

King Township

Three Year Community Tourism Plan

April 2014



Prepared by Brain Trust Marketing and Communications



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Introduction

In August 2013, Central Counties Tourism presented its communities with the opportunity to complete a Community Tourism Planning Guide. King Township seized this opportunity to utilize this method of tourism planning that has been successfully utilized in other Canadian communities since its development by Tourism Saskatchewan in 2012.

Central Counties Tourism believed that a grass roots development process would be a catalyst for community and business leaders who are interested in exploring opportunities available to their communities through tourism.

Community leadership and engagement was critical to the success of the plan. A Tourism Task Force consisting of a cross section of tourism industry stakeholders came together for a series of 5 3-hour sessions to create this grass roots plan. The Community Tourism Planning Guide was facilitated by Carolyn O'Donnell of Brain Trust Marketing and Communications. Brain Trust's role was to facilitate the discussions necessary to complete the Tourism Planning Guide and develop a three year action plan created by and endorsed by the Tourism Task Force.

Members of the Tourism Task Force:

- Jon Bell, King Township & Soupfest
- Katrina Bin, Seneca College Residence & Conference Centre
- Jono Boyson, Spray Lake
- Avia Eek, Councillor, King Township & Soupfest
- Patty Fleetwood, King Chamber of Commerce, Feast of Fields
- Kathleen Fry, King Museum
- Lorraine Mennen, Pathways to Perennials Botanical Gardens & Outdoor Café
- Brian and Wilma Millage, Oak Ridges Moraine Trail Association
- Susanne Prince, Schomberg Village Association & Lions Club
- Kirsten Ragoza, Kingbridge Conference Centre
- Ramon Regozo, 20 Bells Lake B&B
- Lynda Rogers, Arts Society King
- Jamie Smyth, King Township
- Deborah Weiss, Waterstone Estate & Farms

This Community Tourism Planning Guide has been prepared to help King Township's community leaders direct and focus tourism planning efforts at the community level.

Why Tourism?

The Current Tourism Landscape

The Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC) describes the tourism industry as a dynamic and far-reaching sector whose economic impact helps to employ Canadians across the country. Globally, it is one of the world's most remarkable growth industries, with the vast majority of destinations showing increased arrivals and tourism spending each year.

According to TIAC, in 2011, Canada's tourism industry provided a vital stimulus to Canada's commercial growth through the "visitor economy".¹ Among the benefits provided by the sector are:

- \$78.8 billion in total economic activity.
- 603,400 direct tourism jobs, as well as a total of 1.6 million jobs supported by tourism spending nationally – 9.2% of all jobs in Canada.
- More than \$15.4 billion in export revenue – i.e., money spent in Canada by international travellers.
- Tourism represents more of Canada's GDP than agriculture, forestry and fisheries combined

In 2009, with the release of The Ontario Ministry of Tourism's Competitiveness Study thirteen official Regional Tourism Organizations (RTOs) were formed. Region Tourism Organization 6 (RTO6) is made up of three sub-regional Destination Management Organizations (DMOs): The Hills of Headwaters Tourism Association, York Region and Durham Tourism. King Township is one of 9 municipalities in York Region. The Organization's branded name is Central Counties Tourism.

As a follow up to the 2009 report, Ontario's Tourism Investment Strategy and Implementation report was released in 2011. In this document the province set the goal to double tourism receipts by the year 2020 through increased visitations and visitor spending.² This overall success hinges on attracting more visitors by offering new and refreshed tourism product. The province also agreed to continue to support the work of the RTOs to achieve this. The end goal is to strengthen the tourism sector, create jobs and improve the quality of life for Ontarians.

¹ <http://tiac.travel/About.html>

² Ontario's Investment Strategy and Implementation Plan, November 2011, Miller Dickenson Blais

Central Counties' Role

- In collaboration with industry Central Counties aims to help the local tourism industry and the Central Counties region to realize its tourism potential.
- Devises and delivers targeted marketing programs and works in close co-operation with industry partners as well as with the meetings & events trade, media, and online marketers to encourage consumers to discover and visit the Central Counties.
- Influence product development by sharing insights on global tourism trends, the changing needs of consumers, and the status of local tourism with other tourism agencies and our industry partners.

Using a pan-regional approach, Central Counties focuses on four distinct tourism pillars – strategic marketing, product development, workforce development, and investment attraction.

Central Counties' 2014/15 overall budget is \$2,773,000.³ Allocated funds to address the 4 distinct tourism pillars are as follows:

Strategic Marketing: \$1,395,450
Product Development: \$263,540
Workforce Development: \$20,000
Investment Attraction: \$4,000

Local Tourism Offices

Central Counties consists of 3 regions; York Region, Durham Region, and The Hills of Headwaters. These offices are the lead agencies for local tourism within each of the three sub-regions of the Central Counties and guide and promote tourism as a leading indigenous component of the local economy. Each works in partnership with stakeholders to market and develop their respective sub-regions within the Central Counties to improve the visitor experience. They work in partnership with tourism interests to support the industry in its efforts to be more competitive and more profitable and to help individual enterprises to enhance their performance. Each tourism office also provides strategic and practical support to develop and sustain the Central Counties region as a high quality and competitive tourism destination.

York Region's Current Role

York has facilitated the transition to Central Counties to take on the role of the larger regional tourism destination as stated in their Economic Development Action Plan.

YorkScene is a regional marketing function and provides King with a limited presence by listing festivals and events, attractions and accommodations. YorkScene.com is the property

³ Central Counties Tourism, Business and Operational Plan, April 1, 2014 – March 31, 2015

of the York Region Arts Council and a collaborative initiative between the York Region Arts Council, the Regional Municipality of York, Economic Strategy Branch, and York Region Media Group, a division of Metroland Media Group. The site's event calendar and reservation system has been provided by Central Counties Tourism.

This resource does not currently provide a visitor to King with a sense of its communities or an easy to navigate listing of things to do, dining or accommodations.

Developing a Community Tourism Plan for King

Creating a tourism plan ensures that as a community, King Township can optimize the benefits available from tourism activities. This includes what is already happening and what could be happening. Figure 1 shows the need for local tourism coordination to develop the grass roots tourism experiences that can then be positioned to leverage programming and marketing that takes place on a regional (Central Counties Tourism), provincial and national level.

