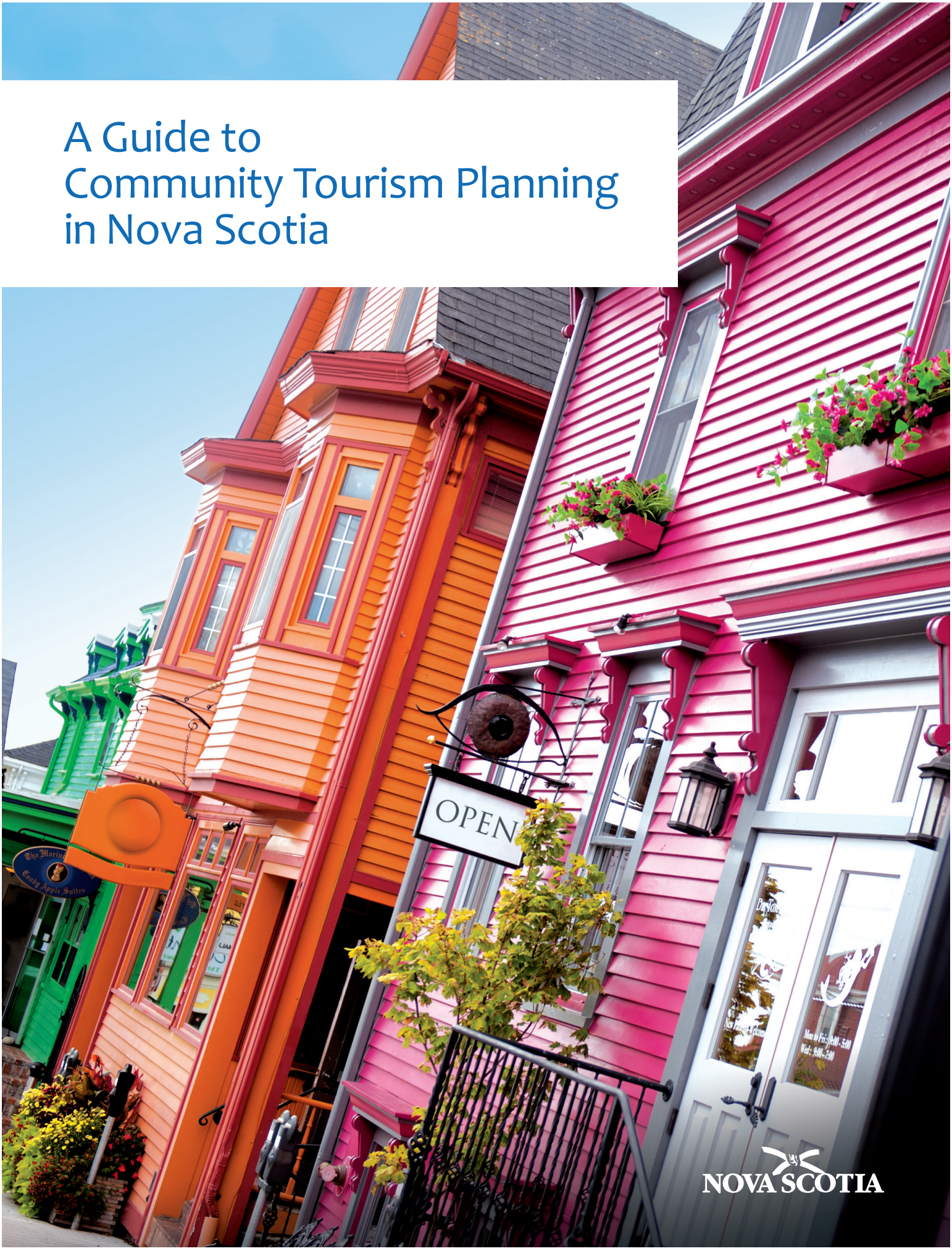
A Guide to Community Tourism Planning in Nova Scotia



A GUIDE TO COMMUNITY TOURISM PLANNING IN NOVA SCOTIA

Prepared by:
The Economic Planning Group of Canada

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The information and analysis contained herein is intended to be general and represents the research of the authors and should in no way be construed as being definitive or as being official or unofficial policy of any government body. Any reliance on the Guide shall be at the reader's own risk.

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Part 1: Introduction

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Tourism is important to many communities across Nova Scotia. It helps rural communities diversify their economic base, creates jobs for all ages and provides customers for local businesses, helping to make them sustainable.

Communities can influence the type and amount of tourism they get by building on their appeals and resources to offer quality experiences that are of interest to travellers. And, with a mix of the right experiences, facilities and services, travellers can be encouraged to stay overnight in your community meaning higher spending and more economic activity.

Achieving all of this is much easier if your community has a tourism plan – a document that sets out what you are trying to achieve and the actions needed to get there.

This guide will help you prepare a community tourism plan. It is a 'how to' document for a community tourism committee or association, outlining the steps to be taken in doing such a plan.

This guide is one of a series commissioned by the Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism. They are designed to assist Nova Scotians in establishing tourism businesses and planning for the delivery of tourism services. These guides can be found at: http://novascotiatourismagency.ca/business-development-guides .

CONTENTS OF THE GUIDE

This guide explores topics important in planning for tourism in your community and implementing actions that will help make tourism a success. It will guide you through the process of preparing a community tourism plan and help you identify opportunities and challenges your community might face. It will also help you decide whether tourism has potential for your community.

The guide is in three parts, covering the following topics:

Part 1: Introduction

- Tourism in Nova Scotia and its value
- The tourism marketplace today

Part 2: Preparing the Plan

- Getting started with developing a community tourism plan
- Assessing the existing situation
- Setting goals and objectives for tourism, identifying opportunities and priorities for action
- Developing action plans for implementation

Part 3: Implementation

- Implementing your plan
- Monitoring and updating
- Marketing your community for tourism

Completed worksheets throughout the guide provide examples for a 'fictional' Nova Scotia community. Blank worksheets for you to use are in the appendices.

WHY DO YOU NEED A COMMUNITY TOURISM PLAN?

Many rural communities are seeking to diversify their economic base to reduce their dependency on resource-based sectors and provide employment opportunities. Tourism is often identified as an economic activity that can play a major role in achieving these objectives. Compared to many economic sectors, tourism is a 'clean' industry and can be developed with minimal impacts on the environment and the quality of life in the community.

But not all communities are suited to tourism and not all communities want tourism. Some communities are not well-located for tourism (e.g. too far from main travel routes) and/or have limited appeals to visitors. In some communities, some residents may be opposed to tourism if they think more visitors might negatively impact their quality of life.

Tourism can have negative impacts. Pressure on infrastructure (parking, roads, services), competition with visitors for recreational resources and environmental impacts are some examples.

A tourism plan can help your community get the most out of tourism by maximizing the benefits and minimizing the costs and negative impacts. Without a plan, there is no common vision or goals for tourism and opportunities may be overlooked. And the tourism effort that does occur may not be best suited to the expectations and interests of today's travellers.

SHOULD YOU PREPARE YOUR OWN COMMUNITY TOURISM PLAN?

The guide talks about the 'do it yourself' approach to preparing a community tourism plan so it is useful for communities having limited budgets with which to retain outside assistance. However, doing it yourself requires a substantial commitment of time and resources and may not be realistic.

Think about the local people available and how much of a time commitment they might be prepared to make. And, consider how complex the issues might be in planning for tourism in your community before deciding which approach is best. You could also seek the opinion of local/regional economic development staff, staff of the Nova Scotia Tourism Agency, or the Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia (TIANS) or your Regional Tourism Industry Association.

If you do decide to do your own community tourism plan, keep it simple and focus on a few core opportunities and needs. You can always address other issues at a later date.

Consider hiring a professional knowledgeable about tourism to help you. They could act as a facilitator, helping your local committee through the process. Or, they could prepare the entire plan. If you take this latter approach, your committee should still be involved throughout the process since it is critical that you believe in, and take ownership of, the final strategy.

And, don't forget there are resources available to help you. Along with this guide, the Nova Scotia Tourism Agency has several other tool kits and lots of data and insights on the tourism marketplace. You could also retain someone knowledgeable about tourism to 'mystery shop' your community and provide their perspectives on what your strengths and weaknesses are and what needs to be done.

CHAPTER 2: THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

This chapter provides an overview of tourism in Nova Scotia and today's tourism marketplace. It also explores the building blocks that go into making a tourism destination.

WHAT IS TOURISM?

Having a common understanding of tourism is an important place to start.

Simply put, tourism is all about people who are travelling to and staying in places away from their home. Tourism can involve travel for business, for pleasure, to visit friends and relatives or for other reasons such as shopping or personal business.

In Canada, an important factor in deciding if someone is a tourist or not is where they have come from and/or how far they are travelling. Anyone crossing an international border into Canada, no matter the distance travelled, is a tourist.

For Canadians travelling within Canada, all overnight trips are considered tourism. And, anyone travelling out-of- town and forty kilometres or more one way from home on a same-day trip is a tourist. There are exceptions - travel to work, for education, for military purposes, migration, and routine trips (i.e. those made at least once a month) are not tourism.

SOME EXAMPLES OF TOURISM IN NOVA SCOTIA

- An Antigonish resident travelling to Halifax for a business meeting that is not a regular/routine meeting.
- A hockey team travelling from Yarmouth to Sydney for a weekend tournament.
- A Charlottetown, PEI resident taking the ferry to Pictou for the weekend.
- A Halifax resident travelling to the Annapolis Valley to shop for wine and fresh local produce.
- A Toronto businessman flying into Halifax for the day to attend a meeting.
- A Lunenburg resident who drives into Halifax for dinner and a Moosehead's game.

Tourism spending is the spending of tourists, as defined above, on/at:

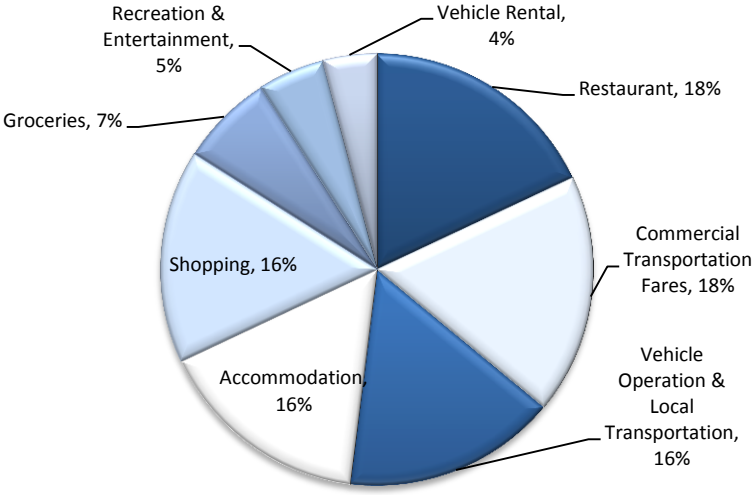
- Transportation (air, rail, water, taxis, vehicle rental, interurban, charter & tour buses, vehicle repairs and fuel)
- Accommodation, including hotels, motels, inns, B&Bs, cottages and campgrounds
- Food and beverage services – restaurants and licensed establishments
- Recreation and entertainment including cultural, natural and historical attractions and festivals and events
- Travel agencies
- Items purchased in advance of the trip for the trip such as luggage, motorhomes, tents
- Items such as groceries, liquor, clothing, maps and souvenirs, crafts

TOURISM IN NOVA SCOTIA

TOURISM REVENUES IN NOVA SCOTIA

Tourism in Nova Scotia is big business. In 2010, total tourism spending was $2.1 billion with $1.18 billion or 58% generated by non-resident visitors; the balance was from Nova Scotians travelling within the province. Tourism supports 24,000 jobs in the province. It represented 2% of all economic activity in the province in 2010.

Nova Scotia Tourism Revenue by Sector, 2010



The $2.1 billion in spending is spread around many businesses, with the largest percentage going to restaurants, as illustrated in the pie chart.

The spending of tourists at these businesses flows through many sectors of the provincial economy, resulting in:

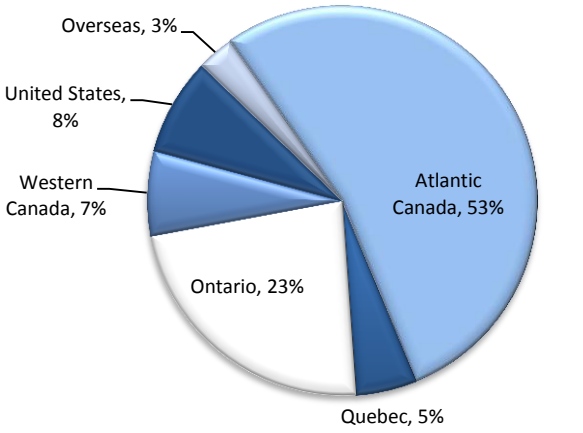
- $892 million in total household income
- $131 million in provincial tax receipts
- $130 million in federal tax receipts
- $24.3 million in tourism-related municipal tax receipts

VISITORS TO NOVA SCOTIA

In 2012, there were 2 million visitors from outside the province. Two thirds of all visitors came during May to October.

Almost 90% of visitors were from Canada with 53% from elsewhere in Atlantic Canada. The Nova Scotia Tourism Agency reports on tourism activity in the province. Up-to-date information can be found at: http://novascotiatourismagency.ca/research

Origins of Visitors to Nova Scotia, 2012



NSTA also conducts a Visitor Exit Survey (VES) every few years. This survey ***is only for visitors from outside Nova Scotia*** and includes pleasure travellers as well as those visiting friends and relatives and travelling for business. It provides insights into visitors to the province such as:

- How long they stay
- How much they spend
- What motivated their trip to Nova Scotia
- What they do and see while in the province
- Demographics (age, income, family characteristics)

The most recent Visitor Exit Survey was in 2010. The detailed findings can be found at: http://novascotiatourismagency.ca/visitor-exit-survey-results. Some key findings are:

- The average party was 2.1 persons; those travelling by car and recreational vehicle had larger party sizes.
- Almost 50% of visitor parties included someone 55 years and older.
- The average length of stay in Nova Scotia was 5.1 nights.
    - Visitors from overseas and from Western Canada stayed the longest – over 8 nights
    - Visitors from elsewhere in Atlantic Canada had the shortest stays – 2.9 nights
- On average, visitors to Nova Scotia spent $1,052 per party or $98 per person per day during their visit.
    - Visitors from overseas had the highest level of spending, followed by those from Western Canada
    - Visitors from elsewhere in Atlantic Canada had the lowest level of spending
- Visiting friends and relatives was the most common trip purpose:
    - 40% were in Nova Scotia to visit friends and relatives
    - 26% were on vacation/pleasure trips
    - 19% were on business/convention trips
    - 8% were here for other reasons such as shopping, attending a sports event
- Outdoor activities were the most popular
    - 39% participated in outdoor activities, the most common being coastal sightseeing, hiking, and beach exploring
    - 29% went to craft shops/studios
    - 25% went to museums/historic sites
- Between June and November, 2010, 81% of pleasure travellers were repeat visitors; only 19% were first time visitors. For the full 2010 year, 87% of all visitors had been to Nova Scotia before.
- 60% used personal electronic devices to find information about Nova Scotia.
- Visitor satisfaction with Nova Scotia was high and visitors were highly likely to recommend Nova Scotia to others.

