

Note to Reader:

MGA's Recommended MATA Framework (i.e. the grant framework) is outlined in Part 1 of this Strategy. Certain aspects of the MGA recommendations were not originally included in the RFP.

While these represent MGA's suggestions concerning the grant framework, these recommendations may not fully align with the Board's expectations. MATA is working to refine the grant framework. Therefore, the earliest the grants could be available is Q1 2024.



South Bruce Peninsula MATA

**Recommended MATA Framework,
5-Year Tourism Strategy & 1-Year Action Plan**

September 2023



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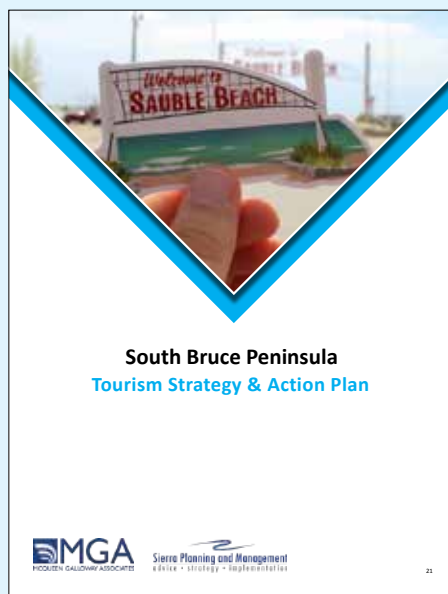
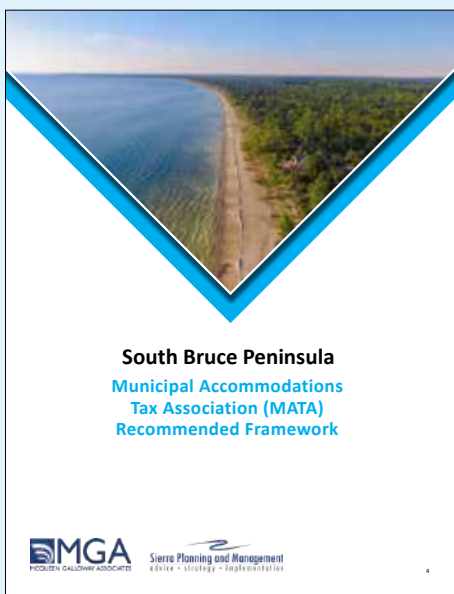
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The Municipal Accommodation Tax Association (MATA) for South Bruce Peninsula, pursuant to their Agreement with the Town of South Bruce Peninsula, has commissioned the development of a Tourism Strategy and Action Plan.

In addition to the Strategy and Action Plan, the newly formed MATA tasked the consultants to develop a “framework” to guide decision making regarding the allocation of Municipal Accommodations Tax (MAT) funds under their management.

The Tourism Strategy and Action Plan and the MATA Framework are distinct documents. The Tourism Strategy and Action Plan is intended to identify specific actions that MATA, in their tourism leadership role, should address over the next five years and collaborate with other tourism entities as well as South Bruce Peninsula, including priorities for the first year. The MATA Framework is intended to guide the MATA Board in how they will allocate MAT funding to qualified applicants based on industry best practices.

THIS REPORT IS COMPRISED OF TWO DISTINCT SECTIONS:



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

MGA wishes to thank and acknowledge the staff of RTO7 who served as project managers, the project steering committee for their insight and guidance in the preparation of this Tourism Strategy & Action Plan for the Municipal Accommodation Tax Association (MATA) of South Bruce Peninsula. Additionally, we would like to acknowledge the support, insight, and vision of the MATA Board in commissioning this Tourism Strategy and Action Plan to guide their efforts in the next five years.

MATA BOARD AND TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS:

MATA BOARD OF DIRECTORS	STAKEHOLDERS ORGANIZATIONS
<i>(presented by last name in alphabetical order)</i>	<i>The following organizations and entities are deemed to be the primary stakeholders in the overall planning, development, implementation, and delivery of tourism in SBP.</i>
<p>Baulch, Evan - Heydays Restaurant Owner Clarke, Kim - MATA Admin/RTO7 Follis, Kim - Financial advisor Grant, Mitch - STA owner Lisa Gow - Carson’s Campground Harb, Donna - Realtor/Classic Sauble Cottages Trask, Robert - Chair/Chesley Lake Camp Knight, Betty Ann (George) - Financial advisor</p>	<p>Municipal Accommodation Tax Association (MATA) Town of South Bruce Peninsula (SBP) Sauble Beach Chamber of Commerce (SBCoC) Warton Chamber of Commerce (WCoC) Business Improvement Area (BIA) Bruce County (BC) Regional Tourism Organization - 7 (RTO7) Tourism Entities (TE)*</p>

* *Tourism Entities include short-term accommodators (STA) and tourism related businesses and organizations who serve visitors to South Bruce Peninsula for the purpose of Tourism.*



South Bruce Peninsula
Municipal Accommodations
Tax Association (MATA)
Recommended Framework

INTRODUCTION

The following framework has been prepared to incorporate the current situation, the provincial context that all DMO’s must work within, the strategic priorities of MATA, and ultimately the guidelines proposed for the MATA’s Fund Allocation Committee and potential applicants. The respective sections include;

- Historic SBP MAT Revenues
- Ontario’s Municipal Accommodation Tax Guidelines
- MATA FRAMEWORK Recommendations
- Proposed Organization Structure
- Strategic Investment Goals – Fund Committee
- Conflict of Interest
- Eligible Applicants
- Application Evaluation Criteria
- Eligible Cost for MAT Funding
- Maximum Funding Guidelines
- Application Process
- Funding Agreement
- Reporting

HISTORIC SBP MAT REVENUES:

The MATA Board is ultimately responsible for the strategic allocation of MAT funds. Based on historic MATA distribution data in the 2022-2023 Budget, MATA will be allocating several hundred thousand dollars worth of funding. In the past two years, the Town of South Bruce Peninsula estimated allocations of:

	2022	2023
MAT Revenue (annual budget)	(\$600,000)	(\$400,000)
Operating expenses	\$45,000	\$55,000
Net Revenue to be shared with MATA	\$555,000	\$345,000
MATA 50% share	\$277,500	\$172,500

Data source: Town of South Bruce Peninsula, User Pay Operating Budget 2023

Having a Framework built on best practices and clear guidelines will assist the MAT Board and tourism entities to understand the limitations and opportunities provided by MAT funds.

ONTARIO'S MUNICIPAL ACCOMMODATION TAX GUIDELINES

The Province of Ontario's Transient Accommodation Regulation 435/ authorized municipalities across Ontario to implement a Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT). The implementation and administration of the accommodation tax is authorized under Section 400.1 of the Municipal Act and Ontario Regulation 435/17, local MAT by-laws and other relevant laws, regulations, and by-laws.

In the Town of South Bruce Peninsula, MAT is in effect since January 1, 2022. The MAT By-Law 30-2021 approves and regulates the implementation of a four percent (4%) mandatory MAT applicable on all short-term accommodations under 30 days. The MAT is mandatory and obligates providers of short term accommodation to collect the tax from purchasers of accommodation and to remit the collected tax amount to the Town.

The MAT proceeds must be allocated, distributed, and utilized, in accordance with the Ontario regulation, the municipal by-law, and all applicable bylaws. The provincial regulation provides that the Town shall share at least 50% of MAT proceeds with an eligible tourism entity for tourism promotion purposes, including tourism product development.

In the Town of South Bruce Peninsula, the Town has designated the Municipal Accommodation Tax Association (MATA) as the organization that will be responsible for allocating and distributing the non-municipal share of the proceeds of the MAT (the proceeds transferred to the MATA being the "Municipal Accommodations Tax Fund"). The MATA has an existing non-profit board with a tourism development mandate.

The purpose of the Municipal Accommodations Tax Fund is to promote and grow the tourism industry. To guide investments by the MATA, the Town of South Bruce Peninsula in cooperation with MATA and RTO7 are developing a five-year Tourism Strategy and an Action Plan (2023-2028). Details of the strategy in addition to the comprehensive Situational Analysis Report (SAR) will be provided on the Town's websites in the MAT Section [Municipal Accommodation Tax - South Bruce Peninsula](#).

The following recommendations are based on best practices from the municipal comparator review of established Destination Marketing Organizations (DMO's) in Ontario. For reference purpose these included the DMO's in Kingston, Prince Edward County, Quinte West, and Timmins. A complete summary of comparators can be found in the [SAR](#).

1. In order to establish cooperative and trustworthy relationships with Tourism Stakeholders and local tourism entities, MATA should **develop a transparent process of allocating and distributing municipal accommodation tax (MAT) funds.**
2. **MATA should have a publicly-facing website to present information about MATA priorities, funding opportunities and procedures,** funding process and results (how funding was awarded and spent). The website should also provide access to Terms of Reference, by-laws, agreements, and any policies guiding the MATA Board and a MATA Fund Committee (if such committee is established as per recommendations below).

(continued...)

3. The MATA Board would have **active representation from the Saugeen First Nation and a representative cross section of tourism entities, and Town of South Bruce Peninsula.**
4. **Establish a MATA Fund** to support tourism promotion and cooperation by providing funding to eligible tourism entities. Eligibility criteria include:
 - A local legal entity – a non-for-profit organization or a private business –located and/or providing tourism services/promoting tourism in South Bruce Peninsula;
 - The organization must have a tourism mandate/main business activity, e.g., providing tourism services, operating tours, promoting tourism in South Bruce Peninsula, stated in the founding documents.
 - Have a proven record of tourism activities, marketing, promotion.
5. To have objectivity and a commitment to fairness and equity at all times, MATA board composition should be such to **reduce the impacts of conflict of interest so objectivity is maintained** – options include:
 - Have a strong Conflict of Interest declaration policy signed at commencement of the committee that binds all board members to ensure they are recused from direct adjudication; and
 - Have an annual declaration of whether a board member’s group intends to bid and have a process detailed in Terms of Reference to have an alternate member for that year.
6. MATA Board should **establish a MATA Fund Committee** that will review and assess MATA Fund applications from eligible tourism entities. The MATA Board should develop the committee’s Terms of Reference and appoint Committee Members. MATA Fund Committee Terms of Reference should include the following:
 - Establish guidelines and procedures for the Committee;
 - Have a strong Conflict of Interest declaration policy signed at commencement of the Committee that binds all Committee members.
7. Both the Board and the Committee could establish a roster of alternate members to replace Committee members who declared a Conflict of Interest or cannot temporarily participate in funding application review.

