

A Strategy to Develop the Tourism Industry in Durham Region

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Prepared by Durham Region Tourism in partnership with tourism industry in Durham Region



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Durham Region

Tourism Development Strategy

Introduction

Durham Region, like many municipalities, has embraced tourism as a strong component of its Economic Development Strategy. Durham Region is defined to include the Town of Ajax, Township of Brock, Municipality of Clarington, City of Oshawa, City of Pickering, Township of Scugog, Township of Uxbridge and the Town of Whitby, each active to varying degrees in tourism. Durham's location just east of Canada's largest metropolitan area, Toronto, also an established and diversified international tourism destination, creates challenges and opportunities for the Region's tourism industry.

In order to evaluate its current competitiveness and to examine its tourism development needs, the Region initiated the Premier-ranked Tourism Destination Framework (PRTDF) project in late 2005. Developed by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, the PRTDF process is an intense one that follows a detailed step by step inventory, analysis and resource audit of tourism industry assets to identify gaps and opportunities. Analysis and conclusions address the three dimensions of the PRTD Framework – Product, Performance and Futurity – using eleven (11) separate criteria as presented on the next page. A more detailed outline of the process, its worksheets and conclusions are presented under separate cover and available from Durham Tourism.

Analysis and discussions prompted primarily by the PRTDF process identified that there is opportunity and momentum to reach beyond individual geopolitical boundaries of the towns and cities that are part of Durham Region to strategically build and market tourism products that will motivate new and increased visits and spending to the Region as a whole.

This draft Tourism Development Strategy identifies strategic priorities to address key findings from the detailed PRTDF analysis. It integrates the discussions and input from sessions with the PRTDF Steering Committee and industry input meetings held in late June 2006 with a broad cross-section of tourism industry leaders, influencers and stakeholders. This Tourism Development Strategy also responds to industry input from a presentation of the Strategy in draft form in early September 2006.

This Tourism Strategy Plan is a living document subject to shifts and updating as implementation of initiatives identified in this plan continue. Similar to the PRTDF process, it takes a holistic approach to developing and supporting tourism. In addition, it is important to note that by their very nature, strategies provide a high level focus and direction, rather than specific actions

and tactics. The development of a detailed work plan to implement the Strategy is the first task to be undertaken by key partners and stakeholders.

The tourism industry in Durham Region is in various stages of development and maturity. In some centres such as Port Perry, the industry is organized, well-developed and diverse, providing significant economic impact to the community. In other areas of the Region, tourism is at an earlier stage of development, may be less organized or not currently play such a significant role in the overall economy. As well, tourism providers are diverse -- large and small, privately owned/operated, volunteer run, national and local in reach.

The Strategy recognizes, acknowledges and addresses the diverse continuum of the tourism industry in the Region. Its recommendations focus clearly on the Regional level, noting links between demand generators, both large and small to build the industry as a whole. Municipalities, tourism associations and individual tourism operations within Durham Region are encouraged to embrace and build their own strategies using this shared Regional Strategy as a framework. Investment of resources, human and financial, at the Regional, municipal and individual tourism operator level will result in growth and diversification to the benefit of the Region as a whole.

Premier-ranked Tourist Destination Framework Dimensions and Criteria	
<p>PRODUCT</p> <p><i>“Features that enable a destination to offer a high quality tourist experience”.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Distinctive Core Attractions What makes the destination stand out as distinct? How is the destination offering relevant to market wants? ✓ Quality and Critical Mass To what extent does the destination provide a broad and deep range of core and related activities, as well as entertainment, shopping and dining? ✓ Satisfaction and Value Do guests feel welcomed, are they satisfied, do they receive good value? What is being done to enhance these areas? ✓ Accessibility How accessible is the destination to tourists and how well is access being managed? ✓ Accommodations Base What range of accommodation classes, price points and locations is available?
<p>PERFORMANCE</p> <p><i>“The extent to which the destination is successful and recognized in the market place”.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Visitation Examines total visitation and market share, market segments it attracts and seasonality of visits. ✓ Occupancy and Yield What is the destination’s occupancy and spending relative to provincial averages and norms? ✓ Critical Acclaim Is the destination recognized as standing out from other competitive destinations? Is it a ‘must see’ destination?
<p>FUTURITY</p> <p><i>“Is the destination investing in its future as a place with viable and continuing attractiveness for evolving markets”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Destination Marketing Is the destination targeting viable markets, investing in managing and promoting tourism and working with tour operators serving the area? ✓ Product Renewal Is the destination making capital investment into its attractiveness for the future? ✓ Managing within Carrying Capacity Does the destination have the ability to manage systems that sustain it, (e.g. soft and hard, infrastructure, ecosystems administrative systems) and its attractiveness to the tourism marketplace?
<p>Source: Ontario Ministry of Tourism <i>Premier-ranked Tourist Destination Framework</i> , 2001</p>	

