

DESTINATION WHITBY

**Tourism Strategy
2022 - 2025**



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that the Town of Whitby is situated on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation of the Mississauga Nation and signatories of the Williams Treaties. May we respectfully share in the responsibility of the stewardship and protection of these ancestral lands, and may we continue towards truth and reconciliation as we move forward as friends and allies.



Family in Downtown Whitby

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Tourism Strategy was developed in partnership between Whitby staff and a Steering Committee composed of diverse tourism stakeholders and residents from across Whitby.

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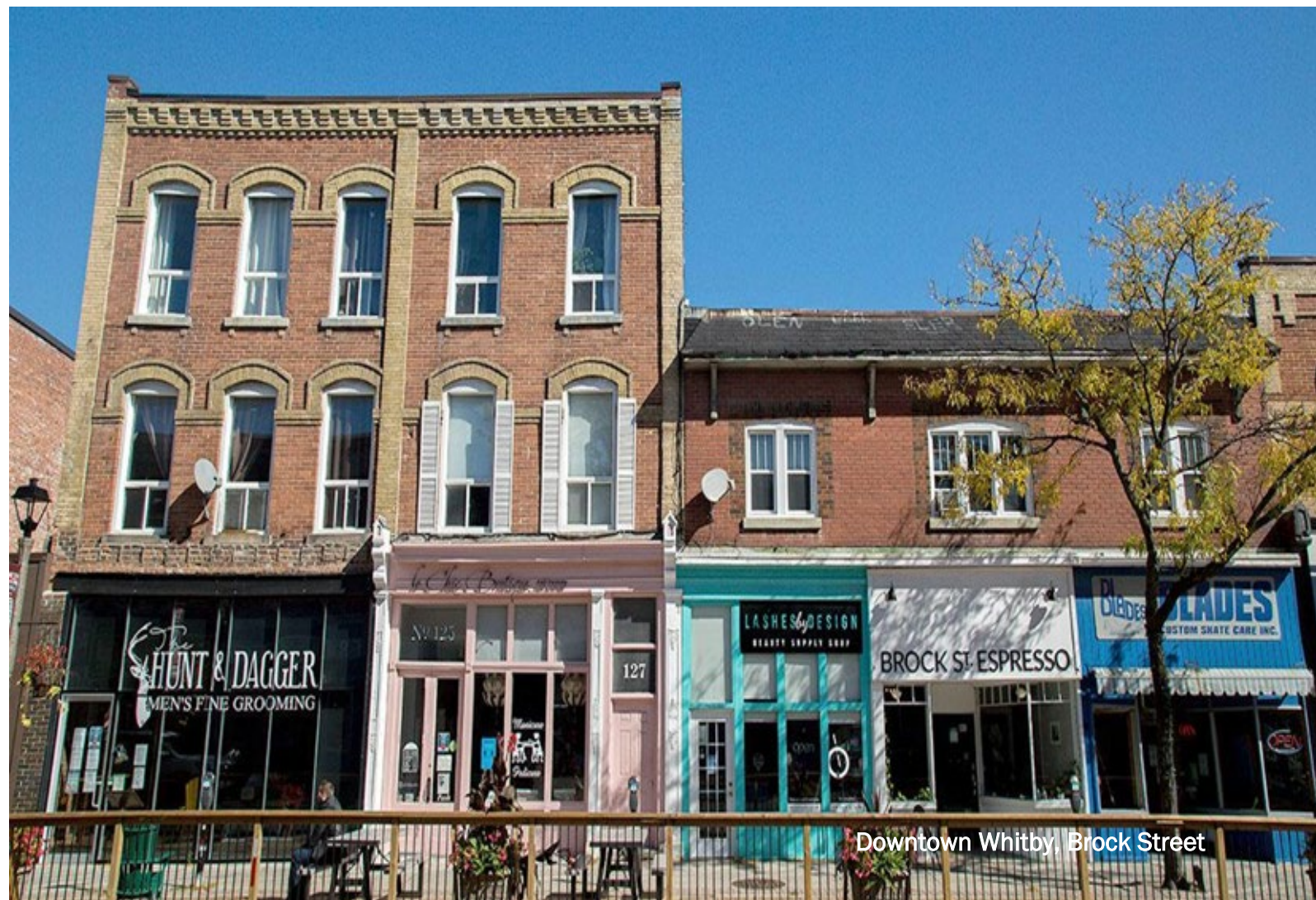
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Centennial Building



Downtown Whitby, Brock Street



A stroll on the Whitby Pier

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Whitby is a fast-growing, vibrant municipality which offers a small-town atmosphere with the amenities of a large urban centre. The Town is known for its built and natural heritage, including the waterfront, parks, trails and greenspaces, two historic downtowns, and productive agricultural areas. Whitby currently has a variety of tourism assets including places like Station Gallery, Port Whitby Marina, the largest entertainment centrum east of Toronto, Abilities Centre, Iroquois Park Sports Centre, numerous award-winning events, golf courses, and restaurants, and soon-to-open wellness attraction, Thermea Spa Village.

As one of the fastest-growing municipalities in Ontario, the Town of Whitby is looking at strategies and plans to help manage the growth pressures and maintain the high quality of life that makes Whitby attractive to residents and visitors. A thriving tourism industry can act as a positive economic driver for Whitby and support local business. In fact, in 2019, [Durham Region welcomed 3.6 million annual visitors, generating \\$321 million in new spending.](#)

In March 2021, just as the COVID-19 pandemic had reshaped the tourism industry, the Town of Whitby set out to formulate a tourism strategy to support local businesses and stakeholders that rely on the tourism economy. Differentiating Whitby in the market includes identifying our unique themes, using quality data and research, and building a tourism brand. Starting with a strategy increases the opportunity to grow visitor revenue, local jobs, quality of life, and pride of place for residents.



Fishing Charter on Lake Ontario



Arts Trail Mural, Downtown Whitby



Shopping in Downtown Whitby, Words on Wood



A Steering Committee comprised of cross-sector industry experts was formed to oversee the development of a new four-year Tourism Strategy. Each Committee member at the table was engaged in the process and invested in the outcome. Together, they met the challenge to develop a plan to elevate the Town of Whitby as a great destination and community to live, work, and play. Through this process a vision, objectives, and goals were established.

Destination Whitby is the first Tourism Strategy for the Town of Whitby. It is a four-year strategy that outlines a plan to guide the municipality in future tourism support, promotion, planning, and development. To deliver on this strategy, the Town of Whitby will implement three key objectives with eight goals and thirty-three action items.

VISION

The Town of Whitby will create a visitor-friendly, welcoming, inclusive, vibrant and accessible destination rooted in economic, social and cultural connectivity.

KEY OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

1. Character

Elevate Whitby through destination development.

- Goal 1 Differentiate Whitby as a Unique Destination within Ontario
- Goal 2 Use Quality Research to Drive Tourism Development
- Goal 3 Build Capacity for Community Tourism
- Goal 4 Grow Local Economic Development for the Tourism Sector

2. Connectivity

Collaborate and connect with businesses, organizations, and residents to develop tourism offerings, products, and packages.

