CLEARVIEW

Staff Report

To:	**Mayor and Council**
From:	**Amanda Murray, Community Culture & Tourism Coordinator**
Date:	**February 9, 2023**
Subject:	**Report #PCR-001-2023 – Clearview Sustainable and Strategic Tourism Plan**

Recommendation

Be It Resolved That Report #PCR-001-2023 dated February 9, 2023 be received.

And Further That the "Clearview Sustainable and Strategic Tourism Plan" included as Attachment #1 to Report #PCR-001-2023 be received and be considered as part of the strategic planning process.

Background

As reported on July 11th, 2022, the Township proceeded to contract BC Hughes Inc. for the purposes of undertaking Sustainability & Strategic Tourism Master Plan. The immediate funding was provided to Clearview Township explicitly supplied in confidence to the municipality or local board by Canada, a province or territory or a Crown agency of any of them related to Grant Funding Requirements. We cannot disclose the Funding Agent.

From August to December 2022, BC Hughes Inc., along with the Department of Parks & Recreation worked on the project. A major component of the planning process was the Stakeholder Engagement. There was a Community Survey, specifically for resident feedback about tourism initiatives and related issues; Operator Survey, which was targeted to over 60 tourism-related businesses in Clearview Township; 1:1 Stakeholder Conference Calls with targeted questions; and finally, a Stakeholders' Workshop (3hrs).

Comments and Analysis

Acting as a roadmap for the next 5 years, the Clearview Township Sustainable & Strategic Tourism Plan, will provide strategic objectives and tactics, address issues currently identified by staff and assist with increasing efficiencies/effectiveness with community partners and will assist the PCR department to be results-oriented when making future decisions about key pillars. This plan will also assist the Clearview Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) because of the economic impact of tourism within our Township. The Tourism Plan will be viewed through the lens of sustainability as defined by the UN World Tourism Organization: "The aim of

sustainable tourism is to increase the benefits and to reduce the negative impacts caused by tourism for destinations. Long-term sustainability can be achieved by seeking a suitable balance between:

- Protecting natural environments, wildlife and natural resources when developing and managing tourism activities (environmental);
- Providing authentic tourist experiences that celebrate and conserve heritage and culture (socio-cultural);
- Creating socio-economic benefits and well-being for host communities through employment and income earning opportunities (economic)."

The Goals of the Sustainable & Strategic Tourism Plan are:

- Provide guidance and prioritize tourism tasks
- Explore how we best attract visitors to support and benefit the local economy and strengthen the local community
- Recommend ways to embrace opportunities to boost tourism through destination and experience development
- Consider the resources required to support tourism activities in the Township
- Show appreciation for the natural environment and wellbeing

Our Vision "To be a distinctive Ontario community showcasing the charm of rural living, small town authenticity, rugged natural beauty, all positioned close to the mountain and beaches, and with a flourishing food and farming culture scene".

Our Mission "Together, with our community stakeholders, we work to generate economic prosperity through tourism, while being sustainable, and providing visitors as well as locals with recreational opportunities and enhanced quality of life".

Clearview's Strategic Plan

The above initiative supports the following strategic pillars:

- Recreation and Culture
- Identity-Marketing-Promotion
- Economic Activity
- Quality of Life
- Governance

Financial Implications

The Strategic Plan was fully funded by grant funding. The final expenses in 2022 was $64,000 + HST.

Report Appendices

Appendix A – Clearview Sustainable and Strategic Tourism Plan

Approvals

Submitted by:	Amanda Murray, Community Culture & Tourism Coordinator
Reviewed by:	Terry Vachon, Director of Parks & Recreation
Financial Implications Reviewed by:	Treasurer
Approved by:	CAO

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Clearview Township

Strategic & Sustainable Tourism Plan

December 2022

BCHughes

Tourism Development, Management & Marketing

CLEARVIEW

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Introduction

Tourism is all about putting smiles on faces, memories in hearts, and sharing a way of life. All the while exchanging goods and services for commerce. It's a robust resilient industry that ebbs and flows as trends change and especially when a global pandemic rears its head. The industry is full of caring, compassionate, and creative individuals who get up each day to see the smile on a visitor's face.

Clearview is a relatively mature destination that has watched the mass tourism explode around it. Some say that Clearview is just a blink on the way to somewhere else, while true for some, it's the polar opposite for others. For some it's home; it's the opposite of city, it's an escape from the everyday, it's the challenge of grinding up a gravel road on your bike, it's a wave from a farmer in their tractor and its darn good beer. The values that make up Clearview are many, and sought after by many more. Of course, being part of this fluid industry requires foresight and good planning if you want to stay on top of the game - the smile game.

This *Strategic and Sustainable Tourism Plan*, a five-year plan for tourism development in the Township of Clearview, will consider the current and future tourism environments, stakeholder input and review current tourism research to formulate recommendations surrounding how to continue to support tourism developments (and smiles) in the region.

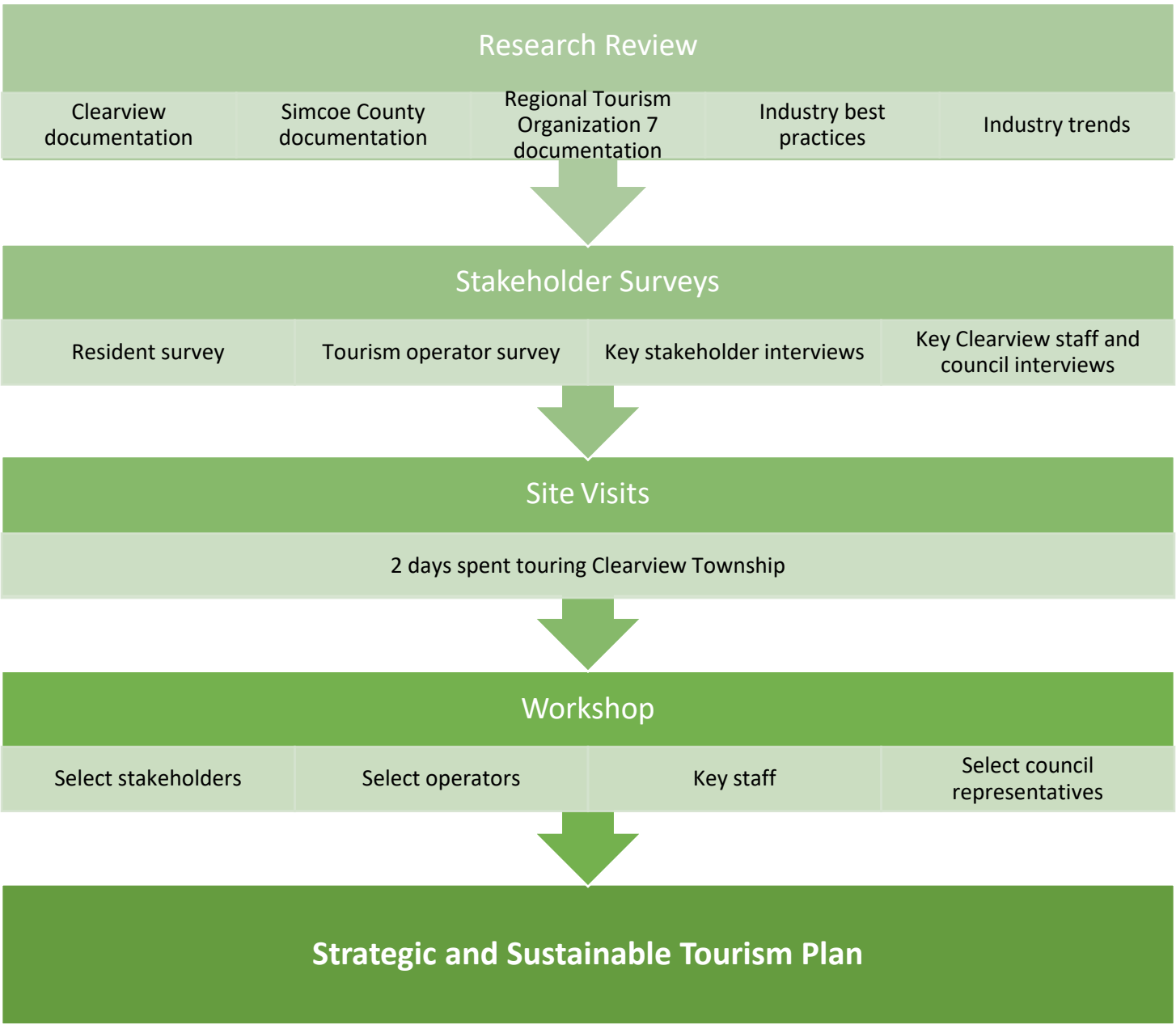
Strategic and Sustainable Tourism Goals

The Strategic and Sustainable Tourism Plan will achieve the following goals while bearing in mind the township's unique selling propositions, current tourism offerings and strategic positioning, as well as the tourism strengths of nearby destinations:

- Provide guidance and prioritize tourism tasks
- Explore how best to attract visitors to support and benefit the local economy and strengthen the local community
- Recommend ways to embrace opportunities to boost tourism through destination and experience development
- Consider the resources required to support tourism activities in the township
- Show appreciation for the natural environment and its wellbeing

Project Process

In undertaking the Strategic and Sustainable Tourism Plan, a multi-staged process was followed that included research and stakeholder consultation.



