



TOURISM DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN REFRESH – DRAFT I

TOWN COUNCIL PRESENTATION

JUNE 2024

BRAIN TRUST

- IN 2018, BRAIN TRUST, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE TOURISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE, IDENTIFIED 15 RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENHANCE WASAGA BEACH'S TOURISM COMPETITIVENESS



- **SINCE 2018, MUCH HAS CHANGED,** THEREFORE THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE (EDTAC) RECOGNIZED THE PRESSING NEED FOR A REVITALIZED TOURISM DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

Identified as a priority in the 2022-2026 Council Term Priorities under O. Grow Tourism #52. Resurrect the Tourism Destination Marketing Plan.

NEW REALITIES

- **REGENERATIVE TOURISM** – INTEREST IN THE WELL-BEING OF CITIZENS AS WELL AS VISITATION GROWTH AND PROFITS
- **HIGH-VALUE GUESTS** = SLOW TRAVEL, LEARNERS, ENGAGE WITH LOCALS, LEAVE THE PLACE BETTER THAN THEY FOUND IT
- **LEGENDARY EXPERIENCES** – PRESERVE AND CELEBRATE LOCAL HERITAGE/CULTURE, AND NATURAL SURROUNDINGS THROUGH CONNECTIONS WITH LOCAL PEOPLE

OBSERVATIONS

- LOCALS' FIRST VISITOR'S SECOND SENTIMENT IS FOUNDATIONAL
- CURRENT AUDIENCE, NOT THE FUTURE AUDIENCE – HIGH-VALUE GUESTS
- CHALLENGED (\$) TO MEET THE DEMANDS OF LOCALS AND TOURISTS

Visits 2019	Visits 2022	Change vs 2019	Visits 2023	Change vs 2019
1,585,668	1,189,338	-4.4%	1,962,843	+20.9%

Aggregate Visitor Visits – Wasaga Beach Mobile Phone Data. Simcoe County & BP Insights. Apr. 16, 2024.
Note: 2019 was a benchmark year for global tourism visits to and within Canada and Ontario.

OBSERVATIONS

- **MANY COMMUNITIES IN ONTARIO HAVE SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENTED A MUNICIPAL ACCOMMODATION LEVY**
- **NEW RESIDENT & VISITOR INFRASTRUCTURE ENHANCES THE VISITOR JOURNEY:**
 - **ARENA/LIBRARY, HIGH SCHOOL/THEATRE, BEACHFRONT DEVELOPMENT**

OBSERVATIONS

- **EVENTS AS A TOURISM MOTIVATOR HAVE LOST THEIR APPEAL AND CONSUME TOWN RESOURCES**
- **TOURISM'S ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES ARE NOT FULLY LEVERAGED DUE TO A DAY TRIP REALITY AND 14-WEEK SEASON**
- **TOWN STAFF EMBRACE A RENEWED FOCUS RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF TOURISM**

OBSERVATIONS

- **WASAGA BEACH PROVINCIAL PARK LACKS INVESTMENT THEREFORE THE PARK'S INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES HAVE DETERIORATED**
- **THE PROVINCIALY OWNED NANCY ISLAND HISTORIC SITE HAS FALLEN INTO DISREPAIR AND HAS LOST ITS APPEAL**

RECOMMENDATIONS - FOUR OVERARCHING THEMES:

1. CITIZENS DESIRE TO PRESERVE THE PLACE THEY CALL HOME:

“A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE IS A GREAT PLACE TO VISIT”

2. BE PERCEIVED AS A TOURISM DESTINATION THAT OFFERS FAMILY FUN

3. ARTS AND LIVE ENTERTAINMENT (FOCUSING ON MUSIC) IS THE NARRATIVE WE WANT TO RECAPTURE AND THEN OWN

4. NEW SUSTAINABLE FUNDING SOURCES MUST BE IDENTIFIED TO SUPPORT THE TDMP IMPLEMENTATION

RECOMMENDATIONS

Action: 2024 -2027			
Recommendation	Actions	Role	Timing
Detail of each Recommendation with measurable goals and deliverables	Details of each action to support the fulfillment of the recommendation	The person or group responsible	Prioritize Actions

