City of Kingston

History and Innovation: Growing Cultural Heritage and Cultural Tourism in Kingston

March 2014

Integrated Cultural Heritage and Cultural Tourism Strategy
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: AN INTEGRATED CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CULTURAL TOURISM STRATEGY TO ENSURE THAT HISTORY AND INNOVATION THRIVE IN THE CITY OF KINGSTON

The development of this Strategy is predicated on two important assumptions inspired by the fact Kingston is well positioned among Canadian communities shaped by its location, history, resources and overall quality of life:

1. **Kingston’s history and heritage comprise a compelling resource.** Located at the confluence of three bodies of water, its evolution as a community is closely associated with the development of Canada as a nation of nations. It is a story that begins with Aboriginal peoples and expands to include centuries of settlement, immigration and migration.

2. **Increased investment in cultural tourism represents a cost effective way to grow the tourism market in Kingston.** By continuing to invest in, develop and sustain the range of historical and cultural assets in Kingston, cultural tourism has the potential to benefit residents and visitors alike by making it a great place to live and a great place to visit.

Within the context of Kingston’s Integrated Community Sustainability Plan, the development of Kingston’s history and heritage, together with the development of cultural tourism, will support social cohesion, economic health and cultural vitality within Kingston. This Strategy as outlined provides the rationale needed to develop both the cultural heritage and cultural tourism sectors in Kingston, pointing out the benefits that would accrue to the City of Kingston and its residents as a result.
Confederation Tour Trolley. Photo: Kingston Publications.
The need for this Strategy arises from the Kingston Culture Plan (KCP) and most specifically Recommendation 3 (“that the City of Kingston develop a cultural heritage strategy that develops Kingston’s powerful historical narrative”) and Recommendation 59 (“that the City... develop a tourism strategy that leverages Kingston’s cultural and heritage assets and distinctive identity”). While this Cultural Heritage and Cultural Tourism Plan advances other recommendations in the KCP, the two referenced above are the most relevant.

In preparing this Strategy a clear finding has been that cultural heritage and cultural tourism are intertwined and interdependent. In Kingston, the existing resource base as it relates to cultural heritage is very strong. It is something that already exists in terms of built form, histories and landscapes and should be further developed, making it a distinctive and cost-effective way to grow the tourism market in Kingston.

The existence of a strong resource base and the opportunity to develop and sustain this resource base in ways that expand and grow the range of cultural tourism experiences and products that exist is a key concept that connects this Strategy to the KCP. What is most needed at this juncture is an investment of efforts designed (1) to strengthen the resource base that exists, (2) to develop and sustain a range of experiences and products based on those resources, (3) to link those experiences and products to cultural tourism, and (4) to do so by involving key stakeholders in a coordinated, team-based approach.

**The Opportunity: Why Focus on Cultural Heritage and Cultural Tourism?**

Along with the potential for cultural tourism as described, the tourism market in Kingston is already well developed and consists of four main elements:

- Meetings and conventions;
- Travel trade;
- Sports; and
- Leisure.

These four elements have proven to be successful, but can be expensive to develop further because they are resource intensive and demand significant infrastructure investment. By comparison, cultural tourism provides an opportunity to expand tourism in Kingston through a combination of resource allocation and investment that targets experience and product development first and foremost followed by additional marketing as needed.
Fortunately for Kingston, it is also already well positioned to support a higher level of tourism given the infrastructure that already exists:

- Its location on Highway 401, Ontario’s most important thoroughfare, a municipal airport, regular train and bus service and numerous marinas;
- The prevalence of attractions, including the waterfront, historic sites, museums, cultural venues, conservation areas and events;
- Walkability and a sense of scale unique to smaller communities;
- Accommodations, shopping and restaurants;
- Learning institutions such as Queen’s University, RMC and St. Lawrence College;
- Information management systems put in place by the City of Kingston.

While Kingston is well-placed to utilize tourism to enhance its economic prospects and encourage growth, this Strategy focuses on the combined potential of cultural heritage and cultural tourism in particular. In terms of growing tourism in the city, cultural tourism is being emphasized because:

- Kingston has a well developed cultural and heritage resource base;
- The necessary infrastructure exists and cultural tourism can be positioned to appeal to residents while attracting more visitors and spending year round;
- Cultural tourism has the potential to raise Kingston’s profile and importance locally, nationally and internationally; and
- Most importantly, Kingston’s powerful historical narrative is rich in its complexity. It is a resource that already exists and that should be developed and sustained in ways that benefit residents and engage visitors.

Kingston is in an excellent position. Its location, history, resources and overall quality of life means the raw material already exists to create a range of experiences and products with broad appeal. The building blocks are already in place and what is needed right now is a strong vision, coupled with an ability to bring people and resources together to open up new opportunities for civic pride, cultural sustainability and economic development.

The State of Heritage: Assets, Gaps and Needs

If tourism represents a major economic growth opportunity for Kingston, and cultural tourism is the ideal means of developing that opportunity, then what are the key assets that Kingston can develop?
• Natural heritage assets, including the Great Lakes, Cataraqui River, Rideau Canal, St. Lawrence River, Prince Edward County, the Thousand Islands and the Frontenac Arch Biosphere (Canada’s 12th UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve), which highlight the importance of water to the historical narrative as well as to the city’s geographical setting.

• Tangible heritage assets, including Kingston’s well-known stock of heritage buildings, its many museums and galleries, and its cultural sector generally. Included in the broad category of tangible assets are the public realm in Kingston, which includes the magnificent 19th century Kingston City Hall National Historic Site, a walkable downtown, and the waterfront.

• And finally intangible assets such as the history and heritage that animate the stories of those who have lived or passed through this region over its long history—Aboriginal peoples, French, English, immigrant and others—as well as the customs, traditions and stories of Kingston area residents past and present.

Kingston is rich in natural, tangible and intangible cultural heritage, but few have been fully developed as market-ready experiences and/or products, and many existing experiences and products remain narrowly focused so have yet to emerge as “must see” attractions. Most, particularly the museums and other collection-based institutions, continue to offer the same experience year after year while they struggle to maintain sustainable operating budgets. This is not just an issue unique to museums as few of Kingston’s cultural heritage assets have achieved their full potential.
Our process has revealed the following:

- **Interpretation of existing cultural heritage assets is narrow and incomplete:** The consultations revealed that there are many “Kingston stories” that shape its history. 19th century history dominates but the city could and should expand and enhance all its cultural heritage assets.

- **The city’s built heritage is a major asset that can be better developed:** While Kingston’s built heritage is one of its greatest strengths, more work needs to be done to determine how best to utilize these assets as a major part of this Strategy. Currently, the focus rests on a series of well-produced architectural walking tours but these could be expanded to include both didactic and experiential information about social history and to illustrate the difference between historical and contemporary streetscapes.

- **There is a need for greater attention to the balance between mission and market:** We observed an imbalance in terms of approach, with many cultural heritage organizations focusing more heavily on their missions (focus) and less on their markets (audiences). The consultations revealed a need to strike a better balance that would help to emphasize accessibility and relevance with a long term goal being increased community support and organizational sustainability.

- **There is a need for better coordination and leadership:** Leadership and coordination are needed in relation to both cultural heritage and cultural tourism and this Strategy must address this key need in order to ensure success.

### The State of Cultural Tourism in Kingston: Strengths, Challenges and Potentials

Given its location, history, resources and overall quality of life, Kingston already offers a rich and interesting mix of cultural tourism experiences and products that are best known to local residents. The strength of its homegrown culture is well established as is its location and geography that are both extremely desirable. Though varied, some of the more popular experiences and products that already exist and provide a strong foundation upon which to build include the following:

- **Food and music experiences** – the city has always had a public market, fine dining and a lively music scene. Festivals are common, with such events as the Skeleton Park Music Festival, Kingston Jazz Festival, Home Grown Music Festival, Wolfe Island Music Festival, Bluesfest and other music events that are a regular occurrence particularly in the summer months.
• **Learning experiences** – these include the many museums, galleries and historic sites as well as self-directed and guided walking tours that are offered throughout the city at different times of the year. Also popular are the various learning experiences on offer through Queen’s University, like Queen’s MiniU and Queen’s Institute for Lifelong Learning that attract a strong local following.

• **Adventure experiences** – Kingston’s cultural heritage and natural heritage are closely linked providing interesting points of intersection for tourists who seek a combination of learning and adventure. This includes a range of watersports such as sailing, boating, kayaking and kite boarding as well as hiking, cycling, canoeing, fishing and camping within the region and ready access to the nearby Frontenac Arch Biosphere that has been designated as a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve.

Given the availability of cultural tourism offerings that exist in Kingston, there is an incredible opportunity to develop and grow local and regional tourism efforts using these offerings. The potential for cultural tourism in Kingston is significant but it is a sector that requires further development and investment as evidenced by our work within the community that indicates the following:

• **Cultural tourism in Kingston tends to be undeveloped, underdeveloped and/or small-scale:** The existing cultural tourism experiences and products, while varied, lack focus, investment and critical mass.

• **A significant number of cultural tourism experiences and products remain undeveloped, untapped and undiscovered:** There is a tremendous variety of less visible activity that exists beneath the surface and that attest to a surplus of creative energy that exists, but which needs to be better developed in relation to local and regional audiences.

• **The need for coordination, leadership, investment and development:** Fragmentation within the local tourism sector indicates a need for a strategy to frame proposed approaches that promote coordination, leadership, investment and development.

It is well known that cultural tourists are more likely to spend money and stay longer in a community that offers a compelling range of cultural experiences and products. These visitors are interested in learning and seek authentic “experiences” they will remember; therefore, the focus here is on the development of a range of unique and distinctive experiences and products that will appeal to residents and foster a sense of pride and engage a broad array of cultural tourists.
Shaping an Integrated Cultural Heritage and Cultural Tourism Strategy for Kingston

Defining Principles

The Strategy as proposed is built on a number of defining principles:

- **Community identity and municipal vision.** A great place to live is also a great place to visit. That is a truism that recognizes the need to ensure a high quality of life for local residents so they will feel a strong sense of connection to their home community and, therefore, function as ambassadors. Municipal vision is also required that supports a balanced approach to quality of life issues as well as economic development.

- **An authentic sense of history and heritage.** Kingston’s many strengths in terms of history and heritage also present many challenges, which need to be understood. Often, Kingston is best known as the “Limestone City” that is home to Fort Henry, Canada’s first Prime Minister and an extraordinary number of prisons and other institutions. Each of these elements is closely associated with Kingston’s 19th century history but they do not reveal the full extent and breadth of histories that exist. Kingston needs to pursue a vision of its cultural heritage—natural, tangible and intangible—that is well defined and authentic.

- **Make cultural heritage assets central to the cultural tourism strategy and focus on stories and storytelling.** Cultural heritage and cultural tourism should not be considered in isolation. In fact, they can be developed in ways that strengthen which is why this Strategy makes the case for developing a broad range of heritage-based cultural tourism experiences and products based on Kingston’s stories. Greater access to a broader range of stories and specifically experiences must be provided, and vehicles must be developed to enable people to discover those stories and engage with these experiences.

- **Focus on discovery and experience:** This refers to the ways in which visitors should experience Kingston’s many histories and stories. It also means there should be opportunities for spontaneity and self-directed exploration, as well as suggested itineraries that are relevant to local audiences and engaging to tourists.

- **Cluster experiences:** Clustering experiences can be either physical, temporal or intellectual forms. The physical focuses on experiences that are in close proximity to each other and are easily accessed as a result, the temporal focuses on clustering major events at distinct times during the year to create an evenly distributed calendar of programs and experiences, and the intellectual focuses on themed clusters relating to a range of subject areas, including human and built heritage, natural history, Aboriginal heritage, industrial history, military history and so on.
• **Bundle products:** Bundling involves positioning the city’s assets as a whole experience and recognizes that discovery need not exclude commercial, retail or any other kind of experiences available for visitors. While obviously closely related to the clustering issue above, it is a marketing principle as well, and can include value-added pricing and other related initiatives. Partnerships between organizations, service providers and programmers are essential.

• **Plan for sustainability:** Sustainability is an issue for some cultural institutions and organizations in Kingston. A strategy for sustainability requires a phased approach in terms of development and resource allocation so that it involves a combination of professional development, partnership building and investment. These same principles can be applied at a higher level to achieve community benefit through strategic support for the “Pillars of Sustainability”: cultural, social, environmental and economic.

• **City Leadership:** The City of Kingston will be required to take on a coordination role initially, acting as facilitator to start the conversation outlined above and to take an active role in bringing together cultural heritage and cultural tourism stakeholders. In the past, these stakeholders have worked in relative isolation but there are clearly advantages to be gained by working together. The City of Kingston must seize the opportunity to lead by example and to demonstrate what is possible in terms of developing and delivering “market ready” experiences and products. In the long term, however, it will be the responsibility of the stakeholders to adopt a shared leadership model to ensure the growth and sustainability of the cultural heritage and cultural tourism sectors in Kingston as a joint venture.
The Two Key Actions

The Integrated Cultural Heritage and Cultural Tourism Strategy for Kingston is based on two key actions:

1. **Improve the cultural experiences and products.** By focusing on discovery and experience, the Strategy suggests ways to identify the histories and stories that could and should be shared, to enhance the existing heritage asset base and to offer residents and visitors new and improved cultural experiences and products.

2. **Make these cultural experiences and products market-ready.** This means several things within the Kingston context:
   - Improving the cultural heritage experiences and products in terms of subject matter, content and delivery, and then developing those same experiences and products so they are more visitor-focused. They also need to be innovative and unique, yet accessible and relevant at the same time.
   - Improving the quality of operations of the content providers;
   - Clustering the experiences and products to respond to market preferences and needs;
   - Bundling the experiences and products as appropriate and marketing them effectively.

