

Discover
Peterborough

Tourism Growth Strategy 2026–30



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Acknowledgements

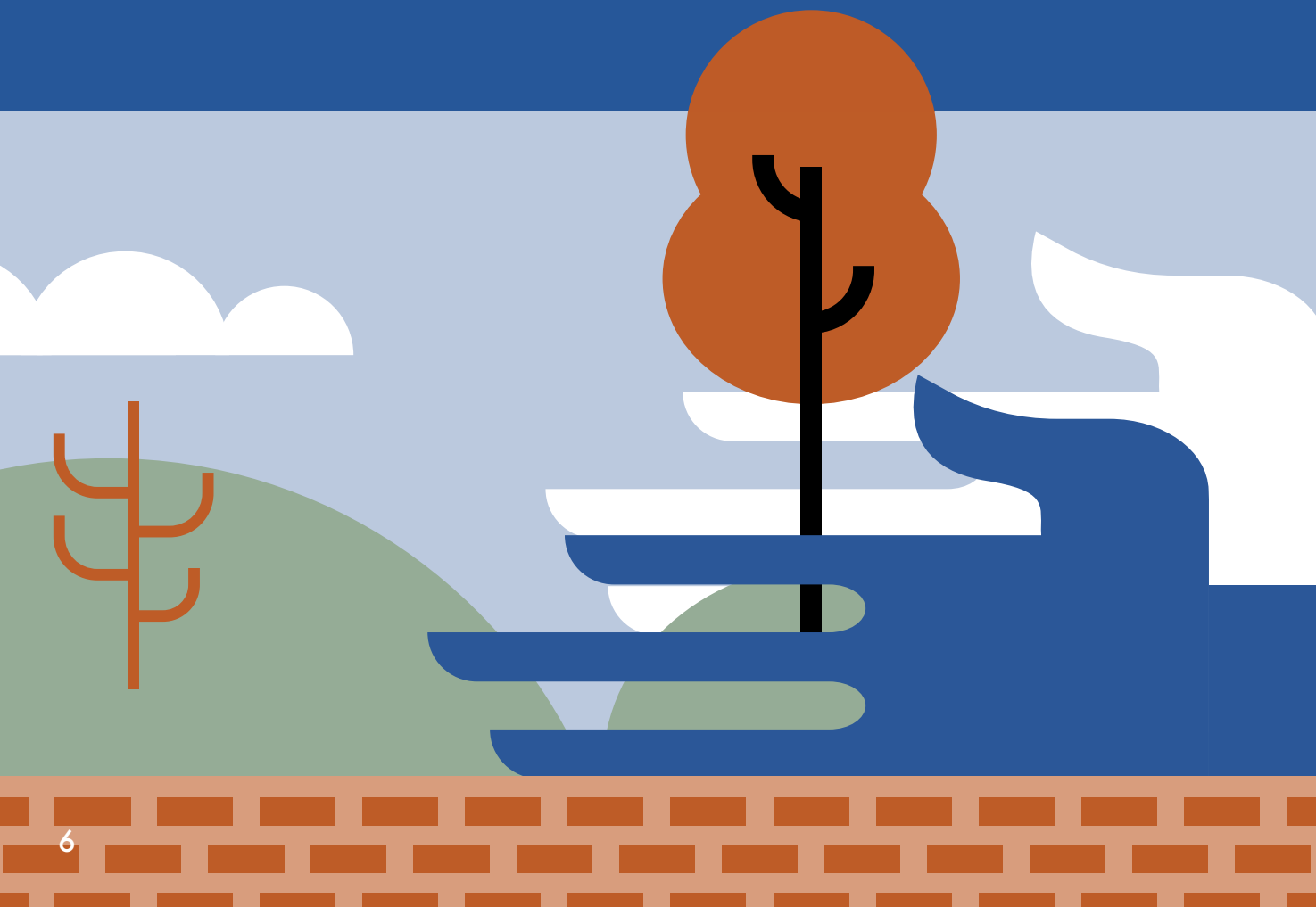
This tourism strategy is informed by input gathered through surveys, consultations, and stakeholder engagement. Participation in these activities was voluntary and reflects a combination of self-selected respondents and individuals invited based on their involvement in the tourism industry. As such, the findings represent the individual perspectives and experiences of those who chose or were selected to participate and may not fully reflect the views of all residents, businesses, or visitors. While effort has been made to ensure a balanced and informed approach, the information is not a statistically accurate snapshot of the myriad perspectives of the Peterborough community and results should be interpreted within the context of these limitations.



Lands

Located in south-central Ontario, Peterborough is approximately 125 kilometres northeast of Toronto and 275 kilometres southwest of Ottawa. The city is part of a broader region that is in a transition zone between the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Lowlands and the Canadian Shield. This means that Peterborough is surrounded by a varied landscape that moves from flatter and more fertile sediment-based lands, towards rolling topography and forests, and then exposed granite. As a result, the city is both an accessible and rugged destination that naturally connects urban areas to the wonders of nature.

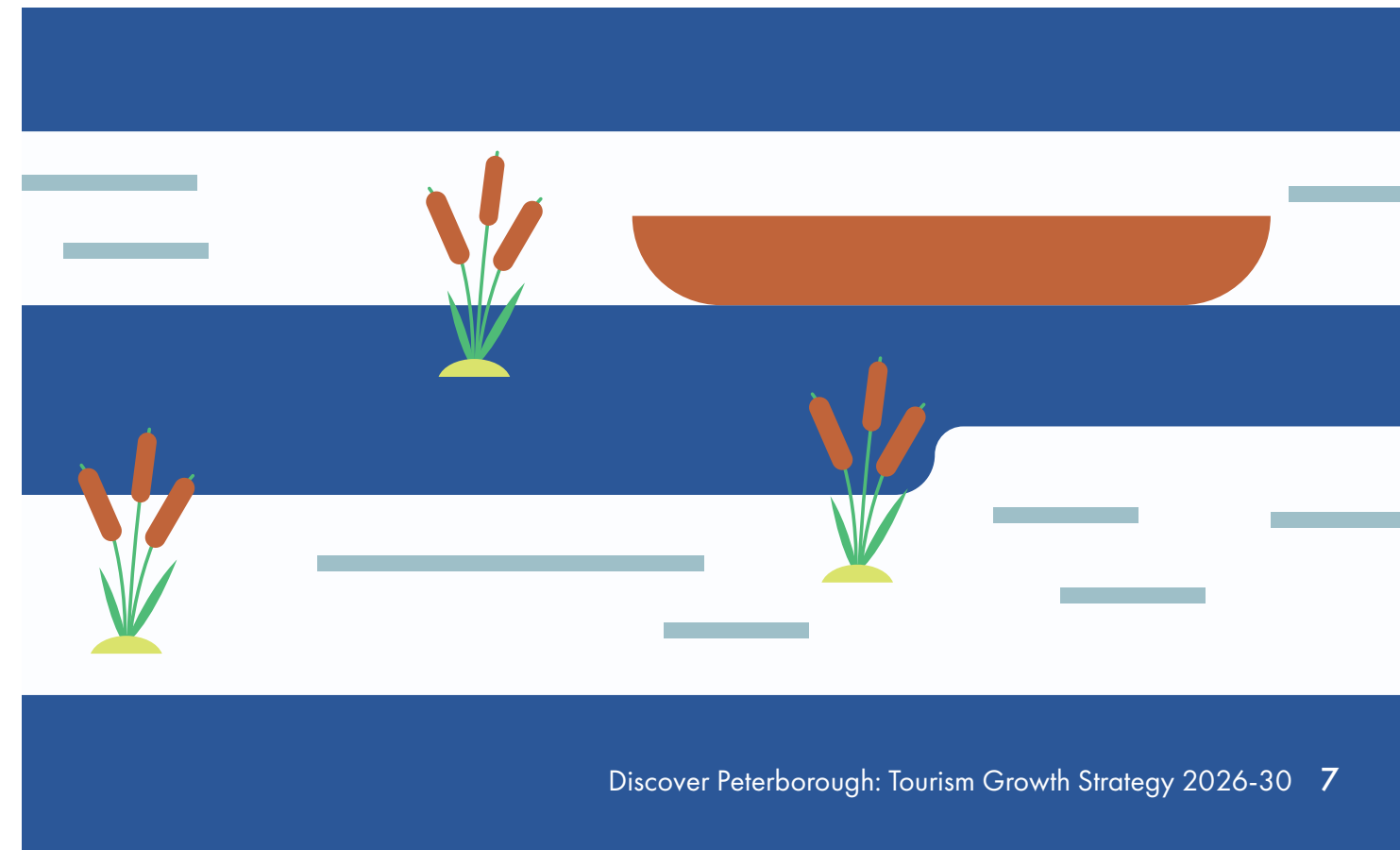
We acknowledge the value that these natural lands and their biodiversity bring to both Peterborough residents and visitors alike. They provide us with a beautiful setting of livable places and green spaces to enjoy together.



