

# Northumberland Economic Development

## 1. General Service Description

To provide leadership and support in coordinated economic development activities throughout Northumberland County in a collegial and cooperative manner in order to secure long term sustainable benefits for all residents.

### A. Service Functions

The Economic Development Department provides the following services:

- **Information Services:** Acts as a focal point for investment attraction by providing a single source of data related to Northumberland opportunities, as well as sources of provincial and federal assistance to new and existing investment driven initiatives.
- **Referral Services:** Support information and cooperative information exchange to individual municipal staff and service providers in support of business retention and attraction.
- **Relationship Services:** Seeking provincial and federal funds to support local and regional activities related to strategic infrastructure development.
- **Coordination Services:** Strategic Development Initiatives:
  - (i) agricultural, agri-food, and agri-tourism awareness and activities as defined by the agricultural action plan,
  - (ii) destination development coordination and
  - (iii) manufacturing undertakings in technology, training and product development including “green”.
  - (iv) regional economic development strategies

## B. Environmental Scan

The current economic environment indicates that Northumberland is faced with challenges which are indicative of current global economic conditions as well as issues specific to Northumberland. These include:

- A highly competitive investment attraction environment – specifically SW Ontario, GTA and competing jurisdictions such as the Greater Peterborough and Area Economic Development Commission (GPAEDC) and Quinte Economic Development Commission (QEDC).
- A decreasing number of jobs in the County, despite the population growth – the result of lost manufacturing jobs due to global economics versus the attractiveness of place which draws retirees.
- A lack of serviced industrial land and lack of useable industrial space – which due to plant closures has resulted in an increased inventory, though some communities in Northumberland, are investing in the development of industrial land/parks.
- The absence of centralized planning to create a coordinated approach to support a strategic economic development process for the County.
- Youth out migration – the result of absence of opportunities to maintain youth.
- Levels of educational attainment less than the Provincial average resulting in the need to improve the quality of workforce.
- Incomes lower than the provincial average – though a potential attractor, also a deterrent to the attraction of high tech/high skill employment based on workforce skills and abilities.
- Limited assessment growth in Northumberland County in commercial and industrial tax assessment resulting in a limited base upon which taxes can be raised relative to infrastructure costs.
- Insufficient tourism infrastructure – with the completion of the Premier Rank Tourism Destination (PRTD) project product development becomes essential.
- High levels of commuting out of the County which may be as a result of limited accessible technology – although current efforts are beginning to reduce this challenge.

## 2. Economic Overview

Economic Development in Northumberland consists of three categories – agriculture, tourism and manufacturing. The department has focused its efforts to support and foster the opportunities associated with agriculture and tourism and utilized its research and funding relationship network to support attraction and investment.

The current manufacturing climate is such that opportunities for large sector industrial growth are very limited both from an internal capacity perspective – industrial ready sites, as well as the nature of manufacturing development and investment.

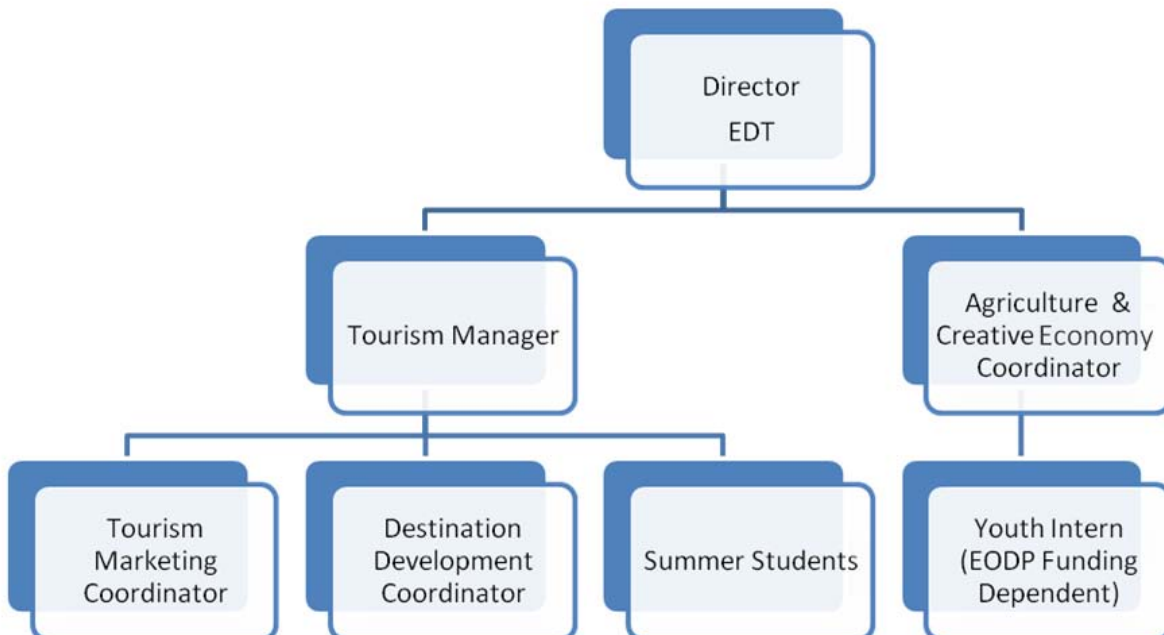
Embracing creative economy sector opportunities may prove to be the most advantageous.