Top-Line Priorities

Having identified the two key actions necessary, three top-line priorities emerge that give shape, form and direction to the Strategy:

1. **Connect the stakeholders.** The Strategy calls upon existing and potentially new cultural heritage and cultural tourism stakeholders to work together to strengthen and sustain individual organizations, groups, businesses and concerns. By encouraging the articulation of a shared and coherent outlook, the Strategy creates a unified direction for cultural tourism and cultural heritage for Kingston as a whole by identifying best practices and developing standards and guidelines that are relevant and meaningful to both the stakeholders and the community. It would also be helpful to develop a shared understanding of the many histories that exist and how they can be best developed to Kingston’s advantage.
2. **Develop new information management infrastructure.** This task is already underway in Kingston, where the City of Kingston has been working to develop a database of cultural heritage and cultural tourism resources that can be accessed through maps, handhelds and other digital devices. The existence of such a database provides increased access to information about assets, events and happenings in the city in ways that improve customer service as well as resident and visitor experiences overall.

3. **Achieve specific outcomes through the strategic use of City practices, policies and financial resources.** The City of Kingston itself needs to foster best practices as it relates to cultural heritage and that supports cultural tourism by association. It needs to lead by example and create opportunities for professional development, partnership building and investment that benefit the cultural heritage sector. Policies need to be put in place to improve governance, operations, asset management, programming and sustainability among cultural heritage organizations and to develop mechanisms that encourage the continuing preservation of built heritage as one area of endeavor and that expands to include other forms of cultural heritage. The City also needs to manage its resources strategically to build capacity, both internally and externally.

**Who Does What?**

In order to develop cultural heritage in tandem with cultural tourism as a way to grow the tourism market in Kingston, it will be necessary for the City of Kingston to assume a leadership position in the short term. Our work has revealed that Kingston is well positioned to convene the skills and resources of the following stakeholders who create, deliver or market cultural experiences and products:

- Community leaders within the cultural heritage sectors such as the Municipal Heritage Committee; Kingston Historical Society; Frontenac Heritage Foundation; Kingston Arts Council; Kingston Association of Museums, Art Galleries and Historic Sites; and the City of Kingston’s own Cultural Services department;
- Local and regional tourism marketing organizations such as Tourism Kingston, Kingston Accommodation Partners, The Great Waterway, Rideau Heritage Route, and others;
- Cultural content producers such as the St. Lawrence Parks Commission, Kingston 1,000 Islands Cruises, Kingston Trolley Tours and Downtown Kingston! BIA;
• Institutions of higher education such as Queen’s University, RMC and St. Lawrence College;
• Members of Kingston’s Urban Aboriginal groups and other local residents whose stories, experiences, cultural heritage, and perspectives can be celebrated through cultural heritage programming, which is both city-facilitated and/or community-led.

In reality the City of Kingston is just one partner of many, but must play a strong facilitation role at the outset in order to create the conditions needed to bring the cultural heritage and cultural tourism stakeholders together. In this regard, it must provide a framework for cooperation through which content can be developed, enhanced and made readily available to the cultural tourism market that includes residents as well as visitors from outside the community.

The Strategy identifies implementation mechanisms for the two key actions as well as the three top-line priorities as defined.

**Who Leads the Two Key Actions?**

1. **Improve the Cultural Experiences and Products**
   Once the stakeholders have been brought together, identified best practices and developed a set of standards and guidelines, the City of Kingston must work in collaboration with various cultural heritage partners to:
   
   • Implement the cultural heritage interpretive plan (described in Chapter 4);
   • Cluster existing festivals to increase the size and “feel” of the events;
   • Identify and develop cultural calendar “anchors”;
   • Identify and develop a series of cultural clusters;
   • Develop themed cultural tourism itineraries.

   At the same time, this exercise also needs to define a process for identifying the best experiences and products to be developed over time as well as the resources needed to develop them effectively. The key issue here is to be clear about the aspects of Kingston’s cultural heritage that can and should be developed. This needs to be managed strategically in order to focus on those things that are authentic to Kingston and can be well developed.
2. **Make These Cultural Experiences and Products Market-Ready**

The best practices together with the standards and guidelines as defined would provide a context for moving forward. Working with the destination marketers to leverage the cultural experiences and products that get developed is important. Equally significant is the ability to work with Kingston Accommodation Partners; Tourism Kingston; Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport; Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation; and the Canadian Tourism Commission, to name a few, to identify opportunities to grow tourism through proactive partnerships in initiatives that target cultural tourists, who may be local, regional, national or international.

Incentive programs—in the form of grants and/or tax rebates--should be used by the City of Kingston as a tool for improving operational, programmatic and marketing strategies. A greater level of economic sustainability for cultural heritage institutions and organizations would result, along with increased participation by local residents as well as greater numbers of cultural tourists. Incentive programs are also necessary to encourage the continuing preservation of Kingston’s built heritage that provides the context for a range of cultural heritage experiences and products.

Key initiatives include:

- Assess the status of the cultural heritage sector as it now exists;
- Use of grant-making programs;
- Mentor and provide ‘How-to’ workshops to benefit the cultural heritage sector; and
- Develop a set of best practices unique to Kingston in order to establish a “Centre of Excellence” that would not only generate innovative ideas, but develop and deliver capacity-building programs yet to be defined.

**Who Implements the Top-Line Priorities?**

1. **Connect the Stakeholders:**

As recommended in the Kingston Culture Plan (Recommendation #58), the City of Kingston should function as the main facilitator at the outset of this Strategy to create an environment for cultural tourism stakeholders to work together. Initially it would the responsibility of the City to achieve the following:

- Convene a Cultural Capacity Working Group that includes both cultural heritage and cultural tourism stakeholders
• Ensure that the Cultural Capacity Working Group identifies a set of best practices and develops standards and guidelines that can be used to direct the development of authentic, vibrant and market ready experiences and products in Kingston.

At the present time, the City of Kingston is well positioned to initiate this process of connecting the stakeholders and demonstrating how best to develop the opportunities that exist. The ability to show what is possible is crucial at this early stage, as is the ability to develop and deliver examples of cultural experiences and products that can be successfully marketed. In the long term, however, this responsibility will need to be shared among all the stakeholders to ensure the sustainability of this endeavour.

2. **Develop New Information Management Infrastructure**
A new, more sophisticated and sustainable information management infrastructure is needed so Kingston can establish itself as a leader in the field, especially as it relates to providing access to information about the city’s diverse cultural heritage. This work is already underway in the form of an Enterprise GIS program and it will be necessary for the City of Kingston to work with stakeholders to deliver the following initiatives:

• Develop a comprehensive database of cultural groups and cultural resources;
• Enhance the current calendar of events;
• Develop comprehensive events packages.

The development of a comprehensive database also provides the information needed to establish a baseline understanding of cultural heritage and cultural tourism in Kingston and can be used to define targets and evaluate progress toward achieving those targets in the long term.

3. **Achieve specific outcomes through the strategic use of City practices, policies and financial resources.**
The City needs to lead by example and facilitate best practices that support cultural tourism. The City also needs to assess and refine existing policies, develop new policies where necessary and allocate financial resources to support the creation of cultural experiences and products across the community.

The strategic use of City practices, policies and financial resources will strengthen the ability of the City to take a leadership role while also fostering the ability of local stakeholders to deliver the cultural experiences and products needed that will set Kingston apart.
The creation of a Heritage Fund as described in the Kingston Culture Plan provides the financial resources needed to build the capacity of the museum and heritage sectors through a combination of project and operating grants. In this context, the Heritage Fund should be understood as an investment program and as a tool that could encourage heritage organizations to progress towards increasingly professional and sustainable operations.

The creation and implementation of a Special Event Office is also essential as the City needs to be more customer-focused and able to support the organization of events and festivals across the community with a high degree of efficiency, safety and professionalism.

A review of the City’s Heritage Incentive Programs related to built heritage forms should also be pursued as a way to ensure the diversity of heritage buildings in Kingston that are privately owned are cared for appropriately.
Future Impacts and Benefits

As identified in the Kingston Culture Plan, both cultural heritage and cultural tourism are critical to Kingston’s continuing efforts related to municipal cultural planning and represent two areas of opportunity and growth. Kingston has much to offer as a place to live and as a place to visit and a strategic investment in cultural heritage and cultural tourism will help to ensure innovation and growth in these two sectors that will positively impact and benefit the community as a whole.

This needs to begin with an investment in building organizational capacity and by ensuring the quantity and quality of market-ready cultural experiences and products. The result will be a strengthened sense of pride in the community that will have cultural, social and economic benefits that can be quantified. The ability to measure these impacts and benefits will take time, however, as this Strategy outlines a ten year timeline divided into three phases of 1-2 years; 3-5 years; and 6-10 years.

In the end, it is anticipated that the following outcomes will have been achieved.

Cultural Heritage

Kingston’s cultural heritage will have been developed to strengthen a collective sense of identity. The many histories that emerge will have been embraced and celebrated by local residents who will function as ambassadors and help to draw visitors from near and far. This outcome will have been supported by the following achievements:

- Information about Kingston’s cultural heritage is widely available and accessible;
- Kingston is recognized as a community that understands and appreciates its cultural heritage and builds on it in ways that are accessible, meaningful and inclusive;
- Collaboration and resource sharing defines how Kingston’s cultural heritage is accessed and experienced;
- History and innovation are seen as synonymous improving access, awareness and appreciation of Kingston’s cultural heritage;
- Kingston’s many heritage groups and organizations are sustainable and function as indispensable interpreters of Kingston’s history and heritage via a set of fully market-ready experiences developed in concert with tourism marketers and other types of experience providers.
Cultural Tourism

Cultural tourism will have emerged as a key component of Kingston’s overall tourism sector and results in demonstrable economic benefits that support growth, immigration, migration and talent retention. This outcome will have been supported by the following achievements:

- The development of Kingston’s core cultural attractors is supported by a collective effort involving a diverse mix of (governmental and non-governmental) stakeholders;
- Kingston is recognized as a leader in its approach to developing its cultural heritage assets to support cultural tourism;
- Kingston has established a set of best practices that have resulted in a cohesive, consistent and compelling positioning of its cultural heritage assets;
- Partnerships with stakeholders within and beyond the community define how cultural tourism opportunities are identified, developed and marketed.

These future impacts and benefits are varied and substantial, and the implementation of the Integrated Cultural Heritage and Cultural Tourism Strategy will have enhanced both quality of life and economic development and give substance to the motto of the City of Kingston as a place “where history and innovation thrive.”
Preface

Kingston is in an excellent position among Canadian communities, given its location, history, resources and overall quality of life. Its evolution as a community has been impacted greatly by its geography as well as the effects of colonization, conflict, politics, industrialization, development and shifting priorities and populations. Change is a constant but so too is Kingston’s reputation as the “Limestone City” steeped in history. The city has experienced many cycles of growth and decline over the centuries but continues to demonstrate tremendous potential as a community that possesses the ability to inspire its residents and develop its assets in ways that make it a model for municipal cultural planning. This is especially true in relation to how it fosters creativity, creates wealth and strengthens social cohesion through opportunity, investment, innovation and change management.

Cultural heritage and cultural tourism are critical to Kingston’s continuing efforts related to municipal cultural planning and represent two areas of opportunity and growth. As a meeting place along what is now being referred to as “The Great Waterway”, it functions as a creative hub located in close proximity to three of Canada’s most important cities and provides a vital link to northern New York State and the United States. It has been a place of settlement, conflict and resolution for thousands of years and the preservation of its cultural heritage, and specifically its built heritage, makes it the envy of many cities—small and large—across North America.

Kingston has much to offer as a great place to live and as a great place to visit and a strategic investment in cultural heritage and cultural tourism will ensure these resources are effectively developed for the benefit of the community as a whole. This work is already well underway as evidenced by the unanimous approval of the Kingston Culture Plan (KCP) in 2010 and the inclusion of numerous related priorities as part of Kingston’s Strategic Plan 2011-2014. Moving forward, the approach outlined in this Integrated Cultural Heritage and Cultural Tourism Strategy provides a set of recommendations that support cultural vitality, wealth creation, social cohesion and quality of place that directly benefit residents and be attractive to visitors from around the world.
1 Introduction

In 2010, the City of Kingston completed a comprehensive and strategic Kingston Culture Plan (KCP) to guide the development of the arts, culture and heritage in Kingston. The goals of the plan are to foster cultural vitality, to improve quality of life for Kingston residents and to bolster ongoing economic development strategies. This plan was approved by Council in September 2010.

Two of the key recommendations of the KCP were to develop a Cultural Heritage Strategy and a Cultural Tourism Strategy that would address two vital parts of the overall Plan. In the fall of 2011, the City engaged Lord Cultural Resources, in association with Brain Trust Marketing and the Canadian Urban Institute, to create that strategy, and also to develop a plan for the City in relation to the Sir John A. Macdonald Bicentennial to be celebrated in 2015.

This Integrated Cultural Heritage and Cultural Tourism Strategy must integrate with a related document being referred to as the “Commemoration Plan for Community-Wide Celebrations”, of which the Sir John A. Macdonald Bicentennial will be the first practical application. The Commemoration Plan for Community-Wide Celebrations flows out of the Integrated Cultural Heritage and Cultural Tourism Strategy and is intended as a tool to assist the City in managing its approach to large scale commemorations that are deemed to be of interest to the community as a whole. The Sir John A. Macdonald Bicentennial is one such example as is the celebration of Canada’s sesquicentennial in 2017 and Kingston’s 350th anniversary in 2023. These three commemorations to be celebrated over the next ten years are of local and national significance. The City of Kingston is well positioned to benefit from these commemorations, if approached strategically.
Agnes Etherington Art Centre. Photo: Bernard Clark.
The Integrated Cultural Heritage and Cultural Tourism Strategy and the Commemoration Plan for Community-Wide Celebrations are similar in that they are both intended to function as tools that can be used to identify cultural heritage experiences and products that can be developed and marketed because they are meaningful, relevant and of sufficient quality to appeal to local residents and to attract visitors. In that respect, both the Strategy and Plan need to provide frameworks that will enable the City of Kingston to achieve its corporate goals while working in collaboration with a variety of stakeholders with shared interests in the development of authentic and vibrant cultural heritage experience and products that will appeal to residents and engage cultural tourists.

For the purposes of the Integrated Cultural Tourism and Heritage Strategy, the team has been working with the City to implement a four-phase study process:

- Phase 1: Asset Assessment;
- Phase 2: Stakeholder Consultation;
- Phase 3: Market Assessment (including a festival feasibility study); and
- Phase 4: The Draft and Final Integrated Cultural Tourism and Cultural Heritage Strategy.