Figure 1: The Tourism Industry in Ontario



The Community Tourism Plan achieves the following at the grass roots:

- Identifies and ranks tourism assets & markets
- Identifies the tourism industry stakeholders and agencies involved in tourism
- Assigns roles and responsibilities to avoid duplications and gaps
- Acts as a framework for business, local government and other key organizations

King’s Tourism Market

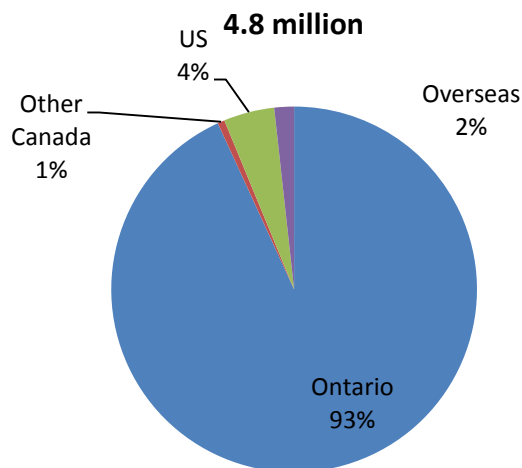
Market profiles can be segmented in a variety of ways. In order to understand King’s markets it was important to consider socio-demographics (age, education, income, place of residence), behaviours (where they stay and what they do) and psychographics (what they value and what motivates them to travel).

What the Research Tells Us

Socio-Demographics

There were 11.4 million visitors to Central Counties in 2011 (8% of provincial visitation); 4.8 million of these visitors came to York Region in 2011 (Figure 2) and the majority of these came from within a 2 hour drive (Figures 3 and 4).⁴ The figures to follow in this section have been extracted from the Ontario Ministry of Tourism’s Regional Tourism Profiles for RTO6 and Ontario for 2011.

Figure 2: Visitation to York Region



Municipality	Visits in 2011
Durham Regional Municipality	5,101,458
York Regional Municipality	4,841,938
Peel Regional Municipality	397,714
Dufferin County	1,066,390

⁴ Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Regional Tourism Profiles, RTO6, Ontario, 2011

Figure 3: Visitor Origins Map (numbers showed in millions of visitors)

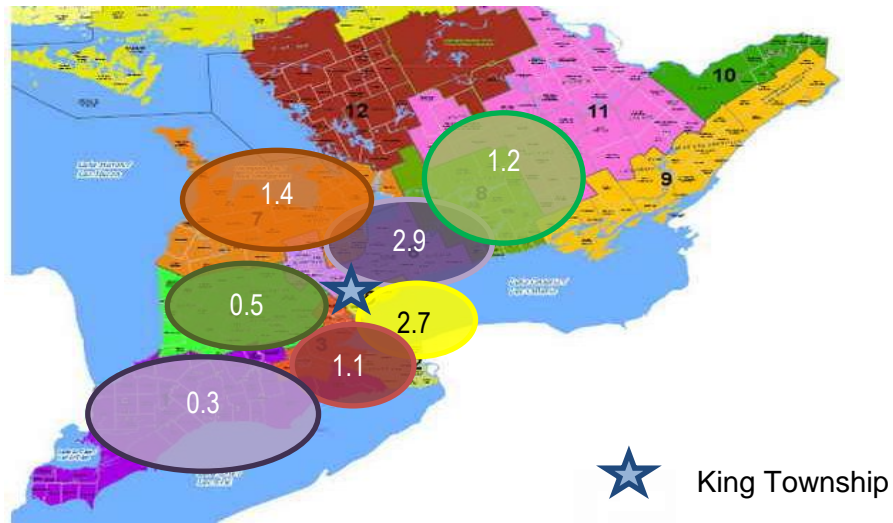
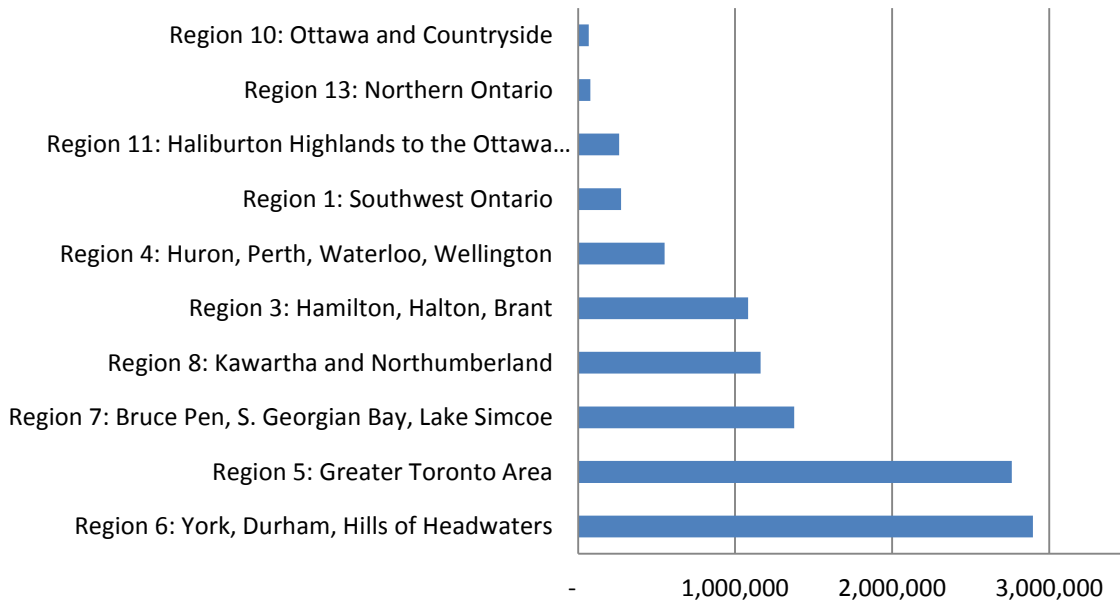


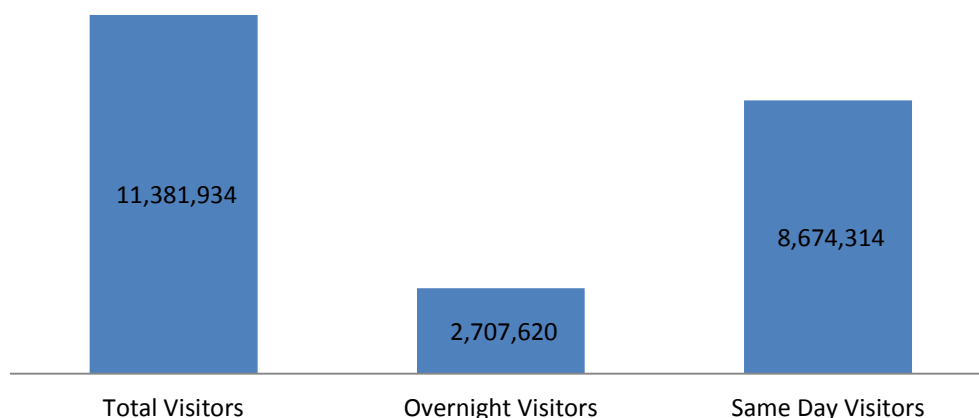
Figure 4: Visitor Origins Chart

**Top Visitor Origins in Ontario
(95% of total visitor market)**



Central Counties is like most other Ontario destinations in that the majority (76%) of visitors are those that come for the day. Figure 5 shows the breakdown of visitor by overnight and same day.