- Goal 1 Develop Visitor Readiness
- Goal 2 Engage Industry Partners in Community Tourism Economic Development

3. Content and Communication

Develop marketing assets to generate authentic Whitby stories; increase Whitby's unique tourism offerings; and create a network of tourism partners that support collaboration, coordination and information sharing.

- Goal 1 Develop Digital Content and Optimize Communication with Residents and Visitors
- Goal 2 Develop an Audience of Visitors



Lynde Shores Conservation Area



Rotary Park Pavillion

The Tourism Landscape



WHY TOURISM

Destination Ontario [defines a visitor as someone who travels more than 40 km](#) to see local attractions or attend a tourism event. These visitors can be identified as those visiting friends and relatives (VFR) or originating within Ontario or out-of-province. They could be motor coach groups or visiting the region as part of a sports group on an overnight trip.

In Canada, the tourism industry [contributes significantly to the economy and job creation](#). In 2019, tourism was Canada's number one service export, totaling 2% of total exports, generating \$105 billion in revenue, and accounting for 2.1 million jobs in Canada. In addition to making a significant economic contribution, a prosperous tourism sector benefits a community both culturally and socially.

Quick Facts about Tourism in Ontario



Tourism Creates Jobs

The Tourism Industry Association of Canada [TIAC] describes the tourism workforce as [“the backbone of the travel economy”](#). Our ability to provide hospitality to all visitors to Canada, and its impact on visitor experience, keeps businesses thriving.” [The 2019 Federal Tourism Growth Strategy: Creating Middle Class Jobs](#) recognizes that every community has something to offer as a destination within the Canadian cultural landscape for visitors to explore. Tourism is one of the only sectors that employ Canadians in every area of the country. This includes every province, territory, and electoral riding.



Royal Ashburn Golf Club

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Many organizations play critical support roles in [Ontario's tourism industry framework](#). Each of them has varying responsibilities and areas of focus to attract and service visitors and maximize the economic benefits to communities. At a local municipal level, there is a need to help coordinate and develop tourism experiences and products within the business community that can be positioned in the market at a regional, provincial, and national level.

Regional Tourism Organization 6 - Central Counties Tourism

Central Counties Tourism [CCT] is one of [13 Regional Tourism Organizations \(RTO's\)](#) province-wide, funded by the Ontario Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism, and Culture Industries. Central Counties, encompasses the Regions of Durham, York, and Headwaters.

The focus of CCT is destination development and research. CCT is aligned with the priorities and works collaboratively with Durham Tourism and Destination Ontario. CCT coordinates, aligns and invests in product development, workforce development, strategic marketing, and investment attraction.

Durham Tourism and Sport Durham

Durham Tourism is part of the Regional Municipality of Durham, Economic Development Division, [Invest Durham](#). As the Destination Marketing Organization [DMO] for the Region, their objective is to develop and [promote Durham Region to visitors](#) with an emphasis on the areas of sports tourism under the brand [Sport Durham](#). The Region supports eight municipalities in the following ways: Promotes Durham as a destination via trade and consumer/trade shows; assists provincial tour operators by providing destination information; coordinates familiarization tours for travel trade operators and media writers.

Municipal Tourism - The Town of Whitby

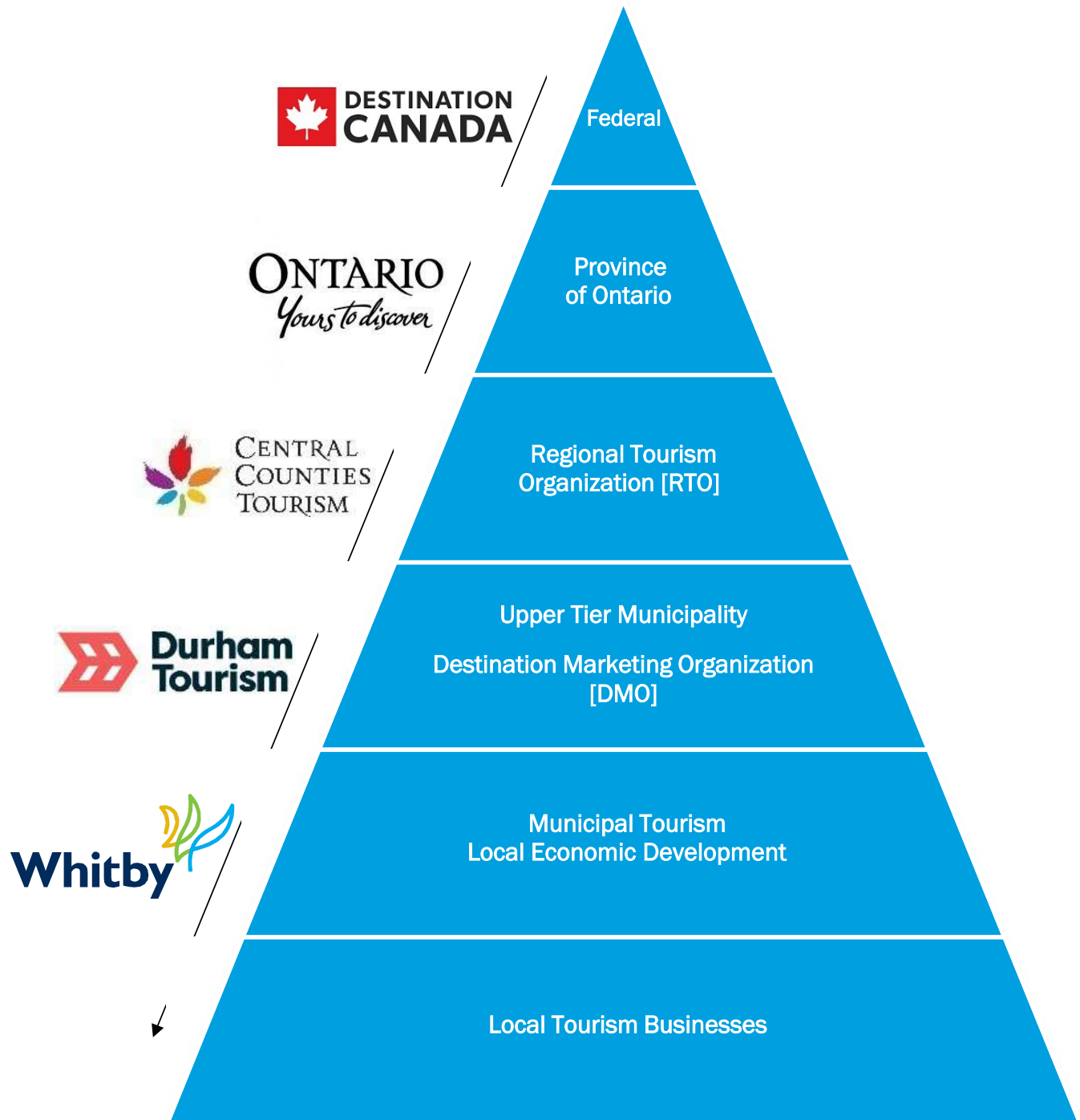
The current allocation of resources to tourism consists of staff support from the [Creative Communities Division](#). Staff time is currently devoted to promoting tourism development in Whitby, including collaborating, marketing, supporting local events, and serving as a liaison to Durham Tourism & Sport Durham.

