

LANARK COUNTY

Tourism Strategy & Action Plan

2020-2025



Welcome

to Lanark County, Ontario, Canada



LANARK COUNTY

Tourism Strategy & Action Plan 2020-2025

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Introduction

Tourism in Lanark County involves the activities of a variety of people, organizations, business owners and staff. This document is published by the Tourism Department of Lanark County in its role as the Destination Marketing Organization (DMO).

On behalf of its municipal partners, the role of the County is to:

- Develop a destination strategy and annual marketing plan for Lanark County;
- Deliver destination focused marketing;
- Support the development of local tourism products;
- Support destination development activities; and
- Develop goals for tourism infrastructure investment in alignment with local municipal needs.

This document will act as the destination strategy in alignment with the Lanark County Economic Development Strategic Plan in order to provide a framework for tourism activities in Lanark County.

Acknowledgements

Lanark County staff in consultation with municipal partners, tourism stakeholders and regional economic development officials at Valley Heartland Community Futures Development Corporation has developed a set of recommended action items based on research and statistics that will support tourism growth in our communities of Beckwith, Carleton Place, Drummond/North Elmsley, Lanark Highlands, Mississippi Mills, Montague, Perth, Tay Valley and the separated Town of Smiths Falls.



Tourism staff would like to express our appreciation for those who contributed to this process and provided insight towards the development of activities that will strengthen collaborative efforts in tourism.



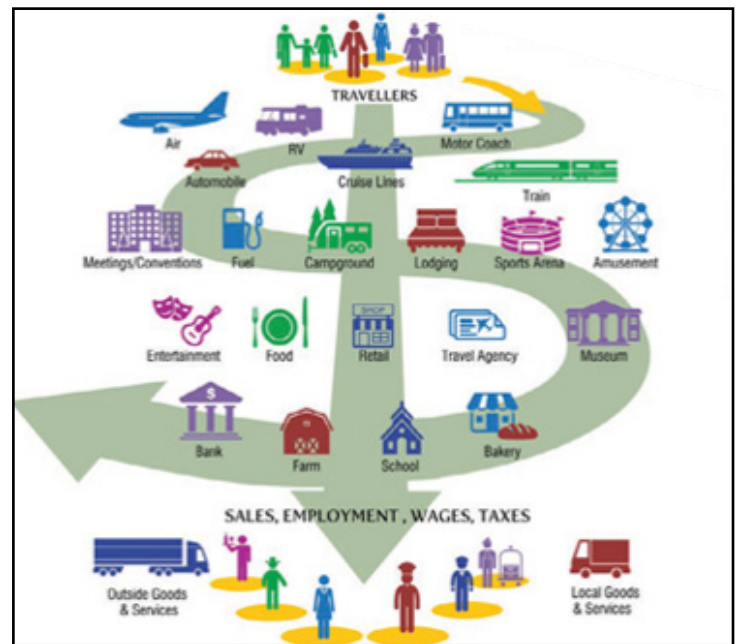
Executive Summary

Tourism has emerged as one of the fastest growing and resilient economic sectors in the world and is a key economic driver to Canada, Ontario, and Lanark County. The full impact of the “visitor economy” is felt when the multiplier effect of tourist spending ripples throughout the whole economy, supporting job creation, infrastructure development and community building.

Some destinations struggle to understand the value of tourism. When they talk about tourism, and more importantly sustainable tourism, the focus is really on the tourism businesses and the visitors. But tourism is so much more. And that is why we are starting to hear more and more about the visitor economy.

The visitor economy refers to the widespread and often unseen benefits to Lanark County of dollars spent by travellers. Tourism is more than just a business sector; it’s an economic driver that crosses multiple industries and supports growth in a myriad of ways. This encompasses everything that attracts visitors to a destination; everything that makes a place special, distinctive, and capable of engendering pride and interest in a place that’s worth experiencing.

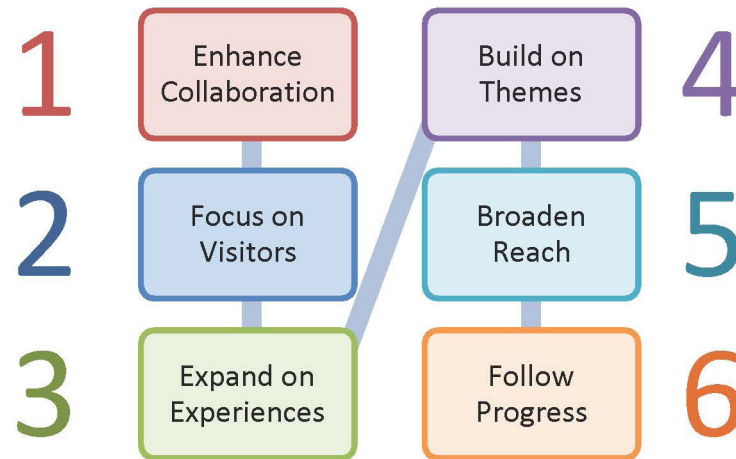
A successful visitor economy requires managing all the components in an integrated and long-term way with a clear focus on the needs of the visitor that the destination is trying to attract. The result is that tourism dollars circulate throughout the economy, amplifying their impact along the way, and resulting in support for community building and economic well-being. The whole community benefits.



Lanark County, together with its municipal partners, recognize the essential role of tourism as an economic driver an opportunity to engage in tourism development activities within the regional tourism framework of Ontario. In order to attract new and returning visitors, retain jobs and increase business investment, tourism in Lanark County requires the continued support of our political leaders.



The Lanark County Tourism Strategy identifies six key actions for the advancement of tourism in Lanark County:



1. Enhance Collaboration

The many organizations that contribute to tourism growth in Lanark County must continue to work together to deliver streamlined experiences to the visitor.

2. Focus on Visitors

Consider year-round offerings that appeal to target markets, rather than time-sensitive events or short-lived promotions.

3. Expand on Experiences

Increase tourism revenue by offering programmed experiences designed to boost emotional engagement that will deliver a higher return on investment.

4. Build on Themes

Differentiating and location-based themes include the following:

- Maple- a Taste of Lanark: The Terroir of the Land
- Geology – Rocks and Minerals
- Our People, Our Roots, Our Heritage
- Architectural Treasures
- Military Beginnings
- The Cultural Impacts of the Canadian Shield

While all present an opportunity for story development, two themes emerged with the most promise based on existing product and industry engagement: Maple and Geology.

5. Broaden Reach

Promote the unique selling proposition of Lanark County; location-based experiences that support and define the regional brand identity through established themes that benefit multiple stakeholders.

6. Follow Progress

Identify best practices and report on activities that support Destination Development.

Details on each of the above recommendations are outlined in the section entitled “Action Plan”

Please Note: Implementation plans for recommended actions are subject to approval by Lanark County Council as part of the annual budget process.

Destination Management

Effective destination management happens when tourism organizations, industry stakeholders and governments, be they municipal, regional, provincial or national, plan and work together to enhance the quality of the visitor's experience by ensuring tourism products, services, and amenities exceed visitor expectations.

The Lanark County Tourism Strategy & Action Plan has been developed to enhance the competitiveness and appeal of Lanark County over the next five years. By implementing the recommendations identified in the action plan, Lanark County and its tourism stakeholders will strengthen their ability to increase the benefits from tourism.

Successful destination management supports two primary revenue drivers – supply and demand. Destination development focuses on the supply side by creating compelling visitor experiences to attract new visitors and entice repeat visitation. Destination marketing strives to generate short-term demand and create immediate urgency for people to want to visit.

Proactive destination management brings together strategies and tactics designed to:

- Ensure that a destination is well positioned to make future strategic decisions;
- Address impediments to growth while capitalizing on opportunities;
- Outline key assets, including the main product themes/experiences available, and;
- Outline priorities for product, infrastructure, amenity and experience development.

Strategic Direction

This plan outlines methods utilized by the Lanark County Tourism Department that benefit municipal partners within Lanark County that contribute financially to the tourism budget and direct activities through the annual budget process: Beckwith, Carleton Place, Drummond/North Elmsley, Lanark Highlands, Mississippi Mills, Montague, Perth, Tay Valley and the separated Town of Smiths Falls.

Purpose

The Lanark County Tourism Strategy & Action Plan is a tool to communicate the strategic priorities of the Lanark County Tourism Department with its municipal partners.

The Lanark County Action Plan outlines:

- Opportunities for collaboration with and between municipal partners to grow the visitor economy in Lanark County, and;
- Project ideas proposed through the community input process.

The Lanark County Tourism Strategy & Action Plan is a tool to communicate the strategic priorities of the Lanark County Tourism Department with its municipal partners.



Objectives

Objectives of The Lanark County Tourism Strategy & Action Plan are to:

- (1) Provide a set of recommendations for collaborative actions to stimulate the visitor economy in Lanark County,
- (2) Identify implementation priorities for the tourism staff at Lanark County,
- (3) Act as a communication document to share the strategic priorities of Lanark County Tourism with its municipal partners, and;
- (4) Establish a resource document for informing the annual tourism budget process.

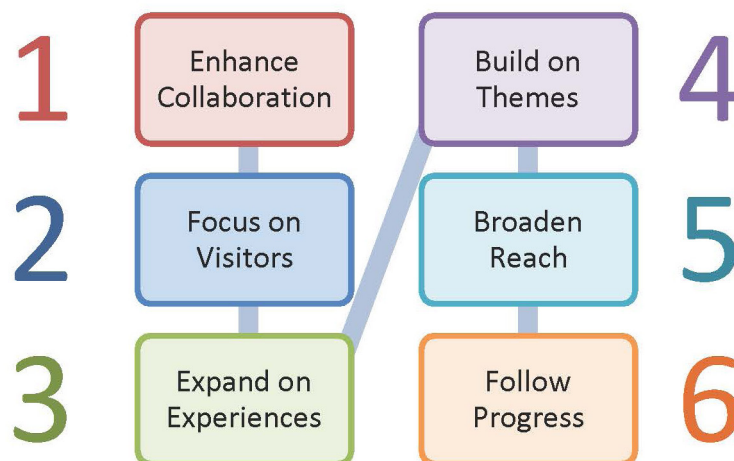
Vision

In 2025, implementation of the Lanark County Tourism Strategy & Action Plan will have contributed to the following:

- Enhanced collaboration among municipal partners and tourism industry groups.
- Tourism activity will have attracted new residents, increased investment and an expanding business community.
- Lanark County will have enhanced its competitive position in the marketplace and positively contributed to the local economy.

Action Plan

Six key actions have been identified. Please refer to Next Steps for new projects that support these actions.