(continued...)



8. To ensure fairness and equity of MAT funds distribution and establish cooperative and trustworthy relationships with Tourism Stakeholders and partners, MATA should have commitment to the following:

- clear guidelines for MAT Fund applicants;
- MAT Fund Application Forms that are easy to fill (ideally an option for filling in and submitting an application online);
- establish maximum funding limits per application;
- a required co-funding amount (expressed as percentage of requested MAT funding amount);
- a general emphasis on meeting those limits so there is less conflict over rationale for funding amounts granted (and this requires good applications to fully justify the funding);
- differentiate between privately owned commercial businesses and non-for-profit tourism entities (as shown in the example below);
- defined application take-in deadlines so that there is no allowance for first-come-first served.

9. The Town should consider increased contribution to MATA from the municipal portion of MAT funding by funding a Tourism Coordinator and a summer seasonal ambassador. This support would be an equivalent of 1 or 1.5 full-time staff member funding. MATA should negotiate this support that potentially could come from the municipal portion of MAT.

- Hire a Tourism Coordinator to implement the Tourism Strategy and Action Plan and monitor results.
- MATA staff responsibilities would include: monitoring the implementation of the Tourism strategy and actions plan, organizing MATA Board and MATA Fund Committee functions, respond to enquiries about MAT Fund, managing and updating the MATA website, pre-screening applications, etc.
- MATA Staff / Tourism Coordinator be responsible for developing an annual benchmark survey for assessing the source of tourists and the quality of their experiences. This activity will be performed in cooperation with RTO 7 and will be presented as a report to the MATA Board.
- Review activities of MATA annually to ensure that all tourism entities and stakeholders (not just accommodation) are realizing benefit from the MAT investment.
- Organize annual Tourism Round Table.

(continued...)



10. The MATA Board through MATA Fund should engage and support tourism entities and stakeholders to actively collaborate on tourism product, programming and events development and offerings that improves visitor experience.
11. MATA should consider hiring a third party to review all Short-Term Accommodations operators to ensure that they are contributing to MAT and promoting their properties within the guidelines permitted. Bi-annual review recommended.

PROPOSED ORGANIZATION

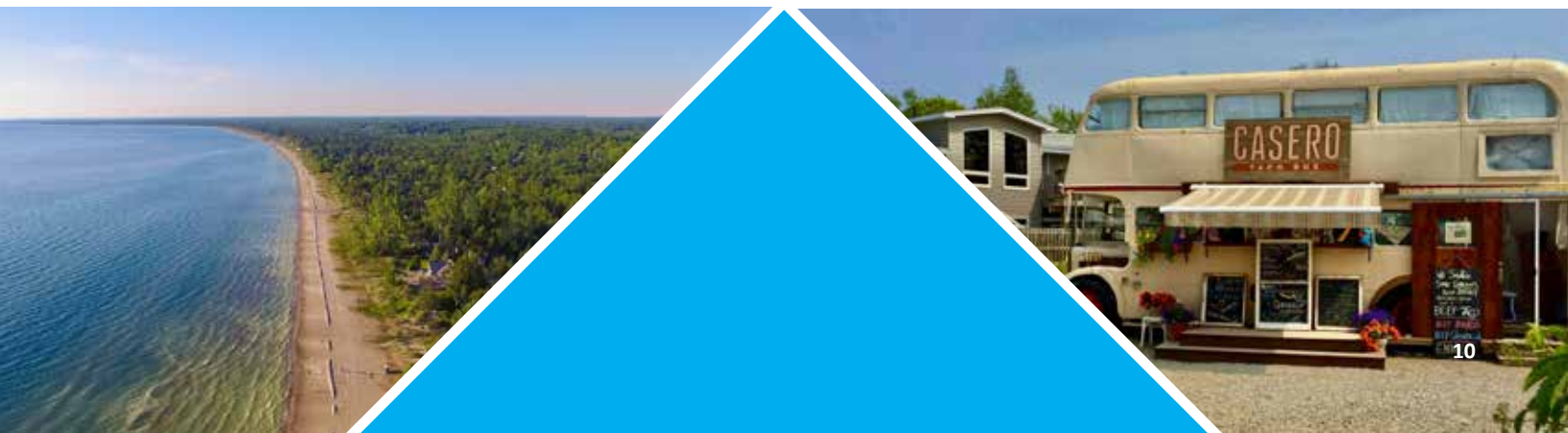
MATA BOARD	
Organization / Governance	Governed by its by-law or Terms of Reference, Conflict of Interest guidelines or policy, agreement with the Town regulating MATA share of the MAT, MAT By-law, and Ontario regulations and other applicable By-laws. Guiding document for the next 5 years: Tourism Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2028.
Responsibilities	Establishes program priorities, oversees the MATA Program regulation and implementation (e.g. develops MATA Fund Committee Terms of Reference, Conflict of Interest policies, approves recommendations for funding made by the MATA Fund Committee, makes decisions regarding MATA Fund changes, develops MATA processes, and ensures arbitration in cases of conflict.
MATA FUND COMMITTEE	
Organization / Governance	Appointed by the MATA Board for the duration of one (2) year, governed by the MATA Fund Committee Terms of Reference and MATA Fund Committee Conflict of Interest Policy.
Responsibilities	Reviewing funding applications and making recommendations to the MATA Board for funding.

STRATEGIC INVESTMENT GOALS – FUND COMMITTEE

The established Fund Committee should be aware of the overall priorities of MATA that are outlined in the Tourism Strategy to guide their overall approach to making recommendations to the MATA Board.

MATA Fund strategic investment goals and priorities are aligned with the Tourism Strategy.

5 STRATEGIC THEMES:	
Coordination and Relationship Building – re-building trust and respect	Re-building trust and respect between and among stakeholders and tourism entities.
Staff Recruitment and Housing	Pursue options to enhance staff recruitment and retention, including a proactive approach to ensure appropriate housing is available.
Extension of Tourism Season	Incrementally extending the tourism season.
Infrastructure	Identify short and long-term opportunities to enhance and improve infrastructure to support tourism growth, ensure a positive visitor experience and share the investment needed to maximize resources effectively.
Enhancing Visitor Experience	Actively collaborate on tourism products, programming and events development and offerings that improves visitor experience.



PRIORITIES OF THE MATA FUND INCLUDE:

- **Enhancing Town of SBP image as an attractive and appealing visitor destination;**
- **Increasing the number of visitors and expanding geography** (of visitors trip origin) to the Town of SBP;
- **Extending the length of stay of visitors** to Town of SBP;
- **Increasing the economic yield of visitors** to Town of SBP;
- **Extending tourism season;**
- **Leveraging partnerships and financial resources.**

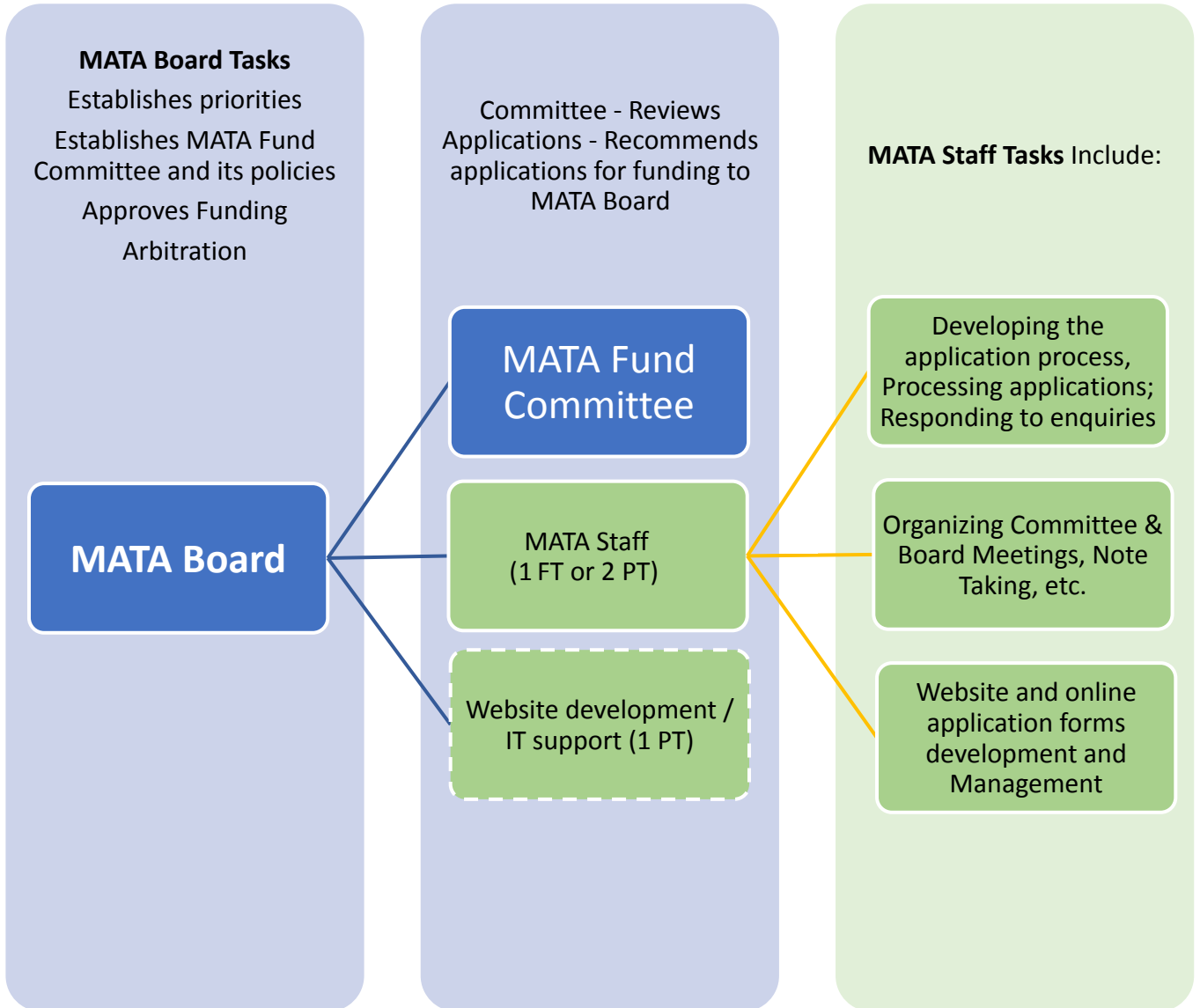
The MATA Fund will support directions to promote the Town of South Bruce Peninsula as a destination for visitors from Ontario, Canada and other countries, MATA will support proposals that contribute to achieving the Tourism Strategy and Action Plan priorities over the next 5 years (2024-2029):

- **Offer new programs or expand existing programs** and events in downtown areas (examples may include concerts, walking tours, interactive store fronts, historical knowledge sharing, etc.);
- **Promote tourism from outside SBP;**
- **Create promotional materials showcasing tourism assets** (print and online);
- **Contribute to the development and investment in an integrated identity, marketing, and branding** process for South Bruce Peninsula as a desirable tourism destination;
- **Promote sustainable tourism** and its contribution to the community and environment;
- **Promote indigenous tourism** and experiences;
- **Contribute to increases in overnight visits** (e.g. weekend-long or multi-day events, sport events, conferences, business meetings/conferences);
- **Tourism product development and infrastructure.**



EXHIBIT 1.