Local Tourism Businesses

Local tourism-based businesses, attractions, and local event organizers are at the grassroots level of the tourism economy and deposit new money into Whitby. Unique products and experience offerings also contribute socially to residents with a sense of pride of place. The Whitby Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Whitby Business Improvement Area [BIA], and local colleges are critical tourism development partners through business retention, expansion, and workforce development.

PARTNERS IN TOURISM

The products and offerings of local businesses are the foundation of the tourism economy. The hierarchy of partners works vertically through alignment, strategic marketing, investment attraction, themed product development, and funding opportunities.





12welve Bistro and Tapwerks, Whitby



Whitby Waterfront

TOURISM TOOLS AND RESOURCES

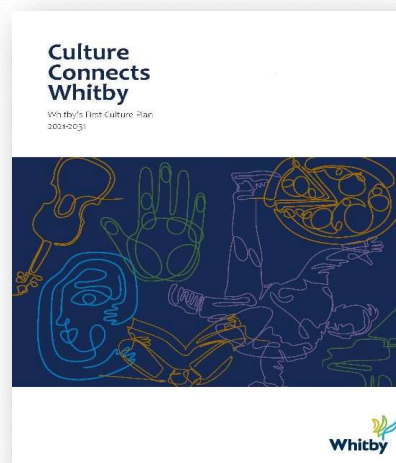
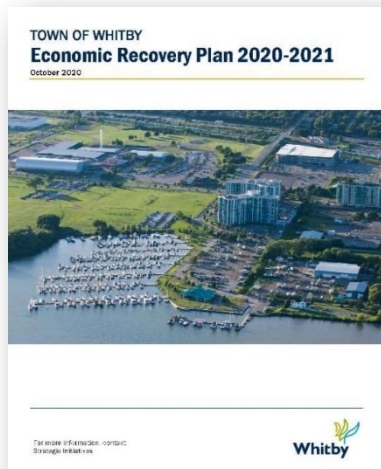
Current Tools and Resources											
Tourism Support Partner	Tourism Education	Research /Tracking	Advocacy	General Marketing	Targeted Marketing	Visitor Information	Wayfinding Signage	Tourism Website	Maps and Guides	Industry Equipping	Community Engaged
Destination Canada Promotes Canada's market-ready products and experiences internationally.		✓		✓	✓			✓			
Destination Ontario (DeON) Promotes Ontario's market ready products and experiences domestically and internationally. DeON is an agency of the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism, and Culture Industries.		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Tourism Industry Association of Ontario [TIAO] advocates for tourism policy, regulation, education, and economics of tourism.	✓	✓	✓								
Regional Tourism Organization (RT06) Central Counties Tourism Tourism product development, workforce development, industry equipping, and marketing in York, Durham and Headwaters regions.	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓		✓	
Durham Tourism/Sport Durham - Region of Durham Promotes Durham as a destination for domestic leisure, sport/group travel throughout the eight municipalities.	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Town of Whitby Promotes Whitby as a destination and the Town's unique experiences, products, community and tourism assets.				✓			✓		✓		✓

The Planning Process



Aerial View, Port Whitby Marina/Whitby Yacht Club

WHERE WE STARTED



Before the World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 outbreak in March 2020, Town staff had identified that Whitby was becoming a vital tourism hub in the Greater Toronto Area with rapid business attraction and a depth of offerings and cultural experiences.

In March 2020, when everything changed, Whitby's economic development and staff attention shifted immediately to supporting the local economy's reopening, recovery, and sustainability. The [2020 to 2021 Economic Recovery Plan](#) was employed.

Also underway was [Culture Connects Whitby -Whitby's 10 Year Culture Plan](#). The Plan identified a goal to support cultural tourism opportunities. Through the action of developing a community-driven Whitby Tourism Strategy, cultural and heritage assets would benefit.

Background Strategies and Reports

A review of existing strategic plans ensured that the Whitby Tourism Strategy builds upon the existing priorities, work plan alignment, and partnerships with other internal stakeholders. Key documents referenced include:

- Council Goals (2018 – 2022)
- Corporate Strategic Plan (2019 to 2022)
- Economic Recovery Plan (2020-2021)
- Economic Development Strategy (2022 to 2026)
- Culture Plan (2021 – 2031)
- Active Transportation Plan (2021)
- Corporate Sustainability Plan (2016)

WHITBY'S TOURISM STEERING COMMITTEE

The first step in the development of the Tourism Strategy was to form a Whitby Tourism Steering Committee, comprised of tourism industry members representing multiple tourism sectors including attractions, operators, accommodations, food and beverage establishments, sports and recreation leaders, business improvement associations, service groups, and the academic sector.

The Steering Committee attended four virtual working sessions from March 2021 to October 2021, using the outline of [Central Counties Community Tourism Planning Guide](#).

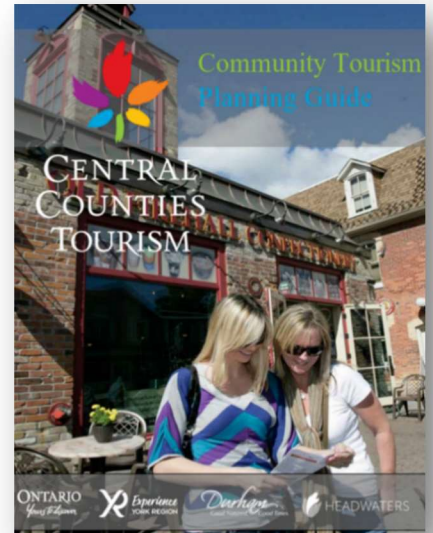
Session One: Defining Tourism Success introduced the tourism industry as an economic driver, job creator, and contributor to resident quality of life.

Session Two: Whitby's Tourism Landscape summarized the Whitby tourism assets, including attractions, businesses, infrastructure, customer service, and promotion.

Session Three: Opportunities and Challenges analyzed the tourism markets, both current and potential, identified challenges, and ranked the opportunities.