1. Enhance Collaboration

The many organizations that contribute to tourism growth in Lanark County must continue to work together in order to enhance the visitor experience and contribute to the revenues of Lanark County tourism operators.

ACTION #1: ENHANCE COLLABORATION	KEY RESULTS	WHEN?	WHO?	WHERE ARE WE NOW?	WHAT'S NEXT?
Annual planning meetings with municipal partners to share upcoming activities that support tourism at the municipal, county and regional level.	A collaborative understanding of what is being accomplished toward the common goal of tourism growth in Lanark County. Discuss opportunities to leverage tourism promotion and regional programs.	2017-2025	(1) Lanark County Tourism Staff (2) Municipal Tourism Partners, and (3) Regional Tourism Staff.	In progress. The Lanark County tourism department initiated annual planning meetings with municipal partners (as identified by the tourism communications protocol est. 2013), in addition to regular tourism committee meetings. Because each group is subject to a separate mandate, a formal agreement to strategically complement efforts in order to advance tourism collectively has not been developed. Informally, there is an ongoing effort by the tourism department to reduce duplication and encourage collaboration.	Continue to enhance relationships between municipal partners and move closer to establishing an ideal collaboration scenario by defining roles and responsibilities. How? Lanark County staff will set annual meetings with municipal partners to discuss opportunities to align efforts.
Communicate the value of tourism for Lanark County and increase awareness of the importance of tourism for all partner municipalities.	Political leaders and businesses that benefit from tourism will be equipped with facts to support that tourism is important to their community.	2020-2025	(1) Lanark County Tourism staff (2) Economic Development reps, and (3) Lanark County Tourism Association. (4) Regional Tourism Organization (OHTO /RTO11) staff	In progress. A 'Value of Tourism' fact sheet has been developed. Link: Value of Tourism Fact Sheet . Presentations and reports to municipal partners have to date been activity-based.	Presentations and reports to political leaders will include the economic value of tourism. Consider including operator testimonials. How? Through Tourism Information Reports submitted by staff to the Lanark County Economic Development Committee.



<p>Develop stories to inspire residents to discover the tourism assets in their own back-yard and present what is available for visitors to experience.</p>	<p>Lanark County Tourism Staff will publish themed stories year-round with direct links to local businesses and post them on social media outlets.</p>	<p>2018-2025</p>	<p>Stories may be shared on Facebook pages by (1) Chambers of Commerce (2) BIAs, (3) businesses and (4) tourism groups.</p>	<p>In progress. Themed stories have been published by tourism staff, on Pinterest, Facebook and on www.lanarkcountytourism.ca</p> <p>Led by Town of Perth, a blog and a billboard campaign promoting visitation to discover "your own backyard" has been launched.</p> <p>Each municipality hosts events in the shoulder seasons to encourage local engagement.</p>	<p>Identify events in each municipality that increase awareness of local tourism assets among residents.</p> <p>How? Tourism staff are actively updating themed stories with suggested itineraries and sharing them on Facebook, with hashtags to encourage partners to share the story.</p>
<p>Facilitate a learning opportunity for local ambassadors to enhance their familiarity with tourism offerings in Lanark County.</p>	<p>Political leaders, front line staff at municipal offices, political leaders, businesses and volunteers engaged in learning about tourism. For example, the Pan Am Games Ambassador program: http://headwatersb2b.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2016/01/Headwaters-Tourism-Ambassador-Program-overview-final-June-2014.pdf</p>	<p>2015-2025</p>	<p>(1) Lanark County Tourism Staff will host with participation from (1) Political Leaders (2) Municipal Staff (3) Businesses and (4) Volunteers.</p>	<p>In progress. An annual familiarization tour is held in June.</p>	<p>Continue to offer annual bus tour.</p> <p>How? Leadership Team Feedback (2018) suggests: Include Industry Training through Familiarization Tours with municipal partners. Consider two tours; in spring, "What's new this season" and fall "Review of the season".</p>



2. Focus on Visitors

Consider developing year-round offerings that appeal to target markets, rather than time-sensitive events or short lived promotions.

ACTION #2: FOCUS ON VISITORS	KEY RESULTS	WHEN ?	WHO?	WHERE ARE WE NOW?	WHAT'S NEXT?
Through the annual marketing plan, communicate details about Lanark County's target market; the " Knowledge Seeker " visitor profile. Monitor changes to market segmentation classifications.	Key stakeholders may consider how their current offerings are presented and how they can appeal to this target market.	2018-2025	Lanark County Tourism staff.	In progress. Circulated to political leaders (via reports to the Lanark County Economic Development Committee) and municipal partners, the annual Lanark County Tourism Marketing Plan , details Lanark County's target market, the " Knowledge Seeker " visitor profile.	Continue to communicate details about the Knowledge Seeker visitor profile. Monitor, and communicate changes to market segmentation classifications. How? The Knowledge Seeker tourism segment will be detailed in the Lanark County Marketing Plan.
Review current marketing images, text and videos to ensure material is presented in a way that will appeal the Knowledge Seeker and Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization's (OHTO) target market, the Connected Explorer visitor profiles.	Update imagery, website content, stories, advertising and promotions to appeal to target profiles.	2018-2025	Lanark County Tourism staff, Lanark County Tourism Association (LCTA) and Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO).	In progress. The Lanark County Tourism website and image inventory have been updated by tourism staff to appeal to the Knowledge Seeker. Led by LCTA, two videos were created and photos acquired that align with both visitor profiles. Led by Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization, professional photo shoots have been conducted in Lanark County to acquire images that appeal to the Connected Explorer profile.	Continue to develop content and campaigns that will appeal to the Knowledge Seeker. How? The 2019 Lanark County tourism budget includes new video and photo acquisition.



Provide ongoing support and mentoring on applying the visitor profile research to new experiences.	Numerous experiences to promote with marketing materials aligned to attract the Knowledge Seeker and the Connected Explorer.	2015-2017	Lanark County Tourism staff, LCTA and Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO).	<p>In progress. Examples of products aligned to the Knowledge Seeker profile include: The Maple Trail introduced in 2017 by Lanark County tourism staff in the "Maple Routes" map publication.</p> <p>Led by LCTA, the Sip and Savour Trail is on schedule to be launched in 2019, in partnership with Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO).</p> <p>Led by OHTO's Rendezvous partnership, The Sugar Maple Trail", "Wonders of our Earth" and the "Backroads Fall Colour Tour" have been launched to international markets.</p>	<p>Continue to provide mentoring and support for new experiences and the expansion of existing experiences to appeal to the Knowledge Seeker profile.</p> <p>How? Tourism staff will support promotional efforts led by LCTA with regard to the Sip and Savour Trail.</p>
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3. Expand on Experiences

Grow the Lanark County visitor economy by offering programmed experiences using local people (see Program & People Asset discretion) designed to boost emotional engagement that will deliver a higher return on investment for operators and a return on engagement/experience for visitors.

Place & Infrastructure Assets:
High fixed costs, need visitor volume &/or base funding. Examples: Hotels, historic sites, parks, attractions, theatres, restaurants, transportation, sports facilities & tour operators who own their transportation.

Activity & Services Assets:
Fixed cost related to activity, need steady volume but often smaller groups. Examples: Fishing outfitters/charters, artisans, horse-drawn sleigh rides.

Program & People Assets:
(1) No or low fixed costs, typically low volume, highly specialized. Examples: Guiding companies, storytellers, musicians, experience brokers (2) Use other's infrastructure; Need volume, e.g., festival and small tour operators.

Progression of Economic Value



ACTION #3: EXPAND ON EXPERIENCES	KEY RESULTS	WHEN	WHO	WHERE ARE WE NOW?	WHAT'S NEXT
Continue to identify venues and businesses where people and program-based experiences could be developed for the Knowledge Seeker to add value to the guest experience and their visitor journey.	Ten or more businesses willing to invest in people/program-based experience development.	2 new: 2020 2 new: 2021 2 new: 2022 2 new: 2023	Lanark County Tourism staff, Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO), Lanark County Tourism Association (LCTA), Industry Partners.	<p>In progress. Examples of such programming facilitated by tourism staff includes: "The Maple Trail" and 'Featured Experiences'.</p> <p>Led by LCTA, a program entitled "Lanark County Sip and Savour." is underway.</p> <p>Led by local businesses; The Good Food Tour has successfully appealed to the Knowledge Seeker through programming. Additional experience providers (listed as featured experiences on the Lanark County Tourism website) have actively expanded programming for the Knowledge Seeker.</p>	<p>Further work can be done with experience providers to tailor programming to the KnowledgeSeeker.</p> <p>How? Approach operators that currently provide workshops to discuss possibilities around programming to suit the Knowledge Seeker. Specifically; those listed as "Featured Experiences" on the Lanark County Tourism website, offering hands on workshops in log building, canoe building, floral design, forest tours and nature bathing.</p>
Identify one festival per year and leverage the festival theme and its connection to the community (e.g. music, art, heritage) by creating year-round programs and activities (e.g. Kayaking with a Kilt).	Build out festival attractions as year- round experiences that appeal to the Knowledge Seeker. Begin with Maple Weekend for provincial positioning, then Signature Events.	One festival per year	Lanark County Tourism staff in partnership with municipalities Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO), Lanark County Tourism Association (LCTA), and Festival Organizers.	<p>In progress. One example includes: Led by Political Officials, the Lanark County Harvest Festival highlights the music and heritage of a feature municipality each year through special programming and displays.</p>	<p>Identify festival experiences that can be offered for an extended period, ideally year-round.</p> <p>How? Discuss possibilities to partner Lanark County Harvest Festival with other food related events and farmers markets to promote products made in Lanark County.</p>
Engage the current 'cottage crowd' who align with the Knowledge Seeker profile and ensure they are aware of tourism-based experiences that they can attend or participate in.	Increased revenue from current cottage visitors and an enhanced visitor experience.	2020	Lanark County Tourism staff, municipal partners, local business, and media partners.	<p>In progress. Lanark County has invested in radio advertising in order to publicize events to seasonal residents and cottagers.</p> <p>Led by the operator, Burning Passions Theatre programs such as Ontario's only walking play successfully appeals to cottage owners.</p>	To be determined. Brainstorm session with tourism leaders.



