning	How to Measure
4. Implement a system to collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative metrics on Haldimand's tourism industry and impact	Obtain a clear picture on the number of visitors to Haldimand County and measure both the growth and impact of tourism	<p>Currently, there is a lack of Haldimand County specific tourism data, which makes it difficult to understand what the impact of the industry is on the County's economy and overall development. Collecting some data on the performance of the tourism industry should help both the County (i.e., Tourism Haldimand) and private businesses plan for the future, and build stronger businesses. Furthermore, relevant data on the economic impact of tourism to the County should help make a better case to residents and the County leadership about the importance of the industry and justify prioritisation in funding and investment. Understanding the value of tourism critically informs marketing and product development, both for the public and private sector.</p> <p>We have found through doing research for the Haldimand Tourism Strategic Plan, there is a limited amount of information at the County level on the size, scope and current landscape of tourism within the County. While the Ontario government conducts statistical research on visitation at the RTO level (albeit with a three year delay period) there exists no commercial, academic nor government sources of data specifically relevant for Haldimand County. Therefore, we suggested the creation of an annual 'Tourism Snapshot' to be implemented by the County (and possibly with funding provided by the Federal Student Work Experiences Program: <a href="http://jobs-emploi.gc.ca/fswep-pfete/index-eng.php">http://jobs-emploi.gc.ca/fswep-pfete/index-eng.php</a>). The snapshot should include two components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A survey that asks stakeholders about the past year (i.e., quantitative metrics on visitation and perception of visitors). Participation is anonymous and voluntary, but only those who participate will have access to aggregated data. At minimum this can help inform who is visiting Haldimand, where they are coming from and the perceptions of the County as a tourism destination.</li> <li>• An online and/or intercept visitor survey advertised to existing seasonal cottagers and campers to build a quantitative visitor profile and assess feedback on key initiatives.</li> </ul> <p>The 2017 results can form the benchmark, with subsequent follow on years compared to assess progress and growth.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of the Tourism Snapshot and on-going tracking against Year 1 benchmark</li> </ul>

## Pillar 1: Tourism Leadership & Resourcing cont'd

Recommendation	Key Objective	Context & Reasoning	How to Measure
5. Identify a distinct budget for Tourism Haldimand focused on product development and marketing/promotion.	Ensure consistent and sustained funding of Tourism Haldimand matched against annual progress and performance related to the Tourism Strategic Action Plan	<p>The trend in North America is for City and regional tourism marketing and development boards to be self-funding organizations based on a collected DMF – Destination Marketing Fee. Ontario Provincial Government legislation provides for municipal tourism organizations to enact regulations to collect and administer these funds. However, in the case of Haldimand County, the lack of commercial accommodation providers and the relatively small base of tourism operators renders a DMF somewhat non-relevant. Additionally, some DMOs have a 'pay-to-play' model offering membership in return for joint marketing and promotion activities. While this membership model is effective for medium and large DMOs with major attraction and accommodation providers, it rarely works for destinations in rural/semi-rural locations with a small tourism supplier base.</p> <p>Therefore, for the five years of this plan the County instead should set up and manage a specific tourism development budget under Tourism Haldimand.</p> <p>1) As a start, a budget of \$75,000 for Year 1 should be considered the minimum investment needed to properly fund Tourism Haldimand initiatives and programs. The budget breaks down as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$50,000 for marketing and promotion; branding (i.e., Pillar 3)</li> <li>• \$25,000 for product development (i.e., Pillar 2)</li> </ul> <p>2) Additionally, the County should conduct an audit to identify all aspects of direct and in-direct tourism funding and partnership support beyond government sources – as part of the research for this strategy we reviewed Destination Canada's, Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation's and RTO1's partnership programmes. RTO1 provides the most comprehensive list of partnership and funding opportunities available of potential for Tourism Haldimand and/or County tourism businesses:</p> <p><a href="http://swotc.ca/industry-resources-tools/partnership-funding">http://swotc.ca/industry-resources-tools/partnership-funding</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up within year 1</li> </ul>



## Pillar 2: Infrastructure & Support

The goal of this Pillar is to create a Tourism & Visitor Friendly Haldimand County, creating an environment that encourages the development of new and existing demand generators, and celebrates the arrival of visitors.

Recommendation	Key Objective	Context & Reasoning	How to Measure
1. Embrace the Grand River and Lake Erie waterfront specifically for tourism development and the County’s main and central demand generator.	To develop an inviting and attractive Grand River tourism experience and Lake Erie waterfront, allowing the County to promote itself as a unique and compelling destination with this asset as its central tourism offering	<p>The Grand River is at the heart of Haldimand County. At the same time the Lake Erie waterfront provides a picturesque backdrop for cottagers and seasonal campers. While many jurisdictions in Ontario have river systems and lake front access, the geographic location and historical significance of Haldimand County’s assets provide a compelling story for the County to position their tourism brand. The County has encouraged utilization of the water system including for fishing, boating, cruising, bird watching, cycling and motorcycle touring. These activities however, have not been fully expanded and exploited to encourage visitors to stay longer and engage in multiple activities while in the County.</p> <p>The County has developed parts of the water system including providing signage, sight-seeing/rest stops and developing a series of experience brochures (i.e., cycling routes, etc.). These are good steps, however somewhat limited in focus. Our recommendation would be to conduct a full spectrum, in-house water system development study. The County team has the resources internally to conduct this study, ideally addressing the following points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. How can the County encourage more private sector operators to set up and sustainably exploit the water system (e.g., boating outfitters and tour operators)?</li><li>2. How can the water system be developed into the County’s main demand generator for tourism?</li><li>3. How can visitors using the water system be encouraged to spend longer in the County and spend money including on retail and food and beverage options?</li><li>4. How can the County develop a pedestrian friendly waterfront in key areas including utilizing festivals and events to draw visitors?</li><li>5. Does the County have the right policies and bylaws in place to encourage and support tourism operators (e.g., Food trucks in Port Maitland)?</li></ol> <p>The intention of the study is to identify the key planning ideas and a systematic framework to encourage on-going development (and build on the work conducted for The Lakescape Action Plan).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conducting the internal study within the first 12 months of adoption of this strategy</li></ul>