MATA Organization: MATA Board and MATA Fund Committee



** MATA Fund Committee members would ideally be representatives of key tourism stakeholders and the Town of South Bruce Peninsula. The MATA staff member would be present at the meetings to take notes and communicate recommendations to the Board.*

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Assuming access to MATA funds and their amount is competitive, conflict of interest can emerge within the Board and the MATA Fund Committee, for example, if a MATA board member or a MATA Fund Committee member would be asked to evaluate applications from their organizations. To mitigate these and other potential conflict of interest situations potentially affecting members' disposition toward all other grant contenders, conflict of interest must be declared to the rest of the Board/Committee.

Both the Board and the applications evaluation committee shall ensure that all conflict of interest guidelines are observed and implemented within the MATA Fund Committee and Board decision-making processes (i.e., meetings, evaluation of applications, producing recommendations, voting, making final decisions, etc.).

Such situations should be anticipated and regulated with Conflict of Interest guidelines or policy for the Board and the Committee. The Conflict of Interest guidelines or policy would:

- Define conflict of interest;
- Require Board Members and Committee Members to disclose any conflict of interest;
- Require the conflict of interest disclosure; and
- Develop a conflict of interest disclosure procedure, including repercussions for the failure to declare a potential conflict of interest.

These or other ways of addressing conflict of interest situations should be regulated by the MATA Board Terms of Reference (or a by-law) and Conflict of Interest guidelines or policy for both the MATA Board and the MATA Fund Committee.



ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

The Municipal Accommodations Tax Program is open to for-profit, not-for-profit, and both public and private sector and partnerships.

APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA

Applications will be assessed based on the following criteria to achieve the following results, the broader intention of which is to grow tourism in the Town of SBP, where applicable:

CRITERIA FOR MATA FUND APPLICATION EVALUATION	EVALUATION (POINTS)
1. Increasing tourism visitation and spending (e.g. increase overnight visits that would in turn contribute to MAT Program, especially outside the tourism season)	20
2. Promoting SBP as a destination	20
3. Generating economic impact from the project or event	10
4. Providing positive regional, provincial, national or international exposure	10
5. Enhancing tourism offering to attract visitors and their experiences to the SBP	10
6. Facilitating partnerships between local organizations	10
7. Leveraging tourism investments	10
8. Supporting or creating jobs (directly or indirectly)	10
Maximum points:	100

Note: The above criteria and the allocation of points are suggestions based on the draft Tourism Strategy and Action Plan. The MATA Board should review and finalize list of evaluation criteria and review the weight of each individual criteria.

In addition to the criteria listed above, the MATA Board may consider other criteria and factors as it may deem appropriate from time to time, having regard to the objectives of the MAT, Applicable Laws and the Tourism Strategy (ie: Sustainable Tourism).

MATA will need to develop an application form. In other municipalities applications have been accepted online via an applications form on the website or as a submission via email. The MATA Committee may choose to request printed version of applications and supporting documentation. Examples of MAT application forms are provided in **Appendix A**.

Should resources permit, MATA can consider a pre-application screening process. Prior to completing an application form, applicants must complete a pre-consultation process with MATA staff to ensure the project they are proposing fits within the goals, guidelines and objectives of the program. The MATA staff will work with applicants to ensure their application is complete and ready to go to the MATA for review.

MAXIMUM FUNDING GUIDELINES

MATA is encouraged to design its approach to MAT funding allocation and distribution to leverage investment with invested MATA funds.

LEGAL STRUCTURE	PROPONENT'S MINIMUM CONTRIBUTION	MAX FUNDING FROM MAT PROJECT FUND	HOLDBACK REQUIRED
Not for Profit	25%	Projects are eligible up to 75% funding.	Min 25%
Private Sector	50%	All projects are eligible for up to 50% funding	Up to 100% Reimbursement based
Partnerships	Based on lead applicant structure		

*In all cases, events are encouraged to show a profit and become self-sustainable.

**The value of in-kind contributions shall not be considered a “contribution” for the purpose of determining an applicant’s contribution to a project, nor for the purpose of determining the total value of a project on which an application is based. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the MAT may, in assessing the merits of an application generally, consider in-kind contributions. (Quotes from TEDC MAT Fund Guidelines)



ELIGIBLE COST FOR MAT FUNDING

MATA is encouraged to clearly present eligible and ineligible costs that can be funded with MAT funds.

ELIGIBLE COSTS:	INELIGIBLE COSTS:
Hosting fees to events rights holders	Alcohol
Signage and wayfinding costs	Pre-existing deficit funding (grant or loan)
Marketing and promotion costs	Ongoing operating costs or losses
Project specific licenses and permits	Capital costs
Travel and registration expenses	Legal, audit, or interest fees
Fees for artists, speakers and related costs	Donations
Defined event legacy funding (case by case basis)	Prize money
Research or consulting services related to feasibility or business planning	Expenses related to charitable component (i.e. lottery licenses and raffle expenses)
Salary costs that can be directly linked to project deliverables	
Business hospitality expenses (food & beverage, gifts, transportation)	
Rental, lease or purchase of equipment/infrastructure	
Training and development costs related to project	

APPLICATION PROCESS

The application process is competitive. There will be more grant applications received than there is available funding.

Two applications dates will be encouraged January 15th and June 15th.

This will allow lead time for evaluation of potential funding and then, if funding is approved, ensure the logistics and marketing required to attract out-of-town participants and/or spectators can be met for a successful tourism event.

Projects must be completed within 18 months of application date.

All completed applications will be reviewed by the MATA Staff. If an application is not complete, it will be returned to the applicant for completion and re-submission.

The MATA Fund Committee evaluates applicants' submissions, assesses the applications based on the evaluation criteria, and makes recommendations to the MATA Board regarding MAT funds allocation and distribution.

Applicants may be asked to make a presentation to the committee as part of the review process.

The MATA Board reviews recommendations made by the MATA Fund Committee and makes the final decision on funding allocation and distribution. The MATA Board decides what projects will be supported.

MAT funding recipients are notified within 10 days from the final decision. MATA signs an agreement with organizations approved for funding.

Projects supported via the MAT Fund will be published on the MAT Fund website.

MAT funds recipients are to submit report within 90 days from the project completion.



Exhibit below demonstrates the process step-by-step.

EXHIBIT 2. MATA FUND APPLICATION PROCESS



DEMONSTRATED TOURISM VALUE

Applicants must identify in the application form that the project contributes positively to the growth and sustainability of the Town of South Bruce Peninsula's tourism economy and is aligned into the five strategic pillars. The following criteria will be used to evaluate applications for tourism value.

- Fulfills a gap in the tourism visitor experience landscape
- Enhances current visitor experience offerings
- Supports overnight accommodations growth
- Creates and retains employment opportunities within the tourism sector
- Extends tourism season
- Demonstrates potential to grow domestic, international, and Canadian travel to the Town
- Demonstrates a financially sustainable business model.

FUNDING AGREEMENT

Applications approved for funding by the MATA Board will require the applicant to enter into a legally binding agreement with the MATA.

The applicant must be a legal entity, and will be required to provide to the MATA, such documents as the MATA may request, including without limitation, documentation relating to the applicant's bank and insurance provider.

The agreement will be in such form as the MATA may require, and will specify, among other things:

- the date and requirements for funding advances;
- any portion of allocated funds to be held back until the submission and approval by the MATA of the applicant's final report.

The MATA may establish additional requirements on case-by-case basis, with consideration given to the particularities of each project.

REPORTING

Applicants receiving MAT Fund funding will be required to submit a final report to the MATA within ninety (90) days of project completion.

The final report must contain an outline of project expenditures and a description of progress made in relation to key deliverables identified in the applicant's application and in the agreement with MATA.

Receipts for expenditures must be provided.

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

Funded projects may be required to report on their contribution to enhancing Town of South Bruce Peninsula tourism economy.

Key performance indicators can include but not limited to:

- **Number of visitors from outside the Town**, with an estimate of overnight visitors;
- **Length of stay per visitor** (for weekend-long, multiple day events, tourism services);
- **Describe partnerships developed** through the project;
- **Permanent or part-time jobs created** through the project;
- **Financial resources leveraged** from the project;
- **Value of media or social media coverage and positive mentions of SBP as a destination** (in connection with the event, service, program supported with MATA Fund funding);
- **Visitor satisfaction ratings** of the visitor experience once operational.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- All funding shall be for future projects. Retroactive funding will not be considered.
- At this time, the MATA Fund will not support capital purchases and ongoing operations.
- Past funding commitments should not be interpreted as a guarantee that future requests will be approved.
- Some exemptions to the eligibility criteria may apply and are at the discretion of the MATA Board.
- MATA will not be required to allocate and/or distribute funding to an applicant. For example, a project or event that meets all MATA Fund criteria yet may not be approved for funding.
- MATA will need to make it clear in the MATA Fund process documents how applicants can contact MATA if they have questions about MATA Fund, application documents and process.





South Bruce Peninsula Tourism Strategy & Action Plan

INTRODUCTION

The Municipal Accommodation Tax Association (MATA) for South Bruce Peninsula, pursuant to their Agreement with the Town of South Bruce Peninsula, has commissioned the development of a Tourism Strategy and Action Plan. The Tourism Strategy and Action Plan is intended to identify specific actions that MATA, in their tourism leadership role, should address over the next five years including priorities for the first year.

To ensure that the Tourism Strategy is fully understood, the actual strategy and action plan is preceded by the MATA Framework. Key sections are important to the overall strategy. Starting with the identification of MATA's Mission and Core Values to ensure alignment. The effective implementation of any strategy relies on working with key stakeholders who should be identified with a clear understanding of their respective roles.

