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# Central Counties Tourism

Developing a Winter/Shoulder Season  
Tourism  
Strategy for Headwaters, Durham and York  
May 27, 2022

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# Disclaimer

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The recommendations reported herein are provided on a confidential basis. Recommendations can be used in whatever necessity, including releasing them to travel and tourism industry stakeholders and partners and/or media.

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

May 2022.

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## Foreward:

# Why a Winter and Shoulder Season Tourism Strategy?

Canada and countries across the globe suffer from uneven tourism performance. This uneven performance can cause stress on residents, communities and the environment with over-tourism during certain periods of the year when demand exceeds capacity and under-tourism at other times, leading to lower revenue for tourism businesses, an insecure labour market and low investor participation rates in the tourism industry vs other industries.

And while each destination may have a differing set of drivers for uneven tourism performance, research suggests, and COVID has proved, that there can be demand for tourism in non-peak seasons. But that demand for winter and shoulder season tourism products and experiences fall well short of supply of those tourism experiences with travellers seeking other destinations to spend their visitor economy dollars.

The three regions in Central Counties understand this challenge and, through a series of three workshops have developed and prioritized key initiatives that can help address this imbalance and support drivers for tourism growth in the winter and shoulder seasons.



# Outcomes

**These strategies offer insight into:**

- What a long-term vision for winter/shoulder season tourism development for Central Counties may look like
- Ensuring the guiding principles that direct the vision are in line with existing Central Counties Tourism guiding principles
- Addressing the challenges and opportunities for developing winter/shoulder season tourism in the three regions
- Adds colour to the vision through goals and objectives
- Detail pillars and initiatives that can be undertaken by Central Counties regions and stakeholders to develop its winter/shoulder season over the designated period
- Outline a roadmap for execution of the strategy
- Detail specific tactics, including responsibilities, key parties, priority, measures of success and more

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# Contents

## Winter/shoulder season strategic framework overview

- Context and purpose
- Approach

## Winter/shoulder season strategic framework details

- Guiding principles
- Challenges and opportunities
- Vision and objectives
- Key opportunities
- Supporting initiatives



# Winter/shoulder season strategic framework overview

- Context and purpose
- Approach



# Our Approach

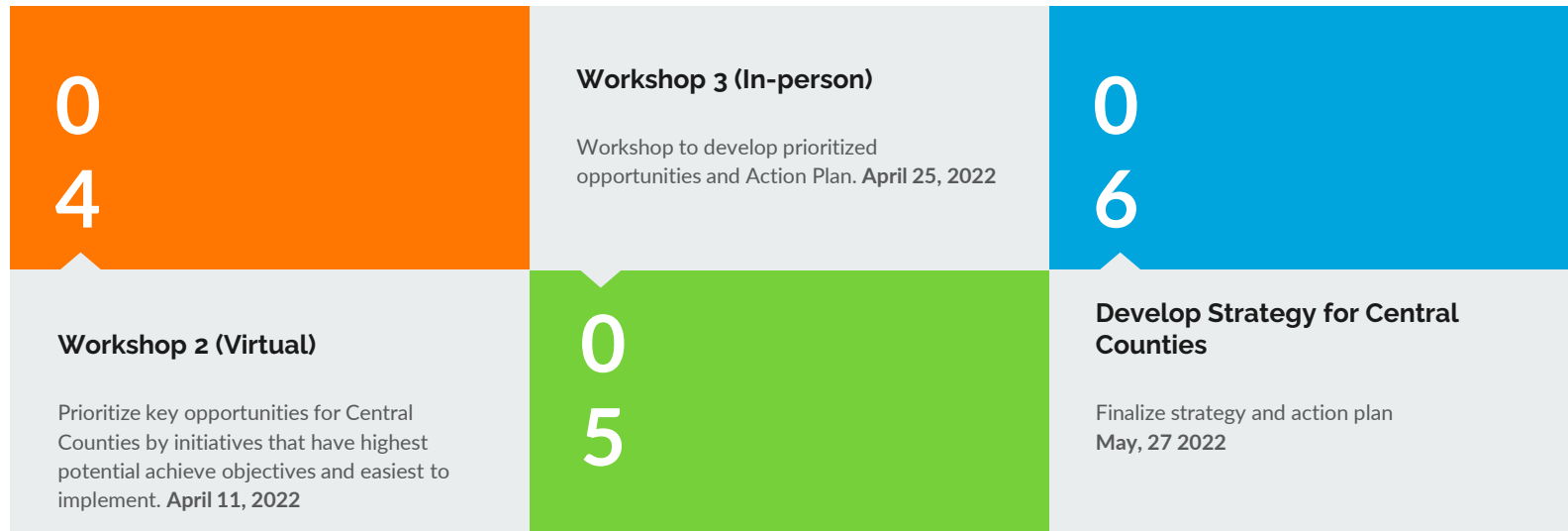
	1 GATHER	2 ASSESS	3 RECOMMEND + ACTION PLAN
<b>Input</b>	Global and localized situational analysis winter/shoulder season workshop	Situational analysis Draft principles, challenges/opportunities, vision, strategic goals and objectives	Draft strategy
<b>Actions</b>	Conduct workshop with leadership and key stakeholders to review guiding principles, vision, challenges and objectives Review existing/new material to further understanding of winter/shoulder tourism Evaluate initial winter/shoulder tourism guiding principles, challenges/opportunities, vision, strategic goals and objectives	Conduct workshop to refine principles, vision, and establish strategic goals and objectives Identify and prioritize opportunities to develop winter/shoulder tourism in destination Conduct innovation lab to assess opportunities in greater detail with leadership and key stakeholders Develop initial draft of the strategy	Facilitate discussion with leadership to review winter/shoulder strategy Present final strategic framework with destination leadership and key stakeholders
<b>Output</b>	Draft principles, challenges and opportunities, vision, strategic goals and objectives	Draft strategy	Final strategy Final presentation to leadership and key stakeholders