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Recommendation	Key Objective	Context & Reasoning	How to Measure
1. Embrace the Grand River and Lake Erie waterfront specifically for tourism development and the County’s main and central demand generator, cont’d.		<p>Ideally, the Economic Development and Tourism Division appoints one or more individuals to spearhead this project including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Desk research to assess any previous development and/or planning studies with direct or in-direct focus on the Grand River and /or Lake Erie Waterfront.</li><li>• Stakeholder engagement including with County businesses operating around the Grand River and/or Lake Erie Waterfront; and residents including an online survey and possibly one or more townhall sessions.</li><li>• A facilitated workshop session with a select number of informed stakeholders/residents.</li></ul> <p>Based on this process, the County should draft up the findings in a public document for resident and stakeholder review and Council input. To be clear this would only be an assessment study for informational purposes.</p>	

## Pillar 2: Infrastructure & Support cont'd

Recommendation	Key Objective	Context & Reasoning	How to Measure
2. Continue to improve Signage & Wayfinding to encourage greater dispersal within the County	To further develop Haldimand as a destination and encourage visitors to find and explore multiple tourism assets and experiences	<p>Effective community signage attracts visitors, provides direction and information, and plays a key role in ensuring that visitors can locate a community’s tourism products and experiences. As well, quality signage sends a subtle but crucial message to a visitor or potential visitor that a community is a place to visit, and worth the time and effort that a visit requires.</p> <p>While we do recognize the County has taken positive steps to improve signage including routes and waterfront interpretative signs, findings from the interviews, in addition to first-hand experience, highlight that the signage and wayfinding in Haldimand County is below the standards of a tourist region seeking to become a destination. Signage is somewhat limited and doesn’t help tell a story – the story of Haldimand County’s history and future.</p> <p>Quality signage can be very impactful to a destination. An effective signage program can and will improve access, enhance the visitor experience and increase dispersal.</p> <p>What’s needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of a Tourism Signage Team (team to ideally be cross-divisional and also include stakeholders and an informed non-local)</li> <li>• Existing signage review and inventory keeping in mind possible touring routes and dispersing visitors within the County (e.g., do the current touring signs highlight food and beverage options along the routes?)</li> <li>• Prioritized list of required signs with implementation costs</li> <li>• Allocation of signage budget once the existing program is renewed</li> <li>• Design requirements for all County signage (e.g., consistent messaging, quality standards, brand standards – see pillar #4)</li> <li>• Continue to promote the Installation of navigation signs at key tourism assets (e.g., Ruthven) to other tourism assets (e.g., Haldimand County Museum), through the County’s Tourism and Agricultural Directional Signage Program</li> <li>• Installation of interpretive signs corresponding to the main proposed product development categories (e.g., highlighting historical significance, thematic exploration signs particular to cycling and motorcycling routes, highlighting waterfront activities with food and beverage/accommodation options)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satisfaction of tourists with signage (i.e., identified through an annual survey)</li> </ul>

## Pillar 2: Infrastructure & Support cont'd

Recommendation	Key Objective	Context & Reasoning	How to Measure
3. To phase-out the County funding of the current visitor information centres	Improving the quality and access to tourism information via digital channels and a seasonal guide	<p>Currently, the County has three visitor information centres. These are under utilized and likely a cost vs. benefit budget item. Digital and online information and influencing sources are more and more the go-to for prospective and current visitors to a destination. That said, given the County’s large population of seasonal cottagers and campers, a re-designed hardcopy guide and/or a micro-site communications campaign would likely help stimulate more interaction of these visitors within the County (i.e., attending festivals and events and spending money in County businesses).</p> <p>Our recommendation would be as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before the start of the 2017 tourism high season the County should provide notice of its intention to stop funding the visitor information centres.</li> <li>• In place the County should announce plans to set up and manage a two fold tourism information campaign including a redesigned tourism brochure focused on existing visitors to the County (i.e., content, tone and messages should address existing visitors, i.e., including seasonal cottagers and campers) and an actively managed tourism microsite on what’s happening in the County.</li> <li>• The look and feel of the brochure should be developed according to the new brand developed (see Pillar #4) and must tell stories and experiences of the main product categories, routes, new experiences and packages/itineraries being offered (e.g., imagery showcasing a couple’s bike trip through the Lake View Tour including imagery of viewpoints captured, activities and dining along the way), highlighting experiences of new products and/or packages (e.g., fishing trip followed by eating your fish at Deb’s cuisine)</li> <li>• This campaign can be launched to both County residents and current visitors (i.e., via signage and/or database marketing – see Pillar #4).</li> <li>• The tourism information campaign will therefore become the principle avenue for the County to communicate what’s on offer and what is happening in Haldimand.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development and launch of the campaign and seasonal feedback by stakeholders and tourists (i.e., identified via an annual survey)</li> </ul>

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## Pillar 3: Product Development

The consultation process made it clear that Haldimand County residents are passionate about the County as a place to live, work, and play. However, the process also unveiled a clear lack of tourism products/experiences that visitors can purchase and that celebrate what makes the County great for residents. As well, there is an even greater lack of products that position Haldimand as the ideal place to stay while exploring all that the Grand River and Lake Erie waterfront region has to offer. In short, it's essential for the County to help create Haldimand tourism products visitors can buy. Budget, resources, and the fact destinations known for one or two things stand-out far stronger than those which try to be everything for everyone, means the County needs to prioritize what product categories it needs to focus on. Using insight from our consultation and research, we identified the following four key tourism product areas for the County to focus on developing further, with the support of its private sector suppliers and operators. In order of priority:

1. The Grand River and Lake Erie waterfront & boating
2. Touring (i.e., destination exploration) tourism – cycling, motorcycling, etc.
3. History & culture tourism
4. Festivals & events

Having two to three unique products in each of these categories will both help carve the image of Haldimand into the minds of the target market, and also allow visitors to have access to actual, tangible experiences they can sink their teeth into and tell their friends and family about. While the County should not be tasked with creating all products and packages, it needs to be a very strong supporter of County businesses to build and market these experiences. The recommendations in this pillar are for products to be developed from the ground up, so the tourism businesses will thoroughly embrace them.

Please see the Appendix for more information on moving from tourism routes (i.e., touring or exploration travel) to itineraries and packages. Also included are some of the options available to the County in terms of 'taking the packages' to market.

