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Introduction

The board and staff of Central Counties Tourism believe that the visitor economy is delivered by businesses, championed by communities and supported by DMOs/RTOs. The 2023-2024 Business Plan reflects this belief and further cements CCT's leadership role in the industry – both regionally and at the provincial level.

In October 2022, the Central Counties Tourism Board of Directors met for a facilitated session to determine the assumptions and priorities that were to guide the 2023-2024 programs. This plan lays out the actions and tactics required to deliver against the priorities.

CCT knows why it exists; to grow the visitor economy. The board and staff recognize that in order to achieve that, two things have to happen:

- 1) Tourism businesses must have the capacity to grow and be more successful
- 2) Municipalities must deliver a welcoming, visitor-friendly environment

There are many ways and layers to achieve the above. Each of the many objectives, goals and tactics is designed to support these two keys to tourism success.

It is important to note that this plan is a stand-alone based on expected provincial funding and earned revenues. One of the priorities for fiscal 2023-2024 is to begin to determine how CCT can further support other organizations and government ministries deliver against their priorities, when those priorities have an impact on stakeholder ability to grow the visitor economy. While this is a long-term strategy, if CCT is successful in securing project funding, a revised budget and project plan will be developed for board approval.

2023-2024 Assumptions

While there is general comfort that the worse of the pandemic is behind us, there are concerns that pent-up demand for international travel could stunt domestic travel recovery and growth.

- Visitor comfort levels will continue to increase, however:
 - a. Ontario travel within Ontario will stay flat to 2022
 - b. Canadian travel to Ontario will remain flat to 2022
 - c. International travel to Ontario will increase over 2022
- Regional accommodators are planning for a strong 2023, however sport tournament and conference travel will see an increase but there is concern for 2024 & 2025
- Provincial funding for Central Counties Tourism will remain flat for 2023-2024
- Additional funding to support the tourism sector will not be available
- Supply chain and staffing will continue to hinder recovery and growth
- There is potential for a recession and, if mild, there won't be too large an impact

2023-2024 Priorities

Beginning in September 2022, the Executive Director and Industry Relations Managers set meetings with all municipal and regional partners to determine what their 2023 priorities were and what they would like Central Counties Tourism to assist with and or fill the gap for. Eleven of these meetings had taken place prior to the board planning session and the below priorities reflect both what was heard by the municipal partners and the direction given by the board. An overarching priority from CCT's municipal partners was the need for funding support to achieve their goals. To this end, new for 2023-2024, CCT will begin to look for new funding sources like the Tourism Relief Fund that can be leveraged to directly support tourism stakeholders. This is a long-term strategic shift for the organization but one that, once successful, will have a lasting impact for stakeholders.

Below are the business plan priorities by pillar and the role CCT plays to support them.

Policy/Advocacy

Priorities: Municipal focus/investment in tourism through:

- 1) Community Tourism Plans (new & updates)
- 2) Wayfinding plans/updates including text / digital / mobile
- 3) Tourism 'lens' integration across departments
- 4) Presenting why tourism matters to new municipal councils
- 5) Consistent use / understanding of language – role, gaps, pillars, etc

Create networks of support organizations (CoC, BoT, Small Business Enterprise, WFDB, etc.) within communities to increase support for the visitor economy

Add the 'tourism-lens' in other Ministries / funds (Ag&Rural / Enviro / MMA etc..)

Focused messaging to residents about the value of tourism in their community

- Role: Municipal Focus/Investment: CCT plays both a leadership and supporting role when it comes to our municipal partners. Our leadership role is ensuring that municipalities are aware of and believe the impact the visitor economy has on their community. We do this through meetings and presentations to council. We then support their efforts to invest in and grow the visitor economy by facilitating Community Tourism and Wayfinding Plans, speaking with senior staff about the importance putting a “tourism lens” on decisions of other municipal departments and leveraging investments with support from the partnership program where applicable.
- Organization Networks: Lead the development of community business support organizations networks and facilitate discussions by municipality to create synergies of support for tourism-related businesses and initiatives.
- Other Ministries: Research other ministries and agencies (Agriculture, Environment, Trillium, etc.) whose stakeholders have a role in tourism and lead discussions with them about the importance of the visitor economy and how CCT could support their efforts
- Changing Resident Sentiment: This is another long-term priority that will be lead by CCT and supported by regional/municipal partners and stakeholders to determine and implement effective methods to educate residents on the importance of the visitor economy to keep their community vibrant.

Research

- Priorities:
- Geo-Fencing for individual stakeholders, BIAs, Municipalities, etc.
 - Municipal data insights for product/market/investment development
 - Data collection partnerships so that we can collectively tell compelling stories (ROI)
 - Champion evidence-based decision making by ensuring stakeholders know how to interpret and utilize the information
 - Cost recovery
- Role:
- Educate stakeholders on the research services CCT offers and their benefits
 - Lead aggregate data collection, analysis and reporting for the region
 - Support stakeholders' understanding of how to interpret and utilize the data
 - Support the development of new tools and datasets to further the understanding of the visitor economy and how to grow it.

Industry Equipping

- Priorities:
- Keep building Learning LAB including:
 - Train the Trainer module
 - Interactive experience development toolkit
 - Add experts and local applications to TAP
 - Marketing “how to’s” (from the Marketing Priorities)
 - Develop a survey toolkit including QR code integration (for events)
 - Connect artists to the visitor economy (from Experience Development Priorities)
 - Connect municipalities with education / students
 - Assist associations develop and implement strategies to grow the tourism workforce
- Role:
- Lead the development and delivery of relevant toolkits/course/workshop content
 - Support stakeholder knowledge through B2B website and social channels
 - Work with DMOs/Stakeholders to build and deliver compelling content for residents
 - Facilitate workshops, learning and networking opportunities for artists to understand the tourism landscape and how they can fit
 - Communicate, through B2B channels, student placement opportunities to stakeholders

Experience Development

- Priorities:
- Leverage CCT funds/resources to support stakeholder-led initiatives
 - Focus on trails – themes, connectivity between trails and to economic centres
 - Use technology and innovation in the development of content and storytelling
 - Connect artists to other tourism stakeholders
 - Create an artist database
 - Networking / “speed dating” events
 - Celebrating Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
 - Putting a “tourism lens” on culture program outcomes (Culture Days)
 - Inspire stakeholder-led experience development
 - Networking opportunities
 - Sharing success stories
 - Industry trends and highlights
 - Expand ‘Shoulder Season’ experiences
 - Explore film industry experience opportunities

Role: Focus on Trails: Facilitate discussions between other RTO's, municipalities, trail groups, conservation authorities, businesses, etc., to grow trail connectivity. Coordinate outcomes of discussions to create new trails experiences and support the development and implementation of those experiences.