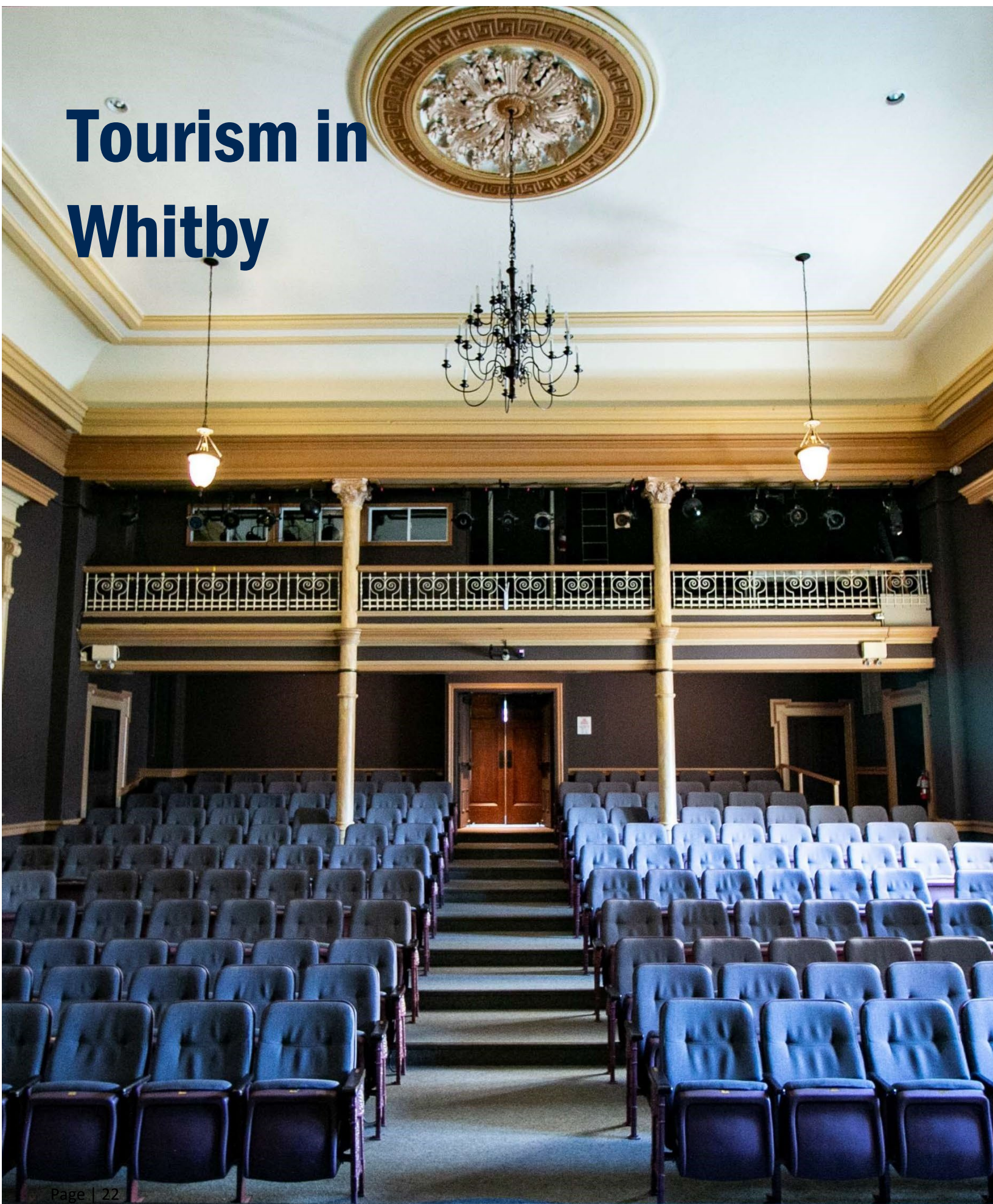
Session Four: Goals and Actions outlined the vision, objective, goals, and actions for Whitby.

The Tourism Steering Committee, through each of the sessions, identified both opportunities, assets and concerns that provided the reasoning and strategic thinking that was used to develop the tourism goals and objectives. The resulting Strategy provides a framework for businesses, local government, and residents to leverage the visitor economy and grow Whitby as a visitor-ready and welcoming destination.



Harvest, Brooklin

Tourism in Whitby



TOURISM ASSETS BY CATEGORY

Tourism is the business of attracting and serving visitors' needs; people traveling from their place of origin, for business or leisure.

It is essential to differentiate the primary attractors that draw visitors to a destination from complementary businesses or traveller amenities. Tourism can be an economic driver for all; attractions, complementary businesses, and amenities. Responsible destination development requires balancing and managing the visitors' needs. Marketing will draw visitors to a destination once ~ great amenities, friendly customer service, and a welcoming community bring them back.

With input from the Tourism Steering Committee, tourism was analyzed in Whitby in the following five tourism categories, listed below. The Steering Committee's discussion and analysis, including challenges and opportunities in each of the five categories, helped to inform many of the Action Items in this strategy.

- a. Attractions
- b. Tourism Businesses
- c. Infrastructure
- d. Customer Service
- e. Tourism Marketing



1. Attractions

Tourist attractions draw visitors for either natural beauty, man-made interest/culture, or entertainment value. Inherently, it is things to 'see and do' within a destination. Lead attractions can generate travel demand for, and be synonymous with, a destination.

Attractions in Whitby include locations such as the Family Entertainment Centrum, world class sports facilities, premium golf, spas, signature festivals and events, boating, fishing charters, arts and culture facilities like Lynde House and Station Gallery and larger attractions such as Reptilia Zoo Ltd, Flying Squirrel, SkyZone, and Aspire Climbing.

2. Tourism Businesses

Tourism businesses can be defined as those that help take care of visitors' needs, including accommodations, food and beverage, meeting, conference and event venues, agritourism locations, specialty retail and services. Types of tourism businesses include hotels, motels, campgrounds, bed and breakfast properties, service stations, car rental and boat charter services, restaurants, craft beverage producers, and more.

Whitby is home to more than 2,230 businesses to serve both the visitor market and locals.



Entrance to Reptilia



3. Infrastructure

Tourism infrastructure includes amenities like facilities, bike lanes, public transit, commuter trains, parking areas, wastewater, and garbage disposal facilities, water and power services, access to cellular service, availability of fuels such as diesel, natural gas, propane, and gasoline, location, and distance signage, public transit, police and emergency services. The availability and quality of services and amenities available to travellers will affect a community's ability to attract visitors.

The Town of Whitby includes significant infrastructure to support the tourism industry including the Port Whitby Marina with 420 slips; the Waterfront Trail and Greenbelt Cycling routes; 2,000 acres of parks and conservation areas; 128+ parks with playgrounds, picnic areas, washrooms and splash pads; parking in the downtown areas; two dog parks and over 60 km of trails.

Whitby benefits from the major travel corridors of three 400-series highways (Highways 401, 407, and 412) and is just 45-minutes away from Pearson International Airport. Significant travel market potential exists for multi-modal travellers with full GO Train service from Toronto and beyond.



4. Customer Service

Customer service includes hospitality and welcoming tourists, anticipating their needs, providing excellent customer service, and being an ambassador to the Town of Whitby at large. Visitors have high expectations of the quality of personal service they receive from tourism attractions, businesses and the municipality. This is critical to the reputation of a destination as being a welcoming, inclusive, diverse, and accessible.