## Pillar 3: Product Development - Rationale

The following table provides the rationale for why Haldimand County should focus on and further develop each of the recommended tourism product areas – all four align with those product areas identified as priority product and experience categories by RTO1 – Ontario’s Southwest.

Recommended Tourism Product Area	Rationale
The Grand River and Lake Erie waterfront & boating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Large natural asset cutting across the County and touching multiple communities</li><li>- Historic significance and a key geographic feature which has shaped the County’s farming culture</li><li>- Current and prospective opportunities for soft adventure tourism product development including boating, fishing, etc.</li><li>- Major draw for new and repeat seasonal cottagers and campers and anglers</li><li>- Great potential to brand Haldimand’s tourism experience as the signature experience</li></ul>
Touring tourism – cycling, motorcycling, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Existing investment can be leveraged including routing signage and maps</li><li>- Growth tourism segment (i.e., cycling) with appeals to Haldimand’s recommended segment targets</li><li>- Potential to expand dispersal and length of stay within the County</li></ul>
History & Culture tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Great untapped potential for Haldimand County to exploit increasing consumer interest in Canadian history: including links to Canada 150, American Loyalist history and rural/farming Ontario culture</li><li>- Existing top quality tourism assets to leverage (i.e., Museums) and package</li></ul>
Festivals & Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Haldimand County’s existing Festivals and Events appeal to multiple audiences but are largely marketed to local residents</li><li>- Festivals and Events provide a trigger to visit Haldimand and/or venture beyond a seasonal cottage or campground into the broader community</li></ul>

# Pillar 3: Product Development, cont'd

Recommendation	Key Objective	Context & Reasoning	How to Measure
1. Support County businesses to participate in tourism product development.	Provide necessary training, guidelines and communications to support the County in its efforts to become a tourism friendly region.	<p>Smart tourism product development involves a multi-layered approach, and successful product requires the active participation of local businesses. The active participation of local businesses in tourism product development and delivery creates a community where people want to live and play – arguably, the goal for the County. The disparate nature of tourism knowledge and participation in the County is a barrier to success. This recommendation will seek to overcome this barrier by providing pragmatic, tangible training standards and opening communication channels that will further support tourism development in Haldimand.</p> <p>Currently the County itself does not have much packaged and promoted product. Initially the County’s role in building Haldimand specific product will be to facilitate the design of packages as well as marketing the products and linking to the suppliers who create them. Following the implementation of this strategy, the County should be shifting towards a supporting role, while industry players take the lead on product development.</p> <p>What’s Needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design Haldimand-centric products and events, ensuring that products leverage local and surrounding events and activities, have a strategic seasonal spread, differentiate Haldimand from surrounding areas and complement existing calendar of events (i.e., Pre and post event/festival activities to lengthen stays).</li> <li>• Structured into packages that vary in length (day trips to 1+ night stays), ensure 2 – 3 packages per priority product segment. Packages should include activities and services that can be purchased, including accommodations (i.e., B&amp;B’s), dining, gated attractions, guided adventure experiences, etc.</li> <li>• While jurisdictions across Ontario want to attract overnight visitors, a set number of packages should be directed to cottagers and seasonal campers to encourage them to explore more of the County (i.e., attend a County-promoted Festival or Event, etc.).</li> <li>• Once identified, these packages should be launched on the County’s tourism microsite.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create industry specific tourism newsletter and events calendar</li> <li>• Create market ready guidelines for stakeholders</li> <li>• With the support of RTO1, implement product/packaging workshops</li> </ul>



### Pillar 3: Product Development, cont'd

Recommendation	Key Objective	Context & Reasoning	How to Measure
1. Support County businesses to participate in tourism product development, cont'd.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide product and experience development training through the Tourism Network quarterly meetings by incorporating a 1 hour training, discussion or workshop. Topics to include: Understanding Your Customer; Building Experiences (e.g., customer service from beginning to end, how to manage bookings, packaging products, building relationships); Marketing Experiences to Your Customer (e.g., defining your markets, basics of social media); Market Ready Criteria (e.g., basic business requirements, operating hours, communicating with customers).</li><li>• Future consideration to include quarterly webinar training.</li></ul> <p>Best Practice Example “Destination British Columbia” found in Appendix</p>	

### Pillar 3: Product Development, cont'd

Recommendation	Key Objective	Context & Reasoning	How to Measure
2. Create Grand River and Lake Erie waterfront activities that are compelling for tourists.	Create reasons to explore the Grand River and Lake Erie waterfront, while supporting local businesses to create tourism products and experiences.	<p>The Grand River and Lake Erie waterfront is an underutilized resource. It is largely disconnected from the various downtown cores and there are insufficient reasons to visit it, apart from one-off specific activities like fishing. The handful of boating and fishing outfitters should be encouraged to further develop their offerings via guided packages and more rounded experiences. This is more challenging and will likely entail the County championing one or two businesses as best-practice examples.</p> <p>Reasons to visit and explore the Grand River and Lake Erie waterfront need to include recreational opportunities, such as cycling, paddling, boating, and food and beverage. Providing simple things like waterfront dining options and bike rentals at the waterfront would help bring more people to the area. Additionally, the waterfront must play an integral role in Recommendations #3, #4 and #5, and establish programming that highlights these recommendations while integrating Touring, History &amp; Culture in addition to Festivals and Events.</p> <p>Sample experiences:</p> <p>Best Practice Example “Brockville Tourism” found in Appendix.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A review of Haldimand’s current waterfront policies to ensure they allow for local businesses to service potential tourists via a venue, providing activities, food, beverages and events.</li><li>• Number of County waterfront products created.</li></ul>

### Pillar 3: Product Development, cont’d

Recommendation	Key Objective	Context & Reasoning	How to Measure
3. Expand existing Touring (i.e., County discovery) tourism activities to encourage further exploration of the County.	Support and better leverage Haldimand County’s existing foundation as a touring destination while creating tangible tourism products for visitors.	<p>The County has done a good job of developing touring options including for cyclists and motorcyclists. These efforts can be expanded to turn these one-off activities into suggested packages (i.e., from routes to itineraries) and encourage participants to spend longer than a half day in the County.</p> <p>At the same time, integrating the County’s historical, cultural and festivals and events with the touring product line will foster greater dispersal within the County. Furthermore, touring presents a compelling experience for cottagers and seasonal campers to explore more of the County.</p> <p>Our recommendation would be as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assess existing touring activities and those which could be converted to itineraries encouraging participants to engage in more than one activity and integrate a meal and/or night stay within the County. (e.g., Cycle and Brew Tour, Historic Loyalist Tour)</li><li>• Develop a series of themed routes with associated itineraries taking advantage of the County’s history and cultural product (e.g., passing historic buildings – Ruthven) and festivals and events (e.g., Hagersville Farmers’ Market).</li><li>• Develop a series of touring itineraries specific for cottagers and seasonal campers.</li></ul> <p>Best Practice Example “Travel Portland” found in Appendix.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Number of touring itineraries created.</li></ul>

