

# Enhancing Winter/Shoulder Season Tourism in Windsor Essex: 3-year Strategy 2021



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# Disclaimer

The recommendations reported herein are provided on a confidential basis. Recommendations can be used in whatever necessary, including releasing them to travel and tourism industry stakeholders and partners and/or media.

The information and data found in this report are current as of the date of submission and subject to change given market forces and external variables.

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The Windsor Essex 3-Year Winter/Shoulder Tourism Strategy is made possible through the commitment and dedication of these stakeholders.

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Spirit of Windsor, Dieppe Gardens | Windsor



Thiessen Orchards | Learnington

# Winter/Shoulder season strategy overview

WINDSOR ESSEX CAN DIVERSIFY ITS TOURISM PRODUCTS AND EXPERIENCES THROUGH WINTER/SHOULDER TOURISM.

# Context & Purpose

On May 21, 2019, the Government of Canada launched a new national tourism development strategy ('Creating Middle Class Jobs: A Federal Tourism Growth Strategy') aiming at empowering communities across Canada to grow their tourism economies.

As part of that strategy, the Government of Canada committed to stimulate and diversify Canada's tourism products and experiences to overcome one of five of Canada's perennial tourism challenges: seasonality. With most tourism taking place during the summer months, it identified an opportunity to develop and enhance products and experiences, to create demand for travel beyond the peak summer season.

Additionally, it launched the Canadian Experiences Fund (CEF) to support expansion of distinctive products and experiences in rural communities. And, it selected the Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC) to manage the CEF via a new program called "Elevating Canadian Experiences".

The program, co-led by tourism management consultancy, Twenty31 Consulting, included a series of workshops across Canada to highlight the importance of building winter and shoulder season tourism capacity, the launch of a market-readiness toolkit and the creation of a series of regional winter and shoulder season tourism development strategies for selected regions – including Windsor Essex in Ontario.

This document outlines the strategy for Windsor Essex to develop its winter and shoulder tourism season. Specifically, it includes:

- Definition of key elements underpinning a destination's winter/shoulder strategy such as guiding principles, a vision and strategic objectives
- Identification and prioritization of competitive opportunities and their supporting initiatives
- Development of a roadmap for implementation

Taken together, this document provides Windsor Essex, along with its travel and tourism industry partners, a 24 to 36 month plan to develop and enhance its winter and shoulder season tourism potential.

THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT APPROACH  
CONSISTED OF THREE PHASES.

# Approach

01

## GATHER

- 1/ Situational analysis
- 2/ Winter/shoulder workshop
- 3/ Stakeholder engagement 1

02

## ACCESS

- 4/ Initial assessment
- 5/ Stakeholder engagement 2
- 6/ Initiative prioritization
- 7/ Draft Windsor Essex strategy

03

## RECOMMEND

- 8/ Windsor Essex strategy review
- 9/ Final Windsor Essex strategy



A PROVEN STRUCTURE GUIDED DEVELOPMENT OF WINDSOR  
ESSEX WINTER/SHOULDER TOURISM STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK.

# Windsor Essex Winter/Shoulder destination development structure

## Guiding Principles

Values that guide Windsor Essex tourism stakeholders in the development of Winter/Shoulder tourism products and experiences

## Challenges & Opportunities

Considers barriers identified in the Winter/Shoulder workshops and engagement sessions as well as opportunities to address those barriers

## Vision

Ensures alignment of the direction for Winter/Shoulder tourism in Windsor Essex that reflects industry demands, potential visitors, operators, and the communities that tourism serves

## Objectives

Accomplishments that Windsor Essex wishes to achieve its vision as it develops Winter/Shoulder tourism – the ultimate outcome

## Pillars

Themes that become high-level speaking points to describe the focus of the strategy

## Lead Opportunities

“Big idea” or “big opportunity” where there is a competitive advantage

Can be supply driven reflecting a certain currently underleveraged competitive opportunity

Can be demand driven like an under targeted group of prospective customers

Prioritized in order of ease of implementation and impact on tourism objectives

## Supporting Initiatives

Complements the lead opportunity

Ensures conditions for success are met and there are sufficient resources to develop the lead opportunity

Can include ensuring there is sufficient tourism infrastructure to support the product

Can include developing a profile, size of market and characteristics of those who might be willing to travel to the region

# Winter/Shoulder season strategy details



Downtown Windsor Farmers Market | Windsor

WINTER/SHOULDER TOURISM GUIDING PRINCIPLES ARE VALUES THAT GUIDE WINDSOR ESSEX TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS.

# Winter/Shoudler tourism guiding principles



Tolerant of a shift in mindset from a summer to a year-round destination



Focused on fostering entrepreneurship, and ultimately economic and job growth



Valued and supported by government, industry and citizens



A conduit to enhance and develop other sectors and industries



Inclusive, evidence-based and co-created by communities, government, industry and key stakeholders



Safeguards culture, environment, people, places and institutions

Winter/Shoulder tourism guiding principles identified and defined by key Windsor Essex key tourism stakeholders.