The Phase 1 Asset Assessment Report identified top-line priorities for the City of Kingston in terms of both cultural heritage and cultural tourism. In Phase 2, the Stakeholder Consultations, we surveyed a wide range of residents, interested groups and individuals to further deepen our understanding of the cultural and heritage landscape in the city.
The public consultation process was a key element of our needs investigation and analysis. Consultations took the form of roundtable discussions with a variety of targeted groups, stakeholder interviews, and large citywide open houses. Particular effort was placed to craft an appropriate framework within which participants could voice their opinions and priorities. Kingston residents were encouraged to develop a vision for their community; principles for innovative participation; and an identity that speaks to their past, present and future as a community. Meetings were advertised in advance and via diverse avenues.

The following table lists targeted groups for consultation as part of the process:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories &amp; Stakeholders for Consultation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural Heritage</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museum and Gallery Directors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens with a stake/interest in cultural heritage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Districts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional and/or Provincial Heritage Organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural Tourism</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museum and Gallery Directors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queen’s University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTO 9 (The Great Waterway)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Kingston Chamber of Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel Trade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media outlets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens with a stake/interest in cultural tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summer Festival Feasibility Study</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential individual contributors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Festival champions in local government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representative from Royal Military College</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Our Market Assessment followed in Phase 3, reviewing the potential audiences for culture and heritage and assessing the feasibility of a new summer festival, followed by this Phase 4 report – the Integrated Cultural Tourism and Heritage Strategy for the City of Kingston and the culmination of the process.

This document is organized in two volumes:

**Volume I**, the Strategy, contains the main strategy in five chapters:

- Chapter 1, this **Introduction**;
- Chapter 2, **The Opportunity** for both cultural tourism and cultural heritage in Kingston, outlining the asset base from which to build;
- Chapter 3, **The State of Cultural Tourism and Heritage in Kingston**, outlines the results of the community and stakeholder consultations and outlines the priorities and needs for each;
- Chapter 4, **Kingston’s Integrated Cultural Tourism and Heritage Strategy** presents the Strategy in terms of top-line priorities, principles and key initiatives;
- Chapter 5, **Implementation** provides a way forward and a system for resource allocation.

**Volume II** contains the Appendices, which provide supporting research and analysis for the recommendations found within this document:

- Appendix A. Stated Goals from the RFP
- Appendix B. Tourism in Kingston
- Appendix C. Preliminary Interpretive Plan
- Appendix D. Festival Feasibility Study
- Appendix E. Museum Sustainability Options
- Appendix F. Best Practices for Master Calendar of Events
Top: Agnes Etherington Art Centre. Photo: Tim Forbes; Bottom: Bellevue House. Photo courtesy Parks Canada.
The first section of this chapter sets the stage for the Strategy by considering Kingston’s cultural and heritage assets, thus affirming the findings of the KCP by noting that Kingston’s proposition is the fact that the city has been shaped by its particular history and heritage, which are reinforced by the presence of a rich cultural and heritage asset base.

The chapter goes on to review the potential for tourism development in the city in light of the current context and proposes that a strategic way of growing tourism in the city is through cultural tourism, thus linking the city’s heritage asset base with a recommended cultural tourism strategy.

### 2.1 Kingston’s History and Heritage

From earliest times, Kingston has been a “meeting place” which was how the Aboriginal peoples in the area described it before their terminology was transformed by the French into the more familiar Cataraqui. Its strategic location near the mouth of the St. Lawrence made it a natural location for trade and encampments among the Aboriginal peoples and for military purposes and transshipment of goods during the period of European colonization and settlement. Later, as the British North American colonies were maturing economically and politically, its position near the mid-point between three important cities – Montreal, Toronto and Ottawa – made it a good choice to become capital of a United Canada for a short period between 1841 and 1844.

Kingston came into its own during the 19th century as the first capital of the united provinces and as the home of Canada’s first Prime Minister. It was a time of tremendous growth and investment that lead to the creation of a significant number of public and private buildings that made use of the local limestone that was so readily available. This legacy continues today in the form of a remarkable inventory of heritage buildings that helped Kingston to become known as the “Limestone City.”
Fort Henry overlooking Royal Military College. Photo: Wayne Hiebert.
Over time, Kingston’s evolution as a community has been impacted greatly by its geography as well as the effects of colonization, conflict, politics, industrialization, development and shifting priorities and populations. Change has been a constant and the city has experienced many cycles of growth and decline, yet has remained resilient.

Like every other community, re-invention is inevitable but, for Kingston, the link to the past continues to assert itself as a strong foundation for future growth. Today, the corporate motto for the City of Kingston positions the city as a place:

“Where History and Innovation Thrive.”

As a community, it is determined to reconcile the past with the present and future in ways that can be cultivated to benefit the city as a whole. Investment in cultural heritage and cultural tourism represent two more obvious and cost effective ways to demonstrate the potential the community possesses to inspire its residents and to develop some of its best assets in ways that make it a model for municipal cultural planning.

2.2 Kingston’s Heritage Assets: A Brief Overview

Kingston is rich in cultural heritage assets of various kinds:

- Natural heritage;
- Built heritage; and
- Museums, galleries and archives (collection-based institutions);
- Intangible heritage.

2.2.1 Natural Heritage

Kingston’s location at the confluence of Lake Ontario, the St. Lawrence River and Rideau Canal is fundamental to its history, dating well before contact between European and Aboriginal cultures. Its positioning and climate all had an impact on the human geography of the region, affecting why people came, how they used the land, and how it affected development and growth. Today, the close proximity of so many natural heritage features, including Prince Edward County, the Thousand Islands and the Frontenac Arch Biosphere, which is itself a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve, make Kingston a desirable place to access and experience these resources.
2.2.2 Built Heritage

Perhaps the best known asset in the City of Kingston is its built heritage. Known for generations as the “Limestone City”, preservationist sentiment exists in the city and this has ensured the city remains well endowed with a range of heritage structures that embody its many military, government, industrial, commercial and private histories.

The municipal register under the Ontario Heritage Act includes about 1,200 properties, of which 600 are designated, and 30 building sites are federally and provincially designated and bear commemorative plaques. There is the potential for many more individual designations, and more designated heritage conservation districts in the years to come. Changes in policies and incentive programs, along with the availability of additional staff resources, could assist with this effort and help support stronger connections with cultural initiatives.

2.2.3 Museums, Galleries and Archives

Museums, galleries and archives are, for the most part, collecting or collection-based institutions. Our inventory revealed many small museums, galleries and archives, most of which may be classified as “specialized” in nature. The Marine Museum of the Great Lakes, Canada’s Penitentiary Museum, Fort Henry or the MacLachlan Woodworking Museum – there are a large number of specialized institutions in the city that offer a range of experiences.

There are also four not-for-profit art galleries. One of the most significant of these is the Agnes Etherington Art Centre at Queen’s University that houses an important and diverse collection relating to Canadian historic and contemporary art plus some unusual (and perhaps unexpected) holdings of international importance. Again, aspects of the collection are highly specialized but the Agnes Etherington Art Centre is recognized as one of Canada’s leading University galleries and is well respected for the quality of its work.

Several archives also exist within in the community, including the Kingston General Hospital Archives, the Sisters of St. Paul de Vincent Archives, and the Queen’s University Archives, which also houses the municipal archive of the City of Kingston.
The city’s approximately 23 museums, galleries and archives make up a very important piece of the asset base and represent a large part of the opportunity. Recent investment by the City of Kingston in the Kingston Association of Museums, Art Galleries and Historic Sites has helped to galvanize this community. It has also resulted in an increase in collective efforts around program, education and marketing that demonstrates the potential that exist when cultural heritage begins to be developed strategically.

2.2.4 Intangible Assets

What is perhaps less well known in Kingston is the wide range of intangible and experiential assets present in the community. Currently, festivals, events, theatrical productions, cultural associations, websites, Facebook pages and walking tours manifest the diversity of stories and histories that exist. At the present time, these assets tend to pop up in interesting and unexpected ways outside of official channels in order to bring alternative stories about people and places to light.

Every community has an array of historical societies and cultural associations that play a crucial role in making sure history is not lost. In Kingston this includes the Kingston Historical Society and Frontenac Heritage Foundation with long and well established histories within the community of program, events, publications and preservation programs. Many ethno-cultural groups in Kingston have also played an important role in keeping intangible cultural heritage assets front and centre. Early examples included Folklore in the 1970s that offered a city-wide celebration of food, culture and tradition. In recent years this has been updated in the form of a one-day Multicultural Arts Festival. The Aboriginal and Francophone communities have also made efforts to promote cultural awareness through a combination of programs that highlight the fact that they represent Kingston’s past as well as its present.

This section has focused on the diverse range of cultural heritage assets that exist in an effort to strengthen an argument for the importance of cultural heritage as the centerpiece for any cultural tourism strategy. However, there are many other assets in Kingston that need to be recognized that will also appeal to the cultural tourist: restaurants and food experiences, live music via numerous venues and forms, learning experiences, adventure and exploration opportunities. These are all important and should be integrated with the cultural heritage assets to create an even more powerful cultural tourism offering, and this Strategy does recommend this in later chapters.
The City of Kingston is at a crossroads. Long important as a military stronghold, a centre of heavy industry and as a port town, the city’s economy underwent some fundamental structural changes in the second half of the 20th century as a result of a shift away from transshipment and industry to government services and education. Since that time, the Kingston economy has been extraordinarily stable based on the presence of several sturdy pillars that include public institutions (for example, the Corrections Service of Canada), the military (Royal Military College and CFB Kingston), and educational institutions (St. Lawrence College and Queen’s University). A smaller industrial base also exists but the public sector has predominated and has been the source of the city’s stability.
Kingston will likely continue to benefit from the presence of major public institutions for years to come. Nevertheless, there are signs that the city is moving into another transitional phase. As government continues to downsize and to “do more with less”, this suggests the public-sector may shrink – at least in the foreseeable future. Indeed, the closure of Kingston Penitentiary is part of this general trend. What this shows is that the big employers that were the mainstay of the city’s economy in the past are retrenching, a reality that requires innovation in thinking and the identification of new sources for growth and revenue.

An integrated approach to cultural heritage and cultural tourism, as outlined in this Strategy, represents an important economic opportunity for Kingston in an era of change. The next section explores the benefits of cultural tourism generally then goes on to examine the opportunity for cultural tourism in Kingston in particular.

2.3.1 Cultural Tourism: An Overview

By way of introducing the case for cultural tourism in Kingston, some terms and qualities are defined below:

Who is the cultural tourist?¹

Cultural tourists are defined as “persons from outside the host community motivated wholly or in part by interest in the historical, artistic and scientific or lifestyle/heritage offerings of a community, group or institution”.

What are the traits of the cultural tourist?

Cultural tourism represents a growing market. Typically the cultural tourist has the following characteristics:

- Has a **higher level of education** than the mass tourist;
- Has a higher propensity to “explore”;
- **Spends more money** at their destination;
- **Has a “worldly” perspective**, bringing with them a bank of cultural knowledge that informs the way in which they choose and interact with their host destination;
- Highly motivated by the **benefits of cultural travel** which mitigates other deterring factors such as costs of travel and security;

The cultural tourist is a highly attractive kind of tourist, and represents a potential growth market and an opportunity for Kingston given the city’s already rich cultural asset base.

Benefits of Cultural Tourism

The tourism industry as a whole continues to grow unabated. According to the UN World Tourism Organization’s (UNWTO) 2012 Tourism Highlights report, tourism has experienced continued expansion and diversification over the past six decades, becoming one of the largest and fastest-growing economic sectors in the world. Growth worldwide has been virtually uninterrupted – from 277 million visits in 1980 to 528 million in 1995, and 983 million in 2011\(^2\). It goes without saying that tourism is an economic juggernaut.

Numerous studies also extol the benefits of cultural tourism. Lord Cultural Resources’ 2009 study for the Government of Ontario on cultural tourism examined numerous studies on the subject. The data clearly say that cultural tourism is on the rise and yields economic benefits. For example, the Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund (OCAF) Report E examines cultural events they supported between 2002-2005. The economic impact analysis showed that “by investing in cultural and heritage events that attracted over 3.5 million visitors between 2002 and 2005, OCAF has made a significant contribution to cultural organizations and cultural tourism in communities across Ontario...\(^2\)

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\(^2\) See UNWTO Tourism Highlights 2012, http://dtxtq4w60xapw.cloudfront.net/sites/all/files/docpdf/unwtohighlights12enlr_1.pdf
The Fund also helps generate an economic return to Ontario and new tax revenues for governments.” The 97 festivals and events funded by OTF, OAC and OCAF contributed nearly $80 million to the GDP at that time, as well as over $30 million in taxes for all levels of government. Some 2,600 jobs and over $50 million in wages and salaries resulted.3

There is an opportunity, then, for cultural tourism to be a focus for growing the tourism sector in Kingston, and that opportunity stems not only from the general trends outlined above, but in Kingston’s case from its pre-existing asset base (the city’s history and heritage). From the analysis above, “cultural tourism” and “cultural heritage” cannot be considered in isolation; cultural tourists are looking for the kinds of experiences that can be provided by the kinds of heritage assets that Kingston already has.

2.3.2 Tourism in Kingston: The Current Situation

What kinds of tourists are currently attracted to Kingston? The following section summarizes a review of tourism in Kingston based on available data. (Please refer to Appendix B for detailed data and sources.)

- **Tourism is a substantial source of economic activity in Kingston.** At 2.2 million visitors per year and over $301 million in visitor spending, tourism is a major industry in the city.

- **Most visitors are leisure visitors** – with nearly half of the total (46%) coming for pleasure and another 37% coming to visit friends and relatives. This is increasing: from 2009 to 2010, the trends for visiting Kingston for pleasure increased by 16.5%. However, VFRs declined over that time period by 6.7%.

- In 2010 the largest single segment of travel to Kingston (Frontenac County) was for “Outdoor / Sports” activities. About 516,000 person trips were taken for this activity. Combined with a visit to a National or Provincial nature park, this total increases to 715,000 person trips.