Figure 5: Length of Stay



In 2011 visitor spending in Central Counties total \$.8 billion which represented 4% of the total spending for the province (Table 1). Considering that Central Counties is seeing 8% of the provincial visitation this lower share of the spending indicates that visitors are coming but not spending in the same way they do in other regions.

Table 1: Visitor Spending (Billions)

2011	Visitor Spending (\$billions)
Ontario	\$ 20.8
Central Counties	\$ 0.8
Central Counties proportion of Total Ontario	4.0%

Visitors to King tend to be composed of single person (54%) followed by an equal split of 2 person parties (24%) and 3 or more persons (22%) shown in Figure 6. Visitor ages are represented primarily by adults with only 1% of visitors under the age of 15 years (Figure 7).

Figure 6: Party Compositions

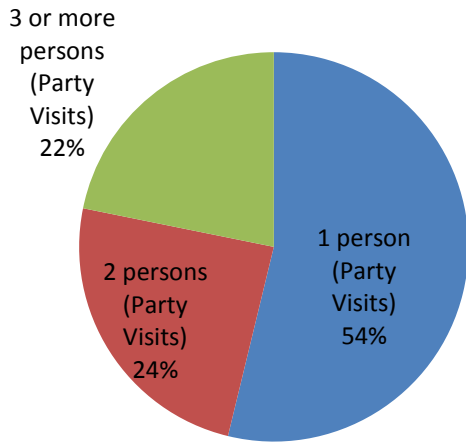
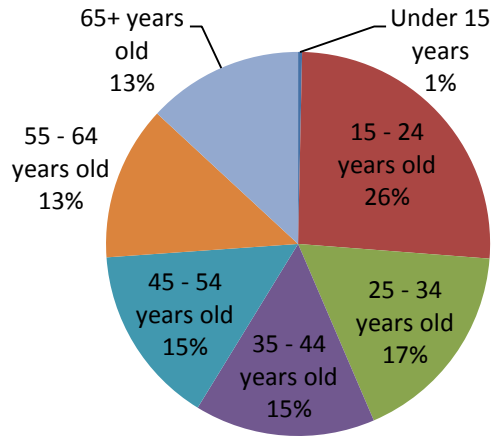
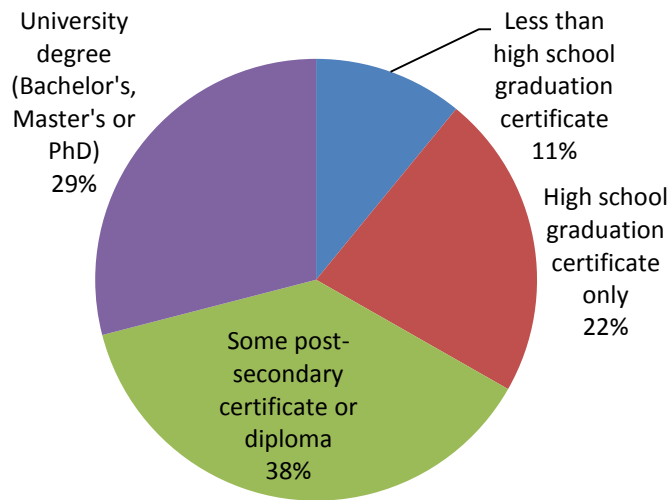


Figure 7: Visitor Ages



Education level of current visitors to Central Counties is represented by a wide variety of levels with post-secondary education (certificates, diplomas and university degrees) accounting for a combined 67% (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Education Levels



Behaviours

Average per person per overnight spending was \$144 compared to a provincial average of \$273 while the same day visit saw spending of \$51 compared to \$83 for the province. One key factors in spending may be attributed to where visitors are staying. Figure 9 shows that of the 7.4 million overnight stays in Central Counties, 5.9 million were in private homes/cottages. This is in keeping with the high number of visitors who come to Central Counties for the main purpose of visiting friends and relatives (Figure 10).

Figure 9: Where Visitors Stayed

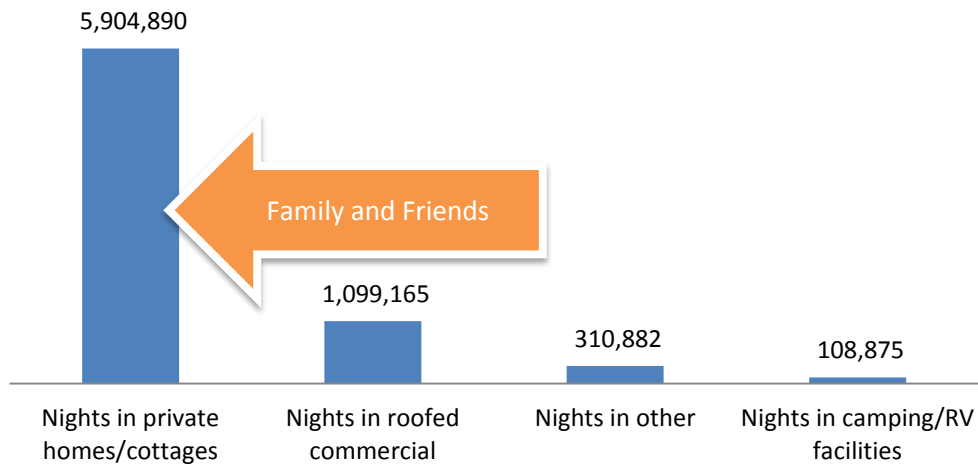
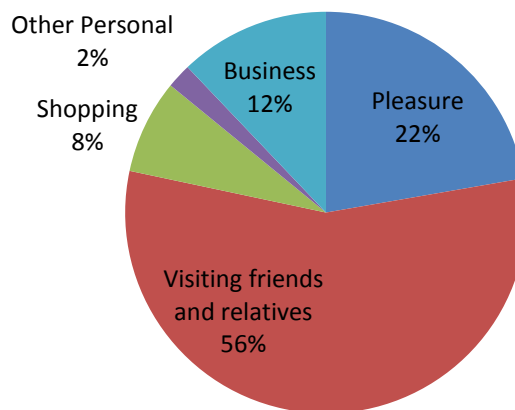
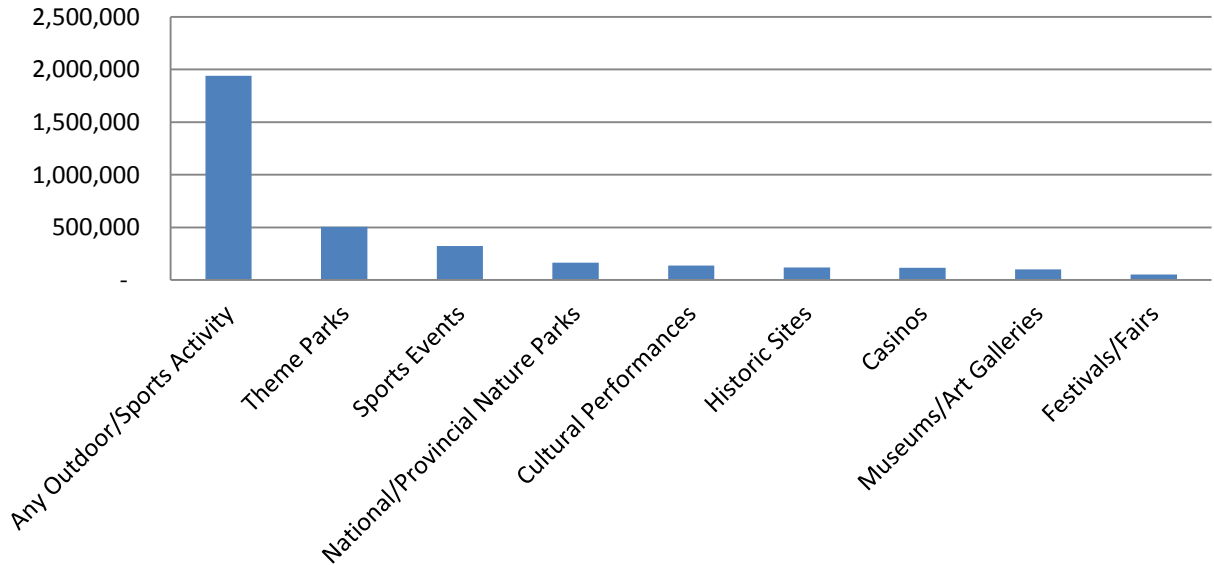