High Yield Market Segments

The 2010 Visitor Exit Survey revealed three important high yield, activity- and travel motivation-based market segments of visitors from outside the province. These are outdoor enthusiasts, cultural enthusiasts and culinary enthusiasts. The table below describes key characteristics of these market segments compared to the average pleasure traveller.

Discover more about Nova Scotia's visitor segments at: http://novascotiatourismagency.ca/visitor-segments.

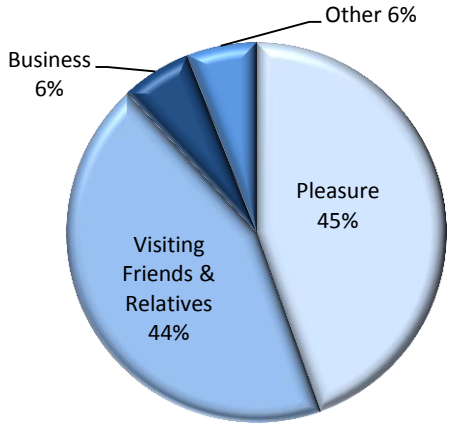
Characteristics of Activity-based High Yield Market Segments				
	Outdoor Enthusiasts	**Cultural Enthusiasts**	**Culinary Enthusiasts**	**Average Pleasure Traveller**
Percent of Pleasure Visitors	16%	8%	5%	100%
Average Spending per Party	$1,960	$2,130	$2,030	$1,280
Average Length of Stay	10.5 nights	7.5 nights	7.5 nights	5.8 nights
Percent Completed University	64%	53%	62%	51%
Percent with Household Income above $80,000	54%	49%	53%	46%
Most Popular Activities	Any Outdoor Activity (100%) Beach Exploring (81%) Hiking (75%) Coastal sightseeing (71%) Craft shops (64%) Nature Observing (63%) Museums (62%)	Craft Shops (92%) Museums (87%) Halifax Waterfront (70%) Any Outdoor Activity (72%) Art Galleries (49%)	Farm/Food producers (82%) Halifax Waterfront (64%) Craft Shops (57%) Any Outdoor Activity (63%) Museums (52%) Winery (41%)	Any Outdoor Activity (53%) Halifax waterfront (50%) Craft shops (40%) Museums (36%)

Source: Tourism Research, 2010 Visitor Exit Survey Research Bulletins; (For visitors from outside Nova Scotia) http://novascotiatourismagency.ca/visitor-segments.

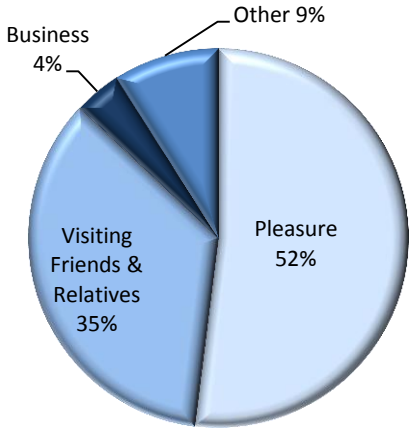
NOVA SCOTIANS TRAVELLING WITHIN THE PROVINCE

Nova Scotians travelling within the province are an important tourism market for regions and communities. In 2010, Nova Scotians made 2 million overnight trips and 4.9 million same day trips around the province. A significant portion of these trips are for pleasure, as illustrated:

Overnight Trips in Nova Scotia by Nova Scotia Residents, 2010



Same Day Trips in Nova Scotia by Nova Scotia Residents, 2010



WHO'S WHO IN NOVA SCOTIA TOURISM

There are many organizations, government departments and agencies involved in tourism in Nova Scotia. All offer insights and information and can work with you in different ways to help grow tourism to your community. They include:

- Nova Scotia Tourism Agency (http://novascotiatourismagency.ca/), responsible for:
  - sales, marketing, partnerships and travel media relations
  - product and experience development
  - market research and intelligence

- Nova Scotia Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism (http://www.gov.ns.ca/econ/tourism/) responsible for economic development as well as these tourism functions:
  - quality assurance and licensing
  - industry training and development
  - provincial visitor services (visitor information centres)
  - economic impact analysis and statistics
  - tourist attraction signage

- TIANS - Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia (www.tians.org) represents the industry and advocates on its behalf.

- NSTHRC - Nova Scotia Tourism Human Resource Council; (www.tourismhrc.com) provides professional human resource development for the province's tourism industry.

- Regional tourism industry associations market Nova Scotia's tourism regions:
  - Destination Southwest Nova Association (www.novascotiabackyard.com)
  - Destination Halifax (www.destinationhalifax.com)
  - Destination Cape Breton Association (www.cbisland.com)
  - Central Nova Tourist Association (www.centralnovascotia.com)
  - Destination Eastern and Northumberland Shores (www.visitdeans.ca)

- Municipal, county, sub-regional and sector tourism associations (e.g. Taste of Nova Scotia) with varying responsibilities that can include marketing, visitor information services, product development and packaging.

- Regional Enterprise Networks that bring together business communities, the province, municipalities and other groups involved in economic development.

- ACOA – Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (www.acoa-apeca.gc.ca) – a federal government economic development organization that works with businesses, organizations and other levels of government to help create economic activity and employment.

- ECBC – Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation (http://www.ecbc-secb.gc.ca/index_intro.php) is a federal Crown corporation created to promote and assist the financing and development of Cape Breton Island and the Mulgrave area. ECBC's mandate includes tourism.

- ACTP – Atlantic Canada Tourism Partnership (www.actp-ptca.ca) – a partnership of the four Atlantic provinces and ACOA to grow the tourism industry in the region through marketing efforts outside of Canada, specifically in the United States and key overseas markets.

NOVA SCOTIA'S TOURISM STRATEGY

In 2011, a new collaborative approach between government and industry was developed, leading to the establishment of the Nova Scotia Tourism Agency (NSTA).

Working with industry, NSTA developed a new five year strategy for tourism http://novascotiatourismagency.ca/tourism-strategy-Nova-Scotia). The primary goal of the strategy is "more visitors, who spend more and stay longer" (Nova Scotia Tourism Strategy, 2013, page 3). We know that first time visitors tend to travel more throughout the province, spending 42% more than repeat visitors and twice as much on accommodation. That is where the growth potential lies; research shows that once people visit Nova Scotia they tend to come back.

Five priorities are identified in the strategy to guide direction and drive growth. They are:

1. Leadership & Collaboration
2. Inspirational Strategic Marketing
3. Evidence-based decision making
4. Higher-quality products and experiences
5. Improved access to Nova Scotia and throughout the province

WORDS OF ADVICE

When planning for tourism in your community, make sure you are familiar with the provincial tourism strategy and consider the opportunities and priorities it suggests.

Your community tourism plan should be "in sync" with the provincial strategy as well as the priorities of your regional tourism association – this will make things much easier when you are looking for support and assistance.

The strategy offers the following insights into priority directions for tourism in Nova Scotia:

- The province is targeting travellers as opposed to 'tourists'. Travellers are curious by nature and seek out memorable experiences they can immerse themselves in. Nova Scotia is generally seen as a peaceful, relaxing vacation by the sea. That is a good starting point. The opportunity is to build on that existing perception and make Nova Scotia a place for exploration and discovery. Our market is the outdoor enthusiast – not the extreme adventurer but the "soft adventurer" who appreciates local culture and cuisine after a day spent hiking or whale watching.

- ***Nova Scotia is the spirit of the perfect road trip*** is the positioning statement. *This is* the promise to our travellers and defines what we say and do to create desire among potential visitors. It is all about freedom and exploration.

- Building on Nova Scotia's tourism icons to attract visitors and enhance market appeal is an important element of the strategy.

Nova Scotia Tourism Brand Guidelines can be found at http://novascotiatourismagency.ca/brand-kit-and-images. They indicate:

- Three ***brand pillars*** bring the positioning to life by connecting the desires with the genuine Nova Scotia experience. They are:
  - Discovery (Place)
  - Freedom (Spirit)
  - Engagement (People/Culture)

- With an emphasis on the first-time visitor, provincial marketing efforts and spending will be focused outside Nova Scotia and Atlantic Canada. The geographic target markets for Nova Scotia are:
  - Canada – Ontario, Quebec, Maritimes
  - United States – Mid-Atlantic, New England
  - Overseas – UK, Germany

THE TOURISM MARKETPLACE TODAY

Tourism today is a very competitive industry, on the international scene as well as across Canada and in Atlantic Canada.

Across the world, travel is continuing to grow, driven by growing middle classes in emerging economies such as China, India, Brazil and Mexico. According to the World Tourism Organization (Tourism Towards 2030: Global Overview, October 2011), emerging economy destinations are growing much faster than established destinations—China, Vietnam, Dubai, Turkey and Brazil are just some examples of destinations attracting an increasing share of the international travel market. And cruising has become a mega 'destination' in its own right. The traditional destinations such as the US and Europe are facing challenges in sharing in this growth in international travel but seem to be holding their own.

Canada has struggled with its position in the international travel market, in no small part due to a significant decline in US visitation over the past ten years. High air travel costs (particularly within the country), price disadvantages (due to higher prices and a strong Canadian dollar) and a lack of pressing reasons to visit Canada now (even though it is high on lists of desirable places to visit) all play a role. As well, funds available for marketing Canada continue to decline while our competitors such as the USA, UK and Australia are increasing their marketing budgets. This makes it ever more important for us to emphasize the experiences we have to offer and to deliver on the expectation with quality service.

Canadians are travelling more and more – both within Canada and to international destinations. According to Statistics Canada, Canadians made 317 million trips within the country in 2011, up 48% from 214.5 million in 2008. Travel abroad (to US and overseas destinations) by Canadians increased from 19.2 million overnight trips in 2000 to 26.2 million trips in 2009, an increase of 36%.

Nova Scotia has had its own challenges although the province has fared better than Canada as a whole. There has been a steady decline in US visitation but an increase in visitors from other parts of Canada. The province's new tourism strategy introduced in 2012/2013 is giving more attention to attracting first time visitors from outside the region in efforts to reverse this trend.

The Internet has played a major role in the changes in international tourism patterns. Potential travellers can research destinations around the world – check out the experiences offered, compare prices, find out what other travellers have to say and, once a decision is made, easily book all elements of their trip – all from the comfort of their own home. When combined with a desire to explore new and different destinations and cheaper international air fares, the Internet has fundamentally changed the travel marketplace. This is a major factor in today's very competitive travel marketplace.

Some key trends in the travel marketplace are:

- Growth in the use of the Internet for both travel research and booking:
    - PhoCusWright reports that online leisure bookings in the US represented 40% of total leisure bookings in 2012.
    - YStats.com forecasts in their Global Online Travel Report, 2012 that travel booked online will represent 1/3 of the total global travel market value in 2012.
    - ITB's World Travel Trends Report (2012/2013) notes that the first Internet generation is now reaching 18 – they have never known a world without the Internet. The Internet will continue to fundamentally change how consumers plan and purchase their travel.

- Growth in the use of social media and smart devices:
    - 85% of travellers use smart devices of some kind while travelling:
        - For sharing travel experiences and photos – both good and bad
        - For getting information and directions while travelling
        - For making reservations and purchases
        - For keeping connected
    - PhoCusWright also reported in a 2011 survey that 16% of mobile device users used their device to shop for trips, up from 11% in 2010. In a 2010 survey, Atmosphere Research Group reported that 40% of smart phone users intended to use their mobile device to book a hotel stay; respondents indicated they were more likely use mobile devices to make same day travel arrangements such as making restaurant reservations.

- Consumers are relying more and more on personal information and recommendations on commercial and social websites. ITB's World Travel Trends Report indicates that TripAdvisor has 50 million users monthly!

- The consumer is now shaping and controlling the marketplace; so engaging with them and building relationships is crucial. It also means focusing on wants not needs and promoting experiences, not facilities.

- Travellers are looking for experiences that are meaningful, offer something a bit different, a chance to learn and connect with other people, and, most importantly, to create memories. Some examples of these types of experiences in Nova Scotia are:
    - Living Wharves program in Yarmouth & Acadian Shores
    - Cooking on the Farm with the Kilted Chef
    - Dulsing We Will Go (Fundy Adventures)

- The baby boomers have had a major impact on travel for the past 40 years and will continue to do so for the next 15 to 20 years. They are now in or close to retirement. Travel has always been part of their life and they now have more time (though perhaps not as much money as they had hoped) to enjoy it. Destinations and businesses wanting to attract this market segment will need to pay increasing attention to addressing accessibility issues.

Travel Propensity by Demographic Segment
(US Leisure Travellers; Source: US Travel Association)

Demographic Market	% of US Leisure Travellers	# of Leisure Trips per Year
Gen Y (born after 1980)	12%	3.9
Gen X (born '65 – '80)	31%	3.5
Young Boomers (born '55 – '64)	21%	4.1
Older Boomers (born '46 – '54)	15%	4.4
Mature (born pre 1946)	21%	4.1

- The tourist of tomorrow is already here – the Youth (18 – 24); Generation Y and Generation X markets are significant segments of the travel market.
    - Deloitte's semi-annual publication on Canada's tourism industry, 'Navigate' (Winter 2010) reported that over 50% of youth surveyed said that travel was one of the most important things in their lives. The youth market planned to take 2 trips in Canada in the next year, more than any other age segment, with 11% planning 5 trips or more.
    - These are tech savvy generations (particularly the first two) – never separated from their smart devices and in constant communication with friends.
    - Those with families are very family-centric, and seek travel experiences that the whole family can enjoy.
    - They have a strong interest in the environment, local foods and cultures.
    - They seek adventure when they travel.

- Another important market for the future is New Canadians and their visiting friends and relatives who represent new international markets for Canada and its provinces. Reaching these markets means making an effort to understand their wants and interests, and targeted marketing. Parks Canada's Learn to Camp program which provides all the necessary camping equipment along with instruction, has illustrated how successful an effort to reach New Canadians can be.

- Interest in travel associated with cuisine is strong. Deloitte's 'Navigate' (Summer 2012), reports that 35% of Canadians surveyed would travel primarily for a culinary purpose and 50% consider food and beverage choices when narrowing down their destination decision. The younger markets, 25 – 34 years, are the segment most influenced by the food and beverage offerings at vacation destinations.

Some growth travel market segments are identified in the box.