### Pillar 3: Product Development, cont'd

Recommendation	Key Objective	Context & Reasoning	How to Measure
4. Build History & Culture experiences that draw visitors to Haldimand County.	Support and better leverage the County's existing foundation as a region with a rich History & Culture while creating tangible tourism products for visitors.	<p>The strong History &amp; Culture resources available in Haldimand County (i.e., the museums, the links to British loyalists and Canada's founding, etc.) are being underutilized as a means of effectively drawing visitors for day trips, or multi-day stays. A combination of History &amp; Culture stand alone products (museum exhibitions etc.) and packages would work in concert to support a revitalization of Haldimand for residents (i.e., a celebration of what defines the County), while increasing visitation – i.e., as a tourism draw. There appears to be a need for the County's Museums/Heritage and Culture team to work more closely with the Economic Development and Tourism Division. The following are some examples that were uncovered from stakeholder interviews.</p> <p>Stand-Alone Product Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In partnership with our neighbours, a First Nations artist exhibit or a First Nations outdoor art tour similar to Explorers Edge Group of Seven outdoor exhibit</li> <li>• Exploring Canada's United Empire Loyalist past</li> </ul> <p>Package Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A visit to one of Haldimand's museums with a walking tour of specific historical sites and lunch at a local restaurant.</li> <li>• A visit to Ruthven followed by a visit to the Grand River and lunch.</li> </ul> <p>Best Practice Example "Travel Portland" found in Appendix.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of new History &amp; Culture stand alone products</li> <li>• Number of History &amp; Culture regional packages</li> </ul>

### Pillar 3: Product Development, cont'd

Recommendation	Key Objective	Context & Reasoning	How to Measure
5. Build Festivals & Events packages that encourage visitors to stay a few more hours in Haldimand County.	To better integrate the full County into experiences that feature Festivals & Events.	<p>The Festivals &amp; Events resources available in Haldimand County are being underutilized as a means of effectively drawing visitors for more than a few hours. Evidence from stakeholder interviews indicate that the timing and quality of programming in the County is not providing residents and visitors alike sufficient motivation to include a full day or longer stay in their festivals/events plans. As with the previous recommendation, there appears to be a need for the County's Community Development and Partnerships team to work more closely with the Economic Development and Tourism Division.</p> <p>We recommend the County focus on a handful of select existing festivals and events (e.g., Hagersville Rocks, Dunnville Mudcat Festival, etc.) that can likely be a draw for non-County residents and packaged to include a full day and/or 1+ night stay (i.e., keeping in mind limited accommodation options).</p> <p>Best Practice Example "Tourism Nova Scotia" found in Appendix.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Number of Festivals &amp; Events packages</li><li>• Increase in pre/post day/1+ night stays surrounding Festivals &amp; Events</li></ul>

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## Pillar 4: Tourism Marketing & Communications

Currently there is limited marketing of Haldimand County both to prospective visitors and current cottagers and seasonal campers. Additionally, Haldimand's voice within the broader RTO1 region is largely unheard. The County needs to take charge in marketing itself directly.

We analyzed the marketing and communication efforts of each of the local groups responsible for marketing Haldimand County as a tourism destination. We determined that Haldimand is simply not being marketed much at all. The County and their partners market some of the festivals and events which do attract tourists. Additionally, the County produces a number of brochures (i.e., product specific) which are distributed via traditional channels. Moving further afield, RTO1 markets the larger region, and OTMPC promotes the province as a whole. Despite all these efforts, Haldimand as a destination is missing out on being actively and specifically marketed to potential tourists and actual visitors in-destination.

Another area of concern is the County does not have a defined tourism brand positioning, and the logo, a visual representation of Haldimand, is outdated.

This pillar makes a limited number of recommendations, but if carried out, will help propel Haldimand to be specifically marketed as a tourism destination, in earnest for the first time, giving it a much greater chance of increasing visitation and visitor spend, and will showcase Haldimand with a refreshed, updated and refined image that travel consumers can appreciate and understand.

## Pillar 4: Tourism Marketing & Communications. cont'd

Recommendation	Key Objective	Context & Reasoning	How to Measure
1. Undergo a Haldimand County brand positioning and refresh exercise including an update of the visual representation (logo, font, etc.) and brand promise.	To showcase the County with a modern, refreshed look, feel and identity and establish groundwork for the County's destination marketing efforts	<p>Cities and surrounding regions throughout Ontario are marketing themselves directly and in defined, refreshed ways. Stratford, pop. 30,000 is "Canada's Premier Arts Town," Niagara-on-the-Lake, pop. 15,000 refers to itself as "The prettiest town in Ontario," and Kingston, pop. 117,000 is "Fresh Made Daily," in reference to its ever changing population base thanks to the universities located there. Haldimand needs a competitive identity marker, and we recommend it center on the Grand River and Lake Erie Waterfront.</p> <p>The branding should be completed before investing more in marketing efforts as the look and identity of the destination will guide the marketing decisions referenced in the next recommendation under this pillar.</p> <p>The brand will showcase the assets that make Haldimand a great place to live and to visit. Whether it's the Grand River, Haldimand's history and 'rural' charm, or something else, the County needs to define this promise in order to effectively showcase it to its target market.</p> <p>We recommend as a priority, undertaking a project to determine the County's brand positioning, followed by the creation of an updated logo and tagline, complete with a brand toolkit to give various stakeholders the guidelines to use the brand effectively.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Creation of brand positioning</li><li>• Creation of brand toolkit</li><li>• Use of brand toolkit by County and tourism industry partners</li></ul>