Technology: Lead the development and use of augmented reality pilot project that will deliver compelling experience content. Cost recovery model.

Connecting Artists: Facilitate discussions and networking opportunities between artists and the broader tourism sector. Support the compilation of artist databases.

Stakeholder-led Experiences: Lead opportunities to learn about the benefits of collaboration. Facilitate planning/development discussions between stakeholders. Connect stakeholder groups to other potential participants. Support the implementation and marketing of launched experiences.

Shoulder Season: Facilitate the development of shoulder season experiences and supporting content. Support the implementation and marketing of market-ready experiences.

Film Industry: Research/Explore opportunities to engage stakeholders in the development of film-centric experiences

Marketing

Priorities:

- Content Development
 - New markets
 - New tag-line / focus
- B2B Engagement
 - Produce content about experience development
 - Sharing best practices
 - Content-rich social engagement
 - Compelling and resource-rich website
 - Develop templates/toolkit for partnership program recipients to further leverage CCT
 - PR support / distribution
- Connecting YDH Audience to municipal / stakeholder content
- Co-op ad strategy (Note: will be developed as part of fiscal 2022-2023)

Role:

Content Development: Lead the creation and execution of pan-regional and themed campaigns to drive visitation. Engage new market(s) based on research insights and industry trends. Refresh brand positioning of Ontario's Road Trip Destination because it is being copied too much.

B2B Engagement: Lead the development and implementation of a B2B marketing and communications strategy to engage stakeholders and inspire them to be more successful.

Connecting YDH Audience: Utilize the expertise of the Industry Relations team, work with municipal stakeholders and businesses to determine which are tourism ready and connect those that aren't to CCT resources to get them there. Amplify the positioning of municipal and regional weblinks from the YDH website and digital channels.

Co-op Ads: Create equal opportunity for all interested parties to participate.

Executive Summary

The plan has been developed to deliver against the priorities while furthering CCT's mission to provide resources and support to stakeholders so they have the capacity to achieve success. Objectives for fiscal 2022-2023 are:

Governance and Administration

- Clear and transparent delivery of the 2023-2024 Business Plan
- Transfer Payment Agreement compliance, clean audit and budget oversight
- Engaged Board of Directors to maximize organizational excellence and direction

Industry Relations & Advocacy

- Build municipal (town and resident) understanding of, and increased support for, the visitor economy as it relates to the vibrancy of the community
- Support the development and implementation of Community Tourism Plans to increase tourism readiness
- Explore long-term funding opportunities from other ministries and agencies

Investment Attraction

- Grow municipal investment in tourism through the facilitation and implementation support of Community Tourism Plans and Wayfinding Plans
- Leverage stakeholder investment through the partnership program
- Provide visitor insights to communities to demonstrate the value of the visitor economy

Research

- Provide stakeholders a holistic view of the tourism landscape in the region and its importance on the vibrancy of communities
- Provide in-depth and aggregated visitor analysis to stakeholder, municipalities, DMO's and RTO's so that they can understand their visitor landscape and make informed decisions about experiences to develop, audiences to target and markets to penetrate (revenue generator)
- CCT to be an integral part of provincial/national research working groups and panels so that stakeholders needs/wants are communicated and implemented which will assist them in their success
- Make research results easy for all stakeholders to understand so they can interpret and use the data to make informed decisions

Partnership Program

- Foster tourism investment
- Further CCT impact on tourism

Industry Equipping

- Grow stakeholder ability to strengthen their skills by providing learning content on key topics that increase tourism-readiness resulting in strong and competitive tourism businesses
- Identify opportunities and support programs that will assist stakeholders build their capacity.
- Leverage municipal and stakeholders relationships to connect them with student placement opportunities to grow the workforce
- Assist municipalities to create a welcoming environment for visitors by providing customer and tourism ambassador skills training to the tourism workforce and volunteer/resident base

Experience Development

- Facilitate industry-led experience development
- Develop and launch new trails/itineraries in partnership with regional stakeholders
- Support Marketing & Communications campaigns through development of itineraries
- Explore use of new and emerging technologies for experience development

Marketing & Communications

- Develop and implement a B2B Marketing Strategy
- Provide opportunities for stakeholders to tell their stories through YDH pan-regional campaigns as
- Position the region as Ontario's Road Trip Destination for local & domestic visitors in order to increase economic impact.
- Become a leader in Consumer Education in order to provide visitors with all the information they require during the destination selection process.
- Raise consumer awareness of tourism businesses and products found in York Durham Headwaters while retaining strong sub-regional identification.
- Strengthen local tourism awareness while supporting new economic impact models
- Align with Destination Ontario and other in-region tourism partners in order to raise awareness of YDH as a premier and safe destination – including local markets
- Measure success through goal setting and metric models

Group Travel Support

- Be the best practice example of pan-regional partnerships through the Golf in Ontario Program
- Support group travel growth through bid-support and offsetting the cost for stakeholders to attend Travel Trade events (through partnership program)

Revenue

- Communicate the value of the programs CCT offers and solicit participation
- Increase CCT's ability to support stakeholders
- Further CCT's impact on tourism

Defining Success for Central Counties

Success for Central Counties Tourism is two-fold. The main measure of success is seeing an increase in stakeholder capacity, which is built through active engagement with CCT and a formal recognition from municipalities regarding the importance of tourism to the community, which leads to further support for the sector and, through coordination and cooperation, a regional approach for tourism development. The second measure of success is CCT's ability to connect potential visitors to tourism-ready stakeholders through compelling content.