The Town of Whitby is committed to providing an accessible environment in which visitors, residents, and employees have access to customer services and facilities. A key strength for customer service throughout Whitby's workforce is Durham College and other full-time programs in Hospitality Skills, Hotel and Restaurant Operations Management, and Tourism Destination Marketing, with specific courses in customer service.

5. Tourism Marketing

Tourism marketing involves activities that stakeholders undertake to attract potential visitors (i.e. overnight trips, transient visitors or destination based visitors). Co-operative advertising, attendance at travel shows, magazine articles, brochures, maps, commercial and promotional signs, travel guides, newspaper, radio, television, websites, social media, digital campaigns, and tourism information centers are all examples of promotional activities that attract visitors.

Presently, the Town of Whitby staff is responsible for promoting Whitby as a destination, including collaborating, marketing, supporting local events. However, there is no dedicated visitor tourism website or social channels.

WHY DO PEOPLE VISIT WHITBY?

Below is a snapshot of Whitby's tourism strengths for attracting visitors to the community with both urban and rural elements, as identified by the Tourism Steering Committee.

Attractions

- Sports Tourism and Sports Facilities (Abilities Centre, Iroquois Park Sports Centre, 2 Soccer Domes)
- Golf Courses (including premium Course – Royal Ashburn Golf Club)
- Thermea Spa Village
- Largest Family Entertainment Centre east of Toronto (iFLY Indoor Skydiving, Putting Edge, Pro Hockey Life, Landmark Theatres, Chuck E. Cheese) including 11 food and beverage options
- Reptilia Zoo Ltd/Flying Squirrel, SkyZone/Aspire Climbing/Durham Escape Rooms
- Port Whitby Marina
- Fishing Charters/ Whitby Yacht Club
- Signature Festivals and Events (Brooklin Spring Fair, Food Truck Frenzy, Whitby Lacrosse Festival Downtown Whitby BIA Beer Festival)

Outdoor Adventure and Recreation

- Kayaking, sailing, swimming and beaches, regattas, splash pads
- Cycling Routes (Great Waterfront Trail/Greenbelt Route)
- Heber Down Conservation Area/Lynde Shores Conservation Area/Cullen Park
- 60+ Km of Trails
- 128+ Parks and playgrounds
- Close to 3 ski hills

Food and Beverage

- 5 Award-winning Craft Breweries
- Culinary Scene including Celebrity and Michelin Certified Chefs/FEASTOn Certified Restaurants
- Bistro '67 and W. Galen Weston Centre for Food
- Agritourism – Pick-Your Own

Specialty Retail

- Historic Downtowns (Whitby and Brooklin) with special and boutique shopping
- Artisan and Maker Spaces and workshops/experiences
- RV Centres

Arts and Culture

- Station Gallery
- Courthouse Theatre
- Centennial Building
- Historical districts and Walking Tours
- Public Art/Whitby Arts Trail
- Lynde House Museum
- Intrepid Park



Park of Reflection, Cullen Park



Wooden Bridge, Cullen Park



Heydenshore Beach



Galen E Weston Centre for Food

TOURISM INDUSTRY SECTORS IN WHITBY

In Whitby, the Tourism Steering Committee identified the following six types of tourism sectors/segments for Whitby.

- **Nautical Tourism** is tourism that combines sailing and boating with vacation and holiday activities. It can be anything from travel on a cruise ship, participating in boat centered activities such as regattas to taking a fishing charter.
- **Sports Tourism** is defined as travel undertaken to participate in or watch a sport event, or to engage in a recreational sport such as golf or skiing.
- **Family Tourism** is driven by the increasing importance placed on promoting family togetherness and creating memories while travelling and can include participating in activities and dining out, vacationing at resorts or visiting attractions.
- **Culinary Tourism** is the exploration of food as the purpose for travel or a destination and can be further defined as the active pursuit of unique and memorable eating and drinking experiences, as well as agritourism experiences that connect what is being grown and produced in an area to what is being prepared and enjoyed by locals.
- **Wellness Tourism** is travel for the purpose of promoting health and well-being through physical, psychological and spiritual activities.
- **Cultural Tourism** is a type of tourism activity in which the visitors' essential motivation is to learn, discover, experience and consume the tangible and intangible cultural attractions/products in a tourism destination.



VISITATION BY THE NUMBERS

In one of the sessions, the Tourism Steering Committee were shown locations where tourists currently visit Whitby: Port Whitby Marina for nautical tourism; Whitby Entertainment Centrum for family tourism and for family activities and food and beverage; Downtown Whitby with a focus on cultural tourism including specialty retail and activities.

Using the Central Counties Tourism Visitor Research Program called Geofencing, a virtual perimeter of these geographic locations was analyzed utilizing mobile phone technology. Geofence data collection works by creating an invisible barrier around an area to capture the number of unique visitors, the number of trips made by those visitors, the distance they travelled from a common location (their home) and provide an analysis of these cell phone holders over a specific time.

This data research is particularly useful when not able to collect postal code data in locations such as public beaches/parks, free festivals and events or specific sections of the downtown core. Geofencing data will validate who Whitby's customers are based on real data.

The number of visitors is important to Whitby, however it is more important to understand the customer as it will help make informed decisions on the product and experiences developed and how to effectively market Whitby to an ideal visitor.



Lynde House Museum



Total Annual 2019 Visits by Geofence area Identified

The data from the four specific geographic locations selected [reported 1,893,913 tourism visits to Whitby in 2019](#).

Using this visitor data only (from 2019) for the four geographic areas in Whitby, an economic impact evaluation was completed using the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism, and Culture Industries [TREIM \(Tourism Regional Economic Impact Model\)](#). The TREIM report totaled \$226 Million in economic impact to Whitby, contributing \$371,205 in municipal taxes and generating 1,619 tourism jobs.

These results show how tourism is a huge economic driver for Whitby and the Geofence data collection can be used in future tourism planning for Whitby.



Downtown Whitby

ENGAGEMENT BY THE NUMBERS

A public survey was launched in September 2021 through the [Connect Whitby](#) portal to gather additional input on Whitby's Tourism assets and attractions."

What We Heard

The public told us why people visit Whitby, shared their 'hidden gem' locations, stated the best photo spots in Whitby, and contributed insights about visiting the downtown areas and favourite restaurants. The survey results aligned with the list of why people visit Whitby (page 27) and helped to inform the tourism industry sectors.

Going forward, engaging residents is pivotal to the success of the tourism strategy, including the development of community ambassadors for Whitby and fostering pride of place.

461

Visitors to the
Connect Whitby
Site

118

Completed
Surveys

Have Your Say

on **Whitby's**

Tourism Strategy

We're working to develop a new tourism strategy that supports and highlights all of the great things that make our Town a destination.

Share your favourite places in Whitby and our two downtowns – inform the new strategy that will help residents and visitors rediscover our community.



