

Clarenville Area Sustainable Tourism Plan

Town of Clarenville

August 2023



Clarendville Area Sustainable Tourism Plan – August 2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary.....	1
Background	1
What is Sustainable Tourism?	1
The Vision	1
Guiding Principles	2
Our Goal	3
Our Strategic Priorities.....	3
Conclusion	6
1.0 STEP Background	7
1.1 What is STEP?	7
1.2 Why STEP for the Clarendville Area?	7
1.3 STEP Catchment Area	8
1.4 STEP Working Group.....	8
1.5 Project Timelines	10
1.6 Consultation, Research and Engagement Activities.....	11
1.7 STEP Plan Development.....	12
2.0 Our Situation.....	13
2.1 Tourism Features.....	13
2.2 Some Challenges.....	15
2.3 SWOT	16
2.4 Stakeholder Input	18
2.5 Clarendville’s Digital Footprint.....	21

Clareville Area Sustainable Tourism Plan – August 2023

2.6	Market Readiness	22
2.8	Alignment with Regional, Provincial and Federal Priorities.....	24
3.0	Clareville’s Visitors.....	25
3.1	A Visitor Centric Approach.....	25
3.2	Non-Resident Visitors	25
3.3	Resident Visitors	27
3.4	Clareville Area Accommodations.....	30
3.5	Occupancy Drivers	31
4.0	Vision, Guiding Principles and Sustainable Tourism Goals	34
4.1	Vision	34
4.2	Guiding Principles	34
4.3	Goal.....	35
4.4	Overview of Strategic Priorities	36
5.0	Priority 1 - Organize and Build industry Capacity to Grow	38
Action 5.1	Establish a Sustainable Tourism Action Committee (STAC).....	38
Action 5.2	Build STAC Capacity.....	38
Action 5.3	Prepare and Maintain a Workplan for Sustainable Tourism	39
Action 5.4	Utilize Task Teams for Key Plan Priorities.....	39
Action 5.5	Identify Tourism Coordination Support	39
Action 5.6	Industry Engagement in Sustaining Plan Activities	40
Action 5.7	Prepare and Implement Communications and Engagement Plan.....	41
6.0	Priority 2 – Market the Clareville area.....	42
Action 6.1	Develop a Destination Clareville (and area) Website	42
Action 6.2	Build a Sense of Arrival	42

Clarendville Area Sustainable Tourism Plan – August 2023

	Action 6.3	Determine Approach to Enhanced Memorial Drive/TCH Access.....	43
	Action 6.4	Initiate Preliminary Wayfinding Strategy	43
	Action 6.5	Prepare a Promotional Video	43
7.0	Priority 3 –	Visitor Intercept Strategy	45
	Action 7.1	Encourage Itinerary Development and Packaged Experiences.....	45
	Action 7.2	Create a Regional Event Calendar	45
	Action 7.3	Sports Tourism Initiative	45
	Action 7.4	Conference Initiative.....	46
	Action 7.5	Festivals and Special Events Initiative	46
	Action 7.6	Motorcoach Initiative.....	47
	Action 7.7	Marine/Urban District Development.....	48
	Action 7.8	Hiking and ATV Trail Development.....	48
8.0	Priority 4 –	Enhance Tourism Operator Capacity	51
	Action 8.1	Enable Collaboration and Networking.....	51
	Action 8.2	Engage Bonavista STAR and Terra Nova National Park	51
	Action 8.3	Build Capacity	52
	Action 8.4	Enhance the Industry’s Digital Footprint	52
	Action 8.5	Human Resource Development.....	53
	Action 8.6	Social Enterprise Sustainability Planning	53
	Action 8.7	White Hills Sustainability Planning	54
9.0	Priority 5 -	Monitor & Measure Progress & Report Results	55
	Action 9.1	Develop a Visitor Experience Survey	55
	Action 9.2	Identify Performance Measurement Framework	56
	Action 9.3	Measure Stakeholder Engagement.....	56

Clareville Area Sustainable Tourism Plan – August 2023

Action 9.4 Endorse the STEP Plan through a Clareville Sustainable Tourism Accord..... 57

Action 9.5 Hold Annual Tourism Forum 57

10.0 Budget 58

11.0 Implementation Schedule..... 60

References 62

List of Appendices 63

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

This Clarendville Sustainable Tourism Plan was prepared through the Strategic Tourism Expansion Program (STEP), a sustainable tourism development planning process with a focus on creating memorable tourism experiences. STEP is designed to help communities and tourism businesses with above-average visitor potential to develop experiential tourism products and techniques for digital/online marketing enhancement and tourism investment in collaboration with Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs). Since May 2022 the STEP Working Group (WG), led by STEP Consultants, Pat Curran + Associates (PCA) Inc. and Tract Consulting, have been enabling the planning process.