WINTER/SHOULDER TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN WINDSOR ESSEX  
INITIALLY FOCUSES ON A CHANGING MINDSET.

# Vision

Our vision is to unlock Windsor Essex for visitors all year-round.

They will be encouraged to do more and see more of our Winter/Shoulder products and experiences, which will step up their overall satisfaction and increase their likelihood of returning in other seasons and spreading the word.

We achieve our vision by collecting evidence to inform deliberate decisions, in coordination with our communities, government, industry and key stakeholders to expand the tourism season responsibly, unlocking long term economic and job growth.



Point Pelee National Park | Leamington

Winter/Shoulder tourism vision detailed by key Windsor Essex key tourism stakeholders.

FOUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES SUPPORT ACTUALIZATION OF THE VISION.

# Objectives

- 1/ Focus on developing 2-3 distinct Winter/Shoulder tourism opportunities per year, for the next three years
- 2/ Growing the leisure market during Winter/Shoulder (October through May) tourism occupancy by 5%\*
- 3/ Improve Winter/Shoulder (October through May) tourism job growth by 10%\*
- 4/ Continuous communication of the value of tourism and tourism leadership's commitment to Winter/Shoulder tourism development

\*Based on 2019 Winter/Shoulder tourism revenue

Winter/Shoulder tourism vision detailed by key Windsor Essex key tourism stakeholders.

# Pillars & Initiatives



WINTER/SHOULDER PILLARS ARE ESTABLISHING A YEAR-ROUND MINDSET, ENHANCING THE SUPPLY, AND ENTICING VISITORS.

# Pillars

## 01

### ESTABLISH FOCUS ON YEAR-ROUND TOURISM

#### INITIATIVES:

- 1/** Communicate the Winter/Shoulder tourism strategy
- 2/** Provide continuous and clear stakeholder communications
- 3/** Research potential markets for winter/shoulder (regional at first)
- 4/** Create opportunities for collaboration and partnerships

#### OUTCOME

Establish year-round tourism by prioritizing and communicating aspirations with relevant stakeholders.

## 02

### ENHANCE THE SUPPLY

#### INITIATIVES:

- 1/** Inventory existing Winter/Shoulder products and experiences related to (year 1):
  - Food and drink
  - "Canada's Furthest South" brand
  - Domestic Drive Market
- 2/** Develop products and experiences related to lead opportunities
- 3/** Develop packages and itineraries focusing on lead opportunities

Lead Opportunities

#### OUTCOME

Enhance supply by understanding existing opportunities and connecting them with potential source market needs.

## 03

### ENTICING VISITORS

#### INITIATIVES:

- 1/** Plan and execute 2-3 regional campaign(s) focused on food and drink and "Canada's Furthest South" brand, and the domestic drive market
- 2/** Work with tourism channels to promote products and experiences related to lead opportunities

#### OUTCOME

Promote Windsor Essex Winter/Shoulder tourism products and experiences to the right people, at the right time.

**PILLAR 1: ESTABLISH FOCUS ON YEAR-ROUND TOURISM****Initiative 01: Communicate Winter/Shoulder Tourism Strategy****DESCRIPTION****Rationale**

A destination tourism strategy is the first step a destination can take towards developing and enhancing its tourism and other related industries growth. A key next step to ensure the success of the destination's tourism strategy is for the authority that owns it, in this case Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island, to communicate existence of the strategy to relevant stakeholders to generate buy-in for its implementation and leadership among its stakeholders.

**Actions**

Complete and approve Windsor Essex's Winter/Shoulder tourism strategy.

Attain buy-in from all relevant stakeholders.

Communicate the region's focus on specific elements, in this case Windsor Essex's food and drink scene, "Canada's Furthest South" brand, and on its domestic drive market (see PILLAR 2) to develop its Winter/Shoulder tourism season to achieve its vision of becoming a year-round destination.

**TIMEFRAME/TRIGGER**

Within 3 months of strategy approval

**RESPONSIBLE**

Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island (lead)

Tourism Industry Association of Ontario (TIAO)  
(support)

Regional Tourism Organization 1 (RTO-1)  
(support)

**OUTCOMES**

Stakeholders aware of Windsor Essex  
Winter/Shoulder tourism strategy

**PILLAR 1: ESTABLISH FOCUS ON YEAR-ROUND TOURISM****Initiative 02: Provide Continuous and Clear Stakeholder Communications****DESCRIPTION****Rationale**

Destinations that are most successful are those that maintain continuous communication with their key stakeholders (and in some cases, all stakeholders). Having a mindset of continuous communication reinforces the responsibility of execution of the strategy among those responsible for its execution and provides key stakeholders with an opportunity to understand the context and align with initiatives.

**Actions**

Consider conducting a survey with key tourism stakeholders to better understand communications needs – i.e., how, what, where and how often.

Develop a yearly organizational communications plan and execute to continue to display leadership required for stakeholders to move together towards the common vision. Of importance would be the communication of Windsor Essex approved Winter/Shoulder tourism strategy, the lead opportunities it will focus on, the rationale behind that focus, as well as the initiatives and the status of the initiatives that Windsor Essex is taking to implement the strategy.

