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When our last 5-year Strategic Plan was adopted in 2016, on the eve of the highly anticipated Canada 150 celebrations, no one could have predicted the unprecedented (and ongoing) impact that COVID-19 would have on tourism. In the case of Ottawa, the pandemic resulted in $3 billion of foregone spending and a 25% drop in the visitor-related workforce.

The sesquicentennial was a huge success and provided a platform for tourism intensification in Ottawa. But COVID-19 has challenged every destination. Travel patterns have changed...some permanently. As marketers, we understand that our job is to present Ottawa as a compelling, year-round destination not only through marketing and sales activities but also by ensuring the attractiveness of the destination for visitors and residents.

As challenging as 2020 and 2021 were, Ottawa Tourism has made big strides over the past five years. We led the creation of a new Ottawa brand. We made necessary organizational changes and secured a stable funding source through our Municipal Accommodation Tax. Our pre-COVID-19 visitor numbers were advancing. We had success in the domestic and international group event and group market.

We now look forward to putting a new 5-year plan in place. A plan informed by the creation of a longer-term Stewardship Plan for the destination. Many of the priorities addressed in this plan are short-term (i.e., they will be addressed in the initial few years), others may take longer; all are tied to the Stewardship Plan and a vision to make Ottawa a leading, successful urban destination.
The role of destination marketing organizations continues to evolve. Once focused solely on sales and marketing, today’s DMO often takes a leadership role across several interrelated areas. Leadership in city brand building and awareness. Leadership in product development and product packaging. Leadership in community. And, all the while, telling a story and encouraging people to visit the destination.

Sales and marketing are still the primary focus, but smarter, more tailored, researched and measured marketing activities (and sales initiatives) need to be undertaken. Understanding who our customers are, how they make decisions and identifying the barriers to visitation will set us apart from our competitors.

At the same time, Ottawa Tourism needs to participate in the management, not just the marketing, of the destination. Ottawa Tourism was one of the first DMOs in Canada to recognize the need to go beyond pure sales and marketing. Our Tourism Development Council, funded through contributions from the City of Ottawa and the Municipal Accommodation Tax, with support from the Ottawa Gatineau Hotel Association, is the vehicle for capitalizing on future opportunities and addressing tourism impediments. Ottawa Tourism, working with our sister economic development agencies and organizations, will position Ottawa as an attractive destination for visitors, residents, and companies.
Project Process And Alignment With Destination Stewardship Plan

The Ottawa Tourism Strategic Plan was prepared in tandem with a Destination Stewardship Plan. Resonance Consultancy was engaged to develop both plans resulting in a unique opportunity to tie long-range destination planning for Ottawa’s tourism industry to a shorter-term organization strategy for Ottawa Tourism itself.

The plans were created following extensive research and wide-ranging engagement with stakeholders, visitors and residents regarding perceptions of Ottawa, the destination’s strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and potential new target markets.

The current 5-year Strategic Plan picks up from where the previous plan leaves off and builds on the many successes at the organizational and industry levels, guided by insights from the Stewardship Plan. Strategies from the Stewardship Plan, with organizational implications for Ottawa Tourism, are referenced and linked under each strategic area of the Strategic Plan. Strategies and actions outlined in the Strategic Plan have been further developed to inform implementation in the Stewardship Plan.
Vision

To be one of Canada’s most visited, sustainable, vibrant, and valued urban destinations, and the tourism authority for key economic development and city-building decisions in Ottawa.

Mission

OTTAWA TOURISM:

• Markets and sells Ottawa as a compelling leisure and business destination.
• Leads or participates in initiatives that improve Ottawa’s visitor experience.
• Contributes to the broader economic development objectives of the city and the success of our stakeholders.
• And, by doing so, enriches the quality-of-life for all Ottawa residents.
Values

As an organization, we value inclusivity, trust, collaboration, and innovation.

INCLUSIVE:

- We foster a diverse, equitable and inclusive organization.
- We connect with Indigenous communities.
- We care about the planet, our people and our industry.
- We want our city to be accessible to all.

COLLABORATIVE:

- We are passionate about what we do, how we deliver our work, and our shared pride for Ottawa.
- We approach work with positivity, where opinions are encouraged, and diverse perspectives valued.
- We work together to deliver results.

TRUSTED:

- We practice integrity in all that we do.
- We are trusted advocates for the tourism industry.
- We have the trust and confidence of our members, stakeholders and the community at large.

INNOVATIVE:

- We are thoughtful, creative and prepared to challenge the status quo in developing best practices in destination marketing and management.
COVID-19 may be down but it’s not yet completely out. It may result in permanent changes to the way we’ve historically operated, and it might cause short-term disruptions in the future. The path to recovery (visitor levels, spending, air access) will extend at least into 2023 and possibly beyond.

Ottawa Tourism will support our members and Ottawa’s tourism industry with targeted, short-term measures until the recovery is complete.

A. SEE THE RECOVERY THROUGH

OBJECTIVE A.1:
Return Ottawa to Pre-Pandemic Levels of Tourism Volume

OBJECTIVE A.2:
Actively Support Efforts to Rebuild Air Connectivity

OBJECTIVE A.3:
Support Small and Medium Sized Businesses That Provide Unique Tourism Experiences
Ottawa is “Canada in One City”, but from time-to-time and for specific markets, Ottawa’s tourism offering needs to be refined, targeted and/or amplified. Our target markets of “Active Adventurers” and “Sophisticated Explorers” are looking for greater definition of travel options and in areas not historically associated with Ottawa’s perceived product and service offerings.