- In 2010 attendance at festivals / fairs, cultural performances, museum / art galleries and historic sites comprised 559,696 visits or 25% of all activity.

This represents a significant level of travel – but as we shall see, a smaller percentage of the total available market than might be expected given the many heritage and cultural assets in the city.

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2.3.3 Tourism Marketing in Kingston

There is one Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) in the city: Tourism Kingston. In addition, there is the Destination Kingston Marketing Fund, the Kingston Accommodation Partners and the regional organization known as The Great Waterway, the RTO for the provincially-designated tourism Region 9. The Great Waterway’s role is to organize regional product development and marketing activities and initiatives working directly with the tourism industry within a particular region.

Tourism Kingston is a division of the Kingston Economic Development Corporation (KEDCO). Tourism Kingston’s mission is to ensure that Kingston remains a world class city by supporting tourism marketing and development in order to be a destination of choice for visitors from all over the world.

Tourism Kingston utilizes the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport’s market segmentation study created by Environics Analytics. This study identifies the market segments that in all likelihood match the Kingston traveller profile. Specifically, they have targeted the “Adventurers” market segment for the leisure market of the tourism sector.

Their importance for cultural tourism is underlined by the proportion of Leisure Travellers who are drawn to cultural pursuits. Specifically, these are more likely to take part in architecture appreciation (42.5%); well-known historic sites (31.8%); other historic sites (25.3%); well-known natural “wonders” (24.0%); live theatre (20.3% of all Leisure Travellers); amusement parks (20.1%); and farmers’ markets (19.8%).

A brief description of each leisure market follows. Detailed information and source references can be found in Appendix B.

- **Leisure**: The mass consumer market which identifies visitors who may be single, couples, families, or groups that are travelling for the purpose of pure enjoyment or recreation – a holiday or vacation getaway with no work responsibilities.

- **Travel Trade**: A full range of organizations that operate as intermediaries in the travel and tourism industry. These typically include tour operators, wholesalers, reception operators, group leaders and travel agents. Tourism Kingston works to sell Kingston as a destination to operators who package destination travel to their clientele – group/coach travel and Foreign Independent Travellers (FIT).

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• **Meetings and Conferences:** The segment of the tourism industry which works with meeting and event planners to provide support services for hosting and facilitating a meeting or conference. The DMO also bids on city-wide conference business, acting as a lead generator to its database of partners.

• **Sports Tourism:** One of the fastest growing segments of the tourism industry, sport tourism involves travel for the purpose of participating in or viewing a sport event. The DMO is engaged in the bid process and sourcing of new hosting opportunities, development and marketing of sporting events to gain economic and community benefit.

The Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) along with Parks Canada developed a new and different market segmentation framework in 2007. Since that time it has been refined and all of the CTC’s marketing efforts are grounded in the Explorer Quotient (EQ) segmentation. The CTC recommends tourism destinations and individual tourism organizations and business operators follow a number of steps to fully develop the EQ strategy. These steps include:

• Step 1 - Identify your global and domestic target markets. This is something that has likely already been done in past marketing efforts; if so, it needs to be done again using this new approach.

• Step 2 - Review experiences and highlight their unique selling points. Also make note of the standard details like accommodations, pricing, features, upgrades and whether it is for independent or group travel.

• Step 3 - Closely review the EQ Worksheets specific to target markets. Be sure to pay careful attention to what each Explorer Type seeks and avoids.

• Step 4 - Compare your experience to the Explorer Type profiles. In terms of experience motivators, your offering should cover a minimum of three preferences in order to be considered a good match. This is also a good time to consider fine-tuning the experience and itinerary to create an even stronger match.

The CTC has created an Experience Travel / EQ Tool Kit available at www.canada.travel/eq and we have recommended its adoption in Chapter 4.

### 2.3.4 Arts, Culture and Heritage Tourism Performance in Kingston

In 2010 there were 598,696 visits to Kingston for arts, cultural and heritage related activities. For detailed data and source attribution, please see Appendix B.
Visitation by Product Type

The following chart provides a snapshot of the number of visits to Kingston for festivals/fairs, cultural performances, museums/art galleries and historical sites.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Ontario</th>
<th>Other Can</th>
<th>US</th>
<th>Overseas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Festivals and Fairs</td>
<td>85,471</td>
<td>28,936</td>
<td>11,148</td>
<td>23,890</td>
<td>21,497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Performances</td>
<td>90,697</td>
<td>45,835</td>
<td>5,302</td>
<td>25,550</td>
<td>14,009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museums/Art Galleries</td>
<td>176,576</td>
<td>84,409</td>
<td>20,062</td>
<td>34,060</td>
<td>38,045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Sites</td>
<td>236,952</td>
<td>100,944</td>
<td>23,072</td>
<td>58,843</td>
<td>54,094</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Highlights:**

- Of the 2.3 million visitors to Ontario participating in festivals and fairs, some 4% (85,471) visited Kingston;
- Of the 4.6 million visitors to Ontario participating in cultural performances, only 2% (90,697) visited Kingston;
- Of the 3.9 million visitors to Ontario attending museums/galleries, about 5% (176,576) visited Kingston;
- Of the 5.2 million visitors to Ontario participating in visiting historic sites, some 4% (236,952) visited Kingston;
- In 2010, $10.2 million was spent in Kingston on culture, representing 3% of all visitor tourism receipts in Kingston and 1% of all provincial culture spending;

This suggests that although Kingston already attracts some cultural tourists, there is a much larger market that may be tapped with the right mix of products and marketing.

Spending on Cultural Products

The following chart shows cultural spending in Kingston compared to other destinations in the province:

**Highlights:** (additional data included in Appendix B):

- In 2010, $10.2 million was spent in Kingston on culture, representing 3% of all visitor tourism receipts in Kingston and 1% of all provincial culture spending;
- The cultural spending per visitor at $4.53 in Kingston is well below the provincial average of $9.78.
These data suggest that Kingston could attract many more cultural tourists than is now the case. The existing cultural tourism base is likely attracted by the power of the historical narrative and asset base which is strong enough to overcome some of the deficiencies, but it is likely that increased investment and product improvement would help the city attract a larger proportion of the potential market, of which only a small fraction currently comes to Kingston – and would help boost tourist spending levels that are currently well below provincial averages. The main point is that the cultural tourism market represents an exceptional opportunity for Kingston and this market should be further developed and optimized.

Since cultural tourists are looking for meaningful experiences, it will be important to assess the state of the current product base in Kingston to determine how this should be done – for example, whether additional investment or new or improved products are required. This is the subject of Chapter 3. In the meantime, it is clear that the cultural tourist presents an opportunity for a mature market like Kingston to fully optimize. Further, given spending habits of cultural tourists, such a focus offers the likelihood of a favourable return on investment.
3 Existing Product Assessment

This chapter builds upon the previous discussion of cultural tourism and looks at the existing cultural tourism experiences and products in Kingston. The analysis is a result of our research and extensive consultations in the city over the course of this process.

3.1 What Does a 21st Century Cultural Tourism Product Look Like?

As noted from the previous chapter, cultural tourism has been present in Kingston as a vital industry for years but represents a key opportunity for growth. It is well-known that cultural tourists are better educated, spend more and stay longer. It makes sense, therefore, that the cultural tourism product in the city be developed in such a way as to maximize the economic benefit of the assets that already exist. And given the outline of initiatives above, as well as the Asset Assessment completed as Phase 1 of this process, it is clear that Kingston has a tremendous opportunity to develop and position itself as a compelling cultural tourism destination for the 21st century cultural traveller.

The ideal 21st century cultural tourism product incorporates the following key characteristics:

- **Experiences and products that offer opportunities for creativity**: A new type of tourist, the “creative traveller” sees travel as an extension of everyday life and work, and expects opportunities for personal and professional development while travelling.

- **“Agency” as a core characteristic of a new generation of “pro-sumers”**: Increasingly travellers expect choice and participation as a core component of their cultural experiences while travelling.
Kingston Jazz Festival. Photo courtesy City of Kingston.
• **A range of product types (something for everybody):** A destination must be able to provide a range of experiences—from passive to active, including hybrid models that allow tourist to design and mould experiences toward a unique definition of cultural tourism.

• **Distinctive experiences:** Identifying those features of a destination that are unique, and supporting them through high quality interpretation, positioning and marketing is a strong strategy for developing competitive cultural attractions. In many cases unique experiences are synonymous with heritage experiences—and these serve to position a destination as historically distinctive. Kingston has a major advantage in this regard.

• **Clustering:** Excellent products often follow the strategy of clustering—in time, according to theme, or physically, in terms of positioning a city district or districts as cultural hubs.

• **Experience bundling:** Bundling of a time-specific major event (a festival, for example) that features high quality ‘product’ (art, music, photography) and that generates substantial media interest is a strong strategy around which to build longer-term cultural experiences. Adjacent experiences are clustered around the core event, building on the reputation of the city as a ‘cultural hotspot’, and encouraging visitors to prolong their stay, and/or come back again.

While Kingston can compete by developing and supporting experiences that are of high quality, and level of distinctiveness, it has the opportunity to excel in being a leader in providing the 21st century cultural traveller with that experience that he/she covets—the creative experience. The promise lies in developing its cultural attractions to fulfill a range of criteria: quality, distinctiveness, creativity and economic impact.

### 3.2 Analysis of Existing Experiences and Products

In this section we assess the existing cultural tourism products with these criteria in mind:

#### 3.2.1 Built Heritage

Kingston has a tremendous built heritage asset base—one of the best in Canada. Preservation has been an understandable and laudable focus of many community leaders over the years, yielding a stock of heritage buildings that is the envy of many other communities. Much remains in the public realm, but much is now privately-owned.
While the “raw material” is present, the built heritage is not well packaged as a heritage (or cultural tourism) product or “experience” in terms of the criteria laid out above. There are interesting built heritage tours given by volunteer groups and Doors Open Kingston does provide a sense of discovery, but these are limited opportunities. Walking tours for streetscapes and built heritage exist but tend to be niche attractors with limited appeal for broader audiences, including families.

There is potential for the development of better products that feature the city’s stock of heritage structures. A new vision that involves utilizing the buildings as a “stage” for interpretation in an experiential way is the way forward.

### 3.2.2 Festivals and Events

Kingston has an active schedule of festivals and events. There exist a number of festival clusters that occur through the calendar year, some of which occur in close temporal proximity, such as these from late May, through June and into early July:

- Home Grown Music festival;
- The Kingston Jazz Festival;
- Skeleton Park Music Festival;
- Doors Open Kingston;
- Artfest;
- Canada Day.

Another cluster of festivals and events happens in the late summer and early fall. These include the Limestone City Blues Festival, Kingston Multicultural Arts Festival, Kingston Writersfest and Culture Days. The Downtown Kingston! BIA has had tremendous success for many years organizing festivals and events with local appeal and Kingston Writersfest has emerged in more recent years offering a program that is attractive to regional and national audiences.

For the most part festivals and events in Kingston tend to be small-scale and many are volunteer-driven. Formalizing, enhancing and marketing the collective value of the event clusters that already exist within an annual festival cycle can provide both residents and visitors with a more compelling menu of cultural activities that suit a range of tastes. The ability to grow the existing festival and event offerings and to make them more sustainable in the long term is also desirable.
3.2.3 Cultural Heritage Institutions

Kingston is home to many cultural heritage institutions, such as museums and heritage organizations. Over the years, the majority of these institutions have not kept pace in terms of their overall appeal as “must see” attractions or as providers of experiences and products with broad appeal. Most continue to provide the same offerings year after year and struggle to maintain sustainable operations and budgets.

There are a few noteworthy exceptions. Fort Henry is the core cultural heritage tourism attractor and is certainly a “must see” site. With the recent addition of the Fort Henry Discovery Centre in the spring of 2012 and other investments made to the Fort, it remains a key tourism feature amid a myriad of historic sites. But in terms of cultural tourism product development, Fort Henry, with its UNESCO designation, is underutilized, and other museums are underdeveloped and tend to have niche appeal from a market point of view.

There are two key areas that need to be addressed for them to improve as cultural tourism products:

• The visitor experience – ensuring it is up to date, relevant and engaging; and
• Operations and marketing – including strategies that characterize any good cultural tourism product, such as bundling or clustering.

The museum sector is made up of a series of specialized institutions that represent selected aspects of the many Kingston stories and narratives (see Appendix C). Many of these museums were founded by volunteer groups with a desire to highlight specific collections and/or subject matter. As a result they tend to be highly focused and their long-term sustainability depends upon the continuing involvement of a core group of volunteers. Sustainability continues to be a longstanding issue for Kingston’s museums as is their ability to house and maintain their collections, refresh their exhibitions and expand their programming. In their own way, they each deal with important aspects of the Kingston story but survival tends to be their main focus.

The sustainability of the museum sector is a key issue in Kingston. We have noted a tendency for these small organizations to focus on mission rather than market – thus reducing their ability to generate higher attendance and earned revenue. This is a common and not unexpected phenomenon typical of smaller scale institutions with modest budgets – they tend to be stronger in content and focus rather than in revenue generation and marketing. This suggests assistance is required to help these organizations undergo institutional change – to make them more sustainable so they can readjust their strategic directions toward a more market-focused orientation.
The museums and heritage organizations in Kingston require that support be provided to umbrella organizations such as the Kingston Association of Museums, Art Galleries and Historic Sites, which has already begun. The sector also requires advocacy as well as the development of marketing and training mechanisms to assist museums and heritage organizations to build capacity. The establishment of a Heritage Fund, a result of the Kingston Culture Plan, is now being implemented, which is critical in order to provide this sector with the investment needed to build capacity and begin to better balance mission-driven and market-oriented approaches.

### 3.2.4 Intangible Heritage

As noted in Chapter 2, Kingston is rich in intangible heritage expressed in festivals, events and community programming initiatives. And many of the untold stories that are part of the larger narrative lie within this component of the asset base. Music, dance, food and storytelling traditions – all of these can be classified under the heading of intangible heritage. However, while the city is rich in this regard the asset base is not well known except within many (sometimes isolated) communities of practitioners.
Aspects of Kingston’s intangible heritage are constantly being explored and celebrated but this is an asset that remains largely undeveloped in terms of cultural tourism product. Intangible heritage products should be better developed and integrated with other experiences via a combination of partnerships, program development, clustering, packaging and bundling.