## 3. Overall Marketing & Attraction Strategies

Current efforts are directed at long-term relationship building with credible investors seeking public sector support. Current fiscal conditions limit the availability of significant investor contribution to large scale manufacturing projects.

Significant effort has been undertaken to support smaller niche based manufacturing opportunities which require a lower initial capital investment and facility.

## 4. Economic Development and Tourism Organization Chart



## 5. Partnerships

Strengthening and expanding existing partnerships with business operators, area municipalities, business -related organizations, regional, provincial and federal partners are opportunities we champion to leverage expertise and resources.

Currently the department has targeted specific organizations which support investment and attraction in the region. These include:

- **Workforce Development Board**  
Implementation of the Integrated Local Labour Market Plan to support strategies to insure workforce availability
- **Eastern Ontario Warden's Caucus**  
Supporting and assisting in the coordination of the Eastern Ontario Economic Summit and implementation of the recommendations coming forward
- **Eastern Ontario Regional Network**  
Integrating the technological opportunities available to the region as a result of enhanced infrastructure
- **Tri-manufacturers Association**  
Successful acquisition of training funds for the region supported by the three manufacturing associations
- **RTO8**  
Support and formation of transitional entity to allow for the equitable distribution of provincial funds in support of Northumberland Tourism
- **EO CFDC Network Inc**  
Securing relationships and funding opportunities regarding FedDev Ontario
- **Ontario East Economic Development Commission**  
Opportunities associated with regional marketing and maximization of county-wide marketing efforts relating to investment and attraction

## 6. Economic Development and County Strategic Planning

The following initiatives are the result of the 2008 - 2011 County's Strategic Planning process and approved by County Council specific to Economic Development:

- Continued involvement with the Eastern Ontario Wardens Caucus (EOWC) to ensure adequate Federal and Provincial funding.
- Increase the mandate and the membership of the Economic Development Advisory Committee.
- Increase the profile and awareness of Northumberland County as a tourist and business destination, by means of regional branding.
- Set goals for a more balanced and improved assessment base and develop initiatives to increase the industrial and commercial assessment ratios.
- Develop a joint task force to acquire Federal and Provincial funding to extend high speed internet services throughout the County.
- Develop opportunities that will enable our agricultural sectors and rural communities to prosper.

## 7. Initiatives into Actions

### A. Agriculture, Agri-food and Agri-tourism

**Agriculture Action Plan** – The market analysis of the county's agriculture industry and an assessment of sector opportunities to support present and future agri-food business resulted in a framework of actionable items. To date nearly three-quarters of the proposed actions are either completed or underway with the balance being integrated in the upcoming year. The following illustrates the on-going commitment to supporting agricultural in Northumberland.

- [www.ProudlyNorthumberland.ca](http://www.ProudlyNorthumberland.ca) - a one-window agricultural resource for County stakeholders devoted to the agriculture resources, history, events of Northumberland County, including a portal for each of dial-up and broadband users.
- **Proudly Northumberland @ Home** – in conjunction with the HKPR Health Unit and local stakeholders to promote healthy, fresh local food options.
- **Proudly Northumberland Farm Gate Guide** – preparation for 2011 with enhanced opportunities for suppliers and users of local food products and services.