Each of the pillar objectives are broken into tactics, with measurable KPIs, and goals staff plans on achieving. In addition, new research capabilities allow CCT to provide a clearer picture of the visitor economy and, where possible, the organizations' impact on it.

CCT measures its success against these two main components for growing the visitor economy. Measures include the number of stakeholders furthering their capacity by participating in CCT-led initiatives, the number of new products/experiences developed and launched, the amount of stakeholder investment being made, the number of partnerships, municipal investment in Community Tourism Planning, municipal investment in tourism products/events, municipal investment in tourism infrastructure, tourism budgets, tourism advisory committees and an acknowledgement of tourism impact on the economics and vibrancy at the community level, the number of stakeholder leads generated through CCT content, media value of stories told about stakeholders, the number of clicks to stakeholder websites through CCT channels, etc.

Business Plan Details

The tactics, KPIs and goals listed below are how CCT plans on delivering against the priorities as set out by the Board of Directors. The expectation in 2023-2024 is that no further COVID-19 supports will be available and it will be up to staff to find additional funds to complete projects not directly tied to the draft budget.

Governance and Administration

Objectives:

- Clear and transparent delivery of the 2023-2024 Business Plan
- Transfer Payment Agreement compliance, clean audit and budget oversight
- Engaged Board of Directors to maximize organizational excellence and direction

Organizational Excellence			
Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Lead
Maintain Financial Accountability	Clean Audit		ED
Sustainability	Leveraging stakeholder investments	\$50,000	ED
Deliver on the objectives of the business plan	Quarterly and Year End Reports	5	ED
Governance Review & Board Engagement	By-Law and Process Review Complete # of board and committee meetings	Q4 5 Meetings	ED

Research

Objectives:

- Provide stakeholders a holistic view of the tourism landscape in the region and its importance on the vibrancy of communities
- Provide in-depth and aggregated visitor analysis to stakeholder, municipalities, DMO's and RTO's so that they can understand their visitor landscape and make informed decisions about experiences to develop, audiences to target and markets to penetrate (revenue generator)
- CCT to be an integral part of provincial/national research working groups and panels so that stakeholders needs/wants are communicated and implemented which will assist them in their success
- Make research results easy for all stakeholders to understand so they can interpret and use the data to make informed decisions

Provide aggregate visitor analysis to stakeholders, municipalities, DMO's and RTO's			
Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Lead
Collect monthly hotel occupancy rates and revenues for Durham, York, and aggregated CCT (shared quarterly).	# of collections	4	RDM
Geo-fence specific locations for municipalities, DMO's and RTO's.	# of reports	25	RDM
Write a series of articles for the B2B Newsletter on visitation trends & success stories.	# of B2B Articles	4	RDM

CCT to be an integral part of provincial/national research working groups and panels

Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Lead
Continue to represent RTO6 and its stakeholders at a provincial/national level within various research groups and disseminate key insights as needed.	# of committees	3	RDM

Make research results easy for all stakeholders to understand, interpret and use for making informed decisions

Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Lead
Present research results through infographics/visualization with key take-aways and suggestions.	# of reports	4	RDM

Industry Relations (Advocacy/Communications)

Objectives:

Industry Relations & Advocacy

- Build municipal (town and resident) understanding of, and increased support for, the visitor economy as it relates to the vibrancy of the community
- Support the development and implementation of Community Tourism Plans to increase tourism readiness
- Explore long-term funding opportunities from other ministries and agencies

Build municipal (town/resident) understanding of, and increased support for, the visitor economy

Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Lead
Meetings with municipal EDO staff and/or council members to discuss the importance of the visitor economy on the vibrancy of the community.	# of Meetings	12	ED
Publish stories in the B2B newsletter about stakeholders and how they are making a difference in the community.	# of Articles	6	DIR
Provide staff access to research to help build the case for supporting the growth of the visitor economy.	# of Municipalities utilizing CCT research	12	RDM
Create networks of support organizations (CoC, BoT, Small Business Enterprise, WFDB, etc.) within communities to increase support for the visitor economy	# of networks	4	ED
Provide staff/council with tools on how to champion the visitor economy to residents.	# of municipalities championing tourism	6	ED

ED – Executive Director, DIR – Director of Industry Relations, RDM – Research Development Manager

Community Tourism Planning

Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Lead
Support the achievement of at least one objective for every municipality that has a community tourism plan.	# of partnerships	6	ED
Facilitate the development of Community Tourism Plans / CTP refreshes.	# of plans/refreshes	3	ED

Explore long-term funding opportunities from other ministries and agencies			
Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Lead
Engage in discussions with various government ministries to determine opportunities to support their stakeholders as a third-party delivery manager.	# of identified potential partners	3	ED
Apply for grant funding for CCT lead initiatives to offset the cost of core expenses and/or delivery un-budgeted projects	# of successful grants	1	ED

Industry Equipping B2B Support Plan

The COVID-19 pandemic has left many businesses with an under-skilled workforce in addition to the existing workforce gap while customer service expectations remain high. Challenges continue with attracting and retaining staff, creating a skill deficit for some businesses and time constraints for training. Central Counties aims to deliver education and support programs designed to help stakeholders gain a competitive edge for their business, as well as provide resources and opportunities that can be leveraged to increase capacity, upskill their staff and expand their reach through industry networks and associations. In addition, these programs and supports will act as complimentary resources for CCT partner organizations to leverage for their own use.