3.2.5 Natural Heritage

There are informal opportunities for visitors to sample the natural heritage of the region, but few experiences we might classify as cultural tourism products. There are stories and vehicles for storytelling within this asset base, but by and large they remain self-directed and untapped.

The Lake Ontario Waterfront Pathway is an excellent initiative and the work of the City of Kingston and the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority in promoting this trail and other natural assets should be recognized, along with the work being done to promote the K & P Trail and Rideau Trail in particular that enjoys a long history of use.

Other natural heritage assets that are being developed and promoted include the Rideau Heritage Route and the Frontenac Arch Biosphere. Both of these assets are easily accessed from Kingston and could be developed as “experiences” by strengthening the connections between the urban and rural, human history and natural history. The ability to connect human history to natural history will help to provide the “something for everybody” component of a good cultural tourism product.

3.2.6 Performing Arts

Investments have been (and continue to be) made in some of Kingston’s performing arts venues such as the Grand Theatre and the Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts. The City has also provided the Domino Theatre with a newly renovated space in a former arena and Kingston is also home to a wide range of facilities that host the performing arts, including theatres, auditoriums and churches. Having access to such a diverse array of venues is typical of most cities like Kingston but the city is also fortunate to have excellent facilities like the Grand Theatre that dates back to the 19th century as well as the Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts that is already attracting international attention for its architectural design. Both venues are assets for residents and tourists alike and the performing arts programs they offer should be bundled and clustered with other products where appropriate to maximize their potential as cultural tourism products.
3.2.7 Sports and Adventure

There are sport and adventure-related products available in Kingston, such as diving and sailing opportunities as well as watersports in general. While they are fine as stand-alone products, they are not currently marketed as part of cultural tourism packages. Again, sports and adventure activities could be developed as an opportunity to provide “something for everyone” through bundling with cultural heritage and other more purely “cultural” products. They also have the advantage of being inherently participatory and appealing to what the modern cultural tourist is looking for, particularly the Leisure Traveller market segment as previously described.

3.3 Principles for the Cultural Tourism and Heritage Strategy

Our assessment of the existing cultural tourism product base indicates that Kingston’s full potential has yet to be reached in terms of developing the powerful historical narrative and the opportunities available within the cultural heritage narrative and asset base. There are a number of important principles we have developed that should guide the Strategy and which appear as integral to the recommendations in Chapter 4.

3.3.1 Community Identity and municipal vision.

“A great place to live is also a great place to visit”. That is a quote from Dr. Brian White that is highlighted in the recently published document Cultural & Heritage Tourism: A Handbook for Community Champions. In the Handbook the point is made that it is beneficial to invest in making our cities more welcoming, attractive and full of interesting things to do because it affects quality of life. This directly benefits residents but it also has implications for tourism because a great place to live is also a great place to visit. The result is that community image and pride are enhanced. This, in turn, helps to make local residents feel a stronger sense of connection to their home community, a feeling they will want to share with family, friends and visitors as they take on an unofficial role as ambassadors. Municipal vision is required to affect this kind of dynamic that is supported by a balanced approach to quality of life issues as well as economic development.
3.3.2 An Authentic Sense of History and Heritage.

Kingston’s many strengths in terms of history and heritage also present many challenges that need to be understood and explored. Often Kingston is best known as the “Limestone City” that is home to Fort Henry, Canada’s first Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald and an extraordinary number of prisons and other governmental and educational institutions. Each of these elements is closely associated with Kingston’s 19th century history but they do not reveal the full extent and breadth of histories that exist.

In order to ensure the success of this Strategy, Kingston needs to pursue a vision of its cultural heritage—natural, tangible and intangible—that is well defined and authentic. Ideally it would also be inclusive with regard to the way it regards the different forces that have shaped Kingston in the past and present, including its geographical, political, military, industrial and economic histories as well as its history as it relates to the Aboriginal peoples, French, British and new Canadians that have all called it home at different times.

All of these different issues deserve to be explored and decisions need to be made, through consultation, as to which need to be documented and presented as part of the record of Kingston’s cultural heritage and which can be developed in ways that will be considered authentic to local residents and, at the same time, engaging to cultural tourists who choose to visit.

3.3.3 Focus on Stories and Storytelling

In general, the existing cultural heritage assets lack context (i.e., connection to the larger story) from an interpretive perspective as well as the content and “punch” that might compel visitors to come to Kingston and stay overnight. And there are many stories that are not being told. Heritage-based cultural tourism products must therefore focus on stories and storytelling, and these stories must be broader in scope than is currently the case, to achieve the goal of making accessible the whole breadth of the rich historical narrative.

We have noted throughout this process that the City of Kingston has a wealth of cultural heritage and other assets. Along with the tangible and more visible heritage assets, there is also a significant amount of unrecognized or less visible cultural activity.

There are two versions of culture in Kingston: the “official” and much more visible version as presented by institutions such as museums or the major theatres, and the much less visible, “unofficial” version undertaken by small groups operating with limited recognition and often without significant funding.
What is very interesting is that these latter happenings are often experiences that, when clearly articulated, are what the “cultural tourist” seeks in a destination. Again these are underdeveloped or undeveloped cultural tourism products – and there are other experiences that await discovery and that can be made accessible to residents and tourists alike through a combination of tools and technologies yet to be implemented.

3.3.4 Focus on Experience and Discovery

In developing the cultural tourism assets into better products, we believe that the focus must be on experience and discovery – which repositions more visible assets and the most obvious “gems” but also shines a light on those less visible or less tangible offerings that cultural tourists are seeking. It also recognizes that Kingston has a high density of opportunities for visitors to discover across a spectrum that includes those things that already exist (the “official” history, primarily 19th century) and those things that could be developed (the “unofficial” history, including everything else that predates first contact to 21st century immigration and migration).
3.3.5 Improve Market-Readiness

Market-readiness is an issue and needs attention and requires improvement. Among those currently involved in tourism development and marketing it is felt that the cultural tourism offerings are limited in range and would benefit from strategic collaboration to improve market-readiness.

It should be noted that in 2011 The Great Waterway conducted a comprehensive assessment of the arts, culture and heritage assets found in the region. That work was followed in 2012 by an extensive itinerary-building exercise that featured the region’s heritage offerings including Kingston’s culture and heritage assets. The itineraries focused on heritage products and not experiences; therefore they lacked the content that the cultural tourist is looking for, although they may be a good starting point. This means that stories must be told via experiences that are developed as market-ready cultural tourism products.

3.3.6 Clustering of Cultural Products and Experiences

Many of Kingston’s most recognizable heritage assets – the waterfront access, military buildings and limestone architecture, for example – are mostly clustered downtown. But intangible assets (festivals or events, for example) may occur elsewhere or could be clustered at different times of the year as noted in our Festival Feasibility Study (see Appendix D). In addition, it may be helpful to cluster heritage assets by theme – for military history, for example, there might be a themed itinerary that points out both the principal attractions like Fort Frontenac, Fort Henry and the Kingston fortifications but also encourages discovery of the less obvious assets, such as stories of institutions, events or people. This is just one example; many creative cultural tourism and heritage experiences may be developed from the many permutations of the three ways of understanding clustering: location, time and theme. Once again, the experiences should be designed to encourage discovery and creative exploration – key factors for attracting the creative cultural tourist.

Accessibility and strength in numbers derive from a physical proximity of experiences. Clusters have the potential for joint marketing as well as collaborations in shared services across efforts. Branding and signage, urban design and dedicated public space accommodating multiple initiatives can further optimize experiences grouped by cluster.
3.3.7 Product Building

In addition to clustering experiences, a product bundling strategy includes the whole universe of experiences, products and services that a cultural tourist might want to explore. It involves positioning the city as a whole experience and recognizes that discovery need not exclude commercial, retail or any other kind of experiences available to a visitor. Despite the number of offerings available in Kingston, visitors may not be aware of such experiences. Further, for niche tourists – those attracted by particular interests – Kingston’s experiences can be optimized when grouped by theme, such as Canadian history, culture, nature/outdoors, etc. **Products should be bundled to respond to trends in cultural tourism and to give tourists the critical mass of activity that they are looking for.**

3.3.8 Focus on Improving Sustainability of Cultural Organizations

Sustainability is always an important issue for cultural institutions, and it is difficult for organizations to work strategically when day-to-day survival is a constant preoccupation. This Strategy, therefore, must envision a way to assist Kingston’s many cultural organizations to become more sustainable – leading to greater self-sufficiency and well-being.

Mission and market orientations must always work together. Paying attention to market actually amplifies the ability of an organization to achieve its mission. In Kingston, we observed an imbalance in terms of approach. Through our consultation process, an undercurrent of opinion was expressed by those involved in managing heritage assets that they remain mission-driven. To be sustainable, however, it is imperative to strike a balance between mission and market in order to be progressive and creative in developing programming that interests a broad target audience.

The success of a strategy for Kingston’s cultural tourism and heritage assets relies on the sustainability of both community-led efforts and City-operated facilities and events. Ensuring the long-term maintenance of facilities and operating budgets of Kingston’s cultural organizations and efforts is critical to any initiative. Capacity-building and sustainability need to be a focus of this Strategy, whether they take the form of mentorship, community building, partnerships or financial investment.
3.3.9 The Importance of City Leadership

Leadership is required on a community-wide basis to foster the creative development of cultural heritage experiences and products and to promote these same experiences and products once they are market ready through a range of cultural tourism initiatives. The consultations revealed there needs to be a “coming together” on a community-wide basis. There is a need to see residents as a primary audience for these experiences and products as well as cultural tourists as the ideal customer who also wishes to access these experiences and products.

Given the fragmentation of organizations, individuals and products, it is necessary to bring the various tourism and heritage groups into contact with the City and with one another. Both new and traditional cultural heritage and tourism stakeholders should work together to strengthen and sustain individual organizations, groups, businesses or concerns. By encouraging a coherent outlook, the Strategy creates a unified direction for cultural tourism and cultural heritage for Kingston as a whole.

Even though tourism falls outside the City of Kingston’s jurisdiction, the consultation process has revealed that leadership is required at this time to bring together a disparate group of stakeholders and to demonstrate what is possible. Given the current climate it is recommended that the City should take on a facilitation role, acting as connector and be active in bringing together the heritage groups and tourism experts that each have much to offer.

The creation of a staff-led Cultural Capacity Working Group would provide the framework needed to complete the initial work required that would include the following:

- Identify the “gems” that already exist and that could be developed further
- Define a vision for sharing Kingston’s many histories that is authentic and engaging
- Identify additional cultural heritage experiences and products to be supported and/or developed
- Articulate a set of standards and guidelines to assist museums and other cultural heritage organizations and groups to build capacity, set priorities, identify funding opportunities and allocate resources for sustainability and growth
Once this context has been defined, it will necessary to invest in a dedicated cultural tourism connector to apply these tools to liaise with the organizations producing cultural products, and to identify the “best bets” and make recommendations as to what products need to be enhanced to be market ready. These efforts will have to be evaluated and a long-term strategy will need to be developed.

Strengthening the pride of residents in the cultural heritage experiences and products that exist will result in increased participation in these activities by the local community. Assuming the stories and experiences being interpreted are authentic, engaging and meaningful, residents will feel an increased sense of pride and will willingly act as ambassadors to encourage friends and family to visit. The emergence of such a dynamic is critical to the success of this Strategy and to strengthening the linkages that exist between cultural heritage and cultural tourism.

In summary, there is a need for cultural tourism in Kingston to be developed further as dynamic 21st century cultural tourism experiences. To be successful, it must be packaged in ways that combine cultural heritage with shopping and dining performing and visual arts offerings, walkability and discovery, sporting and recreational events, and others. And they must improve operationally and in terms of “market-readiness” and organizational capacity. The specific recommendations around these issues make up the contents of the next chapter of this Strategy.

▼ Skating at City Hall. Photo courtesy City of Kingston.
4 Kingston’s Cultural Heritage and Tourism Strategy

In previous chapters we have established that Kingston’s cultural heritage is an important asset on which the city can build. We noted there is a major opportunity to grow the cultural tourism market for Kingston, provided that the experiences and products on offer are attractive to the 21st century cultural traveller. We examined the existing product base and noted that while there are existing products on which to build, there is room for improvement and plenty of untapped potential.

Given the results of the analysis, this chapter proposes key actions, top-line priorities and actionable recommendations to achieve the goals set out for this Strategy.

Each of the recommendations in this chapter is organized by phase. There are three proposed phases, ordered logically, with the most urgent needs recommended for Phase 1 and those that are less urgent, or those requiring more time, recommended for Phases 2 or 3. The suggested timelines are as follows:

- Phase 1 – years 1-2;
- Phase 2 – years 3-5;
- Phase 3 – years 6-10.
4.1 Key Actions

Given the work completed to date, the two key actions should be:

1. Improve the cultural experiences and products;
2. Make the cultural products and experiences market-ready.

We examine each in turn.

4.1.1 Improve the Cultural Experiences and Products

Better cultural experiences and products will emphasize discovery and experience, new storytelling methods (and a broader range of stories), and enhancements of the existing heritage asset base. It is important to note that this priority means “better” and not necessarily “more”; in fact, improvement of the product may point toward fewer products or product-producing organizations than is now the case.

Recommendations to Improve the Experiences and Products

As noted, this priority is intended to improve and strengthen content and it does rely on the establishment of the recommended committees and of such initiatives as the standards and guidelines developed by the stakeholders via the process described above.

Phase 1

Recommendation 1: Implement Phase 1 of the Heritage Interpretive Plan.

A Heritage Interpretive Plan is being recommended (see Appendix C) that highlights the gaps in interpretation and outlines a preliminary plan to be pursued that expands the range of subject matter and themes that could be explored and developed. Overall, the heritage interpretive plan for Kingston being proposed has the following characteristics in terms of main theme, key communication messages and vehicles for storytelling:

- **Main Theme**: Kingston as a meeting place or crossroads located at the confluence of three distinct bodies of water.
- **Main communication messages**: The main communication messages for the interpretation should be:
• Kingston has been home to a wide variety of peoples and cultures, from earliest times to the present day;

• Kingston’s strategic location and natural setting has to a great extent determined the course and direction of the city’s and the metropolitan region’s growth and development;

• Kingston played a crucial role in the development of Canada as a nation in the 18th and 19th centuries and that history is still evidenced in its built heritage; and

• In many ways contemporary Kingston is a product of that history but there is still many more stories and experiences to be discovered, promoted and shared that occurred both before and after this period.