Consider creating additional simple networking opportunities for Windsor Essex's tourism stakeholders.

**TIMEFRAME/TRIGGER**

Immediately upon strategy approval

Ongoing

**RESPONSIBLE**

Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island (lead)

RTO-1 (support)

**OUTCOMES**

Plurality of Windsor Essex tourism stakeholders satisfied with communications

Constant communication stream of Windsor Essex tourism actions

**PILLAR 1: ESTABLISH FOCUS ON YEAR-ROUND TOURISM****Initiative 03: Research Potential Markets For Winter/ Shoulder (Regional At First)****DESCRIPTION****Rationale**

Travel consumer behaviour in the Winter/Shoulder season is different than in the peak summer season and add to that the shift caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This is true for local, domestic, regional and international travellers.

**Actions**

Conduct thorough research to understand potential target regional visitor needs, including the types of places and activities they are seeking, how they intend to learn more about products and experiences, their booking behaviours and newly developed interests as a result of COVID-19, and so forth.

Use existing available tools to gain a better understanding of potential target visitors to ensure Windsor Essex offers experiences they are seeking and attract them through effective marketing campaigns. In depth digital listening can be a cost-effective way to provide actionable data quickly.

Understand local sentiment towards tourism in general, but also in Winter/Shoulder season to address negative sentiment they may feel towards potential visitors.

Make insights accessible to all tourism and non-tourism partners to evaluate opportunities and make the right business decisions.

**TIMEFRAME/TRIGGER**

Within 6 months of strategy approval

**RESPONSIBLE**

Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island (lead)

RTO-1 (support)

**OUTCOMES**

Market intelligence on target markets and Winter/Shoulder season needs

Access to research for tourism stakeholders

**PILLAR 1: ESTABLISH FOCUS ON YEAR-ROUND TOURISM****Initiative 04: Create Opportunities For Collaboration And Partnerships****DESCRIPTION****Rationale**

When launching into new territory as may be the case for many stakeholders in Windsor Essex focusing on the development or enhancement of the potential Winter/Shoulder, working in collaboration with other stakeholders and partners provides the operational and psychological support for destinations and operators to lean on each other for guidance and advice and reduces the risk that a single destination or operator may take attempting to develop new products and experiences independently.

**Actions**

Bring together a group of focused operators that can support development of product and experience clusters, regularly. Potential partnership opportunities includes banding with other stakeholders that can support Winter/Shoulder season market research, marketing and promotion, packaging and itinerary development and efforts to jumpstart the Winter/Shoulder season.

Leverage tools such as video-conferencing and social media platforms to connect groups of stakeholders; this, however, does not replace face-to-face meetings that may be required, when the time comes to re-connect stakeholders to realize opportunities.

**TIMEFRAME/TRIGGER**

Within 6 months of strategy approval

Ongoing

**RESPONSIBLE**

Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island (lead)

RTO-1 (support)

**OUTCOMES**

Increased number of partnerships supporting Winter/Shoulder opportunities



**PILLAR 2: ENHANCE THE SUPPLY****Initiative 01: Inventory Existing Winter/Shoulder Products And Experiences****DESCRIPTION****Rationale**

Stakeholders from across the region identified and prioritized several potential lead opportunities to build momentum towards enhancing Windsor Essex's Winter/Shoulder tourism season.

Focusing on the top 2-3 opportunities in the first 12-24 months allows for the best chance of success. If successful, other identified and prioritized opportunities can be reviewed to determine whether Windsor Essex ought to begin focusing on them as well. Initial Winter/Shoulder lead opportunities for Windsor Essex include focusing on (year 1):

- Food and drink
- "Canada's Furthest South" brand
- Initially targeting the hyper local market, then domestic drive market

**Actions**

Understand the universe of Winter/Shoulder products and experiences that relate to these lead opportunities (especially given some operators may have been impacted by COVID-19).

Identify potential gaps to develop new products and experiences and/or related packages based on identified opportunities.

House information online to inform operators/visitors on availability of products and experiences they can link to.

**TIMEFRAME/TRIGGER**

Within 6 months of strategy approval

**RESPONSIBLE**

Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island (lead)

RTO-1 (support)

**OUTCOMES**

Listing of products and experiences related to lead opportunities

**PILLAR 2: ENHANCE THE SUPPLY****Initiative 02: Develop Products And Experiences Related To Lead Opportunities****DESCRIPTION****Rationale**

The inventory of existing Windsor Essex Winter/Shoulder tourism products and experiences (PILLAR 2: Initiative 01 – Inventory Existing Winter/Shoulder Products and Experiences) will allow Windsor Essex to identify the gaps that need to be filled to provide visitors with a holistic tourism experience.

**Actions**

Work with key destinations and operators related to the identified lead opportunities to brainstorm options to fill identified gaps leveraging learnings from market research to ensure developed products and experiences are aligned with potential target market needs (PILLAR 1: Initiative 03 – Research Potential Markets for Winter/Shoulder – Regional at First).