# Process (Steps 1-3)

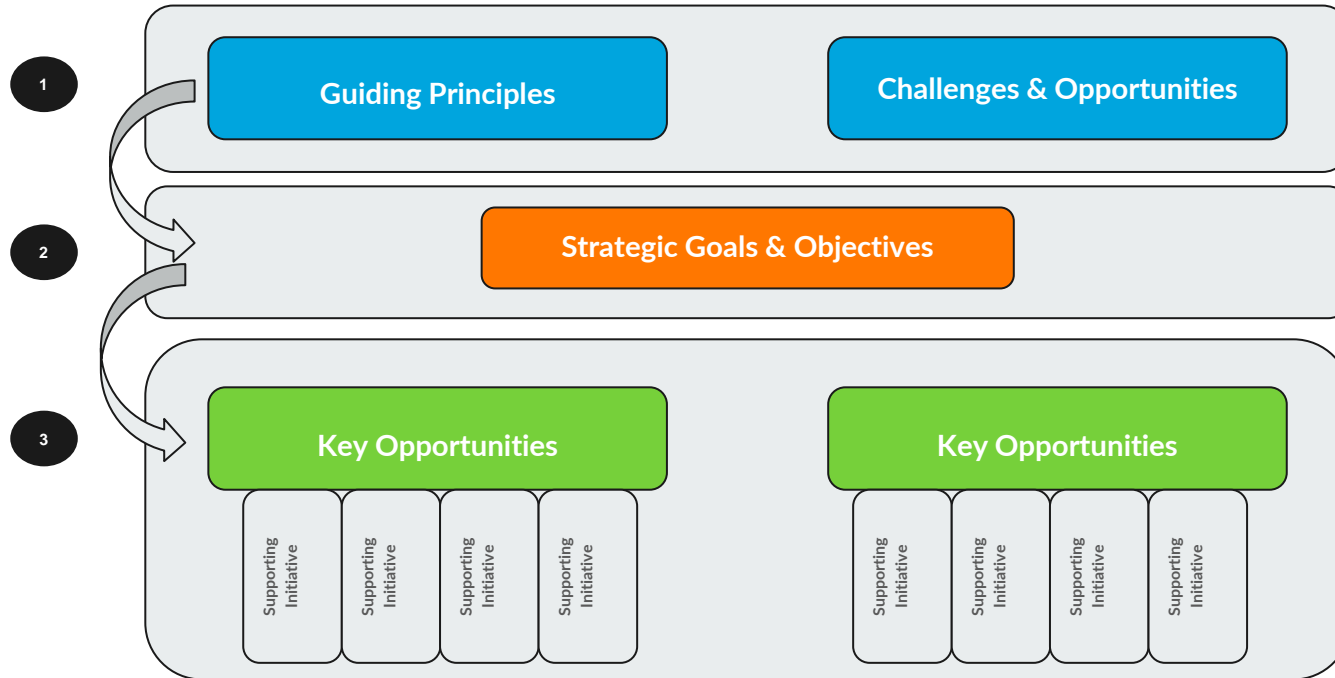




## Process (Steps 4-6)

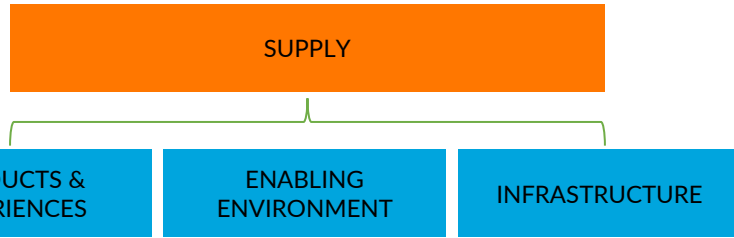


# Strategic Framework

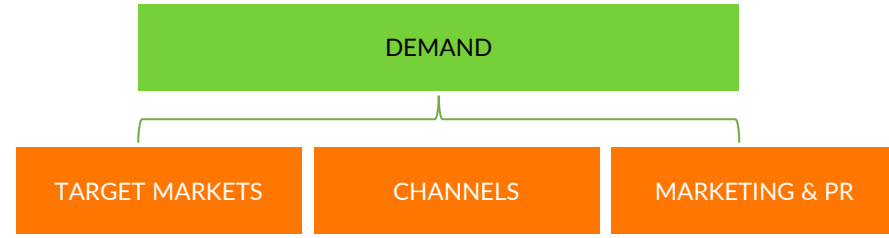


For a destination, there may be dozens of opportunities that could be considered to develop their winter/shoulder season. Our process helps CCT categorize top priorities into supply and demand.

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- Natural, cultural or developed resources
- A capability where destination or operator holds competitive advantage
- Could range from festivals, golf courses, wellness centers, sporting events, or a particular asset like a museum or conference center
- Research should be conducted to ensure there is sufficient demand for the supply side and to better understand the characteristics of that demand.



- Particular source market, target market segment or unique marketing channel
- An unmet need or interest
- Channel such as tour operators, travel agents, travel influencers
- Could range from couples in the region or sports enthusiasts from further away
- Research should be conducted to understand demand to ensure destination or operator has right mix of products or experiences to warrant demand


# Winter/shoulder season strategic framework overview

- Guiding principles
  - Challenges and opportunities
  - Vision and Objectives
  - Key opportunities
  - Supporting initiatives
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# Review Guiding Principles

## Two Main Components for growing the visitor economy

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



Central Counties Tourism believes stakeholder engagement and alignment will draw businesses together to build a strong, visitor centric focus and maximize results for tourism operators.