Key documents related to tourism and destination development in and around Clearview Township were reviewed to provide insight and context to the plan. The documents reviewed include (but are not limited to):

- Clearview Township Strategic Plan 2017-2022
- Clearview Township: Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan 2019-2028
- Clearview Municipal Identity Signage 2016 resolution
- Clearview Brand Strategy
- Stayner Downtown Improvement Plan 2018
- Simcoe County Economic Development Strategy 2021-2025
- Simcoe County Economic Development Strategy Priority Chart
- Simcoe County Roles and Responsibilities Chart, August 2021
- Simcoe County Environics Analytics 2022
- Regional Tourism Organization 7 (RTO7) Business Plan 2021/22

A series of surveys were developed and distributed to gain valuable input from local residents and stakeholders.

- Resident survey – 196 surveys completed
- Tourism operator survey – 24 surveys completed
- One on one interviews - 14 key stakeholders, operators, Clearview Township staff and council members

Finally, a workshop was held on November 15, 2022, to gather additional input from select key stakeholders, operators, staff and council representatives.

Current Tourism Context

All tourism destinations, large and small, rural and urban, established and emerging are responding to significant shifts in visitor patterns, interests and capacity to travel. Clearview Township and its stakeholders and partners must be aware of and respond to the key factors outlined below.

Economic Factors

Rising interest rates, price of gas and inflation across all products and services are placing limits on where and how residents and visitors spend any discretionary income they have. While not expected to be long term, these factors are also having a significant impact on individual private and public sector tourism operators.

Shortage of Skilled Labour

Shortages of skilled labour for the hospitality and tourism sector have been projected for a number of years due to an aging workforce. COVID-19, general economic conditions and geopolitical tensions have only made it worse. In its *Tourism Outlook Spring 2022* report, Destination Canada notes that "Unfilled jobs in tourism is emerging as a chronic issue amid a tight labour market and an expanding workforce in the Canadian economy".

As a trained and skilled workforce is difficult to attract and retain, some operations now offer fewer hours, less opening days or have shorter seasons in response to limited human resources.

Big Shifts to Pay Attention To

Destination Canada notes a number of key factors that will impact tourism in the November 2021 *Tourism's Big Shift Report* that include:

- *Continuing uncertainty* as economies recover and respond to COVID-19. The report notes that "Canada's high vaccination levels combined with many destinations offering unique nature-related experiences may provide a competitive edge".
- *Social change* with a newfound awareness in building and supporting equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) not only at operational levels but at destination levels.

- *Climate change* and the impact of extreme weather events on destinations and operations, as well as visitor interest in supporting operations and communities who actively practice sustainable operating practices. Interest in actively reducing one's carbon footprint may also play a role in reduced air travel and seeking experiences closer to home, both day trips and overnight.

- *Accelerated digitization* with more rapid adoption of digital solutions by businesses and destinations as a direct result of COVID-19. This wide-spread adoption of technology changes consumer expectations, marketing and business operations.

Market trends noted in the same report, most relevant to Clearview Township include:

- *Drive-to and daytrip destinations* are in demand. As travellers re-engage with pent-up demand for travel, there is still a significant portion of Canadians who prefer to stay close to home. This interest creates opportunities for drive-to destinations to create road trip and day trip itineraries for travellers willing to explore more deeply in a regional, provincial, territorial or national context. In turn, these travellers have the potential to be long-term loyalists, acting as ambassadors spreading the word on near-by experiences. Destination Canada predicts that "all generations and demographics will want to explore the country, with locals wanting to explore and discover their region differently".

- *Regenerative travel's* ultimate goal is to create "economic prosperity, develop sociocultural vibrancy and grow environmental thrive-ability". The combination of increased interest from visitors who want to connect to the community in a responsible and meaningful way and the interest in 'regenerative travel' by host communities to harness the benefits of tourism while minimizing pressures, creates an environment for the development of a sustainable future that benefits residents and visitors alike.

- *Remote workers/digital nomads* are a new visitor market segment. With many businesses supporting some level of work-from-home, remote workers who are area residents will be looking for things to do close-by more often. Digital nomads who re-locate for extended periods of time will be seeking a different type of experience. Both of these residents and long-stay visitors expand the number of potential visitors available year-round, with the opportunity to smooth demand over low and shoulder seasons.

Considerations for Clearview

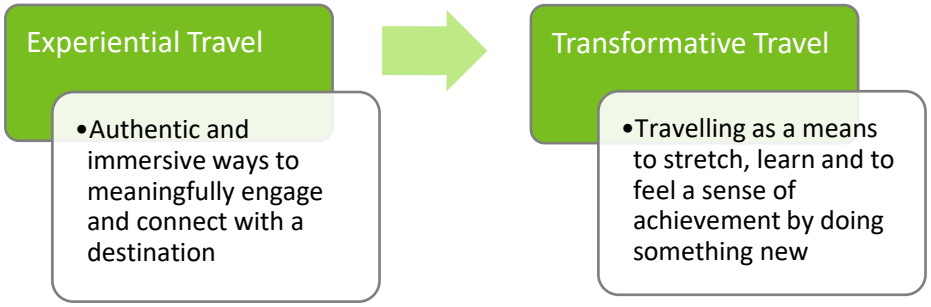
- As Clearview Township develops a tourism plan, it will be important to keep a broad lens on, to help manage expectations and to identify realistic and achievable tactics.
- Operators must be flexible and creative in who and how they hire; how can their labour issues be supported?
- How can technology be used to capitalize on tourism trends?
- As tourism developments are determined and implemented, Clearview and its stakeholders must consider sustainability and environmental factors.
- How can tourism attract digital nomads and nearby drive-to visitors?

Trends in Tourism

The development of tourism tactics for Clearview Township must pay attention to broader trends in travel, both short term and longer term in nature. A number of significant trends are outlined below.

Experiential Travel

With the advent of social sharing of unique travel experiences from throughout the world, there is increasing demand for more sophistication in travel experiences. Experiential travel is the current tourism trend which defines travel that is immersive and engaging. Often it involves the visitor being immersed in nature or local culture, creating a deeper connection and sense of place. Experiential travel activities typically see the traveller participating in hands-on activities, allowing them to activate their senses while doing and learning.



Transformative Travel

There is a shift from experiential travel to transformative travel. Travellers are actively making decisions and being "intentional" with their decision making and travel behavior. The Transformational Travel Council (TTC) lists the following as characteristics of transformational experiences:

- Venturing to a place that is dramatically different from home
- Traveling with intention ... and yet still with an open mind and heart
- Purposefully engaging with the local people to learn about their culture
- Seeking out challenging physical, cultural and/or spiritual experiences

- Inviting others into powerful conversations and sharing perspectives about life, etc.
- Taking time out for personal reflection (journaling, meditation/prayer, etc.)
- Considering the meaning and extracting lessons from your experiences
- Developing a plan for applying what you have learned into your life

Well-designed transformational travel experiences link traditional tourism providers, with those not typically involved in tourism and typically create new and higher sources of revenue.

Transformative travel varies from unstructured experiences with the visitor taking the lead on their own time, to fully programmed, minute-by-minute experiences, led by one or more group leaders. They can be short micro-adventures or more intense, multi-day immersive experiences. Transformative travel and experiential travel experiences both provide the visitor with opportunities to learn, self-actualize and grow.

Custom Itineraries and Personal Experiences

Seasoned travellers are designing personalized itineraries and experiences that include for instance, private transportation, VIP concierge service, back of the house access, private accommodation and private chef, etc.

Festivals & Events Drive Visits

Festivals and events can be powerful tools for building community pride and capacity, delivering economic benefits and filling capacity at slower times of the year. They can bring people to key areas, enticing targeted markets as well as local residents to take part, raising the profile and supporting the brand and unique selling propositions of the community, while celebrating local culture and heritage.

Festivals and events differ in a number of important ways from other forms of more traditional entertainment activities. They can:

- Increase visitation from new and returning visitors
- Generate incremental media coverage and publicity
- Provide new funding sources
- Contribute to the development of new infrastructure
- Increase community pride, job opportunities and volunteerism

Perhaps the most significant advantage of festivals is the speed of development. While the timeframe for a new 'bricks and mortar' attraction is often measured in decades; a festival can grow from inception to fruition in a matter of months.

In addition to local events, which have little tourism appeal and limited local benefit, there are two categories of special events which have substantial tourism potential.

- *Community events* originate from within the community and are usually produced by local residents or organizations. Community events can focus on a specific audience or stakeholder group but are most often promoted to the community at large. Some community events have the potential to grow into events that attract visitors from beyond the community.
- *Signature Events* are recurring events possessing such significance, tradition, attractiveness, image, or publicity that they provide the host community with an influx of visitors on an annual basis. Over time, the event and destination can become inseparable in terms of their image in the minds of visitors. For example, The Royal Winter Fair in Toronto.

Destinations are becoming increasingly sophisticated in the way they strategically use events to grow tourism, extend seasonality in the local tourism industry, and in turn attract and stimulate new private sector investment.

Affinity or Special Interest Travel

Travel to participate in a shared, special interest or activity, such as photography, astronomy, extreme winter sports, girls' getaways, cycling or birding is described as Affinity or Special Interest Travel (SIT). Trip and activity decisions are typically made by an informal or formal group leader, making it easier to reach a number of visitors and organize through one contact. Group sizes vary, meaning that communities can target SIT travellers that they have capacity and suitable infrastructure for.