Figure 10: Main Purpose of Trip



Outdoor recreation and sports ranked number one by a wide margin as the top activities that overnight visitors to Central Counties participated in (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Activities of Overnight Guests



Any Outdoor /Sport Activities also includes boating, hunting, fishing, golf and downhill skiing/snowboarding.

Psychographics

The Canadian Tourism Commission's (CTC) role is to promote Canadian Tourism to the global market and in doing so they have invested time and resources into market segmentation. Some of their recent work extends beyond traditional market research to understand why different types of people seek different types of travel experiences. They have presented Canada's tourism industry with a new way of thinking using what they call the Explorer Quotient (EQ). EQ is a market segmentation system based on the science of psychographics which looks deeper at people's social values and views of the world.⁵

The CTC has developed EQ types specific to Canada's primarily geographic markets. Considering the high visitation in King by Ontarians, the Canadian profiles are the ones that would currently relate to King's travellers. Within the Canadian EQ research there are 7 traveller types:

- Free Spirits (12% of Canadians)
- Cultural Explorers (9%)
- Authentic Experiencers (12%)
- Personal History Explorers (13%)
- No-Hassle Travellers (10%)
- Rejuvenators (6%)
- Gentle Explorers (25%)

Each of the above type is identified by particular characteristics stemming from social and travel values, travel motivations and behaviours. In reviewing King's primary tourism assets (to follow in this report) it was determined that King's offerings aligned best with Free Spirits, Cultural Explorers and Authentic Experiencers. Table 2 provides a snapshot of these Canadian travellers.

⁵ Canadian Tourism Commission, EQ Profiles, 2012

Table 2: Traveller Types aligned to King's Tourism Assets

	Free Spirits	Cultural Explorers	Authentic Experiencers
Gender	55% female, 45% male	66% female, 33% male	49% female, 51% male
Education	Higher than average	Average	Higher than average
Income	Higher than average	Average	Average
Age	<p>18-34 49% 35-54 40% 55+ 11%</p>	<p>18-34 28% 35-54 47% 55+ 26%</p>	<p>18-34 18% 35-54 31% 55+ 51%</p>
Appealing Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wildlife viewing - land based animal & bird watching Visiting parks to view wildlife and nature and/or to participate in adventure Dining at restaurants offering local ingredients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attending farmers' markets Dining at restaurants offering local ingredients Visiting parks to visit interpretative centres/museums Wildlife viewing - land based animals & bird watching Visiting parks to view wildlife and nature and/or to participate in adventure experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wildlife viewing - land based animals & bird watching Visiting small towns, villages Visiting parks to view wildlife and surrounding nature and/or to participate in adventure Visiting parks to visit interpretative centers or museums

King's Specific Markets

In a half-day facilitated session, King's Tourism Task Force spent time discussing current visitation to King and identified their own visitor categories:

- Outdoor Enthusiasts (hiking, biking)
- Golfers
- Couple on fall drives
- Couples and families attending weddings
- Couples and groups of women attending cultural or learning events
- Equestrian enthusiasts
- Groups travelling for garden related activities
- Small corporate groups attending workshops that encompassed escape and rejuvenation
- Conferences seeking a remote setting for intensive discussions/learning
- Sports teams
- Families of international students
- Adventure racers
- Genealogy enthusiasts
- Those travelling for education or research
- Naturalists
- Festivals and Events attendees
- Local food enthusiasts (farmers' markets, Holland Marsh, orchards, wineries)

As the group fine-tuned the above list several market clusters emerged and were then aligned with the CTC's EQ types (Table 3). The EQ profiles did not specifically address one of King's current market groups which is business and group travel and therefore this segment was added to the mix to ensure the inclusion of meetings/conventions, corporate retreats, weddings and education/research travel as an important consideration going forward.

Table 3: King's Key Market Clusters

	Business and Group	Free Spirits	Cultural Explorers	Authentic Experiencers
	“Rejuvenation just outside the city”	“Escaping the ordinary”	“Immersion in the culture and setting”	“Authenticity and history”
Valued Activities and Assets	Meetings	Wildlife/Nature	Nature	Wildlife/Nature
	Corporate Retreats	Dining with local ingredients	Architecture, Historical Sites and Museums	Dining with local ingredients
	Weddings	Shopping	Hands-on learning	Architecture, Historical Sites, History, Museums
	Conventions	Performing Arts	Small towns and villages	Small towns and villages
	Education Research	Amusement Parks (nearby)	Interaction with locals	Interaction with locals

King's Tourism Assets

The Tourism Task Force met for another half-day session to identify and rank King's tourism assets. These assets included the 5 components of tourism; attractions, tourism businesses, infrastructure, hospitality and promotion. Working groups explored these and then shared their findings with the larger group where the following observations were made.

Attractions

The attractions component of tourism consists of "things to do" (i.e. parks, trails, museums, festivals, galleries). King does not have any iconic demand generators that attract large attendance or annual visitation like some of its neighbours (Canada's Wonderland in Vaughan, McMichael Gallery in Kleinburg). Instead, its tourism assets are smaller in scale and yet important to the community and its economic impact.