Highlights of the PRTDF Analysis and Conclusions

Durham Region's tourism product is for the most part, a regional draw. Over 70% of current visitation to Durham Region is from same day visits, with 98% of these by adult residents from the Greater Toronto Area. Overnight visitors, making up 29% of total visitation, are drawn to the Region for a number of reasons including events at Mosport, visits to friends and relatives (VFR), business activities and sporting competitions and events. The addition of new fixed roof accommodation in the last two years in the Region will support a natural shift in the mix of same-day and overnight visits.

While many areas in Ontario benefit from an iconic geographic feature that helps define them and motivate visits including, for example the Bruce Peninsula, Niagara Falls, many lake regions (Muskoka, Kawartha's, Great Lakes, etc.) and national and provincial parks such as Algonquin Park, Durham Region does not. The Region does, however, have many firsts and 'one-only's' in Ontario that provide Durham with profile and visitor draws including:

- Mosport International Raceway – largest of its kind in Ontario with one of only 3 tracks in Ontario that has hosted Formula 1, Can-Am and Indy events
- Wooden Sticks Golf Course – a destination golf course with holes designed after iconic PGA golf holes from around the world and on-site accommodation
- University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT) – Ontario's first laptop university
- Parkwood, The R.S. McLaughlin Estate – a national historic site and home of auto baron Col. R. Samuel McLaughlin with historic gardens and grand estate.

Each of these unique facilities draw different, and rather narrow market niches, some regional, others international.

Attractors for the same day traveller appear to be a number of character rural centres and heritage downtown cores such as Bowmanville, Uxbridge and Port Perry, the opportunity to visit farms and buy agricultural products from the source, garden-related attractions, a range of historic and cultural attractions including local theatre productions, heritage sites,

What does tourism in Durham Region look like now?

Total # of visits: 3.03 million

Total spending: \$208 million generating over \$4 million in Municipal tax revenue

Same day vs. Overnight:
71% same day; 29% overnight

Origin: same day visits 98% from within Ontario; overnight: within Ontario (83%), 9% U.S., 4% other provinces and 4% overseas

Travel Party Profile: 90% 2 adults, average age: 41 yrs.

Market segments: Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) 71%, pleasure; 19%, business 7.3% and other 2.1%

Seasonality: 36% July to September, 21% per quarter for the remainder of the year.

Source: CTS/ITS 2004

artisans, galleries and festival and events. The Region also provides visitors with a broad choice of year round outdoor venues and activities including a significant trails network and waterfront areas. It is often the proximity to each other and combination of these draws that provide focus and entertainment for visitors within a day's drive. The core attractors for same-day visitors are important supporting attractions for overnight visitors.

The draw of visiting area residents is also a strong pull as evidenced by the fact that 71% of total visitation is to visit friends and relatives, a number that will continue to grow as the Region's population continues to expand. While not typically high yield, this sector is important to attractions, restaurants and festivals while also adding local flavour that enhances a destination for visitors.

While Durham Region is primarily a regional draw, a limited number of facilities are successful at attracting an affluent and longer haul and sometimes international traveller including, for example:

- Mosport International Raceway;
- Wooden Sticks Golf Course;
- High Fields Spa & Country Inn
- Provincial, national and international sporting events/competitions; and
- Technical tours and meetings in the automotive and energy industries.

These facilities each attract a distinct and different market niche.

Durham Region is in a period of active development and growth. A number of major capital developments, recently completed or under development have been identified that will alter and enhance the tourism offer or bring a new type of visitor to the Region. In addition, entrepreneurs and not-for-profit organizations continue to invest into tourism products and experiences, further expanding and enhancing the overall draw for visitors. While not intended to be all-inclusive, the following table illustrates the range of operators investing in tourism products and experiences.