RANDALL TRAVEL MARKETING: TOP TRENDS IN TRAVEL & TOURISM, JUNE 2012

Growth Travel Market Segments

Leisure travel
Medical tourism
Sports
Weddings/reunions
Food/Culinary
Youth
Film
Military
Multi-generational
Hobbies
Wildlife
LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender)
Off-season
Girlfriend getaways and mencations
BRIC (Brazil, India, China)
Nakations

WHAT MAKES A TOURISM DESTINATION?

In today's competitive marketplace, destinations need to deliver on a number of critical fronts if they are to be successful. First, they need to understand what the primary motivator is to attract visitors to their community – something compelling that catches the visitor's attention. To differentiate themselves from the competition, destinations need to be well-themed, have a brand that reflects their primary motivator and resonates with consumers, and they must successfully deliver on their brand promise.

WHAT IS A BRAND

A brand is a name and symbol or design that identifies and differentiates your destination or product. It is your promise to your customer and tells them what they can expect.

The elements of a successful tourism destination are illustrated in the graphic and explored in more detail in the following text.



EXPERIENCES

Let's spend a few minutes talking about experiences.

As noted earlier, todays travellers are looking for more out of their travel. A 'pretty, friendly destination' doesn't cut it anymore. Travellers want to visit places that can offer them something different than they can find elsewhere, something that appeals to their interests and passion, something that can captivate, entertain, educate and provide lasting memories.

These experiences, and their scope, intensity, uniqueness and appeal will contribute strongly to the decision by travellers to stop and spend time and money in a community. There are guides available to help you understand and develop experiences for visitors, including:

- Experience Nova Scotia: A Toolkit: http://novascotiatourismagency.ca/experience-toolkit
- Experiences – A Tool Kit for Partners of the CTC (Canadian Tourism Commission): www.en-corporate.canada.travel/resources-industry/tools

Experiences, attractions, events and activities can, on their own, motivate a stop or a visit for some market segments. These are ***demand generators or travel motivators.*** Demand generators can include:

- Major attractions (e.g. Peggy's Cove, Bluenose II, Fortress of Louisbourg, NHS, UNESCO World Heritage Sites)
- Major or unique events (e.g. Not Since Moses Run, Celtic Colours International Festival)
- High quality scenery or natural areas (e.g. Cabot Trail, Bay of Fundy)
- Programming or packages that appeal to special interest markets (e.g. Music camps at Sherbrooke Village, culinary and wine product clusters)
- A combination of attractions and experiences that together can motivate a visit (e.g. Old Town Lunenburg with its heritage architecture, shopping and dining, walking tours, shipyard and the Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic)

Other experiences and things to do may not be the main motivator for visiting but contribute to the overall appeal of the destination. Visitors can add these other experiences to their agenda while they are there, helping to extend stays and increase spending. These are ***demand supporters*** and include things such as:

- Community attractions and festivals
- Specialty shopping, arts and crafts
- Quality dining
- Coastal hikes and scenic drives
- Activities such as sightseeing tours

To be successful, a tourist destination needs to have a 'critical mass' of demand generator/travel motivator and demand supporter experiences in place to make it worth a visit or a stop (along with basic traveller services). And, then, once the experiences are market-ready, they need to be promoted to potential visitors.

Achieving this will not happen overnight; it takes time and effort and will happen in stages.

Not every community will have enough demand generating experiences to be a destination in its own right. But perhaps working with other communities in the region will do the trick. And, where communities are not destinations themselves, they can still benefit from tourism by providing services to travellers en route elsewhere.

OTHER ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFULTOURISM DESTINATION

While people travel for a variety of reasons, most have similar expectations about the basics of travel.

The basic expectations include:

- ***High quality customer service*** – this means having well-trained not just hospitable staff at all points of contact from the visitor information centre to the local gas station and coffee shop to the hotel or tour company.
- ***Quality experiences*** that are authentic but relevant to the visitor, easy to plan, buy and participate in. It's one thing to have great experiences or iconic attractions but travellers must be able to:
    - Know what's available – this means marketing what you have to offer
    - Find out information about it – what's offered, operating season and hours, prices, etc.
    - Be able to easily make a booking or purchase a ticket, if necessary
    - Be able to find it – this means good local information, maps and signage
- ***Good value*** – good value doesn't necessarily mean cheap since there are markets at all price ranges but it does mean value for the money charged.

- ***Products and amenities that are up-to-date and meet contemporary standards –*** today's consumers have high expectations and standards. Local accommodations, restaurants, attractions and other experiences need to be up-to-par so as to compete.
- ***Have the necessary infrastructure and services –*** transportation connections, good signage, easy to find parking, basic services such as gas stations, banks/ATMs, accommodations and restaurants, convenience stores and visitor information.

Successful destinations also need efforts around a coordinated effort and partnerships that involves marketing, event development, experience development, and packaging, for example. This requires both human and financial resources.

Part 2: Preparing the Plan

CHAPTER 3: GETTING STARTED

PREPARING A COMMUNITY TOURISM PLAN – AN OVERVIEW

Preparing a community tourism plan involves five stages. They are summarized in the graphic on the next page and explored in the next five chapters.

At the community level, your focus should first be on product and experience development. Your community needs to have a mix of market-ready experiences that appeal to the travellers in Nova Scotia – both those from out-of-province and Nova Scotians. Yes, having some basic marketing tools is important but without a strong experience base, you will have nothing to market. And in today's competitive travel marketplace, it is crucial that you are able to 'deliver on the promise'.

Much of the marketing effort will be done at the regional and provincial level where the resources and expertise is available. This is especially true for out-of-province marketing.

GETTING THINGS UNDERWAY

FORM A COMMUNITY TOURISM PLANNING COMMITTEE

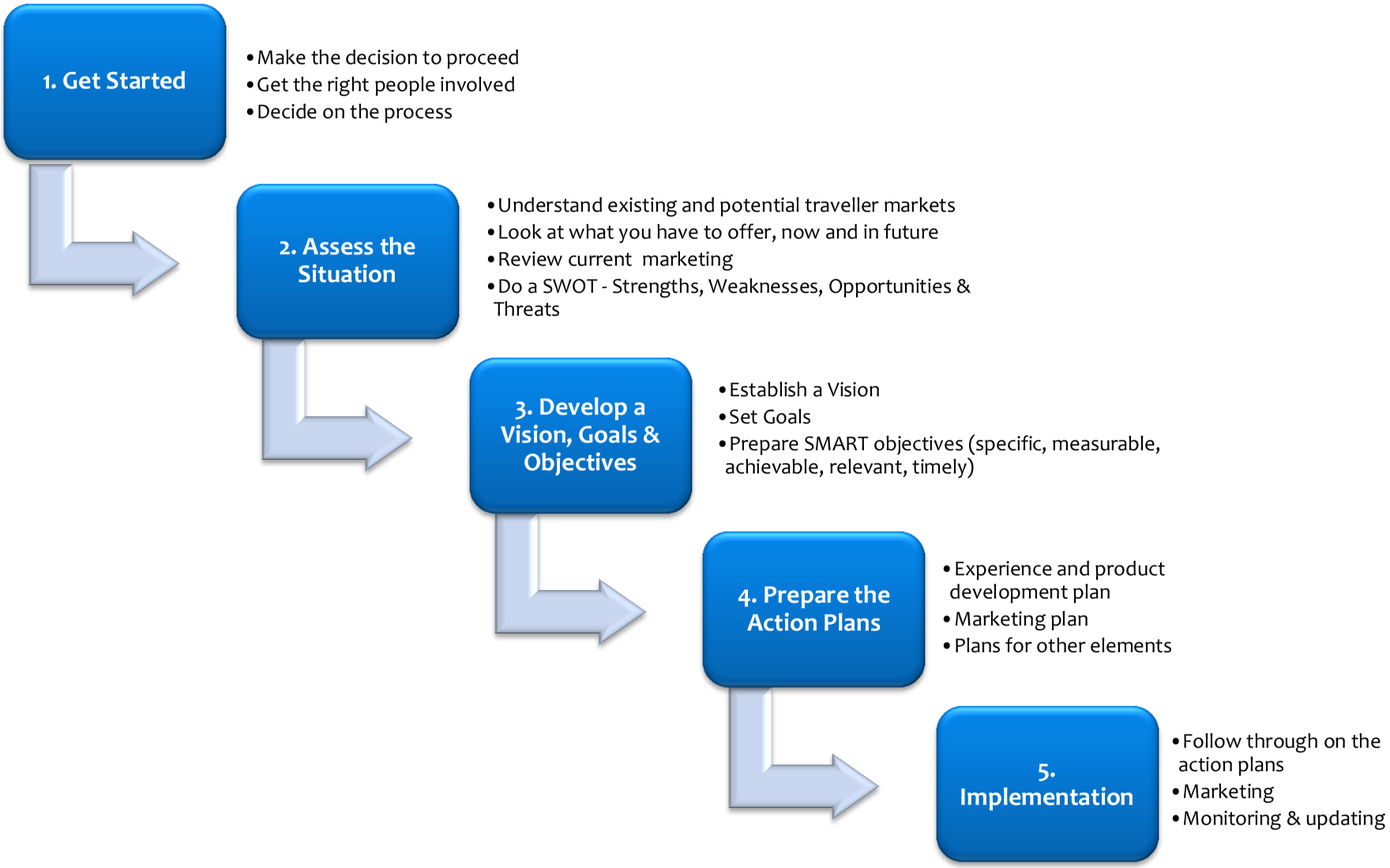
Once you have decided to prepare a tourism plan, your first task is to decide who is going to lead the process and then establish a committee to prepare the plan.

The Lead Group

Ideally, the idea that a tourism plan is needed comes from a group that has some involvement with tourism. This might be the local tourism association, Chamber of Commerce, economic development agency or municipal government. If so, this group should decide on the tourism planning committee – who should be on the committee, under whose authority it is established and to whom the committee will report. You want to get influential players who are engaged in tourism on the committee.

If the idea to do a plan comes from a group of tourism businesses or members of the community, it will be important to get 'buy in' from groups such as those listed above and, if possible, get one of them to sponsor the process. This may involve money and/or the organization could provide support services and other such assistance.

THE FIVE STAGES OF PREPARING A COMMUNITY TOURISM PLAN



The Tourism Planning Committee Members

An early task is to establish the tourism planning committee. When doing so, consider the following:

- The key stakeholders in the tourism industry – the tourism businesses themselves – must play a major role in developing the plan. **If these stakeholders have no interest in being involved, then you need to seriously question the idea of developing a tourism plan and whether it would ever be implemented.** The tourism businesses have to be on side and will need to be actively involved in implementation. We suggest they make up at least half the committee, and preferably three quarters.

  Government representatives and other interested community members can assist and participate but since their livelihood will not be depend on the outcomes, they should not be the ones driving the plan or its implementation. However, their support will be important as you move forward.

- Have some representation from other groups such as:
  - Other businesses affected by or benefitting from tourism
  - Local attractions – museums, parks, activities
  - Community organizations
  - Municipal staff
  - Economic development department/agency staff
  - Regional tourism industry association
  - Interested members of the general public

- Keep the committee a workable size – big enough that the tasks can be spread around but not too large to be unmanageable. 10 – 15 people is a good target. And, as you get going, think about some smaller subcommittees (possibly involving people not on the main committee) for selected tasks.

- Committee members need to have a commitment to preparing the plan, as well as the time needed to work on the plan. If you decide to prepare the plan yourselves, you will need regular meetings (likely every month or so) and there will be likely be tasks to be done outside the meetings.

GETTING HELP

Your committee should consider getting some help in preparing the plan, particularly if your community and/or your tourism industry are large or the issues and opportunities are complex.

There are several possibilities:

- Create a temporary position to do the "legwork" under the direction of your committee. You could hire someone for a short term position or borrow/second someone from another organization.
- Find someone to facilitate the planning process and guide the committee in preparing the plan, with the committee doing the actual work. You could hire a consultant or perhaps arrange for someone from another organization to play this role.
- Hire someone to facilitate the process and do some of the work tasks, with the committee doing the rest of the work.
- Hire someone to prepare the entire plan, with the committee in an advisory and oversight role. This probably means hiring a consultant, in which case you will need funds to cover the costs. Approach your municipality or sponsor organization.

If you decide to prepare the plan on your own, this guide provides a process you can follow. If you decide to bring in some assistance, you should still follow the process described in the guide and your committee should definitely play an active role, but you will not need to do all the work yourselves.

YOUR FIRST MEETING

Once your committee is in place and you are ready to proceed, have a first meeting (or two) to:

- Discuss the overall mandate of the committee and its roles and responsibilities.
- Select a Chair and one or two vice-chairs.
- Decide if you want to retain some outside help and what kind of help is needed.
- Identify possible funding sources, if necessary.
- Develop an overall work plan.
- Consider establishing some subcommittees to take on specific tasks. This will be particularly important if you have decided to do most of the work yourselves. Consider subcommittees for different parts of the situation analysis or for different pieces of the planning process if you have some complex issues to be addressed. If you decide on subcommittees, set up a regular reporting and communications process with the main committee.
- Decide if you want input from the broader tourism industry in the community, or any other groups, and how you are going to get this. This might be done through a survey or individual interviews.
- Develop a schedule and time frame.

Think about inviting a guest to one of your early meetings, someone who has experience with tourism planning, e.g. someone from the Nova Scotia Tourism Agency, your regional tourism

industry association or another community that has prepared a tourism plan. They can provide advice based on their experience and identify resources you can use.

WHO ELSE SHOULD BE INVOLVED?

Decide on which people, other than those on the committee, you want to involve in your efforts to prepare the community tourism plan. These might be key stakeholders such as:

- Tourism businesses such as accommodations, attractions, activities
- Other businesses, particularly those that serve visitors such as restaurants, retail stores
- Municipal/regional staff such as the recreation department
- Organizers of festivals and events
- Your regional tourism industry association or destination marketing organization
- Funding agencies

Your discussions with these stakeholders should cover all of the topics explored in Chapter 4, The Situation Analysis. You can involve them through group sessions or in individual meetings. If you decide to hold group meetings, we recommend that they be by invitation only and that you have different meetings for different groups of people. Try one meeting for tourism businesses and another one for other businesses or festivals and events. You will need someone to lead the discussion and someone to take notes.

Individual interviews probably work best for any significant tourism or other businesses since people are more likely to open up in a one-on-one situation. Develop a list of discussion topics for these interviews so that anyone conducting the interview is exploring the same issues.

We recommend that you not involve the broader general public or organizations not directly involved in tourism in preparing the plan. Tourism is a specialized industry and one that is facing challenging times. It is important that you concentrate on getting input from those with a good understanding of tourism, the markets and the issues.