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. SECURE BROAD-BASED ENGAGEMENT IN AND ENDORSEMENT OF THE 2024-2027 TOURISM DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN (TDMP).**
- 2. MOBILIZE COMMUNITY LEADERS AND RESIDENTS TO TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. LEVERAGE NEW AND PLANNED INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS WHILE ADDRESSING GAPS IN INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICE.
4. IMPLEMENT A MUNICIPAL ACCOMMODATION TAX.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5. FINALIZE AND IMPLEMENT THE ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT ACTION PLAN.**
- 6. FOSTER THE CREATION OF NEW ASSET-BASED VISITOR EXPERIENCES, EMPHASIZING DEVELOPING EXPERIENCES IN OFF-PEAK TOURISM SEASONS.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

7. GROUND FUTURE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN REGENERATIVE TOURISM PRACTICES.
8. CONTINUE TO PURSUE ACTIVITIES TO REIMAGINE THE NANCY ISLAND HISTORIC SITE.



BRAIN TRUST

A Meeting of Minds

www.braintrustmarketing.ca



2024 – 2027
Tourism Destination
Management Plan Refresh

DRAFT I
June 5, 2024





We recognize the First Nations, Metis, and Inuit peoples of Canada as traditional stewards and caretakers of the land.

We acknowledge that Wasaga Beach is located within the boundaries of Treaty 18, the traditional lands of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Tionontati, and Wendat. It is also the home of many First Nations, Metis, and Inuit peoples as part of an intricate nationhood that reaches across Turtle Island.

At this time of truth and reconciliation, we welcome the opportunity to work together towards new understandings and new relationships and ask for guidance in all we do.



Appreciation

The successful outcomes of this project resulted from the many business owners, community leaders, volunteers, and residents who participated in the Wasaga Beach Tourism Destination Management Plan development process. Their collaborative efforts and willingness to provide input and observations contributed significantly to helping inform the strategy recommendations.

The BRAIN TRUST team wants to acknowledge and thank Kaitlyn Monsma, Economic Development Officer, and her colleagues at the Town of Wasaga Beach, the members of the Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee under the leadership of Steve Harlow, senior staff and management at Simcoe County Tourism, RTO7, and the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport.



Introduction

In August 2018, the Town of Wasaga Beach, in partnership with the Wasaga Beach Tourism Advisory Committee and tourism consulting firm Brain Trust, released its first Tourism Destination Management Plan (TDMP). The TDMP, which identified fifteen recommendations to enhance Wasaga Beach's tourism competitiveness and appeal, was a significant step. However, the tourism landscape has since evolved dramatically, with the global pandemic, international conflicts, uncertain economic conditions, climate change, hospitality labour shortages, and changing customer travel motivations and behaviours reshaping the industry. These changes necessitate a new approach.

The TDMP was identified as a priority in the 2022-2026 Council Term Priorities under O. Grow Tourism #52. Resurrect the Tourism Destination Marketing Plan.

Considering these significant factors, senior town staff and the Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee (EDTAC) have recognized the pressing need for a revitalized Tourism Destination Management Plan. In the summer of 2023, they again engaged Brain Trust's services to spearhead the development of this crucial plan.

New Realities – The hiatus from travel over the past three-plus years has forced new conversations. Globally, tourism management organizations and community leaders have identified the need to shift to more responsible travel with a greater focus on socio-environmental factors. They support a greater interest in the well-being of communities and residents vs. visitation growth and profits. This has become a goal for many destinations. For example, Destination Next said this:

"Prioritizing profit over the planet's health and well-being of people is not a legacy that the global visitor industry cannot continue."

Regenerative Tourism - Due to the global reset related to future travel, many destinations, including several in Canada, are adopting a regenerative tourism approach, where opportunities to create an ecosystem of innovation, collaboration, and adaptation are the goal. This new approach to tourism destination development is believed to energize strong economic growth, thriving operations, sociocultural vibrancy, healthy people, and a natural environment for future generations. Regenerative tourism is about guiding and supporting tourism development with an equal focus on economics and the well-being of people and places to measure success.

Destination Canada stated this to guide Canada's approach to regenerative tourism development:

"The hosting economy is finally being seen for its power as a community-builder, a job generator, a path to reconciliation, a protector of natural assets, and as an enabler of Canada's identity and broader global ambitions. We want a sector that produces profitable business growth and net benefits for our communities from a thriving, regenerative tourism ecosystem."

This approach to tourism development in Wasaga Beach has been thoughtfully considered. Throughout the community consultation process, participants were eager to understand the thinking behind the regenerative approach. The idea resonated and was welcome news, particularly for residents who attended the consultation sessions.