Scan This QR Code

**Complete the
survey today!**

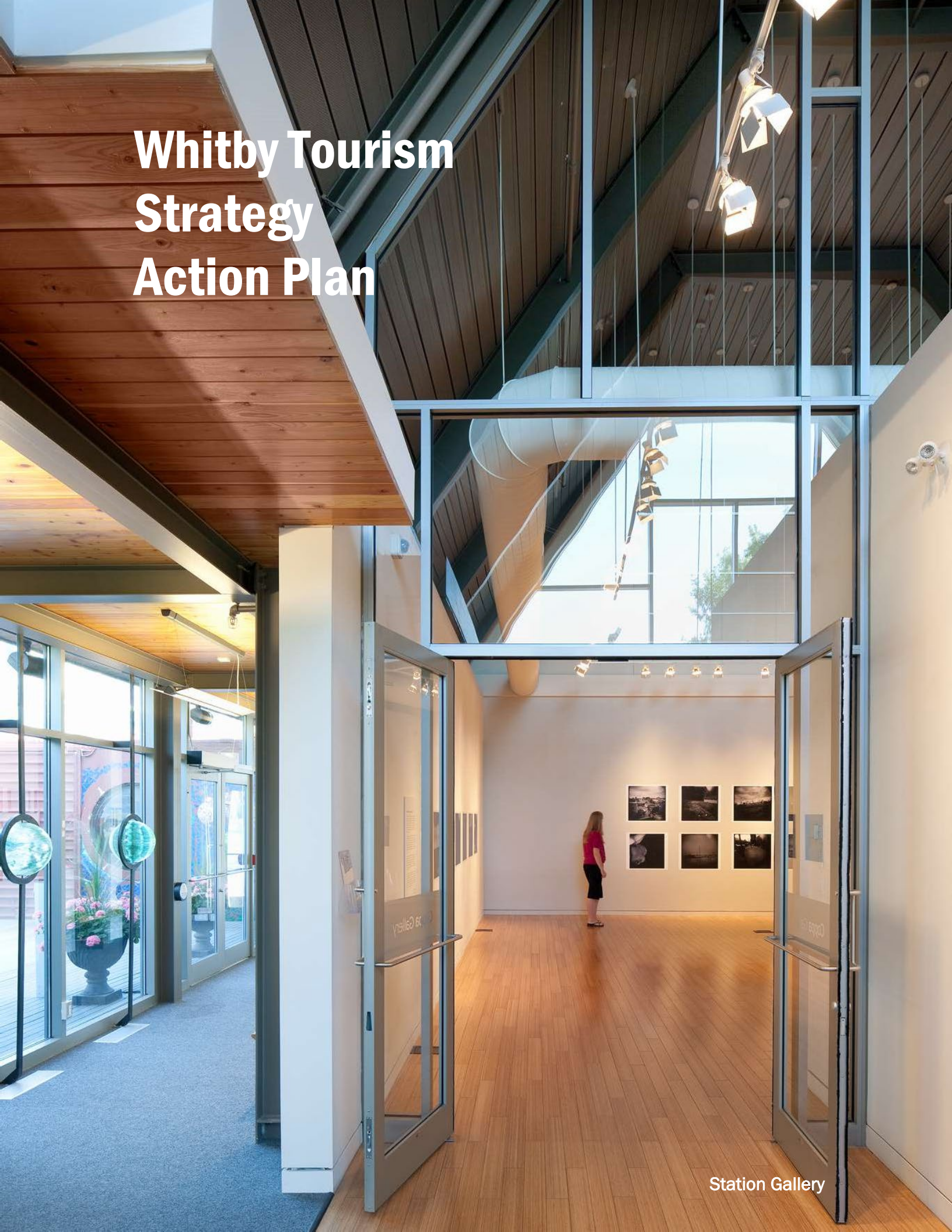
Scan the QR code using the camera on your mobile phone.



You can also complete the survey
by calling **905-444-3164** or visiting
[connectwhitby.ca/TourismStrategy](#)



Whitby Tourism Strategy Action Plan



Station Gallery

WHITBY TOURISM STRATEGY MATRIX

The Objectives, Goals, and Actions of the Strategy are included in the Matrix below and include a timeline, costs, and responsibility related to the Objectives - Character, Connectivity, Content and Communication.

To deliver on the Strategy, the objectives have been established with thirty-three action items. The list of actions is a prioritized starting point based on discussions at the Tourism Steering Committee. New actions may emerge and will need to be assessed against the priorities of this Strategy on an annual basis.

Lead/Partners

The Tourism Strategy is built on an understanding of collaboration and connection. The Action Plan establishes the various responsibilities for the Town and the internal and external stakeholders who could support tourism in Whitby.

For the Strategy to succeed, the Town and key partners will continue to engage in ongoing conversations.



Cost

Each of the actions include an approximate cost estimate (note that staff time would be required for all projects). Any requests for funding in the Action Plan will be subject to the annual budgeting process and approvals (Capital and Operating).

- **N/A** - Fits in the current Operating Budget
- **\$** - Under \$1,000
- **\$\$** - \$1,000 - \$9,999
- **\$\$\$** - \$10,000 - \$25,000
- **\$\$\$\$** - More than \$25,000 - \$100,000
- **Operating** – Operating Cost
- **Capital** – Capital Cost

Next Steps

Central Counties Tourism will work with Whitby to pull the annual action items and create a one-year work plan. Each initiative will be assigned an output/outcome, budget (where applicable and approved) and key performance indicators (KPIs).

Strategic four-year planning for tourism development in Whitby will require resiliency to support the needs of stakeholder partners. As businesses respond, recover, and rebuild, a managed approach should be cognizant of new consumer sentiment, travel trends, and the receptiveness to welcome visitors by the host community. An incremental review of this Plan (minimum every 12 months) will significantly benefit Whitby's highly affected tourism businesses and organizations that rely on tourists.



OBJECTIVE 1: CHARACTER

Elevate Whitby through destination development.

Item #	Action	Timing	Lead/Partners	Cost
GOAL 1: Differentiate Whitby as a Unique Destination within Ontario				
1.1.1	Develop the tourism profiles including identifying the attractions, insights, partners, travel characteristics and market segments for each of Whitby's six key tourism industry sectors (Nautical Tourism, Sports Tourism, Family Tourism, Culinary Tourism, Wellness Tourism, and Cultural Tourism).	2022	Town of Whitby (ToW): Creative Communities Partners: Tourism Steering Committee, Central Counties Tourism, Tourism Stakeholders	Operating N/A
1.1.2	Collaborate with private sector tourism businesses twice a year to help promote and market tourism products and offerings in order to differentiate Whitby as a destination in Ontario.	2023/ 2024/ 2025	ToW: Creative Communities Partners: tourism businesses and attractions	Operating N/A
GOAL 2: Use Quality Research to Drive Tourism Development				
1.2.1	Develop tourism metrics through visitor data provided by Central Counties Tourism, Destination Ontario, and other resources to determine opportunities for expanding and measuring future market growth and how Whitby markets itself.	2023	ToW: Creative Communities, Economic Development Partners: Central Counties Tourism, Destination Ontario, Durham Tourism	Operating \$
1.2.2	Complete a tourism asset gap analysis to determine what opportunities for	2025	ToW: Creative Communities,	Operating \$