In terms of vehicles for storytelling, we recommend the following, beginning with some suggestions for initial, easily-implemented vehicles, then progressing to interpretive vehicles that may be implemented in later stages. Phasing also helps with costs:

In Phase 1, it is important to put in place the groundwork for telling the city’s stories via durable and proven methods that are accessible to all and are less sensitive to inevitable technological changes:

• **Street-level strategy** – which for Phase 1 could include:
  - Interpretive outdoor panels (“museum of the streets”) with basic-level text and graphics.
  - Heritage building life-cycle interpretation that would respect the buildings’ heritage and character but show them as living things with uses that change as the city changes. This could be delivered via better, more innovative programming, via the web on a dedicated site, or via “information stations” regarding architectural heritage that could be set up as kiosks around the city.

• **Facilitating a means to disseminate user-generated heritage content:** This means that heritage content need not come from “official” sources such as museum curators or the City of Kingston, but may be contributed by others. The City has experimented with user-contributed material before (the Kingston Poetry Project, for example) and in this case the idea is extended to heritage. The details of how this might be done would need to be developed, and the content would need to be vetted by an appointed moderator – to ensure its authenticity, its accuracy and its relevance and fit.
But there are many platforms by which such content may be gathered and distributed, and in Phase 1 public programs like the Kingston Poetry Project, delivered by the City or by others, could be implemented, or a website could be set up that invites people to contribute to a city “story bank” that is curated and monitored by city staff at first but which may devolve as a task to one of the major heritage institutions as capacity improves.

**Recommendation 2: Cluster existing festivals to enhance the festival product.**

The goal here is to enhance the existing festival and event product through clustering. There is already a high level of event activity happening in Kingston and clustering (i.e. multiple events occurring in a period of time) is a strategy for making events look and feel more substantive and last longer. We recommend formalizing, enhancing and marketing festival clusters in the annual cycle that will provide both residents and visitors with a menu of cultural activities that suit a range of interests, budgets and modes of participation. In order for this Strategy to be successful, a couple of anchor events or headline artists would have to be added into the mix to increase public awareness, leading them to explore the larger festival offering.

Kingston already has sufficient physical infrastructure to support a city-wide festival or event. This will be further strengthened with the introduction of the Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts at Queen’s University. The Kingston Culture Plan recommends that the City continue to have a dialogue with the University about the possibility of partnering over time on a significant event. These discussions should continue as – given the opportunities described above - there is great potential for something to emerge over the next five years.

**Phase 1 Metrics**

1. **(Measuring the degree of augmentation of Kingston’s narrative)** Alignment of main communication messages related to Kingston’s heritage and an increase in the implementation of the street-level tools, new methods of information sharing via technology and increases in user generated heritage content.
2. **(Measuring collaborative efforts)** Number of organizations working together under numerous festival “umbrellas” and the improvement of that dialogue leading to new working relationships.
3. **(Measuring collaborative efforts)** Number of projects initiated through collaborations among participating groups.
4. **(Measuring increased attendance at festival events)** Growth in public attendance as a result of augmented and collective programming and marketing efforts.
Recommendation 3: Implement Phase 2 of the Heritage Interpretive Plan.

Heritage Interpretive Plan: In a second phase of the Heritage Interpretive Plan implementation, it is recommended that the following interpretive vehicles be introduced:

- **Street-level strategy** – Phase 2 of the street-level strategy:
  - “Augmented reality” stations around the city. Installation of tangible stations is preferable, but an option may be an augmented reality “app” to allow people to download via their smartphones historic photos relevant to the spot at which they are standing.
  - StoryTour apps connected to a Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) system that, upon approaching a specific site (such as a landmark, intersection, former site of a community hub), launches a personal testimonial recorded by Kingston residents. The StoryTour would make stories available on a website and also welcome new stories to be recorded so that oral history is continuously built upon.
• **Storytelling using Kingston’s built heritage:** For good reasons, Kingston’s stock of heritage building mean a great deal to local residents. There is a need for preservation of the heritage assets, but they should be “brought to life” as cultural tourism products through various storytelling opportunities and by using various sites for festival and event programming, such as Springer Market Square.

• **User-generated heritage content:** By the time the second phase of interpretation is implemented, some of the products will be improved (or will be improving) and additional organizational capacity will have been created. The museums are the most appropriate vehicle for this task, and some of those will be in a position to implement enhanced or additional means of gathering user-generated content via:
  • Exhibitions, whether they be in museums or other locations;
  • Online and mobile vehicles, and;
  • Events or special projects.

**Recommendation 4: Identify and develop cultural “anchors” and cultural clusters linked by time and place.**

Currently, Kingston does provide a range of high profile events that do attract residents and visitors on an annual basis. A select few should be identified as cultural anchors with smaller and/or emerging events scheduled to immediately precede or follow these major events to take advantage of existing audiences. Further, Kingston can take advantage of events clustered around contiguous dates through joint marketing, hotel packages, and transportation/restaurant discounts.

As a next step, Kingston can benefit from clustering experiences linked by geography, time and/or theme. For example, maps and signage can be used to link assets and serve as an incentive for collaborations and an extension of a visit from one to multiple cultural venues. Cultural clustering may entail street lamp banners, the construction of pathways linking multiple venues, or joint amenities such as shops, restaurants and pubs.
Recommendation 5: Develop cultural tourism itineraries that are theme-based.

Cultural itineraries that are theme-based is another key aspect of the Strategy and is important for making the heritage and cultural tourism assets accessible to a broader market. The planning process revealed that Kingston’s many cultural assets are spread out. These assets exist not only in the city centre but in neighbourhoods, on the waterfront, on campuses, and in other areas of the city. Residents and visitors may not discover these assets on their own so the coordination of information and transportation would improve the discovery process.

In addition to the hop-on and hop-off trolley service, GPS-assisted bike/moped tours and highly-visible way finding signs are all methods that could be used to encourage Kingston-wide discovery of cultural assets. The specific content featured as part of these itineraries would be developed based on what is determined to be most authentic and engaging about Kingston’s history.

Phase 2 Metrics

- **(Measuring the degree of augmentation of Kingston’s narrative)** For example: number of distinct groups offering stories for oral history/StoryTour project; number of storytelling techniques telling “non-traditional” stories.
- **(Measuring the development of cultural anchors)** The diversity of cultural anchors identified and successfully marketed as fixed points within an annual calendar of events.
- **(Measuring creation of cultural clusters)** Linkages are created across the community and across platforms that increase traffic and enable cultural tourists to develop self-directed tours.
- **(Measuring success of cultural itineraries)** Number of cultural itineraries created and levels of use, assessed using web analytics.
Phase 3

Recommendation 6: Implement Phase 3 of the Heritage Interpretive Plan.

**Heritage Interpretive Plan:** In a third phase of the Heritage Interpretive Plan implementation, the introduction of the following interpretive vehicles would provide novel ways to animate history through innovation:

- **Sound and light shows** utilizing projection technology to bring the city’s heritage buildings to life through a juxtaposition of narrative, image, sound and music. To justify the expenditure these shows could be presented according to a regular schedule and focus on a different theme from year to year;
- **Street theatre and public art,** various locations around the city could be used to provide a stage for performance-based presentations and/or temporary art installations. Such efforts can be used to re-interpret familiar surroundings in new ways or to disrupt expectations in order to foster a renewed sense of appreciation.


Museum passes are common in cities. But this recommendation is more than a museum pass; it is to be understood as a culture pass, a bundling strategy recognizing that a day-long or weekend-long traveller may have the capacity to visit more than one museum, event or program. For that traveller, offering a Kingston Culture Pass would encourage visits to multiple institutions by providing a single pass allowing participation in a number of different types of products (museums, programs, events, etc.). We have positioned it in Phase 3 to ensure that the products and experiences are fully ready to be marketed in this way.

Phase 3 Metrics

- **(Measuring the degree of augmentation of Kingston’s narrative)** Kingston’s stories continue to be enhanced through innovative means that draw cultural tourists, as well as tourists of all kinds, and that bring increased profile and attention to the community through word of mouth and media coverage.
- **(Measuring the culture pass)** Measure sales and economic impact on participants.
4.1.2 Make the Cultural Products and Experiences Market-Ready

Passion and a commitment to mission are common among organizations and efforts in Kingston’s cultural heritage sector. Volunteer boards devote countless hours to offering services and experiences to the public consistently and with pride. Within the context of a cultural tourism and cultural heritage strategy, capacity-building and professional development is critical to translating the missions of organizations into fully-optimized visitor experiences.

While passion for the subject matter and content is certainly present for those who develop and deliver cultural tourism products, the initiatives under this priority will help them improve the quality of operations and marketing. Ultimately it is about ensuring that the cultural and heritage assets are “market-ready” and deliver what cultural tourists expect while further enhancing quality of life for residents and making Kingston an even more attractive place to live, work and play. The goal is to:

- Improve the cultural and heritage products in terms of content, operations, marketing and delivery;
- Improve the quality of operations of the product providers;
- Cluster the experiences to respond to market preferences and needs;
- Bundle the products;
- Develop the products so that they are more visitor-focused and offer experiences that are innovative and unique but are what visitors expect.

The City’s grant-making process would be central in identifying gaps and opportunities in market-readiness, particularly operational and marketing strategies. The City’s role would be to facilitate a process to identify the most likely organizations to train and advise cultural groups on tourism market-readiness within the context of the grant-making process. The City may choose to co-fund this training with the right organization.

Recommendations to Make the Cultural Products and Experiences Market-Ready

The following recommendations are suggested to make the cultural products and experiences market-ready.
Phase 1

Recommendation 8: Hire a Cultural Tourism Connector to work within the City of Kingston to support the implementation of Phase 1 of this Strategy.

Even though tourism falls outside of the City of Kingston’s jurisdiction, it would be strategic for the City to hire a Cultural Tourism Connector during the implementation of Phase 1 of this Strategy. Initially, the Connector would be hired to begin the work needed to complete a number of the recommendations within this Strategy. The job of this City staff person would be to connect the stakeholders, identify cultural and heritage assets, access cultural mapping to create an inventory of facilities and events, recommend enhancements to existing cultural assets, build relationships with cultural organizations, and create and implement a marketing strategy with a primarily local focus.

It is anticipated that the work required to be done by the person holding this position would be completed in Phase 2 of this Strategy. At that point it would be necessary to consider the development of a new position focused on marketing the cultural experiences and products that have emerged to attract visitors from outside the community. At that stage the emphasis would need to shift to marketing a broader range of cultural experiences and products that exist at which point this position would best be integrated within Tourism Kingston.

Recommendation 9: Adopt the Canadian Tourism Commission’s Experiential Travel Toolkit.

As outlined in Appendix B, we recommend adoption of the Canadian Tourism Commission’s Experiential Travel Toolkit by Tourism Kingston, which should also consider facilitating tourism experience development training. This approach is more aligned to cultural tourism as it further segments leisure travellers and matched them with more specific experiences. To facilitate this we recommend adoption of the Explorer Quotient or EQ framework to support, if not drive, future culture and heritage tourism development and marketing activities. In line with this approach is the adoption of “experiential tourism” development. These two new ways of thinking when combined provide impetus for the repositioning of Kingston’s cultural tourism offerings and give compelling new reasons for people to visit.
Recommendation 10: Institute the Heritage Fund program recommended as part of the Kingston Culture Plan.

The Heritage Fund recommended in the Kingston Culture Plan should be developed as a way to improve the quality of product, operations and marketing within the heritage sector and to achieve an increased level of sustainability. Grants offered by municipalities are often not comprehensive enough to sustain efforts. For that reason we recommend that the implementation of the Heritage Fund be supported by a scheme for mentoring, professional development and guidance. It also makes sense that such a program be administered by the Kingston Association of Museums, Art Galleries and Historic Sites (KAM) with support from the City as has now been formalized.

In setting up the Heritage Fund, an approach should be taken that provides grant recipients with the incentives needed to improve the experience and products they offer as well as to professionalize their operations. Grants can be tied to reaching new visitor markets, improving visitor experiences through innovative programming and marketing, pursuing strategic planning and staff development, as has been outlined in the program Objectives developed by KAM and approved by Council in 2013. In this way, the Heritage Fund becomes a useful tool for organizations to progress towards increasingly sustainable operations. It should be understood as an investment program; evidence from municipalities such as the City of Ottawa (see Appendix E) suggests that the investment can pay off both in quality and in financial terms. The establishment of the Heritage Fund represents an important first step for Kingston with other forms of support needing to be considered in time as the sector evolves.
Recommendation 11: Assess the status of the cultural heritage sector as it now exists.

As has previously been observed, Kingston is home to many cultural heritage institutions that, while valuable, struggle to keep pace in terms of their overall appeal as “must see” attractions or as providers of experiences and products with broad appeal. Much of this comes down to the issue of sustainability as many museums tend to be narrowly focused in terms of their mission and funding options can also be extremely limited.

Basic survival often emerges as a major focus of energy and efforts at the expense of the kind of activity that would allow cultural heritage institutions—and smaller community museums in particular—to deliver experiences and products with broader appeal. Regardless, these kind of cultural heritage institutions play a vital role in preserving and interpreting local history and need to be supported to ensure they can be sustainable.

The creation of the Heritage Fund described above will help to address the needs that exist but it would also be strategic to assess the status of the cultural heritage sector as it now exists to establish a benchmark and to ensure the potential recipients of this funding are well positioned to receive it. In Phase 1 of this strategy it is recommended that the City of Kingston work with a consultant to assess the current status of the cultural heritage sector.

As part of this assessment it is anticipated that many of the local museums should be looked at objectively to determine the risks that impact them most (such as funding, governance, operational capacity, planning and development, quality of programs and service) as well as their capacity for growth in response to outside investment. Along with museums, it would also be helpful to assess other heritage-related groups and organizations in order to strengthen the cultural heritage sector as a whole.