What is Sustainable Tourism?

Sustainable tourism is defined by the [UN Environment Program](#) and [UN World Tourism Organization](#) as “tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities.” Additionally, sustainable tourism “refers to the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability” ([UNEP & UNWTO](#), 2005: 11-12. *Making Tourism More Sustainable – A Guide for Policy Makers*).

The Vision

This Sustainable Tourism Plan defines a vision for sustainable tourism development in the Clarendville area. Our vision is:

The Clarendville area will be recognized as a year-round destination attracting visitors through authentic and high-quality visitor experiences.

Guiding Principles

The Plan is guided by the following five (5) principles. By embracing these guiding principles, the Clarenville area can work towards realizing its vision of becoming a recognized year-round destination with authentic and high-quality visitor experiences.

Leadership and Industry Commitment

The Clarenville area recognizes that for tourism to grow it must be led by industry champions. This implies that local business leaders and tourism knowledge holders are dedicated to driving the growth of the tourism industry and are willing to invest time, resources, and expertise to achieve the stated vision. The principle reflects the Town's commitment to support tourism leadership.

Communication and Collaboration

The Clarenville area understands that effective communication and collaboration are the key to achieving measurable growth outcomes. Industry leadership and the Town will engage tourism stakeholders to support a coordinated business-led effort in developing Clarenville as a tourism destination. Communication will play a crucial role in conveying the Plan's vision and supporting industry leaders in the tourism development process.

Partnership

The Clarenville area realizes the importance of partnerships in achieving its tourism goal. Industry leadership and the Town will promote collaborations with relevant partners to enhance the visitor journey. Partnerships and an active volunteer base are critical to success and can support leveraging resources, expertise, and funding to create a more welcoming, socially cohesive and attractive tourism destination.

High-quality Authentic Experiences

The Clarenville area believes that the tourism experiences offered must be of high quality and authentic, indicating a commitment to providing value for visitors' money.

Sustainability

The Clarenville area aims to develop tourism in a way that “celebrates place” and tells our specific stories while preserving and celebrating local culture, heritage, and the built and natural environment. The focus on authentic visitor experiences implies a long-term sustainability perspective, ensuring that tourism development benefits both the local community and the environment, and is engrained in the community fabric.

Our Goal

“By 2028, the Clarenville area will be a tourism destination hub, benefitting from more and longer visitor stays and increased revenue by offering a more diverse mix of visitor experiences year-round.”

This goal will be met by:

- Engaging industry leadership in strategic tourism development and marketing;
- Sustaining a strong core season while growing shoulder and winter season activities;
- Enhancing communication and collaboration among operators, influencers and partners at the local, regional and provincial level;
- Intercepting visitors travelling to other areas and encouraging them to extend their stay in the area;
- Aligning planning efforts with those of the eastern region’s destination management organization (DMO) the Legendary Coasts of Eastern Newfoundland (LCEN), the Province and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA).

Our Strategic Priorities

5.0 Priority 1 - Organize and Build industry Capacity to Grow

There is a need to transition from the current Working Group into a longer-term, industry-led leadership model. The Plan will not succeed if driven primarily by the Town and not-for-profit tourism attractions. Governance will be met initially through an industry-led Sustainable Tourism Action Committee (STAC). The STAC will prepare a sustainable tourism workplan, hire and direct Tourism coordination supports, and develop and implement an industry engagement and communications strategy. Actions will be advanced through specific task teams. Actions include:

Clarenville Area Sustainable Tourism Plan – August 2023

- Action 5.1 Establish a Sustainable Tourism Action Committee (STAC)
- Action 5.2 Build STAC Capacity
- Action 5.3 Prepare and Maintain a Workplan for Sustainable Tourism
- Action 5.4 Utilize Task Teams for Key Plan Priorities
- Action 5.5 Identify Tourism Coordination Support, including a Tourism Coordinator and an MOA between the STAC and the Town
- Action 5.6 Industry Engagement in Sustaining Plan Activities
- Action 5.7 Prepare and Implement Communications and Engagement Plan