Objectives:

- Grow stakeholder ability to strengthen their skills by providing learning content on key topics that increase tourism-readiness resulting in strong and competitive tourism businesses
- Identify opportunities and support programs that will assist stakeholders build their capacity
- Leverage municipal and stakeholders' relationships to connect them with student placement opportunities to grow the workforce
- Assist municipalities to create a welcoming environment for visitors by providing customer and tourism ambassador skills training to the tourism workforce

Provide stakeholders with learning content on key topics designed to increase tourism-readiness and build strong, competitive tourism businesses

Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Lead
Learning Lab Expand and update CCT “Signature Courses” (courses that are proprietary to CCT) including addition of micro-learning formats Deliver curated learning content from third party e-learning. Learning suites include Business, Hospitality, Marketing	# new modules	4	DIR
	# of updated modules (TAP)	1	
	#of learning suites	3	
Develop downloadable toolkits to help assist stakeholders enhance and grow their business (example topics: Experience Development, Guide to Event Surveys)	# of toolkits	2	DIR
Connect with stakeholders utilizing B2B communication channels to provide important and up to date information that enhances business intelligence.	# of social media posts	150	DIR
	# of articles	24	
	# of e-news	12	
Continue with Industry Program Awareness road-map to inform on the advantages of participation in industry groups/associations such as ORHMA, TIAO, Safe Travels, FeastOn, Propel, etc., and support Ontario industry associations.	# of programs	1	DIR
	#of workshops	3	

Offer training to develop and grow shoulder season experiences through a series of workshops on a) developing opportunities b) prioritization of key initiatives c) developing a strategy.	# of workshops	3	DIR
Deliver expert-led interactive learning opportunities/workshops	# number of opportunities/workshops	3	DIR

Identify opportunities and support programs that will assist stakeholders build their capacity

Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Lead
Develop Industry Partner Program that offers stakeholders special benefits and opportunities only offered to CCT members (example discounted ad buy in <i>Attractions Ontario</i> publication for CCT members)	# of programs	1	DIR
Research and identify third-party lead opportunities to assist in development and growth of shoulder season experiences (currently working with Culinary Tourism Alliance and BC Hughes through TIAO-led initiative)	# of programs	Based on available opportunities	DIR
Continue training to develop and grow shoulder season experiences through a series of workshops on a) developing opportunities b) prioritization of key initiatives c) developing a strategy.	# of workshops	3	DIR
Create/leverage existing Artist/Community Connection database to help integrate artist experiences into the visitor economy (from Experience Development Priorities)	# of databases	1	IRM
Support upskilling and training of tourism workforce for customer service excellence through TAP and skill-based Learning Lab courses	# of new users	200	DIR

Leverage municipal and stakeholders relationships to connect them with student placement opportunities to grow the workforce

Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Lead
Connect municipalities with education / students	# of modules	1	DIR
Support efforts to build and retain a strong tourism talent pool in local communities by aligning with colleges/universities to provide placement opportunities for students.	# of student placements	10	DIR

Assist municipalities to create a welcoming environment for visitors by providing customer and tourism ambassador skills training to the tourism workforce

Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Lead
Develop Train-the-Trainer version of the Tourism Ambassador Program to provide municipalities with the knowledge and skill to execute the program in their own communities.	# of programs	1	DIR

Product / Experience Development

Objectives:

- Facilitate industry-led experience development
- Develop and launch new trails in partnership with regional stakeholders
- Support Marketing & Communications campaigns through development of itineraries
- Explore use of new and emerging technologies for experience development

Facilitate industry-led experience development

Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Lead
Work with Ontario by Bike to identify opportunities and connect stakeholders to grow cycle tourism in the region	# of new experiences projects	2	IRM
Work with Culinary Tourism Alliance and TIAO to leverage product development workshops and programs with stakeholders	# of new experiences projects	2	IRM
Work with the art community to lead the development of new experiences	# of experiences	1	ED

Develop and launch new trails in partnership with regional stakeholders

Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Lead
Assist stakeholders in honing new tourism products and connecting them to the marketing team	# of products	As required by stakeholders	Partner
Identify new stakeholder trails and products to be leveraged and supported by marketing	# of products	As required by stakeholders	DMC

Support Marketing & Communications campaigns

Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Lead
Coordinate logistics and contacts for media fams	% of coordination	80	DMC
Support seasonal marketing campaign refresh for Road Trip planning tool	# of refreshes	5	DMC
Support marketing with content and stakeholder recommendations for website landing	# of campaigns	6	IRM

Explore use of new and emerging technologies for experience development

Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Lead
Support technology-based marketing initiatives through connecting and coordinating stakeholders with marketing team (AR pilot project)	# of programs	1	IRM

B2B Marketing Communications Outline

The COVID-19 pandemic has left many businesses with an under-skilled hospitality workforce, in addition to the existing workforce gap, while customer service expectations remain high. Challenges continue with attracting and retaining staff, creating a skill deficit for some businesses and time constraints for training. Central Counties aims to deliver education and support programs designed to help stakeholders gain a competitive edge for their business, as well as provide resources and opportunities that can be leveraged to increase capacity, upskill their staff and expand their reach through industry networks and associations. In addition, these programs and support will act as complementary resources for CCT partner organizations.

B2B marketing and communications will focus on communicating this information to the stakeholders. Currently the main communication channels for delivering information:

Direct e-communications: Mailchimp, B2B newsletter, Industry Relations Manager email

Online: Website, social media

In-person: IR Manager/Stakeholders one-on-ones and events (CCT and stakeholder-led)

There is an opportunity to increase the calibre and frequency of delivering informative and relevant B2B content to stakeholders through existing and newly identified channels that will drive awareness of CCT as an organization, as well as the programs and support offered.

The marketing plan follows the guidelines as set out by the CCT Board and staff during the 2022 board retreat.