Environmental Awareness

Today's travellers are becoming more environmentally conscious. Climate change is having a negative impact on the planet, global biodiversity and habitats are disappearing and remaining pristine and intact natural areas and habitats are of increasing value. Significant portions of the world's residents cannot see the night sky due to the effects of artificial lighting.

Destinations and operators that are employing sustainable and eco-friendly practices are positioned well to take advantage of increased interest in experiences that are environmentally friendly or allow visitors to do their part to take care of the planet.

Nature and the Outdoors

The COVID-19 pandemic and the related need to create distance from other people, drastically increased interest in travel destinations, activities and experiences that allow visitors to spend time enjoying nature and the outdoors.

Technology

Many technological factors are affecting how visitors travel and plan their trips. Consumers are increasingly searching for and booking travel online. Cell phone and Wi-Fi connectivity are expected amenities, and apps are used to plan and manage travel details and to enhance visitor experiences. Use of artificial intelligence (AI) and virtual reality (VR) is growing, and although relatively new, the metaverse has the potential to change the way people explore destinations by allowing them to access a 3D world.

Social Media

Information flows more rapidly with the advent of social media, and the credibility of information sources is changing. This has a profound effect on travel, in terms of the way people's interest in a destination or experience is driven, how they research travel opportunities and in the way destinations and operations market and distribute product. Social media is enabling consumers to increasingly seek advice from other consumers. As such, an increasing proportion of travellers rely on online sources to evaluate activities while planning travel and while at a destination.

Health & Wellness

There is a rapidly increasing consumer interest in all things related to maintaining and improving health. This is driven by the aging population, the COVID-19 pandemic, a rising global epidemic of chronic disease and stress and the negative health impacts of environmental degradation. The Global Wellness Institute's *Global Wellness Economic Report* 2018 indicates that the wellness tourism sector grew by 6.5% from 2015 to 2017. Precedence Research estimates the market for wellness travel will grow from US $793.2 billion in 2020 to $1672.6 billion in 2030. The Global Wellness Institute also reports that wellness lifestyle real estate is poised for growth at a rate faster than the overall real estate sector over the next decade.

Aging Population

The world population is aging and travel will increase at both ends, in younger and older age cohorts. The two biggest markets include the Millennials (those born between the early 1980's and the mid 90's) and the Boomer (born from 1946 – 1964) markets.

Millennials are adventurous travellers, who put a lot of value on travel for personal growth. Destination Canada research indicates that key segments of the millennial market value buying local and supporting small businesses and are environmentally conscious. A technologically savvy bunch, this market uses social media to share their travel experiences with their friends and family, looking for authentic and unique experiences.

Boomers have the time and money to travel extensively, particularly internationally. As a result, in the past, it has been a challenge to keep them in Ontario. With COVID-19, this market segment looked for options closer to home, building awareness and support for what is in their backyard. This aging population will also seek easily accessible experiences, where operators pay attention to meeting the needs of these travellers.

Ethnic Diversity

According to Statistics Canada, by 2031 it is estimated that between 25% and 28% of the Canadian population will have been born in another country with 55% of Asian descent. The growth rate of the foreign-born population of Canada will be 4x's faster than the rest of the population. It is estimated that 96% of visible minority groups will live in metropolitan areas, with 63% residing in Toronto (up from 51.5% in 2016). To serve these ethnic markets, visitor offerings need to be tailored to different cultural backgrounds and travel interests and be sensitive to cultural needs.

Considerations for Clearview

- Which travel trends can be embraced in a way that make sense for tourism stakeholder and assets?
- How can Clearview use their experience and success with Small Halls as a foundation to build further events or experiences?
- Can new events strategically grow tourism that celebrates the unique selling propositions of the region, during traditionally slower seasons?

Niche Travel Markets

There may be an opportunity for Clearview Township to provide experiences that are of interest to a niche market of visitors. The following categories of niche experiences may be relevant.

Agritourism

Agritourism is an increasingly popular and growing opportunity for agricultural producers. Agritourism can provide ways to sell local products direct to the market, create valuable connections within the tourism sector (i.e. through culinary tourism), and add supplementary income to farm operations. Common agritourism businesses or programs being added in many destinations worldwide include:

- Farm stays
- Farm markets and lane markets
- Farm to table culinary
- Agricultural entertainment, recreation and education experiences
- Agricultural and food trail development
- Artisanal food production
- Food festivals
- Agricultural history interpretation and storytelling
- Farm work experiences

Typically, these activities are not motivators for travel, but rather part of a broader itinerary. However, there are some opportunities, such as more in-depth learning and experiential opportunities that are of interest to a particular sector and may be a primary motivator.

Culinary Tourism

Ontario's *Four-Year Culinary Tourism Strategy and Action Plan 2011-2015* identified the following three distinct market segments:

- 10% of the market plan their trip based on the food experience (i.e. it is the primary motivating factor).
- 80% of tourists include a food experience in their overall itinerary. While food may not be the primary motivator, food is of growing importance to the overall experience in

destination. The Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance (OTCA) views this market as having the greatest opportunity for culinary tourism product development.

- 10% of tourists who are travelling through an area or touring, make an unplanned stop to eat.

In 2016 the Culinary Tourism Alliance, in association with Skift, published a report titled *The Rise of Food Tourism,* which provides some useful insights into the potential for culinary or food tourism. One way to develop culinary tourism is through the food culture of a destination, which includes the opportunity to learn about the local food culture and history by being connected to local growers and producers, and dining at restaurants with chefs that support local food and 'farm to table' experiences. Another opportunity is to incorporate local culinary programming at festivals and events.

Soft Adventure

According to the Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA), adventure travellers are looking for life-changing experiences, to enjoy personal growth and challenge, a sense of accomplishment and achievement, feeling of gratitude and mindfulness. What was formerly to experience culture is now to "understand" culture.

The elements of adventure have changed from 2008 to 2018.

- In 2008 adventure was associated with risk, hardcore, extreme, danger, power
- In 2018 being in a natural environment, learning, meaningful experiences, and being in a new culture all supersede risk

Examples of soft adventure activities include hiking and biking, bird watching, and wildlife viewing.

Considerations for Clearview

- Can new types of travellers be reached with niche experiences that make sense for the region and its assets?
- How can investments into trails, parks and greenspace align with experiences of interest to soft adventurers?

Tourism Environment

Clearview Township is in a position to strategically work with many partners to advance and grow tourism in a sustainable manner. The challenge will be keeping the focus on its own priorities, while leveraging the efforts and investment of others.

Sectoral Tourism Resources - Provincial, National & International

There is a wide range of training, product development and marketing resources, standards and quality programs available to the tourism sector provincially, nationally and internationally. These resources typically provide specialized and narrowly targeted information to meet the specific needs of a defined activity, visitor and/or destination. Some of these programs are self-administered with others delivered by a third party. Examples include:

- *Ontario by Bike* – Ontario by bike provides consumers with a source of information about cycling destinations in Ontario and a list of businesses or locations that have been certified as bicycle-friendly. In addition to a certification program, Ontario by Bike offers workshops, operator training, marketing and product development assistance to destinations investing in cycling tourism.
- *GreenStep Sustainable Tourism* – The GreenStep Tourism program provide sustainability program and services to the tourism industry. Tourism destinations and businesses can access assessment tools and support programs to measure and improve their sustainability performance and certification to demonstrate their level of commitment to sustainability.
- *Rainbow Registered* – The Rainbow Registered program provides inclusivity and market readiness training, as well as national accreditation to Canadian businesses that are LGBT+ friendly in order to create a more welcoming and inclusive Canadian economy.
- *Farm Fresh Ontario* – Farm Fresh Ontario (FFO) is a not-for-profit, educational and promotional organization that provides it members with training and support for direct-to-consumer farm sales, linking consumers directly to the producers.
- *Culinary Tourism Alliance* – Formerly OCTA, the Culinary Tourism Alliance (CTA) supports operators, communities and destination stakeholders in the development of new and refined food and agritourism experiences that showcase a destination's taste of place to a

broader audience. *FeastOn* is a certification program that recognizes restaurants committed to sourcing and celebrating Ontario food and drink and *Great Taste of Ontario*, is a digital passport aimed at helping visitors explore Ontario's food and drink.

Regional Tourism Focus

Clearview Township is located within the boundaries of Regional Tourism Organization 7 (RTO7) one of 13 regional tourism organizations (RTOs), funded by the provincial Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (MTCS). Current provincial priorities delivered through RTOs address four pillars:

- Marketing
- Product/Experience Development
- Workforce Development
- Investment Attraction

A key feature of RTO initiatives is access to a range of provincial and other partnership programs and pan-regional initiatives, delivered at a regional and local level that communities and businesses would not necessarily access on their own.

The current RTO7 Business Plan for 2021/22 focuses on working with MTCS to support COVID recovery with themes of stabilization, recovery and resiliency. This focuses efforts on marketing, product development and workforce development with no resources committed to investment attraction.

At this time, RTO7 delivers a number of implementation programs, leveraging investments by partners for specific initiatives that include experience development, marketing, operation of festivals and events and staff recruitment. Some areas to be noted include:

- Community tourism planning to support long term destination development and resiliency, including conversations and exploring solutions and strategies to address overcrowding.
- The Experience Implementation Program offers interested operators training, templates, coaching and consumer analysis to help launch new tourism experiences in the region.
- The T3 Accelerator Program, a partnership between RTO7 and Community Futures South Georgian Bay, provides business support and coaching to operators looking to further

develop their experience offer or for input regarding marketing, finance, human resources and management.