<i>Recently completed developments, upgrades and expansions</i>	<i>Under development</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scugog Island Cruises ▪ Oshawa Jazz Festival ▪ Hilton Garden Inn, Ajax ▪ Cider House Golf Course at Archibald Orchards & Estate Winery ▪ Legends Centre, a multi-purpose sports and community facility ▪ University of Ontario Institute of Technology, including a Conference Centre, State-of-the-art Tennis Facility, 2 NHL size pads ▪ Ajax Slots at Picov Downs ▪ Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment Complex ▪ Total Hockey Museum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ R. S. McLaughlin Durham Regional Cancer Centre ▪ Ongoing development/expansion of Oshawa Valley Botanical Gardens ▪ Regional Trails Network

A number of other initiatives are in the planning stages including, for example, Second Marsh's Great Lakes Wetland Centre and The Regent Theatre Renewal Project. These new, planned and anticipated investments must be actively engaged by the tourism community to enhance the tourism offer in Durham.

Tourism in Durham Region is supported by area municipalities in different degrees including:

- Commitment to local tourism as part of a broader economic strategy;
- Staging and marketing of community and local festivals and events;
- Active preservation of historic buildings and homes;
- Operation of visitor information centres;
- Support for the development of a trails network; and
- Public investment into tourism services and amenities such as development and maintenance of public spaces, parks and washrooms, transportation facilities and signage.

This commitment provides momentum to further enhance and grow tourism as an economic activity.

Strategic Priorities

Based on review and analysis of the opportunities and gaps identified through the PRTDF process, the following statement summarizes strategic priorities for tourism in Durham Region:

The Region of Durham and its partners will work together to increase the time that same day visitors spend in the Region, increase the number of overnight visits, and generate increased spending and resulting economic activity by providing visitors with new and compelling reasons to visit Durham Region. Efforts will also focus on diversifying the visitor party profile to include more families. To achieve these goals, five strategic priorities will be addressed in the next five years, 2006 to 2011 as outlined below.

- 1. Invest into the strategic development of new and expanded tourism products/services;*
- 2. Facilitate effective communication of regional tourism products/services to highest potential target markets;*
- 3. Support and foster intraregional tourism networks;*
- 4. Continue to generate presence and partnering with appropriate partners outside the region; and*
- 5. Inform, educate and engage municipal politicians and staff on the benefits of and impact of tourism in Durham Region.*

Simply put, this strategy focuses on building the product then marketing it accordingly, supported by an active and engaged industry. Specific initiatives under each of these strategic priorities follow. As noted previously, Municipalities, associations and stakeholders are encouraged to work within this broader framework to complement Regional level initiatives.

1. Invest into the strategic development of new and expanded tourism products/services.

New and expanded tourism products/services will ensure that visitors have compelling reasons to visit and re-visit the many communities, rural areas and attractions that make up Durham Region. Product development efforts will focus primarily on the linking of market-ready products across the Region that will motivate overnight stays in the Region. These efforts will be supported by capacity-building initiatives for operators, such as market-readiness, how to package workshops, marketing tools/tactics and customer service as appropriate.

Strategic Initiative	Implementation Considerations
<p>A. Develop overnight products (sports and tournament events, garden tours, etc.) and packages that link accommodation providers with attractions, restaurants, performing arts, walking tours, festivals/events, etc. to a range of market segments such as families, cyclists, auto event enthusiasts, long-stay business travellers, visitors to destination golf facilities, etc.</p>	<p>This is an ongoing need that the Region will take a lead in facilitating. These efforts will be grounded on existing available market-based research, applied to local conditions and opportunities. Priorities will be based on new and emerging market interests, matched with a critical mass of market-ready or almost market-ready tourism providers in the Region. In all product development initiatives, there will be an effort to tie in supporting attractors and events with core attractors, as these enrich and extend the stay. Packages can be developed with out-of-Region accommodation providers as well.</p>
<p>B. Facilitate a coordinated Regional 'tourism events' schedule to reduce duplication and to identify gaps in the event calendar that may be addressed with appropriate product development efforts.</p>	<p>Durham Tourism currently publishes a consolidated list of events in the Region, but there is an opportunity to use this information in a more strategic manner by identifying gaps and overlaps in the annual event calendar. If a significant gap exists in tourism-related festivals and events, tourism stakeholders may consider event development as a next step.</p>
<p>C. Continue to take a pro-active role in supporting the attraction of investment into new and expanded tourism facilities.</p>	<p>Durham Tourism will continue to respond to investment inquiries, providing a Regional perspective and facilitating contacts as appropriate.</p>

2. Facilitate effective communication of Regional tourism products/services to highest potential target markets.

Marketing has four pillars of activity including research and planning; product development; communications and sales. Communications must inform visitors before they travel as well as when they are already in the region. This strategic priority addresses the development of a range of communication tools supported by effective distribution and use of these tools.