As town staff and the EDTAC implement the TDMP, they are encouraged to continue to explore how regenerative tourism development translates at the community and business level – ensuring all benefit by building deeper connections with communities and respecting the unique people and places on which tourism is based.

The Planning Process

Three imperatives guided the TDMP development process:

- **Destination Alignment**—Industry, community, and government alignment drives the town’s destination brand, responsible visitation, and revenues.
- **Connection to Communities** – Destinations belong to the people who call them home. A locals-first approach is tourism destination management with sustainable goals, filtered through a lens of resident quality of life, economic prosperity, sociocultural vibrancy, inclusiveness, and environmental thrive ability.
- **Connection to the Visitor** - Being visitor-friendly throughout the visitor's journey ensures that all visitors feel welcome and can access information and services that make their visit a positive experience.

Additionally, consideration was given to the following factors:

The customer has changed, and travel behaviour and motivations have been dramatically altered post-pandemic. For example, Destination Canada suggests visitors desire more frictionless travel supported by enhanced technology and a shift to more responsible travel with a socio-environmental focus. Also, understanding new travellers and how to succeed in attracting them to specific destinations, like Wasaga Beach, have emerged:

High-Value Guests (HVGs) – Travellers with a higher-than-average income who travel more frequently and intend to travel in 2024 and beyond. These guests leave a destination better than they found them and appreciate local culture by contributing to the host community's economy. They visit and interact with places and people respectfully and make travel choices based on the availability of extraordinary experiences and a sense of life enrichment. HVGs display the following characteristics:

- **Appreciate Slow Travel** - It is not about checking off boxes or seeing as many things as possible in the shortest amount of time but relishing moments of rejuvenation.
- **Learners and the Naturally Curious** - They want to feel inspired by their surroundings and learn more about the history of the place they're staying and the stories of the people around them.
- **Actively Seeks Culture and Events** - They want to get out and experience exciting and life-enriching things.
- **Engages With Locals** - They want to try the local dishes and immerse themselves in the local customs. In many ways, they want to feel like they're one of the locals.
- **Experience Over Price** - For these travellers, extraordinary experiences are priceless. Price always plays a role but is not as crucial to high-value guests.
- **Leave the Places They Visit Better Than They Found Them** - They want to give back rather than take from the places they visit.

High-value guests align with Simcoe County's, RTO7's, Destination Ontario's, and Destination Canada's target market segments. Supporting data defines these guests' travel behaviours and motivations, which should be utilized to inform the implementation of the strategies. Note: Destination Canada is currently updating its market segments. This work is expected to be released in late 2024.

Legendary Experiences – In the near term, successful tourism development in Wasaga Beach will not be based solely on significant investments in tourism-related infrastructure, like the new library and arena, new high school and theatre complex, or new beachfront development, but on leveraging the power of existing tourism assets like its coastal landscape, beach, heritage and its four-season outdoor recreation features.

Once again, taking the lead from Destination Canada will be of value to tourism and community stakeholders. DC suggests destinations need exceptional, inimitable travel experiences reflecting our country's essence and diverse fabric to attract high-value guests. Legendary experiences are unforgettable travel experiences that reflect Wasaga Beach's characteristics, themes, and narrative. Experiences preserve and celebrate the heritage, local cultures and traditions, natural surroundings, and coastal landscape. Through effective engagement, ongoing training, and capacity building with a broad base of stakeholders, new or enhanced legendary experiences can be developed.

TDMP Refresh Process – A comprehensive development process was followed. It included the following steps:

- Review reports, plans, and studies (Tourism Simcoe, RTO7, Destination Ontario & Canada)
- Obtain and review Wasaga Beach-specific tourism performance data (Simcoe County)
- Meetings and discussions with town staff, EDTAC, Simcoe County, RTO7
- Site visit with town staff and EDTAC members
- Two in-person community consultation sessions
- Senior town staff consultation sessions (Department Heads, Events Planning Group, Bylaw/Planning/Municipal Code staff)
- Fourteen key informant interviews (live and virtual)
- Development and presentation of Findings, Observations, and Implications to town staff and EDTAC for input and validation
- Development and presentation of Recommendations and Action Plan to town staff and EDTAC for input and validation
- Presentation of TDMP to Town Council

Finding and Observations

Throughout the planning process, numerous overarching Findings and Observations were identified; these included:

- Wasaga Beach continues to be a popular tourist destination:

2019	2022	Change-2019	2023	Change-2019
1,585,668	1,189,338	-4.4%	1,962,843	+20.9%

Source: Aggregate Visitor Visits – Wasaga Beach Mobile Phone Data. Simcoe County & BP Insights. Apr. 16, 2024.