Item #	Action	Timing	Lead/Partners	Cost
	products/ experiences and infrastructure (conference centre, hotels, etc.) can be enhanced or developed by existing businesses/operators.		Economic Development	
1.2.3	Partner in a First Impressions Community Exchange (FICE) program https://www.ontario.ca/page/first-impressions-community-exchange-program to discover how well Whitby serves its visitors.	2025	ToW: Creative Communities Partners: Province of Ontario, Downtown Whitby BIA, Central Counties Tourism, Durham Tourism, selected partner municipality	Operating \$
1.2.4	Explore potential funding streams for tourism initiatives (Municipal Accommodation Tax).	2022/ 2023	ToW: Creative Communities/Legal and Enforcement Services	Operating \$
GOAL 3: Build Capacity for Community Tourism				
1.3.1	Establish an annual Tourism Operating budget to support initiatives identified in the Tourism Strategy.	Completed 2022	ToW: Creative Communities, Financial Services	Operating \$\$\$
1.3.2	Secure a full-time culture and tourism-focused staff person to support the implementation of the Tourism Strategy and the Culture Plan.	2022	ToW: Strategic Initiatives, Financial Services	Operating \$\$\$\$
1.3.3	Consult the Investment and Development Office [IDO] and seek out opportunities for collaboration, partnerships, and/ or financial support and grants.	2023	ToW: Creative Communities	Operating N/A

Item #	Actions	Timing	Lead/Partners	Costs
1.3.4	Establish an informal, external Tourism Coalition consisting of tourism operators and key stakeholders to leverage the skills, resources, and expertise for tourism development.	2024	ToW: Creative Communities, Economic Development Partners: Central Counties Tourism, Durham Tourism, Tourism Stakeholder	Operating \$
1.3.5	Enhance cycle and trail tourism infrastructure (rest stops/signage and maps on Whitby's Waterfront).	2023/2024	ToW: Creative Communities, Active Transportation, Community Services Partners: Waterfront Regeneration Trust, Parks Planning	Capital \$\$\$
1.3.6	Invest in existing or temporary infrastructure to support a temporary or seasonal Visitor Centre service location (or pop up location) including directional signage.	2025	ToW: Creative Communities, Community Services, Operations	Capital \$\$\$
1.3.7	Utilize the current Wayfinding and Signage Plan to design tourism wayfinding signage for Whitby.	2025	ToW: Creative Communities, Community Services, Communications and Creative Services	Capital \$\$\$\$
1.3.8	Invest and establish well signed, publicly accessible washroom in Downtown Whitby.	2025	ToW: Creative Communities, Economic Development Partners: Downtown Whitby BIA	Capital \$\$\$\$

Item #	Actions	Timing	Lead/Partners	Costs
GOAL 4: Grow Local Economic Development for the Tourism Sector				
1.4.1	Work with post-secondary institutions for potential placement student partnerships in tourism, marketing, photography, graphic design, horticulture, project management.	2023/ 2024/ 2025	ToW: Creative Communities Partners: Post-secondary institutions, Central Counties Tourism	Operating \$



OBJECTIVE 2: CONNECTIVITY

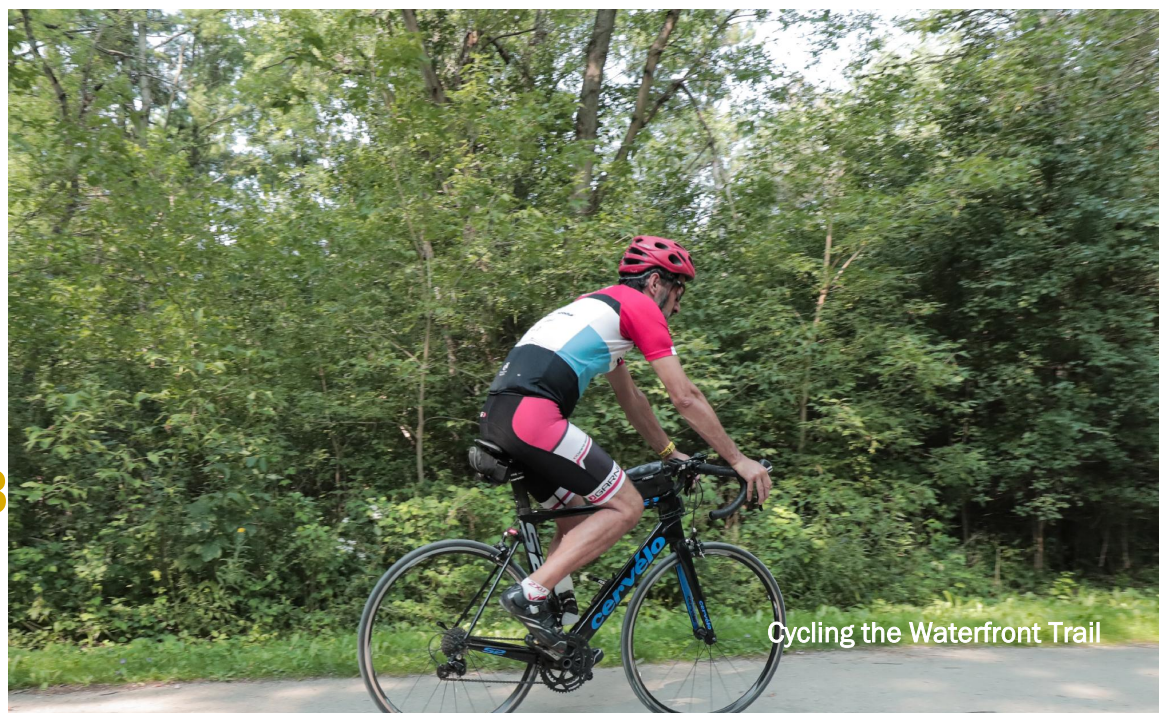
Collaborate and connect with businesses, organizations, and residents to develop tourism offerings, products, and packages.