The time to talk to the broader community is if you have some 'big ideas' in your draft plan and you need some feedback from the community. *Note: You may decide it is important to get input from the broader community at some point during the process. If so, we suggest hosting an open house or community meeting to get ideas. Think carefully about the timing of such a meeting – it may be better to do it once you have some ideas to explore.*

CHAPTER 4: THE SITUATION ANALYSIS

Assessing the existing situation will be one of the more time-consuming tasks in preparing your plan, particularly if your community is of any significant size. However, it is a crucial step in the process – you can't plan for the future without having a solid understanding of the past and the present.

The outcomes of this assessment will provide an understanding of:

- Your current visitors and who your future visitors might be
- What your community has to offer - the existing experiences, products and activities as well as resources available for the future, and the amenities and services available
- Current marketing activities and the results being achieved
- What is missing from your community's tourism offerings (gap analysis)
- Any other tourism-related issues that need to be addressed in your community
- What other communities are doing – to give you some ideas on what to do and what not to do
- A SWOT analysis – strengths, weaknesses, opportunities to address gaps that have been identified, and threats

Once you have finished this assessment, you will be ready to start building your plan for the future.

As you go through this chapter, you will find worksheets providing some examples. Blank worksheets that you can use to help organize your information can be found in Appendix I.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR CURRENT AND FUTURE VISITORS

VOLUME OF VISITORS

To start with, it would be useful to have some idea about how many visitors come to your community now. It is virtually impossible to get an accurate visitor count and it is not really necessary. All you really need to do is get some idea about your visitors, such as:

- Are there 5,000 or 50,000 visitors now?
- Do they stop for 20 minutes, come for most of the day or stay overnight?

USING VISITOR EXIT SURVEY DATA

- The VES data is only for travellers from outside Nova Scotia.
- Remember to use visitor parties in your calculations. Take the total number of visitors to the province (2 million in 2012) and divide by 2.1 (the average party size) to get visitor parties.

Here are some sources of information that can help:

- The Nova Scotia Visitor Exit Survey (VES) produces a series of reports on visitors to the province. They can be found at: http://novascotiatourismagency.ca/visitor-exit-survey-results. One of these reports, Community Report (found at the same website address), provides information on the percentage of out-of-province visitors who stopped for at least 30 minutes or stayed overnight (and their average length of stay) in many communities around the province. Applying these percentages to the total number of *travel or visitor parties* visiting Nova Scotia can provide you with a rough idea of how many of these travellers came to your community.

- The Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism collects data from all licensed accommodations around the province on their level of business, measured in room nights. You can request a special run of this data for your community or area, as long as you have at least 6 properties open in your area. This will provide some idea of how many people stay overnight in your community. Similar data is also available for campgrounds.

- Your local or regional visitor information centre or regional tourism association may collect statistics. Use caution with data from visitor information centres since only a portion of travellers visit VICs.

- Major attractions in the area, such as museums, interpretive centres, historic sites and parks usually have statistics available. Make sure you get data on out-of-town visitors, not visiting local residents.

HOW TO CALCULATE THE NUMBER OF VISITORS STAYING OVERNIGHT USING OCCUPANCY DATA

1. Take the total room nights from the occupancy report you get from the Tourism Research staff.
2. Multiply by the average party size (2.1)
3. Divide by the average length of stay (from the VES community profile data, discussions with operators)

Here's an example:

Total Room Nights: 2,500
Average Party Size: 2.1 people
Average Length of Stay: 1.5 nights
Total Number Staying Overnight:
2500 x 2.1 ÷ 1.5 = 3,500 overnight visitors

WHO ARE YOUR VISITORS? WHY DO THEY COME? WHAT ARE THEY DOING WHILE IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

So you can determine where your community fits in the provincial context and to help later on when you are identifying opportunities, it is also useful to understand more about your current visitors.

Understanding your current visitors is more complicated than just looking at visitor numbers since detailed information is not readily available. You could do a survey of visitors but this is complex

and can be expensive and time consuming. The best way is to brainstorm with your committee and tourism operators from the community, drawing on their collective experience with visitors.

Use Worksheet #1 (page 26) to record information on your visitors. Consider:

- Who are your visitors?
- Why are they coming?
- When are they coming?
- Is your community a destination now?
- What do most of the visitors do while in your community?
- How long do visitors stay?

Be realistic in your assessment. Focus on the majority of the visitors; don't worry too much about the few that don't fit the pattern. With the insights of your committee and tourism businesses, you should be able to develop a reasonable profile of your current visitors.

WHO MIGHT YOUR FUTURE VISITORS BE?

It's also important to have some idea about the future visitors to your community. Will they be similar to the existing visitors in terms of age, interests, reason for their visit and length of stay? Or are there other markets your community could appeal to? Review the information in this guide and on the Nova Scotia Tourism Agency's website on the priority market segments for Nova Scotia (outdoor, cultural and culinary enthusiasts) and their interests. Consider whether any of these might offer an opportunity for your community.

Don't forget Nova Scotians travelling around the province. These may not be the main priority for the Nova Scotia Tourism Agency, but, as noted earlier, they are a big travel market in Nova Scotia and important to many communities and tourism businesses. Nova Scotians might have some different reasons for visiting your community than visitors from outside the province, such as:

- Shopping expeditions
- Visiting a favourite restaurant
- Weekend getaways, family reunions or small meetings
- Weddings
- Sports tournaments or bonspiels

Use Worksheet #2 (page 28) to record your thoughts on new markets for your community, or on existing markets with potential to grow.

Worksheet #1: Understand the Visitors to Your Community		
Key Visitor Characteristics	**Describe Visitors to Your Community**	**Any Trends or Changes Happening**
Who are your visitors? e.g. • Families, couples, singles, groups • Older or younger • From the region, from other parts of Nova Scotia or from outside Nova Scotia • On day trips, overnight visits to your community or just passing through	*Families on vacation at their own cottages or renting a cottage – mostly from elsewhere in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick; usually come every year* *Couples from Ontario and western Canada, renting cottages for a getaway* *A few day trip visitors going to the beach and for our Festival*	*Starting to see Ontario families rent cottages for a week.* *More overseas visitors (Germany, Australia) staying for 1 – 2 nights*
Why are they coming? e.g. • For a particular experience, attraction, event or natural feature • For business or meetings • To stay at a special local accommodation or dine in a particular restaurant • To go shopping • To visit friends and family • En route to an iconic experience nearby	*Great beach – good for swimming, beach combing and children - is a big draw* *Both ocean and river provide good paddling* *Area is peaceful and quiet – a real retreat setting* *Some passing through en route to a major heritage attraction about an hour away* *Get a few sports teams in spring, occasional curling bonspiel in winter* *Major July festival brings in regional market*	*The new inn and high quality restaurant is attracting visitors – it is getting a good reputation* *More people looking for outdoor activities such as kayaking and canoeing (and want to rent equipment); also demand for easy hiking and cycling routes.* *Festival getting a bit stale, needs some new ideas*
When are they coming? e.g. • All year • Summer only • Spring, summer and fall • All week or weekends only	*Mostly summer, week long visitors* *Some late spring/early fall weekends*	*Spring and fall traffic has been increasing* *Getting requests for cottage rentals in the winter from other Nova Scotia markets*
Is your community the destination for your visitors? If so, what brings them?	*Yes – the beach and the ocean* *For some – sports facilities, curling rink*	*New inn/restaurant is becoming a destination*

Worksheet #1: Understand the Visitors to Your Community		
Key Visitor Characteristics	**Describe Visitors to Your Community**	**Any Trends or Changes Happening**
What do most visitors do while in your community? • Participate in activities – which ones • Visit attractions – which ones • Shop • Eat out • Sightsee	*Swim and play in the water* *Lie on beach* *Kayak* *Go to museum* *Eat at local chowder shop* *Party at their cottage*	*See more cars with bicycles on, also more people arriving with kayaks or looking to rent them* *People ask where they can get seafood – to cook themselves*
How long do visitors stay? • For ½ day or less • For one night • For several nights	*In summer – one week* *In spring and fall – 1 – 2 weeks* *Lots just drive through and only stop for gas*	
Other:		

Note: The information in all worksheets is for a fictitious Nova Scotia community used solely for illustration purposes.

Worksheet #2 Potential New Markets for Your Community		
Markets – New or with Potential to Grow	**Key Characteristics & Interests or Needs**	**What our Community offers or could offer for this Market**
Couples from other parts of Canada	*Active – they want to hike, kayak, canoe, cycle along with a chance to relax* *Also want fine dining and good quality accommodation*	*We have a beach and large sheltered bay that is great for kayaking – but no clear launching site* *Good back roads – but hard for visitors to find them* *New inn offers great dining and accommodation*
Winter weekend visitors from Halifax	*Getaway market – want cottages with fireplaces, view of the ocean, option of dining out*	*Only a few of our cottages are winterized – perhaps more could be upgraded* *We have great storm viewing* *Inn is trying to stay open in winter – so dining out is available*
Curling bonspiels	*Mostly from Halifax area, other parts of Atlantic Canada* *Need accommodation for small groups of friends – e.g. cottages; also motel rooms* *Need dining options*	*Curling rink is just being expanded to 4 sheets – will be good for bonspiels* *We have some cottages that could be used* *Local curling club is strong and very interested in hosting bonspiels*
Paddling enthusiasts (people who come primarily to paddle)	*Younger, singles and couples; mostly from outside Atlantic Canada* *Information on where to put in, best routes to take, places to stop* *Reasonably priced places to stay overnight*	*We have a great bay and connecting river for paddling – offers a variety of different paddling experiences.* *Need more information for paddlers, directions to put-in locations, signage*

Note: The information in all worksheets is for a fictitious Nova Scotia community used solely for illustration purposes.

UNDERSTANDING WHAT YOUR COMMUNITY HAS TO OFFER

The next task is to understand the experiences, products and activities available - what make your community appealing to travellers and encourages them to visit or stay longer. It's also important to look at the amenities and services you have to offer.

EXPERIENCES, PRODUCTS AND ACTIVITIES

Start by looking at the demand-generating /travel motivating and demand-supporting experiences in your community (refer back to Pages 15/16 for definitions). Build an inventory of the experiences, products and activities available and think about what makes them appealing. In particular, think of unique experiences that differentiate your destination from others. Focus first on experiences, products and activities offered through public or not-for-profit agencies, on natural resources and on events offered by the community generally. (Attractions and experiences offered by private business are discussed below.)

Use Worksheet #3A (page 30) to record this information. As you do, think about what could be done to expand on and strengthen these experiences - this will be important later when you explore future opportunities.

The experiences could include:

- Attractions – museum/historic site, interpretive centre, golf course
- Natural attractions – beaches, major hiking trails, iconic landscape features, parks
- Recreational and Cultural Facilities and Activities – art galleries, arenas, theatres
- Festivals and Events
- Other Experiences – programs or activities that appeal to travellers

Look at what experiences and products are in the surrounding area, particularly significant attractions and experiences as they may provide an opportunity for your community.

For help with this task, collect tourist literature and use the Internet. Other resources include:

- Doers & Dreamers – Nova Scotia Travel Guide
- Local and Regional travel guides
- Various regional tourism industry association websites



Photo Credit: Economic Planning Group

Grand Pré National Historic Site and the UNESCO World Heritage Site are not in the Town of Windsor but it is a significant attraction nearby that helps draw people to the community.

Worksheet # 3A: Understand What Your Community has to Offer				
Name of Experience, Product or Activity	**Operating Season**	**Key Features and Experiences**	**Is it a Demand Generator? Why?**	**Is it Market Ready? If not, why not?**
Oceanfront Beach	*All year*	*Sandy beach, sheltered bay, shallow water*	*Yes – great for families and kids; bay is good for kayaking*	*Yes – though would be better with new washrooms, signage*
Oceanfront hiking trail (on crown land)	*Spring, Summer, Fall*	*Great ocean views Several loops possible to increase distance Bird watching*	*No*	*No - Trails need upgrading, no directional signage, no parking area, hard to find*
Local community museum	*Spring, Summer, Fall*	*Features history of the community; mostly things donated*	*No*	*No – displays are dated; material has limited interest to most people*
Major heritage attraction (within 1 hour drive)	*Late spring to early Fall*	*Heritage buildings and exhibits Costumed interpreters Several events Guided tours*	*Yes – one of the province's major heritage attractions*	*Yes*
New curling club	*December to April*	*4 sheets of ice Good viewing area*	*Yes – for bonspiels*	*Yes*
Nova Scotia River	*For paddling – April to October*	*A candidate Canadian Heritage River Great paddling – variety of water, view wildlife, great scenery*	*Yes – for a few people*	*No – need launch sites and information on paddling opportunities*
Our Community Festival	*Mid-July*	*Paddling races Sidewalk sale Parade Community seafood supper*	*Yes – for day visitors from within an hour or so*	*Yes – but attendance has been declining – needs more new activities, displays, etc.*

Note: The information in all worksheets is for a fictitious Nova Scotia community used solely for illustration purposes.

As you complete your inventory and assessment, remember that you need to have products and experiences that are 'market ready' before you start marketing them. Your local experiences must be able to deliver on the promise they make to potential visitors in their marketing activities. Market readiness is described in the box on this page.

Also prepare an inventory of private businesses, summarizing what they have to offer for visitors to your community in Worksheet #3B (page 32). Again the focus here is on demand- generators or travel motivators – experiences, attractions, events and activities that can, on their own, motivate a stop or a visit. These might include:

- Attractions such as amusement parks, wineries
- Activities – kayaking, boat tours, hiking
- Specialty retail outlets and artisans
- Specialty restaurants and food producers
- Destination accommodation and campgrounds – accommodations and campgrounds that draw people to the community or region, such as resorts or lodges

WHAT IS MARKET READINESS?

Market readiness means having the experiences and services offered ready in a way that leads to customer satisfaction. For example:

- Visitors can easily find out all they need to know about the experience – what it is, how much it is, where to find it, hours of operation, etc.
- Visitors can find the location/site – using maps, signs.
- There are regular hours of operation so that visitors are not disappointed when they arrive.
- The experience is of good quality, meets all licensing and regulatory requirements.
- The experience offers good value.

Also identify demand-supporters – things that can extend a stay in the area.

Since these are private businesses it is not your position to assess their business and operations, but you need to be aware of what they have to offer and how you can build on their offers to enrich tourism in your community.

AMENITIES AND SERVICES

Inventory the amenities available to visitors in the community, along with some basic information on them, as described in Worksheet #4A (page 33). These would include:

- Accommodations – hotels, motels, B&Bs, cottages, etc.
- Campgrounds
- Visitor Information Services
- Restaurants

Worksheet # 3B: Understand What Private Tourism Businesses Offer in Your Community			
Name of Experience, Product or Activity	**Operating Season**	**Key Features and Experiences**	**Is it a Demand Generator? Why?**
New Inn	*Spring, Summer, Fall and winter weekends*	*4 Star Heritage property* *Award winning restaurant featuring regional cuisine* *Small meeting room* *10 rooms in total*	*Is starting to be for some small meetings, some travellers who have heard about the restaurant*
Joe's Rental Cottages	*July and August*	*Housekeeping cottages – 2 – 3 bedroom, very rustic,*	*Yes - Brings in families for week-long vacation rentals*
Sally's Kayak Tours	*July, August and September*	*Kayak lessons and guided tours on the bay*	*No*

Note: The information in all worksheets is for a fictitious Nova Scotia community used solely for illustration purposes.