As part of the communications role, Durham Region industry stakeholders identified a clear need and interest in increasing their own and others' current knowledge on what there is to see and do outside their immediate, localized area of knowledge, in order to inform and keep visitors in the Region longer, spending more. This approach will build a foundation to support visitors who are already in the Region.

Strategic Initiative	Implementation Considerations
<p>A. Develop and implement a 'knowledgeable host' program in order to provide visitors with more ideas and opportunities. Knowledgeable hosts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ residents who host VFR visitors ▪ front-line staff including hotel desk staff, B&B owners, attractions admission staff, taxi drivers, restaurant owners/managers, golf course staff, etc. ▪ volunteers who work at cultural and heritage attractions ▪ managers and owners of tourism operations ▪ tournament/meeting planners and businesses hosting out of town guests, staff, meetings, etc. ▪ leading residents who can act as ambassadors to bring more visitors to Durham. 	<p>This initiative requires a range of existing, refined and new tools, available both on-line and off-line, to respond to various operational realities. Tools include maps, reference manuals/guide books, comprehensive events listings, front line familiarization tours, etc. Time required to review tools, inform appropriate staff, and keeping materials current will be directly tied to the level of investment that each owner/operator makes. The Region has the opportunity to act as the catalyst to adopt the 'knowledgeable host' approach and philosophy.</p>

Strategic Initiative	Implementation Considerations
<p>B. Pool resources currently invested into local visitor guide books and listings to develop coordinated and comprehensive Regional Tourism/Visitor Guide(s) with shared branding.</p>	<p>These guide(s) would replace the diverse number of smaller guides that create confusion for the visitor and challenges the limited marketing resources of many tourism operations. The approach would include and highlight linkages across the Region, regardless of municipal boundaries, and may take a broader activities/theme approach, responding to visitor interests. Conversations with private sector publishers should be included at appropriate stages to explore opportunities to work together on comprehensive guides.</p>
<p>C. Review, update and refine design of tourism map(s) to enhance linkages and range of opportunities within and throughout the Region.</p>	<p>Maps must be integrated with development of activity/theme-specific initiatives noted above.</p>
<p>D. Improve in-Region way-finding signage to be less restrictive for operators, address visitor travel patterns while in the Region and to build a shared Regional look and feel.</p>	<p>Strike a cross-regional task force of tourism owners/operators and appropriate staff to define needs and explore options to address.</p>
<p>E. Continue evolution of on-line marketing strategies to support and enhance off-line materials. This includes opt-in e-newsletters and effective use of landing pages/keywords by market segment.</p>	<p>www.durhamtourism.ca provides a portal for the Region's tourism offers. It must continue to adopt leading edge Internet tools and tactics to supplement other materials and approaches.</p>
<p>F. Enhance effective distribution of Visitor Guides, maps and other tourism information to where it is easily accessed by visitors already in the Region to encourage longer stays and visits to other areas in the Region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ in hotel/motel/B&B rooms, lobbies, front desks, etc, ▪ at festivals and events ▪ for meetings, conferences and competitions 	<p>Coordinate distribution of printed Regional material will be facilitated by Regional staff as well as liaising with event organizers for distribution in packages, etc.</p>
<p>G. Act as a catalyst to ensure visitor information services are available at strategic locations across the Region.</p>	<p>Confirm typical and key points of entry into the Region to ensure that visitor services and information are easily accessible. This includes a physical presence as well as hours of operation that match visitation patterns (weekends, holidays, etc).</p>

3. Support and foster tourism networks throughout the Region to enhance all other strategic initiatives.

Formal and informal connections and networks create synergies that often result in new partnerships, new tourism offers and renewed energy.

Strategic Initiative	Implementation Considerations
<p>A. Expand and enhance regular 'tourism networking occasions' for tourism operators to meet each other and to learn of new and ongoing offers outside of their immediate, local area. These occasions may also provide Durham Region tourism operators with other needs such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ training/skills development ▪ package development linking/support ▪ brochure swaps ▪ tourism product knowledge sessions/opportunities – planned investments, new programs, upcoming events, etc. 	<p>Consult with the tourism industry on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ type of event ▪ optimum time of year ▪ optimum time of day ▪ preferred length of event(s) ▪ highest priority for content presented and resources available. <p>Rotate throughout the Region.</p>
<p>B. Engage new, refreshed and planned tourist attractions, events, packages, etc. into established tourism networks and activities.</p>	<p>The PRTDF process identified a number of newly completed, planned and projected capital investments, both tourism and non-tourism. Owners and managers of these initiatives will benefit from active integration into the broader tourism industry to share understanding of the new product/experience offered, explore partnership opportunities, share profile of customers/visitors and identify peak capacity and times of need.</p>

4. Continue to generate presence and partnering with appropriate partners outside the Region to extend market reach.

Active participation on regional, provincial and national initiatives will provide the Durham Region tourism industry, where appropriate and relevant, with access to longer haul markets such as inter-provincial, U.S., and overseas.