## Pillar 4: Tourism Marketing & Communications, cont'd

Recommendation	Key Objective	Context & Reasoning	How to Measure
2. Haldimand County markets itself as a destination.	Get the word out about Haldimand as a destination and provide information to those visitors planning to visit and those within the County (i.e., cottagers and seasonal campers)	<p>The County needs to take charge both in advising its partners on what to market, in addition to marketing itself directly. The County (under Tourism Haldimand) should create an annual marketing plan including objectives, goals, metrics and specific experiences to promote. The plan should identify efforts carried out by partners and all efforts to be carried out internally. This plan will help guide the County’s tourism marketing actions and help the County to better advise its various partners in their marketing efforts specific to Haldimand as a destination.</p> <p>Specific marketing tactics we recommend the County (under Tourism Haldimand) undertake are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revamping the tourism section and assets on Haldimand County’s main website with defined portals for the tourism industry vs. visitors. The industry site should provide useful information for tourism businesses to succeed and the visitor portal should provide simple, engaging and current content (i.e., stress influence over information).</li> <li>• For the industry site:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Creation of tools for stakeholders (held within the website, this is an asset bank of written content and images for tourism providers to easily market their product in Haldimand. Most small businesses don’t have the time to develop these assets on their own)</li> <li>b) A Brand Toolkit (e.g., outlining the value of using the brand; how to use and adopt the brand; logo and visual guidelines, etc.)</li> <li>c) A product development tool kit (e.g., a basic checklist of tourism ready business criteria, steps to knowing and understanding your customer, basics of social media and content marketing, resources for developing packages)</li> <li>d) Industry trends and resources section (e.g., market intelligence and experience trends relevant to the Mellow Vacationer, Knowledge Seeker and Nature Lover; industry trends for the domestic traveller; OTMPC visitor statistics; cycling blogs and news)</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of a Brand and Product Development tool kits</li> <li>• Creation of Haldimand experiences map</li> </ul>

## Pillar 4: Tourism Marketing & Communications, cont'd

Recommendation	Key Objective	Context & Reasoning	How to Measure
2. Haldimand County markets itself as a destination, cont'd.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• For the visitors micro site:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Simple and factual information on the County's key product and experience offerings (see Pillar #2)</li><li>b) Haldimand tourism experiences map (i.e., including all tourism attractions, sites, accommodation, food and retail options)</li><li>c) Itineraries and packages with clear details on how to book (i.e. via select operators)</li><li>d) Separate messaging directed at new vs. existing visitors (i.e. new product additions, itinerary adjustments and experience upgrades vs. messaging of a full brand new experience for a first-time visitor)</li></ul></li></ul> <p>As part of this marketing program enhancement the County should put together a pro-active media engagement plan including targeting media based on prioritized product development themes (see Pillar #3) and focused on media utilized by Haldimand's audience targets. Haldimand likely can garner more and better earned media coverage including from ethnic community media circulated in the GTA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Future considerations: Active digital and social media marketing led by Tourism Haldimand. This should be a content marketing full year campaign with a thematic calendar and a content strategy including pushing content and courting media.</li></ul>	



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## Appendix: Product Development and Packaging – Options for Haldimand

A persistent challenge at the destination level involves efforts to increase sales through the packaging and bundling of local experiences. Destinations rely on their representative accommodators, operators and small businesses to engage in packaging activities, an approach that largely depends on the business acumen of the respective participants. The inherent challenge of relying on local tourism assets to participate in packaging is a lack of resources and industry experience. For the best results, one point of contact that creates the package, acts as the point of sale and manages consumer contact is recommended.

Given their position representing and receiving funding often from multiple public and private stakeholders, Destination Management organizations rarely see themselves in the position to be that single point of contact to create, sell and deliver packages. We recommend the County considering the implementation of one, or a combination, of the following distribution models as part of the adoption of Pillar 2.

### I. TAKE IT IN HOUSE

A considerably bold move, eventually, Tourism Haldimand could engage an in house team member (i.e., a future resource) to engage their representatives in packaging and sales activities, thus allowing said destination to employ a clear call to action in all marketing efforts. The representative would be responsible for:

- Creating packages and bundled itineraries for select target markets
- Developing necessary marketing materials
- Managing all package related inquiries via a dedicated number and email
- Act as the point of sale
- Handling all commissions and vouchers

Tourism Haldimand would maintain all marketing responsibilities. The benefits of this is the direct oversight and considerable value add for Tourism Haldimand's representative businesses. The cons include any number of political issues, including the inability to assure that every business would benefit equally. One option would include offering this service only to those operators who meet a pre-determined list of market ready criteria, ideally the motivation for increased sales would encourage an overall lift in the quality and competitiveness of the County's tourism assets. A further challenge is addressing the need for TICO accreditation and the associated accounting and financial challenges.

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## **Appendix: Product Development and Packaging – Options for Haldimand, cont’d**

### **II. APPOINT A LOCAL POINT OF CONTACT**

Managing all packaging operations and sales internally would require a very progressive destination. In most cases, this course would be a departure from a DMO’s mandate. A second option would be to engage with a third party, either a local travel agent or inbound tour operator with existing training and licences, and task them with the aforementioned packaging responsibilities. A memorandum of understanding that contained clear key performance indicators would be required to govern the relationship. Tourism Haldimand would maintain all marketing responsibilities.

The benefits to this approach would be a detached sales ‘arm’, again a further benefit to tourism businesses who support Tourism Haldimand. The negatives would include maintaining quality control, training and service levels and marketing standards. A further challenge would be the question of profits, and ensuring that the proposition remains profitable enough to allow Tourism Haldimand control over the aforementioned potential challenges, in addition to the question of re-investment into the County of a percentage of the profits.

### **III. DELIVER AS SUGGESTED ROUTES WITH NO POINT OF PURCHASE**

A more straightforward marketing approach would be the current routes already identified by the County (e.g., for cycling). The benefits are that it is simple, it is not a resource drain, nor is it a politically charged course of action (i.e., favouring one tourism business over another). The drawbacks are that there is no clear call to action, a limited ability to accurately measure results, and the benefits are less obvious to the participants.

Our strong recommendation to the County is to refine current routes into packages to encourage more dispersal within the County and more spending.

### **IV. DEVELOP A TRADE RELATIONS STRATEGY**

Arguably the most realistic scenario, eventually (i.e., within a couple of years), the County could engage with an external party to develop and implement a trade relations strategy. The third party would have the expertise required to utilize Tourism Haldimand’s itineraries and bundled product, and engage custom trip planners and receptive tour operators with a view to developing legacy trade relationships targeted at small groups and the FIT market in Ontario.