Consider what other destinations in Canada and beyond are doing related to identified lead opportunities.

Develop a short business case on each opportunity including a description of the idea itself, the market potential, those who would be responsible for its implementation, potential funding sources, steps for implementation, and so forth.

Present business case to required stakeholders to support its implementation (e.g., economic development department, small business hubs or other operators who may be willing to expand their offerings).

**TIMEFRAME/TRIGGER**

Within 6–9 months of strategy approval

**RESPONSIBLE**

Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island (lead)

RTO-1 (support)

Invest WindsorEssex and Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre

**OUTCOMES**

Development of new products and experiences related to lead opportunities

**PILLAR 2: ENHANCE THE SUPPLY****Initiative 03: Develop Packages And Itineraries Focusing On Lead Opportunities**

DESCRIPTION	TIMEFRAME/TRIGGER
<p><b>Rationale</b></p> <p>In many instances, development of products/experiences alone (PILLAR 2: Initiative 02: Develop Products and Experiences Related to Lead Opportunities) may be sufficient to entice travellers to visit and ensure the quality of their experience in the hope of encouraging a return visit or spread of the experience through word of mouth.</p> <p>However, the research (PILLAR 1: Initiative 03 – Research Potential Markets for Winter/ Shoulder) may determine that some visitors prefer to simplify decision-making when it comes lodging, food and beverage, activities, attractions and so forth.</p>	<p>Within 6-9 months of strategy approval</p>
<p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>Work with identified key stakeholders (destinations and operators) involved with the development of lead opportunity product and experiences to identify and develop an inventory of possible destination itineraries according to specific product themes and regional market travel needs.</p> <p>Coordinate with stakeholders within the region to launch the packages/ itineraries, as well as to publicize the itineraries starting with earned media.</p>	<p><b>RESPONSIBLE</b></p> <p>Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island (lead)</p> <p>RTO-1 (support)</p>
	<p><b>OUTCOMES</b></p> <p>Development of new products and experiences related to lead opportunities</p>

**PILLAR 3: ENTICE VISITORS****Initiative 01: Plan And Execute 2-3 Regional Campaigns**

DESCRIPTION	TIMEFRAME/TRIGGER
<p><b>Rationale</b></p> <p>Stakeholders that informed Windsor Essex's Winter/Shoulder tourism strategy identified regional tourism as a lead opportunity, especially those that may be looking to escape major urban areas in pursuit of less crowds.</p> <p>Target markets within this region need to be informed of the attractions that Windsor Essex offers with a focus on food and drink, its position as "Canada's Furthest South", and the domestic drive market opportunity.</p> <p>Focusing marketing campaigns on targeted markets as defined by research addressed in PILLAR 1: Initiative 03 – Research Potential Markets for Winter/Shoulder, Windsor Essex may be able to entice those travellers in the region to experience a new Winter/Shoulder season product, stay longer, with more family members or friends, and spend more with a focus on the identified market-ready or near-market ready opportunities like food and drink, checking items off their "Canada's Furthest South" list, or taking a domestic drive-based holiday.</p> <p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>Development of integrated campaigns, armed with the research conducted in PILLAR 1: Initiative 03 – Research Potential Markets for Winter/Shoulder, aimed at specific target areas within the region, leveraging appropriate messaging, channels and influencers where necessary.</p>	<p>Within 9-12 months of strategy approval</p>
	RESPONSIBLE
	<p>Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island (lead)</p> <p>Agency of Record (support)</p>
	OUTCOMES
	<p>2-3 regional campaigns</p>

**PILLAR 3: ENTICE VISITORS****Initiative 02: Work With Tourism Channels**

DESCRIPTION	TIMEFRAME/TRIGGER
<p><b>Rationale</b></p> <p>Working with channels such as traditional and online travel agencies accelerates linking visitors with winter/ shoulder products, experiences, attractions, itineraries, and packages developed for the Winter/Shoulder season.</p> <p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>Identify tour operators focused on the regional market that may be a good conduit to promote food and drink and “Canada’s Furthest South” Winter/Shoulder products, experiences and packages, and connect with them to promote those products, experiences and packages.</p> <p>Work with traditional and online travel agencies influencing the local/ regional travel market that Windsor Essex can explore to further promote Winter/Shoulder season products, experiences and packages online targeting different demo/psychographics.</p>	<p>Within 6-12 months of strategy approval</p>
	RESPONSIBLE
	<p>Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island (lead)</p> <p>Destination Ontario (support)</p> <p>RTO-1 (support)</p>
	OUTCOMES
	<p>Promotion of Winter/Shoulder tourism packages through tourism channels</p>



EACH INITIATIVE IS SET AGAINST A TIMELINE BASED ON NEED, IMPACT AND EASE OF IMPLEMENTATION.