All tourism destinations are premised on a certain value proposition that they offer visitors. South Bruce Peninsula's value proposition is presented as a fundamental reminder of what South Bruce Peninsula has to offer. A listing of distinct demand generators has also been included. These are important to understand as they are what visitors are saying they are attracted to the most. These become increasingly important when strategic promotional actions are formulated and implemented. Lastly, understanding how tourism trends are shifting is important to MATA as well as the variety of tourism entities serving the South Bruce Peninsula.

The Tourism Strategy and Action Plan is based on 5 strategic themes that evolved from a situational analysis report. The themes were developed and validated through a comprehensive community and stakeholder engagement process and on-line survey.



MUNICIPAL ACCOMMODATIONS TAX ASSOCIATION

MATA MISSION To work with all tourism stakeholders to build, sustain and grow tourism in the Town of South Bruce Peninsula through investment and education.

MATA CORE VALUES Collaborative, Transparent, Trustworthy and Accountable to our Tourism Stakeholders.

VALUE PROPOSITION

The Town of South Bruce Peninsula is the Gateway to the Bruce Peninsula. It is flanked by one of Canada’s Great Lakes – Lake Huron to the west, and Georgian Bay to the east. Its lake fronts offer a mix of notable beaches and rugged picturesque shoreline. Its two core business sections serve the residential and visiting public through their key roles as one of the world’s great freshwater beaches and as ‘basecamp’ to the entire Peninsula. It is predicated on a foundational consideration for sustainable tourism.

DEMAND GENERATORS

The Town of South Bruce Peninsula has an abundance of opportunities for visitors to enjoy. The key demand generators for SBP, include.

- World Renowned Sunsets
- Sauble Beach – rated Canada’s #1 Freshwater Beach
- The Bruce Trail
- A Playground for Watercraft
- Camping & Cottage Country
- Bluewater Park - Home of Wiarthon Willie
- Sauble Beach Sandcastle events
- Skinners Bluffs and Bruce Caves*
- Sauble Falls Provincial Park
- Gateway to an abundance of Provincial and National Parks (entire Bruce Peninsula)

** Located in the Township of Georgian Bluffs.*



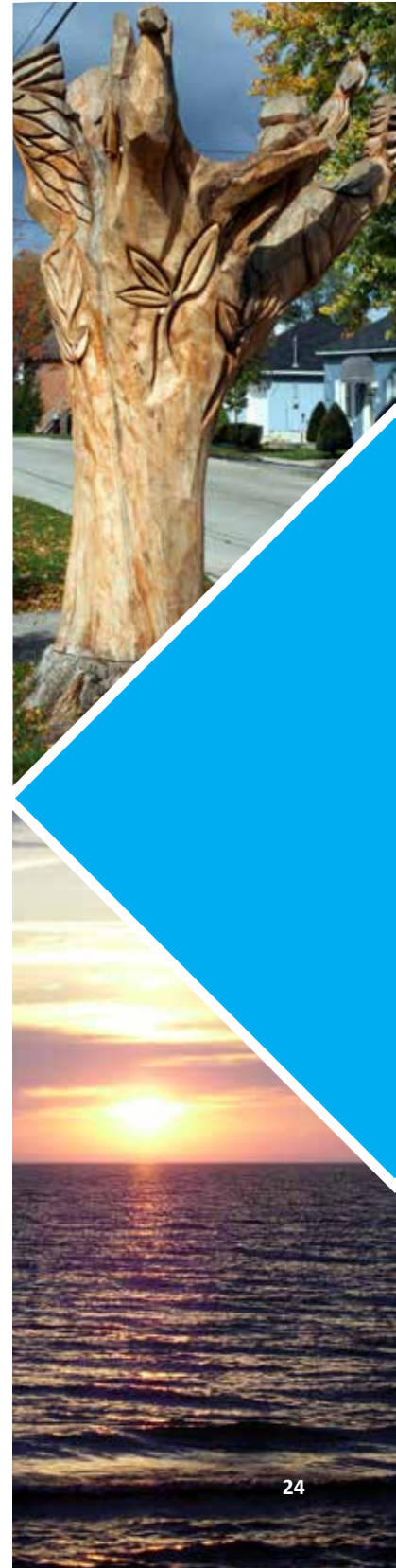
TOURISM TRENDS

Demand for travel and tourist experiences is on the rise, primarily driven by domestic travel and markets. During the pandemic domestic tourism substituted much of international travel due to travel restrictions, safety, and health concerns. Today's uncertainties include health concerns, cost of living and inflation, and new geopolitical risks ([Destination Canada, 2022](#)). This national trend is true in Ontario.

A SUMMARY OF TOURISM TRENDS IN CANADA AND ONTARIO

- **Increase in domestic and local tourism** – Concerns about health and personal finance have contributed to the increase in domestic and local travel.
- **Increased interest in responsible tourism** – Travelers are more mindful of environmental sustainability, social diversity and the impacts of tourism on local communities.
- **Increased interest in outdoor activities and experiences** - The trend has continued since the increase in outdoor activities during the pandemic due to indoor capacity restrictions, health and safety concerns.
- **The digital shift** - The tourism sector has been adapting to digital enhancements made during the pandemic. This includes innovative approaches to marketing (e.g., digital marketing, data-driven decision-making, and digital user experience-based product design).
- **Sports tourism trends** include increased domestic and shorter-distance travel, building local capacity for sports participants, and planning multi-use facilities (higher capacity, energy and cost efficient) to offer benefits to sport participants and communities.
- **The industry has been changing.** The labour pool in tourism, travel, entertainment, and related sectors became smaller during the pandemic. As the industry recovers, this creates opportunities (and challenges) to offer employment and increase the number of jobs. This trend can be especially relevant to local communities as domestic and local tourism has been on the rise.

In addition to the recent trends of an increased interest in outdoor and adventure tourism, food tourism, and sustainable tourism, the emerging trends and markets in Canada include Indigenous experiences and tourism and 2SLGBTQIA+ Tourism.



INDIGENOUS EXPERIENCES / TOURISM

The Federal Tourism Strategy encourages and supports building partnerships that would help promote indigenous tourism among Canadians and international visitors to Canada. The Government's Tourism Growth Program includes dedicated funding streams to support the development of Indigenous tourism and indigenous tourism attractions.

The Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) supports Indigenous-led solutions in the tourism product development and promotion.

Indigenous tourism operators across Canada provide opportunities for reconciliation and education for non-Indigenous people and visitors and at the same time they support the cultural and economic vitality of Indigenous Nations and communities.

“Through ITAC’s Strategic Recovery Plan, we believe we will see 40,000 Indigenous people working in the tourism industry again, while contributing \$1.9 billion in revenue to Canada’s GDP by 2024. ITAC is committed to doing our part to help rebuild our national economy.”

ITAC seeks partnerships with organizations that want to support and grow Indigenous tourism operations with “an industry led, Indigenous-led mandate as a priority” (ITAC Report 2022-2023).

Resources: [Plans & Reports - Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada](#)

2SLGBTQIA+ TOURISM

[Federal 2SLGBTQIA+ Action Plan 2022 - Women and Gender Equality Canada](#)

The Federal Tourism Growth Strategy and the Federal 2SLGBTQIA+ Action Plan support the growth of 2SLGBTQIA+ tourism and encourage communities across Canada to address demand for inclusive tourism experiences.

Budget 2022 announced that the Minister of Tourism will work with the tourism industry, including those with 2SLGBTQIA+ perspectives, provincial and territorial counterparts, and Indigenous tourism operators to develop a new post-pandemic *Federal Tourism Growth Strategy* that positions Canada’s visitor economy as a destination of choice for decades to come. Businesses should monitor Government programs to assess future funding opportunities.

LGBT+ tourism is a lucrative market, valued at over \$12 billion dollars annually in Canada alone. But LGBT+ travellers are also a discerning market that spends their money where they feel welcome and well-served.

INVESTING IN TOURISM ASSETS AND ATTRACTIONS

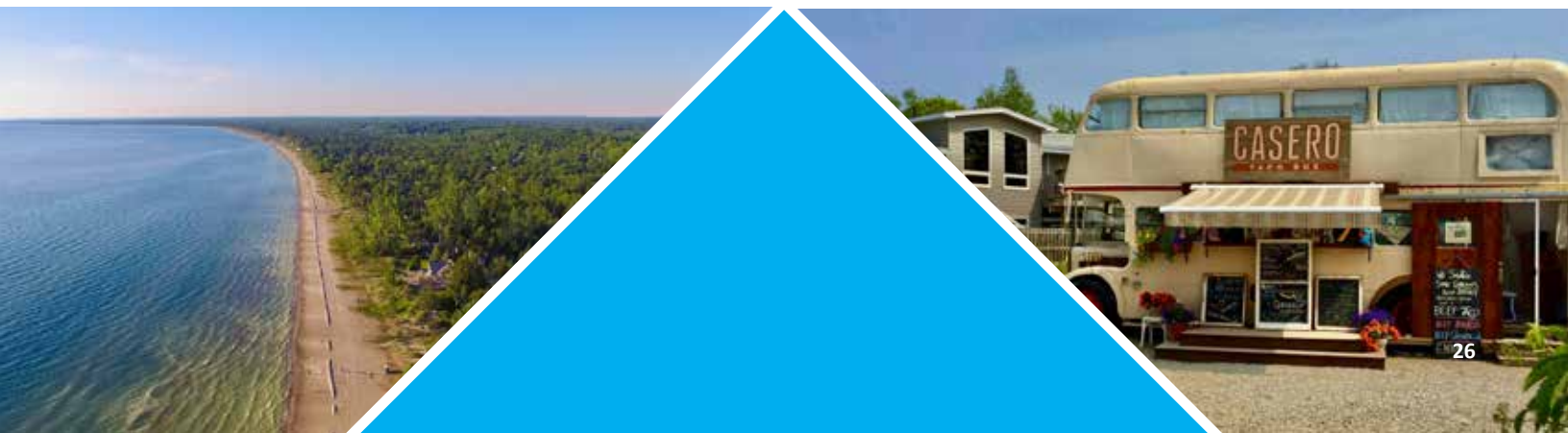
The Federal government has developed its Tourism Growth Strategy to “attract and de-risk those investments and to facilitate access to capital for business owners” ([FTG Strategy Website](#)).

In its 2023 Budget, Government of Canada announced \$108 million over 3 years to create the Tourism Growth Program (TGP) for local communities to support rural and remote communities, small and medium-sized businesses, and non-profit organizations to develop tourism projects and events. TGP contribution will be based on regional contexts and will complement existing federal, provincial, and territorial programs. Organizations should assess opportunities for funding through these and other similar Government funding initiatives.