A long list of assets were generated and are included in Appendix A. This list informed the following attractions clusters as the current demand generators for King:

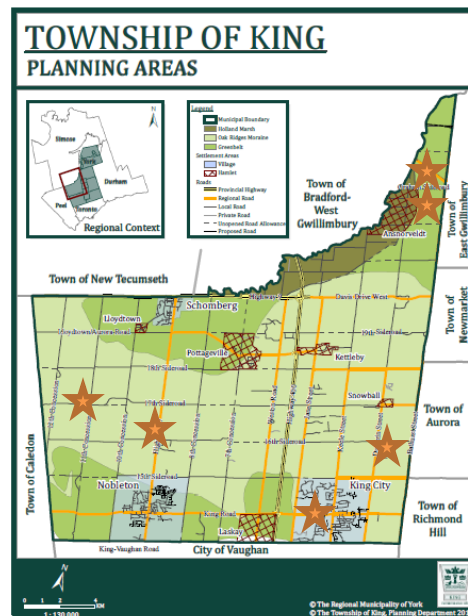
- Outdoor Adventure and Recreation
- Arts, Culture and Heritage
- Small towns, villages and rural landscapes
- Agri-tourism (equestrian, farmer's markets, farm gates, orchards and wineries)
- Festivals and events
- Sports Events
- Golf
- Health and Wellness retreats
- Business, Corporate and wedding travel venues
- Education and research



Tourism Businesses

This important component of tourism looks at the businesses beyond attractions (things to do) to the necessary businesses that support tourism visits (i.e. accommodations, service stations, restaurants, retail).

The accommodation base in King is limited, however it is not operating at capacity indicating that there are options for travellers ranging from Kingbridge's 124 room conference center that caters to group business to smaller motels, bed and breakfasts and college residences that are available in the summer months. Within a 30 minute drive of King, York's urban centers offer a wide range of accommodation options including several branded hotels.



There are a variety of restaurants in the area that are open on a year round basis including small coffee shops, pubs, country-style dining, golf course clubhouses, orchards, and a winery with dining and high end offerings. A published dining guide features these assets.

King's retail options reflect its rural roots with communities offering unique establishments that are located in their town or village core. Retail opportunities are expanded through festival and events that take place in these hubs and offer visitors the chance to buy local products including food grown in the area (i.e. Feast of Fields and Holland Marsh Soupfest as shown below).



Locally produced art is celebrated in 4 key events hosted by Arts Society King. These include Winter Bites, Studio Tour King, Art Festival King, and the Schomberg Street Gallery. Participating artists have the opportunity through these events to showcase and sell their works.

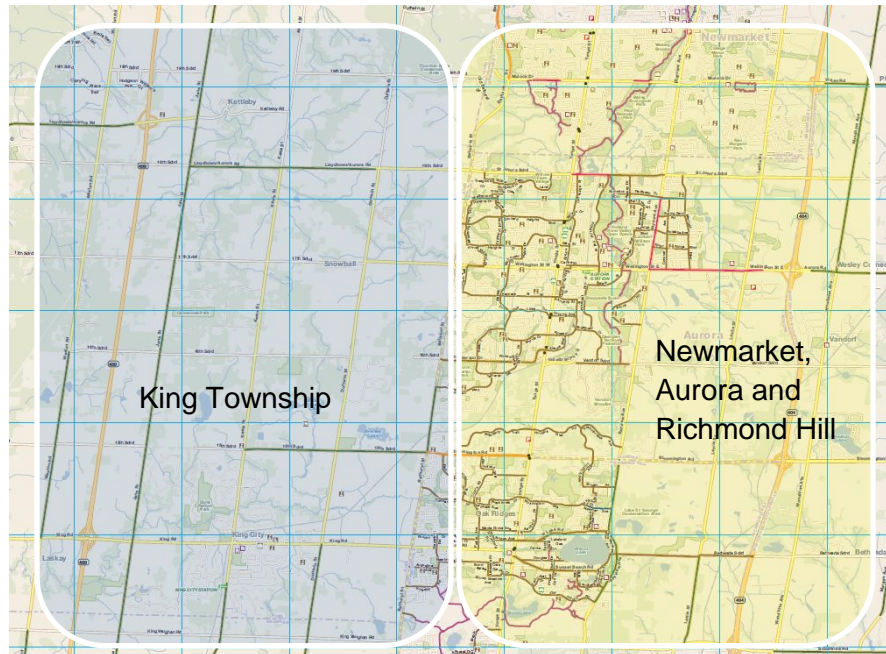


“WINTER BLUE”
 an art exhibit
 Opening January 18th
 At
 King Township Museum

Tourism Infrastructure

This important tourism component looks at some key foundations that are important for travellers when they are in the community (i.e. roads, airports, cell service, signage, amenities). Given King’s proximity to the GTA and the road, rail and air infrastructure, there are multiple ways to travel to and near the area however there is room for improvement. The biggest challenges with the current infrastructure is related to congestion on the 400 series highways as well as Highway 27. Rail service through GOtransit offers connectivity however the schedules are designed for commuter travel and do not currently match the demands of a weekend visitor to King from the GTA. There is also a lack of public transit to and from the train station if visitors desire to explore areas in King beyond King City without their own car.

Road cycling is increasing in popularity. King's roads are not currently designed to serve this market and there is a gap in connectivity to other neighbouring communities who have developed cycle lanes and are promoting cycling. York's cycling map shown below shows the infrastructure located in Newmarket, Aurora and Richmond Hill and the lack of continuation through King.⁶



Off-road biking trail infrastructure exists on the many off-road trails that are accessible to those with mountain bikes, however, these trails are in need of additional access points and parking/staging areas for bikers and hikers. The 275 km long Oak Ridges Moraine trail weaves its way through King as shown below⁷.



⁶ www.yorkregion.ca, cycling map

⁷ www.oakridgestrail.org, trail map

Tourism Hospitality

The fourth component of tourism that the taskforce explored was hospitality. The group took a step back and evaluated King's current ability to be welcoming and offer pleasant experiences. Table 4 is a summary of what was identified.

Table 4: Tourism Hospitality in King

Area of focus	Summary
Customer Service	People are friendly. No formal ambassador training or township wide communication
Way finding	TODS signage is good Regional signage and business signage could improve
Opportunity to engage with locals/learn	Niche opportunities exist for visitors who seek them out. Would not stumble across
Do we do visitor surveys	Some business do this on their own, no collaboration
Are we welcoming?	Town/village signage is welcoming but there is a lack of identity – no apparent effort
How do locals feel about visitors?	Cyclist may be seen as negative Some indifference/lack of awareness Strong VFR shows pride
Visitor Information Centres	none

Tourism Promotion

The final tourism component that was reviewed looked at how King is currently promoting tourism including web activities, advertising, promotional signs, and travel guides. Table 5 is a summary of the task forces assessment.