Support businesses in applying for Signature Experience status to increase the profile for Lanark County businesses and leverage the national marketing benefits.	One Ontario Signature Experience application	2020-2025	Businesses with support of Lanark County Tourism staff, Lanark County Tourism Association (LCTA), and Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO).	In progress. Business leaders that have been approached by Lanark County Tourism staff to consider the Signature Experience Program have informally responded that it is not the right time for them to pursue the accreditation.	Consult with tourism partners to identify potential applicants to the Signature Experience program. How? Request that each municipality nominate a business that should be approached for provincial recognition.
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4. Build on Themes

Differentiating and location-based themes include the following:

- Maple- a Taste of Lanark: The Terroir of the Land
- Geology – Rocks and Minerals
- Our People, Our Roots, Our Heritage
- Architectural Treasures
- Military Beginnings
- The Cultural Impacts of the Canadian Shield

While all present an opportunity for story development, two themes emerged with the most promise based on existing product and industry engagement: Maple and Geology.

ACTION #4: BUILD ON THEMES	KEY RESULTS	WHEN	WHO	WHERE ARE WE NOW?	WHAT'S NEXT?
Further establish Experience Theme Routes that present a journey through Lanark County for visitors that links multiple businesses and municipal assets. Routes that benefit multiple stakeholders and are aligned with location-based themes will be prioritized.	Business partnerships are formed and collaborate on developing the theme route with their product, targeted to the Knowledge Seeker profile.	2020 - 2025	Lanark County Tourism staff in partnership with Lanark County Tourism Association (LCTA), Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO) and tourism businesses with assets/interest in the theme, municipal partners.	In progress. Examples include: Led by tourism staff, the Maple Trail, and Led by LCTA, the Lanark County Sip and Savour Trail. And led by Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO), a relaunch of the existing Recreational Geology Route. "Hidden Gems."	Build on The Maple Trail and continue working with LCTA on the Sip and Savour Trail. How? A new maple video will be created in 2019.

<p>Engage the Culinary Tourism Alliance (CTA) to strengthen awareness of food and beverage visitor opportunities in Lanark County. Leverage Lanark County's membership with the CTA.</p>	<p>Unique food experiences and events will be co-marketed in ways that meet the needs of the Knowledge Seeker.</p>	<p>2020 - 2025</p>	<p>Lanark County Tourism staff in partnership with Lanark County Tourism Association (LCTA), Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO), municipal partners, and food and beverage providers and tourism businesses with assets/ interest in the theme.</p>	<p>In progress. Lanark County's annual membership with CTA includes promotion of food events and products such as the Maple Trail and the Sip and Savour Trail.</p> <p>A Food Strategy was recommended as a result of the Lanark County Economic Development planning process, and discussions are being held at the Regional Economic Development Alliance meetings to move recommendations forward.</p>	<p>Connect with CTA to further promote food related initiatives such as promote the Sip and Savour Trail.</p> <p>How? Consider an application for a Culinary Tourism Award.</p>
<p>Encourage local area experience providers to offer programs that correspond to themes, and that can be sold direct-to-market or packaged with complimentary tourism businesses to enrich the visitor experience and diversify the choices available.</p>	<p>Continue to highlight experience providers as Featured Experiences.</p>	<p>2020 - 2025</p>	<p>Lanark County Tourism staff in partnership with Lanark County Tourism Association (LCTA), Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO), businesses, community members.</p>	<p>In progress. Lanark County highlights experience providers that offer programs that can be sold direct to market on the website as "Featured Experiences".</p>	<p>Connect with businesses that currently offer workshops and discuss potential to align with themes and improve visitor access with online booking</p>
<p>Add theatrical storytelling that aligns with themes in more communities as it appeals to the Knowledge Seeker's interest in cultural events and may stimulate expanded use of performing arts venues/municipal assets.</p>	<p>Extend season of telling our story beyond festivals and events and add value to other businesses.</p>	<p>2021 - 2023</p>	<p>Lanark County Tourism staff in partnership with Lanark County Tourism Association (LCTA), Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO) and theatre community.</p>	<p>In progress.</p> <p>Led by the operator, Burning Passions Theatre is actively building theatrical excellence in Lanark County through programming that will appeal to the Knowledge Seeker.</p>	<p>Connect with leaders in the theatre community and discuss opportunities to share our themes through storytelling.</p> <p>How? Tourism staff will contact Burning Passions Theatre to begin the conversation.</p>

<p>Provide information to transportation companies that may offer themed excursions.</p>	<p>Additional excursions that relay themes and include transportation to Lanark County.</p>	<p>2020</p>	<p>Lanark County Tourism staff, Operators, Ottawa Tourism, Lanark County Tourism Association (LCTA), and Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO).</p>	<p>In progress. Tourism staff have approached Brew Donkey and The Shop Bus resulting in additional stops in Lanark County.</p> <p>Led by the operators, Brew Donkey, The Shop Bus and Lanark Transportation Association (LTA) have established routes for public transportation.</p>	<p>Reconnect with Lanark Transportation Association (LTA) and Ottawa Valley Tours to discuss potential for growth in Lanark County.</p> <p>How? Tourism staff will offer to develop itineraries for groups.</p>
<p>Determine ways to layer on new, revenue generating experiences onto the trails.</p>	<p>Identify trails and experiences that could be developed to the ideal guests and the businesses willing to invest in development.</p>	<p>2020</p>	<p>Lanark County Tourism staff, Lanark County Municipal Trails Network, municipal partners, Lanark County Tourism Association (LCTA), and Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO).</p>	<p>To be determined. Led by County staff, a directional sign program along the Ottawa Valley Recreational Trail (OVRT) will link nearby businesses to the trail.</p>	<p>With partners, propose theme development on the Ottawa Valley Recreational Trail (OVRT).</p> <p>How? Tourism staff will work with the Ottawa Valley Tourist Association (OVTA), Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO), and trail partners towards an acceptable theme.</p>



5. Broaden Reach

Promote the unique selling proposition of Lanark County; location-based experiences that support and define the regional brand identity through established themes.

ACTION #5: BROADEN REACH	KEY RESULTS	WHEN	WHO	WHERE ARE WE NOW?	WHAT'S NEXT?
Ensure stories published on the Lanark County Tourism website directly link to promoting visitor experiences that appeal to the Knowledge Seeker profile and move the visitor down the path to purchase and closes the sale.	Continue to build story-based promotions and articles on social media for visitor activities and promote businesses.	2018-2020	Lanark County Tourism Staff.	In progress. Tourism staff have established an Editorial Calendar (published in the Lanark County Tourism Marketing Plan) outlining a series of stories that promote experiences appealing to the Knowledge Seeker.	Refresh stories to enhance appeal to the Knowledge Seeker profile. How? Add itineraries, photo galleries and re-post for expanded reach, link directly to businesses and drive sales.
Conduct an annual review of marketing investments to determine success with promotions geared towards the Knowledge Seeker.	A strategically prioritized and aligned tourism budget that directly connects to delivery of increased tourism visitation and revenues.	2015-2025	Lanark County Tourism Department, Lanark County Tourism Association (LCTA), and municipal partners, Chambers, BIAs.	Completed as part of the annual budget process.	Continue to refine marketing tactics to focus investments on promotions that appeal to the Knowledge Seeker profile. How? Review results of social media (number of people reached) using Facebook insights and google analytics to determine which campaigns are best suited to the Knowledge Seeker.
Establish a baseline to measure how Lanark County is perceived in the marketplace through an audit of material published on social media.	Lanark County has a baseline of data against which to benchmark change in the next five years.	2019-2020	Lanark County Tourism Department in partnership with Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO)	In progress. Tourism Staff have partnered with OHTO to conduct a study to reveal the reviews and comments of visitors to Lanark County, also called "online word-of-mouth" through an online sentiment analysis in 2019 as a baseline.	A baseline will be established through an audit of material published on social media. How? Tourism staff will review results of the Online Tourism Sentiment Index for Lanark County performed by Destination Think.

<p>Maintain the current level of brand presence through the Lanark County website while leveraging the Ontario's Highlands regional branding initiatives.</p>	<p>Lanark County's branding position aligns with regional initiatives.</p>	<p>2020-2025</p>	<p>Lanark County Tourism Department, Lanark County Tourism Association (LCTA), Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO), and municipal partners.</p>	<p>In progress. Tourism staff work to align with regional initiatives, primarily through story development.</p>	<p>Continue to explore brand development and participate in regional promotions that align with themes (ex. Recreational Geology) and opportunities that strengthen Lanark County's position in the marketplace.</p> <p>How? Tourism staff will work with OHTO in the production new videos that include regional branding</p>
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6. Follow Progress

Identify best practices and report on activities that support Destination Development.

ACTION #6: FOLLOW PROGRESS	KEY RESULTS	WHEN	WHO	WHERE ARE WE NOW?	WHAT'S NEXT?
Regular meetings with municipal partners to share efforts in tourism and work towards alignment for greater collective impact.	Growing alignment between Lanark County Tourism Department and municipal partners.	2020-2025	Lanark County Tourism Department & Municipal Partners in line with Lanark County Tourism Association (LCTA), and Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO).	In progress. Within the approved budget, Lanark County's Tourism Department continues to act as the Destination Marketing Organization for Lanark County, and supports development projects in partnership with the Lanark County Tourism Association (LCTA), and the Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO).	Continue to share information and work towards aligning efforts with partners. How? Tourism staff meets regularly with municipal partners.
Create a report on the economic value of tourism in Lanark County.	Measure of tourism impact as an economic driver in Lanark County.	2020-2025	Lanark County Tourism Department (DMO), Economic Development Staff, Lanark County Tourism Association (LCTA), Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO) Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (MTCS), Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), Others.	Performance indicators remain consistent with measures of success outlined in the Lanark County Marketing Plan.	Consider partnering with Lanark County Tourism Association (LCTA), Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO), Economic Development staff and municipal partners to report on tourism advancements including product development, workforce training, investment attraction and resident attraction & retention. How? Tourism staff will document and catalogue information to establish the economic impact of tourism in Lanark County.

Monitoring & Evaluation

Success will be indicated by (1) the completion of projects (2) project reach (3) an increase in visitation to Lanark County, and (4) an increase in tourism spending. Results will be reported in context of environmental factors such as gas prices, exchange rates, and travel trends.

References

Reports, studies, statistics and consultations that guided the process of building this strategy are listed. Leadership Team Feedback 2018: **Reference municipal strategic documents** such as the Tay Valley Strategic Plan, Tay Valley Asset Mapping (stores, restaurants), friendly land use policies where applicable, the Montague Branding Platform and the Carleton Place Branding Strategy.