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## Appendix: Competitive Analysis

A total of four Ontario destinations were reviewed in terms of how their tourism industries have been development. The goal is to provide the County with an idea of the competitive landscape for tourism development and promotion with all four destinations largely targeting the GTA market.

The reviewed destinations include:

- Prince Edward County
- Niagara Falls
- Bruce County
- Elora

In most cases we were able to readily identify their tourism strategy; their brand positioning; identify levels of tourism visitation and economic impact and key competitive strengths vs. Haldimand County.



# Competitive Analysis – Prince Edward County

Overview	Competitive Products	Marketing	Budget
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cornered the market on local food – i.e., as a draw for visitors</li> <li>• Their success appears to come from a successful move towards a creative rural economy, a conscious planning initiative designed to attract residents, but that has benefited tourism enormously. The initiative was based around investing in the quality of the place.</li> <li>• The main outreach mechanism seems to be through 'Tourism Talks' a match-funding advertising program. Often, tourism stakeholders just want financial support and marketing reach – and it looks like PEC has opted to give them just that.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Primary:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food and Wine</li> <li>• Weddings</li> <li>• Artisans</li> </ul> <p><b>Secondary:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beaches</li> <li>• Parks</li> <li>• Trails</li> </ul>	<p><b>Target Market:</b> Families &amp; Couples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Website (40k visitors/month) Website is financially self sustaining through ads</li> <li>• French website to attract QC</li> <li>• Good social media activity and following on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook</li> <li>• Events newsletter</li> <li>• 2016: mobile app</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unknown</li> </ul>
Management & Structure	Brand Positioning		Visitor Count
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Until Oct 2016, tourism was managed by the PEC Chamber of Tourism &amp; Commerce (PECCTC) – a membership based DMO, governed by a Board of Directors. PEC is currently going through a major transition where the County is taking over the tourism duties.</li> <li>• PECCTC Staff include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive Director</li> <li>• Office Administrator</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PEC's brand is centred around "Get away from the daily grind; explore, taste, reconnect and unwind." Rather than one key theme, the brand encompasses a number of themes with a focus on their culinary and wine experiences. Other themes include relaxing island escape, artisan culture, and a place to explore.</li> <li>• PEC has done a good job of media mentions including Travel &amp; Leisure, Time Magazine and McLean's.</li> </ul>		<p><b>Visitor Count</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2012 – 659K</li> </ul> <p><b>Visitor Spend</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2012 – \$115.3M</li> </ul>
Strategic Focus Areas		Competitive Advantage over Haldimand County	Key Takeaway
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PEC has identified initiatives to develop a product of higher quality highlighting a "quality of place" and encouraging a longer visitor stay.</li> <li>• They have identified the need for a tourism strategy with the main objectives of extending the tourism shoulder season and developing a cohesive tourism brand.</li> <li>• Goals to help accomplish this include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanding cultural assets</li> <li>• Further develop festivals and events</li> <li>• Increase roofed accommodations</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well rated, quaint hotels</li> <li>• Strong culinary tourism product</li> <li>• Dedicated tourism website and social media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on one main signature initiative to drive demand to the region</li> </ul>

# Competitive Analysis – Niagara Falls



Overview	Competitive Products	Marketing	Budget
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A well-known family and couples destination with high brand recognition and numerous “tourism ready” assets and experiences.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Food and wine</li><li>Meetings (microsite catering to meetings)</li></ul>	<b>Target Market:</b> Families & Couples <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Website is full of calls to action to the consumer to: Call us! Email us! Book with Us!</li><li>Robust package planning functionality</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>\$90M</li></ul>
Management & Structure		Brand Positioning	Visitor Count
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Niagara Falls Tourism is a member based DMO with 12 staff members accounting for local and international leisure and meeting markets as well as leadership, marketing and admin.</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Niagara Falls is a globally recognized brand offering numerous activities for families, romantic getaways for couples, luxurious meetings and wine/golf vacations.</li></ul>	<b>Visitor Count</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>12M</li></ul>
Strategic Focus Areas		Competitive Advantage over Haldimand County	Key Takeaway
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Weddings</li><li>Meetings</li><li>Family Vacations</li><li>Wine/Golf Vacations</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>World Renewed Brand</li><li>Multiple hotel options in all budgets and sizes</li><li>Myriad of visitor-ready product including culinary &amp; wineries, family entertainment, luxury and meetings</li><li>Dedicated tourism website and packages</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Develop packages that are easy to plan and book</li><li>Make it easy for tourists to get the information they need</li></ul>



# Competitive Analysis – Bruce County

Overview	Competitive Products	Marketing	Budget
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tourism goal is to keep people in Bruce longer and get them to spend more</li> <li>They are pushing a year-round destination highlighting experiences for the fall</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lake Huron Beaches</li> <li>Bruce Trail</li> </ul>	<p><b>Target Market:</b> Outdoor Adventure Enthusiasts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Robust search functionality on their site</li> <li>Bruce creates reasons to return like: Adventure Passport – treasure hunt that is updated annually</li> <li>Specialised brochures – focus on cycling</li> <li>Tradeshows</li> <li>Sell promotional material like trail mix and mugs</li> <li>Strong social media presence with very active and well followed channels including a blog, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest and Trip Advisor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2007 - \$550k – tourism specific</li> <li>2013 - \$2.8M For Agriculture, Tourism &amp; Economic Development combined</li> </ul>
Management & Structure	Brand Positioning		Visitor Count
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grey County Tourism is a department of the County of Grey with strategic guidance provided by a Tourism Advisory Committee which includes tourism businesses and residents and well as County councillors.</li> <li>Grey County has 3 staff members.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bruce County has a cohesive brand around “Explore the Bruce” - exploring outdoor experiences and an abundance of outdoor activities all year round.</li> </ul>		<p><b>Visitor Count</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2010 - RTO1 – 9.5M</li> </ul> <p><b>Visitor Spend</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$230M</li> </ul>
Strategic Focus Areas	Competitive Advantage over Haldimand County		Key Takeaway
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adventure &amp; Exploration</li> <li>Further developing and marketing fall and winter product</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Four season destination</li> <li>Dedicated website and social media</li> <li>Cohesive brand</li> <li>Resort accommodations</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Think beyond single tourism products and assets to more of a full destination experience</li> </ul>