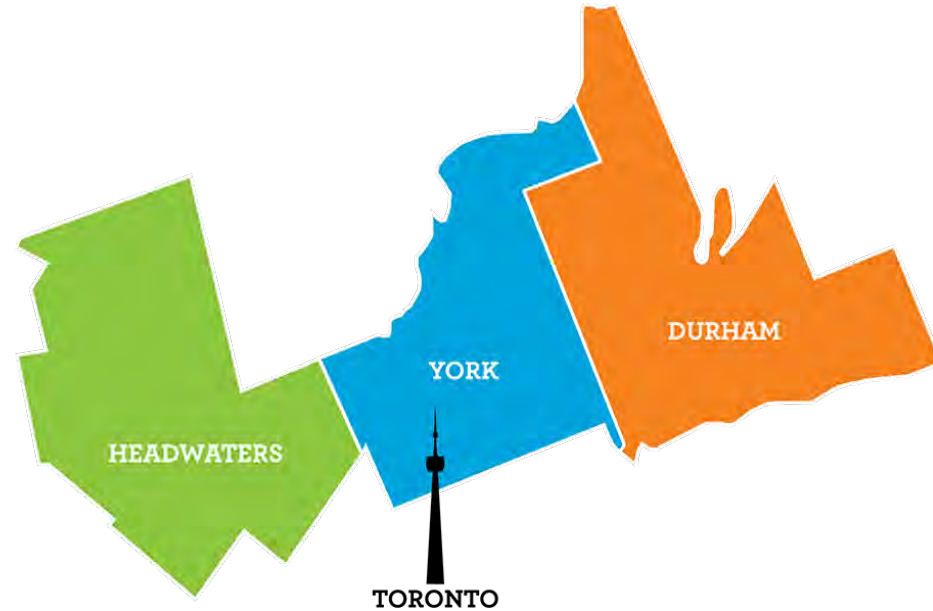
## Core Values

1. Conducting business with integrity, transparency and respect
2. Embracing diverse tourism experiences
3. Collaboration and leveraging resources
4. A sustainable business model through solid stewardship and innovation



# Objectives

1. Increase stakeholder capacity
2. Formal recognition from municipalities on the importance of tourism to communities





**Ensures alignment of the direction for Central Counties that reflects industry demands, potential visitors, operators, and the communities that tourism serves.**

**VISION: Central Counties will be a destination region that in 10 years.....**

Becomes a **destination of choice throughout the year**; supporting tourism revenue growth, increase in tourism investment, attraction of skilled labour and prosperity and growth for the communities it serves.

Through strong tourism leadership, the region is collaborative. Engaging with all key stakeholders in Central Counties tourism success and has the tools to do so

Increased coordination and partnership required among tourism stakeholders within and across the region

Tourism becomes a recognized economic driver for the region and as a catalyst for other regional priorities

- Authentic and real
- Not a “poorer version of another destination” but one that truly celebrates each county’s unique assets and culture



**The accomplishments that the Central Counties tourism regions wishes to achieve its vision as it develops and enhances its tourism experiences to even out its tourism season in favour of a year-round tourism experience.**

## Project Strategic Objectives

OBJECTIVE	RATIONALE
<b>1.</b> Tourism leadership, industry and local government support for developing and enhancing a critical mass of experiences developed and available for the winter and shoulder season	Prioritizing experience and destination development and marketing to compel and inspire visitors to choose the Central Counties region as a destination to visit during the winter and shoulder seasons
<b>2.</b> Support the <b>development, enhancement and marketing</b> of at least 3 “big ideas” to support the development of a winter and shoulder season	Identifying, prioritizing and growing potential experiences, product in each of the three CCT regions over the next three years
<b>3.</b> Increase accommodations occupancy by X%* within 3 years during the winter/shoulder season. *Based on 2019 occupancy	Quantifying evidence that the investment in developing exceptional experiences and tourism development is working. Giving the program at least one year to develop products and the destination.

## Headwaters

Key barriers/challenges facing the potential to develop Winter/Shoulder season tourism are:



Weather & daylight



Lack of product to support winter experiences



Communities push against tourism



Access to labour



Parking capacity



Competition with other regions



Lack of unique experiences



The need for DMO's to be fair

**There are key barriers/challenges that are perceived to impact development or enhancement of experiences to support **Headwaters'** opportunity to develop winter and shoulder season tourism.**

Challenge	Description	Potential Mitigation
<b>Weather &amp; Daylight</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weather in the region is unpredictable. At times, too cold and other times too warm for outdoor winter activities</li> <li>Driving in the region during unpredictable storms a challenge from the GTA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential to develop channel packages with bus tours</li> <li>Encourage GTA visitation from public transportation</li> </ul>
<b>Access to labour</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skilled and trained labour is a challenge; particularly reliant on students who can work only until early September;</li> <li>Don't have enough confidence to be open beyond the weekends at times so work can only be part-time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Though not an issue unique to winter and shoulder season tourism, opportunity for more full time, year-round labour if enterprise if operational throughout the year</li> </ul>
<b>Diversity of experiences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The region covers a huge swath of geography</li> <li>The region has a great deal of diversity of products, experiences and assets; some very rural, some very urban.</li> <li>Packaging this geographic and product diversity is a challenge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Packaging can support the geographic spread and the variety of products, assets and experiences.</li> <li>Packages can be developed by region within York, by product type (cultural packages, culinary packages, outdoor and adventure, or by communities of interest—chess tournaments, quilting weekends, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Lack of product to support winter experiences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weather is unpredictable. Resources are needed to develop “agile” experiences that adapt to weather</li> <li>There is a lack of outfitters and education for novice outdoor tourists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunity to explore agile experiences (indoor and outdoor)</li> <li>Opportunity to work with business community to meet needs of tourists</li> </ul>

There are key barriers/challenges that are perceived to impact development or enhancement of experiences to support **Headwaters'** opportunity to develop winter and shoulder season tourism.