Table 5: Tourism Promotion in King

Area of focus	Summary
Web	No dedicated web presence. Several agencies doing their own Fragmented
Social Media	No dedicated presence. Several agencies doing their own, Fragmented
Print (Guides and maps)	Where to Eat, Heritage Site Map, York Scene Farm Fresh, Oak Ridges, Arts Society King (June/July), Parks, Recreation and Culture Guide
Travel shows	None
Promotional Signs	Banners, digital marquee signs, event signage
Affiliate Marketing	None, lack of awareness
Marketing Toolkit	Needed for Small and Medium Sized Businesses to provide an understanding of where to focus their marketing resources.
Story tellers	Internally there is Economic King business stories and the Mosaic magazine. There is a need to extend the stories beyond the local market.
Other Ads	York Scene, double-paged ad, township page in local paper

A Summary of the Tourism Asset Concerns

In reviewing the five key tourism components it became evident that overlapping themes were starting to emerge. In an additional half-day session, the task force began to focus on the overall tourism concerns. Table 6 provides a snapshot of these. This became an important tool to move into the next important stage of the project where the task Force would identify goals, objectives and actions.

Table 6: Summary of King's Tourism Concerns

Attractions	Infrastructure	Hospitality	Businesses	Promotion
Visitor's don't know what is here	Traffic congestion (400,404, 27)	Outdated information on websites – no trip planning tools	Lack of business to business partnerships, packaging, and programing	Lack of dedicated resources
Residents don't know what is here	No northbound GO transit	Lack of visitor tools (maps, directories)	No sense of identity/brand	No one owns this
Need linkages (signage and tools to get around)	Trail and road cycling connections are not safe, parking areas are limited	No hospitality or ambassador training	No networking opportunities	No metrics for success

Strategic Tourism Goals

Based on the valuable time invested exploring King's current tourism landscape and performance, the Tourism Task Force supported three overarching Tourism Goals:

1. Establish Tourism Coordination and Leadership in King Township.
2. To increase visitation and grow tourism revenue for the economic benefit of our community
3. To grow the awareness of King Township's tourism assets with both visitors and residents.
4. To provide friendly and hospitable service.

Objectives

In order to achieve the 4 goals a series of objectives were developed. These are presented below in relation to the goal that they will enable. Themes of repetition in the areas of leadership, networking, experience development, key performance indicators, metrics, marketing, local ambassadors, sense of place and way finding emerged.

Goal 1: Establish Tourism Coordination and Leadership in King Township	
Objectives	Seek resources to create a Tourism Coordinator position (LEADERSHIP)
	Establish a terms of reference document to guide the roles and responsibilities of the Tourism Committee. (LEADERSHIP)

Goal 2: Increase Visitation & Grow Tourism Revenue	
Objectives	Establish opportunities for tourism businesses to network and create partnerships, encouraging cross promotions and referrals. (NETWORKING)
	Provide opportunities for key tourism asset clusters to enhance their current tourism offerings through product and experience development(EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT)
	Gather feedback to measure visitor satisfaction (METRICS)
	Find opportunities to leverage the strong community pride that inspires a calendar of events that celebrate King's culture and heritage. (EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT/MARKETING)

Goal 3: To grow the awareness of King Township's tourism assets with both visitors and residents	
Objectives	Build an on-line presence to promote King's communities, unique tourism experiences, attractions, accommodations and calendar of events (MARKETING)
	Utilize locations of high visitor volume to promote the township's tourism assets and businesses (MARKETING)
	Communicate with local residents who play host to a large VFR market to raise their awareness of Kings tourism assets and events. (MARKETING, LOCAL AMBASSADORS)

Goal 4: Provide friendly and hospitable service	
Objectives	Create a King Township tourism ambassador program (LOCAL AMBASSADORS)
	Provide tourism attractions and area businesses with tools that assist visitors i.e. maps and directories (MARKETING)
	Assist visitors with way-finding and also create a sense of place that builds on the community gateway signage and extends throughout the township (SENSE OF PLACE, WAYFINDING)

Action Plan

Immediate (next 6 months) **Mid-term** (6 months – 1 year) **Longer Term** (1 year +)

Theme	Action Item	Who Leads Provider (P) Coordinator (C)	Timing	Resources Required
Leadership	1. Hire a Part time Tourism Coordinator as part of the Economic Development Department	King Township (P)	Early 2015	\$30,000*
	2. Create a Tourism Committee Governance Document	King Township (P)	Spring 2014	Time investment
Experience Development/ Networking**	3. Host Product and Experience Development workshops by experience cluster	Central Counties (P) King Township (C)	Fall 2014	Aligns with Central Counties programming
	4. Identify topics of interest and deliver 2-3 workshops/year to tourism stakeholders (i.e. social media 101, accessing financing to expand your business model)	Central Counties (P) King Township (C) Chamber of Commerce (C)	Winter 2014	Aligns with Central Counties programming
Performance Metrics	5. Track attendance at festivals/sports tourism events	Central Counties (P) King Township (C)	Summer 2014	Request support from Central Counties
	6. Tie in metrics to packages and promotions created through experience development and marketing actions	Central Counties (P) King Township (C)	Winter 2014	None

Theme	Action Item	Who Leads Provider (P) Coordinator (C)	Timing	Resources Required
Marketing and Promotion	7. Establish an online visitor information portal	King Township (P)	Summer 2014 (rfp)	Build on current municipal web infrastructure
	8. Produce a brochure that can be used as a tool for visitors and be distributed to local residents and placed in key target markets and local kiosks	King Township (C) Third Party Media Resource (P)	Early 2015	Source third party to produce guide (local newspaper or magazine)
	9. Produce a map of tourism assets with community involvement (becomes an integral part of website and promotional brochure)	King Township (C) King Township Tourism Committee (C)	Winter 2014	Explore partnership model and advertising to off-set costs
	10. Use social media to engage in conversation with visitors and local ambassadors	King Township (P) in cooperation with ASK, Chamber	Winter 2014	*Tourism Coordinator function
	11. Empower local story tellers and use a blog to push this out	King Township (P) in cooperation with ASK, Chamber	Winter 2014	*Tourism Coordinator function
	12. Identify King's high traffic areas and develop an action plan to place collateral and signage/map in that area featuring the "must visit" attractions. Advocate to leverage areas where permitted use if not currently given.	King Township (P)	Summer 2015	*Tourism Coordinator function
	13. Complete a branding exercise	King Township (P)	Early 2015	Seek funding to support this initiative

Theme	Action Item	Who Leads Provider (P) Coordinator (C)	Timing	Resources Required
Ambassador Program	14. Provide front line hospitality employees with local ambassador training that provides them with a robust understanding of King's tourism assets	King Township (P)	Spring 2015	*Tourism Coordinator function
Wayfinding	15. Expand the current community gateway signage to include way-finding to the area's attractions	King Township (P)	Fall 2014	Possible shared expense between municipality and participating businesses
	16. Continue to support and grow the King Township banner program	King Township (P)	On-going	Program already in place

***Networking is best done through bringing businesses together for an additional purpose i.e. training or product/experience development. Ensure that when programs are offered there is ample time for information sharing and networking. It is amazing what can be learned and shared amongst peers over a coffee or lunch.*

Coordination Required

Although outside of the scope of the community tourism plan, it became evident throughout the process that the lack of a dedicated tourism resource or lead agency would limit the ability for King Township to leverage the actions presented.