**OBJECTIVE B.1:**
Use Data to Better Understand Our Core and Niche Markets

**OBJECTIVE B.2:**
Align Consumer and Online Messaging to Showcase a Wider Array of Ottawa Attributes

**OBJECTIVE B.3:**
Curate, Create and Market Packaged Experiences (and Itineraries) Together with Our Stakeholders

**OBJECTIVE B.4:**
Hone Our Tour Operator, Travel Agent and Travel Influencer Activities
The evolution of destination marketing organizations, to include destination management, reflects the role DMOs can play in product and content development (the unique selling propositions that make Ottawa a preferred travel destination). Granted, most DMOs have neither the expertise nor resources to undertake many development activities, but the DMO can be a catalyst to ensure the infrastructure, activities and services necessary to support the visitor industry are in place.

**OBJECTIVE C.1:**
Greater Access to, and Animation of, Public Lands and Buildings

**OBJECTIVE C.2:**
Establish a Tourism Product and Programming Capability

**OBJECTIVE C.3:**
Actively Support Sector Plans That Benefit the Visitor Experience

**OBJECTIVE C.4:**
Put More Emphasis on Events and Festivals

**OBJECTIVE C.5:**
Encourage the Development of Indigenous Tourism Experiences

C. STRENGTHEN OTTAWA’S UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION
D. FIND MORE OPPORTUNITY IN GROUPS: BUSINESS MEETINGS, SPORTS & EVENTS

Ottawa is a gathering place for business, for competition, for celebration. Ottawa Tourism recognizes past successes in hosting medium- and large-scale events and will expand on this success not only from conventions and meetings in the core but also from sport and celebratory events across the city.

OBJECTIVE D.1: Own the Mid-Sized Canadian National and Regional (Ontario/Central Canada) Business Event Market

OBJECTIVE D.2: Own the Mid-Sized Canadian National and Regional (Ontario/Central Canada) Amateur Sport Market

OBJECTIVE D.3: Target Major International Business and Sport Events

OBJECTIVE D.4: Build an Active Event Calendar to Address Seasonality Issues
Tourism is an important component of Ottawa’s economy. As such, major city-building initiatives—be they development projects, policies affecting parks and recreation or transit—can benefit from a tourism perspective. As the tourism sector leader, Ottawa Tourism’s views will be sought out to provide a tourism lens on all major city-building decisions.

E. BE THE DESTINATION STEWARDS

OBJECTIVE E.1: Work Closely with Other Economic Development Entities to Build and Showcase Ottawa

OBJECTIVE E.2: Provide Considered Commentary (and Advocacy as Necessary) On Major Development and Infrastructure Projects

OBJECTIVE E.3: Monitor the Economic and Community Impacts from Visitor Activity
F. BUILD A GREAT TEAM & ORGANIZATION

Ottawa Tourism is a great place to work. We are a team of dedicated, hard-working, socially-aware tourism professionals working to grow the tourism industry in Ottawa and to ensure this growth benefits all residents. We enjoy what we do and create value for our stakeholders.

OBJECTIVE F.1: Ensure our Work Culture is Supportive, Welcoming, Open and Collaborative

OBJECTIVE F.2: Commit to Corporate Social Responsibility Throughout All We Do

OBJECTIVE F.3: Manage Risk Across the Organization

OBJECTIVE F.4: Advocate, but Acknowledge our Limits
KEY STRATEGIES
A. SEE THE RECOVERY THROUGH

COVID-19 may be down but it’s not yet completely out. It may result in permanent changes to the way we’ve historically operated, and it might cause short-term disruptions in the future. The path to recovery (visitor levels, spending, air access) will extend at least into 2023 and possibly beyond.

Once we return to a more normalized operating environment Ottawa Tourism will resume our marketing focus, until then, we will support our members and Ottawa’s tourism industry with targeted, short-term measure.
OBJECTIVE A.1:
Return Ottawa to Pre-Pandemic Levels of Tourism Volume

Strong performance during the sesquicentennial, 2017, produced an encouraging outlook for tourism in Ottawa. Then, the pandemic hit. Picking up where we left off is our key priority.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:
• Sustained visitor numbers and room nights sold at “normal”/pre-pandemic levels.
• Sustained convention pipeline at “normal”/ pre-pandemic levels.
• Met or exceeded recovery benchmarks set at the national (Destination Canada) and/or provincial (Destination Ontario) level.

ACTIONS:
• Create and extend incentivized packages to generate demand in need periods.
• Address convention and meeting needs/barriers for short-term bookings.
• Focus on short-haul markets (Ontario, Quebec, North-East U.S.).

DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP PLAN

1. WE BRING CANADIANS AND VISITORS TOGETHER
   STRATEGY 1.1: Position Ottawa As A National And Regional Connectivity Hub
   STRATEGY 1.2: Anchor Ottawa As A Centre For National, Regional, and International Meetings And Conferences
   STRATEGY 1.5: Expand National Events And Major Festivals

8. WE VALUE SUSTAINABILITY
   STRATEGY 8.1: Grow The Tourism Industry’s Economic Impact
OBJECTIVE A.2: Actively Support Efforts To Rebuild Connectivity

Ottawa has shared the fate of many destinations that saw international and transborder flights reduced or eliminated. Domestic air capacity is returning but there is still room for improvement in order to make Ottawa a key domestic and regional air hub. U.S. and international routes require still further attention.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

- Domestic flight capacity at 2019 levels in the short term.
- Transborder and international flight capacity back at 2019 levels over the medium term.
- Ottawa International Airport on track to exceed pre-pandemic connectivity levels.

ACTIONS:

- Support the Ottawa International Airport Authority and other partners to advocate for route development and airport infrastructure as necessary.
- Support the Ottawa International Airport as regional inbound/outbound hub.
- Support research efforts to demonstrate Ottawa International Airport ridership and expansion potential.
- Support enhancements to frequency, speed, and reliability of intercity transportation services (air, rail and bus).

DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP PLAN
OBJECTIVE A.3: Support Small & Medium Sized Businesses That Provide Unique Tourism Experiences

The return to normal will not happen to the same extent and at the same speed for everyone. Ottawa’s unique shops, experiences, services and related infrastructure have been especially hard hit. The businesses that animate the downtown core, serving residents as well as tourists, will take longer to recover given the uncertainty of back-to-work policies across the federal government among other employers.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:


ACTIONS:

- Advocate for targeted support from all levels of government.
- Support industry workforce development efforts/initiatives.
- Action third-party support programs to accelerate the development of new products and experiences.

DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP PLAN

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**OBJECTIVE B.1:**

**Use Data To Better Understand Our Core & Niche Markets**

As we look beyond some of the traditional visitor draws in Ottawa, we need to better understand the potential of our core markets—notably “Active Adventurers” and “Sophisticated Explorers”, which were highlighted in the Stewardship Plan—and niche markets centred on lifestyle, activities or other special interests.

**PERFORMANCE MEASURES:**

- Detailed profiles/trip motivators of target and niche markets.
- Campaign tracking methodology in place.
- Increased visitation from Active Adventurers and Sophisticated Explorers.
- Improved Net Promoter Scores (NPS).

**ACTIONS:**

- Research trip motivation factors and barriers specific to target markets.
- Interact with organizations and media influencers that have established relationships with target markets.
- Track and evaluate all marketing campaigns and incentive packages.
- Expand Net Promoter Score research beyond current limited capture areas.

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OBJECTIVE B.2: 
Align Consumer & Online Messaging To Showcase A Wider Array Of Ottawa Attributes

Ottawa is an active city. A green and nature-focused city. A winter city. A city of cultures. Yet these attributes have not been delivered with the intensity necessary to resonate with our target audiences. Ottawa Tourism will think and act through the eyes of the visitor to present all that Ottawa (and the region) has to offer.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:
- Increased visitation from target markets (Active Adventurers and Sophisticated Explorers).
- Improved Net Promoter Scores.

ACTIONS:
- Focus core messages towards Active Adventurers and Sophisticated Explorers target groups.
- Position Ottawa as a year-round destination for outdoor activities.
- Pair traditional arts, culture, and heritage positioning with green, active and other outdoor activities.
- Highlight all product offerings on a year-round and seasonal basis; embrace the winter months.

DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP PLAN

2. WE HONOUR OUR HERITAGE
STRATEGY 2.1: Create A Cultural Corridor And Promote Ottawa “Beyond The Capital Government”
STRATEGY 2.2: Showcase Our Heritage, Architecture And Landmarks
STRATEGY 2.3: Make Culture And Music Part Of Ottawa’s Brand

6. WE CELEBRATE COMMUNITY
STRATEGY 6.3: Support Programming In Character Neighbourhoods

3. WE VOICE RECONCILIATION
STRATEGY 3.3: Support The Development Of Indigenous Tourism Experiences And Activities

7. WE LOVE OUR TERROIR
STRATEGY 7.1: Develop And Position Ottawa As A Leading Culinary Destination In Ontario
STRATEGY 7.2: Showcase And Develop Unique Culinary Experiences
STRATEGY 7.3: Host A Global Culinary Event(s)
STRATEGY 7.4: Organize Seasonal Culinary Events

4. WE LIVE FOR THE GREAT OUTDOORS
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STRATEGY 4.3: Build A Destination Activity Centre
STRATEGY 4.4: Develop A Shared Vision And Development Plan For The Waterways
STRATEGY 4.5: Embrace Winter
STRATEGY 4.6: Make The Trails And Pathways More Accessible To Visitors
STRATEGY 4.7: Support Programming Along Waterfront Communities And Public Spaces

8. WE VALUE SUSTAINABILITY
STRATEGY 8.1: Grow The Tourism Industry’s Economic Impact
**OBJECTIVE B.3:**

Curate, Create & Market Packaged Experiences And Itineraries Together With Our Stakeholders

Ottawa has a plethora of cultural, outdoor, heritage, recreation, culinary, natural and entertainment options but not all are readily or intuitively accessed by visitors. We need to let visitors know “how to” enjoy all Ottawa has to offer.

**PERFORMANCE MEASURES:**

- Multiple experience offerings available through Ottawa Tourism and/or linked to member websites.
- Research insights available into activities selected and/or preferred by target markets.