B2B Strategic Goals

- Communicate CCT and industry news, events, and opportunities to stakeholders
- Deliver relevant and engaging content that will help strength, grow, motivate, and inspire stakeholders
- Raise awareness of Central Counties Tourism across York, Durham, and Headwaters
- Align with Destination Ontario and other in-region tourism partners to raise awareness of CCT with stakeholders
- Showcase CCT as a leader and innovator for learning and stakeholder support in the RTO landscape
- Measure success through goal setting and metric models

Target Audience

- Tourism-related businesses and organizations who support and/or benefit from tourism in York, Durham and Headwaters
- Municipalities, BIAs, Chambers of Commerce, DMOs and Festival Organizers

B2B Marketing Program

The B2B marketing program is holistic, utilizing all digital and in-person opportunities to create a network of information that will result in the amplification of all B2B news and messaging to Stakeholders. All anchor content will live on the B2B website with all other outlined communications channels driving traffic to this content.

Direct e-communications

E-communications will leverage multiple stakeholder databases (Mailchimp and Moodle) to increase targeted messaging to stakeholder groups. This will ensure that the right message is received by the right audience and provides opportunities to engage stakeholders with information that they have a predisposed interest in. This tactic combined with the existing newsletter and well-developed relationships

between the Industry Relations Managers and stakeholders will provide increased reach and awareness, and reinforce the communication chain internally and externally.

Online

CCT will continue to buildout the existing B2B website to advance the B2B marketing goals through the communications of educational tools and opportunities, support programs, consumer marketing opportunities, product development support and programs, research tools and resources, industry news and events, compelling, relevant Biz Blog content.

The depth, calibre, and frequency of social media activity will be increased to attract new and existing stakeholders, and drive engagement while supporting CCT goals. Engagement activity will be tracked and measured for success providing insight into the types of content and delivery that resonates most highly with stakeholders then used to hone future content.

Content

Content is the key driver for increasing traffic and engagement on the website and social media channels. Key B2B content categories are: Education, Marketing, Research, Funding Opportunities, Stakeholder Spotlights, News and Events.

In addition to disseminating program, support, and opportunity information, B2B marketing will work closely with B2C marketing to identify and develop engaging businesses-focused content that will showcase inspiring stakeholders and thought-leaders in the region that work CCT to amplify their businesses (Stakeholder Spotlights). The purpose of these success stories is to create awareness of the programs and support that CCT offers and drive stakeholder engagement. B2B marketing will work with B2C to leverage photography and interview opportunities from the B2B point of view, resulting in content development efficiencies (two stories, one interview). All content will be used across all digital channels ultimately driving traffic back to the B2B website.

In-person

In-person opportunities have increased post-pandemic providing more ways to strategically engage with stakeholders to create awareness of CCT as an organization and the wealth of support and programs that are offered. Beyond attending events and having one-on-one engagements with stakeholders a Sponsorship Program will be introduced allowing for a greater presence of CCT at third party events and complementary initiatives across the region. These strategic opportunities will be identified and secured based on the fit and benefits to growing awareness of CCT in the region and industry.

Investment Attraction

Objectives

- Grow municipal investment in tourism through the facilitation and implementation support of Community Tourism Plans and Wayfinding Plans
- Leverage stakeholder investment through the partnership program
- Provide visitor insights to communities to demonstrate the value of the visitor economy

Grow municipal investment			
Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Lead
Audit existing CTP action items	# of action plans reviewed	6	ED
	# of action items implemented	10	
Solicit municipal investment in research to provide prospective investors a clear picture of the visitor impact	# of municipalities purchasing research	10	ED

Support Stakeholder Groups			
Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Lead
Host Tourism Readiness/Welcome Back Workshops and networking sessions.	# of Workshops	3	ED
Facilitate 'Strategic Visioning (planning) Sessions' for small groups E.g. BIAs, Community Associations, Event Organizations, Agri Fair Boards, etc. Educate on the RTO Resources.	# of planning sessions	8	ED
Facilitate the sharing of best practices between organizations for efficiencies and effectiveness.	# of facilitated meetings per region	3	ED

Marketing Support Plan

Background Information and Overview

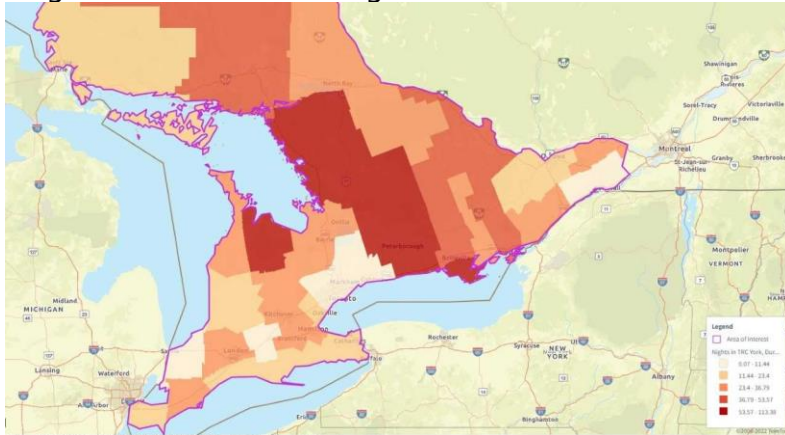
2023-2024 is going to be a critical year for the tourism industry as our target visitor has established a new set of **post-covid** travel values and is focused on spending more time immersed in tourism experiences. With the economy on a downswing, the visitor will be even more hyper focused on meaningful travel that is fiscally responsible and sustainable. The proposed marketing plan follows the guidelines/recommendations as set out by the CCT Board and staff during the 2022 board retreat and the RTO Strategic Assumptions Plan while offering stakeholders additional trackable marketing opportunities.

Research

In 2023-24, research will continue to be a key resource in understanding the current/post-COVID visitor. All proposed goals, objectives, campaigns & tactics utilize current data gathered by the CCT Marketing team and the CCT Research Manager in order to position YDH as an ideal destination to the most viable audiences. We have developed a multifaceted marketing plan to help encourage people to explore our regions in new ways. The research coming out of 2022-2023, has served to help shape the proposed 2023-2024 marketing strategy and tactics. The key findings shaping the foundation of our plans are: **new travel trends, geographical data, emerging new audiences, technology, sustainability, diversity and inclusive marketing.**

Geographical Targeting.