# Tactical Roadmap

	NEXT 3-6 MONTHS	NEXT 6-9 MONTHS	NEXT 9-12 MONTHS
<b>01</b> <b>ESTABLISH YEAR-ROUND TOURISM FOCUS</b>	<p>Communicate Winter/Shoulder tourism strategy</p> <p>Provide continuous and clear stakeholder communications</p>	<p>Research potential markets for Winter/Shoulder (regional at first)</p> <p>Create opportunities for collaboration and partnerships</p> <p>Provide continuous and clear stakeholder communications</p>	<p>Create opportunities for collaboration and partnerships</p> <p>Provide continuous and clear stakeholder communications</p>
<b>02</b> <b>ENHANCE SUPPLY</b>		<p>Inventory existing Winter/Shoulder products and experiences related to lead opportunities</p> <p>Develop products and experiences related to lead opportunities</p> <p>Develop packages and itineraries focusing on lead opportunities</p>	
<b>03</b> <b>ENTICE VISITORS</b>			<p>Plan and execute 1-2 regional campaign(s) focused on food and drink and "Canada's Furthest South" brand</p> <p>Work with tourism channels to promote products and experiences related to lead opportunities</p>

# Appendix



THERE ARE KEY BARRIERS THAT IMPACT DEVELOPMENT OF WINTER/SHOULDER TOURISM IN WINDSOR ESSEX

# Challenges



## Access

Roads, wayfinding and signage does not support travel across municipalities

Cycling infrastructure not yet fully connected



## Changing Perceptions

Shift in mindset to be a year-round destination

Focus on summer lifestyle

Weather is too cold or not cold enough

Perception of distance to tourism opportunities

Impact of COVID-19 on traditional tourism products and experiences



## Collaboration

More collaboration, coordination and partnership required among tourism stakeholders within and across municipalities



## Staffing & Labour

Difficulty in accessing skilled and affordable year-round labour

Costly to retain staff

Some business owners and staff burnout at end of summer



## Business Support

Cash flow, capacity and financial viability of some businesses

Fear of entrepreneurs and small businesses to take risks

Information to make business decisions



## Marketing & Promotion

Visitors unaware of available activities and experiences

Packages and itineraries not geared for Winter/Shoulder



## Understanding Market Needs

Hinders ability to evolve to meet emerging market needs (generational, geographical, psychosocial, etc.)

Limited knowledge of tourism assets across municipalities

Winter/Shoulder tourism vision detailed by key Windsor Essex key tourism stakeholders.

AND SEVERAL OPPORTUNITIES THAT CAN ENHANCE WINTER/ SHOULDER TOURISM.

# Opportunities



## Weather

A “warmer” winter destination in Canada

A badge of honor



## Waterfront

Lighting up the waterfront

Gordie Howe International Bridge



## Winter Adventure

Snowmobiling, ice fishing, ice sailing

Shoulder season drives/cycling

Winter camping

Night-sky viewing



## First Nations & Indigenous Tourism

Canoeing expeditions (fall/spring)

Culture



## Supporting organizations

Collaboration between Business Improvement Areas (BIAs)/districts and municipalities



## Agri-tourism

Essex Pelee Island Coast (EPIC) Wine Route

Farmers markets/urban markets

Flower markets and farm stands



## Entrepreneurial spirit

Support for entrepreneurs

Innovative thinking

Remote workers

Small Business Center



## Events & festivals

Winter light festivals

Windsor International Film Festival



## New markets

Focus on Canadian travellers versus US

Visitors from regions beyond typical drive routes



## Infrastructure

Outdoor facilities for Winter/Shoulder (e.g., outdoor fireplaces, etc.)

Potential tourism information hub near the new international bridge

Additional wayfinding signage for visitors coming off of the new bridge who are navigating Windsor Essex



## Arts & culinary

Windsor Distillery District

Arts experiences (e.g., poetry, murals)



## Technology

Itinerary builders

Investment in digital passports

Leveraging a hotel and package booking platform

Tourism Windsor Essex website

Winter/Shoulder tourism challenges identified by key Windsor Essex tourism stakeholders.



WINDSOR ESSEX PRIORITIZED SEVERAL OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE WINTER/SHOULDER TOURISM.

# Winter/Shoulder tourism lead opportunities

## HOW TO READ THIS TABLE

Prioritization of opportunities based on qualitative assessment (typically defined in workshop setting) of impact on objectives and ease of implementation

All identified opportunities require additional assessment and research

Identified opportunities are not static to one quadrant – they are dynamic with the hope that most opportunities will shift to quadrant 1

### HIGH POTENTIAL TO IMPACT OBJECTIVES

#### 3. Medium-term opportunities for next 2-4 years



#### 1. Near market-ready



#### 4. For later consideration/re-evaluation



#### 2. Quick wins for next 1-2 year



### LOW POTENTIAL TO IMPACT OBJECTIVES

CHALLENGING TO IMPLEMENT

EASY TO IMPLEMENT

WHILE SOME OPPORTUNITIES ARE LONGER-TERM, OTHERS CAN BE IMPLEMENTED SOONER.