## Competitive Analysis – Elora

Overview	Competitive Products	Marketing	Budget
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Over the last 1.5 years, Elora has taken a strategic and hands on approach to preparing the town for the incoming Elora Mill and to leverage this opportunity for tourism. The strategies in place work to develop tourism product as well as the community and support of the County.</li><li>The Elora Mill will bring 200+ luxury rooms, restaurants, venues and shopping, and will cater to families, couples and weddings.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The Elora Gorge</li><li>The Elora Mill (opening in 2017)</li><li>Festivals &amp; Events</li></ul>	<p><b>Target Market:</b> Outdoor enthusiasts. Luxury weddings and families (come the opening of Elora Gorge).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>2 websites – a separate tourism website and one through the County of Centre Wellington.</li><li>Promotional materials – visitor guide, newsletter</li><li>Sell promotional material for specific festivals and events</li></ul>	\$300k
Management & Structure	Brand Positioning	Visitor Count	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Elora &amp; Fergus Tourism falls within the County of Centre Wellington and has recently been moved from Economic Development to Parks, Recreation, Culture and Tourism.</li><li>Elora &amp; Fergus Tourism have 2 staff.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Elora is working to brand themselves as Ontario's idyllic experience showcasing natural setting, heritage towns and arts and culture assets.</li></ul>	<p>This information does not get tracked for Elora. Below are the numbers for Wellington County as a region.</p> <p><b>Visitor Count</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>2.2M</li></ul> <p><b>Visitor Spend</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>\$188M</li></ul>	
Strategic Focus Areas		Competitive Advantage over Haldimand County	Key Takeaway
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Prepare Elora for the opening of the Elora Mill. The focus is getting tourism partners and the community on board and engaged, and getting tourism product ready. Key initiatives include:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Illuminate the natural &amp; heritage assets</li><li>Increase tourism product offering</li><li>Increase market readiness of festivals &amp; events</li><li>Enhance accommodation quality &amp; capacity</li><li>Increase community support</li></ul></li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Fully sustainable luxury resort and venue</li><li>Strong festivals and events</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Establish a clear and definitive brand positioning</li></ul>

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## Appendix: Product Development Best Practice Examples

A total of four product development best practice examples were reviewed, each directly related to one of the four recommended product focus areas for Haldimand County.

The reviewed product development best practice examples include:

- Destination BC – Relevance for Haldimand County: Example of how a DMO works with private sector tourism suppliers and operators to develop market-ready products and experiences
- Brockville Tourism – Relevance for Haldimand County: Example of how an Ontario region developed their waterfront as a key demand generator and tourism draw
- Travel Portland – Relevance for Haldimand County: Example of how a destination developed their History and Cultural tourism experience and supporting assets
- Tourism Nova Scotia – Relevance for Haldimand County: Example of how a destination developed their Festivals and Events tourism experience and supporting assets

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# Product Development Best Practice Examples

## 1. Destination British Columbia: Supporting local tourism businesses to develop product

- Destination British Columbia has taken an effective approach to ensuring innovative and diverse product development. They have created a program called Remarkable Experiences. Remarkable Experiences is one of their four strategy imperatives to ensure competitiveness of the tourism sector in the province. Destination BC calls the Remarkable Experiences program a 'destination development' program.
- A remarkable experience is one that sticks in your memory, long after you have returned home from your holiday. It conjures long-lasting positive memories about the destination. Destination BC believes that if they can create more 'remarkable experiences,' more long-lasting happy memories about the destination, that will create more repeat visitation and more positive word of mouth.
- Destination BC recognizes the connection between the online and offline world – and through their remarkable experiences program seeks to provide tools to stakeholders so that they can be successful at both delivering great experiences and ensuring that their guests share them online, by helping providers improve their digital marketing.
- Destination BC has identified target areas that require increased product offering. For example, winter tourism in the Okanagan and non-ski activities in the Kootenay region.
- The program is being implemented on a pilot basis with a view to improve and scale it in the future.

Source: [www.destinationbc.ca/Programs/Regions-Communities-and-Sectors/Sector-Tourism-Programs.aspx](http://www.destinationbc.ca/Programs/Regions-Communities-and-Sectors/Sector-Tourism-Programs.aspx)

### About the Remarkable Experiences Program:

The program combines in-class learning with individualized coaching and online collaboration. Experts in the specific subject matter deliver theory, practical advice and tips on Experience Design, Digital and Social Media Marketing. Participants leave the program with new product ideas or enhancements for existing products and solid tactics to enhance their business website and social media activities.

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## Product Development Best Practice Examples, cont'd

### 2. Brockville Tourism. Developing the Waterfront

- Many towns and cities in Ontario have recently invested in improving their waterfronts and water access points. A vibrant, and pedestrian friendly waterfront can be the heart of a river/lakeside community and delivers benefits both to residents and visitors.
- Brockville lies on the shore of the St. Lawrence river and is branded as '1000 Islands.' Brockville has one of the most accessible waterfront areas in Canada, with vast amounts of public space. It is listed as Brockville's number one strength.
- The waterfront was developed strategically. The impetus was a 2009 Corporate Analysis that identified 'Downtown and Waterfront Master Plan and Urban Design Strategy' as a focus area for Brockville's development.
- Improving the waterfront was correctly identified as an effective way to raise the quality of life for residents (and make the City more appealing to prospective residents) and boost tourism.
- Upgrades included:
  - New condo developments to attract residents to the downtown core (especially 'Silver Spenders')
  - Upgrades to pedestrian walkways
  - Aesthetic improvements to areas around the waterfront (plants, lights, etc.)
- Future suggestions to build on the waterfront include creating a 'Center of freshwater excellence.' Water quantity and quality is a global concern. Brockville is near several academic institutions that are studying water, it is also near the UNESCO Frontenac Arch biosphere and has a new aquarium.
- Through the Waterfront Regeneration Trust, Brockville has invested heavily in its waterfront, including the development of the Waterfront Trail, which features heritage homes, historical locations and beautifully landscaped parks.