6.0 Priority 2 – Market the Clarenville area

The Clarenville area requires a marketing strategy that maximizes and profiles its potential as a year-round destination featuring authentic and high-quality visitor experiences. In particular, there are several key opportunities to act. The first is enhancing the Town's digital footprint through an updated website guided by the recommendations of the *Destination Report: Digital Footprint Clarenville NL April 2023*. The second is building and enhancing the visitors' sense of arrival. The third is a preliminary investment in enhanced wayfinding to direct visitors into and through the Town and to its attractions and services. Finally, there is a need for a promotional video to support in-market tourism promotion activities in key areas including tourism trade shows, motorcoach and so on.

The Town is considering best approaches to enhancing the sense of arrival to the community through investments in enhanced signage. This is a good beginning. Further discussion with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DTI) is required to determine an approach that might be integrated within an overall wayfinding strategy for the Town. This preliminary wayfinding and signage program will be undertaken in the immediate term with longer term requirements around brand development to be addressed later – for now, the existing *Clarenville - Your Adventure Starts Here!* will suffice. Actions include:

- Action 6.1 Develop a Destination Clarenville (and area) Website
- Action 6.2 Build a Sense of Arrival
- Action 6.3 Determine Approach to Enhanced Memorial Drive/TCH Access
- Action 6.4 Initiate Preliminary Wayfinding Strategy
- Action 6.5 Prepare a Promotional Video

7.0 Priority 3 – Visitor Intercept Strategy

As noted above, enhancing the sense of arrival to the community, and investing in enhanced wayfinding are a good beginning. Better directing visitors down Memorial Drive will have an immediate and positive impact on existing attractions and visitor services. Given its strategic location, the Clarenville area’s focus must be on intercepting those many thousands who are passing through everyday or are planning to. The effort must be on encouraging visitors to spend some time in the Clarenville area while on the way somewhere else, or to stay longer if they are already visiting. The following activities might be considered part of a visitor intercept strategy. Actions include:

- Action 7.1 Encourage Itinerary Development and Packaged Experiences
- Action 7.2 Create a Regional Event Calendar
- Action 7.3 Sports Tourism Initiative
- Action 7.4 Conference Initiative
- Action 7.5 Festivals and Special Events Initiative
- Action 7.6 Motorcoach Initiative
- Action 7.7 Marine/Urban District Development
- Action 7.8 Hiking and ATV Trail Development including Engagement with Hike Discovery, Assessing Trail Ownership, Identifying TAP Compliant Trails, Determining Laydown and Parking areas and Bonavista ATV Trail Development

8.0 Priority 4 – Enhance Tourism Operator Capacity

Growing sustainable tourism in the Clarenville area requires a focused approach on key opportunities and an investment in capacity building, networking and collaboration. Formal and informal networking among tourism operators will allow creative collisions leading to new collaborations in product development. Building capacity among business owners and managers, and among not-for-profit organizations is key. For example, the critical mass of emerging operators in Milton represents a distinct opportunity for collaboration for the Clarenville area. Actions include:

- Action 8.1 Enable Collaboration and Networking
- Action 8.2 Engage Bonavista STAR and Terra Nova National Park
- Action 8.3 Build Capacity
- Action 8.4 Enhance the Industry’s Digital Footprint
- Action 8.5 Human Resource Development
- Action 8.6 Social Enterprise Sustainability Planning
- Action 8.7 White Hills Sustainability Planning

9.0 Priority 5 - Monitor & Measure Progress & Report Results

The success of the tourism plan depends on ongoing monitoring and measurement of performance. Performance measures for the Sustainable Tourism Plan will be relevant and reflect a change over time for tourism in the Clareville area. There are significant gaps in local and regional information that will be met through a local industry-wide approach to data collection. Key performance indicators (KPIs) will be identified, and data collection processes requirements will be established. There will be ongoing reporting, on an annual basis, to operators, stakeholders and governments. Measurements will indicate the progress of an activity and whether it should be either revised or dropped. For the time being, until new data collection methods are determined, there is a need to work with existing indicators to measure the impact of Plan activities. Key measurements here will include Clareville area occupancy rates, VIC utilization, online activity relating to Clareville on Provincial online channels and current and updated Resident and Non-Resident Surveys available from DTCAR. Actions include:

- Action 9.1 Develop a Visitor Experience Survey
- Action 9.2 Identify Performance Measurement Framework
- Action 9.3 Measure Stakeholder Engagement
- Action 9.4 Endorse the STEP Plan through a Clareville Sustainable Tourism Accord
- Action 9.5 Hold Annual Tourism Forum

Conclusion

The development of this Sustainable Tourism Plan is only the beginning of the process. In the coming months and years, the Plan will help guide and build lasting partnerships and grow capacity to ensure sustainable tourism development in Clareville. The potential is boundless however the engagement of partners is required if the vision of becoming a year-round outdoor and adventure destination, attracting visitors globally and within the province through authentic and high-quality visitor experiences is to be fully realized.

1.0 STEP BACKGROUND

1.1 What is STEP?

The Strategic Tourism Expansion Program (STEP) is a sustainable tourism development planning process with a focus on creating memorable tourism experiences. It is designed to help communities and tourism businesses with sustained above-average visitor potential to develop experiential tourism products and techniques for digital/online marketing enhancement and tourism investment in collaboration with Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) (STEP Resource Manual, ACOA).

A series of steps guide communities through a strategic process of building and executing a Sustainable Tourism Plan that focuses on product clustering, SME excellence, digital/online enhancement, and value-added product/experience development. Tailored to meet the specific needs of a community, the STEP process involves a local industry-led Working Committee collaborating with a certified STEP Consultant to guide the community through the process over the course of a year and beyond.

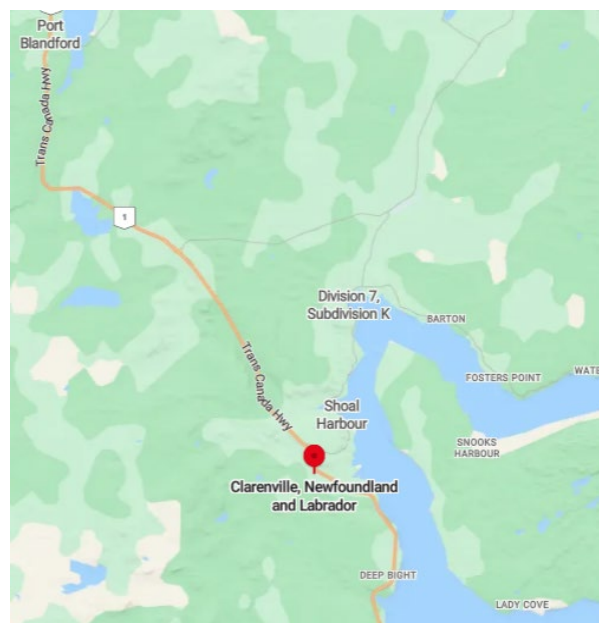
1.2 Why STEP for the Clarenville Area?

Clarenville and the immediate area, and the greater Eastern Newfoundland region, is experiencing tourism growth, with above-average potential to develop sought after experiential tourism products and services. Clarenville is the hub of the Eastern region and the service center for the Bonavista Peninsula and during the peak late spring, summer, and early fall season, offers a growing variety of visitor experiences that compliment those found on the Bonavista Peninsula.

Clarenville has a signature winter experience asset at White Hills and multi-use trails for both snowmobiling and All-Terrain Vehicles (ATV) that are opening up opportunities for an entirely new four-season visitor experience. Recognizing this potential, the Town of Clarenville (the Town) partnered with the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA), the Department of Industry, Energy and Technology (DIET), and other key regional and provincial partners, to lead and support the STEP project.

1.3 STEP Catchment Area

Figure 1 Plan Catchment Area



The Clarenville STEP and the Sustainable Tourism Plan focus on the immediate Clarenville area, while recognizing Clarenville’s unique place as a regional service hub, and its connectivity to the broader Eastern region. **Figure 1** (left) highlights the primary catchment area of the Plan.

The consultative phase of the project engaged industry partners well beyond Clarenville, to Port Blandford in the West and Sunnyside in the East. Many of the Plan’s priorities and actions focus on Clarenville and adjacent areas including the communities of Port Blanford, George’s Brook – Milton and Random Island.