# Focus: near market-ready opportunities



## "Canada's Furthest South"

The concept that Windsor Essex is the "Furthest South" of Canada for many tourism products and experiences creates an opportunity for Windsor Essex to set itself apart from other destinations.

Visiting Canada's "Furthest South" becomes something that visitors may wish to check off their travel to-do list, not to mention that the the climate and terroir maybe be conducive to and tourism products and experiences (e.g., restaurants, attractions), whether real or perceived, can open earlier in spring than in other places in Canada and can run later into the fall.



## Food & Drink

Windsor Essex has a long established history with 'liquid courage' (e.g., rumrunning, bootlegging, etc.) – the drink.

It has a unique claim to be a connoisseur of fine wines and spirits being home to many brewers and distillers and a designated wine region, not to mention Canada's oldest wine region and birthplace of Canadian Whisky.

In the Winter/Shoulder season, alongside having the most acreage for farmland in Ontario and offering farm-to-table and diverse, multicultural dining options, this can make for particularly cozy experiences for adults and couples wishing to imbibe, taking advantage of potential marketing partnerships, tasting passes, food pairings and cooking classes.



## Domestic Drive Market

Especially as Windsor Essex begins to expand its tourism season to include the winter and shoulder seasons, it views its most accessible markets to be those that are a drive away, within the region itself.

Given the uncertain future with COVID-19, focusing on nearby markets and supporting locals; reaching nearby city-dwellers looking to escape makes for a particularly enticing opportunity to target those who may require something more affordable and within reach.

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES CAN BE DEVELOPED IN THE NEXT 1-2 YEARS.

# Other opportunities: quick wins for next 1-2 years

Quick wins for next 1-2 years



## US Market

Post-COVID-19, the US market will again become one of the most significant markets for Windsor Essex and there is potential to capture more of this market in the Winter/Shoulder season.

There would be a significant impact of capturing this market on the Windsor Essex travel and tourism industry due to the proximity of the US and the higher yields its visitors have on Canadian destinations.

In prior years, the US market would be considered a close to market-ready opportunity for Windsor Essex to develop its Winter/Shoulder tourism. Due to COVID-19, this opportunity will require more time to materialize.



## Festivals & Events

Developing festivals and events in the Winter/Shoulder season can support increased visitation by those who may be interested by those events from nearby markets or further afield while also enhancing the quality of experiences in the Winter/Shoulder for local residents as well.

The DMO can enable Windsor Essex to establish and differentiate itself based on this opportunity, potentially linking to other lead opportunities such as food and drink.



### SME Support

Windsor Essex is developing a reputation as a hub for entrepreneurs to innovate as the regulations, enabling environment, special districting areas, etc. allow small and medium size businesses to thrive.

Positioning itself as a hub for small and medium businesses, not just in the summer but all-year, can support development of tourism businesses focused on the Winter/Shoulder season as well as attract businesses from elsewhere to be based here.



### Outdoor Enthusiasts

From enjoying nature and wildlife viewing to exploring Pelee Island, Windsor Essex has a host of outdoor offerings to share with visitors in the Winter/Shoulder season.

Some effort would be required to ensure a holistic experience for visitors wishing to participate in outdoor adventure in Windsor Essex – more would need to be done to package and commercialize related products and experiences.



### Indigenous Tourism

Windsor Essex offers unique Indigenous cultural experiences, including the country's biggest Indigenous restaurant – an attraction in and of itself.

The immediate focus will be on the development of products and experiences around Indigenous culture and heritage, ensuring these would significantly impact Windsor Essex Winter/Shoulder tourism season needs to be further studied, as does the extent of demand for these experiences.



### Two Nation Destination

Branding itself as a “Two Nation Destination” is an opportunity that Windsor Essex can build on that few other destinations can own as well. This type of branding provides some visitors with the opportunity to feel like they can check two destinations off at once while creating partnerships with the US for their market but also in terms of products and experiences.

Similar to the US market opportunity, due to COVID-19, this opportunity will require more time to materialize.



OTHER OPPORTUNITIES: MEDIUM-TERM OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
NEXT 2-4 YEARS

# More opportunities can be developed in the next 2-4 years.

Medium-term opportunities for next 2-4 years



## Cycling

Due to more pleasant weather during the Winter/Shoulder season and well-connected bike paths throughout Windsor Essex, the destination can become a mecca for cyclists from around Canada and elsewhere.

With the proper infrastructure, itineraries and promotion, Windsor Essex has the potential to be on a cyclist's wish list. More research is required to understand potential target market needs.



## History, Culture & Arts

Windsor Essex has a rich and fascinating history and culture alongside a burgeoning arts community.

These types of experiences tend to be indoors which would complement trips to Windsor Essex that focus on the outdoors, not to mention that history, culture and arts can very much be linked to other lead opportunities such as food and drink, gaming, etc.

## Medium-term opportunities for next 2-4 years



### Nature & Birding

The Windsor Essex region is home to one of the most fascinating bird migration areas on the planet. This fact is one that can diversify Windsor Essex from other destinations.