Waters

The Otonabee River, which flows from Katchewanooka Lake south through Peterborough and into Rice Lake, is directly connected to the Otonabee River watershed and forms part of the Trent-Severn Waterway (a National Historic Site of Canada). In addition to serving as a strong visual reference for Peterborough, the Otonabee River and its riverfront provide recreational space, tremendous ecological value, and important hydroelectric power. The Trent-Severn Waterway, which includes Lock 21 – the Peterborough Lift Lock, functions as both a historic and contemporary navigation and recreation route that connects Peterborough to a broader inland waterway network.

We acknowledge the waters and waterways that flow into and through Peterborough. They bring life into the City of Peterborough, help to sustain it, and help to shape our home and destination.





Peoples

The lands upon which the Peterborough is located have been known since time immemorial as Nogojiwanong: 'the place at the foot of the rapids.' These lands and the waters that flow through the Peterborough have always and continue to be stewarded by the Michi Saagiig Anishinaabeg: "the people of the big river mouths."

We acknowledge that these lands are part of Treaty 20 and on the traditional territory of seven Anishinaabeg Nations, collectively known as the Williams Treaties First Nations, including Alderville, Beausoleil, Curve Lake, Georgina Island, Hiawatha, Rama, and Scugog Island First Nations.

We also recognize the ongoing impacts of such treaties, the injustices that occurred, and the enduring strength and resurgence of Indigenous communities. As we live and work here, and invite visitors to experience Peterborough, we commit to reflection, respect, and meaningful action in the spirit of reconciliation.



Introduction



Background

In July 2025, the City of Peterborough set out to develop a tourism strategy that would guide the strategic and sustainable development of Peterborough as a **destination**. The research and development process was facilitated by Bannikin and overseen by a Project Team that included representation from Strategic Communications and Service Peterborough, and Recreation, Parks and Cultural Services.

The goal of the strategy development process was to produce a clear and shared vision for tourism, and a community-informed and data-driven plan for stepping towards this vision over the next few years. Together, these would serve as the roadmap for the City to collaborate on tourism development, management, and marketing across departments and with external partners.

Primary and secondary research methods were used to gather the information, input, and insight that we needed to make informed decisions. This included conducting research into Peterborough’s tourism businesses, the visitor experience, travel and tourism trends, storytelling good practices, factors affecting tourism, comparative, competitive, and collaborative destinations, and existing and prospective visitors.

Engagement activities included connecting with 19 individuals through one-on-one interviews, surveying 514 residents of the Peterborough Census Metropolitan Area, having meaningful in-person conversations with approximately 38 people during two community cafés, and discussing tourism with 22 people through

three virtual meetings with groups focused on outdoor and nature, sports, festivals and events, food and beverage, accommodations, and arts and culture. Before finalizing the strategic direction for tourism, we also circled back with community using a survey that received 191 responses.

Thank you to everyone who shared their perspective and feedback with us across the tourism strategy development process. Discover Peterborough: Tourism Growth Strategy would not have come to existence without your support.



This strategy project was supported by Regional Tourism Organization 8/ Kawarthas Northumberland through the Partnership Allocation Program.

Destination:

A place that people choose to visit for leisure, business, or events because of the experiences it offers. In this strategy, “destination” refers not only to the City of Peterborough as a geographic location, but to the full experience visitors have getting to, exploring, and departing from the city.

Contexts

Tourism Management

In Peterborough, tourism development, management, and marketing sits within a context, highly influenced by an evolving tourism landscape. This strategy development process followed a recent move to take tourism service delivery ‘in-house’ as a function of the municipality. Previously, this work had been delivered as a “contracted out” service by the regional economic development organization known as Peterborough & the Kawarthas Economic Development (PKED). This organization, which was co-funded by the City and County, was dissolved as an entity in December 2024.

Since then, tourism responsibilities at the City of Peterborough have been undertaken by two divisions, including Strategic Communications and Service Peterborough and Recreation, Parks and Cultural Services.

In June 2019, City Council passed By-law 19-063 establishing a 4% **Municipal Accommodation Tax**, of which 50% of the funds generated are used by the City to support its tourism programs and 50% go towards a newly established **Peterborough Tourism** Municipal Services Corporation, which has been established as a not-for-profit entity with a mandate for the promotion of tourism in the City of Peterborough.

Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT):

A tax paid by visitors staying at roofed tourism accommodations. A MAT in Ontario is outlined in the Municipal Act (2001) section 400.1 and Ontario Regulation 435/7. The tax is collected by accommodation providers and submitted to the Municipality. Revenue generated through a MAT must be shared with an eligible not-for-profit tourism entity who will receive at least 50% of MAT revenue generated and use it for tourism marketing and promotion. Through revenue sharing, the funds generated are reinvested into tourism-related programs, destination marketing, and tourism-related services and infrastructure within the municipality.

Peterborough Tourism:

Peterborough Tourism is the City of Peterborough’s tourism service delivery and marketing program, which operates as the destination marketing organization (DMO). DMOs are responsible for promoting and marketing a place as a destination for visitors and lead activities such as destination promotion, marketing campaigns, content creation, media relations, and trip-planning support, among others.

Factors Affecting Tourism

Peterborough’s tourism landscape is shaped by an array of factors beyond our control. These dynamics underscore the need for strategic, adaptive approaches to tourism development that balance economic opportunity with social and environmental responsibility.

While travel demand remains resilient, particularly for domestic and regional markets, global uncertainty, economic pressures, labour constraints, and evolving visitor values influence how and why people travel. Meanwhile, at the destination level, climate change, environmental regulation, and social considerations such as housing affordability and resident sentiment are becoming increasingly central to tourism planning, emphasizing a need for decision-making that prioritizes the long-term value of tourism.

Travel Trends

It’s important for destinations like ours to be aware of travel trends so that we can leverage these, while embracing what makes us different. For Peterborough, several trends are particularly relevant:

Remote Work

Although, several workplaces are retracting on work-from-home options for their employees, hybrid work arrangements are still common and can be leveraged as a tool to extend visitor stays.

Coolcations

Rising summer temperatures make fall and spring getaways increasingly attractive to those seeking more comfortable weather. Moreover, proximity to cottage country mean that even when it is hot out, Peterborough makes for an attractive destination.

Urban travel

The appeal of rural destinations remains strong since the surge we witnessed during the pandemic, but the pendulum has swung back slightly, with visitor interest in urban travel growing again. By combining city amenities and proximity to nature, Peterborough is well-positioned to benefit from this trend.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Trip Planning

As search tools change, Generative AI is revolutionizing marketing and trip planning. Ensuring that our destination is discoverable to AI tools will be essential to staying competitive in the marketplace.

Tourism Trends

When it comes to tourism trends, i.e. those related to destination development, management, and marketing, we need to be aware of how tides are shifting to adapt and stay competitive. A few tourism trends for Peterborough to consider as we plan the future of tourism in our community include:

Community-centred Tourism

Resident sentiment and community benefit are becoming key performance indicators to measure the success of tourism. Destination organizations are shifting from visitation metrics to multidimensional Key Performance Indicators that include components like diversity, belonging, inclusion and sustainability. At the same time, community engagement and co-creation of destination narratives are redefining marketing and development approaches. This means that destinations that proactively balance growth with livability will be more resilient in the long run.

Events

Sports, music, and business events are forecasted to grow into a US\$1.5T global economy by 2032 (Destinations International & MMGY NextFactor. “2025 DestinationNEXT Futures Study.”). From large scale Arts Districts to cozy seating areas, destinations, including Australia’s Gold Coast, Montreal, and St. Thomas are investing in **placemaking** to support event-based tourism. In Toronto, for example, placemaking initiatives are under way to activate The Bentway in anticipation of the 2026 FIFA World Cup. Since the pandemic, conferences and trade events have been rebounding strongly, as work travellers showed

eagerness to network in person, which presents opportunities to tap into business and **‘bleisure’** markets. Event organizers are focusing on networking, wellness, and unique venues to add value and turn events into experiences.

Labour and Technology

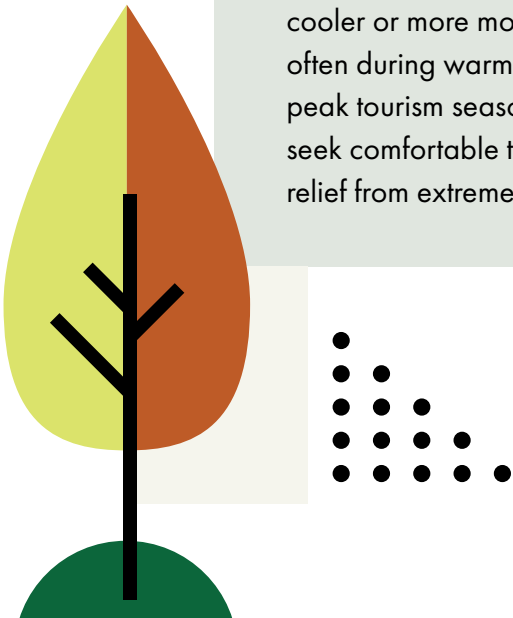
Persistent staffing gaps for businesses are prompting investment in automation and self-service technologies. This means that travel businesses must do more with fewer people, and at the same time invest in staff to ensure quality doesn’t slip. Many destinations are already using technology to maintain service quality, through tools like AI chatbots, online booking, and self-check-in platforms.