**ACTIONS:**

- Make it easier to learn about what to do in Ottawa (and how to do it).
- Ensure research identifies trip motivation factors/characteristics.
- Work with recreation, culture, heritage, and culinary partners to identify a menu of options (“packages”).
- Investigate online and/or storefront options to present and transact packages.

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OBJECTIVE B.4:  
Hone Our Travel Trade, Influencer And Media Hosting Activities

Better align Travel Trade and media to overall identified niches and target strategies, while identifying key partners and allocating our resources accordingly.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

- Categorization of operators and influencers by market potential and cost to service.
- Increased media profile of Ottawa in defined niche areas.
- Increased travel trade share of room nights occupied within defined hotel set.

ACTIONS:

- Undertake analysis of source markets (e.g., by geography, area of interest) including volume potential and Ottawa capacity/constraints (e.g., air access).
- Evaluate and refine Travel Trade strategies based on target markets.
- Identify and segment tour operators (both inbound and receptive) in order to best allocate Travel Trade resources to reach prioritized source markets.
- Identify and segment travel influencers in order to highlight Ottawa tourism product to core and niche markets.
- Work with other destination organizations to identify opportunities for partnerships.

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The evolution of destination marketing organizations to include destination management reflects the role DMOs can play in product and experience development (the unique selling propositions that make Ottawa a preferred travel destination). Granted, most DMOs have neither the expertise nor resources to undertake many development activities, but the DMO can be a catalyst to ensure the infrastructure, activities and services necessary to support the visitor industry are in place.
OBJECTIVE C.1: Greater Access To, & Animation Of, Public Lands & Buildings

Whether in the Parliamentary Precinct, Ottawa’s central waterways or more remote locations across the city, the mandates and control structures among (and within) multiple federal ministries and city departments is often a challenge when marketing Ottawa to visitors. In some cases, the core mandates of organizations and institutions do not even incorporate a tourism component. Greater access to land and buildings, interpretation, and programming would not only help showcase Ottawa’s unique selling propositions to visitors but would also provide greater insight and access to residents.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

- A greater understanding of the impact that operating decisions (e.g., public access, operating hours, pricing, content, etc) have on tourism.

ACTIONS:

- Advocate for public access to public lands and buildings.
- Contribute to initiatives that support improved access and usage of public lands and buildings.

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OBJECTIVE C.2: Establish A Tourism Product & Programming Capability

Understanding product availability across all potential visitor areas of interest provides a basis for developing comprehensive marketing plans.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

- Better selection of product offerings tailored to target markets.
- Participation of non-traditional tourism partners (e.g., City parks and recreation) in tourism initiatives.
- Support for small and medium sized businesses with tourism-ready product.

ACTIONS:

- Coordinate inventories in key tourism areas including culture, entertainment, outdoor/recreation, architecture, culinary, neighbourhoods (unique features/history) and rural experiences.
- Conduct ongoing gap analyses based on target market profiles and products available in competitive destinations.
- Facilitate bundling of experiences, and associated marketing initiatives ("how to", maps, marketing tools).

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OBJECTIVE C.3:
Actively Support Sector Plans That Benefit The Visitor Experience

A number of programs have been initiated by various levels of government over the past few years that will improve the visitor (and resident) experiences. The introduction and implementation of these plans must be managed in tandem to ensure the broadest positive impacts.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:
• Successful introduction of sector plans and integration with Ottawa Tourism business plans.

ACTIONS:
• Participate in the planning and strategy development of relevant sector plans.
• Support the roll-out and implementation of relevant sector plans.

DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP PLAN

1. WE BRING CANADIANS AND VISITORS TOGETHER
   STRATEGY 1.3: Develop An Innovative Hosting Experience

2. WE HONOUR OUR HERITAGE
   STRATEGY 2.3: Make Culture And Music Part Of Ottawa’s Brand

3. WE LIVE FOR THE GREAT OUTDOORS
   STRATEGY 4.1: Position Ottawa As Canada’s Most Active City
   STRATEGY 4.2: Develop And Enhance Unique Outdoor Experiences
   STRATEGY 4.3: Build A Destination Activity Centre
   STRATEGY 4.7: Support Programming Along Waterfront Communities And Public Spaces

4. WE HOST SPORTS
   STRATEGY 5.2: Support The Development Of A Regional And International Draw For Sports, Entertainment, Cultural And Recreational Purposes In LeBreton
   STRATEGY 5.3: Enhance Facility Standards To Host National Sports Competitions
   STRATEGY 5.4: Celebrate Sports In The Community

5. WE CELEBRATE COMMUNITY
   STRATEGY 6.2: Develop Catalyst Attractions And Signature Destinations
   STRATEGY 6.3: Support Programming In Character Neighbourhoods

6. WE CELEBRATE COMMUNITY
   STRATEGY 6.2: Develop Catalyst Attractions And Signature Destinations
   STRATEGY 6.3: Support Programming In Character Neighbourhoods

7. WE VALUE SUSTAINABILITY
   STRATEGY 8.1: Grow The Tourism Industry’s Economic Impact

8. WE VALUE SUSTAINABILITY
   STRATEGY 8.1: Grow The Tourism Industry’s Economic Impact
**OBJECTIVE C.4:**
**Put More Emphasis On Events & Festivals**

Ottawa hosts numerous festivals, celebrations, and other large-scale events annually. Some are operated by single-purpose, not-for-profit entities, some by major corporations, others by neighbourhood committees, and several by either the municipal or federal government. Little coordination exists and, with few exceptions, the direct benefits are not felt outside the immediate capture area.