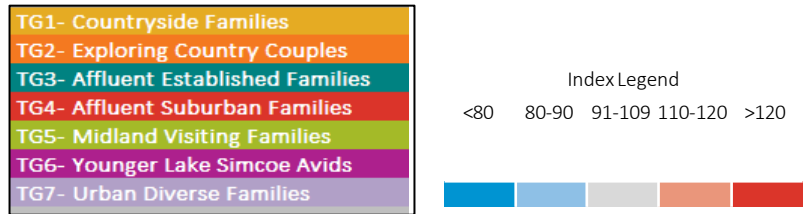
Note: 2019 was a benchmark year for global tourism visits to and within Canada and Ontario.

- Wasaga Beach has a growing population – people have chosen to live in the community to raise their family, retire, or own and enjoy a seasonal property.
- Citizens care about the place they call home and are passionate about preserving and protecting the community life they enjoy. A local's first visitor's second sentiment is foundational to future success.
- Elected officials and town staff are taking positive steps to enhance the lifestyles of citizens as well as the visitor's journey.
- Because of limited budgets, the town is currently challenged to meet all the demands of locals and tourists, and as a result, some service delivery and infrastructure improvements/maintenance suffer.
- Many communities of similar size and structure to Wasaga Beach in Ontario have successfully implemented a Municipal Accommodation Levy and, therefore, have new sources of revenue to meet escalating demands and responsibilities.
- Several community organizations add to the well-being of citizens and contribute to the visitor's experience:
 - Wasaga Society for the Arts
 - Wasaga Community Theatre
 - The Friends of Nancy Island & Wasaga Beach Park
- New resident and visitor infrastructure and amenities will enhance the visitor journey:
 - Arena, Library complex
 - High School/Theatre complex
 - Beachfront Development
 - Wayfinding Signage
- There is notoriety for having the world's longest fresh-water beach (14+ kilometres) and one of Ontario's most unique coastal dune ecosystems.
- Many tourism operators desire to enhance the attractiveness and appeal of their properties; however, others are happy with the status quo, which denigrates the appeal and reputation of the entire community.
- Wasaga Beach Provincial Park was once an attractive destination for Wasaga Beach residents and visitors. However, in recent years, the lack of investment has deteriorated the park's infrastructure and services.
- Community groups/associations and regular citizens are potential tourism experience providers who can help animate the Wasaga Beach narratives. These include Wasaga Beach's heritage, culture, arts, nature, and outdoor recreation themes.

- The current audience (see PRIZM Visitor Target Groups chart) is primarily day users of the beach in high season. They may not be interested in experiencing all the town has to offer. High-value guests, the preferred customers (see description on page. 5), could be included in the 2023 Wasaga Beach identified PRIZM segments. If prompted with compelling reasons to extend their stay and travel outside of high season, some identified visitors could stay overnight, enjoy the beach, participate in community events, and enjoy outdoor recreation activities like hiking, biking, paddling, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing. They also could visit and patronize local retailers and restaurants. These same target groups, excluding Urban Diverse Families, visited and more than likely stayed overnight in Collingwood in 2023.

Wasaga Beach, Collingwood Visitation by PRIZM Visitor Target Groups 2019, 2022, 2023*

PRIZM Profiles for Simcoe County & Index Legend



Index Legend		Lifestage	Wasaga Beach 2019	Wasaga Beach 2022	Wasaga Beach 2023	Collingwood 2019	Collingwood 2022	Collingwood 2023
Countryside Families	Middle-Aged to Older Families	Orange	Red	Grey	Red	Red	Red	Orange
Exploring Country Couples	Older to Mature Couples & Singles	Red	Red	Red with Star	Red	Red	Red	Red
Affluent Established Families	Older to Mature Families	Light Blue	Grey	Grey	Orange	Red	Red	Red
Affluent Suburban Families	Middle-Aged to Mature Families	Red	Red	Red with Star	Orange	Red	Red	Orange
Midland Visiting Families	Older Families & Couples	Light Blue	Dark Blue	Dark Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue
Younger Lake Simcoe Avids	Young Singles & Couples to Starter Families	Dark Blue	Dark Blue	Light Blue	Grey	Dark Blue	Dark Blue	Dark Blue
Urban Diverse Families	Starter Families to Middle-Aged Families	Red	Grey	Red with Star	Light Blue	Dark Blue	Dark Blue	Dark Blue

Note: STAR = Wasaga Beach Primary Visitor Target Groups. Index based on Unique Visitors.