Placemaking:

An approach to urban or space planning and design that focuses on creating welcoming, attractive, and meaningful public spaces. In a tourism context, placemaking helps reflect local identity, foster community pride, and improve how visitors move around and spend time in streets, parks, waterfronts, and gathering places.

Bleisure:

A type of travel where visitors combine business travel with leisure activities, such as extending a work trip to explore a destination or participate in local experiences.





Tourism in Peterborough

The Visitor Economy

The **visitor economy** is the total economic activity generated by people travelling to and spending time in a place outside of their usual environment. It includes the direct, indirect, and induced impacts of their spending across the wider economy. In Peterborough, our visitor economy is an important economic driver, generating significant financial and non-financial benefits for our community. Based on Destination Canada's Tourism Collective portal, over 400 businesses make up the visitor economy, which makes up about 5% of the total number of businesses in the City of Peterborough. These businesses employ over 3,000 people, accounting for about 9% of our community's total employment.

In 2022, the Peterborough Census Metropolitan Area, saw \$277.2 million in visitor spending with 56% coming from overnight visitors, and

44% coming from same-day visits. More specifically, the average spend per person was \$131, with overnight visitors spending \$233 and same-day visitors spending \$84. Food and beverage accounted for the majority of their spending (36%), followed by transportation (26%), accommodations (17%), and recreation/entertainment and retail/other (10%). Through the continued support of the visitor economy, Peterborough will continue to grow and develop this key economic sector for the well-being of our community.

Visitor economy:

The economic activity generated by visitors while travelling and spending time in a destination. This includes the direct, indirect, and induced impacts of visitor spending across businesses, services, and the broader local economy.

Our Tourism Ecosystem

Behind our visitor economy is a breadth and diversity of actors that make up our tourism ecosystem, and play an important role in the development, management, and marketing of Peterborough as a destination. Our **tourism ecosystem actors** include accommodation providers, arts and cultural organizations, festivals and events, experience-based businesses, such as tour operators, retail shops, outdoor and nature spaces, like parks and conservation areas, community organizations, sports and meeting facilities, and wellness spaces.

Importantly, our tourism ecosystem actors bring more than economic value or financial capital to our community. They bring connections and relationships, or social capital. They work with natural resources to create buildings and infrastructure, or material capital. They steward our lands and outdoor spaces, which are pools of living capital. Of course, our ecosystem actors have amazing ideas and knowledge,

which is known as intellectual capital. All of their lived and embodied experiences are experiential capital, and their faith, intention, vision, and compassion is important spiritual capital. Last, our history and heritage, arts and music, stories and traditions, are examples of the of cultural capital being shared by our tourism ecosystem actors.

Tourism ecosystem actors:

The network of public, private, and community-based organizations and individuals that are connected to tourism, either directly or indirectly. This includes government bodies, businesses, not-for-profit and community-led groups, Indigenous partners, and organizations that support, manage, promote, or help shape tourism in a destination.

Visitors to Peterborough

Current Visitors

Based on Environics Analytics, in 2024, our community saw 4.8 million visits to our downtown core, along with 566,000 visits to attractions, trails and parks, 333,000 visits to our sports and recreation facilities, and 294,000 visits to our hotels. That same year, Peterborough saw about 651,638 overnight visitors that would include those staying at hotels, as well as family and friends, campsites, short-term accommodations, etc. About 90% of Peterborough’s **visitors** are coming from Durham, Kawartha Lakes, Northumberland, Hastings, and Toronto primarily, with other visitors coming from Hamilton, Kitchener-Waterloo, Guelph, Ottawa, and Renfrew. Importantly, the number of visitors throughout the months is steady while peaking in July and August.

Visitor:

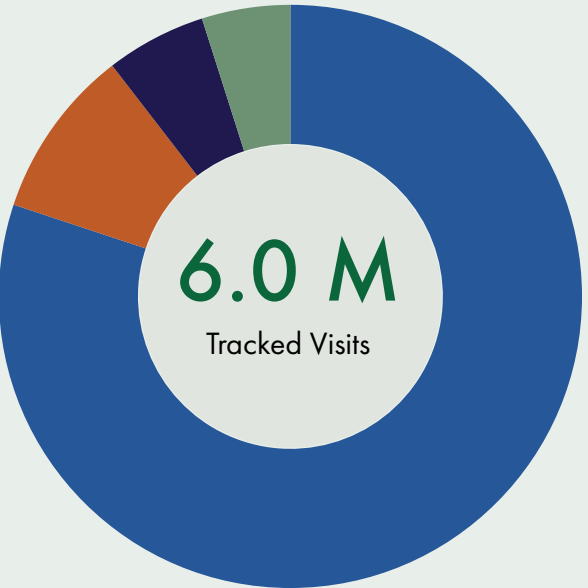
A person who travels to Peterborough from outside their usual place of residence for leisure, business, events, or to visit friends and family, and who does not permanently live in the community. In Ontario, a visitor is further defined as someone who takes an overnight out-of-town trip or an out-of-town same-day trip of 40 kilometres or more away from their home for leisure or business purposes.



2024 Visitor Activity

Tracked visits by destination type

- Downtown core**
4,800,000 visits
- Attractions, trails & parks**
566,000 visits
- Sports & recreation**
333,000 visits
- Hotels**
294,000 visits



Visitor Target Groups

Based on Peterborough’s tourism offerings, trends, and current visitation data, there are three key **visitor target groups** to focus on for the City of Peterborough. The first target group is Countryside Couples and Families, which accounts for 37% of visitors and is the largest visitor group. These visitors are older, mid-income rural couples and families who enjoy a wide range of activities, and live in rural areas all around Peterborough. The second target group is Suburban Families and Couples, which accounts for 15% of visitors and skews a bit younger with more kids at home. They are mostly located in suburbs outside cities like Ottawa, the Greater Toronto Area, and Barrie. The third is target group is Affluent Families,

which accounts for 10% of visitors, and are middle-age high income suburban and urban families and more culturally diverse than the previous two (2) target groups. They are mostly located in large cities like the Greater Toronto Area, Ottawa, Hamilton, and Kingston.

Visitor target groups:

The types of existing and potential visitors that are more likely to visit Peterborough. The target groups are usually made up of similar visitor segments with similar patterns of visitation, urbanity and life stage.



Visitor Investment Groups

In addition to these three target groups, there are two **visitor investment groups** that may be more difficult to target due to their strong connection to urban environments, but who may have the potential for more visitation in the future. The first investment group is Urban Diverse Families, which accounts for 12% of visitors. They are younger to middle-aged multi-ethnic urban families that enjoy attractions, trails, park and overnight trips. They are mostly located in cities like Toronto, Mississauga, Brampton, Hamilton, and Ottawa. The second investment group is Urban Young Singles and Couples, which accounts for under 5%. They are the youngest of all the target groups, enjoy overnight trips and hotels, and are in urban areas.

Visitor investment groups:

The types of visitors that are not likely to visit Peterborough at this moment, but indicate a slow and steady increase in their interest in visiting Peterborough in the future.

Our Community

We know that great places to visit are also great places to live. We also know that visitor experiences can be enriched through genuine interactions with diverse, local people, including those working in the visitor economy and local residents who are also enjoying activities in Peterborough. In fact, these interactions are often what define a visitor's experience and motivate them to return to place.

Our community values many aspects of travelling for tourism, from participating in new experiences, exploring new places, including through nature and outdoor activities, to consuming arts, culture, and history along with food and culinary experiences. We also know the community values social connection, as well as safe, clean, comfortable environments. Residents are proud of their city and are generally open and willing to host family, friends, and neighbours but also visitors to Peterborough and see themselves as informal ambassadors, which is great news considering they have a high level of awareness and connection to Peterborough's tourism offering.

When asked to describe the "perfect visitor" to Peterborough, residents described someone who is eager to explore the city's natural beauty and culture scene. Someone who supports local businesses and is respectful of the place. Someone who leaves with positive memories to share with others. This visitor could be a family, an outdoor enthusiast, a culture lover, or someone is just open to discovering what makes Peterborough special.

As importantly, our community sees that tourism creates more positive than negative impact, from the creation of jobs and attraction of new

businesses to the bringing of people together and strengthening of community connections. At the same time, our community sees the potential for tourism to do more when it comes to protecting the environment, fostering belonging and connection, responding to social issues, and aligning community needs with meeting the expectations of visitors.

As we continue to grow our visitor economy, we are committed amplifying diverse voices to shape how tourism develops and to create truly welcoming destination where locals and visitors of all backgrounds, identities, and abilities feel safe, respected, represented, and able to participate fully. By reducing barriers, amplifying diverse voices and stories, and supporting equity-deserving communities, tourism can play a meaningful role in addressing systemic and environmental challenges while strengthening community well-being.

We know that our community is highly invested in Peterborough as both a place to live and visit, and we believe the community should have a voice when it comes to how tourism develops. This is why we are committed to continuing to engage our community in tourism-related conversations as we work to grow Peterborough as a destination.

