



Town of Kingsville Tourism Plan
November 2023





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Introduction

Kingsville is a charming community of 22,858 on the north shore of Lake Erie in Essex County. In the summer and fall of 2023, a select group of tourism and related business operators and other interested parties met to establish a tourism plan that would support and grow Kingsville’s’ tourism sector.

The goal of this exercise was to:

- Establish a shared vision for the development and support of the tourism economy in Kingsville.
- Identify actions to make Kingsville tourism businesses and assets market ready.
- Provide an action plan for the Kingsville Economic Development and Tourism Officer and tourism stakeholders.
- Leverage programs and resources from regional and provincial tourism partners including Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island (TWEPI), Southwest Ontario Tourism Corporation (SWOTC) and Destination Ontario.

Developing Kingsville's Tourism Plan

The tourism plan development process began with a review of background documents and supporting materials. The process included two focus group meetings with representatives of tourism and related businesses. In advance of the first workshop, the participants received a document that included a definition of tourism, the tourism framework, and an outline of the tourism plan development process (included in Appendix A).

Figure 1: Tourism Plan Development Process



The Focus Group participants first met on August 8, 2023. Together they identified Kingsville's tourism strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and strengths (SWOT) and initiated discussion on the vision and mission of Kingsville's' tourism plan.

Following the focus group, the participants received a summary of the key outcomes and an overview of the next steps in the planning process, included in Appendix B.

The group reconvened on September 18, 2023. Together they discussed their progress and reviewed and refined the Tourism vision and mission. The group then moved on to establish the strategic priorities, related actions and performance measures. A summary of the outcomes of this meeting are included in Appendix C.

This document represents the final phase the Tourism Plan Development process. Kingsville's Tourism Plan includes the key themes, tourism vision, mission, strategic cornerstones, goals, objectives and 20 detailed actions for implementation over the next three to five years.

Figure 2 provides a summary of the key themes identified and discussed by the focus group participants. The tourism plan addresses five areas:

- **Common understanding and direction:** Establishing a common understanding and direction will include an agreement of what constitutes the visitor economy and identification of existing tourism assets and experiences. Participants discussed the importance of providing data to report on the economic impact of the tourism sector and determining the role of the various interested parties in the implementation of the tourism plan.
- **Tourism product development:** A first step in tourism product development is ensuring that Kingsville provides a welcoming and supportive environment for visitors. The participants discussed the opportunities to build on existing tourism assets to encourage longer visits and more return visits. They also discussed the opportunities for operators to collaborate to generate increased awareness and visits.
- **Funding:** The focus group participants recognized that successful implementation of the plan will require collaboration and sustained investment in human and financial resources.
- **Tourism organization:** The tourism plan is expected to provide the road map for Kingsville's tourism efforts. Further work is required to establish terms of reference outlining the role of the Town of Kingsville and the tourism partners. Tourism operators and interested parties will contribute to an annual workplan and the tourism plan implementation.

Figure 2: Key Themes



- Common definitions of tourism assets, experiences.
- Measuring and reporting on economic impact (data collection)
- Establishing an organization responsible for developing and implementing the tourism plan

Effective Leadership



- Ensuring Kingsville is market ready
- Enhancing and expanding the tourism assets and experiences in Kingsville
- Targeted, collaborative promotional programs that increase awareness and visits

Product development

Strategic marketing



- Providing sufficient financial resources to support the Tourism plan

Sustainable funding



- Annual work plan
- Terms of reference
- Regular meetings
- Implementation plan
- Membership tourism operators and Town

Effective Leadership

A Vision for Tourism in Kingsville



Together the tourism vision and mission provide the framework for determining and coordinating Kingsville's' Tourism efforts. The vision describes the future state that the Town of Kingsville and its partners are working toward. The mission is the call to action describing what the town and tourism partners do and why they do it.



Vision

The Town of Kingsville is a welcoming destination for visitors inviting all to discover their own unique tourism experience within a flourishing tourism economy that contributes to the prosperity and vitality of the community.