King Township needs a dedicated Tourism Coordinator who can be the gatekeeper of the opportunities and facilitate the actions as noted above. The actions presented by the Task Force are straightforward and would provide King's tourism stakeholders and local residents with a very early return on investment.

With an overall budget of over \$2.7 million, Central Counties is a valuable resource for King Township, but only if they are poised to participate. Central Counties offers programs that King has the immediate opportunity to leverage.

The marketing campaign of \$1,395,450 consists of specific objective and performance indicators as shown in Appendix B. All of these will provide an overall benefit to King Township and several align directly with King's action plan.

Central Counties Product Development fund of \$263,540 affords an important opportunity for King Township. This area of focus relies heavily on grass roots engagement of tourism operators. A Tourism Coordinator in King would ensure that its owner/operators have the opportunity to take part in developing their tourism products and experiences to increase visitation, spending and yield to their economic benefit. Appendix C identifies these objectives.

The Tourism Coordinator would be best aligned with the Economic Development department at King Township. This position would be further guided with input from an ongoing Tourism Advisory Working Committee who would represent a cross section of King's tourism businesses and agencies.

Justification

1. **Tourism Coordination pays for itself.**

One overnight guest to Ontario spends \$273. King's overnight visitor spending of \$144 is well below this. Same day visitors to King spend \$43 while the provincial average is \$51. Simply providing information to current visitors about what to see and do in King would encourage additional spending for both overnight and same day visitors. Even a 20% increase in spending (adding on a lunch, round of golf, visit to a local retailer or farmer's market) has a powerful economic impact.

King's population of almost 20,000 residents is approximately 2% of York Region. Using the logic that the tendency for visiting friends and relatives (VFR) to King is consistent with the region it is estimated that King sees approximately 17,000 VFR visits annually. (Visits to York in 2012 was 1.5 million, 56% estimated to be VFR = 832,000 visitors. King's 2% share would be 17,000).

If each of these 17,000 visitors spent an additional 15% while in King the average same day spending alone would grow to \$50 instead of \$43. In one year this could increase same day spending from \$730,000 to \$850,000 resulting in \$119,000 additional dollars being spent in the community. The tourism actions identified in this plan will directly support and encourage this type of incremental growth. The rationale can be made that simply providing the basic tools and information would pay for the investment in tourism coordination (Coordinator position, website, visitors guide), and that is just the start.

2. Exploring King's future tourism potential can have a significant economic impact.

Additional product development and marketing initiatives can be explored through Central Counties and provide King with the expanded opportunity to develop new things to see and do, gain exposure to new markets and be part of packaging, sports tourism initiatives and group travel that has the potential to increase spending on the area exponentially. One major event that attracts 20,000 people even for a same day visit could see an additional spend of \$1 million in the area (\$50 spent per person). As an example, Clarington's Boots and Hearts Festival attracts 30,000 visitors over the course of a weekend.

3. The investment made in tourism coordination benefits residents.

The action plan identifies tools (website, map and visitor guide) that are resources that are also valuable to King's residents. King is a collection of communities who are proud of their local offerings and their special events. Creating a website and printed collateral that pulls all of these assets together would be a valued tool. Tourism events and promotion also create a pride of place which residents benefit from. Often new residents to communities first visited as a tourist. The ability to make a great first impression has benefits to attracting both new residents and businesses to King.

Appendix A: King's Tourism Assets

ANSNORVELDT

Holland Marsh

Canal St. Farmers market

WaterStone Estate & Farms

Holland Marsh Winery

Cardinal/Red Crest Golf

Cardinal/Red Crest Event venue

Spray Lake

Marsh Farm Tours

Muck Crops Research Station

Holland Marsh Soup Fest

Headwaters Horse Country Stable Tour

Albert's marina

Bradford Inn

Comfort Inn

KETTLEBY

Kettleby Valley Rock Climbing Summer camp

Kettleby Canada Day

Kettleby Fall Fair

Christmas in Kettleby

Kettleby Bakery

LLOYDTOWN

1837 re-enactment

Statue of Lloydtown Rebellion

POTTAGEVILLE

Pathways to Perennials & Blossom Cafe

Carrying Place Golf

Carrying Place Event Venue

Agri-Farm Tour

Oak Ridges Moraine Trails

Round the Bend School Tours

Round the Bend market

Round the Bend Pumpkin event

SNOWBALL

King Valley Golf

King's Riding Golf

Eaton Hall

Mary Lake Monastery

Seneca College Dragon Boat Races

Seneca College Conference Centre

Adventure Summer Camp

Black Forest Garden Centre

Thornton Bales Conservation Area

King City festival

Christmas in King City

LASKAY

Raspberry Social

NOBLETON

Humber Trails Conservation area

Restaurants

Victoria Day Event

SCHOMBERG

Swimming Pool

Main Street Shopping

King brewery

Main Street Restaurants

Cold Creek Conservation Area

Artisans

A Main Street Christmas

20 Bells Lake Bed & Breakfast

Spring Agricultural Fair

Fall Street Art Show

ACROSS THE TWP

KING CITY

Parks

SHIFT installation

Trails

Restaurants

Roads for cyclists

Museum

Carrying Place Trail

Library and Archives (geneology)

Arts Society King

OUTLYING AREAS

Kingbridge Centre

MAPLE/VAUGHAN

Pine Farms Orchard and Cafe

Canada's Wonderland

Country Apple orchard and cafe

Restaurants

Summer Farmers market

Theatres

Centennial park mountain bike trails

Hotels/Accommodations

RICHMOND HILL

Performing Arts

Restaurants

Shopping

NEWMARKET

Upper Canada Mall

Shopping

Restaurants

Theatre

KLEINBURG

Binder Twine Festival

Restaurants

Shopping

Artisans

Art Gallery

Dr. House events

McMichael Gallery

Kortright Centre

Appendix B: Central Counties Marketing 2014/15

	Objective	Key Performance Indicator
Brand Campaign	To increase visitation to our website to build brand awareness;	60,000 unique visitors to our homepage during year-long campaign
	Improve visitor experience on our website by improving design and adding compelling video content that reinforces the brand experiences	1.5 minute average website visit duration during year-long campaign
	To increase brand awareness with US markets	200 views of each web video during year-long campaign
	To increase brand awareness with VRF/resident markets	Complete production of Travelscope episode in Q2
	To increase brand awareness with LGBT markets	500 new monthly e-newsletter subscribers (not including those collected at the Golf Show) during year-long campaign
		Publish monthly e-newsletter (12 editions)
		10,000 new Facebook likes
		500 new twitter followers
Golf Campaign	To promote and sell diverse golf experiences in Central Counties	Create 3 new golf packages available to book on our website through Meridian; Sell minimum of 10 golf packages during campaign
	Lead with Central Counties' top golf clubs	Partner with minimum of 30 clubs to promote 2015 tour card program at Toronto Golf & Travel Show
		Increase e-newsletter mailing list by 1000 new subscribers (recruited at Toronto Golf Show 2015)
		Publish 5 monthly golf e-newsletters (May – Sept)
		Host one media trip showcasing the golf experience; 5 articles published throughout the season in golf media