It is no surprise that our geographical targeting will remain very similar to previous years. Lucky Orange/CCT Online consumer survey research indicates 92-98% of visitors online are from the GTA, which is also reflected in the postal code/mobility research conducted by CCT and supporting stakeholders. We have seen a slight increase in US visitation to the site, but not significant enough to alter our tactics. In regards to overnight stays, we will target those areas through alternate tactics.



Left Image: One of our data sources is mobility data which tracks visitation of OVERNIGHT VISITORS (in red) who TRAVEL 60KM+ into RTO6.

Right Image: Red oval represents local market. Blue represents the secondary market that is prone to overnight stays.

Consumer Personas/Product Segmentation

CCT, Destination Ontario and Environics, established 6 consumer personas utilizing postal code research and geo-fencing. The personas were matched with existing CCT tourism ready businesses/products and the tactical marketing plan reflects the attributes and behaviours of those targeted personas. We will continue to develop these consumer segments utilizing new trends and findings.

- Art Lovers – Urban
- Art Lovers -Rural
- Adventure Seekers
- Family Fun
- Foodie Fanatics
- Passionate Putters

All product segments will be audited for ideal promotional timing based on product offerings, seasonal appropriateness and other variables.

New Target Audience

Studies over the past 5-10 years, have identified a rising new consumer trend called “unplugged tourism.” This new and potentially powerful visitor seeks to put away technology in order to re-connect to the world around them through tourism experiences. Technology still plays a role in “marketing” to this new consumer segment and they will still “socially document it and share” but the participation in the actual activities are grounded in the idea of mindful tourism where they can re-connect with community, family and themselves. CCT will be developing a new set of digital and paid tactics to capture the attention of this new market.

Diversity Marketing

2022-2023, has sharply brought to the forefront the importance of Diversity Marketing. It is imperative that CCT addresses this important marketing practice from both a B2B and B2C perspective. The CCT marketing team, supported by the Research Manager and the Industry Relations team, will launch new initiatives that will guide us in developing a diversity strategy that is informed, relevant, sustainable and responsible. In order to grow our marketing efforts, we need to highlight the importance of recognizing different subgroups in our target audiences while being informed about different cultural and societal changes in our communities, industry partners, stakeholders and visitors while setting realistic and achievable goals and intentions.

The CCT team will consult with diversity experts in order to establish an actionable plan. Some key categories for diversity that will be addressed are:

- Age
- Gender
- Accessibility
- Appearance
- Religion
- Ethnicity
- Personal identity
- Sexual orientation
- Language
- Education
- Socioeconomic status
- Geographic location

Digital Trends:

In 2022-2023, Facebook and Instagram have changed up their methodology once again to remain current and viable.

Reels are now the most prominently featured content on their channels. CCT will focus on creating more reels to drive to online website content. CCT staff will continue to devote resources into understanding the ever changing landscape of the social media meta-universe in order to give our digital visitors incredible content that drives visitation to our digital channels and regions.

Digital Support for Stakeholders

In 2023-24, CCT marketing staff will launch a new digital support strategy for our key tourism ready stakeholders, communities with interactive tourism websites and regional DMO's. This will be reflected in digital campaigns and a stronger presence on yorkdurhamheadwaters.ca through a series of new landing pages.

Campaigns: Timelines, Elements, Weight

In 2023-2024, CCT will launch a series of seasonal/curated campaigns that will position York Durham Headwaters as:

Ontario's **Ultimate (year-round) Road Trip** destination for domestic tourism through its YDH Road Trip Platform and supporting content.

And the Ultimate Destination to experience **Unplugged Tourism** – Disconnecting to Reconnect with the regions, communities and stakeholders.

We will continue to target our Consumer Segment Persona's using the associated/aligned product categories of interest to engage visitors to drive visitation to our regions. We will do this by delivering updated, relevant and compelling content that is engaging and motivating.

CCT will continue to tell the stories of its stakeholders in order to drive economic impact and support virtual visitation to the YDH and tourism ready websites, YDH and stakeholder digital channels while also supporting tourism sustainability messaging. The content will be carefully curated and delivered in a strategic way to the right consumer in the right way. The campaigns will also provide visitors with the proper information in order to generate a sense of community welcoming and well-being.

Campaigns

Campaign	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Spring												
Summer												
Fall												
Holiday												
Winter												

B2C Strategic Content Goals

In 2023-2024, CCT will continue to focus on strengthening YorkDurhamHeadwaters' in-market position, as Ontario's Ultimate Road Trip Destination with a retained emphasis on supporting local visitation. CCT will also strive to be inclusive and diverse in its marketing initiatives. CCT will also focus on becoming a key destination of choice for the Unplugged Tourist/Mindful Tourist. CCT will achieve this through a new storytelling model which combines new technologies, video, informative articles, reels and other innovative and creative content to highlight tourism businesses, and products under our primary product categories while working with DMOs, Shop Local Initiatives, Tourism Ready Municipalities, Towns, Industry and other Tourism partners to align messaging and tactics.

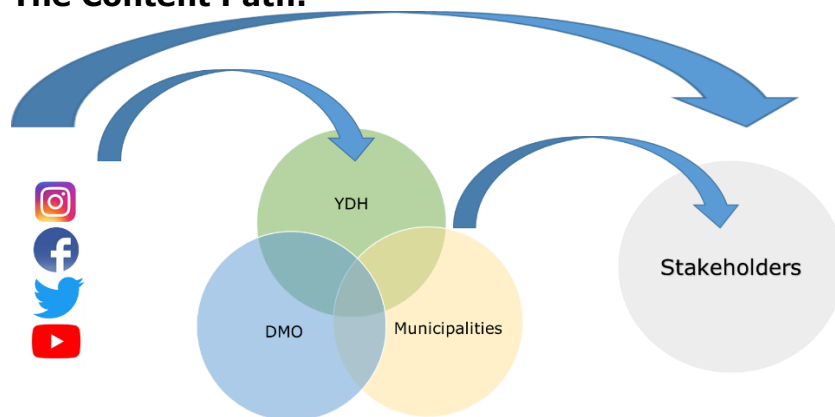
CCT will audit and re-organize existing online content in order to improve the visitor experience to the website. By "sorting" our content into specific pillars, we will capture the attention of the visitor based on a themed interest. CCT will continue to adapt its content strategy by implementing and evaluating industry research & trends in digital advertising methodology. CCT will also monitor success and identify needs for change using CCT online consumer surveys, social listening tools, analytical software and google tag parcels. CCT will continue to use the current advertising/communications fulfillment model for both paid and organic campaigns. The campaigns are and will continue to be executed strategically in an aligned tactical manner across multiple platforms: social media, search engine marketing, third party influencers, media relations and print advertising.