*Source: Simcoe County & BP Insights. Apr. 16, 2024.

- Tourism today equates to a 10 to 14-week season and day-use reality; therefore, tourism’s economic power is not fully leveraged.

- Events, while a primary feature of Wasaga Beaches' efforts and resources have lost their appeal as a tourism motivator.
- The provincially owned Nancy Island Historic Site has fallen into disrepair and has lost its appeal as a place to visit. An excerpt from a letter posted in Barrie Today from the President of The Friends of Nancy Island and Wasaga Beach Park, Jan. 18, 2024, details the concerns.

“Eleven years ago, a new welcome centre was constructed to celebrate the battle's bicentennial with hundreds of re-enactors and included a visit from the full-scale replica of the USS Niagara, stationed in Erie, Pa. Since then, conditions on the island have deteriorated extensively. The lighthouse and bridge to the lighthouse have been closed for four years. The roofs of both the museum and theatre were leaking, and considerable damage was done to the interiors of both buildings. I am also concerned about what tourists will see if they can get to the island. The video shown in the theatre is 33 years old, and its depiction of Indigenous Canadians is not appropriate. Please note that I am not in any way critical of park staff. They are fantastic. Other than the 11-year-old welcome centre serving the park and town, the facilities created in 1967 need significant repairs.”

Recommendations and Action Plan

The Recommendations and Actions of the Tourism Destination Management Plan (TDMP) are based on findings and observations revealed through the discovery consultation sessions, current market dynamics, and the realities of a redefined tourism landscape. Four overarching themes emerged:

1. Citizens desire to preserve the place they call home. They see value in the lifestyle, amenities, and opportunities available; therefore, when it pertains to tourism development, embed the following principle into all activity:
 “A great place to live is a great place to visit.”
2. Be perceived as a tourism destination that offers family fun (however, our potential visitors define family).
3. Arts and Live Entertainment (focusing on music) is the narrative we want to recapture and own going forward.
4. New sustainable funding sources, including public and private sector investments, must be identified to support the TDMP implementation plan and responsibly grow Wasaga Beach’s visitor economy.

In addition, the identified Actions supplement initiatives accomplished and those in play within the community. The Actions consider Simcoe County’s research, specifically their visitor profile data, which has been put in the context of the desire for Wasaga Beach to evolve its current visitor base and focus on high-value guests.

The Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee and senior town staff have validated the DRAFT Recommendations and Actions, which are believed to be achievable over the next three years. Doing so will require sufficient staff resources and buy-in, determination, commitment, and focus from a broad base of stakeholders in and outside the tourism sector. This includes citizens, business operators, community groups, governments (elected officials/staff), and others.

Action Plan Legend:

WB=Wasaga Beach Staff, EDTAC = Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee, OP=Tourism Operators, GOVT=Government Partners, TO=Tourism Organizations, WBC=Wasaga Beach Citizens

June 2024 – March 2025	Role		
Recommendations	Actions	Role	Timing
<p>1. <i>Secure Engagement in and Endorsement of the 2024-2027 Tourism Destination Management Plan (TDMP)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will build engagement and endorsement on the premise that “if it's personal, it’s important.” Therefore, strive to personalize the actions and deliverables. • Take proactive steps to communicate, inform, and engage a broad base of individuals on the specifics of the TDMP and its action plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a TDMP Communications Plan • Facilitate public TDMP launch sessions framed in the Wasaga Beach 50th anniversary programming context (make it personal). • Develop a stakeholder/partner website or pages on the town website to house TDMP-related materials and relay details of 	<p>WB WB EDTAC</p> <p>WB</p>	<p>June July-Sep</p> <p>July</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate the community-first approach in all aspects of future tourism development. • Underpin development goals and actions by reinforcing tourism’s benefits and importance to the community’s future viability. 	<p>the strategy, including videos from the appropriate spokesperson.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a bi-monthly stakeholder/partner e-newsletter to keep constituents up to date on tourism-related actions and activities (make it personal). 	WB	Aug
<p>Stated Goals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Satisfactory understanding and engagement levels measured through the stakeholder survey. 2. Recruit at least ten representative community champions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplement public TDMP sessions with more intimate and informal sessions that target and engage specific community and neighbourhood groups, service clubs, etc., and recruit community champions (make it personal). Include facilitated discussions to understand these groups' needs and desires in the context of tourism development while identifying ways these groups and individuals can contribute to meeting the TDMP goals and actions. 	WB EDTAC	Sep-Oct
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize municipal social media to extend the reach of strategy implementation details. 	WB	Sept
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and distribute a DID YOU KNOW tourism public survey that provides a brief overview of the TDMP and solicits (polls) suggested ways individuals can get involved: 	WB	Oct
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Quantify communication success to ensure messaging is resonating. • Consider other actions as part of a communications plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Messages in local papers 	WB EDTAC	Oct