Challenge	Description	Potential Mitigation
<b>Parking capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weather in the region is unpredictable. At times, too cold and other times too warm for outdoor winter activities</li> <li>Driving in the region during unpredictable storms a challenge from the GTA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential to develop channel packages with bus tours</li> <li>Encourage GTA visitation from public transportation</li> </ul>
<b>Fairness and lack of “major” attraction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not all attractions are created equal. The challenge is to focus on “winning” attractions, which will support smaller operators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Choose a major attraction to support winter/shoulder season tourism</li> <li>Ensure major attraction has adequate investment and is positioned to help smaller operators</li> </ul>
<b>Lack of unique experiences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The region covers a huge swath of geography</li> <li>The region has a great deal of diversity of products, experiences and assets; some very rural, some very urban.</li> <li>Packaging this geographic and product diversity is a challenge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Packaging can support the geographic spread and the variety of products, assets and experiences.</li> <li>Packages can be developed by region within York, by product type (cultural packages, culinary packages, outdoor and adventure, or by communities of interest—chess tournaments, quilting weekends, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Lack of support for winter tourism experiences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many communities do not desire to host winter tourism activities</li> <li>Bedroom communities see no value in tourism development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunity to engage with stakeholders to share the benefits of tourism</li> <li>Opportunity to co-create tourism experiences that align with community needs</li> </ul>

## York Region

**Key barriers/challenges facing the potential to develop Winter/Shoulder season tourism are:**



Weather and driving conditions



Lack of product to support winter experiences



Research: lack of understanding of winter/shoulder season demand



Access to labour



Inventory of assets open for winter



Broad diversity of experiences across the region



The need for City DMO's to be fair

**There are key barriers/challenges that are perceived to impact development or enhancement of experiences to support [York region's](#) opportunity to develop winter and shoulder season tourism.**

Challenge	Description	Potential Mitigation
<b>Weather and driving conditions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weather in the region is unpredictable. At times, too cold and other times too warm for outdoor winter activities</li> <li>Driving in the region during unpredictable storms a challenge from the GTA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential to develop channel packages with bus tours</li> <li>Encourage GTA visitation from public transportation</li> </ul>
<b>Access to trained labour</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skilled and trained labour is a challenge; particularly reliant on students who can work only until early September;</li> <li>Don't have enough confidence to be open beyond the weekends at times so work can only be part-time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Though not an issue unique to winter and shoulder season tourism, opportunity for more full time, year-round labour if enterprise if operational throughout the year</li> </ul>
<b>Geographic spread and diversity of experiences across the region</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The region covers a huge swath of geography</li> <li>The region has a great deal of diversity of products, experiences and assets; some very rural, some very urban.</li> <li>Packaging this geographic and product diversity is a challenge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Packaging can support the geographic spread and the variety of products, assets and experiences.</li> <li>Packages can be developed by region within York, by product type (cultural packages, culinary packages, outdoor and adventure, or by communities of interest—chess tournaments, quilting weekends, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Understanding of the characteristics of “demand” from GTA for winter/shoulder season experiences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We do not really know what our primary customer, from the GTA and beyond is really seeking for a winter/shoulder season experience so that we can package it better for them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunity to engage in market research to determine the potential drivers of visitation from the GTA and other key regions in the winter and shoulder seasons</li> </ul>

**There are key barriers/challenges that are perceived to impact development or enhancement of experiences to support **York region's** opportunity to develop winter and shoulder season tourism.**

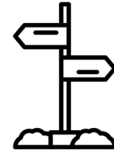
Challenge	Description	Potential Mitigation	
<b>Understanding of what's actually open. Asset inventory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We don't currently have an asset inventory for our industry to even know what is open during the winter/shoulder season and what is closed?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a tool to inventory what is open/available for packaging and sale in the winter/shoulder season.</li> <li>Map those assets by geography and by experience/asset type—culture, events, culinary, outdoor adventure, etc. for ease of packaging</li> </ul>	
<b>DMO fairness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our MAT tax funded DMO's need to be "fair" in the attention, funding and marketing they give to all of our tourism assets....big or small. Popular and unknown</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage the tourism stakeholder community on the need to leverage a handful of key tourism assets to drive visitation to support all ancillary businesses</li> </ul>	
<b>Research: lack of understanding of winter/shoulder season demand</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What d we know about demand for winter/shoulder season tourism? What is the target market segments, in the GTA or elsewhere? What are they seeking in a visitor experience?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allocate resources to conduct market research to determine drivers of visitation from key target segments in the GTA and beyond</li> </ul>	

## Durham Region

Key barriers/challenges facing the potential to develop Winter/Shoulder season tourism are:



Access /Roads and driving



Signage & wayfinding



Access to labour



Lack of accommodation providers



Marketing & itineraries



Collaboration between organizations



There are key barriers/challenges that are perceived to impact development or enhancement of experiences to support **Durham's** opportunity to develop winter and shoulder season tourism.

Challenge	Description	Potential Mitigation
Driving & parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weather in the region is unpredictable. At times, too cold and other times too warm for outdoor winter activities</li> <li>Driving in the region during unpredictable storms a challenge from the GTA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential to develop channel packages with bus tours</li> <li>Encourage GTA visitation from public transportation</li> </ul>
Access to trained labour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skilled and trained labour is a challenge; particularly reliant on students who can work only until early September;</li> <li>Don't have enough confidence to be open beyond the weekends at times so work can only be part-time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Though not an issue unique to winter and shoulder season tourism, opportunity for more full time, year-round labour if enterprise if operational throughout the year</li> </ul>
Marketing & itineraries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing events and attractions that operate in the winter need more support through marketing</li> <li>Events and attractions are not "bundled" to ensure visitors know what is happening nearby</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Packaging can support the geographic spread and the variety of products, assets and experiences.</li> <li>Develop a marketing campaign to promote what is already happening in the region</li> </ul>
Signage & wayfinding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tourists often do not know which attractions are nearby</li> <li>Signage throughout the region is inconsistent</li> <li>Winter weather makes outdoor signage difficult to see and navigate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunity to develop digital guide for the region</li> <li>Develop consistent signage throughout the region</li> </ul>

There are key barriers/challenges that are perceived to impact development or enhancement of experiences to support **Durham's** opportunity to develop winter and shoulder season tourism.