- The Recruitment Implementation Program offers financial compensation to tourism businesses that are using a social media campaign to actively recruit employees.

- New for Spring 2023 is the Sustainability Inclusivity Program (SIP) designed to promote a new sustainable product, experience or initiative or inclusive business practice they've invested in. Examples of sustainable initiatives include the development of a new experience in the shoulder season, the implementation of a green initiative to combat climate change or the development of an experience that instills a sense of community pride. Inclusivity recognizes workplaces that allow people with all kinds of differences and disabilities to feel welcome and valued for their contributions and where people with disabilities have the same opportunities as their co-workers and tourists, visitors and locals should feel comfortable to participate in activities and experiences offered.

Sustainable tourism is a focus for the region, which has seen some key destinations under pressure due to over-tourism in recent years.

RTO7's brand position is characterized by Bruce Grey Simcoe big sky, big land and big water. Product/ experience development areas of emphasis for 2023 and beyond include:

- Culture & heritage
- Nature and outdoor recreation
- Festivals
- Cycling
- Water-based activities (paddling, boating, etc.)
- Touring (motorcycle, rural gardens, art trails)
- Resorting

Additionally, RTO7 is supportive of local retail and accessible offers aligned with the above noted focus areas.

Marketing efforts target the geographic areas of Bruce Grey Simcoe, the Greater Toronto Area, Southwestern Ontario and Quebec. Campaigns that are driven through RTO7's Implementation and Partnership Program, focus on the partner's target market.

Simcoe County's Tourism Environment

Clearview Township is one of Simcoe County's 16 member municipalities which also include the cities of Barrie and Orillia, Beausoleil of Christian Island First Nation and Canadian Forces Bases Borden (CFB Borden).

The *Simcoe County Economic Development Strategy 2021-2025* documents population statistics for the county which:

- Saw a 20% increase between 2011 and 2019, ahead of provincial growth rate of 13%.
- Project continued rapid population growth
- Noted an increase in aging population, with retirement-aged residents projected to increase from 18.2% in 2018 to 27.2% in 2041

Tourism is one of four sectors that is identified as a strategic opportunity and priority for the county, with 11% of the workforce employed in the arts, entertainment and recreation, accommodation or food services sectors. It is.

The strategy estimates that accommodation services have grown 49% over the last five years across the region. It also indicates growing demand for local food and related experiences and agritourism as an opportunity to take advantage of the region's rich and long-standing agricultural sector.

Relevant data and information from the *Economic Development Strategy* include the role of the county to:

- Strengthen and support entrepreneurship. Primarily a new initiative that can impact tourism operators.
- Ensure the spectrum of business support available for tourism sector businesses is understood by economic development partners and the business community. This is a new initiative with on-going efforts.
- Support post-COVID recovery is a short-term priority.

A roles and responsibilities chart to share with partners provides clarity on 'who does what', with shared responsibilities across three pillars.

Tourism Simcoe County	Economic Development Office
Visitor Experience Development	Investment Attraction
Stakeholder/Business Support	Stakeholder/Business Support
Workforce Development	Workforce Development
Advocacy	Advocacy

Two of the Tourism Simcoe County pillars include specific marketing and communications tactics:

Visitor Experience Development

- Build awareness of Simcoe County's tourism assets and experiences to attract visitors to the region
- Work with tourism industry partners on international visitation
- Develop and maintain tourism marketing collateral (i.e. website, social media, print publications, digital marketing, experience and product development)
- Develop and manage regional experiences (i.e. Cycle Simcoe, Ride Simcoe County, Trails Simcoe County)

Stakeholder/Business Support

- Support new and expanding tourism businesses, municipalities and non-profit organizations with partnership opportunities, funding resources, marketing programs, visitation data, consumer insight and data
- Support tourism directional wayfinding signage
- Attend tourism relevant consumer and trade shows
- Distribute County and stakeholder printed materials to brochure racks throughout Simcoe County and along the 401 corridors from Windsor to Quebec

Tourism products/experiences that the county is currently focusing on include:

- Outdoor recreation
- Culture
- Agritourism

A tourism strategic plan is currently under way. The major focus areas are expected to include sustainable and responsible tourism.

Tourism Simcoe County recently invested in an Environics data analysis of its visitors. The *Simcoe County Visitor Scorec*ard examines Prizm[1] profiles that travelled in Simcoe County in 2019, 2020, and 2021 by examining the mobile data to understand who is visiting. Prizm, classifies Canada's neighbourhoods into 67 lifestyle types by integrating geographic, demographic and psychographic data.[2]

The data for seven communities was analyzed, including Stayner (data for other Clearview communities was not analyzed). Details show that the following Prizm categories that visited Stayner that are aligned with Simcoe County's segments, that have an index of representation that is over that of the normal population for visitors to the town:

- Countryside Families
- Exploring Country Couples
- Affluent Established Families

Prizm profiles determines key aspects of these segments, and indicates which ones also align with the nearby communities of Wasaga Beach and Collingwood.

Visitor Segment[3]	Lifestage	Attributes	Aligns with Collingwood Segments	Aligns with Wasaga Beach Segments	May Align with Blue Mountain Visitors
Countryside Families	Middle-aged to older families	• Live in suburban or rural areas – i.e. Hamilton, Clarington • Enjoy relaxation in nature, outdoors • College education, average income • Activities - Camping, ATVing, snowmobiling, power boating, jet skiing, fishing, hunting • Attractions - Sporting events, National and Provincial Parks, parks and city gardens, craft and home shows • Internet - Facebook, pinterest, limited digital • Shopping - Big box stores/ retail chains	✓	✓	

[2] https://environicsanalytics.com
[3] Prizm segments showing index of over representation in Stayner

Visitor Segment[3]	Lifestage	Attributes	Aligns with Collingwood Segments	Aligns with Wasaga Beach Segments	May Align with Blue Mountain Visitors
Exploring County Couples	Older to mature couples and singles	• Rural and suburban – Kawartha Lakes, Norfolk County, Greater Sudbury • College diploma or below, below average income, retired • Enjoy nature, parks, gardens • Activities - Camping, ATVing, snowmobiling, power boating, jet skiing, fishing, hunting, XC skiing, community events • Attractions – Sporting events, parks, gardens, exhibitions, carnivals, fairs, markets • Internet – moderate use, modest social media use • Shopping – In person, Canadian retailers, Canadian products	✓		
Affluent Established Families	Older to mature families	• Live in urban and urban fringe areas – Toronto, Ottawa, Markham • Enjoy cultural events • Well educated, higher income, white collar jobs • Healthy lifestyles, enjoy physical activities • Environmentally friendly • Activities – Whale watching, downhill skiing, XC skiing, snowshoeing • Attractions – Historical sites, theme parks, art galleries, museums • Internet – Access travel content, limited social media interaction • Shopping – Like to impress others, show off affluence and status	✓		✓
Affluent Suburban Families	Middle-aged to mature families	• Profile of this visitor segment was not attained by Simcoe County			

Clearview Township's Current Tourism Environment

Clearview Township is home to eleven communities and four hamlets, each with an established culture and natural assets. The dispersion of communities offers visitors a number of areas to explore, rather than one central main street or gathering area.

With the implementation of a number of the initiatives noted in the *Clearview Township Strategic Plan 2017-2022*, Clearview is in a better position to advance tourism to the next stage of maturity. The Plan identified five key pillars:

- Recreation and Culture
- Identity-Marketing-Promotion
- Economic Activity
- Quality of Life
- Governance

This update to the previous *Strategic Plan*, completed in 2008, positions the few mentions of tourism under the Recreation and Culture pillar. The addition of 'tourism programming' is noted as a responsibility of the Recreation and Culture position with enhanced promotion of the established Small Halls Festival. The need for a signage and wayfinding strategy is indicated, as well as the active facilitation of downtown beautification.

The Identity-Marketing Promotion pillar notes telling a wider audience about a number of historically significant and unique assets, along with better promotion of community theatre and music as one part of an overall marketing and promotion plan.

The current *Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan 2019 - 2028* recognizes the role and potential of visitors and hence tourism as noted in the mission.

> *Mission:*
>
> *Together with our community partners, we create opportunities to support healthy and enriching lifestyles for our residents, families and visitors.*

Two recommendations in the *Master Plan* with the potential to impact tourism in the future include:

- To establish a range of parks, trails and greenspace facilities that support programs for recreation and culture with the range of facilities and programs reflecting the Township's demographic profile (21% senior, 52% adult, and 27% under 25).
- To invest in and nurture Small Halls, working to ensure the operational and market viability of Small Halls over the next 10 years, using Small Halls to foster community development and increase the capacity of the not-for-profit and private sector and to establish a range of community programs and activities that can be accommodated at these halls by 2020 and to begin implementing new programming by 2022.