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work with WBPP to encourage improvements to park services, facilities, and programming. Address identified infrastructure gaps, such as traffic control, EV charging stations, parking, and animation of Main Street. <p>Stated Goals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Hold one (2024) and three (2025) community information/input meetings through Dec 2025. Continue to set aside a budget for the Wasaga Beach Wayfinding Strategy each year. Continue the Community Beautification Action Plan. Prepare a Long-Range Infrastructure/Service Master Plan by Sept 2025. Continue the dialogue with the Ontario Government and WBPP to secure timely solutions to address the service/infrastructure gaps at WBPP with clear direction by March 2025. 	<p>Include this message as part of all tourism communications.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investments in the beachfront development will only add value for residents and appeal to visitors. Continue the process to make this vital project a reality. Town officials must continue engaging residents in planning discussions about this and other capital investments through ongoing community meetings, surveys, and focus groups. This will help ensure continued community endorsement and support for projects beyond scheduled election cycles or other genuine and perceived realities. Consider framing future development plans and infrastructure and services gaps in a 50th-anniversary context with umbrella co-branding, such as “Success for the Next 50” or “Building for the Next 50”. Solicit support from government partners to address community infrastructure and services gaps by creating a long-term Visitor Services Infrastructure and Services Master Plan. Partner with WBPP to address service/infrastructure gaps, including facility maintenance and repair, regular garbage collection, and added services (water fountains, shelters, trail/info signage, interpretive guides, 	<p>WB WBC</p> <p>WB</p> <p>WB GOVT</p> <p>WBPP WB EDTAC</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>July</p> <p>2024-2027</p> <p>2024-2027</p>
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	third-party service/amenity license agreement for partners to operate in the park, etc.).		
<p>4. Implement a Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize exploring the introduction of a municipal-led accommodation levy. • Include new Short-Term Rental guidelines and policies as part of this recommendation. • In developing new municipal codes and bylaws (in the process now), consider the visitor and tourism operator realities by introducing guidelines that enhance the visitor journey and encourage businesses to comply with new standards and guidelines – new bylaws are simplified, more user/operator friendly and outcome-driven vs. punitive and prohibitive. • Consider framing this messaging under 50th-anniversary co-branding. • <p>Stated Goals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce the Wasaga Beach MAT in Spring 2025. 2. Include the Wasaga Beach Short-term Rental plan in the MAT introduction (Spring 2025). 3. The renewed Wasaga Beach Codes and Bylaws for the tourism sector should be included in the MAT introduction (Spring 2025). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take steps to introduce a municipal-led accommodation levy. Steps include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Open and transparent dialogue with tourism stakeholders and accommodation operators. ○ Understand best practices from other Ontario communities ○ Apply learning to a Made-in-Wasaga MAT Strategy and Implementation Plan. • Partner with Simcoe County as they work with other municipalities (Midland, Collingwood, Blue Mountains, etc.) to introduce municipal levies. • Finalize the details of the model, including a mechanism to collect and distribute funds and, with stakeholder approval, take steps to implement. • Finalize the Short-Term Rental (STR) Strategy, act on the findings, and implement the recommendations. • Should the MAT move forward, the STR policies, new municipal code, and bylaws could be introduced in concert with the MAT and the 50th Anniversary theme (Success for the Next 50). Accommodation Levy Calculation – Example 1047 rooms available in 2018* 	WB EDTAC OP GP GOVT	July
		WB EDTA C	July
		WB	Nov
		WB	Nov
		WB EDTAC	Nov