Source: [www.waterfronttrail.org/brockville](http://www.waterfronttrail.org/brockville)

1000 Islands/Mille-Îles  
**Brockville**

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## Product Development Best Practice Examples, cont'd

### 3. Travel Portland. Developing History & Culture products

- Portland, Oregon is well known as a hip and happening town in the Pacific North West region of the United States. One of their key brand messages, as per their strategic plan, is “Portland has a strong creative and historical undercurrent that affects everything it has to offer.’ History & Culture are therefore clearly at the heart of the city’s brand and its personality.
- In 2009, The City of Portland Bureau of Planning & Sustainability produced the “Portland Plan,” with the goal to provide a long term strategy for the City’s growth and development, with a specific focus on Portland’s physical, economic, social, cultural and environmental growth in the next thirty years.
- Prior to the Portland Plan, the city drafted the Act for Art and Culture: A Creative Action Plan for the Portland Metropolitan area. Both plans focus on the provision of an environment that encourages public art, celebration of their history, cultural amenities and events that enliven public spaces, thus growing both a sense of community as well as the tourism industry.
- Key to this plan are the following tenets:
  - ✓ Clarification on the City’s role in supporting History & Culture
  - ✓ Clear, long term goals for strengthening cultural infrastructure
  - ✓ Clear goals on the improvement of community access to the arts
  - ✓ Investment in history education and creative talent
  - ✓ A review of City policy with a view to ensuring they are conducive for further development of the art
  - ✓ Implementation of a dedicated, stable, funding mechanism for local arts and culture and arts education

Source: <http://www.portlandonline.com/portlandplan/index.cfm?a=373231>



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## Product Development Best Practice Examples, cont'd

### 4. Tourism Nova Scotia. Supporting creation of Festivals & Events products

- Nova Scotia is a best practice example in how to support Festivals & Events in a region.
- Tourism Nova Scotia provides funding, knowledge and a free online listing mechanism for Festival & Events organizers.
- Any person organizing or promoting an event can create a free listing on Nova Scotia's Festival & Event Calendar, by creating an online profile and uploading the required information (images, text, dates, etc.) Listings must adhere to certain criteria and are reviewed by Tourism Nova Scotia staff prior to being made live on the website. Once that is done, the listing is visible to all users who access the online calendar and may even be actively promoted through Tourism Nova Scotia's social media channels.
- Tourism Nova Scotia has a dedicated person at their office to support Festivals & Events. This centralizes the knowledge about current events, operations, etc., and provides stakeholders with a dedicated contact person who can assist them.
- Tourism Nova Scotia also provides tools to help Festival & Event organizers. One tool is a 129 page 'Guide to planning and hosting festivals and events in Nova Scotia' which is a free download available on their website. The guide was originally prepared in 2005 and updated in subsequent years to reflect new learnings. The guide addresses topics such as:
  - ✓ How to pick the right venue
  - ✓ How to raise funds to cover costs
  - ✓ How to recruit volunteers
  - ✓ How to provide hospitality to performers
  - ✓ How to improve year on year
- The Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage also provides funding for festival and event organizers.

Source: [www.tourismns.ca/festivals-and-events](http://www.tourismns.ca/festivals-and-events)



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# Appendix: Trends Impacting Tourism In Haldimand

The following table provides a list of macro and micro trends impacting tourism in Haldimand from both the supply and demand sides. The findings were drawn from our desk research and competitive analysis and site visit observations.



# Trends Impacting Tourism in Haldimand

Supply Side	Demand Side
Sharing economy: Innovative technology companies, such as AirBNB and Uber, allow travel services to be shared between individuals. This is the result of economics (people want to save) and social interests (increased desire for local experiences) and is only made possible through disruptive technology. Haldimand has a clear and defined challenge with limited roofed accommodation. Investment in a hotel is likely not possible until more demand is realized. The sharing economy could help offset this shortage.	Internet bookings: 74% of tourists will turn to the Internet to plan their vacation (source: ThinkTravel with Google). With the proliferation of applications used by travellers to assist with planning and booking, interactive online maps and the ubiquity of mobile phones, technology has dramatically changed the way tourists discover destinations, plan and book travel. Technology will continue to drive consumer behaviour and tourism marketing in the future. Having a findable, relevant online presence and a solid understanding of social marketing is key to influencing consumers in the dreaming phase as well as in the planning phase of the travel booking lifecycle.
Local responsible tourism: Globally, there is an increased interest in responsible, local tourism. Experiences such as farmers markets, heritage walks by locals and local History and Cultural activities are increasingly sought after. Haldimand's appeal as a quaint and authentic example of 'rural' Ontario is a clear draw.	New source markets: traditionally, the majority of Ontario's visitors have come from within the province, or from neighboring provinces. However, there are some new segments to consider. The first is 'New Canadians,' who are keen to discover their new home, and often travel in larger groups ( for example, this market represents a significant portion of weekend campers to at least two of Haldimand County's camp grounds). The second is the American market, which is increasingly drawn back to Canada for its affordable currency and diversity of experiences.
Diverse itineraries: Tourists are seeking itineraries that contain various elements, including cultural experiences, recreational activities such as hiking or boating and excellent culinary options. Destinations that can provide a well-balanced mix of activities are more likely to win the more discerning, higher-value, overnight tourist. There is a shift away from single-focused product itineraries (i.e., cycling) to more rounded itineraries (i.e., cycling plus lunch and a hike).	Shorter stay: There is a trend for tourists to take shorter trips (1 to 2 nights) and stay closer to home. There is a financial element, as well as a time element. Increasingly, people are uncomfortable staying away from work for extended periods of time. This directly works to Haldimand's favour and suggests a key focus should be the day tripper from the Hamilton and GTA regions.
Attracting and retaining a workforce: Tourism is often a seasonal industry, and as such it can be difficult for tourism businesses to maintain a qualified workforce year round. Looking at effective training programs or increasing the length of the season will help ensure stability among the workforce. This is particularly acute for Haldimand's restaurants.	Aging population: Many smaller cities in Canada are dealing with an aging population. Tourism can help attract new residents to these cities, perhaps seeking locations to retire to/raise their families.
Adopting sustainable practices: Destinations are increasingly looking to counterbalance the negative impacts of tourism by adapting more sustainable practices such as encouraging the purchase of local produce, creating carbon neutral schemes, encouraging man-powered transportation etc. Sustainable destinations can use this in their marketing, which is viewed as a positive attribute by tourists. Haldimand's central positioning as Ontario's 'green-energy' development could be a draw.	