Local:

- Lanark County Economic Development Strategic Plan 2018-2020
- Lanark County Destination Development Plan 2014 – 2018
- Lanark County Tourism Statistics Report 2018-2019
- Lanark County Sustainable Communities Official Plan – Adopted 2012
- Lanark County Community Vision 2020 and County Strategic Plan - 2005
- Lanark County Tourism Business Plan - 2004
- Tourism Master Plan for the County of Lanark 1988
- Township of Beckwith Official Plan
- Carleton Place Community Strategic Plan
- Drummond/North Elmsley Official Plan
- Lanark Highlands Official Plan
- Town of Mississippi Mills Municipal Culture Plan
- Township of Montague Strategic Plan
- Town of Perth Strategic Plan 2020 (including Tourism 10-Year Strategy) 2015
- Tay Valley Township Official Plan
- Marketing Materials (over 200 guides, maps and brochures, plus over 400 local business websites and social media pages)

Regional:

- Premier Ranked Destination Framework -2011
- Visitor Opportunities Experience Concept (VEOC) Reports
- Come Wander Brand Toolkit
- Regional Tourism Profiles
- Rideau Heritage Route Marketing Plan 2014
- Five conferences (2012 to 2017)

Provincial:

- Ontario Ministry of Tourism Culture and Sport Regional Tourism Profiles
- Ontario Tourism Competitiveness Study – The Sorbara Report 2009
- Destination Ontario Tourism Marketing Strategy
- 10 conferences (2007-2017)

National:

- Unlocking the Potential of Canada’s Visitor Economy - 2018
- Passport to Growth: How International Arrivals Stimulate Canadian Exports - 2014
- Destination Canada Corporate Plan 2016-2020
- Overview of Destination Canada’s Tourism Marketing Plan
- One conference (2018)

International:

- Destination Next: Global Tourism Organizations 2017

Other:

- [New Zealand 2025](#)

Consultations:

Meetings were held on July 11 and Sept. 27, 2018 for the Leadership Team and Aug. 8 and Nov. 22 for the Tourism Partnership Group.

Appendices

Appendix I: Community Input Report

Over the past several years, tourism staff have consulted with the tourism community and municipal staff in multiple forums and recorded more than 30 project ideas and suggestions brought forward by stakeholders for exploration. These ideas and activities are detailed in the charts below.

In order to present this input as it relates to the Lanark County Tourism Strategy, project ideas have been sorted according to the six actions identified. Secondly, tourism staff ranked the ideas in relation to their ability to reinforce one of these six actions. Ideas are ranked as follows:

- A – Highly Supports Action(s) identified in Tourism Strategy
- B – Moderately Supports Action(s) identified in Tourism Strategy
- C – Does Not Support Action(s) identified in Tourism Strategy

The priorities set by Lanark County Council will inform tourism staff in the planning of, promotion of and participation in the development of partnership-led projects that: (1) support at least one of the six actions, and (2) are directly related to product development and/or market development. Ongoing activities of the tourism department will continue; in particular, the successful marketing and promotion activities as outlined in the annual [Lanark County Marketing Plan](#).

Lanark County tourism staff will consider implementing ideas ranked as “A” into the Action Plan under the associated theme. Staff may choose to support the implementation of ideas ranked as “B” or “C” in cases where there is a high level of community involvement and political support.

Please Note: In order for project ideas to advance, a lead organization must be identified, and partnership roles will be proposed as part of the implementation plan. The County’s participation as the Destination Marketing Organization is determined by Lanark County Council as part of the annual budget process.



Ideas for Action Item #1: Enhance Collaboration					
Rank #	Project	Rationale	Potential Partners	Sectors that Benefit	How it might be implemented
A	Tourism is Big Business in Lanark County (Value of Tourism Campaign)* \$	Present tourism information to councils as a collaborative, demonstrating the way common goals are accomplished through partnership. Bring tourism forward as a part of Economic Development discussions. Communicate how tourism dollars positively impact other sectors (Leadership Team Feedback 2018).	Metroland, Lake 88.1 Media Partners.	Municipalities, Chambers of Commerce, BIAs. Supports investment attraction efforts.	Produce video presentation that will convey the economic value that tourism brings to the communities in Lanark County. Distribute via Metroland, YouTube, Facebook, radio and others. Host Regional Tourism conference in 2020 at the new hotel & conference centre in Carleton Place.
A	Trail Builder* \$	The new Ottawa Valley Recreational Trail (OVRT) is a good opportunity to promote regional tourism, with connections to Ottawa and Renfrew County. It was suggested that a themed route for the entire trail be brought forward in order to present a consistent message throughout the visitor's journey (Leadership Team Feedback 2018). Opportunity to collaborate on promotion and development of the trail (Industry Partnership Group Feedback 2018).	Ottawa Valley Recreational Trail (OVRT) sub-committee (Lanark County), Lanark County Municipal Trails Corporation (LCMTC), Renfrew County, municipal partners, Trillium Foundation, Ontario Arts Council, Algonquin College.	Arts, entertainment & recreation sector. Residents and Visitors to Lanark County. Heritage sector.	Establish a proposal for consideration that includes locations for lookouts, picnic areas and rest stops along selected trails. Tell the story of Lanark County through Industrial artifacts, monuments or public art to provide a learning experience along selected trails. Consider a revenue model and potential for paid experiences
B	Ancestry*	Complete database of Lanark County that began as a 200 th anniversary legacy project for the Perth Military settlement in 2016.	Municipalities of Carleton Place, Lanark Highlands, Mississippi Mills and Montague. Algonquin College, 200 th Anniversary Committee (Carleton Place), Lanark County Museums Network, Councillor Barrie Crampton. Lanark County Archives.	Heritage sector. Visitors with roots in Lanark County.	Partner with Algonquin College and Lanark County Archives to publish remaining settlement records.
C	Cycling Route Connectivity Trail Development*	Partner with the Lanark County Municipal Trails Corporation (LCMTC) and municipalities to identify gaps and connecting active transportation routes (Stakeholder Feedback 2008).	Lanark County Municipal Trails Corporation (LCMTC)	Transportation sector	
C	Sign Plan*	Enhance entry points to Lanark County in order to inspire exploration within Lanark County (Leadership Team Feedback 2018).	Encourage partnerships between municipal partners for cross-promotion.	Residents and Visitors to Lanark County.	Start by producing a document outlining how to apply for signage at all levels of government to be

		An area of collaboration could be directional signs. It was also suggested that a document outlining how to apply for signage at all levels of government be produced and made available to tourism stakeholders (Leadership Team Feedback 2018).			made available to tourism stakeholders and municipal offices.
B	Eat Stay Play Map*	Highlight businesses (Leadership Team Feedback 2018).	BIAs, Chambers of Commerce. LCTA.	Retail, food & beverage, accommodation sectors.	Lanark County map project to locate business assets on a hard copy map ("Stay –Eat-Play map, with icons for shops, restaurants, accommodations plus gas, LCBO and Beer stores)
B	Tourism Partnership with Smiths Falls*	Explore possibility of Smiths Falls being integrated into the tourism services provided by Lanark County and how that would affect the scope of operations, specifically as it relates to the current set of municipal partners (Leadership Team Feedback 2018).	Encourage partnerships between municipal partners for cross-promotion.	Retail, food & beverage, accommodation sectors.	Discuss with political leaders.
B	Share website insights*	Share common key word searches on municipal websites that would indicate priority information that should be made readily available to the visitor (Leadership Team Feedback 2018).	Encourage partnerships between municipal partners for cross-promotion.	Municipal partners.	Discuss with municipal partners. Carleton Place currently uses a program that provides them with information on the highest key word searches.
A	Newsletter*	Assist municipal partners when implementing tourism activities and help communicate the return on investment (ROI) for municipal partners. Clarify how municipalities benefit from working with multiple tourism organizations such as Lanark County Tourism and Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO) (Leadership Team Feedback 2018).	Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO), Lanark County Small Business Advisory Centre, and Valley Heartland Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC).	Municipal Partners.	Discuss with municipal partners. Create a bi-annual document / newsletter that would summarize reports to Lanark County Economic Development Committee regarding tourism activities.
C	Lanark County Visitor Guide*	A county-wide visitor guide that would include editorial content for different types of travellers. Such content and story development may be eligible for partnership with Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO) and support the "Come Wander" brand platform (Industry Partnership Group Feedback 2018).	Carleton Place & District Chamber of Commerce, Mississippi Mills, Perth & District Chamber of Commerce, Smiths Falls.	Tourism industry partners. Visitor. Municipal partners.	Publish a county-wide visitor guide.

Ideas for Action Item #2: Focus on Visitors					
Rank	Project	Rationale	Potential Partners	Sectors that Benefit	How it might be implemented
C	Restaurant Makeover* \$ (or Motel Makeover)	Skills Development identified as an area of development (Premier Ranked Destination Framework Report, 2011). Build capacity to meet the expectations of today's visitors.	Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO), Lanark County Tourism Association (LCTA), Culinary Tourism Alliance (CTA), participating food establishments, Home & Garden Television Network (HGTV) Canada or The Food Network.	Food & beverage sector or accommodations sector. Promotion will indirectly support multiple sectors.	Video project, mini-series.
B	Public Docking* \$	Improve access to communities from Mississippi & Rideau Watersheds (Tourism stakeholder Feedback 2008).	Municipal partners. Rideau Valley Conservation Authority, Parks Canada, Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority.	Visitors to Lanark County.	Consult with municipal partners on next steps. Identify potential locations for public docking.
A	Trail Map* \$	To update existing marketing collateral that is out of stock.	Lanark County Municipal Trails Corporation, Ottawa Valley Recreation Trail (OVRT) Committee, Lake Associations, Mississippi Valley Field Naturalists, Outfitters.	Arts, entertainment & recreation sectors. Visitors.	Publish an updated Trail Map of Lanark County
A	Website and social media seminar for municipal partners*	Skills development. To inform municipalities and businesses of how to make their promotional efforts more effective. Website audits could be an area of collaboration to assess municipal websites in order to identify simple improvements for implementation by municipal staff (Leadership Team Feedback 2018). Create a "Tourism Business Series", which would include a series of seminars that inform municipalities and businesses what Lanark County Tourism is doing for them and how they can leverage that support (Leadership Team Feedback 2018). Share a comprehensive list of hashtags for use by industry partners & municipal partners. Partner to provide workshops that are specific to a municipal audience on ways to be more effective with online presence (Industry Partnership Group Feedback 2018).	Lanark County Small Business Advisory Centre, Valley Heartland Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC).	Municipal partners. Industry partners.	Discuss with municipal partners. Lanark County host a two-day media and website keyword workshop/seminar.