The Content

All campaigns will be centered on compelling content (which can be CCT and/or stakeholder generated) that captures the uniqueness of the landscape, history and heritage of our regions and the incredible stories about our stakeholders and their products.

All tactics (paid and organic) will do a final drive to our website and other tourism ready websites, which will be filled with robust current content: events, videos, articles, podcasts, the audio/driving tours, maps, augmented reality, and landing pages that will inspire visitors to take the tours and spend money in the regions. The content is adaptable, can be re-purposed, multi-positioned and flexible in order to respond to any changes in the environment that might affect tourism visitation.

The Content Path:



Content is promoted on YDH social media channels with the appropriate hashtags and handles. Please note, the content can also be created by hired influencers and other 3rd party media.

The Content is housed on the YDH site, DMO site, Municipal site or stakeholder site. Customized variations of this content can be housed on all sites as well in order to amplify reach.

The digital consumer attribution path is tracked by a UTM/Google Tag – or Parcel.

Content will be also measured by Lucky Orange in order to measure engagement success and consumer interest.

Marketing Mission

To create a fiscally responsible measurable strategic marketing plan that promotes tourism ready products and experiences to the public via effective communication channels and through quality content that tells stories of our region with honesty, inspiration, integrity and authenticity, in order to raise awareness of the regions of York Durham Headwaters and increase economic impact for our businesses.

Web Strategy Objectives

- To create a newly designed website that provides the online visitor with targeted compelling informative content and tools that are easy to find, highly interactive and user friendly in order to drive in-person visitation to the regions.
- To provide Tourism Ready CCT stakeholders increased exposure on the site in order to give them greater access to the YDH audience in an organized manner that is aligned with the YDH brand.
- To install mechanisms and reporting tools that monitor the success of the website, and audience needs in order to achieve consumer attribution and generate economic impact.

Web Strategy			
Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Lead
To re-design and re-frame Yorkdurhamheadwaters.ca	# of re-design/re-frame	1	DM
To create engaging seasonal campaigns that drive visitation to the regions.	# of campaigns	5	DM
To curate speciality landing pages that serve to effectively organize the content into pillars on the website for both visitors and stakeholders: Shop Local, Festivals and Events, Community/Regional Tourism, Mindful Tourism, Agri-Tourism, Ultimate Road Trip	# of pillar landing pages	6	DM
To build out 1 new YDH Trail Talks product with podcasts, AR, AR web tools and content.	#of landing pages	1	DM
To execute online survey that explores the success of website content and isolates consumer needs.	# of surveys	1	DM
	# of completed surveys	750	
To create a report that measures the success of the website: statistics to include consumer attribution (referral) and engagement.	# of reports	2	DM/MM
To embed visitor intent (google tags) tracking mechanisms within articles to track success.	# of Articles Embedded	20	DM/MM

Digital Strategy Objectives

- To create engaging, highly-targeted, measurable, organic, and paid digital experiences that attract new and existing visitors, and drives engagement with high-converting, personalized content.

- To create a digital strategy that tells the stories of our stakeholders and products in order to increase social engagement, acquire and retain new audiences and drive traffic to the targeted website in order to generate movement along the consumer attribution path.
- Create a digital stakeholder support plan that will give selected tourism ready stakeholders direct access to the @VisitYDH audience.
- To create a new image, videography, and reels program that reflects current trends.
- To establish a reporting program that accurately measures the success of our digital efforts.
- To work with influencers and paid social media personalities to create content for their channels, and ours, in order to extend our audience reach and grow @VisitYDH and stakeholder audience visitation to the regions while supporting the needs of our businesses.

Digital Strategy			
Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Lead
Social Media Engagement: Complete quarterly YOY engagement growth comparison for all social channels for B2C, YorkDurhamHeadwaters.	% of engagement increases per channel	Twitter: 20% Facebook: 15% Instagram: 30%	DM/MM
Social Media Channel Referral: To measure referral traffic coming from social channels to yorkdurheadwaters.ca	% of social media traffic referrals #of reports	25% 2	DM/MM
Content Development: Create, prioritize and execute a "shot list" to continue to build a robust image bank that accurately reflects the pillar 5 product content inventory of each region for marketing purposes.	# of images for print/web	1000 images	DM/MM
Content Development: Continue to develop the video bank to accurately reflect the pillar product content inventory of each region for marketing purposes. Hire paid experts to produce a series of YDH reels for YDH channels and external channels	#of video #of reels	4 40	DM/MM
Research and attend International Social Media Conference.	# of conferences	1	DM/MM

Content development: Create compelling articles for yorkdurhamheadwaters and stakeholder sites, that tell the story of the region, tourism businesses, products and programs.	#of articles	60	DM/MM
Execute a targeted search based marketing campaign to raise awareness of tourism businesses, products, and programming.	# of impressions	2,600,000	DM/MM
Execute Social Media Boosted Campaigns in order to expand audience reach and increase engagement in order to drive traffic to the affiliated website	# of campaigns	5	DM/MM
Execute a Landmark campaign a major social media outlet	# of campaigns	1	DM/MM

Earned Media and Influencer Relations Objectives

To establish, build and maintain solid ethical relationships with third party media, influencers and bloggers. CCT strives to ensure that all media efforts are accurate and communicated to the public in a timely manner. The stories released by the media will raise awareness of tourism businesses, products, programming and people in our regions in order to attract visitors, extend audience reach and increase economic impact. All initiatives will be measured for success and reported quarterly.