Host:

The role that residents, businesses, staff, volunteers, and anyone interacting with a visitor plays in welcoming visitors and sharing positive experiences. In tourism, visitors are hosted by a broad network of tourism ecosystem actors who enable positive visitor experiences and in turn benefit from tourism activity.



Vision & Principles



Peterborough is a welcoming and inclusive year-round destination that celebrates its blend of beautiful waterways and green spaces, vibrant arts and events scene, and deep respect for history, heritage and living cultures.

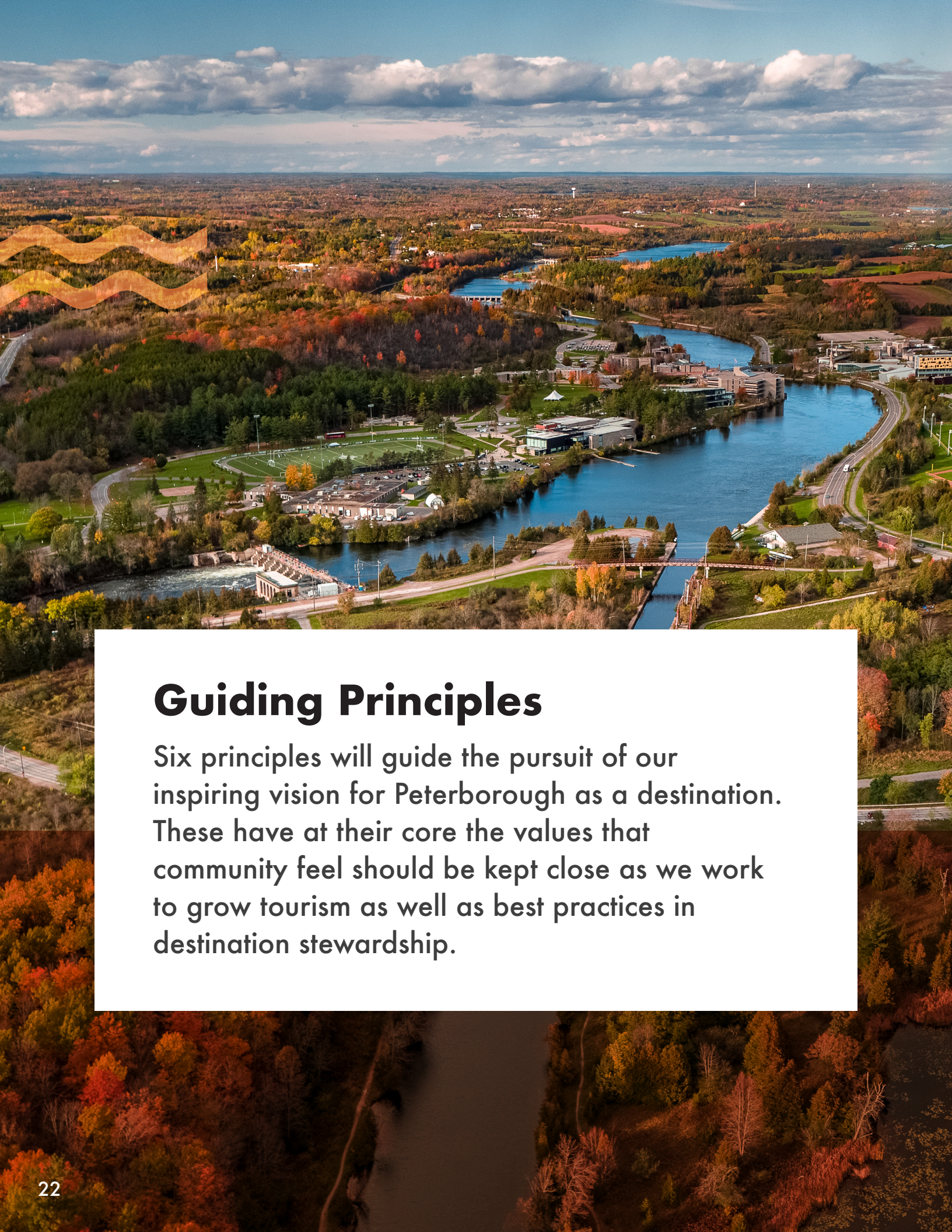
Destination Vision

Our destination vision is rooted in the perspectives shared by community across the strategy development process. It depicts what flourishing looks like in the eyes of those working in our visitor economy and who are proud to call Peterborough home. It also captures the unique combination of elements that motivate people to visit. Importantly, our destination vision serves to inspire the hard work that is needed to bring it to life.

We invite visitors to Peterborough-Nogojwanong to connect and engage with

us, whether through enjoying arts, music and festivals, paddling our waterways, enjoying sporting events and unique downtown places, exploring trail connections, or sharing meals and moments with our community.

We see tourism as a way to strengthen our local economy and pride in place, support an active and healthy lifestyle, and steward the lands and waters we enjoy for future generations. As a regional hub that believes in the power of partnerships, we work collaboratively to deliver authentic, year-round experiences that enrich quality of life for locals while inspiring visitors to explore Peterborough, amplify our stories, and return feeling a part of this place.



Guiding Principles

Six principles will guide the pursuit of our inspiring vision for Peterborough as a destination. These have at their core the values that community feel should be kept close as we work to grow tourism as well as best practices in destination stewardship.

Guiding Principles

1 Put community well-being first

We recognize that a clean, safe, welcoming, accessible, and inclusive city is the foundation of a strong visitor economy. We will grow tourism in ways that enhance residents’ quality of life, foster belonging, celebrate diversity, and ensure people of all backgrounds feel respected, represented, and able to fully participate.

2 Lead with authenticity

Rather than trying to be everything to everyone, we will focus our efforts on what truly sets Peterborough apart, from our waterways and natural spaces to our arts, culture, and heritage, from our food and music scenes to our local festivals and sports events.

3 Grow tourism responsibly and sustainably

We will balance the pursuit of economic benefits from tourism with environmental stewardship, social responsibility and equity. This allows us to utilize tourism to protect our lands, waters, and community today and for generations to come.

4 Work in partnership to create synergy

We want to take a leadership role while working as both a connector and facilitator, so we will collaborate with local businesses, community organizations, Indigenous and regional partners, to produce outcomes that are equitable, aligned, and impactful.

5 Focus on quality over quantity

Instead of working simply to increase the number of visitors to Peterborough, we will prioritize the development and delivery of well-designed and meaningful experiences that encourage longer stays, year-round visitation, and deeper engagement with our community. By focusing on quality, we will grow the quantity.

6 Proceed with clarity and transparency

Using data, including community input and feedback, we will ensure that our decisions are grounded in evidence, clearly communicated, and demonstrate how tourism investment delivers value for Peterborough.



Strategic Direction



Areas of Action

As we pursue our destination vision, all of our work over the next few years will fall into three areas of action, with specific actions, i.e., projects and initiatives, being subject to annual work planning and budgeting processes.



Development

Development is the intentional process that we will use to strengthen Peterborough as a destination so that we are able to meet and exceed visitor expectations. This includes developing our tourism ecosystem, from supporting our existing businesses to attracting new ones, and developing the visitor experience to ensure that we lead with quality and visitors are able to enjoy all that Peterborough has to offer.



Management

Management is our approach to ensuring that our visitor economy delivers positive and lasting social, cultural, environmental, and economic benefits for residents and visitors alike. This includes continuing to work from an evidence base, keeping open channels of communication with everyone in our tourism ecosystem, and making collaboration a competitive advantage.



Marketing

Marketing is the combination of methods that we will use to collect, package, and strategically communicate the stories that define Peterborough as a destination and the value that we offer to visitors. This includes homing in our unique points of differentiation and working in partnership with others to attract visitors across the year.

2030 Goals

Within each area of action, we have set goals to achieve by 2030.



Development

1. There's always something for visitors to do in Peterborough
2. We are a leading host for cultural events, sports, and outdoor activities
3. We live in a beautiful place that we encourage visitors to experience and explore



Management

4. The visitor economy is supporting the sustainable growth and development of Peterborough
5. Tourism in Peterborough is powered by a team of individuals, businesses, and organizations



Marketing

6. Peterborough is recognized as destination in its own right
7. We are attracting visitors that celebrate what Peterborough has to offer and want to see it flourish



Strategies & Actions



Goal 01

There's Always Something for Visitors to do in Peterborough



When visitors know Peterborough is a place that always delivers, we become more competitive.

Regardless of why someone is coming to Peterborough, we want them to feel confident that they will easily find activities and experiences that are open and welcoming. This reliability can make us a default destination, especially for evening and mid-week visitation, as well as during the winter and **shoulder seasons** when being open is a point of differentiation. By making it simpler for visitors to enjoy Peterborough, the more magnetic and memorable their trip will become and the more likely they will be to book a trip, extend their journey, or plan a return visit.

Reliable destinations make compelling destinations. Working towards this goal helps us strengthen our reputation as a lively, engaging place for residents and visitors, while building our resilience as a destination.