	Objective	Key Performance Indicator
		<p>Create tour-card program with minimum of 20 participating clubs: 300 tour card players complete program by end of season (10 rounds played by each)</p> <p>20,000 unique visitors to golf landing page</p> <p>Add minimum of 30 new high quality golf images to the image bank</p>
Outdoors Campaign	To promote and sell soft outdoor adventure experiences in Central Counties	<p>Create 3 new outdoor experience packages available to book on our website through Meridian; Sell minimum of 10 outdoor experience packages during campaign</p> <p>20,000 unique visitors to the outdoor recreation landing page during campaign</p> <p>500 engagements (contest entries) at Discover Ontario event</p> <p>Add minimum of 30 new outdoor adventure images to the image bank</p> <p>Publish minimum of 15 guest blog posts featuring outdoor recreation content</p>
Culinary Campaign	To promote and sell culinary experiences in Central Counties	<p>Create 3 new culinary experience packages available to book on our website through Meridian; Sell minimum of 10 packages during campaign</p> <p>Create minimum of 5 culinary itineraries to showcase seasonal experiences</p> <p>Host one media trip showcasing the culinary experience; 5 articles published</p> <p>20,000 unique visitors to the culinary landing page during campaign</p> <p>Add minimum of 30 new culinary images to the image bank</p> <p>Publish minimum of 15 guest blog posts featuring culinary content</p>

	Objective	Key Performance Indicator
		500 consumer engagements (contest entries) at Food & Wine Show
		10% increase in Culinary Facebook Contest entries
Arts, Culture & Festivals Campaign	To promote and sell arts, culture and festival experiences in Central Counties	Create 3 new arts/culture/festival experience packages available to book on our website through Meridian; Sell minimum of 10 packages during campaign
		10,000 unique visitors to the arts/culture landing page during campaign
		Publish minimum of 5 guest blog posts featuring arts/culture/festival content
Summer Family Fun Campaign	To promote and sell the family attractions experiences in Central Counties	Create 3 new family attraction experience packages available to book on our website through Meridian; Sell minimum of 5 packages during campaign
		10% increase in number of operators participating in program
		5,000 unique visitors to the Kid's Road Trip landing page during campaign
		Publish minimum of 5 guest blog posts featuring family attraction content during campaign
Pan Am Games Campaign	To extend the stay/spend of visitors who are already coming for the Pan / Parapan AM Games by promoting the top visitor experiences and itineraries available before, during and after the Games	5,000 unique visitors to landing page during campaign
		Create minimum of 3 suggested itineraries and/or packages available before, during and after the Games for each DMO (9 in total)
		Launch webpage on July 10, 2014 (one year before games officially open)
Meetings, Conventions	Build strategic relationships and work with regional partners to identify and pursue high-impact meetings and events	Attend a minimum of 6 tradeshow geared towards MC&IT

	Objective	Key Performance Indicator
	Continue to build awareness of the three distinct regions to the MC&IT markets	Drive 500 new views to the MC&IT microsite on CentralCounties.ca
		Complete one new lure video
		Create a CCT specific MC&IT insert/brochure
		Create ad and advertise in Ignite (print & ad), CVENT (web), Impact (print) and PIC
		Generate 5 new leads and book 1 new conferences for region
		Translate microsite/collateral to French and Spanish
Sports Tourism	Utilize opportunities identified through the Sports Tourism Strategy to target new tournaments and expand on existing tournament	Attend 2 shows geared towards Sports Tourism
		Promote and drive 200 new views to Sports Microsite
		Create new Digital/New Media (video) lure piece for Sports Tourism
		Create new collateral that is Sports specific (in partnership with regional partners)
		Organize a Fam Trip/Relationship Building Day with Ontario Sports Organization
		Follow up & book 2 new tournaments/events into CCT
Travel Trade	Clearly identify each regions key tourism drivers and communicate them to receptive and international tour operators	Attend 4 tradeshows that are Tour & Travel Specific
	Understand the travel motivators of high-yield travel trade tourist and match with Central Counties offerings	Promote and drive 75 new views to Tour & Travel Microsite
		Create new Digital/New Media (video) lure piece for Travel Trade Tourism

	Objective	Key Performance Indicator
		Create new collateral that is Travel trade specific (in partnership with regional partners)
		Identify and work with receptive tour operators to include CCT attractions in product offering (sign up with 3 tour operators)
		Translate microsite/collateral to French and Spanish

Appendix C: Central Counties Product Development 2014/15

	Objective	Key Performance Indicator
Field Consultants	Be the daily liaison between operators and Central Counties	Minimum 30% average increase in stakeholder satisfaction with Central Counties over the 2013 survey results
	"Dotted-Line" reporting with DMO's to further the alignment of priorities and to minimize operator confusion regarding the roles of DMO's and Central Counties	Delivery of all experiences and itineraries as outlined in the Marketing Schedule C's (includes Meridian packages)
	Develop the experiences, packages and itineraries of the Marketing Plan (minimum 29)	Utilization of a minimum of 50% of experiences and itineraries by our DMO partners
	Develop robust operators listings on Central Counties website (which will also populate DMO website)	300 New Operators Profile on centralcounties.ca
	Utilize Meridian to its full potential to drive trackable landing page visitors and revenues	Increase # visitors to Meridian landing page by 20%
Enhance Existing Experiences	Review and modify current products and experiences offered through Central Counties to better fit the 2014-2015 campaigns and reflect increased offerings of our operators	Minimum of twelve operators enhancing current experience components and minimum of three new operators adding to current experiences
	Engage existing operators and attract new operators to assist with the refinement and enhancement of current products and experiences	Add new and/or enhanced components to a minimum of four 2013-2014 product/experience packages and bring to market during the 2014-2015 campaigns
		Addition of a minimum of 20 new partners for the culinary program during 2014-2015 fiscal
New Product Development	Build consensus with DMO's to determine which new area to focus product development efforts	Participation of all three DMO's in the new product development project
	Deliver a new market-ready product/experience for launch in the 2015-2016 season	Delivery of the implementation plan for the new product/experience by Feb 28 2015