**PERFORMANCE MEASURES:**
- An event calendar with year-round programming.
- Expansion/enhancement of existing and creation of new recurring events.
- More dispersion of event activities/benefits outside core areas.

**ACTIONS:**
- Identify calendar “need” periods to be filled with culinary, cultural, entertainment or similar events.
- Investigate commercialization and enhancement opportunities for marquee events that create overnight visitation.
- Work with Ottawa community groups to make local events more tourism friendly and enhance marketing efforts.
- Re-examine Destination Development Funding criteria to encourage more, larger and unique events.

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**DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP PLAN**

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OBJECTIVE C.5: Encourage The Development Of Indigenous Tourism Experiences

As the national capital, our destination should play a lead role in telling the history and showcasing the culture of First Nations, the Métis Nation and the Inuit peoples of Canada to other Canadians and to our international visitors. In the spirit of true reconciliation, this effort should only be undertaken with the full and active support of the Indigenous population within the region and from across the country.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

• Indigenous tourism businesses operating in the Ottawa market.

ACTIONS:

• Establish an Indigenous Advisory Committee to provide input and guidance on Indigenous tourism development initiatives and to shepherd the long-term tourism plan.
• Seek local Indigenous tourism product initiatives that can be supported through the Destination Development Fund.
• Initiate a long-term Indigenous tourism plan for Ottawa, including consideration of Ottawa as a centre for Truth and Reconciliation.
• Advocate on behalf of Indigenous tourism operators.

DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP PLAN

3. WE VOICE RECONCILIATION
   STRATEGY 3.1: Position Ottawa As The National Centre For Truth And Reconciliation
   STRATEGY 3.2: Establish A Coordination Role With Algonquin And Urban Indigenous Partners In The Development Of Indigenous Tourism In Ottawa
   STRATEGY 3.3: Support The Development Of Indigenous Tourism Experiences And Activities

6. WE CELEBRATE COMMUNITY
   STRATEGY 6.3: Support Programming In Character Neighbourhoods

8. WE VALUE SUSTAINABILITY
   STRATEGY 8.1: Grow The Tourism Industry’s Economic Impact
Ottawa is a gathering place for business, for competition, for celebration. Ottawa Tourism recognizes past successes in hosting medium- and large-scale events and will expand on this success not only from conventions and meetings in the core but also from sport and celebratory events across the city.
OBJECTIVE D.1: Own The Mid-Sized Canadian National & Regional (Ontario/ Central Canada) Business Event Market

Ottawa is an established business events destination, but further potential exists in the Canadian and Ontario association market as well as targeted business sectors.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

- Achieve capacity at >50 city-wide business events per annum by 2027.
- Ottawa is known as the leader in mid-market association meetings based on Convention Centres of Canada benchmarking survey or other metrics.

ACTIONS:

- Build in-house research capacity to more fully scope market potential.
- Develop target lists tied to industry, use type, season, and/or venue needs in order to gauge effectiveness of sales efforts.
- Target high-value business events in already identified sectors like tech (including software, security, communications), life sciences, aerospace and government, and emerging industries like robotics and cleantech.
- Maintain the Convention Development Fund incentive but periodically review thresholds for activation.
- Support Ottawa hotels selling to “under-one-roof” business events.

DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP PLAN

1. WE BRING CANADIANS AND VISITORS TOGETHER
   STRATEGY 1.1: Position Ottawa As A National And Regional Connectivity Hub
   STRATEGY 1.2: Anchor Ottawa As A Centre For National, Regional, and International Meetings And Conferences

8. WE VALUE SUSTAINABILITY
   STRATEGY 8.1: Grow The Tourism Industry’s Economic Impact
OBJECTIVE D.2: Own The Mid-Sized Canadian National & Regional (Ontario /Central Canada) Amateur Sport Market

As home base to numerous national amateur sports organizations—best evidenced by the House of Sport—as well as a proven destination for Ontario sports competitions, Ottawa is a compelling option for national and regional competitions, training activities and league play.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

• Successful hosting of >30 sport competitions and events per year by 2027.
• Ottawa is known as a leader in sport hosting for national events.

ACTIONS:

• Set up a sport event working group comprised of sport event facilitators and venues.
• Update the assessment of priority and secondary sports (2012 analysis).
• Conduct a venue assessment tied to priority and secondary sports, as well as identify facility gaps.
• Advocate for sport infrastructure enhancements where gaps exist between market opportunity and venue capability/capacity.
• Build a 10-year event opportunity calendar working with venues and sport associations.
• Partner with local organizations (and Ottawa offices of national groups) to develop hosting opportunities.
• Maintain the major events fund incentive but periodically review thresholds for activation.

DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP PLAN

1. WE BRING CANADIANS AND VISITORS TOGETHER
STRATEGY 1.1: Position Ottawa As A National And Regional Connectivity Hub

8. WE VALUE SUSTAINABILITY
STRATEGY 8.1: Grow The Tourism Industry’s Economic Impact

5. WE HOST SPORTS
STRATEGY 5.1: Position Ottawa As The Centre For Canadian Sports
STRATEGY 5.2: Support The Development Of A Regional And International Draw For Sports, Entertainment, Cultural And Recreational Purposes In LeBreton
STRATEGY 5.3: Enhance Facility Standards To Host National Sports Competitions
OBJECTIVE D.3: Target Major International Business & Sport Events

Ottawa has successfully hosted European and broader international business meetings. Future potential has been identified to grow this market as well as limited opportunities for select international sport and celebratory events.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

- Successful hosting of >5 international events/annum on average.
- Ottawa listed on ICCA city index.

ACTIONS:

- Research to identify target groups by industry sector, sport organization or other clear differentiator.
- Establish Ottawa as an international (size-appropriate) sport event destination.
- Work with already identified Ottawa business sectors such as information and communication, health and life sciences, engineering, clean tech and defence/aerospace to identify local champions (event hosts) and annual/regular business events suitable for Ottawa.
- Maintain and enhance the Think Ottawa ambassador program.
- Continue international prospecting events and introduce similar events as deemed appropriate.

DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP PLAN

1. WE BRING CANADIANS AND VISITORS TOGETHER
   STRATEGY 1.1: Position Ottawa As A National And Regional Connectivity Hub

5. WE HOST SPORTS
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8. WE VALUE SUSTAINABILITY
   STRATEGY 8.1: Grow The Tourism Industry’s Economic Impact
OBJECTIVE D.4: Build An Active Event Calendar To Address Seasonality Issues

Ottawa hosts numerous events in a typical year. Some are complementary and can be held concurrently. Others create conflicts for hotel rooms, public spaces and unique venues. Still others are lost as a result of competition for host meeting venues. An event calendar that establishes “need” periods, reflects ongoing annual events (that draw on hotel and support infrastructure) and sets out characteristics for targeted events in Ottawa would greatly assist the planning and sales process.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:
• More consistent “peak to trough” annual hotel occupancies.
• Hosted events in “off” season.

ACTIONS:
• Identify calendar “need” periods that can be filled with business and sport events, but also culinary, cultural, entertainment or related events.
• Encourage a national effort to be more proactive in selling to international sport events.
• Expand Ottawa Tourism’s lead calendar to include all events of interest to visitors or where a visitor impact may occur.

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E. BE THE DESTINATION STEWARDS

Tourism is an important component of Ottawa’s economy. As such, major city-building initiatives—be they development projects, policies affecting parks and recreation or transit—can benefit from a tourism perspective. As the tourism industry leader, Ottawa Tourism’s views will be sought out to provide a tourism lens on all major city-building decisions.
OBJECTIVE E.1: Work Closely With Other Economic Development Entities To Build & Showcase Ottawa

Ottawa Tourism is but one of many organizations charged with furthering economic development and prosperity for Ottawa and its citizens. Whether attracting a visitor, a new resident or a business/investment, Ottawa should be presented in a consistent manner that highlights those destination attributes of greatest importance in the selection decision.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

- An ongoing, coordinated vision for Ottawa.
- A common brand used widely by the City, business and institutions.
- Clear delineation of objectives by stakeholder organizations and joint use of resources where possible.

ACTIONS:

- Full engagement in current (and future) strategic plan development for Invest Ottawa, the Ottawa Board of Trade and other lead city (and regional) agencies.
- Ongoing monitoring of the brand and brand essence for relevancy.
- Periodic updating and retooling of the brand as necessary.

DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP PLAN

1. WE BRING CANADIANS AND VISITORS TOGETHER
   STRATEGY 1.1: Position Ottawa As A National And Regional Connectivity Hub
   STRATEGY 1.2: Anchor Ottawa As A Centre For National, Regional, and International Meetings And Conferences

6. WE CELEBRATE COMMUNITY
   STRATEGY 6.1: Reinforce The Byward Market As A Key Tourism Anchor For The City
   STRATEGY 6.2: Develop Catalyst Attractions And Signature Destinations

8. WE VALUE SUSTAINABILITY
   STRATEGY 8.1: Grow The Tourism Industry’s Economic Impact
   STRATEGY 8.2: Support Economic Development In Ottawa
   STRATEGY 8.3: Support Ottawa’s Brand Essence, Canada In One City
OBJECTIVE E.2:
Provide Considered Commentary (& Advocacy As Necessary) On Major Development & Infrastructure Projects

Ottawa Tourism provides the tourism lens into major project discussions ranging from transit to land planning, parks and recreation and economic development. Major infrastructure decisions must be driven by taxpayer needs but understanding the impact on the visitor economy often drives benefits for visitors and residents alike.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

• Supported projects have demonstrable benefits for tourism in Ottawa.
• Priority projects are approved.

ACTIONS:

• Seek out opportunities to provide input into City initiatives involving transit, land planning, parks and recreation where a potential tourism impact exists.
• Develop opinions and advocate a position on major projects under consideration:
  - ByWard Market;
  - LeBreton Flats;
  - Lansdowne Park;
  - Sports facilities/venues;
  - Proposed outdoor gathering places;
  - Repurposed office buildings; and
  - Wellington Street closure.

DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP PLAN

1. WE BRING CANADIANS AND VISITORS TOGETHER
   STRATEGY 1.1: Position Ottawa As A National And Regional Connectivity Hub
   STRATEGY 1.4: Develop New And Unique Outdoor Gathering Spaces
   STRATEGY 1.5: Expand National Events And Major Festivals

4. WE LIVE FOR THE GREAT OUTDOORS
   STRATEGY 4.4: Develop A Shared Vision And Development Plan For The Waterways

6. WE CELEBRATE COMMUNITY
   STRATEGY 6.1: Reinforce The Byward Market As A Key Tourism Anchor For The City
   STRATEGY 6.2: Develop Catalyst Attractions And Signature Destinations

8. WE VALUE SUSTAINABILITY
   STRATEGY 8.1: Grow The Tourism Industry’s Economic Impact
OBJECTIVE E.3:
Monitor The Economic & Community Impacts From Visitor Activity

Pre-pandemic visitors to Ottawa spent more than $2 billion per year on lodging, retail, entertainment, food and drink and related services. The industry is a significant contributor and residents should be aware of its value.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:
• Positive outlook towards tourism and tourists by Ottawans and City Council.
• Positive results from resident surveys.

ACTIONS:
• Produce annual economic impact summaries.
• Provide examples of economic impact at the business, neighbourhood or event level.
• Monitor over-tourism issues to identify negative impacts on residents.
• Communicate the benefits of tourism to the community at large and to our membership.

DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP PLAN

1. WE BRING CANADIANS AND VISITORS TOGETHER
   STRATEGY 1.2: Anchor Ottawa As A Centre For National, Regional, and International Meetings And Conferences
   STRATEGY 1.5: Expand National Events And Major Festivals

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5. WE HOST SPORTS
   STRATEGY 5.4: Celebrate Sports In The Community

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   STRATEGY 8.2: Support Economic Development In Ottawa
   STRATEGY 8.3: Support Ottawa’s Brand Essence, Canada In One City
F. BUILD A GREAT TEAM & ORGANIZATION

Ottawa Tourism is a great place to work. We are a team of dedicated, hard-working, socially aware tourism professionals working to grow the tourism industry in Ottawa and to ensure this growth benefits all residents. We enjoy what we do and create value for our stakeholders.
OBJECTIVE F.1:
Ensure Our Work Culture Is Supportive, Welcoming, Open & Collaborative

COVID-19 required changes to the way we communicated, collaborated and undertook work processes. It was a learning experience through which the team held together and performed well. Going forward, we can improve our work environment to ensure we get the best from our people, individually and collectively.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:
• Sustained strong Employee Net Promoter Scores (ENPS).
• Positive onboarding/exiting interviews.

ACTIONS:
• Assess implications of the hybrid work environment (in office/work from home) on Ottawa Tourism’s culture.
• Improve cross-department communication and involvement.
• Consider the impact on Ottawa Tourism’s culture when assessing lease renewal options.
• Celebrate successes more often.

DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP PLAN

8. WE VALUE SUSTAINABILITY
STRATEGY 8.12: Steward Diversity And Inclusion In The Industry
OBJECTIVE F.2: Commit To Corporate Social Responsibility Throughout All We Do

Ottawa Tourism is committed to being an exemplary and socially responsible organization, whether in the diversity of our team and Board of Directors, our position towards sustainability, advocacy for accessibility, or supporting workforce initiatives. Ottawa Tourism will “walk the walk.”

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

- Greater diversity of Ottawa Tourism staff and Board of Directors.
- Updated marketing and related materials.
- Use of land acknowledgements, where appropriate.
- Complete the 2021 Sustainability Action Plan.

ACTIONS:

- Make a concerted effort towards achieving diversity and inclusion goals consistent with the Destinations International “Equity, Diversity & Inclusion CEO Pledge.”
- Diversify the image of Ottawa through advertising images, support of cultural festivals and advocacy.
- Hire an Indigenous tourism liaison staff.
- Provide training on Indigenous culture, including to all Ottawa Tourism staff
- Carry out the 2021 Sustainability Action Plan, including formally taking the Sustainable 2030 Pledge.
- Monitor sustainability efforts (and successes), within Ottawa Tourism, the destination, and in similar cities and comparable DMOs.

DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP PLAN

8. WE VALUE SUSTAINABILITY
STRATEGY 8.4: Transition Towards A Net Zero Destination
STRATEGY 8.6: Develop A Clean And Circular Economy For The Industry
STRATEGY 8.7: Communicate About Sustainability
STRATEGY 8.8: Invest In Workforce Development
STRATEGY 8.9: Advocate For Talent Wellbeing
STRATEGY 8.10: Focus On Community Quality Of Life
STRATEGY 8.11: Focus On Accessibility
STRATEGY 8.12: Steward Diversity And Inclusion In The Industry
OBJECTIVE F.3: Manage Risk Across The Organization

Ottawa Tourism has worked hard to earn the trust of our stakeholders and the community. We are proactive. In this regard, we have developed--and continually update and modify--a crisis response and recovery plan. This plan assists with the effective management of our organization, in particular our information technology, financial and data storage processes--while staying current on industry best practices.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

- Current and implementable Crisis Response and Recovery Plan as well as a Tourism Crisis Communications Plan.
- No data breaches.
- Regular risk assessments as part of project evaluation and selection.