EMBRACING RECREATION

Canada is investing in infrastructure and natural assets. Among other priorities TGP will invest in promoting recreational tourism, including the following.

- **Supporting national parks** to attract more tourists to remote and rural parts of Canada,
- **Investing in trails** inventory and infrastructure in local communities and at the regional level,
- **Diversifying community infrastructure.**





TOURISM STRATEGY STRATEGIC THEMES

This Tourism Strategy is based on a series of findings derived from a comprehensive analysis of quantitative and qualitative information sources within and beyond South Bruce Peninsula. These evidentiary findings were outlined and subsequently summarized in the Situational Analysis Report tabled with the MATA Project Steering Committee on July 7, 2023 and subsequently updated on August 07, 2023. This comprehensive document is posted to RT07 and the Town of SBP websites. [The SAR contains all stakeholder engagement findings and survey results.](#)

The Recommendations that follow are predicated on the need for all partners to work together. It is clear that the Municipal Accommodation Tax Association (MATA) cannot work in isolation without support and coordination with the Town of South Bruce Peninsula (SBP) and the Saugeen First Nation (SFN)*. Collaboration with all partners, including Bruce County and RTO7, can contribute to a stronger collective: “Tourism - South Bruce Peninsula.”

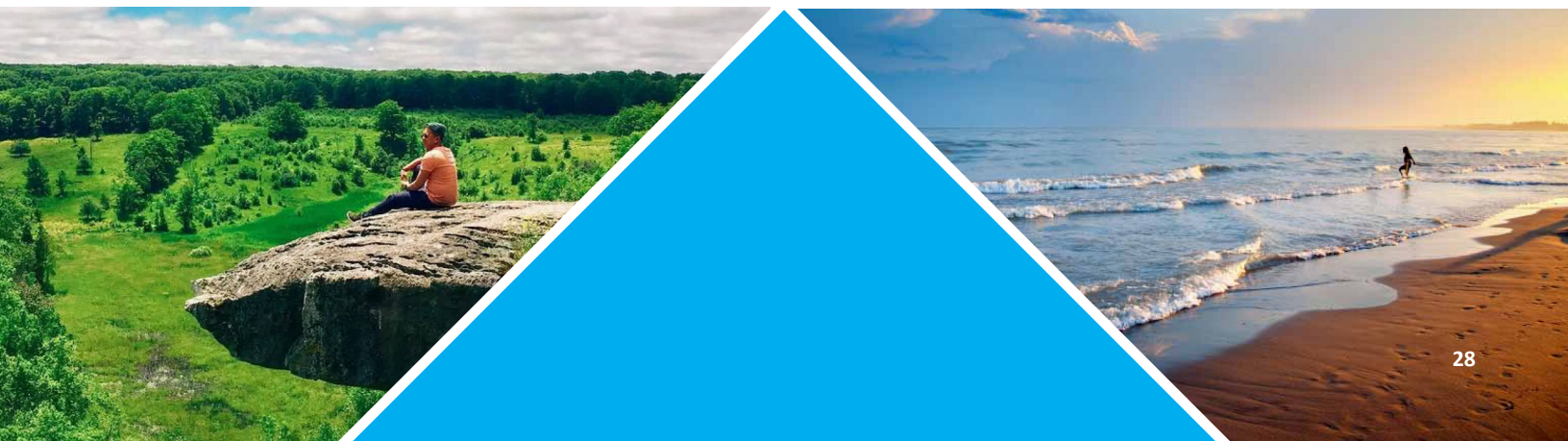
*Despite numerous attempts, the consultants were unable to contact SFN during the project and were not able to gather their input or feedback.

This collective can and should address the recommendations together and assess the current and future opportunity to lead and/or support implementing each item as identified.

“We will succeed despite ourselves, but we will thrive if we get together.”
(quote provided through an engagement discussion)

Working together, over time, silos can be removed and resources (human and financial) can be maximized to benefit the entire tourism industry.

The recommendations noted under each of the five (5) strategic themes include a suggested “Lead” however, the consultants submit that these are subject to change based upon a review by all partners.



THE OVERALL FINDINGS UNCOVERED FIVE (5) DISTINCT STRATEGIC THEMES IDENTIFIED BELOW.

1. COORDINATION AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING – RE-BUILDING TRUST AND RESPECT

That a renewed focus on re-building trust and respect between and among stakeholders and tourism entities be embraced in a meaningful and transparent way, including committing to coordinating efforts, sharing resources, attending networking and roundtable events and monitoring results under a shared collective vision.

2. STAFF RECRUITMENT AND HOUSING

That MATA and the Town of South Bruce Peninsula collectively work with allied organizations, and post-secondary institutions to pursue options to enhance staff recruitment and retention, including a proactive approach to ensure appropriate housing is available.

3. EXTENSION OF TOURISM SEASON

That MATA, the Town of South Bruce Peninsula, and tourism stakeholders and entities support a planned approach to incrementally extending the tourism season.

4. INFRASTRUCTURE

That MATA work with all tourism entities and stakeholders to identify short and long-term opportunities to enhance and improve infrastructure to support tourism growth, ensure a positive visitor experience and share the investment needed to maximize resources effectively.

5. ENHANCING VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Engage tourism entities and stakeholders to actively collaborate on tourism products, programming and events development and offerings that improves visitor experience.

In all 5 pillars, sustainable tourism must be foundational to tourism development and management. It should contribute in a positive way and minimize negative impacts from an environmental, economic and social perspective.



HOW TO INTERPRET THIS TOURISM STRATEGY

This Strategy and Action Plan is laid out using the five strategic themes as identified previously. The overarching strategy is noted at the beginning of each theme area, with priorities, tasks, target timelines and required resources. Lastly, each recommendation has a corresponding alphabetical listing to indicate suggested short, medium, and ongoing recommendations.

The highlighted blue represent the 1-year Action plan

TIMING LEGEND

A	B	O
1-3 years	3-5 years	Ongoing

This summary represents a roadmap that guides the specific recommendation undertaken in support of the Tourism Strategy and Action Plan. It is important that this roadmap remains flexible as further discussions and reports (as noted above) become available and as an annual review of MAT revenues is undertaken.

At minimum, a review process should be conducted annually with interested and aligned partners, stakeholders, and tourism entities. This review could identify:

- actions complete with corresponding results.
- new and changed information.
- financial review including annual MAT status.
- changing trends
- alignment with the five pillars
- changing Municipal and County priorities

The Agreement between the Town of South Bruce Peninsula and the MATA is for a three-year period; however, this Strategy covers up to five years. Therefore, a more strategic review and/or updating of this strategy should be built into the review process for all parties. As the MATA Action Plan is for the first year of the Strategy (2024), communication with stakeholders, partners and entities will assist in showing progress benefiting tourism development and growth in South Bruce Peninsula.

TOURISM ROLES (UNDER REVIEW)

- **RTO 7** – Regional Tourism Organization, Region 7
- **BC** – Bruce County
- **SBP** – Town of South Bruce Peninsula
- **MATA** – Municipal Accommodation Tax Association
- **CC** – Chambers of Commerce
- **SBP Tourism** – All tourism organizations
- **TE** – Tourism Entities (Organizations, operators and businesses serving tourists; including STAs who collect and remit MAT revenue).

	Education/ Research	Funding	Advocacy	General Marketing	Targeted Marketing	Regional Marketing	Visitor Info.	Wayfinding	Website	Networking	Community Engagement	Collector of MAT
RTO7	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			
BC	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
SBP	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
MATA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	
CC			✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		
TE			✓		✓		✓		✓	✓		✓ STA

TOURISM STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

* Staff time reflects existing or proposed new staff (tourism coordinator) and actual \$\$\$ could be grants through MATA or other organizations. This will have to be clarified as roles are confirmed and other partners are able to support the strategy with human and/or direct financial support (grants, infrastructure investment, other). Allocation of MATA funds (including funds available for grants) will have to be reviewed on an annual basis. Fluctuations are expected as MATA launches the grant program (further elaborated on in the one-year action plan) and develops its internal working processes, for administration, website support, other.

STRATEGY 1: COORDINATION AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING – RE-BUILDING TRUST AND RESPECT.

That a renewed focus on re-building trust and respect between and among stakeholders and tourism entities be embraced in a meaningful and transparent way, including committing to coordinating efforts, sharing resources, attending networking and roundtable events and monitoring results through a lens of a shared collective vision.

<i>Priority / Task</i>	<i>Project Lead / Team</i>	<i>Target Date</i>	<i>Budget/Resources*</i>
A 1.0	That MATA endorse the strategic priorities for the MATA framework, including the grant program and broader Tourism Strategy, while continuing to work collectively with all partners and the Town of South Bruce Peninsula.		
	MATA one year plan implemented, and partners identified to implement Strategy.	MATA	2024
B 1.1	“The Municipal Accommodation Tax Association” should change its name to something more reflective of its role to support tourism throughout the entire SBP. A more broad based, forward facing name would reflect a more broad based role, not solely supported by MAT tax but the opportunity to work with and leverage other partners.		
	New identity created and promoted to reflect ongoing role and purpose.	MATA and SBP	2026 (as part of Agreement Renewal)
A 1.2	That MATA, Town of South Bruce Peninsula and tourism entities develop and invest in an integrated identity, marketing, and branding process for South Bruce Peninsula as a desirable tourism destination.		
	Strategy developed and implementation plan identified.	SBP Tourism	2025

TOURISM STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

<i>Priority / Task</i>		<i>Project Lead / Team</i>	<i>Target Date</i>	<i>Budget/Resources*</i>
A	1.3	Hire a Tourism Coordinator to implement the Tourism Strategy and Action Plan and monitor results.		
	Coordinator hired and annual plan complete.		MATA	2024
A	1.4	Host an annual round table to ensure role clarity for all partners (MATA, SBP, County, RTO7, tourism entities).		
	Round Table launched and communication improved. Build on roles report completed by Bruce County (Fall 2023). Share results of tourism and impact that the sector has on the community.		MATA and all	Initial in 2024
A	1.5	Create a single website to identify all tourism entities – things to do, accommodation, food and beverage, calendar of events etc. (or include Bruce County listing as a front facing link on the MATA website).		
	Website launched in 2024.		MATA	Early 2024
A	1.6	Continue discussions with the Town of South Bruce Peninsula to encourage them to dedicate their share of MAT to support tourism needs in the Town.		
	Discussions semi-annually. SBP pass by-law to dedicate MAT to tourism needs as identified with all partners.		MATA with SBP and partners.	2025
O	1.7	Review activities of MATA annually to ensure that all tourism entities and stakeholders (not just accommodation) are realizing benefit from the MAT investment.		
	Annual Roundtable results in widely shared report. Impact understood and celebrated.		MATA	2024