Worksheet #4A – Inventory of Accommodations and Campgrounds			
Facility Name and Operating Season	**Number of Units**	**Other Facilities and Services**	**Notes**
New Inn	*10*	*Dining room* *Meeting room* *Hot tub* *Gardens*	
Joe's Cottages	*15*	*Housekeeping cottages* *Adjacent to beach* *Fire pit, children's playground*	*Cottages could use some upgrading*
Jack's Campground	*40 transient sites*	*Washrooms, showers* *Playground* *Camp store and snack bar*	*Getting more RVs but does not have many sites with services*
Jenny's Motel	*10*	*Family restaurant*	*Basic accommodation but clean and comfortable; good for curling groups*
Mary Lou's Chalets	*5*	*Large chalets with full kitchen, fireplace, BBQ, 3 bedrooms, overlook the ocean*	*New chalets – very popular in summer and increasingly on weekends throughout the year*

Note: The information in all worksheets is for a fictitious Nova Scotia community used solely for illustration purposes.

Understanding what you have to offer in terms of amenities is important when it comes to identifying gaps and future needs. For example, if you start to plan a major event or a new program for a winter weekend you need to know if local accommodations and restaurants will be open.

Also, do a quick run through on the availability of other services in the community to identify any major gaps. (Use Worksheet #4B, page 35). These are the types of services used by residents as well as visitors such as:

- Banks/ATM machines
- Convenience stores, grocery stores
- Gas stations
- Coffee shops
- Retail shops

OTHER IMPORTANT AND UNIQUE EXPERIENCES

As a final step, think about what else your community has to offer that might have potential to help you develop tourism. These may be resources that are not yet 'tourism-ready'. Or they may be something ordinary or out-of-the-ordinary that could become a tourism experience. Consider:

- "Hidden Gems' – these may not be something you would consider part of your destination's tourism offering but have potential to add value to the visitor's experience, such as a local expert, artisan, musician, chef."[1]
- Natural features or resources – a special beach, old-growth forest, bird watching area, hiking trail, etc.
- Local historic event or feature that could be the stimulus for an event or program.
- Local 'hero' or 'famous person'.
- A manufacturing plant that might offer tours or workshops.
- A community event that could be grown into a tourism event.



Living Wharves

The Living Wharves program in Yarmouth & Acadian Shores is an example of using a local story to build a tourism experience. Visitors are invited to join active and retired fishermen at community wharves around the region to hear their stories and try a hand at fishing skills.

Picture Credit & Program Description: www.savourthelocalsea.com/living-wharves

Draw on your committee's local knowledge of the area and its natural and cultural heritage, as well as ideas from your discussions with tourism business representatives.

[1] Nova Scotia Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism, Experience Nova Scotia – A Toolkit, page 31.

Worksheet #4B – Inventory of Other Amenities and Services			
Type of Amenity/Service	**Community is Well-Supplied**	**Shortage or Lack of Amenity/Service**	**Notes**
Visitor Information Services	*Yes – have VIC for June through September and information kiosk*		
Gas stations	*Yes*		
Banks/ATM	*Yes – 3 major banks*		
Convenience Stores	*Only 1*	*Concerned that this one may close in winter*	
Grocery/Liquor Stores	*Yes*		
Specialty shops	*Only 2 or 3*	*Community needs more variety of retail outlets for visitors*	
Other Shops	*Have a good grocery store*		
Parking		*Very little downtown*	*Need to work with Council to get more parking downtown*
Welcome Signage		*Nothing now*	
Directional Signage		*Only one sign from highway to town; very little signage in town*	*A major problem for us – visitors cannot find their way to downtown or to our attractions, shops, restaurants, trails, etc.*
Other			

Note: The information in all worksheets is for a fictitious Nova Scotia community used solely for illustration purposes.

As you identify these resources, keep in mind what you know about the marketplace and Nova Scotia's target markets and strategic priorities. You may have an outstanding natural resource or a historic event that is extremely important to the community but if it doesn't fit with the interests of your markets then, no matter how appealing you believe it to be, it has little potential for tourism. Also remember that what may be of great interest to a few members of your community, such as an antique collection or little known historic character, may have very limited potential to attract traveller markets.

CURRENT MARKETING ACTIVITIES

Look at the existing situation regarding what is being done to encourage travellers to visit your community. It's important to make sure you know what's happening, how much is being spent and, if possible, what results are being achieved. You also need to understand who is involved in marketing your community for tourism. Consider the following:

- If there is a local tourism organization or committee, do they have a marketing plan and budget?
- Who else markets tourism in your community?
    - The municipality
    - A regional or sub-regional tourism organization
    - A special interest group or a particular event or festival
    - Chamber of Commerce
- What marketing is being done now?
    - Is there a website? Is it up-to-date? Is it of good quality? Is someone tracking its users? Is it effective?
    - Is there any other online marketing – e.g. conversations in social media, promotion on other websites? (One of the companion guides in this series, 'How to Market Your Nova Scotia Tourism Business' has a chapter on Online Marketing which addresses these topics.)
    - Is there a community guide and/or map?
    - Does the community participate in marketing efforts of sub-regional or regional tourism industry organizations? Or in any provincial efforts such as novascotia.com or the Doers & Dreamers Guide?
- How much money is being spent now? Where does it come from? Is it sufficient?
- Who decides on what marketing should be done?
- Do local tourism businesses participate in joint/cooperative marketing efforts?
- Are the current marketing efforts producing results? Is the best use being made of the money available? Is your community taking maximum advantage of available partnership opportunities?

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE THAT NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED?

There may be some other tourism-related issues in your community that need to be addressed in your plan. If so, now is the time to identify them and to pull together any relevant information and opinions. These other issues might include:

- Local visitor information services – the lack thereof or need for additional services such as information kiosks, for example.
- Tourism industry association or committee – the existing one may require some modifications or if there is not one now, perhaps one should be established.
- Limited local municipal or public support for tourism.
- A particular service or piece of infrastructure that is missing, perhaps a parking area or a waterfront walking trail.
- Poor customer service at some types of businesses.
- Shortage of staff for local tourism businesses.

LOOK AT OTHER COMMUNITIES AND WHAT THEY OFFER

Take a look at what other communities are doing to attract visitors – the experiences they are offering and what is working.

This information is useful in two ways:

1. Researching what the others are doing, and what has been successful elsewhere may give you some good ideas for your own community.

2. Knowing what communities nearby are doing will help you avoid duplicating exactly the same experiences in your community. This knowledge may also suggest some opportunities to work together.

Use your committee's knowledge of the region, province, other provinces and other destinations to identify some communities of interest. It helps to pick communities with similar characteristics – size, natural setting, and a similar size market. Once you have a short list, do an Internet search to find out what they are offering. For in-province destinations, you can also look at novascotia.com, the Doers & Dreamers guide or regional tourism industry association guides.

If you find something that looks particularly interesting, dig a bit deeper. It may be worth a call to get more details on what they are doing and any advice they could offer.

THE SWOT ANALYSIS – STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

Before starting the SWOT analysis, take some time to think about where the gaps are in your community's tourism offer. This will be important, particularly as you identify opportunities for the future.

You have already given some thought to who your future visitors might be. The challenge now is to identify the gaps in what your community offers now and decide on the core experiences and programs that can be added to capture the interests of the market segments. Review publications of the Nova Scotia Tourism Agency, particularly those that talk about the interests of visitors, and product development and partnership needs, opportunities and priorities. Consider these questions:

- Do the experiences you have fit with market interests? If so, what can be done to improve them? If not, are there opportunities to develop new experiences that fill the gaps, experiences that are a better fit with what today's travellers are seeking?

- What gaps need to be addressed for you to respond to the new markets you identified earlier, or to grow your existing markets?

- Do you have something unique that could become an authentic visitor experience, something that will attract travellers to explore the nooks and crannies of the seacoast or get immersed in the living history and culture of your community? Or some way in which visitors can engage with friendly residents, creating memorable moments on their vacation?

- Are you close to a significant experience or destination? Can you build on this and offer experiences that will encourage travellers to discover the real character of Nova Scotia?

- Are you a destination already? What gaps need to be addressed for you to become a destination? (refer back to pages 15 and 16 in Chapter 2)

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Now summarize and document the conclusions from what you have learned to date. Think about your strengths and weaknesses, and opportunities to deal with the gaps in experiences, products and activities. Also consider amenities and services, particularly in terms of gaps that need to be addressed. Use Worksheet #5A (page 41) and the suggestions below to help with this.

- Look at each of the following:
    - Attractions and activities
    - Natural areas – parks, beaches, trails
    - Festivals and events
    - Specialty shopping and dining
    - Other experiences
    - Amenities and services including accommodations
- For each, consider:
    - The strengths you can build on
    - The weaknesses/problems that need to be overcome or addressed
    - What's missing – the gaps and the opportunities for the future.

Identifying opportunities for the future is particularly important since these will lead directly to your tourism plan. Focus on what you can influence in the short to medium term and keep it simple. Pay particular attention to products and experiences that will help make your community a destination for visitors and things the community can work on collaboratively.

Have a brainstorming session with your committee. Go through what you have learned and start to build a list of what your community needs or could do to strengthen your tourism offer.

Remember that what is of interest to you, members of your committee and the local community may not be of much interest to visitors and vice versa. For example, a local community museum may have a collection of fishing equipment or farm implements that have a lot of meaning to local residents because of their connection to the activity. But today's tourists (other than a few with a strong interest in heritage) probably have little interest in simply viewing a collection such as this.

KEY WORDS TO REMEMBER

As you build your list of ideas, remember these words:

AUTHENTIC
COMPELLING
DISCOVERY
ENGAGING
MEMORABLE
GOOD VALUE

On the other hand, your community may have some of the highest tides in the world, a natural feature such as Balancing Rock or a fantastic coastline walk – nothing special to the local residents because they have lived with them for years. But for travellers looking for something special, it may be just the hook you need.

It all boils down to giving the consumer what they want rather than trying to sell them what you've got.

Here are some questions to think about when identifying your strengths, weaknesses and opportunities:

- Are your attractions and activities a good match with today's market expectations? Do they offer experiences for visitors or just the basic facilities?
- Is there enough to see and do to keep visitors in the community? The key to maximizing visitor spending is to get people to stay longer – the length of stay is directly related to spending. And, if you can offer enough to get visitors to stay overnight, their spending will increase significantly. Keep Roger Brooks' Four-Times Rule in mind (see the box on this page)
- Do you have any fantastic and unique resources that could become experiences for visitors?
- Do you have a mix of experiences for different markets – both existing markets and the new ones you have identified?
- Is your tourism product heavily concentrated in summer, with most businesses closing down after Labour Day? If so, look for opportunities to expand spring and fall tourism, periods of the year when there is increasing travel activity. Extending the tourism season will help improve the long term financial viability of businesses in your community.
- Are your amenities and services keeping up with market expectations? Is there enough to do after 6 pm? Do your restaurants offer Nova Scotia seafood and regional cuisine? Do they source local foods? These types of things are very important to travellers today.
- Can visitors find information when they arrive in your community, after hours or on the weekend or early/late in the season? Is there good signage to direct visitors to points of interest, downtown areas, parking, etc.?

THE FOUR-TIMES RULE

"Visitors will make a point or stopping or staying in a community if it has enough activities that appeal specifically to them and will keep them busy four time longer than it took them to get there

So, if a person has to drive an hour to visit you, do you have the activities and the amenities to keep them busy for 4 hours?"

Roger Brooks, Destination Development International, Cabot Trail Assessment Findings and Suggestions Report, 2008, Page 5

Worksheet #5A (page 41) provides some examples of strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for a fictitious Nova Scotia community.

Worksheet #5A
Strengths, Weaknesses and Opportunities

Tourism Element	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities & Gaps
Attractions & Activities	• *Major historic attraction with high visitation* • *Quality curling rink suitable for bonspiels* • *Bicycle rental operation with guided tours*	• *Attraction closes Labour Day making it difficult to attract visitors in the fall* • *Few true 'experiences' in the area*	• *Extend the operating season at the historic attraction* • *Develop more experiences building on the seacoast resources*
Natural Areas	• *Scenic coastline adjacent to the community* • *Several white sand beaches – small but high quality* • *High concentration of seabirds in coastal waters*	• *No signed trails or look offs along the coast – only local residents know the best spots to go for good views*	• *Develop a scenic look off and picnic park* • *Develop a walking trail along the most scenic stretch of coastline*
Festivals & Events	• *Major seafood festival in July* • *Christmas craft fair brings in lots of Nova Scotians*	• *No other festivals that have broader appeal than the local community*	• *Build on one or more of the community's festivals to make them appealing to visitors*
Specialty Shopping & Dining	• *Award winning restaurant featuring regional cuisine* • *Several craft shops featuring Nova Scotian products*	• *Restaurant is trying to stay open in winter but it is a struggle*	• *Explore extended operating season – perhaps weekends only in the early winter/late spring*
Destination Accommodation	• *New inn – open year round* • *Coastal cottages that fill every summer with vacationers*		• *Opportunity for more vacation cottages on the coast; winterized cottages*
Other Experiences	• *Local museum has a popular hands-on learning program for adults every summer*	• *No activities that take advantage of the scenic coastline* • *No boat cruises*	• *Get a whale watching tour established*
Amenities & Services	• *Three new B&Bs* • *Visitor information centre is open from May through October* • *Variety of stores including a full grocery store, several banks* • *Mix of restaurants, several featuring seafood*	• *Most restaurants are closed for the winter* • *Several older motels that are in need of upgrading*	• *Extend operating season of one or two of the restaurants*
Other – Infrastructure, Marketing, Community Resources, Tourism Industry Organization, Other	• *Roads surrounding the community are quiet, good quality for cycling* • *Community member is a highly acclaimed photographer, willing to take visitors out on location* • *New community tourism website* • *Strong regional tourism association – we partner with them on marketing initiatives* • *Local council has been very supportive of tourism*	• *Downtown parking is in short supply* • *Signage clutter prevalent on approaches to the town* • *Poor directional signage within town* • *Businesses are having challenges finding summer staff*	• *Prepare and implement a community signage plan* • *Seek out new parking area accessible to downtown businesses*

THREATS

Threats are usually more general and you may have less control over influencing them. Nevertheless they may impact the outcomes of your tourism plan and need to be considered. You should also think about ways of mitigating threats or adapting your community's tourism experience to address them. Use Worksheet #5B (page 43) to identify threats and risks and proposals for mitigation.