Shoulder seasons:

The periods between peak and off-peak tourism seasons, so spring and fall in Ontario, when visitor numbers are usually lower than peak or off seasons of summer and winter depending on the range of draws and activities available.

1.1 Develop new and enhance existing tourism product

By developing new and enhancing our existing tourism products, we give visitors reasons to stay longer, return more, and visit outside of peak periods. This strategy is a tool to fill gaps in the visitor experience and respond to changing visitor demands.

When enhancing existing tourism products, we're building on what works by adding new layers of experience, such as guided activities, themed itineraries, storytelling, or expanded hours and seasons. Whereas, in developing new products, we have an opportunity to plan our offerings from the ground up to more effectively fill gaps and reflect Peterborough's destination narrative.

This strategy can help us to extend the tourism season and contribute to year-round employment for our tourism workers. By encouraging fall, winter, and spring product development and enhancements, we can create a more balanced and resilient visitor economy.

Example Actions

- Provide guidelines for City marketing support and funding criteria (e.g., prioritize midweek, shoulder-season; sustainability; accessibility; collaborations)
- Create a criteria-based product development grant program for industry, not-for-profits, etc. leveraging available resources
- Pilot a Peterborough signature experiences program (i.e. cluster existing assets and bringing partners together to develop new place-based offerings, ensure experiences are pre-bookable online, and target shoulder seasons)
- Develop new programming in collaboration with partners to leverage City-owned assets (e.g., Thursday night at the museum)
- Enhance and regularly program Peterborough's waterfront and signature public spaces with low-cost, recurring activities and amenities
- Collaborate with community organizations to support and grow inclusive and diverse cultural celebrations and community events that reflect the diversity of Peterborough.

1.2 Improve and maintain the quality of tourism product

High-quality tourism experiences can encourage visitors to stay longer, explore more, and recommend Peterborough to others. Although Peterborough has a diverse assets base, the overarching visitor experience can be inconsistent. Issues like unclear wayfinding, trash along our streetscapes, greenspaces, and waterway, inconsistent customer service, and social challenges in our downtown can negatively impact an otherwise positive visit.

Delivering a high-quality visitor experience means ensuring that our attractions, public spaces, events, and services are always welcoming, accessible, and easy to enjoy. To achieve this, we need to work with tourism businesses and asset managers to create more **market-ready** experiences. This will elevate the overall profile of our destination and offer more reasons to visit (i.e. tourism draws) not just more things to do when someone is already visiting.

Improving the quality of our tourism experience means maintaining trails, parks, and waterfront areas, improving signage and visitor information, supporting customer service and tourism ambassadorship, and ensuring that experiences are inclusive and safe for diverse visitors.

Example Actions

- Conduct annual or bi-annual visitor experience assessments to identify opportunities to improve the visitor experience (at various times of year and week)
- Develop and implement market readiness resources and supports (e.g., training to move secondary assets to primary assets, quality assurance program, etc.)
- Launch a customer service and ambassadorship trainings for frontline staff within the City and at tourism businesses across the destination (including social training and resources)
- Provide stable, multi-year funding and practical support to arts and cultural organizations as informed by the Municipal Cultural Plan
- Pursue designation as a Rainbow Registered destination and encourage other tourism actors to participate.

Market-ready:

Tourism experiences or businesses that are prepared to welcome visitors in a consistent, high-quality way. This often includes being easy to find, clearly described, bookable or accessible, safe, welcoming, and aligned with visitor expectations.

1.3 Attract and support new visitor-facing businesses

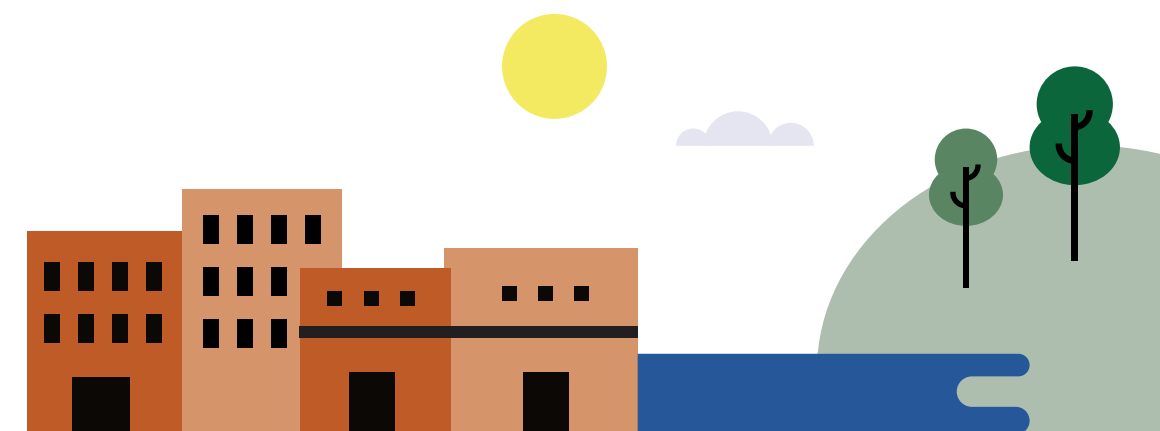
Visitor-facing businesses are often the first point of contact for visitors, and their success directly shapes perceptions of the city. New businesses are important in animating our streets and shopfronts, filling gaps in the visitor journey, and strengthening Peterborough's sense of place. They also add energy and choice to the visitor experience.

To attract and support a diversity of new businesses, we need to ensure that entrepreneurs have the information they need to succeed. For example, helping operators understand visitor demands and market opportunities, fostering collaborations with more established businesses, and streamlining permitting processes to create conditions where businesses can thrive year-round.

Undertaking this strategy is also an opportunity to strengthen connections across City of Peterborough departments and with our broader tourism ecosystem including with Indigenous partners.

Example Actions

- Undertake an opportunities scan, including feasibility assessments (based on identified and perceived gaps, e.g. hotels)
- Create an action plan to attract new visitor-facing businesses
- Develop and implement a pop-up business program (potential inclusions: short-term leases in vacant stores, arenas/municipal spaces, young entrepreneurs plug-in through educational institutions, collaborations with Curve Lake First Nation and Hiawatha First Nation)



Goal 02

We are a leading host for cultural events, sports and outdoor activities



Events are one of Peterborough’s strongest tourism drivers. Sports tournaments, festivals, and cultural events bring visitors to the city, fill accommodations, and add energy to our downtown and neighbourhoods. Many of these events are also a reflection of who we are and contribute to Peterborough’s sense of place. Moreover, events are a tool for growing visitation, encouraging repeat visitation, building stronger destination awareness, and supporting year-round economic activity. For example, we want someone who comes to Peterborough for a fishing derby to then return for a family vacation.

At the same time, we heard from the tourism community that several challenges limit our ability to host and grow events. Challenges that can negatively impact the visitor experience and make Peterborough less competitive as a host destination relate to accommodation gaps, transportation, wayfinding, amenity deficiencies, and shortages of qualified staff. There is an opportunity to better connect events to the rest of the destination, so that visitors stay longer and explore more, growing the positive impacts that events bring to Peterborough.

By strengthening our role as a welcoming and capable host, we will be better equipped to attract events that fit with Peterborough’s values as well as support local businesses and volunteers.

2.1

Attract and develop events that are the right fit for Peterborough

Not all events align with Peterborough’s tourism sector goals, infrastructure, asset base, or capacity. As a result, we want to attract and develop events that make sense for our city. In speaking with our tourism community, we should focus on events that show off Peterborough’s uniqueness, celebrate our natural and cultural assets, and have a positive community impact.

At a minimum, “right-fit” events contribute to the environmental, economic, and social wellbeing of our community. These events reinforce rather than compete with our strong sports, culture, and outdoor assets. We’re aiming to attract and nurture events of diverse sizes, audiences and themes throughout the year. To do this we need to be more intentional, support event organizers effectively, and reduce strain on City services.

Attracting the right events can help strengthen Peterborough’s brand, build pride among residents, and ensure events contribute to a sustainable and values-aligned visitor economy. By building up our reputation as a host city, it will be easier to maximize the Return on Investment on our investments into events.

Example Actions

- Develop events attraction criteria and prioritization matrix (e.g., diversity of sizes and types of events, alignment with event calendar, level of effort required to secure event, focus on shoulder season, events that celebrate diversity, low-impact/carbon-neutral events, etc.)
- Invest in events-based infrastructure and facilities to stay competitive
- Further develop and market a suite of planning supports and ancillary services offered to event organizers
- Pilot a program to evolve select community events into tourism demand generators
- Standardize and clarify event permitting, approvals, and insurance processes, while identifying opportunities to support efficient review timelines for recurring or established events.

2.2 Use events as conduits to other visitor experiences

Events bring people to Peterborough for a specific purpose and moment in time, creating a powerful initial touchpoint. Using events to bring people to our destination and then using them as conduit for visitors to explore more is strategic. Our hope is that through deeper connections with Peterborough, our event visitors will have an experience that encourages them to return, potentially to explore the destination at a different time of year.