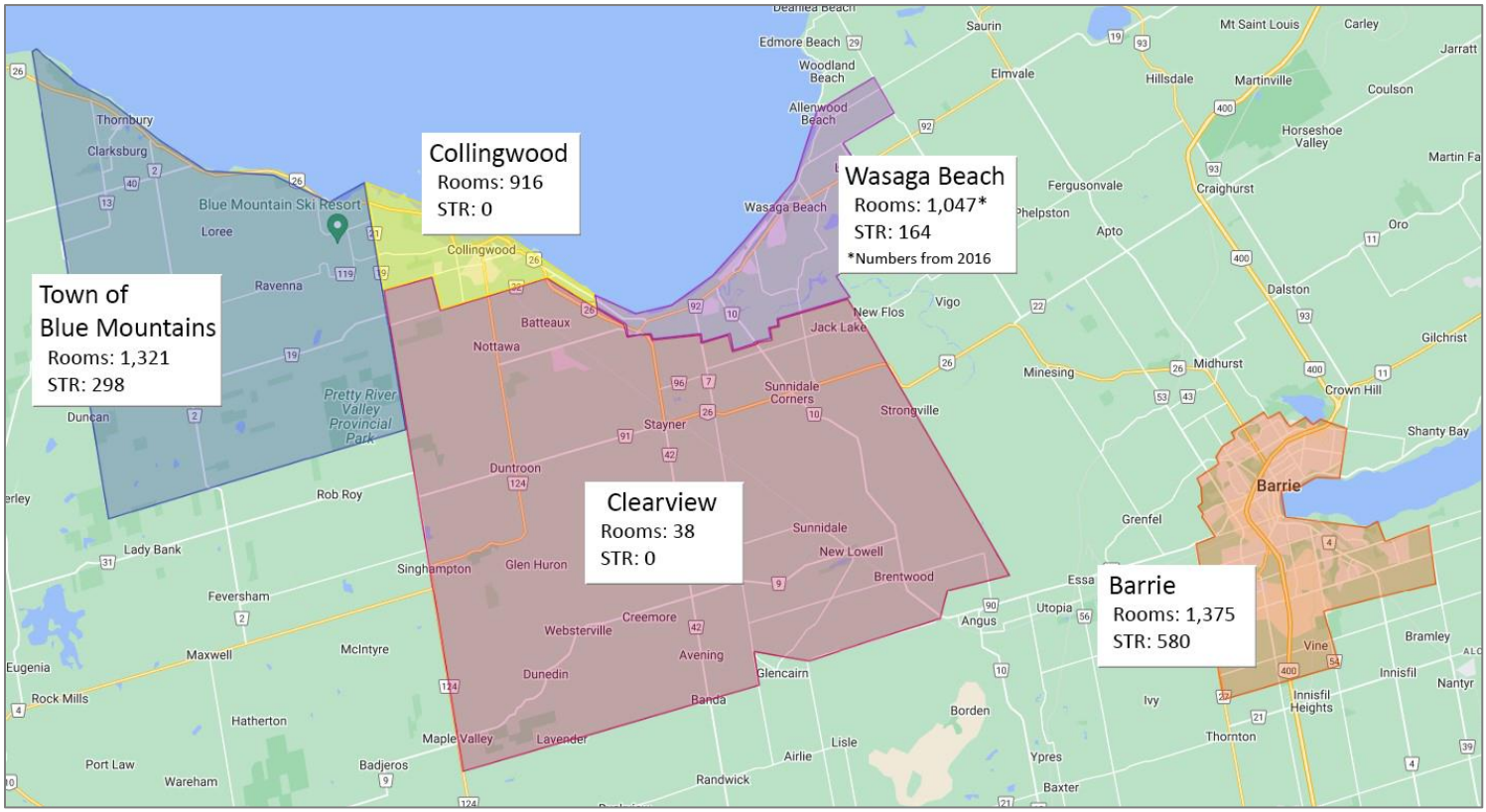
To enhance the municipal identity, Clearview Township adopted a resolution in 2016, to begin installing newly designed identity signage with the following features:

- Standardized signage with the flexibility to reflect the characteristics and history of each community
- Entrance and community entrance signage with a panel slot that can be customized and changed to highlight township events, news and general information
- Four different classes of signs:
    - municipality entrance signs
    - community entrance signs
    - community entrance signs with no image
    - asset signs, to be placed on more than 35 community features and assets, including parks, municipal halls, administrative buildings and recreational facilities

Clearview has six entrance points supported by signage at key entry points along highway 124 and 26 in the north, highway 26 to the east and highways 10, 42 and 9 from the south. Placement of these signs reflects established travel routes to adjacent destinations, providing an opportunity for Clearview to reach a high number of potential visitors.

Clearview's location north of the Toronto and adjacent to major demand generator destinations and attractions, positions the region well to draw from major urban centres of the Greater Toronto Area and south western Ontario as well as visitors to neighbouring areas. Well recognized nearby

areas such as Collingwood, the Blue Mountains, Georgian Bay and Wasaga Beach, and built attractions such as Blue Mountain Resort and the new casino in Wasaga Beach, each attract large amounts of tourists to the region and are supported by large scale commercial accommodations and short term rentals (STR), also known as short term accommodations (STAs). This is in contrast to Clearview's limited supply of privately-run small-scale accommodators. Estimates of room and STR numbers are documented below.



Stayner Downtown Improvement

Stefan Bolliger Inc. was retained in 2018 to design a Downtown Improvement Plan for Stayner. Some elements of this plan have now been completed including the Centennial Park & Brock Street Open Spaces Plan with a new trailhead, new parking spaces & accessible parking, new lighting and sidewalk redesign, as well as below-ground servicing such as drainage, sewer and watermain replacement. These and other recommendations to be implemented will help to position Stayner as a more walkable downtown, not only for residents and visitors, but also to encourage stops

from drive-through traffic, as a day-trip destination and as a gateway and trailhead to access regional trails networks.

Creemore Village Green Project

The Creemore Village Green development was completed in August 2022, creating a vibrant outdoor community cultural gathering space in the village downtown. The space boasts a covered stage, gardens, historical walkway, seating area, table tennis and splashpad. Clearview Township and the Community Foundation have entered into a 20 year management agreement, and a program manager has been hired to organize events and activities on site.

Clearview's Current Tourism Offers

An inventory of current tourism assets and businesses provides an understanding of the offers that are available to visitors to the area. The review summarizes the following findings (see full inventory in appendix A):

- Attractions – 23 gated and ungated attractions, activities or stops
- Farms markets & agritourism – 20 establishments providing farm gate, farmers markets and agritourism offers
- Unique destination retail – 10 unique destination retail businesses
- Accommodations – 12 private small scale accommodation operators
- Dining – 36 dining establishments including 26 privately owned and operated and 10 franchise establishments

The review emphasized the limited stock of accommodations available to house overnight visitors to the area. The inventory, as well as site visits highlighted the limited number of attractions, especially gated or fully developed ungated attractions. Farm markets and agritourism, unique retail and specialty dining opportunities combine with the available attractions to provide activities for visitors to take part in while in the area.

Tourism Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats

Input gathered during the stakeholder workshop combined with community and operator survey results, as well as one-on-one interviews provide an insight into the internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as the external opportunities and threats related to tourism in Clearview Township.

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Small towns • Small town charm • Creemore • Outdoors/ escarpment/ trails/ cycling • Live entertainment • Farmers markets/ farm gates/ agritourism • Culinary assets • Festivals • Small Halls • Fun roads for touring • Daytripping • The “Clear View” • Recreational assets (arenas, baseball diamonds) • Affordable destination • Interest in tourism development • Committed and cooperative operators • Sense of community • Large amount of drive by traffic	• Lack of accommodation • Short term rental restrictions • Labour shortages • Shortage of accessible housing • No clear vision for tourism • Lack of resources to support tourism – budget, staff etc • Limited alignment with Clearview brand positioning • Marketing • Limited communication regarding initiatives • Limited attractions • Limited mix of tourism businesses • Business operating days and hours • Seasonality • Limited experience development • Friction, competition and limited alignment and collaboration between towns • Lack of parking and transportation • Signage • Limited support of tourism by local residents • Process for council approvals can be onerous • Tourism is not the core focus for the township

Opportunities	Threats
• Proximity to urban markets • Proximity of other popular destinations/communities (Blue Mountain, Wasaga Beach, Barrie) • Proximity to a large regional base of accommodations (growth of 49% over last 5 years) • Provides a solution to regional over flow • New casino development in Wasaga Beach • MAT tax • Tourism is one of four priority areas of focus for Simcoe County • Regional and county business incubators and partnership programs • Renewed and increased interest in the outdoors • Remote working is on trend • Drive to destinations, the outdoors and staying closer to home are popular	• Proximity to other popular destinations/ communities • Nearby destinations with larger marketing budgets • Drive through community • Major routes bypass small towns • Divide between tourism and agricultural community • Lack of investment in tourism infrastructure • Gas prices • Recession • Potential for over-tourism, sustainability issues • Accommodation rates • Food prices • Highway safety • Pandemic and corresponding changes in tourism

Considerations for Clearview

- How can Clearview align itself with the priority areas of the county and region while ensuring that it capitalizes on its strengths, brand and needs?
- Can Clearview connect operators, influencers, and decision-makers to a range of education, training and awareness-raising initiatives to improve and enhance the tourism offer?
- The RTO7 Sustainability Inclusivity Program and Community Tourism Planning initiative may be of particular relevance to Clearview Township.
- Simcoe County entrepreneurship initiatives and the RTO7 T3 Accelerator program and Experience Implementation Program may be of interest to Clearview's tourism operators.