Challenge	Description	Potential Mitigation
Lack of accommodation providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Weather in the region is unpredictable. At times, too cold and other times too warm for outdoor winter activities</li><li>• Driving in the region during unpredictable storms a challenge from the GTA</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Potential to develop channel packages with bus tours</li><li>▪ Encourage GTA visitation from public transportation</li></ul>
Lack of collaboration between organizations, attractions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “Red tape” is blocking collaboration in trail system or collaboration within the region</li><li>• Existing events and attractions have traction, but need more partners to expand</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Opportunity for DMO to work together and strengthen relationships within the region</li></ul>

## Common Challenges Across Central Counties Regions

### York

Weather and driving conditions

Access to labour

Broad diversity of experiences across the region

Lack of product to support winter experiences

Inventory of assets open for winter

Research: lack of understanding of winter/shoulder season demand

The need for City DMO's to be fair

### Durham

Access /Roads and driving

Signage & wayfinding

Access to labour

Lack of accommodation providers

Collaboration between organizations

Marketing & itineraries

### Headwaters

Communities push against tourism

Lack of product to support winter experiences

Competition with other regions

Parking capacity

The need for DMO's to be fair

Lack of unique experiences

Weather & daylight

Access to labour

Shared challenges across all three counties

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# York Region Opportunities

## York region identified 14 opportunities for winter/shoulder season tourism



Develop the breadth and depth of York regions unique culinary experiences



Market to groups—school groups, seniors; other communities of interest



Leverage legacy sports facilities



Develop a Winter/Shoulder season attractions council



Tourism leadership



Collaborate with other SME's to develop packages



Develop and enhance small, local festivals for locals and visitors



"Own the weeks between New Years and Spring Break"



Develop a mindset shift towards tourism in winter/ shoulder season



Research to better understand demand



Develop inventory of assets/experiences to match demand



Develop cultural and creative assets



Develop historic assets



Develop outdoor and conservation assets

# How **York** prioritized opportunities to enhance winter/shoulder tourism.

High Potential to Impact Objectives

Challenging to Implement	<p>Medium-term opportunities for next 2-4 years</p> <p><b>Leverage cultural/ creative and arts assets in York Region</b></p> <p><b>Develop the Meetings business to support winter/shoulder season tourism</b></p>	<p>Near market-ready</p> <p><b>Leverage outdoor and conservation experiences</b></p> <p><b>Develop and enhance small, local festivals for locals and visitors</b></p> <p><b>Develop unique culinary experiences</b></p> <p><b>Collaborate with other SMEs</b></p>	Easy to Implement
	<p>Opportunities for later consideration/re-evaluation</p> <p><b>Develop a Winter/Shoulder season attractions council</b></p> <p><b>Research to better understand demand</b></p>	<p>Quick wins for next 1-2 years</p> <p><b>Develop inventory of assets/experiences to match demand</b></p> <p><b>Develop historic assets</b></p>	
Low Potential to Impact Objectives			

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# Durham Region Opportunities

## Durham identified 11 opportunities for winter/shoulder season tourism



Develop hub & spoke experiences with rural and small towns



Develop spring nature education program



Collaborate with other SME's to develop packages



Develop a Winter/Shoulder season attractions council



Complement ice fishing season with additional product development



Develop content marketing plan/ awareness campaign to raise awareness of attractions



Invest in bus tour programming to attract visitors from the GTA



Leverage Culture Days (Culture Trek) as a tourism driver



Maple syrup season



Research to better understand demand



Develop inventory of assets/experiences to match demand



# How **Durham's** prioritized their top opportunities to enhance winter/shoulder tourism.

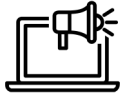
High Potential to Impact Objectives

Challenging to Implement	<p>Medium-term opportunities for next 2-4 years</p> <p>Invest in bus tour programming to attract visitors from the GTA</p> <p>Maple Syrup Festival/Collaboration</p> <p>Leverage the Durham region for its outdoor and conservation experiences (Trail Town Model)</p>	<p>Near market-ready</p> <p>Develop awareness campaign to raise awareness of attraction</p> <p>Develop hub &amp; spoke experiences with rural and small towns</p> <p>Market to groups in a getaway/educational trip</p>	Easy to Implement
	<p>Opportunities for later consideration/re-evaluation</p> <p>Develop an attractions council</p> <p>Develop spring nature education program</p> <p>Influence election agenda</p>	<p>Quick wins for next 1-2 years</p> <p>Develop inventory of assets/experiences to match demand</p> <p>Formalize commitment with municipalities for support</p>	
Low Potential to Impact Objectives			

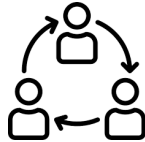
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# Headwaters Region Opportunities

## Headwaters identified 11 opportunities for winter/shoulder season tourism



Build Headwaters' brand through marketing



Collaborate with other SME's to develop packages



Develop a mindset shift towards tourism in winter/ shoulder season



Develop a Winter/Shoulder season through Networking Alliance



Develop culinary events



Maple syrup season



Develop and enhance small, local festivals for locals and visitors



Education for novice outdoor tourists



"Mud season"