Phase 1 Metrics

✓ (Measuring the implementation of a cultural tourism program) Track progress of deliverables and measure ROI.

✓ (Measuring the impact of grants) Based on the criteria for grant recipients, track implementation of Heritage Fund and develop impact reports that assess ROI.

✓ (Measuring capacity-building efforts) Average amount of contributed, earned, and government/grant income for cultural groups in Kingston.
(Measuring market-readiness of cultural assets) Number of attendees to cultural institutions and events: can be measured either comprehensively (counting every visit) or as a representative sample (surveying for a statistically significant number of days over the course of a year to account for changes in season, etc.).

Phase 2

Recommendation 12: Create opportunities to mentor through partnership for festival and event organizers.

Kingston should host an on-going series of community and city-operated events that are produced and executed professionally and efficiently. Emerging organizations wishing to produce festival and events can receive on-the-ground mentoring by participating in the production of these successful events. In the process, strategies regarding event planning, ticketing, set-up and take-down, permitting, space usage, visitor experience, crowd control and way finding, and marketing. Existing events would benefit from additional assistance. Further, potential partnerships can result from a close working relationship between established and emerging efforts.

Recommendation 13: Institute Professional Development Workshops targeted to the cultural and heritage sectors.

An emphasis on capacity building and professional development that Kingston is committed to would manifest in its approach to municipal grants as well as training. “How-To” Workshops would offer organizations training on fundraising, attracting and retaining staff, succession planning, marketing, use of technological innovations, reaching new audiences, improving the visitor experience and others.

Phase 2 Metrics

(Measuring mentoring) Number of organizations participating and official mentoring relationships launched.

(Measuring professional development) Creation and delivery of tourism market ready workshops.

(Measuring professional development) Number of distinct groups attending workshops.
Recommendation 14: Establish a “centre of excellence” of local institutions to produce innovative ideas.

The emphasis on sustainability, professional development, and capacity-building is central to this Strategy. Kingston’s launching of a pronounced effort to secure sustainability of existing and emerging cultural efforts can itself be branded to regional and national organizations. This informal working group of institutions would generate innovative ideas to be disseminated within the cultural heritage and cultural tourism community, forming a kind of “centre of excellence” for capacity building of cultural organizations. The grouping could build a core of regular participants and could also invite occasional participants to Kingston annually, quarterly, or more regularly. Along with ideas and innovation, the group could develop or deliver professional development programs. Queen’s University and St. Lawrence College could be major partners in this endeavour, among others.

Phase 3 Metrics

✓ *(Measuring collaborative innovation)* The development of a set of best practices that are recognized within the province as innovative and sustainable.

4.2 Top-Line Priorities

Having identified the two key actions and related recommendations, three top-line priorities emerge that give shape, form and direction to the Strategy:

1. **Connect the stakeholders.** The Strategy calls upon new and traditional cultural heritage and tourism stakeholders to work together to strengthen and sustain individual organizations, groups, businesses or concerns. By encouraging a coherent outlook, the Strategy creates a unified direction for cultural tourism and cultural heritage for Kingston as a whole.

2. **Develop new information management infrastructure.** This task is already underway in Kingston, where the City has been working to develop a database of cultural heritage and cultural tourism resources that can be accessed through maps, handhelds and other digital devices. This database provides information about assets, events and happenings in the city.
This work needs to continue and the results made available in ways that improve services and experiences to residents, visitors and stakeholders alike.

3. **Achieve specific outcomes through the strategic use of City practices, policies and financial resources.** The City of Kingston itself needs to foster best practices as it relates to cultural heritage and cultural tourism. It needs to lead by example and create opportunities for mentoring and professional development that benefit the cultural sector. Policies also need to be put in place that improve governance, operations and sustainability and the investment of financial resources. The City needs to manage its resources strategically to build capacity, both internally and externally.

4.2.1 **Priority 1: Connect the Stakeholders**

Our consultations illustrated that conversations around culture and heritage in Kingston tend to be isolated from one another. Participants in some cases noted that leadership in the development of the asset base is lacking or at least diffuse, with many small independent groups pursuing their own goals with varying degrees of impact. It is clear that the City has a role to gather the leaders of the cultural and heritage assets under one unified development approach. This is critical to future sustainability and improvement to the arts, culture and heritage assets found in Kingston.

Our process illuminated potential for diverse and exciting collaborations across multiple stakeholders for opportunities that are currently underutilized or as-yet-undiscovered. The process unearthed a number of passionate, innovative and interested members of the community eager to participate in expressing Kingston’s cultural vitality. But the process also revealed a level of exclusivity and reluctance among some members of the cultural sector as well as a need for ongoing forums for collaboration.

In its role as a purveyor of services to diverse communities, the City possesses both the relationships and the commitment to serve as a facilitator for collaborations. Within the context of this Strategy, the role of the City would include connecting groups that offer heritage-related programs and festivals along with identifying the needs for resources for joint efforts. The City would facilitate cross-conversations between culture and heritage advocates, groups, stakeholders and interested citizens. Indeed, culture and heritage are not mutually exclusive. Cross-fertilization of the ideas of preservationists, artists, tour operators, academics and others can lead to new and dynamic forms of expression in the city.
Recommendations to Connect the Stakeholders

Phase 1

Recommendation 15: Establish a Cultural Capacity Working Group to bring together the expertise, access to resources, coordination, and diverse constituents at different levels of implementation and to begin the work of developing the assets into better, more market-ready products.

The Cultural Capacity Working Group is fundamental to the success of this Strategy, and one of the first tasks of the working group should be to develop a detailed implementation plan to guide its efforts and create ownership and buy-in. It would also be the responsibility of the Cultural Capacity Working Group to work with the Cultural Tourism Connector to complete the foundational work required, including to identify the “gems” that already exist, develop a shared vision of Kingston’s histories that is authentic and engaging and articulate a set of standards and guidelines. Another important task would be to research and provide more comprehensive recommendations on funding sources and community benefits so that the City should not have to bear the entire cost burden of the Strategy’s implementation.

Recommendation 16: Identify best practices in other communities and use these examples to engage a group of community leaders in Kingston to drive the implementation of this Strategy.

A number of communities within North America have succeeded in building cultural vitality through the development of heritage assets, resulting in a rich quality of life for its residents and a vibrant cultural tourism industry. The Cultural Capacity Working Group identified in Recommendation 14 should work with the Cultural Tourism Connector to visit a number of these communities and participate in familiarization tours to explore the potential of the future of Kingston through the eyes of other leaders in best practices. The knowledge gained can then be brought back to Kingston and applied where appropriate to foster a “Made in Kingston” approach to cultural tourism.
Recommendation 17: Develop a set of cultural tourism standards and guidelines for Kingston.

An important role for the Cultural Capacity Working Group will be to establish and advocate for a set of standards and guidelines for quality and market-readiness of cultural tourism products. While standards have not been identified, parameters may include:

- Focus on visitor experience;
- Business model sustainability;
- Ability/evidence of collaboration;
- Market-readiness;
- Broad community impact;
- Concurrency with corporate principles of Kingston.

Quantifiable indicators and performance measures will be tied to the establishment of standards discussed above. These indicators and performance measures will provide evidence of culture’s impact, which is a powerful tool to sustain long-term cultural support and attract new partners as funders, content providers, and outreach partners. The indicators would have two distinct results:

- To encourage and monitor the achievement of high-quality standards over time across cultural initiatives;
- To enable the City to demonstrate the effects of culture on tourism and overall quality of life for residents.

Phase 1 Metrics

✓ *(Measuring effectiveness of Cultural Capacity Working Group)* Detailed implementation plan is created, including information about roles and responsibilities, timelines and diversified funding sources.

✓ *(Measuring effectiveness of familiarization tours)* Cultural Capacity Working Group members participate in familiarization tours and bring back and share best practices through presentations, discussion and implementation strategies.

✓ *(Measuring effectiveness of standards and guidelines)* Standards and guidelines provide a sound framework for the development of indicators that can be used to quantify culture's impacts and benefits.


 Springer Market Square. Photo courtesy City of Kingston.
4.2.2 Priority 2: Develop New Information Management Infrastructure

This task is already underway in Kingston, where the City has been working on a cultural mapping process that will produce a database that will be capable of being accessed through maps, handhelds and other digital devices. This database provides information about assets, events and happenings in the city. This work needs to continue and the results made available in ways that improve services and experiences to residents, visitors and stakeholders alike.

Recommendations to Develop New Information Management Infrastructure

The following initiatives are recommended to implement this priority:

Phase 1

Recommendation 18: Develop a comprehensive database of cultural groups, events and sites.

As was identified when the Kingston Culture Plan was being developed, the process behind this Strategy also highlighted a need for a comprehensive inventory outlining all the cultural assets in Kingston. Among its many institutions, heritage groups, societies, and community gatherings, Kingston is home to a diversity of cultural groups, events and sites that have yet to be fully documented and promoted. Many of these groups, events and sites attract a broad constituency of residents as well as visitors and many others have the potential to be further integrated into the cultural experiences and products to be found in Kingston. The development of a comprehensive cultural resource database for Kingston will help to capture information about what already exists and suggest ways that these assets may be promoted, aligned and strengthened.

Phase 1 Metrics

✓ (Measuring inventory) Establishing a comprehensive cultural resource database with a plan to be maintained and shared.
✓ (Measuring integration of new participants) Number of items added to a central database of cultural assets in Kingston.
Phase 2

Recommendation 19: Develop a Master Calendar of Events.

A coordinated calendar of events is needed and the lack of coordination sometimes produces confusion, both on the part of event organizers as well as the public at large. The enhancement of the master calendar already managed by Tourism Kingston or the creation of new, centralized master calendar is needed but, in either case, its success will be predicated on the ability of participating groups to manage their own content. Real-time and automated coordination can result from a system in which calendars are shared among organizations citywide. Best practices are provided in Appendix F.
Recommendation 20: Develop Culturally Themed Itineraries.

Kingston possesses the breadth of cultural activities whose potential as cultural tourism magnets can be enhanced through strategic marketing. Tourism Kingston should develop culturally themed itineraries that include cultural events and experiences for a 1-day, weekend-long, or longer-term stay. Further, the itineraries should offer one-stop coordination with accommodations, transportation and parking, and amenities such as restaurants, and tour buses/boats/guides. Finally, the creation of a Kingston City Cultural Pass (as per Recommendation No. 7) would offer visitors access to the City’s cultural attractions with a single purchase. Coordinated scheduling of events, long-term agreements within and outside of the cultural sector, and resources to market such a package are all critical to the achievement of this initiative.

Phase 2 Metrics

✓ (Measuring master calendar effectiveness) Number of participating organizations and events listed annually, and number of annual visits to view calendar.
✓ (Measuring event package usage) Number of attendees to cultural institutions and events (can be measured either comprehensively (counting every visit) or as a representative sample (surveying for a statistically significant number of days over the course of a year to account for changes in season, etc.).

4.2.3 Priority 3: Achieve Specific Outcomes Through the Strategic Use of City Practices, Policies and Financial Resources

The City of Kingston itself needs to foster best practices as it relates to cultural heritage and cultural tourism. It needs to lead by example and create opportunities for mentoring and professional development that benefit the cultural sector. Policies also need to be put in place that improves governance, operations and sustainability and the investment of financial resources. The City needs to manage its resources strategically to build capacity, both internally and externally.
Recommendations to Achieve Specific Outcomes through the Strategic Use of City Practices and Policies

These recommendations should be implemented as part of the Phase 2 process:

Phase 2

**Recommendation 21: Assess and refine existing policies and develop new policies where necessary to support an effective and sustainable cultural tourism sector.**

The City needs to lead by example and facilitate best practices that support cultural tourism. Among the policies that will need to be either refined or developed is a Special Event Policy as well as a Commemorative Event Policy. These two policies will not only help local stakeholders to develop and deliver better and more professional cultural experiences and products, they will also help to raise the bar by establishing the frameworks needed to nurture best practices and foster innovative thinking that will benefit residents and visitors alike. As these and other policies come online that impact cultural tourism, they also provide opportunities for learning and mentoring among City staff itself as well as within the Kingston community.

The City should also review its Heritage Incentive Programs as they relate to built heritage preservation. Currently these include a Heritage Property Tax Refund Program as well as a Heritage Property Grant Program. At the present time there are only twenty-five properties in the City of Kingston eligible to receive support through the Heritage Property Tax Refund Program so it has been under-utilized. There are more than 600 properties that would be eligible to receive funding through the Heritage Property Grant Program so it may prove helpful to expand this program in support of built heritage preservation.

**Recommendation 22: Establish a centralized Special Event Office for the City of Kingston.**

Currently, the City of Kingston is modifying its service delivery model for special events from a decentralized model to a centralized model. At the present time event organizers are required to visit multiple departments to obtain the necessary approvals, applications and permits. Investing in the creation of a centralized Special Events Office would help to guide event organizers through the steps required to deliver a successful event.
The purpose of the Special Event Office would be to establish a service delivery model designed to support both internal and external users. As Kingston becomes a city of preference for event planners and organizers the long-term success of this endeavour may require additional support.

It is recommended that the Special Event Office reside within the Recreation and Leisure department and function as a single point of contact for event organizers and work on their behalf to secure the permits, permissions and support required from other departments across the City.

The role of the Special Event Office would also be to provide event organizers with resource materials, mentoring and follow up to ensure each event is successful, that event organizers are building their capacity and that future events will improve based on past experience.

**Phase 2 Metrics:**

- ✓ *(Measuring policy creation and implementation)* The development, approval and implementation of the policies specified in Recommendation 20.
- ✓ *(Measuring the effectiveness of the Special Event Coordinator)* The City of Kingston is seen to be willing and interested in supporting special events. Bureaucracy is reduced and mentoring is provided through staff support and resource materials.
- ✓ *(Measuring the effectiveness of the Special Event Coordinator)* The quality and quantity of special events increases and Kingston is recognized for supporting best practices related to special event organization.