Ideas for Action Item #3: Expand on Experiences					
Rank	Project	Rationale	Potential Partners	Sectors that Benefit	How it might be implemented
B	Made in Lanark County factory tours*	To acknowledge tourism motivations such as “Cannabis Tourism” (<i>Culinary Tourism, Sport Tourism, Music Tourism, Cycle Tourism, Maple Tourism etc.</i>). (Leadership Team Feedback 2018). Storytelling (Lanark County Destination Development Plan 2014). Inspire the Knowledge Seeker (Lanark County Destination Development Plan 2014)	Lanark County Tourism Association (LCTA), Classic Theatre Festival, Ontario’s Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO), and Manufacturing industries.	Manufacturing sector. Arts & entertainment sector. Food and beverage sector.	Create a plan to engage youth actors that will produce and deliver historical tours of Balderson Cheese, Jergens, 3M, Canadian Cooperative Wool Growers (talk about Glenayr Kitten Mill and Codes Mill), Sam Bat, Wheelers, Tweed, etc.
C	Museum tours*	(Tourism Stakeholder Feedback 2008). To inspire the Knowledge Seeker.	Lanark County Museums Network, The Good Food Tour, Classic Theatre Festival.	Heritage sector.	Engage youth actors to provide historical tours of museums and cemeteries.
C	Find and Rewind* Antiquing in Eastern Ontario	To inspire the Knowledge Seeker, Memory Maker and travel writers.	LCTA Sip and Savour program, Lanark County Museums Network, Wheelers, Antique shops and retro diners in Ontario’s Highlands.	Retail sector. Heritage sector.	Collect inventory of experiences. Describe and promote antiquing itineraries across the region.
A	Event Builder* \$	Identify one festival per year to expand the story base and connection to the community (Lanark County Destination Development Plan 2014) Acknowledge tourism motivations such as “Cannabis Tourism” (<i>Culinary Tourism, Sport Tourism, Music Tourism, Cycle Tourism, Maple Tourism etc.</i>) (Leadership Team Feedback 2018). Enhance established events by infusing an element that tells the story of Lanark County.	Lanark County Harvest Festival Committee, Festival of the Maples (Perth & District Chamber of Commerce).	Agricultural sector. Farmers Markets, Event organizers, Harvest Festival vendors.	Approach Lanark County Harvest Festival Committee to discuss possibilities to connect festival vendors to join forces with Farmers’ Markets and signature events in each Municipality. Enhance promotion to elevate event status.
C	Woolen Mills of Lanark County*	Theme Development. Differentiation (Tourism MasterPlan 1988 Tourism Stakeholder Feedback 2008).	Lanark County Museums Network (LCMN) and the Wool Growers.	Heritage sector.	Publish a story with a map of woolen mill history in Lanark County. (such as Glenayr Kitten Mill and Codes Mill). Interpretive signs at heritage sites.
B	Midnight Café (Dark Skies)*	Theme Development. Differentiation (Tourism MasterPlan 1988 Tourism Stakeholder Feedback 2008).	LCTA Sip and Savour program, Royal Observatory, Mill of Kintail, Mississippi Mills Bicycle Month.	Arts, entertainment & recreation sectors.	Encourage regular ticketed experiences (similar to The Good Food Tour).

B	Picnics Rock (Picnic friendly Geology)*	Theme Development. Differentiation (Tourism MasterPlan 1988).	Lanark County Sip and Savour program (LCTA), Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO) Hidden Gems program, Ontario Parks, Tickets Please, Mississippi Mills, North Market Café, Fieldhouse, CC's on the Rideau, Fall River Restaurant, Perth Civitan, Matheson House Museum, Perth Tourism.	Food & beverage sector. Mining sector.	Publish a story with a map, featuring picnic areas such as Almonte GeoHeritage Park (North Market Café), Murphys Point (CCs on the Rideau to go), Perth Civitan (Fieldhouse) and more. Encourage regular ticketed experiences (similar to The Good Food Tour).
C	Tea and Me (Genealogy)*	Theme Development. Differentiation (Tourism MasterPlan 1988).	Lanark County Museums Network, Lanark County Archives	Food & beverage sector. Heritage sector.	Publish a story with a map, ancestry, museums and tea rooms.
B	New Cycling Route*	Theme Development (Tourism MasterPlan 1988).	LCTA Sip and Savour program, Mississippi-Ottawa Cycle Loop Volunteers.	Transportation sector. Arts, entertainment & recreation sectors.	Promote cycling from Ottawa to Lanark County on the OVRT.

Ideas for Action Item #4: Build on Themes					
Rank	Project	Rationale	Potential Partners	Sectors that Benefit	How it might be implemented
A	Build on The Maple Trail	<p>Differentiation, Theme Development (1988 Tourism MasterPlan). Supports the recommendationⁱ (Tourism Industry Association of Canada TIAC 2007) to develop niche location- based products to match the unique characteristics of the region appealing to specific traveller types.</p> <p>Maple as a theme for tourism development aligns with the municipalities' strategic objectives and vision for the future on several levels; The development of a maple themed tourism offering in Lanark County and investment in the Maple industry meets 18 strategic objectives in three different areas of Lanark County's Official Plan, cited as an endnoteⁱⁱ.</p> <p>In addition, investment in the maple industry and development of a maple themed tourism experience directly responds to four of seven goals in Lanark County's Vision 2025, cited as an endnoteⁱⁱⁱ</p> <p>It also supports key actions outlined in the Lanark County Destination Development Plan (2014), specifically, Invest in Product & Market Development.</p>	Lanark County Agricultural Advisory Working Group, Lanark County Tourism Association (LCTA), Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO), Destination Ontario, Culinary Tourism Alliance (CTA), Lanark & District Maple Syrup Producers, 35+ business partners.	Multi-sector impact; direct promotion of retail sector, food & beverage sector, agricultural sector, manufacturing sector, accommodation sector. Possible benefit to transportation sector.	Please refer to associated project ideas below; Maple Mobile, Terroir Study, Online Souvenir Shoppe, Event Builder (Maple weekend, Festival of the Maples), Tapping County Forests.

A	Build on the Sip and Savour Trail	Theme Development (1988 Tourism MasterPlan). Aligns with Lanark County Official Plan.	Lanark County Farmer's Markets, Farm Gates, Lanark County Agricultural Advisory Working Group, Lanark County Tourism Association (LCTA), Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO), Destination Ontario, Culinary Tourism Alliance (CTA), Lanark & District Maple Syrup Producers, 10+ business partners.	Food & beverage sector, Visitors to Lanark County.	Please refer to associated project ideas below; Top Chef.
C	The Terroir Study* \$	Builds on the Maple Trail (listed above). Supports the recommendation for Differentiation and Theme Development (1988 Tourism MasterPlan). Supports the recommendation ^{iv} (Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC) 2007) to develop niche location-based products to match the unique characteristics of the region appealing to specific traveller types.	Lanark County Agricultural Advisory Working Group, Geologists, Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO), Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) and the Association for Canadian Educational Resources (ACER) laboratory.	If differentiation is established, multi-sector impact; indirect promotion of retail sector, food & beverage sector, agricultural sector, manufacturing sector, accommodation sector. Possible benefit to transportation sector.	Partner on a study to establish differentiating facts about Lanark County soil and determine its impact on our food products (eg. flavour, mineral content, antioxidants, etc.).
C	The Maple Mobile* \$	To address the challenges and limitations of Public Transportation options for visitors (consider UBER, Shuttles, etc.) (Leadership Team Feedback 2018). Public Transportation has been identified as an area of development (Premier Ranked Destination Framework (PRDF) Report 2011). A pilot project to invest in transportation from Ottawa to improve access to and awareness of Lanark County as a destination.	Brew Donkey, Ottawa Valley Tours, Tickets Please, The Good Food Tour, Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO), Ottawa Tourism, Lanark County Public Works, Lanark Transportation Association (LTA), Cavanagh Construction, the Ontario Trillium Foundation, Valley Heartland Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC).	Transportation sector. Agriculture sector. Food & beverage Sector. Increased visitation will directly benefit participating businesses. Promotion will indirectly support multiple sectors.	Establish a proposal including a draft budget for consideration.
C	Tapping County Forests*	Build on the Maple Theme (Theme Development), Differentiation (Tourism Masterplan 1988). Increase capacity for maple syrup production in the Maple Syrup Capital.	Lanark County Community Forests and the Lanark County Maple Syrup Producers.	Lanark County Tourism (Brand Development), Lanark County Maple Syrup Producers (increased revenues), Lanark County Forest (increased level of community forest management).	Approach Lanark County staff to discuss the potential of new agreements with maple producers to tap trees on community forest properties.

Ideas for Action Item #5: Broaden Reach					
Rank	Project	Rationale	Potential Partners	Sectors that Benefit	How it might be implemented
C	Online Souvenir Shoppe* \$	Increase tourism spending in Lanark County. Create opportunity to build consumer base for local and expand to international markets.	Lanark County Harvest Festival vendors, authors, craftspeople, artisans, Riverguild, studio tours.	Retail sector. Increased sales will directly benefit participating businesses, home based businesses, artisans and authors.	Create a webpage that drives people to purchase products made in Lanark County.
C	Adam Cohen Reunion*	Potential to garner Canada –wide publicity.	Tay Valley Township, Silver Lake Provincial Park, Small Halls Festival, Perth & District Chamber of Commerce, Ontario Parks.	Heritage sector. Participating businesses, Maberly businesses and accommodations (Ontario Parks).	Partner with Small Halls Festival to bring Lanark County descendant Adam Cohen for a reunion concert event in Maberly.
C	Valley Speak*	Potential to garner Canada-wide publicity. Differentiation.	Lanark County Museums Network and the Linguistics Department at the University of Ottawa. CBC Radio, Canadian Geographic traveller and media partners.	Arts, entertainment & recreation sectors. Heritage sector.	Publish a report/ article/story about the heritage behind today's sayings in Lanark County language. Record examples for an oral history.
A	Meet a Cottager Program*	Engage cottage community (Lanark County Destination Development Plan 2014); a dedicated group of return visitors that have the capacity to increase tourism spending in Lanark County.	Lake 88.1 Radio	Heritage sector.	Profile the exceptional people who cottage in Lanark County.
C	Let's Do Lunch Promotion*	To encourage visitor spending.	Lanark County Sip and Savour program (LCTA), BIAs, Chambers of Commerce, Perth Tourism, and Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO).	Retail sector. Food & beverage sector.	Describe and promote exceptional outings in Lanark County.

Ideas for Action Item #6: Follow Progress					
Rank	Project	Rationale	Potential Partners	Sectors that Benefit	How it might be implemented
C	Ongoing BR + E Program (Business Retention and Expansion)* \$	Track the survey responses from participating tourism industry leaders with regard to business needs and perceptions regarding industry gaps, including access to public washrooms, and information centres in Lanark County.	Valley Heartland Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC).	Tourism Industry and supporting organizations.	Continue to collect feedback from businesses using the OMAFRA model, and compare the data year to year.