Strategic Initiative	Implementation Considerations
A. Maintain efforts to ensure Durham Region has a seat at Getaway Country, GTA tourism networking group, Tourism Toronto, and Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation (OTMPC) committees, etc.	Durham Tourism and its partners will continue to represent the broader industry in these and other organizations. This broader perspective will also play a role in identifying opportunities for partnerships outside the Region in such areas as product development, maps etc.
B. Distribute updated and refreshed itineraries to media and travel trade operators to encompass new ideas on regular basis and in variety of mediums.	Durham Tourism will continue to nurture these relationships to maximize coverage and support.
C. Generate media coverage both in the Region and outside of the Region to support awareness and sales of new products and target markets.	Media efforts must actively seek coverage in travel media as well as lifestyle media, both print and on-line. Opportunities for the development and distribution of a coordinated "What's on in Tourism in Durham" public service section of local newspapers and other media should be explored.

5. Inform, educate and engage municipal politicians and staff on the benefits of and impact of tourism in Durham Region.

The tourism industry in Durham must continue to be proactive to ensure that the tourism mindset and interests are on relevant municipal political and staff ‘agendas’ covering such areas as planning, traffic, signage, roads, heritage designations, etc. This initiative requires a continued investment of time and energy in both a formal and informal manner.





Strategic Initiative	Implementation Considerations
A. Implement ROI and tracking for all Regional initiatives in order to provide Region with baseline and subsequent data.	Current and relative measures of the impact of investments into marketing and product development initiatives will provide a sound basis for discussions and evaluation. A range of existing measurement tools such as Tourism Regional Economic Impact Model (TREIM) and the Sport Tourism Economic Assessment Model (STEAM).
B. Facilitate the collection and distribution of consolidated Regional ‘tourism updates’ and reports including visitor profile to attractions, events, etc. (number, place of origin, spending, reason for visit, etc.), new initiatives and packages, etc.	Tourism operator buy-in and participation is a critical element to the successful implementation of this recommendation. A working committee should be formed to address two perspectives – that of tourism operators who will be in a position to provide data, indicators and anecdotal information as well as that of the end user such as politicians and staff to identify optimum timing, style of content and distribution. While the emphasis remains at the Regional level, it may be appropriate to build in flexibility for the highlighting or addition of a local perspective, within the Regional context for use at local levels.







Strategic Initiative	Implementation Considerations
C. Encourage active representation or a 'voice' at meetings of departments/initiatives/discussions that impact tourism in the Region such as traffic patterns, parking regulations, heritage designations, etc.	Representation or a 'voice' will likely include being on a distribution list of minutes, attendance at or contributions to meeting content. In the vast majority of instances, Durham Tourism staff will provide the voice, supplemented and supported by key tourism industry operators as appropriate.
D. Encourage understanding and importance of tourism services and infrastructure.	In addition to the above initiative, Durham Tourism can work closely with economic development and planning colleagues to provide a tourism perspective on public and private sector investments under consideration.

Implementing the Tourism Development Strategy

The implementation of the Tourism Development Strategy will be a shared effort between a number of parties including management and staff of Durham Tourism and other tourism organizations, as well as industry task forces and committees. The Strategy should be treated as a living document, with recommendations continually assessed and refined to respond to the on-going development of the tourism industry in Durham Region and broader market conditions. As a result, some initiatives may be added, others adjusted as time passes. Existing tourism resources and networks will provide a strong foundation and will be used in a more efficient and strategic manner wherever appropriate and feasible as implementation is initiated.

The tables presented in the next two pages summarize optimum timing for implementation of the initiatives within the next two years (September 2006 to December 2008) and within the subsequent three years (2009 to 2011).