FAM Tour to connect "right people" to the region



Develop inventory of assets/experiences to match demand

# How **Headwaters** prioritized their top opportunities to enhance winter/shoulder tourism

High Potential to Impact Objectives

Challenging to Implement	<p>Medium-term opportunities for next 2-4 years</p> <p>Develop culinary events</p> <p>Collaborate with other SME's to develop packages</p> <p>Develop and enhance small, local festivals for locals and visitors</p>	<p>Near market-ready</p> <p>Maple syrup season</p> <p>More communications to target audiences/communities of interest (i.e., mountain bikers, artists, etc.) on what there is to do</p> <p>Develop inventory of assets/experiences to match demand</p>	Easy to Implement
	<p>Opportunities for later consideration/re-evaluation</p> <p>Music under the stars festival/events</p> <p>Develop a Winter/Shoulder season through Networking Alliance</p>	<p>Quick wins for next 1-2 years</p> <p>More "pull" communications to inform more engaged tourism supply stakeholders</p>	
Low Potential to Impact Objectives			

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## Central County Tourism's Lead Opportunities (Big Ideas)

While some opportunities are longer-term, others can be implemented sooner.

Through our consultation we identified **8 lead opportunities**.

These opportunities provide Central Counties Tourism with **big ideas** that are highly favourable, near-market ready projects across each of the three regions.



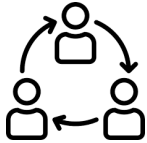
## Central County Tourism's Lead Opportunities (Big Ideas)

While some opportunities are longer-term, others can be implemented sooner.

Through our consultation we identified **8 lead opportunities**.

These opportunities provide Central Counties Tourism with **big ideas** that are highly favourable, near-market ready projects across each of the three regions.

## Collaborate with other SME's to develop packages



Businesses throughout the region have the potential to become tourism draws. However, many of these organizations need to be educated on how they can work in and with the tourism industry. There is an opportunity to collaborate with small businesses in the region and with the business community to develop package that supplement itineraries and trips.

## Develop Maple syrup season



If there's one product that defines Canada around the world, it is maple syrup. With exciting maple syrup events and tourism operators in place, Headwaters and the rest of Central Counties has the opportunity to expand on this success and target international tourists.

## Develop culinary events



Culinary experiences and agri-tourism has enjoyed a growing popularity in the region. There is an opportunity to develop a collaborative event during the winter/shoulder season to bring the organizations together and attract inter-provincial tourists.

## Develop inventory of assets/experiences to match demand



What is actually available to package and sell in the the region during the winter and shoulder season? There is an opportunity to take an inventory of experiences, assets and products available and open for tourism development. The region can benefit from an inventory of tourism assets so that private sector organizations can work with DMO's to develop packages to reflect availability.

## Develop and enhance small, local festivals for locals and visitors



Beginning with smaller festivals that support the potential to attract visitors during the winter and shoulder seasons may be an opportunity to design a reason to visit the region in the winter and shoulder season. The example of Mansfield skating trail, RV Tourism Experiences, and beer tours was used as was . Could similar programs be developed both for locals and to attract visitors?

## Enhanced marketing, communications to reach new audiences



The region has an existing inventory of attractions which are underutilized in the winter and shoulder seasons. There is an opportunity to coordinate the promotion of these attractions through a marketing campaign. This campaign can raise awareness of what is happening in the region to audiences domestically and internationally.



## Leverage Outdoor Experiences




The regions' trails, parks, and farms offer unique experiences for urban tourists and fabulous four-season recreational opportunities. These natural attractions could be coordinated to develop tourist attractions. The region could develop organized hikes, tours, and guides for the spring or fall.

## Develop a Hub and Spoke



Parts of the region are characterized by a series of major lakeshore urban communities; contrasting a variety of small towns, villages, hamlets and farms. The region could develop a strategy to attract tourists to urban areas and encourage day trips to smaller communities and rural areas.

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- Are there deeper dives for York and durham opportunities?

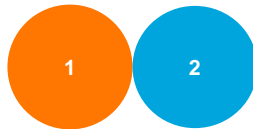
# A deeper dive into three lead opportunities

During our third workshop with CCT stakeholders, participants explored ways to implement lead opportunities across the regions. The following information is the culmination of their work with action items to move forward.



## Collaborate with other SMEs to develop packages. Develop inventory of assets experiences to match demand

The region can work more closely together to develop common themed packages, through CCT or DMO's to develop packages that reflect demand. What is actually available to package and sell in the York region during the winter and shoulder season? Is there an inventory of experiences, assets and products available and open? Could the region benefit from an inventory of tourism assets so that private sector organizations can work with DMO's to develop packages to reflect availability?



## Leverage the region's outdoor and conservation experiences

The region is holds a strong asset in the Kortright Centre for Conservation... 325 hectares of woodlands, sustainable education programs, and technology workshops as well as the Aurora Arboretum with 100 acres of parkland, trails and wildlife and gardens, could the region be further leveraged in the winter and shoulder season to enhance these natural assets for increased tourism?

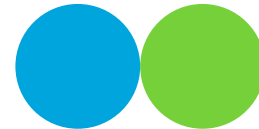


## Maple Syrup Festival/Collaboration

If there's one product that defines Canada around the world, it is maple syrup. With exciting maple syrup events and tourism operators in place, Headwaters and the rest of Central Counties has the opportunity to expand on this success and target international tourists.