More needs to be done to sustainably commercialize nature and birding, packaging it with other experiences, for example, so that birders and twitchers can increase spending in the destination.



### Casino

The casino in Windsor Essex is a big draw, especially for US tourists.

More can be done to collaborate with the casino and create products and experiences that take those who use the casino as a lead opportunity to also experience what else Windsor Essex has to offer from its food and drink, festivals and events, and so forth.



FINALLY, SOME OPPORTUNITIES CAN BE DEVELOPED IN THE FUTURE OR AFTER RE-EVALUATION.

# Other opportunities: opportunities for later consideration/re-evaluation

## Opportunities for Later Consideration/Re-evaluation



### Snowbirds

Most Canadian destinations will be vying for snowbirds, particularly during and post-COVID, since they are generally unable to travel to the warm destinations they typically fly to in the Winter/Shoulder season. Given Windsor Essex's warmer climate (relative to the rest of Canada), it can be sold as an alternative destination to some snowbirds.

More research needs to be done on the medium- to long-term potential of this travel segment. Additionally, it would require significant time, effort and funding to attract this segment to Windsor Essex.



### Cannabis Tourism

Cannabis tourism around Canada is expanding and in many cases is a primary reason for travellers, especially those from US markets where cannabis is more regulated, to visit.

More research needs to be conducted to understand the need and behaviors of those who may be interested in cannabis tourism in order to entice them to come and spend more – what types of products and experiences might they require?



Lakewood Park North | Tecumseh

# Supporting Initiatives: “Canada’s Furthest South”

FOCUS IS ON SUPPORTING INITIATIVES TO FACILITATE IDENTIFIED PRIORITY LEAD OPPORTUNITIES.

# 'Canada's furthest south'

PRODUCT & EXPERIENCES	ENABLING ENVIRONMENT	INFRASTRUCTURE	TARGET MARKETS	CHANNELS	MARKETING & PR
<p>Inventory products and experiences that can leverage "Canada's Furthest South" and identify possible opportunities</p> <p>Support creation of products and experiences</p> <p>Develop packages and itineraries</p>	<p>Communicate prioritization of "Canada's Furthest South" branding to key stakeholders and community</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>Conduct market research to identify and define target markets that "Canada's Furthest South" would appeal to the most</p>	<p>Work with tour operators and travel agencies (including Online Travel Agencies) to promote Windsor Essex's "Canada's Furthest South" products and experiences</p>	<p>Create 1-2 campaigns to promote to identified target markets</p>

OPPORTUNITY CATEGORY	SUPPORTING INITIATIVE	DESCRIPTION
Products & Experiences	Inventory products and experiences that can leverage “Canada’s Furthest South” and identify possible opportunities	Conduct an inventory of existing products and experiences that can leverage the “Canada’s Furthest South” brand, especially for the Winter/Shoulder season
	Support creation of products and experiences	Based on inventory of existing products and experiences that can leverage “Canada’s Furthest South” for Winter/Shoulder season, identify possible opportunities to expand the brand  Work with local municipalities and Windsor Essex Small Business Centre to support focus on development of new products and experiences that leverage “Canada’s Furthest South”
	Develop packages and itineraries	Once a comprehensive understanding of products and experiences that can leverage “Canada’s Furthest South” for Winter/Shoulder season is complete, develop packages and itineraries that cater to identified target market needs (see “Target Markets” initiative)
Enabling Environment	Communicate prioritization of “Furthest South” branding to key stakeholders and community	Communicate the Windsor Essex’s Winter/Shoulder tourism strategy with all key stakeholders  Communicate the Winter/Shoulder “Canada’s Furthest South” offering with relevant stakeholders to ensure alignment with their products and experiences
Target Markets	Conduct market research to identify and define target markets that “Canada’s Furthest South” would appeal to the most	Conduct research to identify potential target markets (especially within the surrounding area at first), to determine interest and needs in “Canada’s Furthest South” product and experiences in Winter/Shoulder season
Channels	Work with tour operators and travel agencies (including Online Travel Agencies) to promote Windsor Essex’ “Canada’s Furthest South” products and experiences	Identify tour operators who may be a good conduit to promote “Canada’s Furthest South” Winter/Shoulder products, experiences, packages to target markets, especially within the surrounding area  Connect with tour operators to promote “Canada’s Furthest South” Winter/Shoulder products and experiences
Marketing & PR	Create 1-2 campaigns to promote to identified target markets	Leveraging insight from the “Target Markets” initiatives, develop 1-2 campaigns focusing on “Canada’s Furthest South” products and experiences in the Winter/Shoulder season



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# Food and drink

PRODUCT & EXPERIENCES	ENABLING ENVIRONMENT	INFRASTRUCTURE	TARGET MARKETS	CHANNELS	MARKETING & PR
<p>Inventory related products and experiences and identify possible gaps</p> <p>Support creation of additional attractions to address gaps</p> <p>Develop packages and itineraries</p>	<p>Communicate prioritization of food drink to key stakeholders and community</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>Conduct market research to identify and define target markets (especially within the surrounding area)</p>	<p>Work with select tour operators and travel agencies (including Online Travel Agencies) to sell products and experiences</p>	<p>Create 1-2 campaigns to promote to identified target markets</p>