- Clearview's assets align well with RTO7 and Simcoe County's key product focus areas.
- How can Clearview capitalize on the opportunity presented by drive through traffic as well as popular nearby destinations, large scale accommodation and attractions?
- What is the opportunity to attract and serve visitors from surrounding areas with unique destination day experiences?
- Which target markets align well with Clearview's brand and tourism strengths?
- Do target markets for Clearview align with those of nearby destinations?
- How can existing assets, resources and skills be strategically used to attract nearby urban markets and visitors to nearby destinations?
- How can Clearview capitalize on its tourism strengths, minimize select weaknesses while seizing opportunities and limiting the effect of threats?

Recommendations

"It's no accident that we live, work in and visit Clearview. Its distinctive charm and genuine down-to-earth values draw you in. Those who live here know this land, they work it, and it gives back an unvarnished beauty and uniqueness that can only be experienced here.

Clearview is the kind of community where businesses are built upon relationships, and people really connect, they cheer on the local team or meet at the winter fair. It's the genuine people who live, work and/or play in Clearview who get to experience their best and most authentic life.

Clearview, experience the difference!"[4]

Tourism Vision: To be a distinctive Ontario community showcasing the charm of rural living, small town authenticity, rugged natural beauty, all positioned close to the mountain and beaches, and with a flourishing food and farming culture scene.

Mission: Together with our community stakeholders, we work to generate economic prosperity through tourism, while being sustainable, and providing visitors as well as locals with recreational opportunities and enhanced quality of life.

[4] Cundari, *Clearview Brand Strategy*, Brand Positioning Statement, April 2014

Target Market for Tourism Initiatives

Strategic Objective: Ensure tourism decisions are driven by the interests of best bet target markets.

Potential visitors have a wealth of opportunities to spend their hard-earned tourism dollars. When making decisions, they want to travel to places that ultimately align with their interests.

Recommendation 1: Focus tourism development and marketing on best bet tourism markets that align with Clearview's tourism strengths and brand.

Ensuring that tourism initiatives are targeted allows for better planning, and more strategic use of resources.

Timeline Short term and ongoing

Actions

1. Define Clearview's best bet tourism target markets.
2. Request that Simcoe County attain the Environics Affluent Suburban Families segment profile from Environics. Examine the characteristics and determine potential alignment with Clearview Township's unique selling propositions.
3. Consider targeting the following markets that align with Simcoe County's targeted segments:
    i. Affluent Established Families – Align this segment with the southern portion of the township/Creemore area, targeting affluent visitors travelling as couples.
    ii. Affluent Suburban Families – Based on the characteristics provided, consider also aligning this segment with the southern portion of the township/Creemore area, if it aligns with the experiential offer of this area.
    iii. Countryside Families – Align this family segment for the northern part of the township/Stayner area, targeting families who enjoy the outdoors, camping, motorsports and the beach.

Marketing Clearview Township to Visitors

Strategic Objective: To increase awareness of Clearview as a tourism destination.

Competition is fierce in the tourism destination marketing space. What makes you stand out and get noticed, is by telling your story. Savvy tourism marketers are great storytellers, leveraging their brand, people, places and things to create engaging reasons for people to visit.

Recommendation 1: Develop an annual tourism marketing plan that targets best bet visitor markets.

An annual marketing plan will ensure that marketing tactics undertaken on a calendar basis are organized and strategic in order to reach beast bet markets while taking into account current trends and the most appropriate media channels to reach the target audience.

Timeline Annually in advance of municipal budget cycle

Actions

1. Document tourism marketing tactics, budget allocations, timelines and partners.
2. Outline four seasonal campaigns leveraging the key experiences for each time of year, targeting southern Ontario urban markets and visitors to nearby destinations. Determine seasonal campaign allocations, based on seasonal needs.
3. Develop a local's 'I ♥ Clearview' campaign designed to build and foster local pride of place, and to position residents as ambassadors.
4. Partner with RTO7, Tourism Simcoe County and South Georgian Bay to create content, leverage assets and increase campaign reach.

Recommendation 2: Enhance the tourism social media presence.

Tourism social channels are important tools that can be used to influence people's decision to travel. Potential visitors can't be bothered with important municipal content like recycling schedules, public skating times and council meeting announcements. It's important that the content aimed at visitors speaks directly to the target audience and is pushed to the channels that the target market pays attention to.

Timeline Annually

Actions

1. Refine tourism-only social media channels. (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube)
2. Create an annual social media content calendar. Document all social media channels, tactics, timing and any allocated budget.
3. Develop a list of hashtags to be used on an ongoing basis. Ensure they tie to the brand and unique selling proposition of Clearview as a tourism destination.
4. Invest in professional photography and video assets.
5. Create engaging tourism related social media content. Post on a regular, scheduled basis.
6. Leverage the social media channels of Tourism Simcoe County and RTO7.
7. Host social media influencers, in partnership with regional, municipal and local stakeholders. Leverage their stories and posts on the Clearview social media channels.
8. Partner with Tourism Simcoe County and RTO7 to create content and to gather photo and video assets.

Recommendation 3: Build a content rich tourism website.

Mature tourism destinations require a robust website in order to be able to tell their stories, and motivate potential visitors. Online content that tells the story of a destination and its experiences, and features blogs, itineraries, and maps are the norm for today's online digital presence and are a critical piece of any new tourism website build.

Timeline Short term

Actions

1. Create a content driven website themed around Clearview's core experience offers.
2. Use third party content creators (writers, bloggers, vloggers) to develop engaging stories on a frequent basis.
3. Design the site to exemplify the Clearview brand and essence of place.

Case Study: Township of Huron Kinloss

The Township of Huron Kinloss, located just south of Kincardine, Ontario, is a rural municipality of similar size to Clearview. In response to a recent rebrand to a "Secrets of the Back Forty" tourism identity, Huron Kinloss required a platform to motivate and inspire potential visitors. To tell their story, they wanted more than just a listings-based website, and set out to create a resource that exemplifies their personality in order to 'set the table' to inspire visitors to find out more. The site, which will be launched in January of 2023, relies heavily on blog-based content that showcases the various unique selling propositions of Huron Kinloss. It also leverages itineraries to aid in user trip planning.

Recommendation 4: Enhance industry awareness of tourism initiatives led by Clearview Township and other tourism stakeholders.

Educating industry about tourism initiatives led by Clearview Township, local tourism operators, other tourism stakeholders and regional and county partners will ensure industry stakeholders are aware of tourism initiatives, and encourage a more collaborative and informed tourism environment across the region.

Timeline Quarterly

Action

1. Develop and deploy a quarterly tourism industry e-newsletter. Include Clearview's as well as other stakeholder's tourism updates.

Recommendation 5: Improve resident understanding, awareness and acceptance of tourism.

Use tactics to educate local residents about tourism initiatives, the value of tourism in the local economy and encouraging welcoming interactions with visitors in order to create a welcoming Clearview environment.

Timeline On an ongoing, scheduled basis

Action

1. Deploy quarterly information through various means which could include a selection of local newspaper, ad mail and/or municipal Facebook posts.

Recommendation 6: Produce an annual multi panel fold out official Clearview Township tourism map.

Small tear off maps can be effective for providing limited information to travellers, but a larger format, branded map would provide greater detail and ease of use.

Timeline Short term

Action

1. Create a larger, branded map format to act as the signature fulfillment piece. Place all market ready, developed attractions and key experiences as well as touring routes and amenities such as ATV and snowmobile staging areas on the map.

Creating Places for Visitors to Stay

Strategic Objective: To increase the capacity of overnight accommodations in Clearview Township.

Clearview's limited accommodation stock was a key source of discussion in all aspects of stakeholder consultations and research. Getting visitors to stay overnight significantly increases their per day in destination spend and length of stay in the area.

Recommendation 1: Regulate and permit short-term accommodations (STAs).

Survey results noted that changes in STA regulation may be beneficial to the township's lack of supply of accommodations in the township.

Short-term accommodations have grown in popularity thanks to booking platforms like Air BnB and VRBO. STAs are changing the way people travel, allowing them to 'live like a local' and be a part of the destination's fabric. Unique STAs that exemplify with Clearview brand may be of interest to the affluent couples and families target markets.

STAs also provide a way that residents can supplement their income through rentals. Not without their share of challenges, municipalities are now starting to regulate STAs so they have greater control and success. STAs can be fast and effective way to increase overnight accommodations.

Timeline Begin planning short term, implement medium term

Actions

1. Develop a short-term accommodation licensing program and corresponding STA regulations for the township.
2. Consider developing a municipal accommodation tax (MAT) to apply to short-term rentals.
3. Allow short term accommodations such as Air BnB and VRBO rentals to operate in the township.
4. Encourage the development of unique accommodation types i.e., geodomes, yurts, pods, tiny homes, cabins, farm stays, historic homes.

5. Educate local residents on the benefits of STAs, the regulations that are in place, how they will be managed and what will be allowed and the economic returns anticipated based on licensing and MAT.