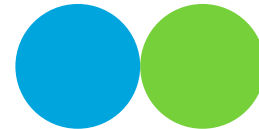
## Collaborate with other SMEs to develop packages. Develop inventory of assets experiences to match demand



Opportunity Category	Supporting Initiative	Description
Products & Experiences	Inventory regional products and experiences and identify possible areas of collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Conduct an inventory of existing outdoor winter products and experiences</li> <li>■ Includes identification of complementary assets like lodging, culinary and other attractions</li> </ul>
	Develop packages and itineraries based on shared business goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Once a comprehensive understanding of winter outdoor products and experiences that can be leveraged for the winter/shoulder season is completed, develop packages and itineraries that cater to potential target markets</li> </ul>
Enabling Environment	Communicate prioritization of outdoor winter activities to key stakeholders, business leaders, and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Communicate the Central Counties winter/shoulder tourism strategy with all key stakeholders</li> <li>■ Create opportunities for stakeholders to meet and share opportunities to collaborate. Collaboration opportunities may be online or in person</li> </ul>

## Collaborate with other SMEs to develop packages. Develop inventory of assets experiences to match demand

Continued



Opportunity Category	Supporting Initiative	Description
Target Markets	Central Counties business and organization leaders from within and outside of the existing tourism network should be targeted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Extend invitation to members of the Chamber of Commerce, business networks, and tourism networks</li> <li>■ Reach out to community leaders and stakeholders to develop an inventory of assets. A digital platform for asset management is encouraged</li> </ul>
Channels	Share collaboration opportunities with existing business and organizational organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Work with existing business networks such as regional Chamber of Commerce, downtown BIAs, and community networks</li> <li>■ Utilize the networks of CCT Field Managers to reach stakeholders and community members</li> <li>■ Harness the social media networks, email newsletters of existing organizations outside of the tourism industry</li> </ul>
Marketing & PR	Develop communications plan for collaboration and inventory of assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Develop a plan to reach business leaders and to receive information on local assets for winter/shoulder season development throughout the regions</li> </ul>



# Leverage the region's outdoor and conservation experiences

Continued

Opportunity Category	Supporting Initiative	Description
Products & Experiences	Inventory related products and experiences and identify possible gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Conduct an inventory of existing outdoor winter products and experiences</li> <li>■ Consider and address the needs of stakeholders and community members (over tourism concerns)</li> <li>■ Includes identification of complementary assets like lodging, culinary and other attractions</li> <li>■ Identify the role small cities and towns play in a 'hub and spoke' model for experiences</li> </ul>
	Develop packages and itineraries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Once a comprehensive understanding of winter outdoor products and experiences that can be leveraged for the winter/shoulder season is completed, develop packages and itineraries that cater to identified target markets</li> <li>■ Support the marketing and promotion of outdoor winter/shoulder season experiences</li> <li>■ Address the needs of community stakeholders (over tourism)</li> </ul>
Enabling Environment	Communicate prioritization of outdoor and conservation winter activities to key stakeholders and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Communicate the CCT winter/shoulder tourism strategy with all key stakeholders</li> <li>■ Communicate tourism strategy with organizations outside of the tourism industry</li> </ul>

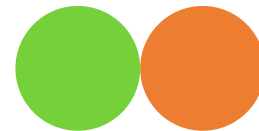
## Leverage the region's outdoor and conservation experiences

Continued



Opportunity Category	Supporting Initiative	Description
Target Markets	Conduct market research to identify and define regional, domestic, and international target markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Conduct research to identify potential target markets (especially in Toronto and GTA), to determine their interest and needs in outdoor winter experiences</li> <li>■ Collaborate with provincial DMO to target domestic and international audiences</li> </ul>
Channels	<p>Work with Online Travel Agencies to sell products and experiences</p> <p>Update website to include booking capabilities with tourism operators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Identify tourism operators who may be a good conduit to promote developed outdoor winter packages to target markets</li> <li>■ Connect with tourism operators to promote outdoor winter experiences</li> </ul>
Marketing & PR	Create 1-2 campaigns to promote to identified target markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Develop 1-2 campaigns, leveraging insight from the "Target Markets" initiatives to develop 1-2 campaigns specific to outdoor winter activities</li> </ul>

## Maple Syrup Festival/Collaboration



Opportunity Category	Supporting Initiative	Description
Products & Experiences	Inventory regional products and experiences and identify possible areas of collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Conduct an inventory of existing outdoor winter products and experiences</li> <li>■ Includes identification of complementary assets like lodging, culinary and other attractions</li> </ul>
	Develop packages and itineraries based on shared business goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Once a comprehensive understanding of winter outdoor products and experiences that can be leveraged for the winter/shoulder season is completed, develop packages and itineraries that cater to potential target markets</li> </ul>
Enabling Environment	Communicate prioritization of outdoor winter activities to key stakeholders, business leaders, and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Communicate the Central Counties winter/shoulder tourism strategy with all key stakeholders</li> <li>■ Create opportunities for stakeholders to meet and share opportunities to collaborate. Collaboration opportunities may be online or in person</li> </ul>




# Maple Syrup Festival/Collaboration

## Continued




Opportunity Category	Supporting Initiative	Description
Target Markets	Central Counties business and organization leaders from within and outside of the existing tourism network should be targeted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Extend invitation to members of the Chamber of Commerce, business networks, and tourism networks</li> <li>■ Reach out to community leaders and stakeholders to develop an inventory of assets. A digital platform for asset management is encouraged</li> </ul>
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Marketing & PR	Develop communications plan for collaboration and inventory of assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Develop a plan to reach business leaders and to receive information on local assets for winter/shoulder season development throughout the regions</li> </ul>



# Winter/shoulder tourism development in Central Counties initially focuses on a changing mindset.

Recognize that opportunities are defined through the lens of over 30 key tourism industry stakeholders and experts but that each opportunity will require additional filters to consider their potential. These are as follows:

- **Market research:** Each opportunity will require further research to determine the characteristics and size of the prospective target markets to support.
- **Resources:** Each opportunity should be evaluated against the human and financial resources of key stakeholders against the priorities of the organization supporting these initiatives.
- **Leadership and Stakeholder Engagement:** Each initiative will require leadership and support from the industry to both prioritize the initiative and develop the destination, products, experiences and marketing to fully realize these potentials.