- **OMAFRA Local Food Summit** – participating partner for all local food champions to meet and discuss challenges and opportunities for their regions.
- **Steps to Leadership Program Committee** - a new project from the Centre for Rural Leadership developed in partnership with: 4-H Ontario, The Ontario Rural Council, and the Foundation for Rural Living piloted in Northumberland. Coordinated the offering of programs that will bring emerging and existing leaders together to share, learn and grow as part of a youth retention strategy.
- **Northumberland Federation of Agriculture (NFA)** – ex-officio member on the Board, providing information and access to services between the two organizations. The quarterly newsletter written by the agricultural coordinator and detailing County agricultural support activities is distributed to the 1000 member NFA and has provided a solid link to the agricultural community.
- **Culinary Tourism** – in conjunction with the chambers of commerce in Northumberland a program to promote ‘culinary tourism’ and ‘foodie’ initiatives in 2010. Numerous projects are under discussion and partnership terms have been agreed upon.
- **Strategic Partnership Initiatives:**
  - Proudly Northumberland branding – use of the logo by existing food processing companies on packaged material
  - Supply chain development
  - Agri-food programs in conjunction with post-secondary institutions
- **County of Markets Campaign** – based on the success of Ontario Marketing Investment Fund dollars in promoting the five farm markets in Northumberland plans are currently underway to further support and enhance these activities under the culinary tourism banner as well as purchase local campaigns.
- **Green Day Events** – For the agricultural community a one day event which provides insights and information to the farming community regarding alternative energy suppliers. Bio-gas, solar and wind suppliers and current users in multiple forums

## B. Tourism and Destination Development

**The Premier Rank Tourism Destination Project** resulted in a series of recommendations which are designed to engage tourism stakeholders and support the future development of tourism product in Northumberland. The Tourism Business Plan is quite explicit in detailing the multiple elements as well as the process. The items below are those where economic development and tourism intersect.

- **Technological Initiatives** – to leverage all three core attractors. Explore mobile technology for businesses as a means of viral online marketing. Initiate a central reservation system as a pilot project. Provide ongoing workshops to assist in implementation. Broadband infrastructure remains an essential requirement to undertake this element.

- **Rice Lake Tourism Renewal Strategy** – Creation of a strategy to enhance the outdoor recreation, angling and sport fishing offering which represents one of the key tourism assets of the County. Secured EODP funding to undertake this initiative as well as additional contribution from GPAEDC.
- **Cycle Tourism** – Continue ongoing partnership with post-Bike Train Initiative and Waterfront Trail. Establish a Cycling Advisory Committee to work with municipal parks & recreation, transportation and tourism departments as well as health agencies to explore cycle opportunities, sustainable transportation and potentially the development of cycling master plan.
- **Destination Marketing Organizations Role and Responsibilities** – Explore how economic development departments, BIAs and Chambers of Commerce can be more effective by identifying roles and responsibilities.
- **Ontario Regional Tourism Organization – Region 8** – Building upon existing Economic Development ties with GPAEDC and City of Kawartha Lakes to support potential partnerships for regional funding opportunities.

### **C. Broad based manufacturing undertakings in technology, training and product development including “green”**

- **Agri-food incubator** – in conjunction with the existing business incubator investment in Port Hope source additional public sector funding to support agri-food initiatives as part of the product development process.
- **Capital Pools** – continue to source organizations which provide private sector funding based on the availability of public sector opportunities specific to Eastern Ontario
- **Community Employment Resource Partnership (CERP)** – with the support of EODP funds the CERP initiative in Northumberland provides employers with a no cost option for the solicitation of potential employees. It also provides an opportunity for individuals seeking employment with a local on-line option. Combined with its ability to maintain data the resource provides an accurate representation of Northumberland’s labour situation.
- **Centres of Excellence** – The infrastructure currently exists to support enhanced centres of excellence within the area, especially with activity directed towards agricultural/bio-energy and advanced manufacturing energy technologies sector. Initial investment is required to further the research culture which is being developed.
- **Ontario East Economic Development Commission Sectoral Committees** – These committees provide additional resources to attracting manufacturing interests to the area. Utilizing a third party to vet potential new manufactures to the area has produced multiple leads. Sectoral committees currently exist in advanced manufacturing, food processing, supply chain logistics, tourism and most recently the creative economy.
- **Business Advisory Centre of Northumberland** – continued support of this provincial entity has created opportunities to provide enhanced training and professional development to the small business community.