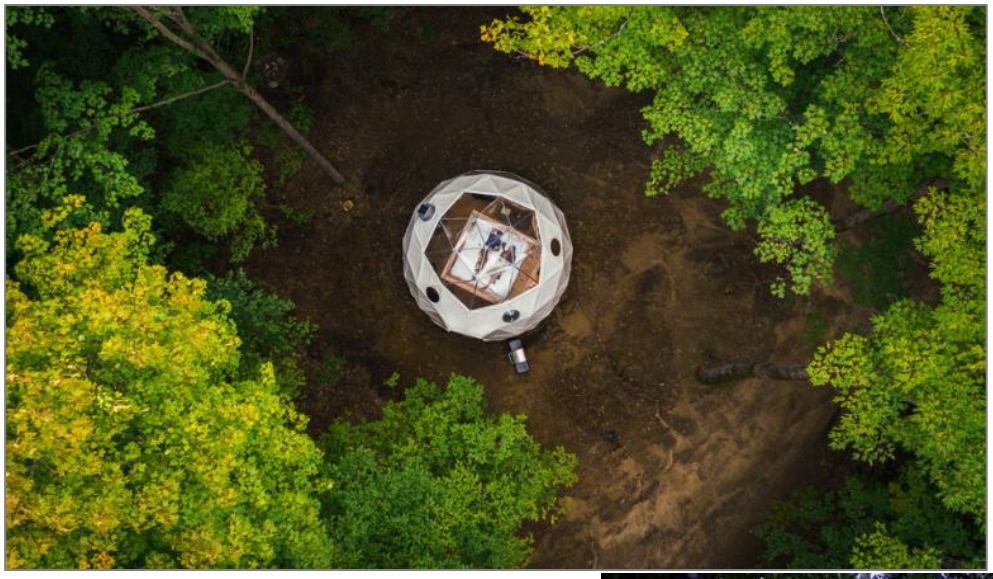
Case Study: Northern Bruce Peninsula

Northern Bruce Peninsula in Bruce County implemented a short-term accommodation (STA) licensing program in 2022. It also included a 4% municipal accommodation tax (MAT) applied to licensed short term rental properties. The program was developed in order to effectively manage the growing number of STAs within the municipality and to generate revenue to fund future tourism development projects.

2022 Details

- Number of Licensed Properties: 325
- Projected 2022 License Fee Revenue: $180,000
- Projected License Fee Program Expenses: $195,000
- Projected Municipal Accommodation Tax Revenue: $615,000
- Projected Transfer to Local Tourism Group: $300,000
- Projected Transfer to Municipal Reserve: $300,000

Source: https://www.northbrucepeninsula.ca/en/resources/en/resourcesGeneral/news/Financial-Statements/2022-Budget-Final.pdf



Case Study: Glen Oro Farm

Glen Oro Farm located outside of Orillia is an Ontario leader in providing an alternative accommodation experience. As an equestrian facility they combine horse experiences with overnight accommodations. With a mix of geodesic domes and prospector glamping tents for a total of 14 accommodation units, Glen Oro Farm is successfully providing visitors with a unique experience.

Photos: https://www.glenoro.com/glamping

Recommendation 2: Consider RV camping as a way to increase visitor overnight stays.

Recreational vehicle sales dramatically increased during the pandemic with the demand for campsites often outstripping supply. Reservations for popular campgrounds are often made a year in advance. Clearview may be positioned to take advantage of this growth, leveraging their proximity to other destinations like Blue Mountain and Wasaga Beach.

An RV campground development aligns with the Countryside Family target market. While campers may choose to visit nearby out of township destinations and attractions while staying in Clearview, overnight revenue would ultimately stay in the community, and visitors have the opportunity to take part in Clearview hiking and cycling opportunities.

Timeline Medium term

Action

1. Discuss the benefits and challenges of operating a municipal campground with fellow municipal operators.
2. Undertake a feasibility study to strategically investigate the opportunity surrounding development of a municipal RV campground. Consider how the campground will align with Clearview's existing tourism strengths and assets, the Countryside Family target market and a potential location in the northern portion of the township/near Stayner to be close to assets of interest to this market such as the beach.
3. Undertake a business plan and site plan, should the feasibility study return positive results and if a development decision is reached.

Case Study: Memorial Park – Meaford's Municipal Campground

The municipality of Meaford manages a successful campground along the shores of Georgian Bay.

- Number of Sites: 87
- Number of Nights Stayed (2019): 9,139
- Length of Operating Season: 5 Months
- Market:
  - Meaford Residents 4%
  - Travelled within 1 hour 26%
  - Travelled more than 1 hour 70%
- Revenue (2021): $502,000
- Expenses (2021): $503,500 (includes $169,650 contribution to reserves)

Source: https://www.meaford.ca/en/resources/budgets/2022-Tax-Supported-Final-Operatiing-Capital-Budget.pdf
Image: https://www.meaford.ca/en/explore-play/memorial-park.aspx

Resources to Support Tourism

Strategic Objective: Ensure tourism is effectively resourced.

Tourism can be a significant driver of economic benefit for a municipality. Ensuring that adequate resources are available to support tourism developments and marketing initiatives and understanding of its importance in economic returns is paramount to success.

Recommendation 1: Establish a dedicated tourism budget.

A budget dedicated to tourism can ensure that funds do not get pulled in varying directions, allow for better planning and ensuring that there are adequate financial resources to undertake annual tourism tactics.

Timeline As budget cycle allows

Actions

1. Determine annual tourism budget requirements and allocate a dedicated annual tourism allotment.

Recommendation 2: Add additional staff to the Parks, Culture and Recreation Department.

Ensuring that there are adequate resources to manage and market the destination is imperative to remain competitive in the market. The current Community Culture and Tourism Coordinator position is stretched thin and often pulled into multiple directions.

Timeline As soon as possible

Actions

1. Add one new full-time year-round recreation staff member to the team, tasked with undertaking all recreational responsibilities previously assigned to the Community Culture and Tourism Coordinator.

2. Adjust Community Culture and Tourism personnel's responsibilities to only managing tourism and culture related tasks – working with the industry to deliver the tasks outlined in the *Strategic and Sustainable Tourism Plan*.

Recommendation 3: Establish a community tourism collective.

Tourism groups made up of community stakeholders can be important assets to ensure collaboration among tourism industry representatives. Comprised of tourism business community members, they can act as an idea generator and a sounding board with the goals of sharing information, discussing opportunities and creating a cohesive and tourism environment that is beneficial to all.

Timeline Medium term

Action

1. Engage a group of 5-7 community tourism stakeholders. Meet on a regular basis to discuss community tourism opportunities, challenges and directions.

Recommendation 4: Work to find solutions to the tourism labour crisis.

Labour challenges are the number one issue facing small business today, especially in the service industry.

Timeline Short term

Actions

1. Develop an ad-hoc labour working group led by the Economic Development Advisory Committee, to discuss issues among stakeholders.
2. Encourage Clearview stakeholders to leverage labour resources available from RTO7 and Simcoe County.

Case Study: RT07 Recruitment Implementation Program

RTO7 is currently offering support to tourism businesses who are actively recruiting employees. The program provides up to $1000 for businesses with less than 100 employees and $2500 for businesses with over 100 employees to undertake a recruitment social media campaign using Facebook and Instagram.

Source: https://rto7.ca/Public/Programs/Recruitment-Implementation-Program

Recommendation 5: Continue to ensure high speed internet is available to all residents and businesses.

In an increasingly technological and connected world, visitors have come to expect reliable internet wherever they travel. Businesses require dependable high-speed internet to provide adequate services to consumers, including online fulfillment and in destination connectivity.

Timeline Long term

Action

1. Recognize that high speed internet is a requirement for all successful businesses and assist in facilitating the development of infrastructure to support this.

Tourism Experience Development

Strategic Objective: To offer a roster of market-ready, best-in-class tourism products and experiences.

Experience refinement and development are wise investments and are critical to becoming a sought-after destination. Increasing the number of experiences, gated and ungated attractions and tours will provide visitors with more to do in Clearview, extending their stay. Ensuring tourism offers are market ready before marketing to visitors will help to ensure a positive experience.

Recommendation 1: Create a new tourism experience called "Clear Views" that showcases the top 10 scenic vistas within the municipality.

Scenic beauty is one of Clearview's strongest assets so it is important to capitalize on it. The diverse rolling landscape ribboned by the Niagara Escarpment creates numerous opportunities for visitors to enjoy the views. Several formalized sites already exist and are well used. Expanding upon this sustainably, will be important to ensure environmental impacts and user conflicts are addressed.

Timeline Medium term

Actions

1. Identify the top 10 most scenic viewpoints in the municipality and position as a touring route.
2. Ensure that each site is market ready, with adequate and safe parking, signage and wayfinding and washroom facilities if required.

Recommendation 2: Continue to work with Tourism Simcoe County to position Clearview as a signature cycling destination within Ontario.

Cycling experienced tremendous growth during the pandemic, especially gravel cycling. Clearview is already an established cycling destination with several defined routes/trails, Strava segments, events and cycle friendly operators. A continued effort to be a major cycling destination within Ontario will benefit the municipality.

Timeline Short term

Actions

1. Inventory all known cycling routes both paved, gravel and off road and showcase on the official visitor map.
2. Continue to support existing cycling events and work with partners to develop new ones.
3. Create a cyclist and resident education program to ensure a welcoming and safe cycling environment.
4. Continue to work with Ontario by Bike and Cycle Simcoe to ensure cycle friendliness of Clearview communities and businesses.
5. Consider the cycling experience when undertaking signage and wayfinding, road maintenance and new construction projects (i.e. paved shoulders, adequate space for cyclist etc.)

Case Study: Cycle Simcoe

Simcoe County has seen tremendous growth in cycling the past 5 years from just under 60,000 cycle trips in 2017 to over 120,000 trips in 2022, resulting in $1.3 million in direct spending. Hotels, resorts, and B&Bs reported a total of 4,297 overnight stays. 29% of riders were considered regional tourists (40-100kms away) while 34% were considered long haul tourists (100+kms away) and 37% were considered local riders.