Examples of threats and risks include:

- Declining population and fewer young people to work seasonally in the tourism industry
- Changes to the road network meaning the community will be by-passed by much of the traffic
- Lack of municipal support for tourism
- Limited funding to support tourism efforts
- New people moving into the community who do not see value in tourism
- Changes to specific government regulations or policies that affect the tourism industry
- Climate change is a big threat that will need to be addressed by the tourism industry. The impact of floods, storms, high water levels, etc. could have significant impacts on tourism infrastructure in communities. Check out this website, http://climatechange.gov.ns.ca for additional information.

Worksheet #5B: Threats/Risks and Proposals for Mitigation	
Threats/Risks	**Proposals for Mitigation or Adaptation**
New highway bypassing the community	• Work with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal to explore additional community signage on the new highway or to identify an alternate 'scenic route'. • Focus on creating a 'must see/do' experience in your community that will pull people off the highway
Lack of municipal support for tourism	• Develop an information base (data, stories) that illustrate what impacts tourism can have on a community. • Meet with Council, municipal staff to discuss tourism generally and attempt to address their issues.
New residents who do not see the value of tourism and are against any tourism development	• Start a campaign in the local media exploring what tourism can do for the community • Meet one-on-one or in small groups with residents who have issues to explore their concerns and ways that they can be addressed.

CHAPTER 5: ESTABLISH A VISION AND DEVELOP GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

ESTABLISH A VISION FOR TOURISM IN YOUR COMMUNITY

WHAT IS A VISION?

A vision is a picture of a future desired situation. It is a description of what you want tourism in your community to be like, at some point in the future – what unique appeals and advantages your community will have and what types of experiences you will offer visitors. Establish a vision that is realistic and attainable; it will be the foundation for your tourism strategy by mapping out where you want to get to. The goals and objectives and the action plans will outline what needs to be done to get there.

The box provides some examples of visions for tourism for different destinations.

WHY IS A VISION IMPORTANT?

A vision draws people together around a common set of ideas about what they would like to achieve for the future. It gets everything 'on track' from the start by building consensus about where you are going.

HOW TO DEVELOP A VISION?

Developing a vision involves looking into the future and imagining what tourism in your community could, and should, become. It is not a simple process and we recommend that you hire a leader or facilitator, or use an experienced volunteer facilitator, to assist you with a visioning session (and with setting goals and objectives).

Your planning committee and possibly a few other key tourism industry members should be involved in this session. Before you start work on the vision, make a brief presentation on your

EXAMPLES OF VISIONS

"A Nova Scotia tourism destination that visitors choose to visit for leisure and business; a rich tapestry of tourism experiences with broad market appeal grounded in the region's natural and cultural heritage; and a diversified tourism economy that capitalizes, but is not dependent, on its unique transportation links to the New England States and Halifax"

Tourism Destination Plan for Yarmouth & Acadian Shores: Final Report

"Our vision is to inspire the world to explore Canada. We do so by promoting a compelling and consistent image of our country in the international tourism marketplace".

Canadian Tourism Commission

situation analysis work so that everyone knows what you have learned to date and your SWOT assessment.

There are many different approaches to a visioning workshop and your facilitator will have ideas on what will work best for you. Here is one suggestion:

1. Divide participants into small groups (4 or 5 people)
2. Ask each group to agree on the ten key words or phrases that describe what they think tourism in the community could aspire to be in 5 or 10 years.
3. Have a representative from each small group report back to the full group and record all the words/phrases on a flip chart.
4. Ask the whole group to agree on the common words/thoughts/phrases that should be included in the vision.
5. Either work with the group to craft a vision statement or establish a small committee to take away the results of the session and come back with some specific proposals for the larger group. If you have a facilitator for the session, you can task them with developing the vision statement for you to review.

ESTABLISH GOALS AND DECIDE ON PRIORITIES

To make the vision meaningful and achievable, you need to convert it into a set of goals and objectives.

Goals are clear, concise statements that outline what needs to happen with respect to tourism in the community if you are to achieve your vision. They provide direction for the objectives which are more specific and measurable.

Goals often begin with the words "to improve…", "to provide…", "to increase…" or "to develop". You should have goals that address part of the tourism plan – experiences and activities, services and amenities, marketing, and the other issues you have identified as being important in your community. You may also want some more general goals that address broader issues such as maintaining the quality of life in the community or protecting your cultural heritage and natural environment.

In developing the goals, go back to the situation analysis, the SWOT and your vision. Pay careful attention to the gaps and opportunities you identified, particularly those related to having market-ready experiences, activities and programs that can attract travellers to your community – the demand generators or motivators, and those things that can help extend the length of stay and spending of visitors – the demand supporters. (For a reminder about demand generators and demand supporters, look at pages 15 and 16).

The goals should be practical, feasible and doable. Decide which goals are your top priorities since human and financial resources are limited. Ask each participant to identify their top 4 – 6 priorities and see where you end up. If some of the goals get very few votes, then seriously think about whether they are important or if they should be dropped. If they are important but not feasible in the short term, put them aside ('in the parking lot') for future consideration.

Worksheet #6 (page 47) is designed for recording your goals and objectives. The completed version of Worksheet #6 on the following pages provides examples of community tourism goals and objectives for the same fictitious community used in the SWOT analysis.

Developing goals and objectives can best be done in a workshop sessions with your committee. Consider a number of smaller groups, each working on a different topic area. Using a facilitator would help with this process as well.

DEFINE THE OBJECTIVES

Once the goals are defined and prioritized, move on to setting objectives for each priority goal. Objectives are more specific than goals – they have to be measurable accomplishments which, if achieved, will help you accomplish your goals and, ultimately, achieve your vision. You may well have more than one objective for each goal.

Objectives should be SMART. The box below provides definitions for SMART.

EXAMPLES OF OBJECTIVES

- Expand our fall community festival by one day this year and two days next year.
- Get our hiking trail market-ready before next season.
- Increase visitation by 10% over the next five years.

SMART

Specific – Identify exactly what is expected or what will change in very clear, definite terms

Measurable – Includes the ability to count in a meaningful way so as to be able to measure progress

Achievable – Can realistically be achieved within the identified timeframe and with available resources

Relevant – Related to the overall strategy and goals for the plan or organization, a worthwhile endeavour

Timely – Identifies a time frame, target date or deadline.

Worksheet #6 Goals and Objectives			
Goals		**Objectives**	
Goal Statement	**Priority**	**Objectives**	**Time Frame**
Experiences & Activities			
To encourage more visitors to stay overnight in the community.	*High*	1. *To provide three more outdoor/nature-based activities for visitors during May to October.* 2. *To create a new memorable experience involving our local photographer and coastal setting.* 3. *To work with the local curling club to attraction regional and provincial bonspiels.*	*Short term* *Immediate* *Short term*
To increase the number of visitors during the shoulder seasons.	*High*	1. *To work with local accommodation operators to create activity-based, overnight packages for the shoulder seasons.* 2. *To enhance the community tourism website to add content on shoulder season appeals.*	*Immediate* *Immediate*
To provide visitors with a top quality experience in our community, so that they recommend it as a 'must visit' on trips to/within Nova Scotia.	*Medium*	1. *To have all front line staff in tourism businesses participate in customer service training.*	*Short term*
To establish more experiences and activities that fit with Nova Scotia's tourism strategy.	*Medium*	1. *To become familiar with the priorities within the Nova Scotia tourism strategy.* 2. *To seek out and implement opportunities within the community for experiences that can be developed that fit with the strategy.*	*Immediate* *Short term*
Services and Amenities			
To make the community more 'user friendly' for visitors.	*High*	1. *To clearly identify and sign downtown parking options.* 2. *To eliminate signage clutter on the approaches to the town.* 3. *To have a comprehensive directional signage system in place.* 4. *To expand the parking options downtown.*	*Immediate* *Short term* *Short term* *Long term*

Note: The information in all worksheets is for a fictitious Nova Scotia community used solely for illustration purposes.

Objectives will be used to help measure progress as you implement the plan.

Tackle the priority goals one at a time and develop a list of objectives, referring back to your SWOT analysis to help identify what needs to be done. Be realistic – resources (time and money) are likely to be limited so keep this in mind when deciding on objectives.

Identify a time frame for achieving each objective. This need not be a specific date; immediate (within one year), short term (2 – 3 years) or long term (more than 3 years) is sufficient. Usually, the immediate objectives would be priorities. However, there may be objectives that are priorities but cannot be accomplished in the immediate or short term. When thinking about short term and priority objectives, consider:

- How important each objective is in achieving the goal? Are there some objectives that have to be achieved before you can start working on others?
- Give priority to objectives that:
    - Produce substantial and visible results – this will give profile to your efforts and help maintain interest in the process.
    - Are realistic and can be done with resources readily available
    - Are a good fit with provincial and regional tourism priorities

Worksheet #6 also provides examples of objectives for our fictitious Nova Scotia seacoast community.

Keep your goals and objectives, brief, to the point and simple. They will feed directly into the action plan, discussed in the next chapter.

When you are finished establishing the vision and setting goals and objectives, prepare a summary document and distribute it to your committee for review and consideration. Do a quick review at a subsequent meeting and make any refinements that are needed.

CHAPTER 6: DEVELOP THE ACTION PLANS

PREPARE THE ACTION PLANS FOR EXPERIENCES AND PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

An action plan is exactly what it sounds like – a plan that details the actions that need to be undertaken to achieve your goals and objectives. In addition to the specific action steps, it needs to include:

- Which organization/stakeholder will take the lead
- Who the partners will be in the effort
- The resources needed – human and financial, and where they will come from
- A timeframe for completing the action
- Key issues or constraints that need to be addressed
- How progress will be monitored and measured

Each of these topics is discussed below.

1. Detail the Specific Actions

Develop detailed, task-oriented statements that set out in a step-by-step fashion the tasks that need to be done to achieve the objectives and respond to the opportunities and gaps that need to be addressed.

Consider setting up sub-groups to deal with specific goals/objectives. Brainstorm within each group to identify the actions needed to achieve the objective and list the actions/tasks in the sequential order in which they need to be done.

Think about each objective and opportunity, and consider what needs to be done to achieve them. Use Worksheet #7 (page 50) to record your actions. To assist, a partially completed Worksheet #7 provides some examples of actions.

Be as specific as possible. The more specific the actions are, the easier it will be for the group tasked with their implementation. It's easier to work with a long list of detailed, manageable tasks than with a short list of vague tasks that leave the implementing organization in the dark about what has to be done.

In some cases, you won't know all of the actions that will be needed; take a 'best guess' to get things started. Action plans are fluid and will be revised as tasks get accomplished or there is a shift in focus or direction.

Worksheet #7 Action Plan						
Objective	**Action Steps**	**Who will lead the effort? Who are the partners?**	**What resources are needed? Where will they come from?**	**Major Constraints or Issues**	Timing	Measurement & Review
To provide three more outdoor/nature-based activities for visitors during May to October.	1. *Establish an ad hoc committee to take the lead on this.* 2. *Identify list of potential activities and what is required for each.* 3. *Agree on priority opportunities.* 4. *Deliver a training workshop on developing experiences.* 5. *Develop detailed experience program.*	*Tourism committee with support of local experts and adventure tourism operators.*	*Mostly time – from Tourism staff and volunteers.* *Approach Nova Scotia Tourism Agency to arrange training workshop.*	*May need some infrastructure such as trails in place in order to deliver these activities.*	*Start immediately with plan to offer one new experience each year.*	*Are the programs established within the time frame?*
To create a new experiential tourism offering involving our local photographer and coastal setting.	1. *Meet with photographer to explore ideas.* 2. *Identify other partners.* 3. *Develop program details and marketing plan.*	*Tourism Committee with assistance of photographer, other businesses*	*Mostly time.* *Tourism Committee to share cost of marketing materials with photographer.*	*Is photographer committed to the community?*		
To work with the local curling club to attraction regional and provincial bonspiels.	1. *Meet with Curling Club.* 2. *Develop list of potential bonspiels and organizers.* 3. *Develop information package on facilities& services.* 4. *Approach bonspiel organizers to introduce community and get on list to 'bid' for events.* 5. *Submit bids as required.*	*Tourism Committee to initiate.* *Curling club to lead, working with Tourism Committee*	*Mostly time.* *Tourism Committee to contribute $1,000 for marketing effort.*	*Bonspiel locations selected 3 -5 years in advance so will take time to see results.*	*Start next spring with target for one or two bonspiels per year*	*Number of bonspiels attracted.*

Note: The information in all worksheets is for a fictitious Nova Scotia community used solely for illustration purposes.

If you have difficulty coming up with action steps, take a careful look at what you are trying to accomplish. Is it really an objective or a specific project that can be accomplished? Or is it perhaps a goal?

Or is the objective too unrealistic to be accomplished as part of a community tourism planning initiative? Or, perhaps your committee members may not have the experience necessary with this type of objective or project and are struggling to identify what needs to be done. If so, get some help from one of the outside groups identified earlier.

2. Identify lead and partner stakeholders/organizations

This is a critical step in successful implementation. If no one is tasked with responsibility for the actions needed, it is very unlikely they will be completed.

Each action needs someone to take the lead in implementation. It might be an individual or a local organization, community group, municipal agency, an ad hoc committee established for a specific purpose, or, it might be one or more individual tourism businesses. Again, be as specific as possible and avoid saying "someone should do this".

If the organization or individual identified for specific actions is not involved in the planning process, you should talk to them and make sure they are prepared to take this on.

In some cases, there will be other organizations or individuals who can assist with the action. Identify them as well.

3. The resources needed and where they will come from

Some actions will require money or investment. For many of your objectives or opportunities, the first action will be "obtain funding for….." Try to get some idea as to how much money might be required and some possible sources. Other actions will require mostly time – again, consider where this will come from.

4. Key issues or constraints that need to be addressed

For some actions, there may be some key issues or constraints that need to be resolved before the action can proceed. If this is the case, identify what the issue is and what needs to be done.

5. A timeframe for completion

Indicate a realistic time frame for completing the action. Certain actions may be achieved within 2 to 6 months. Other tasks could take a year or more to complete.

6. How progress will be measured

Each action should have some measureable outcome that results can be reviewed against. The action should identify who will be responsible for tracking and measuring and when these reviews will take place.

DECIDE ON PRIORITY MARKETING ACTIVITIES

With a plan for experiences, attractions and activities as well as tourism services and amenities in place, you will need a marketing plan outlining what you are going to do to encourage visitors and provide them with the information they need to plan and purchase experiences in your community.

Realistically, your marketing resources are going to be limited so it will be important to maximize the 'bang for your buck". This means being practical about the types of marketing that could benefit tourism in your community and taking advantage of marketing partnership opportunities available through your regional tourism industry organization and the Nova Scotia Tourism Agency.