OPPORTUNITY CATEGORY	SUPPORTING INITIATIVE	DESCRIPTION
Products & Experiences	Inventory related products and experiences and identify possible gaps	<p>Conduct an inventory of existing food and drink-related products and experiences, especially for the winter/shoulder season</p> <p>Includes identification of complementary assets like lodging, events and other attractions</p>
	Support creation of additional attractions to address gaps	<p>Based on the inventory of existing food and drink-related products and experiences that can be leveraged for the winter/shoulder season, identify possible gaps for a holistic experience</p> <p>Work with local municipalities and the Windsor Essex Small Business Centre to support focus on development of new food and drink products and experiences</p>
	Develop packages and itineraries	<p>Once a comprehensive understanding of food and drink-related products and experiences that can be leveraged for the winter/shoulder season is completed, develop packages and itineraries that cater to identified target market needs (see “Target Markets” initiative)</p>
Enabling Environment	Communicate prioritization of food and drink to key stakeholders and community	<p>Communicate the Windsor Essex’s winter/shoulder tourism strategy with all key stakeholders</p> <p>Communicate the winter/shoulder food and drink offering with relevant stakeholders to ensure alignment with their products and experiences</p>
Target Markets	Conduct market research to identify and define target markets (especially within the surrounding area)	<p>Conduct research to identify potential target markets (especially within the surrounding area at first), to determine interest and needs with food and drink in the winter/shoulder season</p>
Channels	Work with select tour operators and travel agencies (including Online Travel Agencies) to sell products and experiences	<p>Identify tour operators who may be a good conduit to promote developed food and drink winter/shoulder packages to target markets, especially within the surrounding area</p> <p>Connect with tour operators to promote winter/shoulder food and drink products and experiences</p>
Marketing & PR	Create 1-2 campaigns to promote to identified target markets	<p>Leveraging insight from the “Target Markets” initiatives, develop 1-2 campaigns focusing on food and drink products and experiences in the winter/shoulder season</p>

FOCUS IS ON SUPPORTING INITIATIVES TO FACILITATE IDENTIFIED  
PRIORITY LEAD OPPORTUNITIES

# Domestic Drive Market

PRODUCT & EXPERIENCES	ENABLING ENVIRONMENT	INFRASTRUCTURE	TARGET MARKETS	CHANNELS	MARKETING & PR
<p>Inventory products and experiences that appeal to the domestic drive market</p> <p>Support creation of additional attractions to address gaps</p> <p>Develop packages and itineraries</p>	<p>Communicate prioritization of the domestic drive market to key stakeholders and community</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>Conduct market research to identify and define target markets</p>	<p>Work with select tour operators and travel agencies (including Online Travel Agencies) to sell products and experiences</p>	<p>Create 1-2 campaigns to promote to identified target markets</p>

OPPORTUNITY CATEGORY	SUPPORTING INITIATIVE	DESCRIPTION
Products & Experiences	Inventory products and experiences that appeal to the domestic drive market	<p>Conduct an inventory of existing products and experiences that may appeal to the domestic drive market based on target market needs (see “Target Markets” initiative), especially for the Winter/Shoulder season</p> <p>Includes identification of assets like lodging, culinary and other attractions</p>
	Support creation of additional attractions to address gaps	<p>Based on the inventory of existing products and experiences that would incite regional travel for the Winter/Shoulder season, identify possible gaps for a holistic experience</p> <p>Work with local municipalities and the Windsor Essex Small Business Centre to support development of new products and experiences focused on the domestic drive market</p>
	Develop packages and itineraries	Once a comprehensive understanding of products and experiences that can incite the domestic drive market for the Winter/Shoulder season is completed, develop packages and itineraries that cater to identified target market needs (see “Target Markets” initiative)
Enabling Environment	Communicate prioritization of the domestic drive market to key stakeholders and community	<p>Communicate the Windsor Essex’s Winter/Shoulder tourism strategy with all key stakeholders</p> <p>Communicate the focus on the domestic drive market for the Winter/Shoulder with relevant stakeholders to ensure alignment with their products and experiences</p>
Target Markets	Conduct market research to identify and define target markets (especially within the surrounding area)	Conduct research to identify potential target markets (especially within the surrounding area at first), to determine the interest and needs of the domestic drive market in the Winter/Shoulder season
Channels	Work with select tour operators and travel agencies (including Online Travel Agencies) to sell products and experiences	<p>Identify tour operators who may be a good conduit to promote developed Winter/Shoulder packages to surrounding target markets</p> <p>Connect with tour operators to promote Winter/Shoulder products and experiences to target the domestic drive market</p>
Marketing & PR	Create 1-2 campaigns to promote to identified target markets	Leveraging insight from the “Target Markets” initiatives, develop 1-2 campaigns focusing on products and experiences to incite target the domestic drive market to visit in the Winter/Shoulder season

# Thank You