By intentionally connecting events to other visitor assets including our restaurants, museums, and outdoor activities, we can encourage visitors to do more in Peterborough. We've also directly heard from event organizers that they see the benefits of forming stronger ties between tourism businesses, visitors, and events.

Example Actions

- Develop compelling itineraries and programming for sports, outdoor, and cultural events (e.g., develop experiences and encourage extended stays surrounding Lock & Paddle, Kawartha Autumn Studio Tour, and CANCAST Fishing Show)
- Create and share tailored recommended packages and promotional materials with event organizers for distribution amongst participants
- Establish Elevate Peterborough (a program to provide support and resources to event organizers, industry and community organizations)

2.3 Increase our capacity to meet visitor needs

While demand for events and experiences is strong, the systems that support visitors and tourism businesses face increased pressure in high-visitation moments. Tourism community members are concerned that capacity issues may lead to our accommodations, transportation networks, public washrooms, etc. getting overwhelmed and negatively impact our ability to be a great host destination.

Increasing capacity is not just large capital-intensive projects, it's also about making the best use of what we already have. For example, we can increase our capacity through improved coordination across City departments and neighbouring municipalities, aligning infrastructure planning with event demand, and ensuring tourism businesses have the tools and information they need to consistently provide excellent customer service, including during peak visitation.

When capacity is insufficient, community frustration can grow, but by being proactive, we can help ensure that events are beneficial rather than disruptive. Committing to this strategy will help us protect resident quality of life maximizing the benefits that events offer. Moreover, strengthening our events capacity also supports year-round tourism, enabling Peterborough to host a wider range events across all seasons.

Example Actions

- Collaborate with accommodation partners to develop an occupancy/capacity calendar that informs when and what events to attract
- Develop a channel and process for communicating upcoming event information with visitor-facing businesses so that they are ready to receive (e.g., restaurants are able to plan for staffing and supplies)
- Collaborate with neighbouring municipalities on research into accommodation/workforce solutions for larger events (e.g., set up shuttle bus to transport event participants)
- Establish an event-capacity coordination framework that aligns event scheduling and promotion with accommodation, food, transportation, and workforce capacity



Goal 03

We live in
a beautiful
place that we
encourage
visitors to
experience
and explore



Peterborough's natural setting and community character are defining elements of our destination identity. Our waterways, trails, and cultural spaces are central to why people enjoy living here and we are proud to share this with visitors. At the same time, we know that it's not always easy to fully experience the city. Challenges with wayfinding, transportation, connectivity between attractions, and a general lack of awareness about what visitors can and should experience can discourage deeper exploration.

This goal is about removing barriers, creating opportunities, and developing the infrastructure visitors need to effortlessly explore. For this to work, our natural and built environments must be woven into a welcoming destination that reflects pride of place for residents and visitors alike.

We want every visitor to have the opportunity to make the most of their trip. Instead of just looking at the Trent-Severn Waterway, we want more visitors to have the chance to transit a lock in a kayak.

3.1

Grow a sense of place across the destination

A strong sense of place conveys to visitors that they are having a unique experience, one that cannot be replicated anywhere else. We know that Peterborough already has a destination identity, but it is not always experienced consistently across neighbourhoods and attractions, especially by visitors.

Growing our destination identity means ensuring that all touchpoints across the visitor journey, including our stories, design, programming, public spaces, etc. reflect who we are as a community. For Peterborough, this means celebrating our natural environment, connection to Indigenous cultures, and passionate business owners in ways that are visible, cohesive, and consistent throughout the city.

We want visitors to feel the essence of Peterborough wherever they go! This means our public art, our storytelling, our products, our events should all build up our sense of place. Cohesiveness across these kinds of efforts help visitors feel connected to the destination, build pride among residents, and grow support for tourism. Through this work, we can bring together individual assets and stories into a unified destination identity.

Example Actions

- Combine placemaking and beautification with maintenance infrastructure projects (e.g., painting garbage cans) and leverage Peterborough's brand identity as part of the process
- Invest in interactive public art installations that share the diverse cultures, identities, histories, and lived experiences of the community.
- Update interpretive signage to tell stories that reflect diverse cultures, identities, histories and lived experiences from Peterborough (with consideration for accessibility elements in storytelling, such as audio and braille)
- Collaborate (with landlords and others) on art projects to animate empty storefronts
- Incorporate environmental equity considerations into public space improvements

3.2 Make it easy for visitors to get to and around the city

Access and navigation are important parts of the visitor experience. While Peterborough is well located in relation to key markets and easily reachable by private vehicle, visitors without a car or those looking to move around using active transportation once they arrive, may struggle.

Ease of movement contributes to a more inclusive and sustainable destination. To make it easier for visitors to get to and around Peterborough, solutions need to combine better transportation options, clear wayfinding, signage, digital tools, accessible infrastructure, and easily available visitor services and information.

By removing friction from the visitor journey, we can encourage longer stays, and deeper engagement with the city, thereby spreading out economic benefits of tourism. Moreover, improvements to walking, cycling, transit, and connectivity also support community livability, adding to quality of life for residents.

Example Actions

- Conduct a visitor movement and mobility assessment (incorporate accessibility lens, collaborate with transportation planning)
- Conduct a signage audit to inform gateway signage and wayfinding updates for multiple modes of transportation (i.e., paddling, boating, bike, car, pedestrian, transit, etc.)
- Develop an accessible visitor information model that extends beyond traditional VICs—using mobile, pop-up, and strategically placed resources—while ensuring improving accessibility across infrastructure, public spaces, events and service delivery beyond minimum legislative requirements
- Explore transportation options and alternatives for visitors (including cycling and trail options and canoe launch sites)
- Pilot a digital tool with interactive maps and example itineraries to encourage visitors to design their own multi-stop and/or multi-day journeys



Tourism already plays a meaningful role in Peterborough's economy and community life. Visitors are drawn by our natural assets, arts and culture, events, and distinctive local character and their spending supports local businesses, jobs, and public amenities. Growth for the sake of growth, however, is not the goal. We want tourism to strengthen our community without putting pressure on the things that make Peterborough special.

Our downtown, waterfront, trails, and community services face pressures related to infrastructure, social issues, and climate change. If unmanaged, tourism can strain these systems further and erode community support for tourism. That said, if we commit to responsible tourism development and leverage visitor interest in shoulder-season, there is a real opportunity for tourism to support Peterborough's sustainable growth and development

We want the visitor economy to work for Peterborough, which requires a focus on quality over volume, aligning tourism development with community priorities, protecting natural and cultural assets, and making decisions that balance economic benefit with environmental stewardship and resident wellbeing. By making this the goal, we see tourism as a long-term tool that can help us build a resilient, inclusive, and livable city that works for residents and visitors alike.

Goal 04

The visitor economy is supporting the sustainable growth and development of Peterborough

4.1 Share and act upon tourism insights

Sharing tourism insights is essential to building trust and alignment with partners and the broader tourism community. It helps everyone understand visitor trends, community concerns, and the trade-offs involved in tourism development. We can make better decisions together when we all have access to key information and insights.

By openly sharing what we learn about tourism and showing how it informs policy, investment, and programming, we create accountability and momentum. More specifically, by collecting, sharing, and acting on tourism insights we hope to improve the downtown experience, address infrastructure and wayfinding gaps, strengthen year-round programming, and responding to social and environmental concerns.

At the same time, these efforts will also give business owners, community organizations, and other partners the data they need to fill gaps in the visitor experience, capitalize on tourism opportunities, and more effectively use tourism as a tool for community development.

Example Actions

- Develop and maintain a local tourism data dashboard
- Utilize year-over-year industry data to calibrate programming and marketing campaigns
- Report back on tourism services and events, towards sharing clear, accessible tourism performance metrics and progress updates that demonstrate results



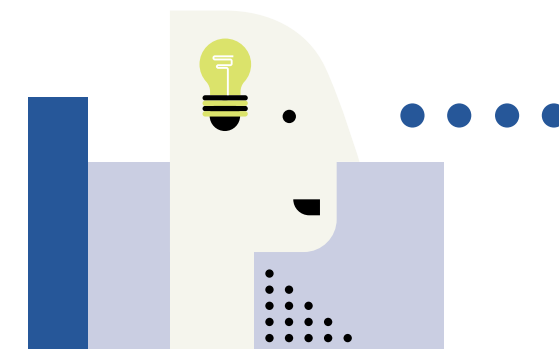
4.2 Collect the data needed to make informed decisions

Strong tourism decisions require access to the right data. This is true at both the destination-level and business-level. While we have access to valuable insights like visitation numbers, there are gaps in how consistently and comprehensively the City and partners are collecting and sharing tourism data. Strengthening our data foundation, will allow us to monitor community sentiment around tourism, measure changes year-over-year, and adjust things to ensure that tourism growth supports long-term community wellbeing rather than short-term gains.

Up-to-date data can also help us identify pressure points, seasonal imbalances, infrastructure needs, and underserved markets. Without this information, we risk investing in the wrong places, overloading popular areas, or missing opportunities for higher-value visitation. At the same time, we want to move beyond volume metrics. We need data that reflects economic, social, and environmental outcomes so we can measure success in ways that matter to residents and businesses. A key part of collecting the right data is confirming what we need to be measuring.