▼ Bellevue House. Photo: Carole Jackson.
5 Implementation

This Strategy has outlined the reasons why a cultural tourism Strategy built on Kingston’s outstanding historical and heritage assets will be beneficial to the city and its residents. This chapter outlines the steps toward implementation of the Strategy. Some of the recommendations can begin immediately and will be implemented in 1 – 3 years; others will require a longer period of time. While the outer horizon of the Strategy is 10 years, the Strategy should be understood as a living document and review and updates to the Strategy should be undertaken at regular intervals.

5.1 Who?

As noted throughout this report, leadership must come from the Corporation of the City of Kingston in implementing this Strategy. Among the stakeholders identified to implement the Strategy are:

- Community leaders within the culture and heritage sector such as Kingston Historical Society, Municipal Heritage Committee, Frontenac Heritage Foundation, Kingston Arts Council, Kingston Association of Museums, Art Galleries and Historic Sites, Cultural Services Department;
- Local and regional tourism marketing organizations such as Tourism Kingston, Kingston Accommodation Partners, The Great Waterway, Rideau Heritage Route, and others;
- Cultural content producers such as St. Lawrence Parks Commission, Thousand Islands Cruises, The Confederation Tour Trolley, Downtown Kingston! BIA;
- Institutions of higher education such as Royal Military College, Queen’s University and St. Lawrence College;
- Residents whose stories, experiences, cultural heritage, and perspectives can be celebrated through cultural programming, which is both city-facilitated and/or community-led.
MacLachlan Woodworking Museum. Photo: Wayne Hiebert.
5.1.1 The Role of the City

The desired outcomes listed below are in some cases the result of initiatives that are already ongoing, with others coming with the implementation of the Strategy. In some cases, assistance from other agencies and stakeholders within the city will be needed. But, by and large, in order to better develop its cultural and heritage assets as well as the Kingston’s attractiveness as a destination with appeal to the cultural tourist/creative traveller, the City of Kingston must lead or coordinate the following:

1. Take a proactive lead at coordinating a collective approach for the ongoing development of Kingston’s core culture and heritage attractors – get everyone on the same page sharing a common vision for proactive development.
   a. With its heritage partners, by effectively engaging the Boards and staff of the culture heritage sites in a process that leads to a new approach for development and marketing; one that leads to a collective presentation of the key Kingston narratives for the purpose of driving increased economic impact to the city through a higher level of local community participation and tourism;
   b. By respecting the desire of culture and heritage sites to preserve and protect the integrity of these sites;
   c. By creating a framework to aid cultural heritage sites towards a path of financial sustainability;

2. Invest resources, both financial and human, in its own culture and heritage assets and demonstrate development leadership.
   a. By investing in infrastructure;
   b. By encouraging and supporting the cultural institutions and organizations in developing experientially-based programming.

3. Work with the various tourism organizations to develop Kingston’s culture and heritage narratives more effectively through the creation and presentation of cohesive, consistent and compelling positioning for the city’s sites and attractors.
   a. By facilitating a proactive process to align the activities of the various tourism organizations;
   b. By facilitating a proactive process to effectively align the resources of Downtown Kingston BIA and other cultural product providers such as Fort Henry and 1000 Islands Cruises to improve services and activities that support tourism growth in Kingston;
   c. By working with the various stakeholders to better utilize the UNESCO designations;
4. Work with the DMO (Tourism Kingston) and other tourism-related stakeholders (Kingston Accommodation Partners, The Great Waterway, Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation, Canadian Tourism Commission) to identify opportunities to grow tourism through proactive partnership in initiatives that target international cultural travellers.

a. Analyze existing market research to identify the opportunities;

b. Understand what sales and marketing activities are available to potentially extend or enhance the telling of the Kingston culture and heritage narrative to international markets through conventional travel trade avenues.

c. To encourage active participation in The Great Waterway regional tourism organization by Kingston’s tourism industry leaders and to encourage those involved to be proactive in ensuring Kingston (the region’s primary tourism demand generator) realizes additional focus and levels of support, proportionate to its position within the region (the vast majority of tourism businesses within the region are located in Kingston). Focus should be given to positioning Kingston as a hub for tourism that enables visitors to use it as a base from which to explore the surrounding area and region.
5.1.2 Role of Kingston’s Heritage and Cultural Organizations

Kingston’s heritage and cultural organizations will play a major role in improving the experiences and products available and making them market ready in partnership with the City and other key stakeholders. They are the content experts, and this knowledge will need to be channeled to arrive at the right mix of experiential, marketing, visitor service and operational strategies that are aimed at improving the products.

The stakeholders include the marketers and tourism organizations as well as the various heritage and cultural organizations and perhaps some interested individuals. Their main role is to participate in discussions when invited and think beyond their own individual organizations. Helping people understand the opportunity inherent in cultural tourism product development and their role in that development is important as an outcome of this process.

This Strategy is not recommending that the City produce significant amounts of new programming, impose an officially-sanctioned “master narrative” on the city, or establish any new heritage institutions. In this case Kingston’s various programmers and product developers (heritage organizations, festival groups etc.) would work to improve programming and interpretation according to the guidelines developed by the Working Group.

5.1.3 Role of Tourism Kingston

Tourism Kingston plays a vital role in relation to this Strategy through its continuing efforts to market leisure activities as a top priority, which highlight Kingston’s heritage, culture, culinary and natural resources. Their expertise is also needed to help identify specific gaps that exist in terms of market-readiness, to support training solutions related to the sector and to ensure that any new experiences and products that are developed align with market demand. Likewise, Tourism Kingston could take on a leadership role and work with a range of local stakeholders to create a series of culture and heritage packages to take to market that specifically target cultural tourists within Kingston, Canada, the U.S. and beyond in a way that would be beneficial.

In the long term it may be necessary for Tourism Kingston to establish a new position focused on marketing the cultural experiences and products that exist and/or that have emerged to build increased capacity related to leisure activities. Such a position could work with the Cultural Tourism Connector hired by the City of Kingston to build upon the work done at the local level in order to sell it more broadly through marketing initiatives aimed at potential visitors coming to Kingston from outside the community.
5.1.4 Role of Other Tourism-Related Stakeholders

In order for this Strategy to succeed it will be necessary to engage other tourism-related stakeholders as part of its implementation. These stakeholders include the Downtown Kingston! BIA, Kingston Accommodation Partners, the St. Lawrence Parks Commission and The Great Waterway who will need to be engaged in an advisory capacity. They also have a role to play in relation to resource sharing and professional leadership, which are both required as part of growing cultural tourism within the region as a whole.

5.2 How Much? When?

The following matrix outlines the approximate launch timeline and estimated annual operating costs for each initiative. The proposed three-phase timeline is applied to the table, so that the timeline for each initiative or recommendation is easily seen.

As this is a long-range strategy (up to 10 years), it is understood that both the timeline and cost estimates may shift. Indeed, recommendations are described broadly enough to be flexible in the face of changing needs, trends, and stakeholders. The benefit of this framework is to equip the city with the tools to prioritize, budget, schedule, and resource the achievement of its cultural heritage and cultural tourism strategy.

Pump House Steam Museum. Photo: Wayne Hiebert
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Actions</th>
<th>Costs</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key Action: Improve the Cultural Experiences and Products</td>
<td>Phase 1</td>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>Phase 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Implement Phase 1 of the Heritage Interpretive Plan</td>
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<td>CS KCP Recommendation #53</td>
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<td>2. Cluster existing festivals to enhance the festival product</td>
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<td>CS KCP Recommendation #6</td>
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<td>3. Implement Phase 2 of the Heritage Interpretive Plan</td>
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<td>4. Identify and Develop Cultural “Anchors” and Cultural Clusters</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Develop Cultural Tourism Itineraries that are Theme-Based</td>
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<td>6. Implement Phase 3 of the Heritage Interpretive Plan</td>
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<td>7. Institute Kingston Culture Pass</td>
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<tr>
<td>Key Action: Make these Cultural Experiences and Products Market Ready</td>
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<td>8a. Hire a Cultural Tourism Connector within the City of Kingston</td>
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<tr>
<td>8b. Hire a Cultural Tourism Manager within Tourism Kingston</td>
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<td>9. Tourism Kingston to adopt the CTCs Experiential Travel Toolkit</td>
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<td>10. Institute the Heritage Fund Program</td>
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<td>CS KCP Recommendation #18, 19</td>
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<td>11. Assess the Status of the Cultural Heritage Sector</td>
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<td>12. Mentorship Opportunities for Festival / Event Organizers</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Institute Professional Development Workshops</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Establish a Centre of Excellence of Local Institutions</td>
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<td>Top-Line Priorities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connect the Stakeholders</td>
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<td>15. Establish Cultural Capacity Working Group</td>
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<td>16. Identify Best Practices in Other Communities</td>
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<td>17. Develop a Set of Cultural Tourism Standards and Guidelines</td>
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<td>Develop New Information Management Infrastructure</td>
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<td>18. Develop a Comprehensive Database of Cultural Groups, Events and Sites</td>
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<td>19. Develop a Master Calendar of Events</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. Develop Culturally Themed Itineraries.</td>
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<td>TK New</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategic Use of City Practices, Policies and Financial Resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. Establish a Special Events Office</td>
<td>Already budgeted</td>
<td></td>
<td>RL New</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Legend**
- X up to $50,000 Cultural Services (City of Kingston)
- XX $50,000 - $100,000 Tourism Kingston (KEDCO)
- XXX $100,000 - $250,000 Recreation and Leisure (City of Kingston)
### 5.3 Allocating Resources

The following section describes two aspects of implementing the Strategy. Specifically, stakeholders as well as annual operating cost estimates and approximate timelines tied to implementing the initiatives described above are described. Secondly, a system that organizes a method for broadening participation, maintaining a high standard of content and visitor experience, and grant-making tied to sustainability is outlined step-by-step.

Descriptions of the governance structure, timing, and resources to implement this system follow:

**Governance**: The system would be initiated and refined by the time-limited Cultural Capacity Working Group. It would set the terms for implementation and advise on grants, space usage, marketing efforts, scheduling assistance, and other resources to support cultural initiatives and organizations.

**Timing**: Attracting potential initiatives would occur year-round through a rolling application process. However, a determination of resource allocation would occur annually.
Resources: Upon determining which initiatives meet the criteria to achieve Kingston’s goals in cultural tourism and heritage, the Cultural Capacity Working Group would offer resources to selected initiatives. These resources include operational funding tied to meeting critical stages of growth, assistance with event planning, marketing resources such as citywide signage, brochures, website exposure, and public relations, and assistance with space usage/rental and street blockages (for outdoor events).

The system sets out a critical path for a market-ready cultural tourism and cultural heritage asset that is operationally sustainable, appealing in its visitor experience, supports broad citywide goals, and cultivates new stakeholders.

The system is defined by four major elements: (1) Product Assessment; (2) Product Improvement Strategies; (3) Concurrence with Standards and Guidelines; and (4) Implementation and Communication Strategy.

Stage (1) Product Assessment

The cultural tourism products would need to be assessed for strengths and weaknesses and ways in which they could be improved in concert with this Strategy. We propose that this can be done via an application process. Applications will be graded according to criteria such as:

- Quality of Visitor Experience;
- Operational Sustainability;
- Tourism Market-Readiness;
- Marketing Capacity;
- Capacity to Collaborate Citywide;
- Capacity to Attract Residents and Visitors;
- Uniqueness to Kingston.

The idea is a prioritization exercise designed to focus resource allocations. Products will be assessed for their capacity to meet high-quality content and visitor experience standards.
Potential initiatives will be categorized across a spectrum of readiness. Those not yet meeting the standards set out by the Cultural Capacity Working Group will be offered the opportunity to participate in structured workshops, training, and mentoring. Further, collaborations may be identified as a result of the application assessment. (It is possible that the Cultural Capacity Working Group may identify initiatives at an emerging stage of growth that can receive smaller grants to further incubate into an initiative designated for comprehensive resource allocation.)

Stage (2) Product Improvement Strategies

Once the most promising products have been identified, what steps need to be taken, with reference to each particular product, to improve them?

Stage (3) Concurrence with Standards and Guidelines

Once precise product improvement strategies are developed, an assessment will be conducted based on criteria that, together, reflect the objectives of the city for high-quality content, visitor experience, and ability to attract visitors to Kingston.

Stage (4) Implementation and Communication Strategy

Initiatives identified from Stage (3) will then be coordinated and marketed as part of Kingston’s citywide tourism efforts. Initiatives discussed above would be implemented in this stage, such as a Comprehensive Events Package to visitors and a coordinated year-round tourism schedule built around anchor events. Resources for implementing initiatives, including funding, space usage, and marketing will be invested. Once launched, metrics will measure the impact of initiatives on identified factors such as economic impact, quality of life, etc.

5.4 Impacts and Benefits

Ultimately, the success of this Strategy will be judged according to the following measures:

5.4.1 Cultural Heritage

Kingston’s cultural heritage defines a collective sense of identity and its many histories are embraced and celebrated by local residents and draw visitors from near and far. This outcome is supported by the following achievements:
• Information about Kingston’s cultural heritage is widely available and accessible;
• Kingston is recognized as a community defined by a cultural heritage that is inclusive and spans thousands of years;
• Collaboration and resource sharing defines how Kingston’s cultural heritage is accessed and experienced;
• History and innovation are seen as synonymous improving access, awareness and appreciation of Kingston’s cultural heritage;
• Kingston’s many heritage groups and organizations are sustainable and indispensable interpreters of Kingston’s history and heritage via a set of fully market-ready experiences developed in concert with tourism marketers and other types of experience providers.

5.4.2 Cultural Tourism

Cultural tourism is central to the city’s overall tourism strategy with demonstrable economic benefits that have supported growth, immigration, migration and talent retention. This outcome is supported by the following achievements:

• The development of Kingston’s core cultural attractors is supported by a collective effort involving a diversity of (governmental and non-governmental) stakeholders;
• Kingston is recognized as a leader in its approach to developing its cultural assets to support cultural tourism;
• Kingston has established a set of best practices that have resulted in a cohesive, consistent and compelling positioning of its cultural assets;
• Partnerships with stakeholders within and beyond the community define how cultural tourism opportunities are identified and developed.

This concludes our Integrated Cultural Heritage and Cultural Tourism Strategy for the City of Kingston.