TOURISM STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

<i>Priority / Task</i>		<i>Project Lead / Team</i>	<i>Target Date</i>	<i>Budget/Resources*</i>
A	1.8	Encourage closer discussion and coordination between the Sauble Beach Chamber of Commerce and the Wiarton Chamber of Commerce to ensure a shared vision and focus on tourism.		
	Chambers work together to develop common goals and themes related to tourism support and development.		CC	2025
B	1.9	Develop a social media campaign to promote tourism outside SBP (GTA, KW, Guelph, Cambridge)		
	Campaign developed and launched. Visitor residency tracked.		MATA	2026
A	1.10	Following the launch of the MATA grant program, re-introduce the Town of SBP support for Grant writing for tourism entities and organizations that would provide guidance in applying for all types of funding opportunities.		
	MATA has support to assist organizations and entities to complete grants, monitor results and promote success.		MATA	2025
O	1.11	Monitor the need to expand marketing materials in multiple languages.		
	Survey data and operator metrics support the need to meet the needs of visitors in various languages.		BC/RT07	2026
A	1.12	Host a joint meeting with the Sustainable Tourism Action Group (STAG) operating in Northern Bruce Peninsula and consider opportunities to create a similar networking group in SBP to assist in information sharing, options to maximize MAT, opportunity to leverage funding and share goals of sustainable tourism for the Peninsula		
	Formal networking group established with shared vision and mandate.		RT07	2024

* Staff time reflects existing or proposed new staff (tourism coordinator) and actual \$\$\$ could be grants through MATA or other organizations. This will have to be clarified as roles are confirmed and other partners are able to support the strategy with human and/or direct financial support (grants, infrastructure investment, other). Allocation of MATA funds (including funds available for grants) will have to be reviewed on an annual basis. Fluctuations are expected as MATA launches the grant program (further elaborated on in the one-year action plan) and develops its internal working processes, for administration, website support, other.

STRATEGY 2: STAFF RECRUITMENT AND HOUSING

That the Town of South Bruce Peninsula works with allied organizations and post-secondary institutions to pursue options to enhance staff recruitment and retention, including a proactive approach to ensure appropriate housing is available.

<i>Priority / Task</i>	<i>Project Lead / Team</i>	<i>Target Date</i>	<i>Budget/Resources*</i>
A	2.0	MATA engages the Town of South Bruce Peninsula to establish a working group to identify all potential staff housing options in SBP and ensure relevant websites updated with direct links.	
		Options are identified, categorized, and updated to websites.	MATA/BC/SBP
		2024	Tourism Coordinator
A	2.1	Work with County Planning and By-Law staff (and local SBP By-Law) to assess administrative barriers and identify streamlining options to expedite approval for short term housing options.	
		Barriers to gain needed approvals are removed.	SBP and BC
		2025	Staff time
B	2.2	Work with Georgian College (and others) to assess options to establish a culinary/hospitality satellite campus for the Peninsula. Assess similar programs in other jurisdictions to glean best practices (Niagara).	
		Post Secondary options identified, and best practices reviewed.	BC (with local jurisdictions)
		2026	Staff time
O	2.3	Advocate and promote SBP as a seasonal employment setting to foreign staff and post-secondary students.	
		Websites updated consistently and links to employment and housing options.	MATA Lead with All
		Ongoing	Tourism Coordinator

TOURISM STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

<i>Priority / Task</i>	<i>Project Lead / Team</i>	<i>Target Date</i>	<i>Budget/Resources*</i>	
A	2.4	Develop more attainable housing, including less conventional options, that support transient workforce.		
	All housing options identified and pursued (dedicated camp areas, Yurts, Trailers, other)		MATA and SBP and Operators	2025
B	2.5	Advocate for the industry's ability to attract entrepreneurs and staff.		
	Economic Development Plan includes recommendations to promote the tourism sector for year-round employment.		SBP	2026
B	2.6	Work with Bruce Power to promote SBP as a community of choice to re-locate and raise a family.		
	SBP identified by Bruce Power in its marketing materials as a community of choice, promoting all the benefits and assets.		SBP	2027
O	2.7	Pursue Government sponsored foreign work programs to attract summer staff.		
	Program identified and applied in SBP. Staff numbers increased.		BC	2028
B	2.8	Work with all tourism entities to ensure a robust Volunteer program is developed and maintained, including a process to become staff as opportunities become available.		
	Events and programs are supported with sufficient volunteer support. New staff options are in place through a successful volunteer program.		MATA	2026

TOURISM STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

<i>Priority / Task</i>		Project Lead / Team	Target Date	Budget/Resources*
A	2.9	Develop a matrix to monitor human resource requirements that meet existing future growth in tourism. Include a measuring plan to ensure that staff and volunteers can support all events and services being promoted. (Ensure sustainability).		
	Simple framework developed to assist all organizations and entities in assessing their capacity to offer existing and expanded services.		SBP/BC	2025
B	2.10	Ensure all organizations and TE are promoting the importance that skills gained in the hospitality industry transfer to lifelong career opportunities (customer service, food and beverage, communication, marketing, accounting)		
	Consistent messaging developed and shared on all websites and social media platforms.		MATA with BC	2027
A	2.11	Re-engage the Bruce County Workforce Development Program.		
	Program effective and meeting local needs as identified by TE.		MATA with BC	2025

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STRATEGY 3: EXTENSION OF TOURISM SEASON

That the Town and tourism stakeholders and entities support a planned approach to extending the tourism season.

Priority / Task		Project Lead / Team	Target Date	Budget/Resources*
A	3.0	Define what tourism season extension means, starting with one month on either side of peak and building on a gradual extension based upon annual surveys with operators and entities.		
		Annual Plan developed and funded, including identifying specific events with incentives, to extend into May and October. Build from there.	MATA	2025
B	3.1	Pursue with tourism entities and regional partners, the development of key signature events. These can be road race related initiatives themed around nature (fall colours tour), and/or with an indigenous focus. Aim to have one new initiative every two years produced by a third party		
		Signature event (possibly in conjunction with NBP).	MATA	2026
B	3.2	Monitor pilot efforts to build around a <i>theme</i> in the “off season” (i.e., Valentines Day, Holiday season, Concert series).		
		Events identified by tourism entities and location and monitored to track impact.	MATA	2026

TOURISM STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

<i>Priority / Task</i>		Project Lead / Team	Target Date	Budget/Resources*
B	3.3	Increase grant programs/incentives for events outside the summer season		
	Pilot program to provide financial incentives to select local events. (Identify two to start, one Spring and one Fall).		MATA	2025
A	3.4	Create a marketing program for the extended season by using influencers, social media platforms, attending trade/consumer shows to promote overnight stays		
	Attend two trade/consumer shows (Bike Show, Cottage Life Show, Camping and RV Show, other.) MATA is represented at trade/consumer shows to showcase the entire area (not just individual business and TE).		MATA	2025
B	3.5	Work with Parks Canada to promote off-season visitation to enjoy the natural environment. Ensure seasonal supports are considered to deal with weather, parking, shuttles, and other identified barriers to off-season visitation. (Sustainable focus)		
	Incremental visitation opportunities provided through tourism operators.		SBP	2026
O	3.6	Grow interest in “search for cool” – opportunities to celebrate Canadian winters in response to climate change and changing global vacation priorities.		
	Using successful European models, promote events that celebrate winter while having plans to address weather related event interruptions.		SBP Tourism	2027

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STRATEGY 4: INFRASTRUCTURE

That MATA work with all tourism entities and stakeholders to identify short and long-term opportunities to enhance and improve infrastructure to support tourism growth, ensure a positive visitor experience and share the investment needed to maximize resources effectively.

<i>Priority / Task</i>	<i>Project Lead / Team</i>	<i>Target Date</i>	<i>Budget/Resources*</i>	
O	4.0	Working with all levels of Government, undertake a study for developing and improving vehicular wayfinding.		
		Current wayfinding options clarified and updated for easy access and implementation. (Including TODS).	SBP Tourism	Ongoing
O	4.1	Continue work with the Town of South Bruce Peninsula to develop and upgrade tourism supportive infrastructure including parking, signage, public washrooms, water fountains and related assets / technology enhancements.		
		Plan identified with phased in implementation schedule, including the identification of "lead".	MATA/ SBP Tourism	Ongoing
A	4.2	Conduct a parking strategy, shuttle service review and needs assessment to expand or refine services for Sauble Beach to establish additional parking or enhance shuttle services (including a review of the data and customer satisfaction with Grey Transit Route 5).		
		Strategy developed and phased implementation plan identified.	SBP	2025

TOURISM STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

<i>Priority / Task</i>		Project Lead / Team	Target Date	Budget/Resources*
B	4.3	Review Gateway signage at key locations and consider a more comprehensive and consistent approach to reflect the entire SBP. Promote all locations as key Instagram and photo destinations.		
	Gateway signage to Sauble Beach, Wiarton and key points along Highway 6 reflect a connection to SBP.		SBP Tourism BC/RT07/	2027
B	4.4	Work with all partners, stakeholders, entities, and levels of Government to maximize resources, leverage new funding sources and diversify revenue streams to support tourism infrastructure and growth.		
	Networking and understanding of roles strengthened and financial resources maximized achieve sustainable results.		SBP Tourism	2027
A	4.5	Assess the suitability of the Wiarton Tourism Centre. Ensure visitor amenities are enhanced. Provide additional directional signage to the Visitor Centre from all points entering Hepworth.		
	The visibility of the existing Visitor Centre is enhanced from all directions traveling through Hepworth. Amenities offered are enhanced. Visitor numbers and customer satisfaction levels increased.		SBP	2025
B	4.6	Consider the development of a “one stop” Bruce Peninsula Visitor Centre through the completion of a feasibility analysis to assess location, financing, roles, and measurement tools.		
	Options considered to provide visitor services in Bruce Peninsula.		SBP, North Bruce Peninsula, BC, Parks Canada	2028
A	4.7	Continue to assess roles to maximize the investment of all MAT revenues to support tourism promotion and development.		
	Annual meetings with SBP and MATA. Investment data updated; impact of annual investment results shared. Local community understand the impact on MAT investment in tourism as contributing to keeping property taxes lower.		MATA and SBP	2025

TOURISM STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

<i>Priority / Task</i>	<i>Project Lead / Team</i>	<i>Target Date</i>	<i>Budget/Resources*</i>
B 4.8	Develop a program to ensure electric vehicle charging stations are strategically located in SBP, encouraging their placement in destinations to capture the flow through traffic (i.e., Wiarton).		
	Stations increased and communicated through social media channels. Local businesses aware of opportunities to capture visitors while charging time elapses.	SBP	2026
A 4.9	Develop a customer satisfaction survey to collect visitor data and identify areas for improvement related to infrastructure (clean sanitation facilities, waste management, adequate parking, and shuttle service etc.). Ensure results are communicated to the correct organization for follow-up. Monitor annually.		
	Customer satisfaction ratings improve. Action is taken to remedy issues identified (by the appropriate jurisdiction).	SBP Tourism	2025
A 4.10	Continue to work with municipality to provide tourism communication materials to support awareness of the tourism industry with a focus on educating visitors on their responsibility as a respectful visitor.		
	Volume of complaints reduced. Satisfaction surveys with tourism entities show improvement. Visitor amenities meet demand for tourist visitation.	MATA/SBP	2024

TOURISM STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

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STRATEGY 5: ELEVATING THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Engage tourism entities and stakeholders to actively collaborate on tourism products, programming and events development and offerings that improve visitor experience.