Example Actions

- Conduct a bi-annual resident sentiment survey (including residents from within the Peterborough Census Metropolitan Area - CMA)
- Conduct a bi-annual industry needs assessment (including any visitor-facing business or organization working to meet the needs of visitors)
- Collect and compile quantitative and qualitative visitation data on an annual basis (which could include conducting ongoing visitor satisfaction surveys)
- Perform impact assessments for select events, including economic and other impacts



4.3 Put the environment first when it comes to tourism

Our natural assets are central to Peterborough's identity and tourism appeal. The waterway, trails, and green spaces are consistently identified as our strongest visitor draws. These assets are also particularly vulnerable to overuse and the impacts of climate change.

Environmental sustainability, climate resilience, and the long-term health of our waterfront and natural spaces are priorities. Tourism growth needs to respect ecological limits and contribute to protecting our natural assets. At the same time, research shows shifting travel behaviour, with many visitors seeking out meaningful, responsible tourism experiences.

As it relates to tourism, environmental stewardship is about protecting the assets tourism depends on while growing a higher-value, lower-impact visitor economy. In order to put the environment first, we need to collect the right data so that we can plan for resilience, disperse visitation, support sustainable business practices, and align tourism development with broader environmental and climate goals.

Example Actions

- Conduct a destination carrying capacity study (with secondary institutions and community-based groups)
- Compile and share relevant climate change adaptation and risk management information with the tourism industry
- Identify and invest in or fund climate change adaptation and risk management equipment/infrastructure
- Support community clean-up initiatives in collaboration with community organizations

Destination carrying capacity:

The volume, style, and spread of visitation a destination can support without pushing limits that negatively affecting the environment, community wellbeing, infrastructure, or the visitor experience.



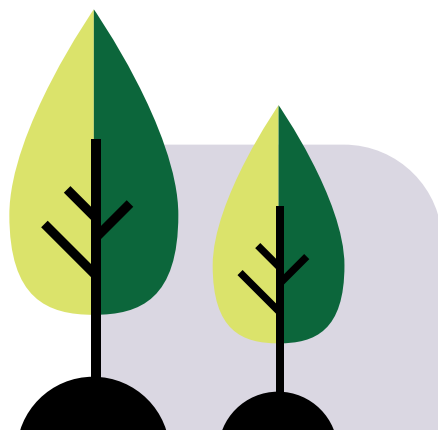
Tourism in Peterborough thrives when we work together. Peterborough's visitor economy is powered by our local businesses, community organizations, event volunteers, Indigenous partners, and City teams working across departments. This collective effort is a strength, but as we heard from our tourism community, we need more clarity, coordination, and support in tourism management.

The Tourism Strategy development started within six months of the significant transition of tourism services delivery from a "contracted out" program delivered by an external agency to an "in-house" service delivery model; it is not surprising that we heard uncertainty regarding tourism roles and responsibilities. Clear alignment of roles, strong communication, and open collaboration opportunities can improve progress, eliminate duplication, and reduce strain on small organizations, businesses, and volunteers who are already stretched.

This goal is about creating stronger structures to support a more resilient visitor economy backed by a connected tourism ecosystem. By strengthening leadership, relationships, and capacity, we want everyone to know how they fit into the bigger picture of tourism and feel empowered to contribute.

Goal 05

Tourism in Peterborough is powered by a team of individuals, businesses, and organizations



5.1 Establish clear tourism leadership, structure, and collaboration mechanisms

Peterborough's diverse tourism ecosystem actors are passionate and committed to sustainable tourism development, management, and marketing, but they are unsure who is responsible for what, where decisions are made, and how to align their efforts with the work of the City. Defining leadership roles and collaboration mechanisms, and sharing this with our community is important to creating a shared understanding of how tourism works in Peterborough. Structure will help us create a resilient system.

With clear leadership, structure, and coordination mechanisms in place, partners will know where and how to contribute, and how their work fits into a shared vision for tourism. It will also allow us to foster more collaboration opportunities and to better align tourism work with broader priorities like downtown revitalization, infrastructure planning, and environmental stewardship.

Example Actions

- Communicate tourism roles, responsibilities, and service delivery model (including use of tourism-related MAT)
- Formalize an internal process and protocol for cross-departmental tourism communication, coordination, and collaboration (noting that a cross-departmental Tourism Working Group was established in 2025)
- Establish quarterly meetings with representatives from tourism sector businesses, First Nations, and community organizations
- Build brand presence for Peterborough Tourism through community engagement and presence of tents, uniformed staff, marketing materials, etc.



5.2 Put reconciliation into action through meaningful relationship building with Indigenous communities

Tourism can be a powerful tool for reconciliation, but only when tourism development is inclusive, respectful, and grounded in real relationships. We know that partnering with neighbouring First Nations is essential to shaping a tourism future for Peterborough that is just, equitable, and that reflects the full story of this place.

To bring this strategy to life we need to move towards genuine collaboration. We heard from local First Nation partners that meaningful relationship building is an ongoing process. It takes time and trust. We're committed to engaging with Indigenous partners consistently, not just when specific collaboration opportunities arise.

Using tourism as one tool to support reconciliation will help us move towards a visitor economy rooted in respect and shared benefit. It also reflects our broader responsibilities as a City to contribute to reconciliation in meaningful and lasting ways.

The nature of our collaborations will be determined together, but some of the ideas that already came out in conversation include opportunities for learning, wider economic participation, initiatives related to the stewardship of land and water, and storytelling. Importantly, we will work to amplify Indigenous voices through these efforts.

Example Actions

- Identify and collaborate with Hiawatha and Curve Lake First Nations on mutually beneficial Indigenous tourism opportunities
- Become a member of Indigenous Tourism Ontario and leverage existing workshops (e.g., Bridging the Waters Workshop)
- Formalize process and practice of holding space for Indigenous voices and perspectives in all tourism conversations, towards ensuring that Indigenous language and perspectives are embedded into tourism experiences and storytelling
- Attend monthly Urban Indigenous Working Group meetings

5.3 Create synergies with others by fostering strong relationships

We know that tourism outcomes improve when people work together across sectors, communities, and geographies. Peterborough's tourism ecosystem includes a wide range of actors like businesses, arts and culture groups, sport organizations, community volunteers, Indigenous partners, and regional partners.

In speaking with tourism community members, we heard that collaboration around tourism often happens informally and inconsistently. By intentionally creating synergies, we can reduce silos, encourage shared problem-solving, identify mutual benefits, manage tensions, coordinate the timing of events, and work to extend visitor stays. Ultimately, this will help us to unlock our collective capacity and create a more cohesive and compelling destination.

Example Actions

- Communicate the value of and opportunities within tourism to relevant audiences
- Identify key intersection points and tourism products to collaborate on with neighbouring communities and First Nations (including cycling, food and agritourism, infrastructure, waterway development and promotion)
- Develop promotional partnerships with organizations that align with Peterborough's value propositions (e.g., Ontario By Bike, Doors Open, Ontario Culture Days Festival)
- Participate in celebrating National Tourism Week

5.4 Build capacity and connections within the tourism ecosystem

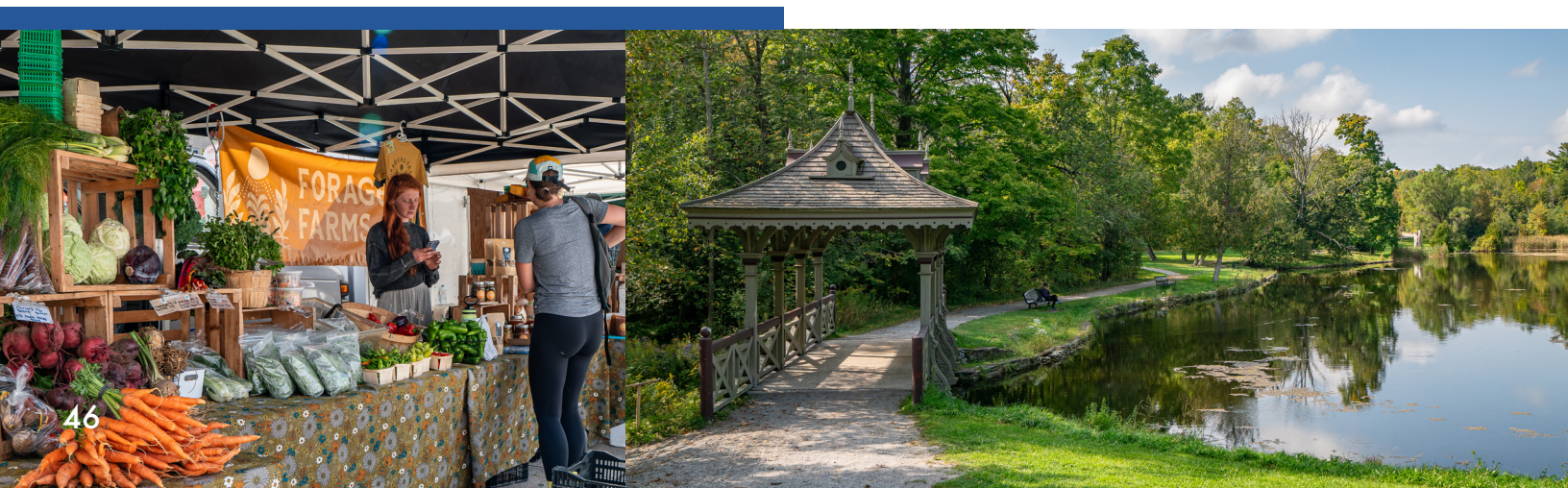
There are real opportunities to grow capacities and connections across the tourism ecosystem. Although many passionate businesses and organizations are delivering visitor experiences, many are small, under-resourced, and rely on volunteers. By pooling resources for capacity development and networking, we hope to foster a stronger tourism community and address skills gaps as well as uneven access to information and support.