ACTIONS:

- Complete review of IT systems including an inventory of software used and gap analysis as well as continuous review of IT security (notably connection with home networks).
- Implementation of refresher/training opportunities in core (e.g., sales, marketing) and support (e.g., CRM, communications) areas.
- Periodic review of Crisis Response and Recovery plans including identification of risk areas and potential mitigation strategies.
- Ongoing review of financial controls and processes.
- Staying current on sector-specific tech opportunities.

DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP PLAN

8. WE VALUE SUSTAINABILITY
STRATEGY 8.1: Grow the Tourism Industry’s Economic Impact
STRATEGY 8.2: Support Economic Development in Ottawa
STRATEGY 8.8: Invest In Workforce Development
OBJECTIVE F.4: Advocate, But Acknowledge Our Limits

Tourism is an important industry in Ottawa. Decisions at all levels of government and across the private sector have the potential to advance or inhibit tourism growth. Ottawa Tourism will be the voice for the industry, highlighting (and advocating for) those initiatives that positively affect tourism and speaking against those that do not.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

• Recognized as the visitor economy experts in Ottawa.

ACTIONS:

• Position Ottawa Tourism as the source of tourism data and expertise for the Ottawa region.
• Identify data, knowledge and/or service gaps, and encourage action from appropriate parties.
• Work with recognized tourism sector expert organizations to provide an Ottawa perspective on topical issues.
• Undertake customized programs (e.g., Shine On) as need and opportunity arise.
• Undertake and maintain general advocacy for identified issues.

DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP PLAN

3. WE VOICE RECONCILIATION
   STRATEGY 3.1: Position Ottawa As The National Centre For Truth And Reconciliation

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   STRATEGY 8.9: Advocate For Talent Wellbeing
   STRATEGY 8.10: Focus On Community Quality Of Life
Target Audiences

The visitor of the future may be different than the one we’ve seen in the past. Based on the opportunities identified in the Stewardship Plan and our vision for the destination, four key target audiences were identified that have the greatest future market potential for Ottawa.

- Local Residents
- Active Adventurers
- Sophisticated Explorers
- Business Travellers

By looking at Ottawa from the perspective of these audiences, strategies and actions were identified as part of the Stewardship Plan to cater to the needs and interests of these specific groups. This market driven approach provides focus to the planning process and will also help inform future marketing efforts as well.
LOCAL RESIDENTS

Understanding the aspirations of the local community with respect to how Ottawa is positioned and developed as a destination to live, work and play is critical to the success of the Stewardship Plan. Local residents perceive Ottawa as historical, and value its beauty, cleanliness, safety, and quality of life, as well as its outdoorsy lifestyle.

Ottawa’s nature and parks, outdoor activities, local neighbourhoods, restaurants, sights and landmarks, museums, events and festivals are some of the most important aspects that attract residents to live, work, or study in Ottawa. In comparison, tours, nightlife, accommodation, and spectator sports are the least important factors residents consider in deciding to live/work/study in the area. Local residents rate both air and train connectivity as very important, but satisfaction with these services is low which suggests that improvements in these areas should be prioritized.

ACTIVE ADVENTURERS

Active Adventurers share a keen interest in outdoor sports, engaging with nature, and health and fitness activities. This group doesn’t see a vacation as a time to slow down or be indulgent; they want to explore new things and be active. They take fewer vacations per year to farther destinations, and they aren’t particularly interested in family or multi-generational vacations. Active Adventurers are more likely to combine business trip with leisure vacation.

Ottawa offers more outdoor activities than any other urban destination in Canada and nearly 1/3 of past visitors to the city fit the profile of an Active Adventurer. As such, Ottawa is well positioned to cater to and expand its reach with this particular market segment. Based on Ottawa’s current product offerings, the promotion of the extraordinary outdoors to visitors is an opportunity to position Ottawa as one of Canada’s most active cities and leverage these assets with additional programming and events for visitors and residents alike that celebrate the great outdoors.
**SOPHISTICATED EXPLORERS**

Sophisticated Explorers take fewer but longer vacations per year, with the highest average vacation spend of any type of Canadian leisure travellers. They are more likely to enjoy sightseeing, visiting cultural attractions, learning new things and attending cultural events. Sophisticated Explorers tend to be older than other segments, with a higher net worth, and more likely to be retired with no children at home.

Nearly 20% of past visitors to Ottawa fit the profile of a Sophisticated Explorer. For these visitors, accommodation, sights and landmarks, dining/restaurants, flight connectivity, interesting neighbourhoods, museums, and nature and parks are very important as part of the visitor experience. Arts and culture are also more important to Sophisticated Explorers compared to Canadian travellers in general, however their level of satisfaction with these types of experiences in Ottawa is lower than in other areas. As a result, the development of arts and culture experiences (non-institutional, other than museums) is a clear opportunity to connect with this audience.

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**BUSINESS TRAVELLERS**

Historically, midweek business travel, business meetings, and convention business filled rooms, restaurants and shops in Downtown Ottawa. However, the pandemic has reshaped corporate travel policies and schedules while new hybrid models are influencing corporate event strategies.

As a result, Ottawa has an opportunity to become the national hub for annual association meetings and events as they consolidate their operations. At the same time, a backlog of international meetings and events in gateway cities means Ottawa has an opportunity to grow its share of the international meetings market as well.