<i>Priority / Task</i>	<i>Project Lead / Team</i>	<i>Target Date</i>	<i>Budget/Resources*</i>	
A	5.0	Continue working with the Chambers and BIA to expand and regularly refresh programs and events for the entire year for downtown areas – i.e., live concerts, entertainment, art displays, pop-ups, history tours, themed events.		
		Annual plan developed and coordinated to ensure seasonal coverage and avoid overlap.	MATA, CC, BIA	2025
A	5.1	Improve coordination and integrated support services, including food and beverage and accommodation, for the annual Wiarion Willie Festival and other off-season events.		
		All services needed to support visitors to the festival are open and promoted as part of the festival media campaign. Visitors extend their stay and provide a positive customer experience survey.	MATA	2024
B	5.2	Explore the development of a bike or e- bike sharing program		
		Bike sharing program introduced and monitored.	SBP and NBP	2027
A	5.3	Support ongoing and new programs for the downtowns, in addition to those supported by the Chambers and BIA, by providing incentives for concerts, walking tours, interactive storefronts, historical knowledge sharing.		
		Existing programs enhanced and supported.	MATA, CC, BIA	2025

TOURISM STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

<i>Priority / Task</i>	<i>Project Lead / Team</i>	<i>Target Date</i>	<i>Budget/Resources*</i>	
A	5.4	Hire a summer seasonal ambassador (and content creator/website) to interact with tourists, tourism entities, create and upload digital content, coordinate visitor satisfaction surveys and report to MATA. Provide training program with staff and volunteers.		
	Pilot ambassador position and report results. Training provided to ensure everyone sharing a role as “tourism ambassador”.		MATA	2025
A	5.5	Develop an online photo, video, drone library as a marketing resource for all tourism entities to use.		
	Photo library completed and developed and used seasonally.		MATA	2025
A	5.6	Develop an annual benchmark survey for assessing the source of tourists and the quality of their experiences. Data collection and reporting is fundamental to understanding what products to offer or are emerging. (Sustainable Focus)		
	Stakeholders involved in determining what data is needed. Data collected and shared annually (with interpretation) with stakeholders. Used in marketing and packaging programs. Information is meaningful to the tourism entities		MATA with RTO7	2025
B	5.7	Develop strategies to attract the water traffic at Marinas (Sauble Beach, Wiarton, Oliphant) and promote local events and businesses.		
	Traffic from water access results in increased visitation to local destinations.		MATA	2026

TOURISM STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

<i>Priority / Task</i>	<i>Project Lead / Team</i>	<i>Target Date</i>	<i>Budget/Resources*</i>
B 5.8	Develop a coordinated plan to provide short term accommodation users and day visitors with “things to do” in SBP. Provide links to providers of various activities and events, including rental options, picnic areas, photo locations. Including an education component to increase awareness of what it means to be a visitor to SBP.		
Customer satisfaction surveys show an increased appreciation of what there is to do. Stays are lengthened.	SBP Tourism	2026	Volunteer and staff time
B 5.9	Explore different business models to host a weeknight market in Wiaraton. The downtown should be animated with interactive events reflecting local events, services, culture.		
Weeknight traffic increased with STA visits. Restaurants and other support services are open	MATA/ CC	2026	Grant Programs / Incentives



APPENDIX A – MAT APPLICATION FORM EXAMPLES

APAPPENDIX A - MAT Fund Application Evaluation Criteria



**Timmins Economic
Development Corporation**
Corporation du développement
économique de Timmins

705-360-2656

705-360-2679

130 Spruce St. S., Suite 1
130, rue Spruce Sud, bureau 1
Timmins, Ontario P4N 2M5

Timmins Municipal Accommodation Tax Fund - Evaluation Matrix

Rating 0 to 5: 0 incomplete, 1 very weak, 2 weak, 3 average, 4 strong, 5 very strong

TOURISM STRATEGY AND WORKPLAN	15 %
Do the organization and its proposed activities align with the goals of the City of Timmins tourism strategy and work plan?	
Is there a demonstrated need for the project or activities proposed?	
Is this a tourism-related project?	
ECONOMIC IMPACT	35 %
Does the project increase the number of out-of-town visitors?	
Does the project increase visitors spending?	
Does the project directly or indirectly increase overnight stays?	
Does this project secure new private sector tourism investment?	
Does the project enhance any of existing infrastructure or new construction (e.g. tourist facilities/ attractions?)	
Does the project support the creation of direct or indirect jobs?	
Does the project encourage partnerships between local organizations?	
EXPOSURE AND REACH	25 %
Does the organization have a marketing and promotional plan to key external markets and local markets?	
Does the project benefit the City of Timmins by increasing public awareness and understanding of the tourism sector?	
Does the project have potential to generate significant exposure for the City of Timmins?	
Does the project enhance the profile of the City of Timmins as a tourism destination locally and/or at the regional, provincial, national, and/or international level?	
Does the project enhance the competitiveness of Timmins tourism products and experiences?	
ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND FINANCIAL HELP	25 %
Does the applicant have a business plan and appropriate experience and governance in place to be successful?	
Does the applicant demonstrate responsible financial management through its past financial track record?	
Does the applicant demonstrate financial need? Is there evidence of an accumulated surplus?	
Is the projected budget balanced and realistic? Is it financially viable?	
Has the applicant demonstrated initiative or success in attempting to generate other revenue than the MAT Fund (e.g. fundraising, sales other grants etc.)?	

Please note not all questions will apply to each application.



TIMMINS
T M I N . | J Y T I E N S . | ∇ d U

APAPPENDIX B - APPLICAITON FORMS EXAMPLES: Timmins - Application Form

(application is completed in a word document and submitted to TEDC via email)



☎ 705-360-2656

📠 705-360-2679

130 Spruce St. S., Suite 1
130, rue Spruce Sud, bureau 1
Timmins, Ontario P4N 2M5

Timmins Municipal Accommodations Tax Fund Application

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Timmins MAT Fund Introduction

With the Province of Ontario's passage of Bill 127, the Stronger Healthier Ontario Act, municipalities have been authorized to establish a transient accommodation tax within their jurisdictions. The implementation and administration of the accommodation tax is authorized under Section 400.1 of the Municipal Act and Ontario Regulation 435/17 (together with all other relevant laws, regulations, decrees, orders, and by-laws, "Applicable Laws").

Where a Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT) by-law is in place, the MAT is mandatory and providers of transient accommodation are obligated to collect the MAT from purchasers of accommodation, and to remit same to the municipality having imposed it.

The proceeds of the MAT must be allocated, distributed, and utilized, in accordance with Applicable Laws.

In Timmins, The Corporation of the City of Timmins has designated the Timmins Economic Development Corporation ("TEDC") as the organization that will be responsible for allocating and distributing part or all of the proceeds of the MAT (the proceeds transferred to the TEDC being the "MAT Fund"). The TEDC has an existing non-profit board with an economic development mandate that has long encompassed tourism.

The purpose of the Municipal Accommodations Tax Fund is to promote and grow the tourism industry in Timmins. To guide investments by the TEDC, Tourism Timmins will develop a "Tourism Development Strategy".

View the [Tourism Timmins Interim Tourism Strategy](#)

Applicants must review all guidelines and contact the TEDC before applying.

[Municipal Accommodations Tax Process](#)

[Municipal Accommodations Tax Fund Guidelines](#)

[Municipal Accommodations Tax Subcommittee Terms of Reference](#)

[Municipal Accommodations Tax Subcommittee Conflict of Interest Guidelines](#)

[Municipal Accommodations Tax Evaluation Matrix](#)

All applicants to the MAT must contact the TEDC before applying. Please contact Noella Rinaldo at noella.rinaldo@timmins.ca or 705-360-2600 x7081 to receive the Word version of this document. Any submissions received without contacting the TEDC will be deemed ineligible for the TMATT.

If you require assistance or further details about some of the questions, please follow-up with Noella.

Project Details

1. How much are you asking for?
2. Name of Project and Organizer
3. Proposed start and completion dates (indicate the proposed project start/completion dates based on the project implementation schedule using the dropdown calendar):

Start Date
Completion Date
4. Select the project type that best suits your request:
 - Product Development Project – Planning (feasibility studies and business plan)
 - Product Development Project – Start-up/Expansion
 - Event Bid Submission
 - Event Hosting
 - Marketing
5. Describe the project that is being presented and its importance to the community (max. 250 words):
6. Please identify any examples of similar or related initiatives to this project that you're aware of that have been undertaken in the city of Timmins (either by the applicant or others):
7. Demonstrate the need or demand for the proposed project. Why do you think your project would be successful? What experience do you have with this type of activity?
8. Specify project objectives and how the project does and/or will contribute to tourism development in the city of Timmins
9. Describe how the project promotes economic growth, innovation, and/or job creation in the city of Timmins. Please forward an Ontario Tourism Regional Economic Impact Model (TREIM) or Sports Tourism Economic Assessment Model (STEAM) report to noella.rinaldo@timmins.ca.
10. Complete all that apply:

- a. Estimated number of out-of-town event participants (non-ticket buyers such as the number of tournament participants, conference exhibitors, and/or performers and production crew):staying in hotels
 - b. Estimated number of out-of-town event attendees (ticket buyers):staying in hotels
 - c. Total (a and B) Estimated number of out-of-town visitors staying in hotels
 - d. Estimated total number of event attendees (both local /regional and out-of-town):
11. How will you attract out-of-town participants/visitors to your event? And what assumptions are you basing this on (e.g. past events, model in other community)?
12. What regions are you targeting?
13. What media will you use?
14. What methods will you use to track the number of hotel visits as a result of your event?
This will be important for the final report.