* Subject to approval

\$ Requires financing

Appendix II: Lanark County Tourism Marketing Plan

Renewed annually, the Lanark County Marketing Plan outlines marketing activities of the Tourism Department, its mission, strategic direction, objectives, tourism products, marketing tools, target markets, visitation trends, leadership roles, performance measures, opportunities, and resource documents such as tourism studies and statistics. The Marketing Plan is available for download from the [Lanark County](#) website on the [Economic Development](#) page.

Appendix III: Competitive Analysis

This section lists the known strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to tourism growth in Lanark County. New in 2019, a report by Destination Think provided a comprehensive analysis of what people are saying about Lanark County as a destination online. It is referred to as the Lanark County Tourism Sentiment Index. The data collected may provide additional insight on how to increase Lanark County's competitiveness.

STRENGTHS

- Diversity of Tourism Assets;
- Significant Natural Assets such as the Rideau Canal; a UNESCO world heritage site, internationally renowned geological discoveries such as Perthite and Wilsonite
- Heritage Assets (7 Wonders, 140 Designated Properties, 34 Claims to Fame)
- Recreational Assets (Trails)
- Over 100 lakes, rivers and waterfalls
- Sufficient infrastructure (Roads, Signs, Gas stations, Rest stops)
- Low rate of violent crime, low visibility of drug related activity and poverty
- Clean water, good health care, low threat of contracting infectious or bacterial disease
- Affordable; visitors spend half the provincial average when visiting Lanark County
- Neutral image; the community is not associated with horrific events or notorious criminals
- Along an established travel corridor between Ottawa and Toronto via Hwy 7

WEAKNESSES

- Limited public transportation options
- Limited infrastructure for Active Transportation
- Limited interpretation of Heritage Assets (non-verbal)
- Limited accessibility
- Fragmented industry comfortable with providing the status quo
- North of the 401 main travel corridor
- Gaps in GPS/navigational mapping
- Limited Internet access/cell phone access
- Availability of accessible public restrooms
- Limited public docking along the Rideau Canal

OPPORTUNITIES

- Potential to double tourism spending from 107.8 million to 215.6 million annually; many activities are free of charge and visitors are spending only half the provincial average (\$77 per person per day rather than \$150 per person per day)
- Momentous capacity for increased visitation; operators are not sold out year round | (Lanark County is part of the lowest visited region in Ontario, with only 2% of travellers choosing to visit Ontario's Highlands)
- Option to extend into fall and winter seasons
- Visual interpretation program (public sculpture, monuments, photographic sites) to differentiate and animate public spaces 365 days a year rather than only during special events
- Collaboration among private industry; many are focused on operations rather than creating contractual partnerships that benefit the visitor (such as overnight experience packages)
- Destination Marketing Fund; municipalities may garner additional resources through an accommodation tax
- Current trends in food tourism fit with existing product; Lanark County has been recognized as a food destination (home to producers of quality food using sustainable practises, farmers' markets, retail and culinary). Plus a growing interest among visitors to learn more about the cannabis industry in Canada has been noted (edible products will be legalized in October 2019).
- Signature Experience Program; attain provincial or federal recognition and international bookings

THREATS

- Competition; assets are very similar to other Eastern Ontario Communities that invest more in tourism development (loss of market share below 2% will lead to fewer jobs in Lanark County)
- Increased tension travelling through international border crossings due to the political climate and the legalization of cannabis in Canada
- Cost of adding and maintaining infrastructure, built heritage and conserving natural assets with low population/tax base
- Economic climate; increase in interest rates and looming recession
- Costs and limitations on waterfront and commercial development



Defining our Competition

Differentiation as the Maple Syrup Capital sets Lanark County apart establishing a competitive edge. Because the majority of visitation to Lanark County is comprised of Fully Independent Travellers (FIT) from within the Province of Ontario, it can be speculated (for the purpose of this report) that those in competition for the same visitors may be defined as other counties within Ontario that have (a) similar product offerings and (b) more funding, with (c) a similar population size (Lanark County pop. 68,698).

Specifically, but in no particular order, Lanark County is in competition with:

1. Muskoka (Regional Municipality pop. 60,599)
2. United Counties of Leeds and Grenville (pop. 100,546)
3. United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry (pop. 113,429)
4. United Counties of Prescott and Russell (pop. 89,333)
5. Prince Edward County (pop. 24,735)

Other counties with mildly different product offerings include Huron County (59,297), Peterborough County (pop. 138,236), and Dufferin County (pop. 61,735).

In the realm of International Group Travel, Ontario destinations that Lanark County may consider its competition include:

1. Niagara Falls
2. Kitchener-Waterloo & Stratford
3. Prince Edward County
4. Muskoka
5. Collingwood

Within Eastern Ontario, attractors that rank highly with the visitor include:

1. Ottawa
2. Upper Canada Village
3. Thousand Islands
4. Kingston
5. Prince Edward County

For the above listed attractors, advantages include the maturity of offerings and the culinary product.



Community Profile

Known as the Maple Syrup Capital of Ontario, Lanark County boasts an expanse of sugar maple forests, over two hundred craft maple syrup producers, world championship award winners, popular pancake houses, the Guinness World Record for maple artifacts, nationally recognized maple experiences and a multitude of food related events.

Stretching from the Rideau System to Canada's Mississippi, Lanark County's recreational assets include over 100 lakes, rivers and waterfalls that welcome cottagers from all over the world, bringing their friends and families to experience the coves and beaches that speckle the landscape. Activities such as boating, hiking and fishing continue to draw the traditional visitor.

Many of the historical landmarks were built by the Scottish stone masons that worked on the Rideau Canal; a UNESCO world heritage site. Evidence of their craft is seen in over 140 designated heritage properties throughout the County, often by water's edge.

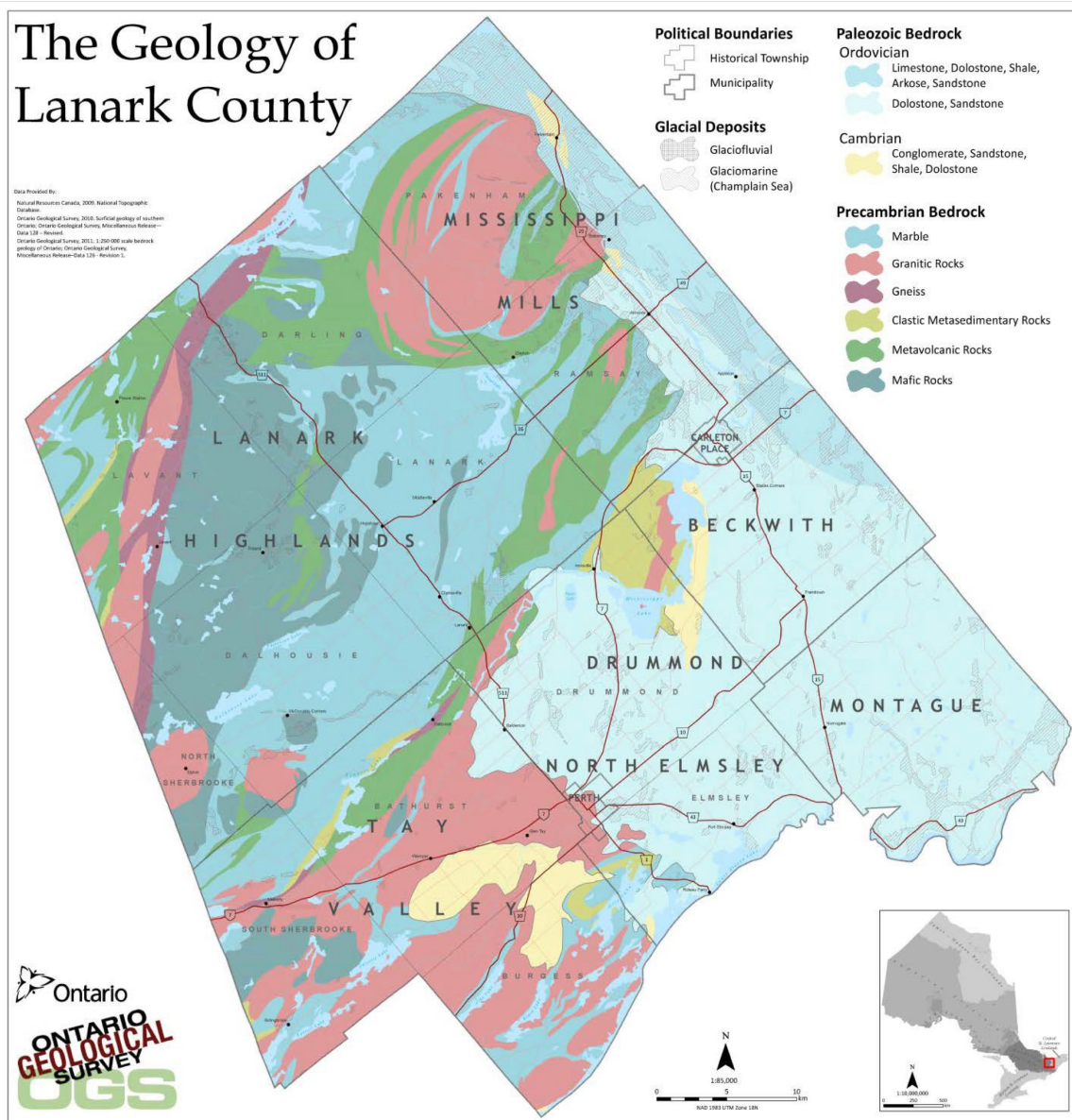
Generations of residents and visitors have built a strong community spirit that has cultivated small business, events and festivals that speak to the ancestral and geological heritage. With a population of nearly 69,000 people, the small town feeling and vast public lands give a true sense of freedom from the density and pace of city life.

Geographically, Lanark County is a remarkably distinct region within the Frontenac Axis where the Canadian Shield meets the Limestone Plains. This presents a combination of ecological features that offer an especially diverse growth area for native plant species which attract a variety of birds and wildlife. Residents and visitors enjoy cycling and paddling through these breathtaking natural vistas.

As the Maple Syrup capital of Ontario, the concentration of sugar maple trees creates a dramatic display of fall colours. Visitors from all over the world enjoy this authentic Canadian experience.

Located only minutes from the Nation's Capital, people in the region have access to all the world-class amenities of a major centre. At the same time, they enjoy the relaxed lakeside lifestyle which attracts over 1.4 million visitors each year.