	<p>1047 rms sold @ 50% occupancy=523.5 rm nights 525.5 rms @ \$200=\$104,700 per night \$104,700 rm nights x 365 nights=\$38,215,500 \$38,215,500 x 4%=\$1,528,620 *Per Simcoe County. It does not include STR. Add avg. of 570** STR units available per night, and the levy revenue jumps to \$2,360,820 **WB unit count, Sept 2023</p>		
<p>5. Finalize and Implement the Arts and Entertainment Action Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building on the desire to enhance residents’ lifestyles while at the same time attracting high-value guests, identify actions that leverage and reinforce Wasaga Beaches’ family entertainment and music narrative by developing and implementing an Arts and Entertainment Action Plan. • Regarding audience and participant attraction, consider the benefits of taking a less-is-more philosophy versus the more-the-merrier approach taken in the past (a consideration expressed by residents). <p>Stated Goals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce the Arts and Entertainment Action Plan as part of the TDMP in September 2024. 2. Identify arts and entertainment audience goals utilizing refined market data and high-value guest profiles for 2025 and 2026. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events team to continue to refine their Action Plan by building on their desire to: • Leverage the once-owned entertainment centre legacy of WB. • Successfully execute various annual attractive and inclusive events to make Beach One a more attractive place for residents and visitors. • Utilize the variety of existing and planned indoor and outdoor community venues to host year-round multi-disciplinary entertainment events and activities. • Enhance WB brand awareness by featuring an annual lineup of high-caliber entertainment options. • Position WB as a music-centric destination to increase year-round tourism. • Align the plan with the broader vision of the Tourism Destination Management Plan. • Deliver lifestyle benefits to WB citizens, economic benefits to WB businesses, and memorable experiences to WB visitors. • Regularly capture citizen and visitor feedback to help 	WB	Sept

	<p>continually enhance the WB entertainment activity calendar.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a multi-year calendar of events to maximize efficiencies of staff and supplier resources, scheduling, booking, communications, and execution. • Proactively seek out and secure long-term partnerships (producers, sponsors, suppliers, etc.) that supplement the goals of activities of the action plan. 		
<p>6. Foster the Creation of New Asset-Based Visitor Experiences, emphasizing developing experiences in off-peak tourism seasons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map and access the wealth of local knowledge and skills AND those invisible assets that have yet to be valued or fully leveraged. • Take proactive steps to leverage the power of the themes through the development of purchasable, curated, visitor-friendly tourism experiences. • This is a three-step process: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Optimize the potential of existing theme-related experiences through enhancement and partner promotion (Tourism Simcoe County, RTO7). 2. Fill gaps in themed-related visitor experiences using them as destination attractors. 3. Recruit, train, and empower a network of theme-related experience providers (residents). 4. Provide seed funding to help individuals get their experiences to market (Tourism Development Grants). <p>Stated Goals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the current list of experiences on offer and put them on the Town tourism website by Sept 2024. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By theme, inventory existing visitor experiences and opportunities where high-value guests can purchase and experience compelling articulations of the featured themes. Ensure these experiences are featured on the Wasaga Beach website, Tourism Simcoe County and RTO7 promotional vehicles, operator websites, and social media channels. • Identify gaps in curated, on-theme, purchasable experiences. Gaps identify where the creation of new visitor experiences is needed—opportunities for high-value guests to purchase compelling experiences to attract them to the community for extended stays at times of the year when there is capacity (non-peak season). • New experiences embrace regenerative tourism principles; they enhance local economies using local products and services, are 	<p>WB OP GOVT</p> <p>WB GP</p> <p>WB OP GP WBC</p>	<p>Feb – May 2025</p> <p>Feb – May 2025</p> <p>Feb – May 2025</p>

<p>2. Identify experience gaps by theme and solicit participation from qualified experience providers by Dec 2024.</p> <p>3. Deliver experiential tourism training to a list of potential experience providers by April 2025.</p> <p>4. Have ten new or enhanced on-theme visitor experiences ready to go to market in May 2025 and grow this number to eighteen by January 2026.</p>	<p>frictionless, minimize carbon footprint on the landscape, present the cultures and traditions of host communities through connections with local people, are inclusive and welcoming to all, consider visitor needs, and restore ecosystems and community infrastructure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and equip new experience providers to deliver compelling visitor experiences using a third-party training resource (RTO7). • Prioritize experiential development opportunities by theme, with potential experiences that are near market-ready and offered off-season to be fostered first. 	<p>WB WBC OP GP</p> <p>WB</p>	<p>Feb – May 2025</p> <p>May 2025</p>
<p>7. Ground future tourism development in regenerative tourism practices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A regenerative approach to tourism development involves several elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Connecting people and their place in a deep, purposeful, and meaningful relationship. 2. Putting that shared purpose into action by developing hosting experiences and infrastructure enlivened by local story, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build tourism development on regenerative tourism principles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Greater interest in the well-being of communities/residents vs. visitation growth/ profit. ○ A focus on economics and the well-being of 	<p>WB EDTAC OP</p>	<p>Jan 2025 - March 2027</p>