Item #	Action	Timing	Lead/Partners	Cost
GOAL 1: Develop Visitor Readiness				
2.1.1	Develop a digital Whitby Food Guide and related culinary experiences within Whitby, including food tours (walking, cycling or driving).	2022	ToW: Creative Communities, Communications and Creative Services Partners: Durham College, Central Counties Tourism, local tourism businesses and restaurants	Operating N/A
2.1.2	Work on destination development and create tourism itineraries for with a focus on the six key tourism sectors for Whitby.	2023	ToW: Creative Communities Partners: Central Counties Tourism, local tourism businesses, restaurants and attractions	Operating N/A
2.1.3	Host Whitby Tourism Ambassador training sessions, offered through Central Counties Tourism. https://centralcounties.ca/central-counties-tourism-ambassador-program/	Ongoing	ToW: Creative Communities Partners: Central Counties Tourism	Operating N/A
2.1.4	Invest in helping local businesses and stakeholders become “tourism ready” through online resources, training and workshops including the use of the Safe	2023	ToW: Creative Communities; Sustainability; Economic Development	Operating \$

Item #	Action	Timing	Lead/Partners	Cost
	<i>Travels</i> stamp. https://www.tiaontario.ca/cpages/safetravelsstamp And the Green Step Sustainable		Partners: Durham	
	Tourism certification program. https://www.tiaontario.ca/cpages/sustainabletourism2030		Tourism, Central Counties Tourism, Whitby Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Whitby BIA, Tourism Association of Ontario (TIAO)	
2.1.5	Host two stakeholder education workshops a year on destination development for Whitby tourism businesses and attractions on creating tourism packages.	2023/ 2024/ 2025	ToW: Creative Communities Partners: Downtown Whitby BIA, Tourism businesses, attractions and restaurants, Central Counties Tourism	Operating \$
2.1.6	Identify and support seasonal opportunities where stakeholder-led packaged products can be distributed at local tournaments (Pilot with Ontario Lacrosse Festival on a 'Family Fun Package' or 'Explore Downtown Between Games').	2024	ToW: Creative Communities, Community Services Partners: Sport Durham, tourism businesses, attractions, accommodations and restaurants	Operating \$
GOAL 2: Engage Industry Partners in Community Tourism Economic Development				
2.2.1	Create a digital newsletter to communicate tourism information and resources to tourism attractions and business owners utilizing Constant Contact.	2023	ToW: Creative Communities, Economic Development, Communications and Creative Services	Operating \$

Item #	Action	Timing	Lead/Partner	Cost
2.2.2	Partner with the Whitby Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Whitby BIA	2023	ToW: Creative Communities	Operating N/A
	for business networking events with a tourism focus.		Partners: Whitby Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Whitby BIA	
2.2.3	Partner with the Downtown Whitby BIA, Whitby Chamber of Commerce and other tourism partners to promote Central Counties Tourism Business to Business (B2B) resources with 'The Landing Pad' https://whitbybia.org/the-landing-pad/ to their memberships and other monthly tourism industry updates.	2023	ToW: Creative Communities, Economic Development Partners: Whitby Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Whitby BIA, Central Counties Tourism, other tourism partners and businesses	Operating N/A
2.2.4	Partner with Sport Durham to develop an of inventory existing regional sports tourism events and develop a strategy on how Whitby Tourism could support sporting events, and benefit stakeholders.	2024	ToW: Creative Communities, Community Services Partners: Sport Durham, Durham Tourism, Community Services	Operating \$\$

OBJECTIVE 3



Cycling the Waterfront Trail

Develop marketing assets to generate authentic Whitby stories; increase Whitby's unique tourism offerings; and create a network of tourism partners that support collaboration, coordination and information sharing.

Item #	Action	Timing	Lead/Partners	Cost
GOAL 1: Develop Digital Content and Optimize Communication with Residents and Visitors				
3.1.1	Invest in Whitby's photos and video assets to capture high-resolution imagery including the four seasons and diverse market segments.	2022 - 2025	ToW: Creative Communities Partners: Freelance Photographers, Central Counties Tourism	Operating \$\$
3.1.2	Develop and launch a dedicated tourism microsite.	2022	ToW: Creative Communities, Communications and Creative Services	Operating N/A
3.1.3	Raise the profile of Whitby with media through press release distribution, travel writers, travel bloggers, and influencers by leveraging our partnerships to generate local content for outlets.	Ongoing	ToW: Creative Communities Partners: Central Counties Tourism, Durham Tourism	Operating \$
3.1.4	Develop and outsource Tourism Destination Marketing Plan for Whitby including a framework that can be adapted annually or as needed.	2023	ToW: Creative Communities, Communications and Creative Services Partners: Central Counties Tourism,	Operating \$\$

Item #	Action	Timing	Lead/ Partners	Cost
			industry partners (marketing consultant, bloggers, travel writers etc.)	
3.1.5	Host a FAM Tour (Familiarization Tour) inviting media and travel trade professionals to Whitby to provide a sampling of what Whitby offers as a destination.	2024	ToW: Creative Communities Partners: Downtown Whitby BIA, Tourism attractions, restaurants and businesses	Operating \$\$
Goal 2: Develop an Audience of Visitors				
3.2.1	Create a database of email addresses for consumer communication of tourism e-blasts, blogs, stories, and newsletters.	2022	ToW: Creative Communities	Operating N/A
3.2.2	Enhance Whitby's online social presence #ExploreWhitby and develop a Social Media Strategy for tourism promotion.	2023	ToW: Creative Communities, Communications and Creative Services	Operating \$
3.2.3	Develop, launch and distribute a QR Code sticker for tourism businesses, accommodations, restaurants and attractions linked to the Whitby tourism microsite.	2022	ToW: Creative Communities, Economic Development, Communications and Creative Services	Operating N/A

Appendices



Waterfront Trail, Port Whitby

GLOSSARY

Below is a guide to understanding several key terms used throughout this report.

Assets

General term tourism marketers use to refer to a product's market position compared to other destinations. This includes visitor appeal assets like cycling routes, hiking trails, small-town charm, waterways, and attractions.

Attractions

One of the critical sectors of the tourism industry, attractions refer to tourism products/experiences that have visitor appeal to create demand for travel, E.g. themeparks, national sites, etc.

Destination

A place of interest where tourists visit, typically for its inherent or an exhibited natural or cultural, historical significance, natural or built beauty, offering leisure and amusement.

Destination Development is the strategic planning and advancement of a community to support growth for visitors.

Destination Based Visitor

Visits or trips with an intended purpose of visiting a specific destination.

Overnight Trip

A visit to an Ontario location with at least a one-night stay was reported at that destination.

Tourism

A traveller's trip at least 40 km away from their place of origin for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes.

Tourism Product

Tourism products can take many forms, including merchandise, experiences, services, and information to the market for tourists to buy, E.g. a suggested itinerary, a culinary passport or food trail, an interpreted ghost walk, a beer-making workshop, etc.

Tourism Ready

Refers to a business that has all of its licenses, permits, and insurance in place to operate legally, provides goods and services to tourists, and welcomes tourists.

Tourism Wayfinding

Signs on roadways that make it easier for tourists to find local attractions and services which help travellers to feel welcome, safe and comfortable.

Transient Visitor

Visits without having a planned stopover; is passing through en route to another destination.

Visitor Economy

The visitor economy refers to dollars spent by travellers from outside the resident tax base. The full impact of the visitor economy is felt when the multiplier effect of tourist spending ripples throughout the entire economy, supporting job creation, infrastructure development, and investment attraction.

Visiting Friends and Relatives [VFR] Visitor

Visits on trips with a stated primary purpose of visiting friends or relatives (VFR).

Visitor Experience

The sum of all perceptions and interactions a traveller has with the destination's people, places and cultures, and the communities and businesses they encounter.