Earned Media			
Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Lead
Work with media & influencers whose audience is demographically and geographically matched with CCT's target audience base, in order to utilize their channels to raise awareness of CCT tourism businesses, programs and products while extending our audience reach through their verified channels and increase visitation to the regions.	# of Tours	10	DM
Pan-Regional Monitoring – Create report in order to measure success in the following categories: impression reach, PR value and regional coverage.	# of reports	12 (monthly)	DM
Press release distribution for stakeholders in order to extend their marketing efforts	# of releases distributed	50	DM

Press release distribution of CCT generated press releases and advisories in order to raise awareness of campaigns, offerings, special products.	# of releases distributed	48	DM
To measure the economic impact of our media efforts through the measurement of impression value and paid advertising value.	Estimated Media Value	\$4M	
Host a group media FAM for travel writers and influencers who have over 80% of Audience based in Ontario.	# of FAM	1	MM/DM
Measure the success of the FAM in order to share with our stakeholders.	#of reports (social impact and digital/print)	1	

Paid Marketing Objectives

To execute a paid marketing campaign that is aligned with our seasonal strategy. We will work with print publications that have a solid, targeted audiences that match the CCT target audiences based on CCT research studies and the CCT consumer personas. We will also offer tourism businesses affordable advertising opportunities in order to raise awareness of their products, programs and experiences in order to generate economic impact.

Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Lead
Partner with tourism businesses to raise awareness of tourism products, programs and events while providing advertising opportunities to tourism businesses.	# of full page co-op ads	10	DM
Partner with Destination Ontario in order to extend audience reach while leveraging dollars.	# of campaigns Value: \$30,000	1	DM
Work with Ontario By Bike/Greenbelt to promote cycling in our regions	#of ads	1	DM
Work with regionally based tourism publications to promote local tourism	# of ads	3	DM
Earned Revenue from Co-Ops	Value	\$26,000	DM

Golf in Ontario

- Be the best practice example of pan-regional partnership through the Golf in Ontario Program

Golf in Ontario Growth			
Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Lead
Solicit new stakeholder partners to actively grow the program within YDH and the rest of the province.	# of new stakeholders	5	ED

Partnership: Ministry Allotment \$379,000

Objectives

- Foster tourism investment
- Further CCT's impact on tourism

Foster Tourism Investment			
Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Lead
Solicit partnership proposals from municipalities, BIAs, DMOs and regions that focus on supporting increased visitation, stakeholder capacity, destination development and other tourism-related projects.	# of mentions in B2B newsletters	4	
	#of direct conversations with stakeholders	10	
	# of Partnerships	4	
Support projects that advance Community Tourism Plan action items	# of Partnerships	4	

Further CCT impact on tourism			
Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Lead
Solicit partnerships that encourage increased visitation and increased length of visit.	# of Partnerships	25	
Encourage development of shoulder season products/experiences/festivals.	# of Partnerships	4	

Revenue

Objectives

- Increase CCT's ability to support stakeholders
- Further CCT impact on tourism

There is value in the stakeholder resources provided by CCT and the organization continues to monetize new services in an effort to offset costs. In addition, CCT has been successful in applying for provincial and federal grants and will continue to pursue additional funding opportunities, like the Tourism Relief Fund, which directly support stakeholders and bolster CCT's ability to deliver against the business plan.

Appendix I

Definitions

In discussing strategy, it is important to have a common understanding of the terms used in the document.

Objectives	Manageable, time-sensitive allocations of resources that move the organization toward the ultimate Strategic Direction. There is a clear link between each objective and a Strategic Direction. Objectives are the backbone of the yearly Business Plan and build on each other year-over-year.
Tactics	Individual activities that support the achievement of Objectives. Each Objective may have several tactics associated with it. Tactics are measurable and are used to gauge organizational effectiveness at achieving the Objectives and moving towards the Strategic Direction.
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators are the agreed upon outcomes that will be measured to determine the execution effectiveness of each tactic.
Goals	The quantitative and qualitative, agreed-upon target to be achieved for each tactic.
Results	The final measurement of achievement for each tactic.
Outcome	The cumulative affect of results supporting the objective.

Definitions Cont'd

Operator:	A tourism-related business or organization that is providing an end product/service that is utilized directly by consumers.
Partner:	An organization that supports the tourism agenda without directly owning the products/services that are used to deliver the tourism experience. These include Municipalities, BIAs, Chambers of Commerce, DMOs and Festival Organizers.
Stakeholders:	An umbrella term to capture all operators, partners and individuals who support and/or benefit from tourism.
Region(s):	In its singular, Region is referring to Central Counties Tourism Region (RTO 6). When used as a plural, Regions refers to the three sub-regions that make up Central Counties borders. These are Durham Region, York Region and The Hills of Headwaters tourism region.
DMO(s):	The staff and board of directors of the three regions that work to further tourism within their borders.
Categories:	The five product categories identified as strengths for CCT. They are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art Lovers • Foodie Fanatics • Adventure Seekers • Family Fun • Golf (Passionate Putters)
Leisure Market:	Visitors travelling for personal reasons, not as a group or for a sport tournament or business meeting/convention

Acronyms

CCT	Central Counties Tourism
HTA	Headwaters Tourism Association
YRAC	York Region Arts Council
Durham	Durham Region Tourism
DeON	Destination Ontario (formerly Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation)
TIAO	Tourism Industry Association of Ontario
DC	Destination Canada (Federal Tourism Agency)
IDO	Investment Development Office (Ministry of Tourism)
Q(1-4)	Fiscal Quarters Q1 Apr-Jun, Q2 Jul-Sep, Q3 Oct-Dec, Q4 Jan-Mar

Organization Chart