Geology Map of Lanark County



Tourism Industry Labour Market Trends

A comprehensive report entitled, “Labour Market Planning Report” by the Labour Market Group of Renfrew and Lanark is available at the following link: <https://www.algonquincollege.com/renfrewlanark/files/2018/03/LLMP-Report-2018-EN.pdf>

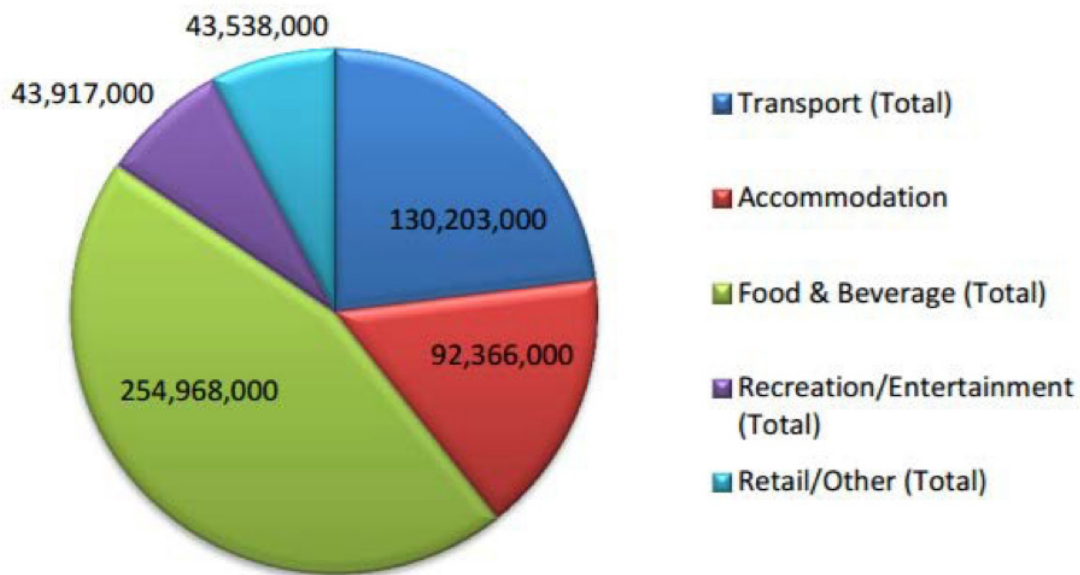
It is understood that Tourism is the largest employer of youth in Canada.

Tourism Sector Composition

The tourism industry is comprised of economic sectors that may include:

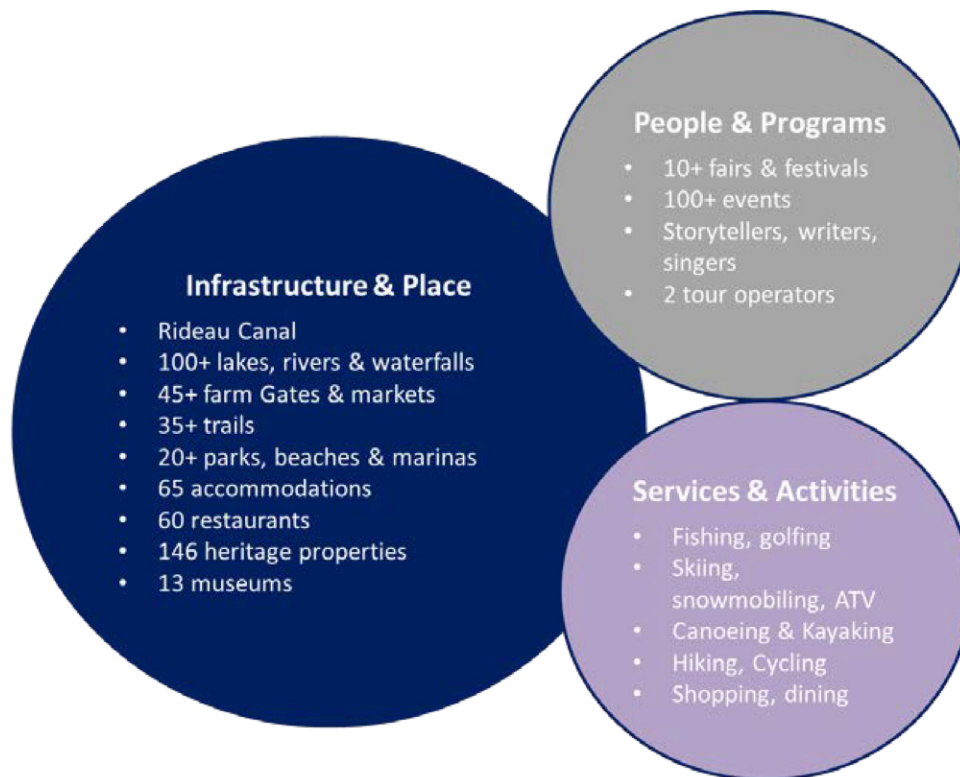
- Transportation (Trains, Taxi's, Buses)
- Accommodation (Hotels, Motels, Resorts)
- Food & Beverage (Restaurants, Cafes)
- Recreation, Entertainment (Ski Resorts, Theatres, Concert Venues)
- Retail (Shops, Grocery, Pharmacy, Beverage Retail)

The following graph, based on regional tourism profiles including the whole of the Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization, illustrates the economic impact generated (indicated in dollars per year) by each of the sectors that are part of the tourism industry .



Tourism Assets

The following excerpt from the Lanark County Destination Development Plan staging document (updated by Marie White, 2019) categorizes the current tourism assets in Lanark County, demonstrating that infrastructure is strong compared to tourism programming and activities.



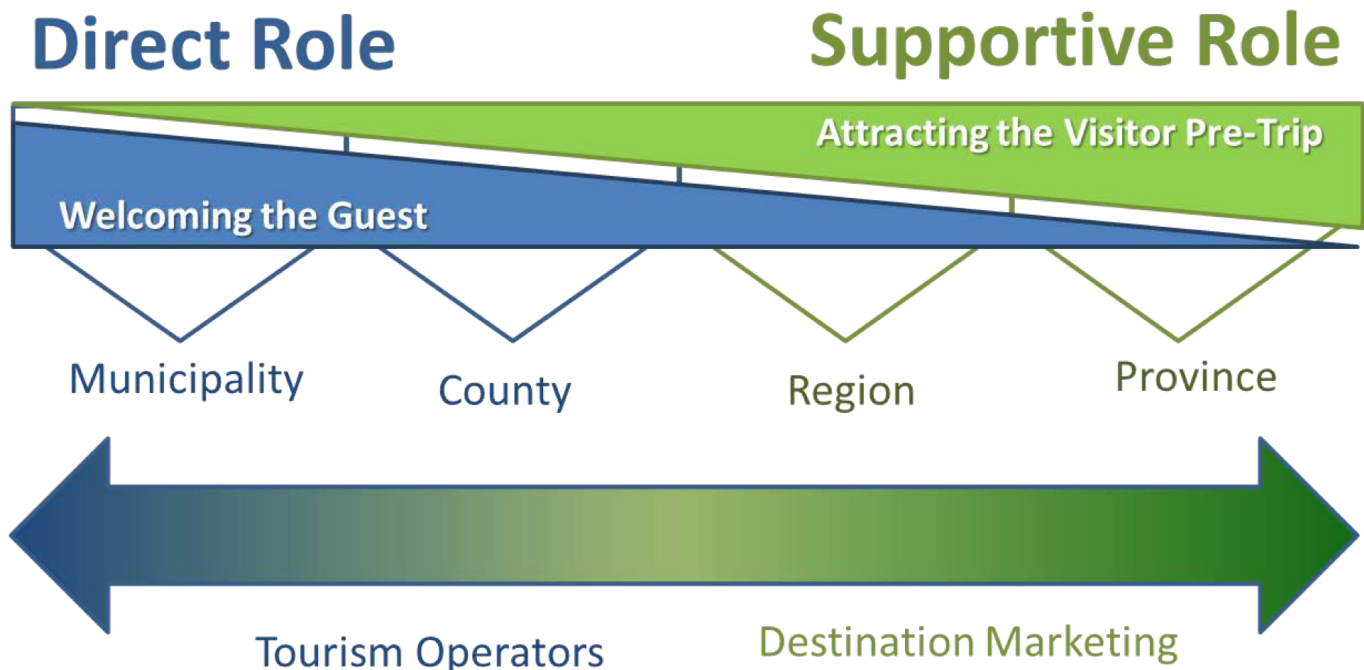
Physical Infrastructure (Public)

- Boating – access to Lanark County from the Finger Lakes Region, Quebec and beyond via the Rideau Canal (202 km).
- Hiking Trails
- Parks
- Gardens
- Lakes (88+)
- Public Docking
- Public Lake access points
- Directional Signs
- Welcome Signs
- Roads

Tourism Attraction & Services (Private)

- Golf Courses (13)
- Ski Hills (1)
- Mini Putt (1)
- Canoe & Kayak (1)
- Cycling (3)
- Maple Syrup Pancake Houses (3)
- Maple Sugar Camps open to the public (15)

Political Structure & Support



[Lanark County Council](#) is comprised of elected officials representing the following municipal partners: Beckwith, Carleton Place, Drummond North Elmsley, Lanark Highlands, Mississippi Mills, Montague, Perth and Tay Valley and the separated Town of Smiths Falls.

Social Culture & Fabric

From the Rideau System to Canada's Mississippi, Lanark County is home to over a hundred lakes, rivers and waterfalls. Coves and beaches speckle the landscape.

After building the world-renowned Rideau Canal, Scottish stone masons stayed to create some of the oldest and prettiest towns in Canada. Evidence of their craft is seen in over 140 designated heritage properties throughout the County, often by water's edge. Bring your camera and capture our historically significant "Seven Wonders of Lanark County!"

Generations of residents and visitors have built a strong community spirit that has cultivated small business, events and festivals that speak to our ancestral and geological heritage.

Geographically, Lanark County is a remarkably distinct region within the Frontenac Axis where the Canadian Shield meets the Limestone Plains. This presents a combination of ecological features that offer an especially diverse growth area for native plant species which attract a variety of birds and wildlife. Residents and visitors enjoy cycling and paddling through these breathtaking natural vistas.