<i>Implementation Plan</i>			
Initiative	<i>Within 2 Years September 2006 to December 2008</i>	<i>Within 5 Years (2009 to 2011)</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
1. Invest into strategic development of new and expanded tourism products/services			
A. Develop overnight packages	✓		
B. Facilitate a coordinated Regional 'tourism events' schedule	✓		
C. Continue to take a pro-active role in supporting the attraction of investment into tourism initiatives			
2. Facilitate effective communication of Regional tourism products/services to highest potential target markets			
A. Develop and implement a 'knowledgeable host' program	✓		
B. Develop one coordinated and comprehensive Regional Tourism/Visitor Guide with shared branding	✓		
C. Review, update and refine design of tourism map(s)		✓	
D. Improve in-Region way-finding signage		✓	
E. Continue evolution of on-line marketing strategies to support , enhance off-line materials			
F. Continue to enhance effective distribution of Visitor Guides, maps and other tools			
G. Act as a catalyst to ensure visitor information services are available at strategic locations across the Region.			

<i>Implementation Plan (continued)</i>			
Initiative	<i>Within 2 Years September 2006 to December 2008</i>	<i>Within 5 Years (2009 to 2011)</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
3. Support and foster tourism networks throughout the Region to enhance all other strategic initiatives			
A. Continue to convene regular 'tourism networking occasions'	✓		
B. Ensure that new, refreshed and planned tourist attractions, events, packages, etc. are linked to established tourism industry providers, infrastructure and marketing.			
4. Continue to generate presence and partnering with appropriate partners outside the Region to extend market reach			
A. Ensure Durham Region continues to have a seat at the table at the broader Getaway Country, GTA, Tourism Toronto, and Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation (OTPMC) committees, etc.			
B. Distribute updated and refreshed itineraries to media and travel trade operators.			
C. Generate media coverage that supports awareness and sales of new products and target markets.			
5. Inform, educate and engage municipal politicians and staff on the benefits of and impact of tourism in Durham Region			
A. Implement ROI and tracking for all Regional initiatives	✓		
B. Facilitate the collection and distribution of consolidated Regional 'tourism updates' and reports.	✓		
C. Ensure there is active representation or a 'voice' at meetings of departments/initiatives/discussions that impact tourism			
D. Encourage understanding and importance of tourism services and infrastructure			

Measures of Success

Durham Region will use the following indicators or measures of success as it implements initiatives identified under this Tourism Development Strategy:

- A variety of new and refreshed overnight packages are available to a select number of target market segments.
- Durham Region has a network of active and engaged ‘knowledgeable hosts’ and in-market communications that encourage visitors to stay longer and spend more.
- Visitation patterns, evident throughout the Region as a whole, show a shift to increased overnight stays, using 2004 as the baseline year.
- Spending per visitor moves towards provincial averages.
- Media coverage of tourism opportunities available in Durham Region increases in a broad range of media.
- A broad range of planning decisions in all towns and cities in the Region include consideration of the impact on tourism.
- Municipal politicians are actively engaged in tourism task forces and initiatives.
- Tourism networking opportunities are held regularly around the Region and are attended by traditional and non-traditional tourism providers.

Resourcing the Strategy

Implementation of the Strategy requires support and investment at many levels and in many forms, including, for example:

- time from front-line industry to be active on Committees and Task Forces that further shape and define some initiatives as well as acting as champions;
- political support at both the Regional and Municipal level for financial and practical resources (meeting rooms for example); and
- new and/or redirected financial resources to implement some elements of the Strategy.

Next Steps

The successful implementation of this Strategy will benefit from initiating some steps quickly to establish momentum, build profile and to engage support and participation from the tourism industry. A number of first steps have been identified and include:

- convening a 'Tourism Industry Implementation Team' to oversee, support and champion this Strategy; and
- a formal launch and announcement of the Strategy to broader industry.

In addition to the above steps, the industry expressed highest interest in moving forward on the following specific initiatives:

- initiation of planning meetings with interested and market-ready parties for the development of overnight packages;
- development of a comprehensive Regional visitor guide; and
- design and implementation of the 'knowledgeable host' program.

As noted and supported by the tourism industry, there is opportunity and momentum to reach beyond individual geopolitical boundaries of the towns and cities that are part of Durham Region to strategically build and market tourism products that will motivate new and increased visits and spending to the Region as a whole. This Strategy provides the framework for moving the industry forward as a whole to grow, nurture and expand tourism in Durham Region.

Implementing a Knowledgeable Host Program

- Kansas City trains and certifies hospitality employees as 'Certified Tourism Ambassadors' with a four module in-classroom program.
- The Connecticut Ambassador Program provides a special Ambassador kit that includes a Vacation Guide, Culture Guide, Getaways Map, set of postcards to send to family and friends Connecticut Ambassador pins and monthly e-newsletter with up-to-the-minute information.