Cycle Simcoe benefits from an annual $30,000 digital marketing campaign, distributes 8,000 cycling maps and has over 80 certified cycle friendly businesses listed throughout the county.

Source: Simcoe County, *Cycling Tourism Impact Report*, 2022

Recommendation 3: Investigate the powersports market.

The township has assets that may have potential to support powersports visits. Simcoe County has recently invested in the development of motorcycle touring routes, and other assets exist that support ATVing and snowmobiling.

Timeline Short term

Action

1. Investigate the economic value of motorsports in the township, and the potential alignment between the target markets and motorsports activities or experiences.

Recommendation 4: Continue to support and expand the Small Halls Festival.

The award-winning Small Halls Festival has created an identity for itself, representing what small-town life is all about. It has activated rural communities, created a vehicle to make local connections, and provided a diverse level of entertainment for both residents and visitors. Doubling down on this unique Ontario experience will continue to ensure it acts as a demand generator for Clearview.

Timeline Short term

Action

1. Expand the Small Halls festival to become the umbrella for all live music, theatre, and shows that happen in the municipality throughout the year.
2. Consider a small halls weekend that acts at the kick off or bookend to close out to the festival each year. Showcase live music and culture throughout Clearview township at both indoor and outdoor venues.

Recommendation 5: Continue to develop and deliver shoulder season signature events in conjunction with community partners.

Unique events are a proven method to drive visitation, especially in the shoulder or off-season. The more unique and aligned with the brand of the community they are, the more likely they are

to be successful at attracting the target market of visitors and residents the destination is attempting to attract.

Events like the Turas Mór vintage cycling event held in Creemore build off the small town charm, camaraderie and showcase the countryside to visitors. Capping participation at 400 riders ensures the sustainability of the event for the community while guaranteeing economic benefits for the community.

Timeline Medium term and ongoing

Action

1. Work with the newly created tourism collective to explore unique event ideas, ensuring they connect to the Clearview brand and highlight the region's strengths as a tourism destination.
2. Create an event planning committee for each event to be delivered, assigning roles and timelines.
3. Evaluate event brand alignment, success, ensuring an adequate amount of time is provided to allow for new event traction.
4. Expand upon downtown animation and activation during high season, ensuring mid-week is included.

Case Study: Gilmore Girls Fan Fest - Unionville

Capitalizing on its friendly small town vibe and its claim to fam as the location that the original Gilmore Girls pilot was filmed, Unionville created a festival aimed at attracting fans of the TV show that ran from 2000 – 2007 and is now a popular Netflix series.

The 2019 festival was a 3 day event, showcasing original filming locations, members of the cast and interactive activities. The event aimed to attract 1200 people to the small town north of Toronto.

More information: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/gilmore-girls-fan-fest-unionville-2019-1.5213793

Recommendation 6: Develop themed driving tour(s), aimed at the daytrip market.

Due to the proximity to market, and proximity to nearby destinations, Clearview continues to be positioned well to benefit from the daytrip segment. Ensuring the development of experiences that encourage spending will be important in order to maximize the benefit. Touring routes are an excellent way to encourage visitors to circulate around a community, spending money along the way.

Owning an electric vehicle is becoming more and more mainstream as the fight against climate change continues. EV owners are proud of the vehicle they drive and are appreciative of communities that have invested in EV charging infrastructure. The development of an experience for EV owners will be novel and get significant earned media attention as something new and different.

Timeline Medium term

Actions

1. Develop themed driving route(s) that capitalizes on the strengths of Clearview township, taking visitors to quaint downtowns, key attractions, farmers markets and agritourism destinations.
2. To increase the sustainability of the driving tour, aim to make the tour EV friendly, complete with the associated charging infrastructure.
3. Ensure that each site is market ready, with adequate and safe parking, EV charging, if possible, signage and wayfinding and washroom facilities if required.

Summary

There is no question the Clearview way of life is in demand. Whether it's to experience it for an afternoon or a lifetime, people want to buy in and be part of Clearview's values. Visitors want to escape their urban lives and fill their trunks and memories with rural, small town moments. A global pandemic simply increased the demand for more 'country'. People are seeking open space, scenic vistas, small towns and farm gates like never before. Clearview is well positioned for continued visitor growth as part of a significant regional tourism hub.

Some will argue that Clearview is simply a pass through to get to Wasaga or the Blue Mountains. This is true for some, but those that value rural small-town charm, will stop the car. Clearview is already an established destination for cyclists, golfers, hikers, main street meanderers, foodies, and entertainment seekers.

Being careful to not to have 'over subscription' will be paramount if Clearview wishes to stick to its core brand values. This is a fine line, and numerous similar destinations currently struggle with over-tourism and too many visitors, especially at peak times. So…we must understand and value what makes Clearview unique and different, leveraging those differences to continue to drive demand, but doing so only when there is capacity. Sound easy? Moving forward will require careful planning and everyone working together. This tourism strategy is a good first step.

Appendix A

Inventory of Tourism Assets and Businesses

Attractions	Location
Blue Mountain Bruce Trail Club	Clearview
Clearview-Collingwood Train Trail	Clearview
Clearview EcoPark	Stayner
Creemore Nature Preserve	Creemore
Creemore Log Cabin	Creemore
Devils Glen Provincial Park & Lookout	Glen Huron
Duntroon Highlands	Duntroon
Bethel Union Cemetery	New Lowell
Big Blue Air	Stayner
Edenvale Aerodrome	Edenvale
Franks Limestone Kiln	Bruce Trail, Duntroon
Ganaraska Trail	Clearview
Highlands Nordic	Duntroon
Linkes Local Art Lessons & Gallery	Stayner
Made Brave Studio	Stayner
Magnetic Hill	Avening
Mill Street Studio	Creemore
North America's Smallest Jail	Creemore
Nottawasaga Bluffs Lookout	Singhampton
Nottawasaga Lookout Provincial Nature Reserve	Duntroon
Purple Hills Arts & Heritage Society - Events	Creemore
Stayner Heritage Society & Museum - Events	Stayner
Singhampton Sculpture Forest	Singhampton
Village Green	Creemore

Farm Market and Agri-Tourism	Location
100 Mile Store	Creemore
A&D Bird Seed & Country Store	Stayner
Creemore Farmers' Market	Creemore
Creemore Coffee Company	New Lowell
Creemore Hills Winery	Creemore
Creemore Springs Brewery	Creemore
Duntroon Cyder House	Duntroon
Fernwood Farms & Market	Stayner
Giffen's Country Market	Glen Huron
Hill Billy Acres & Farm Market	Stayner
Hoffman's Meats & European Deli	Stayner
Kennedy Orchards	Nottawa
Maxwell Apple Orchards & Meesters Farms	Collingwood
McEachran and Sons Orchard	Duntroon
Morrison Pumpkin Farm	Collingwood
Music Market & Park it	Stayner
Purple Hills Lavender Farm	Creemore
Rural Roots Nursery & Market Garden	Stayner
South Bay Fields Lavender Farm	Nottawa
Twelve Farms	Stayner

Unique Destination Retail	Location
Arizona Blues	Duntroon
Cheesy Corner	Stayner
Comic Bin	stayner
Curiosity House Books	Creemore
Heirloom 142	Creemore
Jamie's Main & Local	Stayner
Lagom 142	Creemore
Lagom 172	Creemore
Nottawa General Store	Nottawa
The Keep Refillery	Creemore

Dining	Location
Independent Operator	
Angie's Place	Stayner
Bakery by the Bay	Stayner
Bluewater Fish & Grill	Stayner
Café Coco	Stayner
Charlie's Diner	Stayner
Chez Michel	Creemore
Creemore Bakery	Creemore
Creemore Pizza Co.	Creemore
Duntroon Highlands Golf Café	Duntroon
Friends Pub & Grill Inc.	Stayner
Giffen's Country Market & Café	Glen Huron
Haisai	Singhampton
Honey Monster	Stayner
Jimmy's Kitchen	Nottawa
Jong's Chinese & Canadian Cuisine	Stayner
Kitch'n Savvy	Stayner
La Cucina	Creemore
Miso Hot	Stayner
Nottawa General	Nottawa
Pizza Perfect Diner	Creemore
The Bank Café	Creemore
The Chopsticks	Stayner
The Dornoch Tap & Grill	Nottawa
The Old Mill House Pub	Creemore
The Original Life's A Slice Pizzaria & Deli	New Lowell
YF Patissier & Chocolatier	Creemore
Franchise	
Cashtown Burger	Cashtown Corners
Life's A Slice Pizzaria & Deli	New Lowell
Mr. Sub	Stayner
Pizza Pizza	Cashtown Corners
Pizza Hut	Stayner
Stayner Dairy Queen	Stayner
Tim Hortons	Stayner, Sunnidale & Cashtown Corners
Subway	Stayner

Accommodation	Location
Avalon Clearview Studio B&B	Duntroon
Blacksmith House B&B	Creemore
Cedar Pond Country Getaway	Creemore
Clearview Station B&B	Creemore
Emily's Place	Creemore
Gables B&B	Stayner
Pretty River Valley Country Inn	Nottawa
Sequel Inn	Creemore/ Dunedin
The Cottage on the Noisy River	Creemore
The Klinck House	Nottawa