- **Rural Broadband Enhancement** – provision of service negotiations to provide service in areas as yet not being served and to insure enhanced coverage. Work in conjunction with the Broadband Working Group. Continued project management.

## **D. Regional Economic Development Strategies**

- **EOWC Economic Development Priorities** – provision of material and related linkages to EOFCDC Network Inc and OEEDC to support regional economic opportunities e.g. Economic Forum, Presentation to FEDDEV Ontario, EODP Regional Projects.
- **Regional Broadband Network (EORN)** – integration of regional network services via EOWC.
- **Integrated Local labour Market Planning Project** – launch of recommendations includes creation of a virtual Eastern Ontario research institute. Negotiations currently underway to determine private sector sponsorship and coordination with Queen's University regarding rural policy research
- **International Youth Business /Cultural Initiative** – funding is currently being sought to support two three month stays of 20 Korean graduate students to be integrated into the local business community. A pilot project to be coordinated through the Community Training and Development Corporation it would create an opportunity to employ 10 local youth for a period of 6 months.

# Northumberland Tourism

## 1. General Service Description

Our goal is to position Northumberland County as a diverse four-season destination through **tourism development** and **integrated marketing strategies** which will build a competitive and sustainable tourism region that maximizes Northumberland's potential to successfully attract new visitors and grow tourism spending. This will be undertaken by building and sustaining strong cooperative relationships with the County's tourism industry.

For Northumberland to successfully develop into a premier destination, one which surpasses other regions for its quality of its tourism experience, attractiveness and hospitality, and is top of mind whenever consumers consider vacation options, it is essential that Northumberland incorporates a strategic plan that includes tourism planning, development and marketing.

### A. Strategic Planning & Destination Development

Our commitment is to provide leadership in strategic planning which is supported by ongoing research and initiatives such as the Northumberland Premier-ranked Tourism Destination Project and the Rice Lake Tourism Renewal Initiative. The department has expanded its services to include destination development and management to support industry in: product development; workforce development, gaps in the quality of the tourist experience; and developing strategies to leverage and sustain long term development and increase the economic impact of underdeveloped or underperforming tourism assets e.g. cycle tourism, Trent-Severn Waterway.

### B. Marketing

Focusing resources on promoting Northumberland's tourism experiences and attributes to high-potential markets in Ontario (over 7.3 million potential tourists within a three hour drive) and Canada through planning and facilitating well laid out marketing initiatives.

#### **Marketing Communications**

Development & delivery of communication that informs and inspires travel using various mediums and marketing tools to reach potential visitors: interactive website, e-newsletter, social media, print advertising, specialty brochures targeting market segments, promotional campaigns/events, travel trade marketplace and niche consumer shows.

#### **Research**

Collecting and reviewing relevant, timely research assists the department in making informed decisions on marketing and communication tactics. Review of travel motivator studies,

provincial market segments, campaign metrics, tracking of inquires and web analytics all support the implementation of effective marketing which maximizes ROI.

### **C. Consumer Services and On-line Booking/Reservation Service**

The department has an in-house call centre which responds to consumer/travel trade inquiries and requests which can include fulfillment packages, referral, itinerary building, site visits for travel trade, etc... Our goal is to convert a potential visitor's *intent to visit* into an *actual visit*. Call centre staff engage customers to fully experience Northumberland and spend more.

