

## REPORT TO COUNTY COUNCIL

# 5-Year Tourism Plan

**To:** Warden and Members of County Council

**From:** Chief Administrative Officer

## RECOMMENDATION

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1. That County Council approve the “5-Year Tourism Plan 2025-2030”, as attached to Report CAO 2024-07.

## REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

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- Over the past decade, Oxford County has experienced significant growth in tourism development resulting in the 2024 Business Plan and budget including the development of a 5-Year Tourism Plan.
- April 2024, Mellor Murray Consulting Inc services was contracted to develop the Tourism 5-Year Plan attached to this report.
- This plan provides a clear direction for Oxford County in the management, development and marketing of tourism for the next 5 years through five goals and objectives (table 1) with 23 recommended actions (see attached report).

## Financial Impact

Many recommended actions are operational improvements or adjustments to existing activities that will not require additional funding. The **Tourism Growth Program (TGP)** grant that Oxford County received will cover several implementation expenses in 2024-2025. As strategies to implement the 5-Year Plan recommendations are completed they will be reviewed and approved by Council through the business plan and budget process. As in the past, Tourism Oxford will continue to search for funding grants and partnerships to enhance and implement the business plan.

## Communications

Strategic Communications and Engagement will be engaged as appropriate including use of Speak-up Oxford, media releases and social media channels. Tourism Oxford newsletters (industry and consumer), social media channels and contact databases will also be used to share opportunities and outcomes of the 5-Year Plan.




## 2023-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

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Oxford County Council approved the [2023-2026 Strategic Plan](#) on September 13, 2023. The Plan outlines 39 goals across three strategic pillars that advance Council’s vision of “Working together for a healthy, vibrant, and sustainable future.” These pillars are: (1) *Promoting community vitality*, (2) *Enhancing environmental sustainability*, and (3) *Fostering progressive government*.

The recommendation in this report supports the following strategic goals.

### Strategic Plan Pillars and Goals

PILLAR 1	PILLAR 2	PILLAR 3
		
<b>Promoting community vitality</b>	<b>Enhancing environmental sustainability</b>	<b>Fostering progressive government</b>
<p><b>Goal 1.3</b> – Community health, safety and well-being</p>	<p><b>Goal 2.1</b> – Climate change mitigation and adaptation</p> <p><b>Goal 2.2</b> – Preserve and enhance our natural environment</p>	<p><b>Goal 3.1</b> – Continuous improvement and results-driven solutions</p> <p><b>Goal 3.2</b> – Collaborate with our partners and communities</p>

See: [Oxford County 2023-2026 Strategic Plan](#)

## DISCUSSION

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### Background

#### Development of the 5-Year Plan

For the past decade Tourism Oxford has experienced growth in tourism product development. This growth has led to new tourism products, partnerships, business inquiries and increased visitation. Oxford County has also been recognized as a national example of effective product development in culinary and experiential tourism. To take advantage of this growth, Tourism Oxford recognized the need for a new tourism plan to provide a clear path forward to support tourism management, development and marketing.

In 2024, the Oxford County Business Plan and budget included the creation and implementation of Tourism 5-Year Plan (using one-time funding and a grant). Tourism Oxford secured funding through the Fed Dev Southern Ontario [Tourism Growth Program \(TGP\)](#) to support plan development and implementation.

### Comments

April 2024, Mellor Murray Consulting Inc services was contracted to develop the Tourism 5-Year Plan in consultation with residents, visitors, municipalities and tourism businesses. Consultation included use of Speak-up Oxford, surveys, interviews, and meetings with tourism operators.

#### 5-Year Plan findings

The 5-Year plan provides a clear direction for Oxford County in the management, development and marketing of tourism through 5 goals and objectives with 23 recommended actions. Table 1 lists the goals and objectives. Recommendations can be reviewed in the attached 5-Year Plan.

Table 1: 5 Year Plan Goals and Objectives

Goal	Objective
Economic, social and environmental benefit	Tourism is an important contributor to the County’s economy, environmental sustainability and overall well-being.
Resilient, thriving tourism industry	Tourism businesses have the data, tools and resources and coaching they need to thrive.
Compelling product offering	Oxford County’s tourism offerings and experiences build on the unique character of the region, welcoming and delighting visitors year-round.
Effective marketing and promotion	Tourism Oxford’s marketing and promotion is efficient, effective and provides high-quality customer service.
Collaborative tourism Network	Tourism partners are engaged and work collaboratively for their mutual benefit.

**Benefits of the 5-Year Plan:**

This plan sets a clear path addressing tourism management, development and marketing needs in Oxford County. It is aligned with the Oxford County Strategic Plan and Oxford County’s previous assessments and consultations. The plan also aligns with regional, provincial and national tourism strategies. With increased demand for services, having a strategy identifying priorities will ensure work focuses on key priorities and needs of local tourism operators, residents and visitors.

**CONCLUSIONS**

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Adoption of the 5-year plan will position Oxford County to address Tourism opportunities and challenges. It provides a clear path forward for tourism aligning with national tourism trends to meet the needs of consumers. This work will support tourism attractions expanding their season, ensure Oxford is attracting the right visitors, ensure tourism balances the needs of residents, provide partners with marketing assets and prepare attractions to thrive with a sustainable future.

## SIGNATURES

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### Report author:

Original signed by

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Meredith Maywood  
Tourism Specialist

### Approved for submission:

Original signed by

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Benjamin R. Addley  
Chief Administrative Officer

## ATTACHMENTS

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Attachment 1 CAO-2024-07 5-Year Tourism Plan Document, October 23, 2024  
Attachment 2 CAO-2024-07 5-Year Tourism Plan Presentation, October 23, 2024