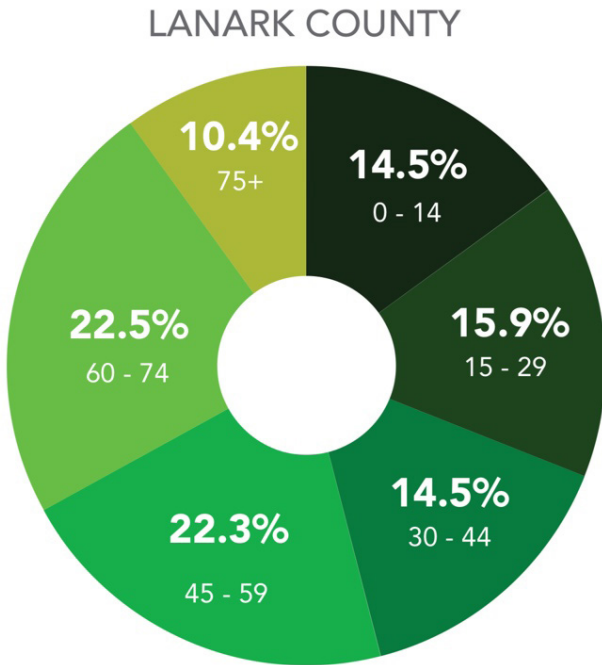
As the Maple Syrup capital of Ontario, our concentration of sugar maple trees creates a dramatic display of fall colours. Visitors from all over the world enjoy this authentic Canadian experience.

Only minutes from the Nation's Capital, people of the region have access to all the world-class amenities of a major centre. At the same time, they enjoy the relaxed lakeside lifestyle.

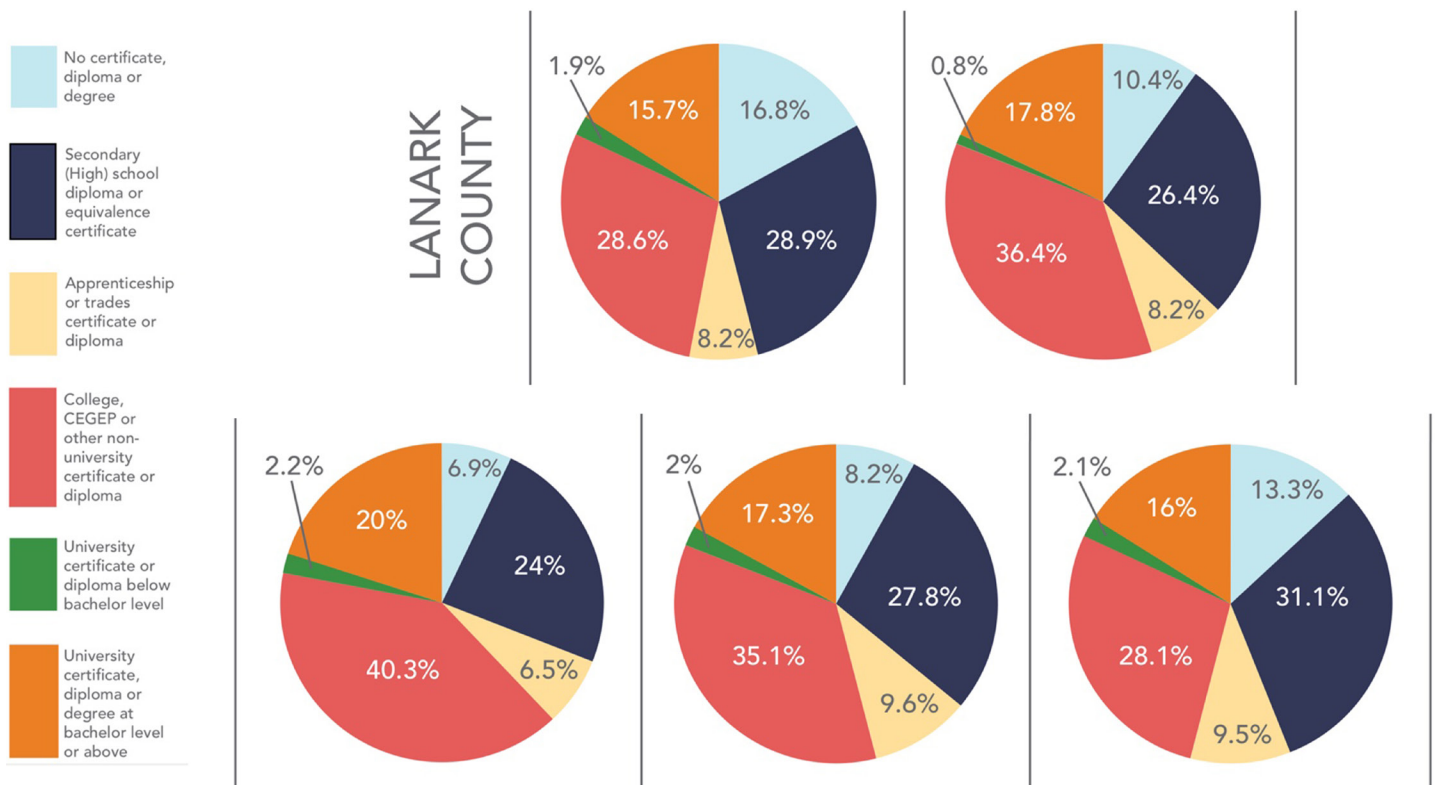
Lanark County is a world heritage destination!

Residents are primarily between 60 and 74 years of age. Most careers are in health care and social services. Among the primary age group, college is the most common level of education.

The following graphs are excerpts from the “Labour Market Planning Report” by the Labour Market Group of Renfrew and Lanark report (page 7, 9 and 14):



Source: EMSI Analyst Projection, 2018



TOTAL JOBS IN LANARK IN 2018: 22,753
AVERAGE EARNINGS IN 2018: \$39,000 (77% OF THE NATIONAL AVERAGE)

JOBS BY INDUSTRY - LANARK COUNTY

NAICS	Industry	2017 Jobs
62	Health care and social assistance	3,675
44-45	Retail trade	3,635
31-33	Accommodation and food services	2,333
72	Manufacturing	2,049
61	Construction	1,760
23	Educational services	1,583
91	Public administration	1,275
48-49	Other services (except public administration)	896
54	Wholesale Trade	716
56	Transportation and warehousing	676

Source: EMSI Analyst projection, 2018

Quality of Life

Clear lakes and pristine rivers abound in Lanark County. Fed by two major historical watersheds—Rideau Valley and Mississippi Valley—we have a constant course of inspiration, exploration, and recreation.

Explore the Rideau Canal – a world heritage site, the Ottawa Valley Recreation Trail, the Rideau, Cataraqui, or Trans Canada Trails, enjoy our world-class museums, festivals, and specialty foods such as our renowned maple syrup. Enjoy the rural lifestyle while having ready access to urban amenities a short drive away.

Attractors for Business

- Lanark County is located within 5 hours of Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, and Northeast U.S.
- Employers enjoy a dependable, loyal and skilled workforce.
- Entrepreneurs benefit from Low start-up costs and taxes
- International partners have premier access to vast Canadian and U.S. markets.
- In close proximity to Canada’s Centre for Advanced Technology.
- Established companies can apply for wage subsidies and training funds available through partners

More than 50 million people live within 800 km (500 miles) of Lanark County. Our excellent highway network, easy access to three U.S. border crossings, and rail and air links with the rest of North America all make Lanark County a natural advantage for business.



Appendix IV: Resources

It was suggested that the Tourism Strategy contain references to social media resources and list selected hashtags for collaborative tourism promotion. (Leadership Team Feedback 2018).

[*Municipal Partner Tourism Checklist*](#)

[*Tourism Product Development in Ontario's Highlands: A Workbook*](#)

[*Come Wander Content Guide*](#)

[*Social Media Courses*](#)

[*Social Media Information Sheet*](#)

[*TRIEM Tool \(Tourism Regional Impact Model\)*](#)

[*Destination Next*](#)

Hashtags

Strategic use of shared hashtags for greater reach include: #LanarkCounty, #MapleCapital, #ComeWander, #DiscoverON plus community hashtags when applicable: #Beckwithtwp, #CarletonPlace, #MeetmeontheMississippi, #RideauFerry, #Balderson, #LanarkHighlands, #MississippiMills, #Almonte, #Pakenham, #Montague, #PerthProud, #TayValley, and #Maberly

Glossary of Acronyms

DMO	Destination Marketing Organization
LCTA	Lanark County Tourism Association
LTA	Lanark Transportation Association
RTO	Regional Tourism Organization
OHTO	Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization
MTCS	Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport
OMAFRA	Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
CFDC	Community Futures Development Corporation



Endnotes

i [Lanark County Destination Development Plan: A New Approach \(pg. 29\)](#)

ii [Lanark County Destination Development Plan 2014 – 2018](#)

iii [Lanark County Destination Development Plan: A New Approach \(pg. 29\)](#)

iv Deloitte & Touche LLP (2007) Destination Canada, Are we doing enough?

v Economic Development Agriculture and Local Food. xi ,
Theme 6: Economic Development

6.1. Support efforts to provide small businesses and local entrepreneurs with access to information and support.

6.2. Support efforts to identify innovative ways to take advantage of our local natural resources.

6.4. Encourage job creation in renewable energy, energy conservation and other green job areas.

6.6. Work together to attract and support new businesses and help them to become sustainable and profitable. Theme 7: Agriculture

7.1. Preserve our rural character by supporting local agriculture.

7.2. Support agricultural tourism by emphasizing value added products and experiences linked to agriculture and tourism such as maple syrup harvesting.

7.3. Support the rehabilitation and enhancement of agricultural land use where possible.

7.4. Anticipate and prepare for changes in agricultural food production and economics over time. Theme 10: Local Food

10.1. Buy local food and promote its values: taste, nutritional value, availability and contribution to local economic benefits.

10.2. Support the development and ongoing operations of local community gardens.

10.3. Make regulations flexible to keep land in agricultural use and to support farmers focused on local food production.

10.4. Work together to eliminate the constraints to marketing local food (example: distribution, storage).

10.5. Encourage efforts to educate our youth about food and provide training in agriculture.

10.6. Support the movement of local foods to restaurants and stores.

10.7. Support the use of sustainable agricultural practices where feasible.

vi In addition, investment in the maple industry and development of a maple themed tourism experience directly responds to 4 of 7 goals in Lanark County's Vision 2025; (i) to Invest in Infrastructure to meet needs and keep pace with growth, (ii) Strengthen and Diversify the economy, (iii) Maintain a high quality of life, and (iv) Maintain high quality services.

vii Deloitte & Touche LLP (2007) Destination Canada, Are we doing enough?

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iv Deloitte & Touche LLP (2007) Destination Canada, Are we doing enough?

v [Lanark County Tourism Statistics Report](#)