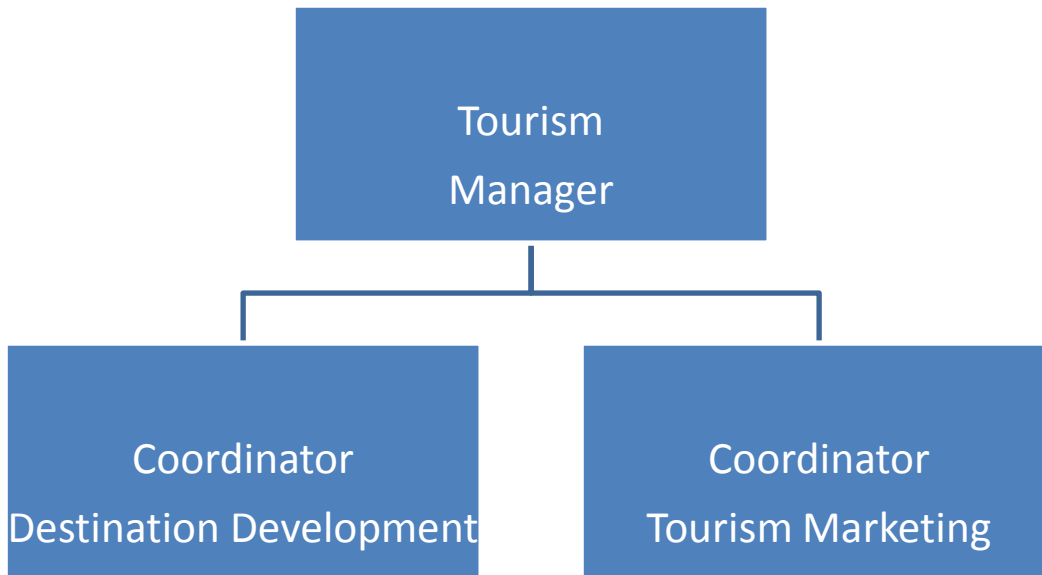
Working with industry to develop packages to increase length of stay, expands tourism spending throughout the county and also attract group tours. The recent implementation of **Northumberland's Online Reservation/Booking System** is an added-value service with the intent to increase visitation and tourism spending. Now tourism operators have an e-commerce platform and can compete with larger destinations which have this in place.

## **2. Recent Initiatives**

- **Online Tourism Business Directory** – Live, up-to-date searchable online directory of all tourism businesses on [www.NorthumberlandTourism.com](http://www.NorthumberlandTourism.com). Business, area municipalities, chamber of commerce and County staff can easily make updates in real time. Integration of additional tools such as maps, amenities and social media marketing enhance the online presence for all businesses. It is a free added-value service maintained by Northumberland Tourism.
- **Hwy 401 and County Road Gateway Signage** – Enhancement of county-wide promotional and branding efforts and to establish a recognized geographic boundary through gateway signage in both a west (Brighton) and east (Port Hope) 401 direction and signage at entry points into the Northumberland on major county roads.
- **Premier-ranked Tourist Destination Project** – Provincial tourism assessment process used to evaluate Northumberland through its tourism product offerings, performance and futurity as well as identify weaknesses and gaps which should be addressed and identify strengths and opportunities that might be used to create and sustainable competitive advantage. Final report and recommendations can be found at [www.northumberlandcounty.ca](http://www.northumberlandcounty.ca) Recommendations were applied by industry to develop Northumberland Destination Development 3 –year Action Plan.
- **Regional Tourism Organization** – Region 8 (refer to page 4)
- **Northumberland Online Reservation/Booking Pilot Project** – Introduce technology that supports the promotion and booking of tourism experience and offer new revenue generating solutions for small business throughout Northumberland.
- **2010-2013 Northumberland Destination Development Action Plan** – Represents industry developed destination action plan targeting opportunities that will provide long-term economic growth.

- **Rice Lake Tourism Renewal Initiative** – The goal of this current initiative is to leverage the Rice Lake angling legacy and reputation and reposition the offering to appeal to new markets. Enhance the offering to include new land-based outdoor experiences, cultural experiences. Stakeholder involvement makes this initiative a growing success.
- **Cycle Tourism and Welcome Cyclists Network Program** – Develop cycle tourism opportunities to increase visitation and tourism expenditures e.g. Cycling master plan, bike train, collaborative marketing with cycling organizations.

### 3. Tourism Staff



### 4. Tourism Overview

Tourism is one of the largest industries with over 700 tourism related businesses within Northumberland County. It employs a considerable work force and provides essential training in a number of fields for the youth portion of our population. It plays an important role in the contribution to Northumberland’s bottom line. In 2008, tourism revenues contributed over \$73 million to Northumberland’s economy.