<p>learning, and care.</p> <p>3. Working in a manner that grows capacity for flourishing and resilience among people, businesses, communities, and ecologies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regenerative development builds people's capability to engage in a continuous and healthy relationship with the place where they live. There is constant learning and feedback so that all aspects of the system (natural, cultural, and economic) are an integral part of life in this place—co-evolution. <p>REGENERATIVE VISION: Wasaga Beach is a community of citizens and visitors committed to embracing regenerative tourism practices that leave our unique and beautiful place with a healthier environment, a happier community, and a more robust hosting economy. (Adapted from Canmore, Alberta’s Regenerative Tourism Framework)</p> <p>Stated Goals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement an annual schedule of four regenerative tourism training opportunities. 2. Twice yearly, train senior town staff in regenerative tourism development at the community level. 3. Once community regenerative tourism benchmarks have been identified, meet all identified metrics within two years of implementation. 	<p>Wasaga Beaches' people and places to measure success.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sourcing locally, creating meaningful connections in safe and supportive settings, and protecting the environment through sustainable and responsible development and business operations. ○ Encourages community-building, job generation, paths to reconciliation, and protection of natural assets. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Throughout the planning process, there was consensus that the strategy should embrace regenerative tourism principles; ongoing dialogue and training are required to support a greater understanding that turns knowledge into action. Therefore, learning opportunities should be implemented for community leaders and operators to equip them to integrate regenerative actions into their situations and communities. • Similarly, Town staff should be included in community-led regenerative tourism training opportunities through participation in Tourism Impact Conferences, best practice missions, etc. • Cooperatively and collaboratively (all involved) identify regenerative development benchmarks to 	<p>WB OP WBC</p> <p>WB</p> <p>WB OP WBC</p>	<p>Feb 2025</p> <p>Spring 2025</p> <p>April 2025</p>
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	<p>meet the ideals articulated in Regenerative Vision. For example, measure citizen sentiment, landscape integrity, cultural/social prosperity, inclusion and equity, and economic contribution through various research techniques.</p>	EDTAC	
<p>8. Continue to Pursue Activities to reimagine the Nancy Island Historic Site.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is value in reimagining Nancy Island as a tourism demand generator, and therefore, every effort must be made to secure the needed attention and resources to bring this once attractive provincial historic site back to life. • While the interest in history may be waning, especially among future audiences, many historic sites have creatively reimagined themselves to ensure they preserve, protect, and relay historical significance to future generations. For example: • The Fortress at Louisbourg, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. https://www.cbisland.com/blog/history-and-unspoiled-natural-beauty-at-louisbourg/ • The Rooms, St. John’s Newfoundland and Labrador. https://www.therooms.ca/exhibits/always/connections-this-place-and-its-early-peoples • Niagara Parks Power Station, Niagara Falls, Ontario https://www.niagaraparks.com/visit/attractions/niagara-parks-power-station 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to keep the conversation going among the senior leadership of the Town of Wasaga Beach, Simcoe County, local MPP and MP, RTO7, Friends of Nancy Island and Wasaga Beach Park, Ontario Parks, Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport and others to secure commitments to study and reimagine what a revived Nancy Island Historic site could become. • In the short term, continue to advocate for the provincial government to invest in immediate, low-cost and high-impact improvements to the site, such as necessary repairs, façade improvements and a fresh coat of paint. Concurrently, consider securing the services of a cultural consulting firm to do a preliminary assessment of the site, evaluate its potential, and cast a vision for the site based on today’s consumer and historic site realities and trends. • Based on the findings of this study, proceed as appropriate. 	<p>WB GOVT TO</p> <p>WB EDTAC GOVT TO</p> <p>WB GOVT</p>	<p>2024-2025</p> <p>2024</p> <p>2025</p>