With a few exceptions, visitors to Nova Scotia are not coming to the province just to visit one small community or region, they are coming for a wide mix of experiences and to visit many areas of the province. It is the responsibility of the Nova Scotia Tourism Agency and their marketing efforts to motivate visits to Nova Scotia and to expose potential travellers to what the province has to offer. 'Tagging on' to their efforts, such as being on novascotia.com, in the Doers & Dreamers Guide or participating in one of many other programs will give your community exposure to these out-of-province markets. Visit: http://novascotiatourismagency.ca/marketing-your-business for details about marketing opportunities.

Once travellers have decided to visit or are in the province, the marketing efforts of the regional tourism industry organizations and individual communities play a role in motivating trips to different parts of the province and providing information on what there is to see and do.

For in-province markets, the approach will be different since the Nova Scotia Tourism Agency will not be involved. For these markets, partnering with the regional tourism industry organization (RTIA) or Destination Marketing Organization, and your own marketing efforts will be important. Visit: http://novascotiatourismagency.ca/regional-tourism-industry-associations for contact details.

Chapter 8 explores the key marketing tools you should consider using.

OTHER ELEMENTS OF YOUR PLAN

Earlier in the guide we talked about other elements of your plan. These might include:

- Assessing the need for a tourism committee or working group, or in larger communities, perhaps a tourism industry organization or association, and relationships with regional and provincial organizations.
- Tourism awareness and municipal support for tourism.
- Human resource and training issues.

Each of these is addressed below.

TOURISM INDUSTRY COMMITTEE OR ORGANIZATION

Your situation analysis work may have identified issues with your local tourism industry – how well it works together, its relationships with other organizations involved in tourism in the community and the region, or various other issues. And if you don't have such an organization, establishing one may be one of your objectives.

Whatever the case, you will need to spend some time exploring solutions and identifying actions to be taken. Consider the following:

- There should be clear definition as to the roles and responsibilities of each involved organization.
- If there are gaps - things that are not being done - decide who is best capable of filling the gap and approach that organization to take on that task.
- If there are overlaps in what is being done, determine who is best capable of doing the work and facilitate a process to eliminate the duplication.
- The tourism businesses in your community must be actively involved in any tourism organization – they know the tourism industry and the success of their business will be directly impacted by what happens with tourism in the area.

Your plan for organizational issues needs to respond to the various components of the overall plan – implementing the actions around experience and product development, marketing, coordination of efforts and any other issues you have decided need to be addressed.

In a small community, working together and making the most of the available resources and expertise is critical. Having a tourism plan that everyone buys into will go a long way to helping keep things on track, as will having clear agreement on roles and responsibilities.

If you are establishing a new tourism committee or organization, keep in mind some key principles:

- It must have the support of the tourism industry.
- The tourist businesses/operators must be actively involved in decision-making.
- It should be largely free of political interference and decision making, with decisions made based on the business case for the tourism industry.
- It will need resources – both money and people.
- The primary purpose should be to benefit tourism in the community.

Your local tourism group should be actively involved with the regional tourism industry organization in your part of Nova Scotia and keep well-informed about opportunities to participate in their programs. Successful partnerships with these organizations are important to success.

TOURISM AWARENESS AND MUNICIPAL SUPPORT

In some communities there may be negative attitudes, or misconceptions, about tourism from the residents and/or the local Council. You may also face a situation where the business community, and even some tourism operators, are not in support of strengthening tourism in the area.

To turn these types of situations around, you will need to mobilize an effort to build awareness about tourism and what the benefits are for your community. This cannot be achieved overnight and it will take a steady, concerted effort over a number of years to influence perceptions about tourism. Some suggestions are as follows:

1. Identify which audiences you need to reach – tourism operators, the business community, municipal politicians and staff, the general public. Municipal politicians are one of the most important audiences since you will likely approach them for support at some point.

2. Decide on the best way to get your message across. For municipal councils, it will be important to keep the lines of communication open via regular presentations on what you are doing, and, most importantly, what you are achieving. Start this process by telling them about the highlights of the tourism plan.

3. For the broader community, use the local community newspaper or website with regular articles on tourism, what is happening with tourism and how it benefits your community. One-on-one contact with key business people and tourism operators will also be useful.

HUMAN RESOURCE ISSUES

If your SWOT analysis identified human resource issues, you will want to pay special attention to dealing with them, if at all possible. Well-trained staff who provide quality service are a fundamental requirement for success in tourism.

Talk to the Nova Scotia Tourism Human Resource Council (www.tourismhrc.com) and explore the issues your SWOT analysis identified. Their programs include skills training, customer service training and mentoring for business owners and managers. Find out what programs they offer that might help in your community.

PULLING THE PLAN TOGETHER

Now that all the separate elements of the overall plan are prepared, put everything together in one tourism plan document. The plan will probably be a series of tables with some discussion around each of them.

Part 3: Implementation

CHAPTER 7: IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

REVIEW THE DRAFT PLAN WITH YOUR PARTNERS

Review the draft plan with your partners and stakeholders, particularly any organizations you involved in the process.

Have a special meeting with the tourism stakeholders who have not been involved in the details and present the key conclusions and actions arising out of the plan. You will want to get their support and assistance with implementing the plan so getting their input is important.

Take the feedback you get from these meetings and fine tune the plan. After these changes are included, you can and prepare a final document.

Depending on the local situation, you will probably want to present the plan to your municipal council. Consider doing this when the plan is still in draft format so that the councillors can provide input into the fine-tuning of the recommended actions. This is particularly important if your plan involves asking Council for support - whether it is financial or in-kind support, make this ask as part of your presentation.

IMPLEMENTATION

Now that your community tourism plan is finished, the next step is implementing it. With key community tourism stakeholders involved, you will have created some interest and support for the plan and the stakeholders should be ready to help with implementation.

The action plans will clearly outline who has responsibility for each action, where the resources are going to come from and what the timeframe/priority is. Make sure that each organization/individual that has been tasked to be the lead on specific actions has a copy of the plan and understands their responsibilities.

You will need a group or organization to take overall responsibility for implementation of the plan. This group will oversee the process, make sure nothing falls off track, act as a sounding and advisory board and coordinate communications between the various players involved in implementation. This group should also monitor progress and lead any efforts to modify the plan or update it as required. This group might be your tourism planning committee or there may be an existing organization to play this ongoing role.

The implementation committee should meet on a regular basis with the organizations tasked with implementing the various actions. These meetings would cover:

- Update on progress, compared to the timeframe in the plan
- Identify any roadblocks
- Explore coordination with the actions of other groups
- Modifications to actions and timetables

There will likely be some changes in the specific actions as the implementation teams move ahead. Some tasks may happen more easily than expected, others may hit roadblocks and stall for extended periods. Don't worry about this; the plan should have a life of its own and be revised and updated as things change.

What is important is that you start work on implementation, and that the overall commitment to the vision and goals remains focussed. If the implementation committee finds that there are some important tasks that are not being done, they may need to step in and find someone else to move ahead with the implementation of these tasks.

Have a communication plan in place that clearly identifies potential milestones and events and exactly how, and to whom, you will share the news. Keep everyone involved in implementation up-to-date on what is happening and any achievements. A regular email blast or e-newsletter can do this. If you reach a major milestone, make it a newsworthy event for the whole community.

MONITORING AND UPDATING

Another job for the implementation committee is to keep track of the actions that have been completed and prepare a brief annual report for distribution to the stakeholders. This report should flag any road blocks or changes in direction and identify any new actions or objectives that have been added.

Each year (or more often if needed), review the goals and objectives you established and summarize the progress you are making towards achieving them. After three to five years, complete a comprehensive review of the plan following a similar plan preparation process to that described in this guide. By this time you will have achieved many of the goals that were set out in your original plan and you can move on to a new set of goals, objectives and actions.

CHAPTER 8: SOME IDEAS FOR MARKETING YOUR COMMUNITY FOR TOURISM

INTRODUCTION

Marketing is often perceived as just selling and advertising. It actually involves much more – and a lot of what you have done in developing your community tourism plan is part of marketing. Marketing begins before the experience or activity exists and continues long after the customer is gone. It really involves all of the following:

- Research and planning
- Matching the experiences, products and services you offer with market interests. Make sure they are market-ready and meet expectations
- Positioning your tourism offer
- Partnerships – with local tourism businesses, regional tourism associations, the Nova Scotia Tourism Agency
- Advertising and promotions including:
    - Website
    - Printed material such as brochures, maps and guides
    - Building customer relationships through social media –Facebook, Twitter, etc.
- Visitor information services
- Some types of signage
- Publicity and media relations
- Working with the travel trade – tour operators, travel agents
- Direct sales, such as for conventions

Your resources for marketing are likely limited so it will be important to leverage your money and get the most for your dollar. This means focussing your efforts on a few important marketing tools, and partnering with your regional tourism industry organization and the Nova Scotia Tourism Agency to gain more exposure for your community.

This chapter of the guide provides an introduction to the key marketing tools that your community should likely be involved in, specifically:

- Website
- Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, You Tube
- Printed collateral – brochure, map
- Advertising in regional and provincial travel guides
- Local visitor information services
- Local signage

There are other guides in this series that will be valuable. One is "A Guide to Marketing Your Nova Scotia Tourism Business" – find it at http://novascotiatourismagency.ca/business-development-guides. It is written for individual tourism businesses but there is a lot of content that will be useful in tourism marketing for a community. In particular, there is information on online marketing as well as an appendix with details on designing brochures. There is also the "Building Travel Trade Business" guide which can be found through the same web address.

MARKETING PARTNERSHIPS

Before looking at the key marketing tools, let's talk about marketing partnerships.

Partnerships, including cooperative marketing initiatives, are essential for communities to grow their tourism. Local partnerships – with local tourism businesses, with organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, the downtown businesses and/or the municipality, should be the first priority followed by partnerships with the regional or sub-regional tourism industry organization. Another possible partner is the Nova Scotia Tourism Agency.

The Nova Scotia Tourism Agency's role in tourism marketing it to grow the province's tourism industry, particularly visits by out-of-region travellers and their spending. As noted earlier, their focus is on attracting first time visitors to Nova Scotia from identified target markets. The Agency does a lot of research and planning to identify markets with the most potential and design marketing programs to encourage them to visit the province. They also partner with others, such as the other Atlantic Provinces through the Atlantic Canada Tourism Partnership and the Canadian Tourism Commission in overseas markets.

The Agency offers a number of partner marketing opportunities. They can be found at http://novascotiatourismagency.ca/marketing-your-business. While many of these opportunities are for individual tourism businesses, communities can participate in many of them, such as:

- Doers & Dreamers Travel Guide
- novascotia.com
- Festival and event marketing initiatives
- Provincial Visitor Information Centre staff product knowledge tours held each summer for different regions of the province
- Familiarization tours

Regional tourism industry associations undertake a lot of marketing programs in which your community can participate. The regional groups work closely with individual tourism businesses in their region and with municipalities and community tourism groups. These associations host websites with information on the entire region, deliver online and social media marketing programs and usually have a printed travel guide. They also participate in shows such as Saltscapes, representing destinations and experiences throughout their region.

It makes a lot of sense for community tourism groups to partner with regional tourism industry associations, and in some cases the Nova Scotia Tourism Agency on marketing initiatives, particularly those that are aimed at out-of-province or out-of-region markets. Community tourism groups do not have sufficient resources to do these types of marketing activities on their own.

An important role for your community tourism group will be to act as a 'content supplier' to other organizations such as the Nova Scotia Tourism Agency and the regional tourism industry associations. Make sure they have up-to-date information on what your community has to offer, and particularly on festivals and events.

It also makes a lot of sense for community tourism groups to work in close partnership with the individual tourism businesses in the community. Cooperative marketing efforts will give you more 'bang for your buck' with a higher impact amid the marketing clutter that is out there. One example is advertising in the provincial Doers & Dreamers Travel Guide – if your community tourism group organizes a two-page spread on the community with participation by a number of businesses, you will all benefit from a much higher profile in the guide.

KEY TOOLS FOR COMMUNITY TOURISM MARKETING

WEBSITE

Growth in the Internet has revolutionized how destinations market themselves. Even the smallest community or tourism business can reach out to the world via the Internet. The big challenges today are not in participating in online marketing, rather they are in your ability to attract prospects to your website, the quality of the website itself, and the ease of navigating within it.

Having a good website for tourism should probably be your top priority marketing initiative. Remember that the website is to promote your community to potential visitors; therefore you want to showcase all of the experiences and activities you have to offer, along with a full list of traveller services and amenities. Avoid getting into a situation where only 'members' are on your website – this can limit what you are promoting and make your community appear less appealing to potential visitors.

Some tips on website design and functionality are provided below:

- Have ***a URL that uses a familiar 'brand name'***, landmark or geographic area.
- Select a ***hosting company that is reliable***, cost effective and well known with an established customer base.
- Make sure you have ***a quality website***.
    - Look at the sites of some other communities for examples of best practices.

    - Think about what potential visitors will want to know about your community – both before and after making the decision to visit.
    - Make sure the content is relevant and reinforces the messages you are trying to communicate.
    - Have a clean, modern, organized and uncluttered site with quality images.
    - Avoid flashy graphics and images since too many moving pieces will distract visitors from the content of your site.
    - Remember the crucial components to quality website design – simple structure and layout, easy to read typography, effective colour scheme and intuitive design elements.
    - Pay particular attention to the homepage – it should set the overall tone for your website and give visitors access to key navigational elements.
    - Hire a copywriter with reputable web experience – writing for the web is different than writing for print since consumers behave differently online – they read much more slowly.
- ***Integrate social sharing on your website***, enabling visitors to share content using their favourite social media sites. Add social media sharing buttons such as Facebook's 'like' button, Twitter's 'tweet' button.
- ***Add a blog to your website*** – this will allow you to build a fuller picture of what you offer and the types of experiences your visitors will have. Blogs have proven to be powerful online tools for the tourism industry.
- ***Have different pages for different target markets*** – such as meeting planners, tour operators, the media and different market segments you may have identified for your community.
- Make sure your website has a ***downloadable map of your community*** indicating where the key tourism experiences and facilities are located, and how to find you, as well as a downloadable brochure in PDF format.
- ***Drive traffic to your website*** through:
    - Search engine optimization – search engines can drive 60% - 80% of a website's traffic
    - Search engine marketing – online advertising
    - Email marketing – this requires asking your website visitors for their permission to send them something
    - Social media marketing
    - An easy to remember URL that is featured in any traditional marketing that is done by your community
- ***Develop and implement a link strategy*** for both inbound links (links from other websites) and outbound links (links to other websites) to ensure your site is connected to all appropriate sites and to help maximize search engine optimization. Make sure your website is linked to/from:
    - Your regional (and sub-regional) tourism industry association
    - Your local municipal website(s)
    - novascotia.com

    - Local and regional tourism businesses and sites
- Other features you should have:
    - ***Inbound email capacity*** for site visitors to use to send a query
    - A built-in ***content management module*** to facilitate updating information on the website. This will avoid the time and costs involved in having the designer make all the necessary changes.
- ***Measure the response*** to your website through a web analytics tool. Some basic measurable components of your website include:
    - Content preferences – which areas of your site do people stay on the longest
    - Clickstream history – where people go on your site and in what order
    - User profiles – where users come from, what site they were on previous to yours, etc.