The industry also supports other businesses by utilizing their services eg. non-tourism related retailers & wholesalers, financial & legal institutions, local newspapers, web and other non-tourism related services etc.

Tourism is integral to economic development. It attracts investment and promotes growth. In many communities throughout Northumberland, tourism has played a role in enhancing services to local residents.

## 5. Partnerships

Strengthening and expanding existing partnerships with business operators, area municipalities, tourism-related organizations, regional, provincial and federal partners are opportunities we champion to leverage expertise and resources. The Northumberland Destination Development Committee, the Rice Lake Tourism Renewal Working Group and Regional Tourism Organization 8 represent three very important partnerships which will advance tourism development and growth opportunities for Northumberland County.

### **Northumberland Destination Development Committee**

Industry-led volunteer committee charged with developing the 3-year Northumberland Destination Development Strategy (as based on the 2009 Premier-ranked Tourist Destination Project recommendations) and 2011 Action Plan. Working with the tourism department, they champion the “better together” cooperation and participation of tourism industry in the implementation of development action plan.

### **Rice Lake Tourism Renewal Working Group**

In January 2010 Northumberland Tourism in partnership with Peterborough & Kawartha Tourism facilitated a Rice Lake tourism renewal strategy process with the intent of capitalizing on the significant tourism assets of Rice Lake to create new tourism growth opportunities for the businesses located on and around the lake. Through a series of facilitated stakeholder sessions, the Rice Lake Tourism Renewal Strategy was developed, followed by the establishment of a Rice Lake Tourism Renewal working group. This volunteer group consisting of tourism stakeholder and municipal partners, will develop and oversee tourism development initiatives which will leverage the existing angling asset with other experiences and reposition Rice Lake as a destination which offers outdoor and cultural opportunities.

### **Regional Tourism Organization 8 – RTO8**

Northumberland’s recent collaboration with the newly formed Regional Tourism Organization 8 has created a platform for industry-led, regional strategic planning. One of 13 provincially supported regional organizations; RTO8 includes representation from tourism industry operators and regional economic development and tourism professionals from Northumberland County, City and County of Peterborough and City of Kawartha Lakes. Maximizing the entire region to successfully attract visitors and grow spending, RTO8 will focus these key areas in 2011:

- Leadership and strategic planning
- Strong partnership and collaboration
- Innovation and product development
- Strategic marketing
- Workforce development

## 6. Overall Marketing & Destination Development Strategies

### Marketing

The marketing plan focuses on the core marketing goals and target prospects. Through targeted promotion and media buys according to market and season, our objective is to increase visitation, overnight stays and spending year round. Our target audience represents the current highest potential market: the adult adventurer, the fun families and the retired roamers, more specifically within the geographic area of the Golden Horseshoe/GTA, southern Ontario, eastern Canada, bordering US. The objective is to establish Northumberland County as a year round tourism destination, within close proximity to the visitor's origin, and offering a diversity of experiences ranging from spectacular natural environment, outdoor recreation, festivals, arts & entertainment, heritage & culture, shopping to spa & wellness.

New research has identified the 3 core attractors which currently drive visitations to Northumberland County are:

#### 1. Outdoor recreation

Outdoor recreation has played a large part in the make-up of Northumberland's tourism offering for many years. This year-round cluster of diverse activities and outdoor recreation experiences provide visitors with a variety of things to do every season e.g. hiking, cycling, nature viewing, golfing, skiing, swimming, boating.

#### 2. Picturesque towns, rural landscapes and cultural

This is best appreciated by touring through the county. This tourism offering includes visual/performing arts, heritage, shopping and dining experiences e.g. driving tours, live theatre, studio tours, heritage sites, festival & events, shopping and dining.

#### 3. Angling and sport fishing

Because it is surrounded by major waterways, Northumberland County is one of the most diverse fishing hot spots in southern Ontario and has numerous angling opportunities all year-round e.g. 24 sport fishing locations, 4 ice fishing locations, 18 boat launches, 23 marinas .

### Destination Development

In 2009 the County completed its Premier-ranked Tourist Destination project which identified strategies designed to generate increased visitation, tourism revenues and jobs in Northumberland. It revealed that a destination development plan for Northumberland would provide opportunities for tourism growth.