Mission

To work in collaboration with tourism partners to develop and market the Town of Kingsville's tourism assets, enhance visitor experience, and grow, strengthen and support the Kingsville Tourism sector.



Strategic Cornerstones: Tourism Goals and Objectives

Four goals and corresponding objectives serve as cornerstones for the Tourism Plan.

Goals are the broad-based end states that are needed to achieve the mission.

Objectives describe the desired outcomes as a result of the end state.

	Goal	Objective
	Collaborate: Sharing strategic and sector initiatives	Establish the framework and programming to encourage tourism sector development and strategic marketing.
	Connect: Accessing resources and opportunities	Grow, strengthen, and support the tourism sector by connecting operators to resources.
	Enhance: Building market readiness	Enhance tourism assets and visitor experiences to increase lengths of stay, economic impact and repeat visits
	Market: Increasing visitors to Kingsville	Establish a marketing strategy focused on target visitor segments and tourism pillars.

Actions



	Goal	Objective
1	Collaborate: Sharing strategy and sector initiatives	Establish the framework and programming to encourage tourism sector development and strategic marketing.

1. Host semi-annual working groups with public and private tourism partners to review trends and opportunities (2024).
2. Collect and share tourism data to support evidence-based decision making and investments (2024).
3. Continue to educate and engage tourism operators on the Kingsville Tourism Plan.
4. Create a “Good Tourism Partner Program” within the business registry in which to provide communicate (2025).
5. Develop a ‘FAM Tour’ (Familiarization tour) program for front line staff to enhance visitor experience and encourage cross promotion efforts. (2026).

	Goal	Objective
2	Connect: Accessing resources and opportunities	Grow, strengthen, and support the tourism sector by connecting private sector operators to resources.

1. Compile and share information with private tourism operators on publicly funded tourism agencies and funding opportunities (2024).
2. Leverage regional collaborations and opportunities with EPIC, TWEPI and SWOTC (2024 through 2026).
3. Research alternative funding sources such as regional DMOs, provincial grants, fee for service and cost recovery programs (2024 through 2026).

1 Essex Pelee Island Coast wineries
2 Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island
3 Southwest Ontario Tourism Corporation



	Goal	Objective
3	Enhance: Building market readiness	Enhance tourism assets and visitor experience to increase length of stay, economic impact, and repeat visits

9. Define and identify tourism assets and experiences (2024 through 2026).
10. Identify opportunities to enhance existing Town owned tourism assets and establish the case for additional municipal funding (2024 through 2026).
11. Create and implement a wayfinding sign strategy (2024 – with a multi-year plan to distribute costs/grant access).
12. Develop a framework to financially support private sector tourism events (2024)
13. Enhance the website and social media with tourism offerings, suggested itineraries, and a database of tourism offerings (2024 through 2026).

	Goal	Objective
4	Market: Increasing visitors to Kingsville	Establish a marketing strategy focused on target visitor segments and tourism pillars.

14. Identify target visitor segments aligned with Kingsville’s tourism assets (2023 with yearly review).
15. Compile and report on tourism data to inform marketing strategy (2023 with yearly review).
16. Establish and implement Kingsville's tourism brand incorporating colours, signage, photography/images, language and cadence. (2023)
17. Regularly engage with tourism stakeholders on the development and implementation of Kingsville’s Tourism Plan. (2023 through 2026)
18. Establish and develop tourism experiences and itineraries (2023 through 2026).
19. Identify opportunities to expand marketing assets including website, social media, brochure (2023 through 2026).
20. Develop marketing campaigns with targeted audiences, metrics/ROI (2023 through 2026).



Next Steps

The development of Kingsville's Tourism Plan is an important milestone in the tourism partners' efforts to grow the sector's economic and social impact. Kingsville staff will develop an implementation plan that outlines the partners, budget, time frame and priority for each action. The implementation plan should also identify related performance measures for future updates to Council.