## **Winter/shoulder tourism development in Central Counties initially focuses on a changing mindset.**

Recognize that while considering these filters, other opportunities may arise which may take priority. Some of those opportunities may not have been considered by stakeholders and others may have been considered but scored poorly.

Because of this, the framework developed allows for a dynamic and ongoing evaluation of opportunities for Winnipeg's winter and shoulder season.

# Thank you!





## **Appendix:**

# **Opportunity scores from prioritization exercise during workshop II**

## YORK'S TOP OPPORTUNITIES RANKED FOR HIGH POTENTIAL (SCORE OF 8.0+)

### High Potential

Opportunity	Score
Leverage the region for its outdoor and conservation experiences	8.9
Collaborate with other SME's to develop packages . Develop inventory of assets/experiences to match demand	8.8
Develop and enhance small, local festivals for locals and visitors	8.5
Leverage cultural/ creative and arts assets in York Region	8.4
Mindset shift towards tourism in winter/shoulder season	8.2
Develop the breadth and depth of York regions unique culinary experiences	8.1
Develop a Winter/Shoulder season attractions council	8.1
Research to better understand demand	8.1

### Ease of Implementation

Opportunity	Score
Develop and enhance small, local festivals for locals and visitors	7.2
Leverage the York region for its outdoor and conservation experiences	7.1
Develop the breadth and depth of York regions unique culinary experiences	7
Develop historic assets	6.9
Develop the Meetings business to support winter/shoulder season tourism	6.9
Leverage cultural/ creative and arts assets in York Region	6.4
Collaborate with other SME's to develop packages . Develop inventory of assets/experiences to match demand	6.3
Research to better understand demand	6.2

## YORK'S TOP OPPORTUNITIES RANKED FOR HIGH POTENTIAL (SCORE OF 8.0+)

### Total Combined

Opportunity	Score
Leverage the region for its outdoor and conservation experiences	16
Develop and enhance small, local festivals for locals and visitors	15.7
Develop the breadth and depth of York regions unique culinary experiences	15.1
Collaborate with other SME's to develop packages . Develop inventory of assets/experiences to match demand	14.9
Leverage cultural/ creative and arts assets in York Region	14.8
Develop the Meetings business to support winter/shoulder season tourism	14.4

DURHAM'S TOP OPPORTUNITIES RANKED FOR HIGH POTENTIAL (SCORE OF 8.0+)

High Potential

Opportunity	Score
Develop content marketing plan/ awareness campaign to raise awareness of attraction	9.5
Develop hub & spoke experiences with rural and small towns	8.5
Market to groups—school groups, seniors, other communities of interest in a getaway/educational trip	8.4
Invest in bus tour programming to attract visitors from the GTA	7.9
Maple Syrup Festival/Collaboration	7.9
Develop inventory of assets/experiences to match demand	7.8
Influence election agenda	7.1
Leverage the Durham region for its outdoor and conservation experiences (Trail Town Model)	7

Ease of Implementation

Opportunity	Score
Develop hub & spoke experiences with rural and small towns	8.4
Develop inventory of assets/experiences to match demand	8
Formalize commitment with municipalities for support	8
Market to groups—school groups, seniors, other communities of interest in a getaway/educational trip	7.7
Develop content marketing plan/ awareness campaign to raise awareness of attraction	7.4
Leverage the Durham region for its outdoor and conservation experiences (Trail Town Model)	7
Develop an attractions council	6.9
Develop spring nature education program	6.8



## DURHAM'S TOP OPPORTUNITIES RANKED FOR HIGH POTENTIAL (SCORE OF 8.0+)

Total Combined	Opportunity	Score
	Develop content marketing plan/ awareness campaign to raise awareness of attraction	16.9
	Develop hub & spoke experiences with rural and small towns	16.9
	Market to groups—school groups, seniors, other communities of interest in a getaway/educational trip	16.1
	Develop inventory of assets/experiences to match demand	15.8
	Invest in bus tour programming to attract visitors from the GTA	14.3
	Maple Syrup Festival/Collaboration	14.3
	Leverage the Durham region for its outdoor and conservation experiences (Trail Town Model)	14

## HEADWATER'S TOP OPPORTUNITIES RANKED FOR HIGH POTENTIAL (SCORE OF 8.0+)

### High Potential

Opportunity	Score
Develop Culinary Events	8.4
More communications to target audiences/communities of interest (i.e., mountain bikers, artists, etc.) on what there is to do	8.2
Maple syrup season	8.2
Develop inventory of assets/experiences to match demand	8.1
Develop and enhance small, local festivals for locals and visitors	8.1
Develop a Winter/Shoulder season through Networking Alliance	8.1
More “pull” communications to inform more engaged tourism supply stakeholders	7.8
Collaborate with other SME’s to develop packages	7.7

### Ease of Implementation

Opportunity	Score
Maple syrup season	7.8
More communications to target audiences/communities of interest (i.e., mountain bikers, artists, etc.) on what there is to do	7.7
Develop a Winter/Shoulder season through Networking Alliance	7.6
Develop culinary events	7.4
Collaborate with other SME’s to develop packages	7.2
Develop and enhance small, local festivals for locals and visitors	7.1
Develop inventory of assets/experiences to match demand	7
Music under the stars festival/events	7

## HEADWATER'S TOP OPPORTUNITIES RANKED FOR HIGH POTENTIAL (SCORE OF 8.0+)

### Total Combined

Opportunity	Score
Develop Maple syrup season	16.9
More communications to target audiences/communities of interest (i.e., mountain bikers, artists, etc.) on what there is to do	15.9
Develop culinary events	15.8
Develop inventory of assets/experiences to match demand	15.4
Develop and enhance small, local festivals for locals and visitors	15.2
Collaborate with other SME's to develop packages	14.9
More "pull" communications to inform more engaged tourism supply stakeholders	14.5