  Use these and other metrics to make educated decisions around what needs to change on your website.

In today's increasingly mobile world, you should also consider apps for mobile phones. However, these can be expensive to develop and update so you will need to investigate the opportunity carefully. This may be something better done in partnership with your regional tourism industry association.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social networks present opportunities for people to connect with other people as well as with tourism businesses and destinations. It allows both businesses and destinations to develop deeper and stronger bonds with customers and visitors, and allows you to tell your story in a way that can be shared further and faster than ever. There are many social media channels, and more being established every year. Some key ones (in 2013) are described below:

Facebook

This is the largest social network in the world with over 250 million users logging in on a daily basis and more than one billion monthly active users. Every month people share more than 30 billion pieces of content including links, news stories, blog posts, photo albums and notes – you can't afford to ignore it!

Your presence on Facebook can be seen in three ways – profiles, pages or groups. ***Profiles*** are the private accounts used primarily for personal communications with friends and family. ***Pages*** are used for businesses, organizations and public figures – they are free and easy to set up but you need to make sure you maintain a level of engagement with your 'friends'. ***Facebook groups*** are similar to discussion forums and require a high level of engagement and time to manage.

The most effective and efficient Facebook channel is pages – they are simple and easy to establish. Make sure you post useful, engaging and relevant information on your wall, not endless updates

about the same thing. Try to enter into a dialogue with your fans – asking questions is a good way to get started at this.

You can also use Facebook ads which can be targeted to users based on their location, demographics and profile information. However, it can get expensive if you are not focused on a specific goal.

Twitter

Twitter is a platform where users share their thoughts, news, information and jokes in 140 characters or less. It allows businesses to communicate across the globe with anyone from celebrities to potential customers at no cost. Users can 'follow' specific businesses or destinations or individuals, and interact with them at their choosing.

Make sure you understand the Twitter lingo such as Handle (your username), Tweet (the message), Feed (the stream of tweets on your home page) and Hashtag (#- a way to denote a topic of conversation or participate in a larger linked discussion). Twitter has a useful online glossary you can refer to - http://support.twitter.com/articles/166337-the-twitter-glossary .

You need to have a well-thought out approach to Twitter so that you can become part of relevant conversations, sharing thoughts relative to your destination.

Pinterest

You use Pinterest by creating different boards based on different subjects that are interesting and relevant to you. You can use it to showcase unique aspects of your destination in a compelling way.

Pinterest has some 35 million active users and daily users increased by more than 145% during 2012.

YouTube

YouTube, which is owned by Google, has become **the** video site of the internet. Uploading and marketing videos of your destination can help give your content visibility on both YouTube and Google Search. You will need to create a YouTube channel which acts as a hub for all your video content.

Foursquare

Foursquare is essentially a social city guide created by other users. People use their phones to 'check in' at different places they visit around a destination – bars, restaurants, parks, museums – and then Foursquare rewards them with badges and points.

Although the usage rates are not as high as Facebook or Twitter it does present an opportunity to connect with a very internet-savvy audience.

COLLATERAL MATERIAL – A COMMUNITY BROCHURE, MAP AND OTHER PIECES

Collateral material includes all the printed material you use to market your community. The main types you are likely to use are brochures and maps.

A brochure is the most important piece of printed collateral for your community because it can influence travellers to visit your community and provide information to those who are already there. A well-done brochure can be a lure if it is distributed outside the community such as through provincial visitor information centres.

When trying to decide what kind of brochure you need, what it should look like and what it should contain, consider the markets you are trying to attract and the reasons travellers are likely to come to your community – the experiences that will attract them.

Next, decide on the content of the brochure. As a rule, it should contain the following:

- Name of the community
- Photographs of the major experiences your community has to offer
- Descriptive text or copy, focused on your local demand-generators
- Selling or motivational copy highlight visitor appeals and unique selling points
- Map showing where your community is and the main routes to get there
- Where to get more information – your website address, a toll free number

The design of the brochure should follow the AIDA formula:

1. **Capture Attention**:
    - Use the front cover
    - Use an attractive lure photograph of the community and surrounding area, focusing on something that illustrates the experiences you offer travellers.
    - Make sure this is on the top one third of your brochure since brochures are frequently displayed with only the top part showing.
2. **Develop Interest**:
    - Use the second panel and photographs and text describing the appeals of the community
    - Focus on the wonderful things to see and do
3. **Create Desire:**
    - Provide enough information for people to decide whether or not they want to visit your community
    - Focus on your unique appeals
4. **Call to Action**
    - Turn the interest and desire into action
    - Use the back panel
    - Include how to get to the community, where to get more information

Photographs should be an essential element of your brochure. Here are some guidelines on using photographs:

- The most effective photographs are action shots of visitors enjoying experiences and interacting with their surroundings.
- Only use photographs that have been taken professionally or to professional standards.
- Don't use too many photographs – a small number of larger photographs have more impact than a large number of small ones.
- Make sure you have permission to use the photographs you select and provide credit as required.
- Don't use photographs that will date rapidly.
- Always run a caption with each photograph explaining what it shows and indicating its proper location – and try to incorporate a selling message in the captions.

The Nova Scotia Tourism Agency can provide you with access to Barberstock.com, an online image and video library that includes images for tourism stakeholders to use in promoting the province and their products.

Some other brochure design hints:

- Use clear, simple type
- Do not use ornate type styles since they are hard to read
- Use black ink on white paper for easy readability
- Don't overprint type on top of a photograph or with a coloured screen – this makes the type difficult to read
- Leave a lot of white space

Printing a brochure can be expensive. Printing costs are impacted by the type of paper stock, the number of pages, the number of colours, the number of copies printed, and the printing process used. Consider a brochure that can be used for several years and refer users to your website for time-sensitive information. Also, include a PDF of the brochure on your website.

If you decide to sell advertising in your brochure as a means of lowering the net costs, make sure you do not compromise the type of information you need to put on the brochure. An alternative approach might be to get 2 or 3 local businesses to 'sponsor' the brochure (with their name and logo appearing on the brochure along with the words 'sponsored by'). This gives them recognition for their support but does not detract from the appeal of the brochure.

Distribute the brochure through channels such as:

- Local visitor information centres (VICs)
- Other information centres – supply the provincial Literature Distribution Centre with a stock for distribution to provincial information centres. There are some guidelines about brochures for them to be included in this program, including that any individual businesses listed must

meet the guidelines. These guidelines can be found at http://novascotiatourismagency.ca/sites/default/files/page_documents/brochure_guidelines_2013.pdf

- Local and regional tourism businesses, especially accommodations
- In response to enquiries

Other printed collateral material could be developed primarily for visitors who are already in the community. These might include:

- A community map
- A weekly or monthly listing of community events – concerts, movies, church suppers
- Guides to local hiking/walking trails or community walking tours
- Lists of local crafts people
- Information on local historic buildings and heritage sites
- How to find your 'hidden gems'

CONTENT AND ADVERTISING IN REGIONAL AND PROVINCIAL TRAVEL GUIDES

Regional and provincial travels guides, both online and print, are excellent ways to reach a large number of potential visitors. You should make sure that information on your community is included in these guides and also consider advertising in them, if this option is available.

This is a cost-effective advertising method since these guides are viewed online by many potential travellers and the print versions are distributed either to people already travelling in the province or to those who have expressed an interest in doing so.

For information on these guides, contact your regional tourism industry association (http://novascotiatourismagency.ca/regional-tourism-industry-associations) or the Nova Scotia Tourism Agency (http://novascotiatourismagency.ca).

LOCAL VISITOR INFORMATION SERVICES

Your community should provide local visitor information services to travellers. This need not be a full-fledged visitor information centre (these can be expensive to operate). Information could be provided through the municipal office, Chamber of Commerce and/or local businesses and at a kiosk with signage panels and displays. Whatever approach is best for your community, make sure that visitors have access to information throughout the day and the week, from May through October at a minimum. (Information on constructing an information kiosk can be found at http://novascotiatourismagency.ca/visitor-information-kiosk-kits).

Providing local visitor information won't help attract new travellers to your community but it can have a significant impact on encouraging existing visitors to stay longer, spend more and have a good time. This means they will be more likely to tell their friends and relatives about their visit.

If you do have a local visitor information centre, the key to making it work in a marketing role is to have well-trained staff who are not only extremely knowledgeable about the community but also have a 'sales' orientation. Staff should be trained to sell your community and its appeals and attractions, and help with itinerary planning for travellers that come through the door. There is another guide in this series about establishing and operating a community information centre that would be useful to review. It can be found at: http://www.novascotia.ca/econ/tourism/building-business/guides/business-guides.asp.

Consider having information sessions for all tourism businesses in your area to inform staff about local highlights and encourage cross-promotion of local businesses.

You can also arrange to have your brochure distributed through selected provincial visitor information centre. Check out the guidelines for the provincial Literature Distribution Centre referenced above.

LOCAL SIGNAGE

Good quality local signage is critical to being a successful tourism destination. Visitors to the community need to be able to find the things to see and do, places to park, your downtown with its shops and services and the 'hidden gems' that make your community appealing. You should also have good quality welcoming signage. This will mean working closely with the municipality and may require changes to signage by-laws.

Signage clutter needs to be managed – it can give a poor overall impression of your community and does not help the traveller.

OTHER MARKETING ACTIVITIES

There are numerous other marketing tools in use within the tourism industry. Public and media relations, working with the travel trade, attending consumer and trade shows, and other forms of advertising are all in use. However, in most cases the impact of these types of marketing activities is much much greater if they are done by organizations covering a broader geographic area, such as the regional tourism industry association or the Nova Scotia Tourism Agency. We recommend that you not attempt these types of marketing activities on your own but instead participate as a partner or in collaboration with other organizations.

EVALUATING YOUR MARKETING EFFORTS

You should try to evaluate the success of your marketing activities on an ongoing basis so you can gage out what is working and what is not.

Tracking the results on one of your most important marketing tools, your website, is relatively simple when using freely available technology such as Google Analytics. Monitor activity on your website on a regular basis and look at the statistics on how long people spend on the site, what they look at and where they come from. You can also use different website URLs for specific ads and publications and then track the numbers of visitors to your website via these URLS.

CONCLUSIONS

Congratulations! You now have a tourism plan for your community – a plan that sets out what you want to achieve, an action plan and groups of individuals tasked with specific implementation responsibilities.

A few words of advice as you move forward:

- Keep the tourism stakeholders in your community involved and up-to-date with what is happening.
- Celebrate your achievements – and communicate them to the entire community, particularly your local council.
- Monitor the results of what you do – and make changes if necessary. The tourism marketplace is constantly evolving so don't be surprised if you need to adjust some of your conclusions and actions. But, do give things a chance to work – attracting new visitors or extending the stay of existing visitors won't happen overnight.
- Collaboration and partnership are key to success in tourism – within your community, with neighbouring communities and within the region and province overall. Travellers don't know (or care) about boundary lines on a map – they are interested in experiences!

Good luck!

Thank you to our review panel – Jeff Stanley (Municipality of the County of Richmond), Suzy Atwood (Discover Shelburne County) and Marianne Gates (formerly Kings Regional Development Agency) for their valuable input to this document.

APPENDIX: BLANK WORKSHEETS FOR YOUR USE

Worksheet #1: Understand the Visitors to Your Community		
Key Visitor Characteristics	**Describe Visitors to Your Community**	**Any Trends or Changes Happening**
Who are your visitors? e.g. • Families, couples, singles, groups • Older or younger • From the region, from other parts of Nova Scotia or from outside Nova Scotia • On day trips, overnight visits to your community or just passing through		
Why are they coming? e.g. • For a particular experience, attraction, event or natural feature • For business or meetings • To stay at a special local accommodation or dine in a particular restaurant • To go shopping • To visit friends and family • En route to an iconic experience nearby		
When are they coming? e.g. • All year • Summer only • Spring, summer and fall • All week or weekends only		
Is your community the		

Worksheet #1: Understand the Visitors to Your Community		
Key Visitor Characteristics	**Describe Visitors to Your Community**	**Any Trends or Changes Happening**
destination for your visitors? If so, what brings them?		
What do most visitors do while in your community? • Participate in activities – which ones • Visit attractions – which ones • Shop • Eat out • Sightsee		
How long do visitors stay? • For ½ day or less • For one night • For several nights		
Other:		

Worksheet #2 Potential New Markets for Your Community		
Markets – New or with Potential to Grow	**Key Characteristics & Interests or Needs**	**What our Community offers or could offer for this Market**

Worksheet # 3A: Understand What Your Community has to Offer				
Name of Experience, Product or Activity	**Operating Season**	**Key Features and Experiences**	**Is it a Demand Generator? Why?**	**Is it Market Ready? If not, why not?**

Worksheet # 3B: Understand What Private Tourism Businesses Offer in Your Community			
Name of Experience, Product or Activity	**Operating Season**	**Key Features and Experiences**	**Is it a Demand Generator? Why?**

Worksheet #4A – Inventory of Accommodations and Campgrounds			
Facility Name and Operating Season	**Number of Units**	**Other Facilities and Services**	**Notes**

Worksheet #4B – Inventory of Other Amenities and Services			
Type of Amenity/Service	**Community is Well-Supplied**	**Shortage or Lack of Amenity/Service**	**Notes**
Visitor Information Services			
Gas stations			
Banks/ATM			
Convenience Stores			
Grocery/Liquor Stores			
Specialty shops			
Other Shops			
Parking			
Welcome Signage			
Directional Signage			
Other			

Worksheet #5A Strengths, Weaknesses and Opportunities			
Tourism Element	**Strengths**	**Weaknesses**	**Opportunities & Gaps**
Attractions & Activities			
Natural Areas			
Festivals & Events			
Specialty Shopping & Dining			
Destination Accommodation			
Other Experiences			
Amenities & Services			
Other – Infrastructure, Marketing, Community Resources, Tourism Industry Organization, Other			

Worksheet #5B: Threats/Risks and Proposals for Mitigation	
Threats/Risks	**Proposals for Mitigation or Adaptation**

Worksheet #6 Goals and Objectives			
Goals		**Objectives**	
Goal Statement	**Priority**	**Objectives**	**Time Frame**
Experiences & Activities			
Services and Amenities			

Worksheet #7 Action Plan						
Objective	**Action Steps**	**Who will lead the effort? Who are the partners?**	**What resources are needed? Where will they come from?**	**Major Constraints or Issues**	Timing	Measurement & Review