Building capacity means helping tourism operators and partners succeed, not asking them to do more with less. This includes strengthening skills, improving access to tools and insights, supporting networking and peer learning, and helping them navigate City processes. These efforts will help Peterborough stay on top of tourism trends and remain competitive as a destination of choice for visitors.

A connected tourism ecosystem is also more resilient, more inclusive, and better able to respond to changing visitor expectations and market conditions. By strengthening connections within our tourism ecosystem, we can create opportunities for tourism businesses and organizations to learn from one another, collaborate on shared challenges, and create innovative tourism offerings.

Example Actions

- Develop inclusive tourism and hospitality training resources for visitor-facing businesses and organizations, including cultural competency, accessibility, anti-racism, and inclusive customer service practices
- Deliver AI-preparedness and support to tourism businesses (including Artificial Intelligence Engine Optimization - AIEO)
- Host an annual tourism events or days that brings together tourism ecosystem actors



Goal 06

Peterborough is
recognized as
destination in its
own right



While we have much to offer, potential visitors may not have a clear or compelling understanding of what makes Peterborough special. This limits length of stay, repeat visitation, and our ability to attract visitors outside peak seasons. At the same time, our tourism community is proud to call Peterborough home and share this special place with visitors.

Our natural setting, arts and culture scene, music and festivals, waterways, heritage, sport, and community spirit are authentic strengths that resonate deeply with people once they experience them. Our challenge is not a lack of identity, but a lack of consistent celebration and expression of that identity.

Our goal is for Peterborough to be clearly understood as a destination in its own right, a place that visitors seek out. We want to attract visitors who come with intention, stay longer, spend more, and connect meaningfully with our community.

Across the tourism ecosystem, we need to confidently tell our story and align how we show up across experiences and platforms both online and in person to ensure that our destination identity reflects who we are and what makes Peterborough unique.

6.1 Create opportunities to celebrate Peterborough and its unique destination identity

Peterborough’s destination story needs to be consistently told or experienced. When visitors interact with individual attractions or events, they should have a strong sense of how they connect to a larger destination narrative, making it easier for Peterborough to stand out in a competitive tourism landscape.

We want our destination identity to be unmissable. By consistently highlighting our unique combination of tourism assets and intangible elements like hospitality, we help visitors understand what makes Peterborough special and why it is worth choosing, returning to, and recommending.

Importantly, we will need to develop a clear destination narrative that encapsulates the diverse identities of the community while making it easy and engaging for others to plug in and amplify. This kind of work can also reinforce pride among residents and tourism partners, strengthening local support for tourism and building ambassadorship.

Example Actions

- Develop and implement a clear destination narrative and guidelines for adapting and utilizing City brand visuals and voice
- Empower ecosystems actors with the tools they need to be strong destination brand ambassadors
- Partner with organizations focused on community building and new resident integration
- Develop a Pride of Place initiative that encourages visitors to be part of the destination story while preserving what makes it unique
- Collaborate with community members of diverse backgrounds, experiences, abilities and identities to expand destination storytelling.

6.2 Share Peterborough stories

Storytelling brings our destination identity to life. Our intention is to share stories all along the visitor journey- when visitors are planning trips, while they are in Peterborough, and afterwards as they are reminiscing about it.

Visitors today seek destinations that feel authentic and experiences that are place-based. Storytelling is a powerful tool in conveying this. By sharing stories from a range of people including residents, artists, Indigenous partners, entrepreneurs, athletes, students, event volunteers, etc., we can help visitors see Peterborough as a place with depth and personality. Amplifying diverse voices also presents an opportunity to contribute to community-building and reconciliation through tourism.

Stories offer a gateway to connection, something that is essential for building Peterborough's destination narrative and giving visitors a reason to visit or come back. Sharing Peterborough's stories means there is no need to invent a new identity. Instead, we need to go through a process of group-sourcing compelling stories that can contribute to our overall destination narrative. From a marketing perspective, storytelling is also a tool for supporting destination management. For example, we can work to attract visitors across the year by sharing stories about the winter and shoulder seasons.

By intentionally amplifying local voices and experiences, we can strengthen pride, reinforce community support for tourism, and build a destination narrative that feels honest, inclusive, and distinctly Peterborough.

Example Actions

- Work with local historians, Indigenous partners, cultural organizations, youth, and neighbouring communities to develop key storytelling themes
- Develop and implement a destination narrative that incorporates storytelling themes (e.g., Indigenous histories, waterways, arts and culture, including food, sports and recreation)
- Invest in media relations, content creators, and regional campaigns that amplify destination narrative and storytelling themes
- Create and distribute seasonal marketing materials (include focus on the social values of the recommended target groups)
- Develop tourism website to become a one-stop-shop for visitors (incl. trip planning tools, business information, upcoming events, booking experiences, etc.)
- Create a campaign that is focused on moments when community and visitors come together



Goal 07

We are attracting visitors that celebrate what Peterborough has to offer and want to see it flourish



We know that it is strategic to attract visitors who, like us, value community, nature, culture, and authentic local experiences. Visitors who respect the places and people they visit are more likely to stay longer, travel outside of peak periods, support local businesses, and return.

We know that our community is looking for tourism that enhances quality of life and wellbeing. To achieve this, we need to be intentional about who we attract and how we grow. This goal reflects a shift away from simply increasing visitor numbers towards attracting visitors who align with Peterborough's values and contribute positively to our community.

At a high level, this goal is about balancing economic benefit with community wellbeing. By focusing on values-aligned visitors, we hope to strengthen local support for tourism, protect our natural and cultural assets, and build a visitor economy that residents can be proud of, and contribute to making Peterborough a better place to live and visit long into the future.

7.1 Target existing markets while exploring new ones

Most of Peterborough's visitors come from nearby, familiar markets. These visitors understand our region, can travel easily, and are more likely to return. Strengthening these relationships allows us to build loyalty, extend stays, and encourage year-round visitation without significantly increasing pressure on infrastructure or services.

At the same time, there are opportunities to thoughtfully expand into new markets that align with our values and experiences. Changing travel patterns, growing interest in authentic and sustainable destinations, and increased shoulder-season travel create space to attract visitors who are seeking what Peterborough already offers, whether that is a new cycling route to try, somewhere to host a hockey tournament, or a small-city getaway.

Targeting aligned markets supports sustainable growth and makes it easier for tourism to contribute positively to Peterborough's economy, environment, and community life. It also helps us use our marketing resources effectively by aligning messaging with audiences most likely to connect with our identity and values. Finding the right mix of strengthening our relationships with existing markets and growing new ones will be essential.

Example Actions

- Develop a marketing plan to attract recommended target groups within Peterborough's visitor benchmark
- Work with Regional Tourism Organization 8 to identify geographical markets outside of Peterborough's visitor benchmark that have a critical mass of recommended target groups
- Develop campaigns that are focused on recommended target groups in new markets outside of Peterborough's visitor benchmark
- Co-create marketing materials and campaigns with neighbouring communities (including Peterborough County, Curve Lake First Nation, Hiawatha First Nation, etc.)
- Partner on promotional campaigns (or identify and participate in) marketing programs with organizations that focus on groups that align with Peterborough's target groups (e.g., Ontario By Bike, Doors Open, Ontario Culture Days Festival, etc.)
- Create a campaign that is focused on moments when community and visitors come together



Invitation



Join Team Peterborough

We know that tourism has and will continue to drive positive outcomes into our community.

To successfully grow tourism over the coming years, we need to sustainably develop our destination, strategically manage our visitor economy, and responsibly market Peterborough as a place to visit across all seasons.

Discover Peterborough: Tourism Growth Strategy and the actions that will follow are an indication of our investment into this important part of our local economy and a roadmap for positioning Peterborough as a tourism destination. However, we cannot do this alone. We need to come together as an ecosystem of actors that have a vested interest in welcoming friends, family, and visitors from near and far to experience all that Peterborough has to offer.

Whether actively collaborating with us on a project or initiative, sharing your input and feedback at various times across the process, or simply following strategy implementation progress, please accept our invitation to join Team Peterborough.

Share your full name and email address with ptbotourism@peterborough.ca and we'll be sure to share any tourism updates with you.

Contact

For more information about **Discover Peterborough: Tourism Growth Strategy** please contact:

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Tourism