Northumberland Tourism has taken a collaborative approach by establishing an industry-lead Destination Development Committee (DDC) consisting of private and public sector partners to drive the strategic process and implementation. This has resulted in a County Council approved 3-year Destination Development Strategy.

Most recently, the DDC has created and presented the 2011 Destination Development Action Plan which focuses on:

- **Tourism awareness communications plan** – to ensure ongoing county-wide tourism efforts and investments receive support from local community as well as foster community pride and ambassadorship
- **County-wide tourism ambassador program** - Improve visitor service and experience. Increase visitation. Establish a certified Northumberland customer service training program for front-line staff and businesses to foster a culture of hospitality excellence.
- **Creation of a Northumberland Conference and Visitor’s Bureau** - Develop a Meetings & Conventions strategy that identifies opportunities to increase the Meetings & Conference market in Northumberland. Increase the average spend in our region through the corporate market; increase the number of groups booking in the region; and increase opportunities for the attraction of groups during needed periods i.e. mid-week, spring, fall and winter season.
- **Host a sports tourism workshop** - Engage local sports organizations to attract regional sports events and work collaboratively with municipalities and local businesses to increase economic opportunities for community
- **County-wide cultural mapping and planning initiative** - Create an economic development plan focused on cultural assets that reinforce Northumberland’s unique cultural identity. Identify cultural assets having potential for growth, development and clustering to increase their appeal and marketing value. Support collaboration, sharing and tourism development decision making throughout the County. Support destination development and marketing decisions at the County level.

## 7. Opportunities

The growth of Northumberland’s tourism industry requires investment and development in the industry’s product, infrastructure and people.

- A “better together” Northumberland culture needs to be adopted. Cross-municipal cooperation and “permeable” tourism boundaries will support and better serve Northumberland’s industry.
- It will be important for the tourism sector to understand the opportunities and shifts in travel needs as well as interests, and adjust their product or service and marketing accordingly to avoid the potential risk of fewer buyers for our services.
- In order to sustain competitiveness, Northumberland’s tourism sector needs to adopt and integrate digital technology for marketing and e-commerce. Small businesses have limited knowledge of the various web based marketing tactics and limited human resources to implement them.
- Inconsistency in standards and customer service level. Culture of hospitality excellence needs to be adopted by entire industry to improve quality and value.

- To better serve, develop and market the destination, Northumberland needs to develop a strategy to grow tourism financial and human resources.

## 8. Strategic Issues

There are several strategic issues to be addressed:

- Ensure the long term sustainability of county-wide tourism marketing and destination development efforts; they contribute to Northumberland's economic growth. It will be important to communicate this message to all stakeholders e.g. businesses, elected officials and residents.
- Decline in leisure travel and changing tastes. The tourism sector needs to continually adjust and enhance its tourism products and services to be competitive and successful in increasing tourism revenues. To support industry, workshops which offer new opportunities in marketing as well as product and professional development initiatives need to be identified and available for tourism operators.
- The focus in the industry tends to be on marketing what already exists, with less emphasis on research-based development of new products. It will be important to refurbish the current tourism products.
- Majority of tourism operators in Northumberland are small and medium sized (between one to four employees). The business climate is not conducive to growth, as evidence by very low rates of investment, cost pressures on business operators (e.g. insurance, utilities, property taxes), cost pressures on their customers (e.g. fuel prices) and other barriers to a strong market (e.g. regulatory, access to capital).
- In the next quarter-century, the proportion of adult Ontarians born outside of Canada is projected to increase substantially. Research indicates the recent immigrants have a lower rate of travel in Ontario. Therefore social-demographic characteristics, travel needs and interest, travel characteristics of visitors to Northumberland County shall change too. It will be important for municipal leaders and business operators to understand the shifts and opportunities this represents.
- In order to develop Northumberland's tourism industry into a Premier-ranked tourist destination, the industry, both private and public sector, needs to work together to expand partnerships, leverage funding resources and maximize overall impact of marketing and destination development efforts.
- Northumberland can distinguish itself from other destinations by enhancing its visitor experience through hospitality excellence. A tourism ambassador program developed and adopted by businesses will inspire a culture of hospitality throughout Northumberland and improve quality and value of the visitor experience.