Project Funding

15. Has your entity ever been funded by the City of Timmins, the Timmins Economic Development Corporation, Link North, and/or The Business Enterprise Centre?
16. If yes, what did your entity receive funding for?
17. Does the applicant owe the City of Timmins any money for taxes or other purposes that are past due? If yes, please elaborate:
18. Has private sector funding been considered and/or is it applicable?
19. In addition to the funding partner listed in your submission, are there other government funding programs that you have applied to or approached?
20. If yes, who else have you contacted?
21. Total estimated Project Costs:
22. If the project is funded, are there any potential issue related to the project that the TEDC should be made aware of?
23. If yes, please explain:
24. What permits and/or approvals are necessary to develop the project? Please indicate the status of each.
25. Is any key information missing from your application that will be submitted at a later date?
25. If yes, please explain what will be provided at a later date:
26. Have you completed the project costs and funders tables? If not, please complete before submission. If yes, please submit.

27. Does the applicant have copies of estimates and quotes for project expenses? If yes, please submit.
28. Does the applicant have documentation confirming partner funding commitments or confirmation of acceptance of application to other funding sources? If yes, please submit.
29. Does your organization have copies of consultant's reports related to your request? If yes, please submit.
30. Do you require the use of City-owned facilities? If yes, please note that all rentals of City-owned facilities must be paid in advance.
31. Do you require an advance on your grant funds prior to the event? If yes, please provided a detailed list, including costs, of what you will be using the advance for, including the rental of City-owned facilities.

Applicant Information

32. Lead Contact Information

- a. Name:
- b. Title:
- c. Organization/Company:
- d. Address:
- e. Mailing address (if different):
- f. Email address:
- g. Telephone number:
- h. Website:

33. Alternate Contact Information

- a. Name:
- b. Title:
- c. Organization/Company:
- d. Address:
- e. Mailing address (if different):
- f. Email address:
- g. Telephone number:
- h. Website (if different than above):

34. Business or Operating Name:

35. Legal Name of Applicant (if different than business or operating name):

36. Type of Legal Entity of Applicant (use dropdown menu):

Legal Entity

a. If other, please describe:

37. Briefly describe the nature of your organization/business

38. Business Registration Number

39. Business Name or Operating Name (if different from legal name)

Documentation Requirements

40. Please describe the governance structure of the organization include a list of key staff their roles.
41. Does your organization have a Board resolution(s) supporting the project? If yes, please submit.
42. Does your organization have a legal registration and/or a Master Business Licence? If yes, please submit
43. Is your organization a corporation? If yes, please provide: (i) articles of incorporation, amendment, and/or amalgamation; (ii) shareholder register; (iii) director register; and (iv) officer register.
44. Does your organization have a copy of its most current, audited financial statements (1-3 years) that have been approved by the Board? If yes, please submit.
45. Does your organization have proof of appropriate insurance, including \$5 million in liability? If yes, please submit.
46. Is your organization governed by a Board of Directors? If yes, please submit a list of all the board members.
47. List each person having a legal or beneficial interest in the project, including all partners, affiliates, and persons related for the purposes of the *Income Tax Act*, RSC 1985, c1.
48. Does the applicant have copies of estimates and quotes for project expenses? If yes, please submit.
49. Does the applicant have documentation confirming partner funding commitments or confirmation of acceptance of application to other funding sources? If yes, please submit.
50. Does your organization have copies of consultant's reports related to your request? If yes, please submit

Certification

51. As the Applicant or an authorized signing officer of the Applicant, I certify to the Timmins Economic Development Corporation (TEDC) that the information contained in the Application Form, which includes supporting documentation submitted herewith, is true and complete in all respects. If the TEDC discovers that the Application Form contains any material misrepresentation, this Application Form shall be deemed to be withdrawn immediately by the Applicant. I agree to provide any additional information that the TEDC may reasonably require for the purposes of assessing this Application Form and administering its Municipal Accommodations Tax (MAT) Fund. I also certify that upon completion of the project described in this Application Form.

52. Applicant/Authorized Signing Authority and Date

a. Applicant/Authorized Signing Authority:

b. Date (use dropdown calendar)

Date

Red Lake Municipal Accommodations Tax Fund Application

BACKGROUND

Please answer all of the questions applicable to your project.

1. Legal Name of Applicant

2. Business Registration Number

3. Business Name or Operating Name (if different from legal name)

4. Type of Legal Entity of Applicant

- Sole proprietorship
- Corporation (for-profit)
- Corporation (not-for-profit)
- Partnership
- Other (please specify)

5. Lead Contact Information

Name

Company

Address

Address 2

City

Province

Postal Code

Country

Email Address

Phone Number

6. Title of Lead Applicant

7. Lead Contact Website URL

8. Alternate Contact Information

Name	<input type="text"/>
Company	<input type="text"/>
Address	<input type="text"/>
Address 2	<input type="text"/>
City	<input type="text"/>
Province	<input type="text"/>
Postal Code	<input type="text"/>
Country	<input type="text"/>
Email Address	<input type="text"/>
Phone Number	<input type="text"/>

9. Title of Alternate Contact

10. Alternate Contact Website URL (if different than above)

11. Select the project type that best suits your request

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Product Development Project - Planning (feasibility studies & business plans) | <input type="radio"/> Event Bid Submission |
| <input type="radio"/> Product Development Project - Start-up/Expansion | <input type="radio"/> Event Hosting |
| <input type="radio"/> Product Development Project - Capital (infrastructure, buildings, and/or equipment for a maximum of \$50,000.00) | <input type="radio"/> Marketing |

12. Proposed start and completion dates (indicate the proposed project start/completion dates based on the project implementation schedule):

Start Date

Date

Completion Date

Date

13. Amount requested from the Municipal Accommodations Tax (MAT) Fund:

14. Briefly describe the nature of your organization/business:

15. Please describe the governance structure of the organization include a list of key staff their roles.

16. Please identify any other related initiatives to this project that you're aware of that have been undertaken in the municipality.

17. Demonstrate the need or demand for the proposed project. Why do you think your project would be successful? What experience do you have with this type of activity?

18. Has your entity ever been funded by the Municipal Accommodation Tax before

Yes

No

19. If yes, what did your entity receive funding for?

20. Does the applicant owe the Municipality of Red Lake any money for taxes or other purposes that are past due?

Yes

No

21. If yes, please elaborate:

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PROJECT DETAILS

22. Project Name:

23. Describe the project that is being presented and it's importance to the community (max. 250 words):

24. Specify project objectives and how the project does and/or will contribute to tourism development in the Municipality of Red Lake:

25. List each person having a legal or beneficial interest in the project, including all partners, affiliates, and persons related for the purposes of the *Income Tax Act*, RSC 1985, c1.

Partner 1

Partner 2

Partner 3

Partner 4

Partner 5

Red Lake Municipal Accommodations Tax Fund Application

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

26. Describe how the project promotes economic growth innovation and/or job creation in the municipality.

27. Complete all that apply:

Estimated number of out-of-town visitors visitation (80 km plus)

Estimated visitor spending generated

Estimated number of conferences or event attendees

Estimated number of non-local conference or event attendees

28. How will you attract out-of-town participants/visitors to your event? And what assumptions are you basing this on (e.g. past events, model in other community)?

29. What regions are you targeting?

30. What media will you use?

31. What methods will you use to track the number of hotel visits as a result of your event? This will be important for the final report.

PROJECT COSTS AND FINANCING

32. Has private sector funding been considered and/or is it applicable?

- Yes
- No

33. In addition to the funding partner listed in your submission, are there other government funding programs that you have applied to or approached?

- Yes
- No

34. If yes, who else have you contacted?

35. Total Project Costs:

Red Lake Municipal Accommodations Tax Fund Application

OTHER INFORMATION

36. If the project is funded, are there any potential issue related to the project that the municipality should be made aware of?

- Yes
 No

37. If yes, please explain:

38. What permits and/or approvals are necessary to develop the project? Please indicate the status of each.

39. Is any key information missing from your application that will be submitted at a later date?

- Yes
 No

40. If yes, please explain what will be provided at a later date:

Red Lake Municipal Accommodations Tax Fund Application

DOCUMENTS TO BE SUBMITTED WITH YOUR APPLICATION

Please submit all requested documents to the HWY 105 Tourism and Marketing Board via info@hwy105.ca

41. Have you completed the project costs and funders tables? If not, please complete before submission. If yes, please submit.

Yes

No

42. Does your organization have a Board resolution(s) supporting the project? If yes, please submit.

Yes

No

43. Does your organization have a legal registration and/or a Master Business Licence? If yes, please submit.

Yes

No

44. Is your organization a corporation? If yes, please provide: (i) articles of incorporation, amendment, and/or amalgamation; (ii) shareholder register; (iii) director register; and (iv) officer register.

Yes

No

45. Does your organization have documentation confirming partner funding commitments or confirmation of acceptance of application to other funding sources? If yes, please submit.

Yes

No

46. Does your organization have a copy of its most current, audited financial statements (1-3 years) that have been approved by the Board? If yes, please submit.

Yes

No

47. Does your organization have copies of consultant's reports related to your request? If yes, please submit.

Yes

No

48. Does your organization have copies of estimates and quotes for project expenses? If yes, please submit.

Yes

No

49. Does your organization have proof of appropriate insurance? If yes, please submit.

Yes

No

50. Is your organization governed by a Board of Directors? If yes, please submit a list of all the board members.

Yes

No

Red Lake Municipal Accommodations Tax Fund Application

CERTIFICATION

51. As the Applicant or an authorized signing officer of the Applicant, I certify that the information contained in the Application Form, which includes supporting documentation submitted herewith, is true and complete in all respects. If the Application Form contains any material misrepresentation, this Application Form shall be deemed to be withdrawn immediately by the Applicant. I agree to provide additional information that may reasonably be require for the purposes of assessing this Application Form.

Yes

No

52. Applicant/Authorized Signing Authority and Date

Applicant/Authorized
Signing Authority Name

Date