1.4 STEP Working Group

Combining community leadership, entrepreneurship, tourism experience and community ambition with the proven expertise of external Consultants, a STEP Working Group (WG) was established to engage a cross-section of tourism SMEs and stakeholders and to focus the community’s tourism strategic thinking. The WG was supported by ongoing engagement from resource partners from regional, provincial, and federal departments and agencies. Since the commencement meeting on May

27, 2022, the WG has met 12 times representing a significant contribution of volunteer time and effort toward the project.

The membership of the WG, along with Resource Committee members, is provided in **Table 1** below while a summary of the dates of meetings is attached as **Appendix A**. The Terms of Reference (TOR) for the WG are attached as **Appendix B**.

Clareville Area Sustainable Tourism Plan – August 2023

Table 1 Working Group Membership

Working Group Members	
Deidre Strowbridge – Co-Chairperson	Town of Clareville
Neil Norcott – Co-Chairperson	Clareville Realty
Brian Avery	Gypsy Sea Tours
Bonita Critch	Clareville Inn
Paul Tilley	Town of Clareville
Joey Smith/Richard Power	Alpine Development Alliance Corporation (ADAC)
Spence Butt	Clareville Marina
Peter Troke	Discovery Trail Snowmobile Association (DTSA)
Lyn Gorman	Clareville Nordic Ski Club
Gerry Organ	Musician/Performer
Resource Committee Members	
Nancy Robbins/Lisa Gushue	Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA)
Johanna Egan	ACOA/Tourism Atlantic
Jeff Green	Department of Industry, Energy and Technology (DIET)
John Angelopoulos/Other	Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation (DTCAR)
Chris Sheppard	Legendary Coasts of Eastern Newfoundland (LCEN)
Colin Holloway	Town of Clareville

1.5 Project Timelines

The Clarendville STEP process followed a timeline of activities in line with the phased approach identified within STEP Resource materials. Project activities and milestones are highlighted in **Table 2** below.

Table 2 Activities and Milestones

Date	Activities/Milestones
April 2022	Request for Proposals (RFP) for STEP Consultants from Town of Clarendville
May 2022	STEP Consultants selected, commencement meeting with Town and Consultants, initial meeting of Working Group (WG), preliminary Tourism Asset Inventory (TAI) prepared
June 2022	WG meeting, WG composition confirmed, WG TOR reviewed, TAI revised, draft communications plan reviewed, site visits
July 2022	WG meeting, preliminary strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats (SWOT) completed, site visits ongoing
August 2022	Site visits ongoing
September 2022	Initial planning for Stakeholder Engagement Session 1
October 2022	WG meetings, review/implementation of Communications and Engagement Plan, detailed planning for Stakeholder Engagement Session 1
November 2022	WG meeting, Stakeholder Engagement Session 1 on November 9 – 60 people in attendance, summary report, online survey
December 2022	Summary report from Session 1, distribution of tourism diagnostic report/situational analysis, RFP for Digital Footprint project issued/Digital Footprint contract awarded to White Punt Consulting
January 2023	WG meeting, planning for Stakeholder Engagement Session 2, Digital Footprint Project ongoing
February 2023	WG meetings, Stakeholder Engagement Session 2, summary report including draft visions, goals and guiding principles, Digital Footprint Project ongoing
March 2023	Draft STEP Plan development, preliminary report from Digital Footprint Project, completion of Alpine and Nordic site visits, RFP for Advanced Market Readiness (AMR) project issued
April 2023	WG meetings, draft plan review, peer review process engaged, AMR project ongoing
May 2023	Draft plan revised, 2 nd stage peer review process completed, AMR overview report prepared/distributed, capacity building sessions on digital footprint held
June 2023	WG meeting, Sustainable Tourism Plan finalized
July 2023	Presentation to Town of Clarendville
September 2023	3 rd stakeholder engagement session/STAC established

1.6 Consultation, Research and Engagement Activities

Successful STEP processes reflect effective stakeholder leadership through the Working Group, meaningful consultation, and ongoing community engagement. The consultative, research and engagement methodology included:

- A Tourism Asset Inventory (TIA) (attached as **Appendix C**)
- A draft and final communications and stakeholder framework (attached as **Appendix D**)
- Completion of 20 interviews and site visits with tourism stakeholders (listing attached as **Appendix E**)
- An online survey following the initial Stakeholder Engagement session (attached as **Appendix F**). A total of 15 responses were received.
- Informal written briefs from the Discovery Trail Snowmobile Association (DSTA), the Clareville Nordic Ski Club and from Gerry Organ on arts and culture in the Clareville area
- Two (2) stakeholder engagement sessions were held.
 - The first on November 9, 2022, was attended by over 60 people and featured an introduction to the STEP process, an overview of preliminary findings to date, and an update by the LCEN on regional and provincial trends and priorities in tourism. The summary report is attached as **Appendix G**.
 - The second session on February 1, 2023 was attended by over 30 people and focused on preparing a draft Vision and Guiding Principles, setting Goals, and identifying Capacity Building Priorities. The summary report is attached as **Appendix H**.
- A detailed Digital Footprint assessment was carried out by White Punt Consulting and analyzed 16 local tourism-related businesses/ organizations and the Town’s digital presence. A copy of the Digital Footprint assessment is included as **Appendix I**.
- As part of an Advanced Market Readiness (AMR) activity carried out by Broad Reach Strategies, a high-level summary of regional findings on market readiness was prepared, and a copy is included as **Appendix J**.
- A listing of documents reviewed, and specific references cited are highlighted in the **Reference** section below.



1.7 STEP Plan Development

Draft Plan

The Consultants led the Working Group in a planning session on February 27, 2023, to review a preliminary vision, goals, priorities, and capacity requirements. Following the planning session, the Consultants commenced development of the draft Plan which was reviewed by the Working Group at planning sessions on April 6 and 18, 2023. Following the session on April 18, 2023, a revised draft Plan was prepared for a peer review.

Peer Review

With the engagement of the Consultants, the revised draft Plan underwent an independent peer review carried out by Marsha Bursey of Broad Reach Strategies Limited. Ms. Bursey has completed multiple Strategic Tourism for Areas and Regions (STAR) and STEP engagements in recent years, including a STAR Plan for the Bonavista Peninsula, and is quite familiar with STEP and STAR processes. The peer review comprised a high-level review of the research, consultative and engagement methodology and a detailed review of the draft plan. Ms. Bursey presented her findings to both the Consultants and the Town in writing and met with the Consultants in early May 2023. From there, the Consultants undertook a further revision of the draft plan. The revised draft plan went to a further stage of peer engaging both Ms. Bursey and the Town.

Draft and Final Sustainable Tourism Plans

Following the second stage of peer review and input, the Consultants revised the draft Plan further, presenting the final draft Plan to the Working Group and to Clarendville Town Council and senior staff in June 2023. Following final changes and input, the Sustainable Tourism Plan was accepted at a meeting of the STEP Working Group in July 2023. The unveiling of the Plan to industry stakeholders is set for September 2023 at Stakeholder Engagement Session 3.

2.0 OUR SITUATION

2.1 Tourism Features

“At a minimum, Clarenville, Shoal Harbour/Random Island/George’s Brook -Milton/Port Blandford should be working together as a “destination area” with common interests, goals, and shared momentum.”

Marsha Burse
Broad Reach Strategies

There is broad agreement among tourism stakeholders that the Clarenville area has varied tourism assets and attributes that with further development and nurturing, can be the basis of an emerging destination.

Strategic Location

Clarenville is a service center and hub for the Eastern region, including the Bonavista and Burin Peninsulas, and neighboring communities. Its broader catchment area for services extends to Port Blandford and Terra Nova National Park (TNNP) to the west and to the isthmus of Avalon in the east. More than 85,000 visitors annually pass through the Clarenville area and its environs while making their way to Bonavista and thousands more drive east or west along the TCH daily. The Clarenville area is within reasonable reach of over 50% of the province’s population, both east and west, and less than a two-hour drive to two international airports at St. John’s and Gander and the province’s secondary point of ferry access at Argentia.

Density and Diversity of Developed and Underdeveloped Services and Attractions

The Clarenville area has a high density of visitor activities, attractions, and supporting services, particularly in accommodation and food and beverage. Developed and underdeveloped activities are diverse in nature and run the gamut from nearby golfing to alpine and Nordic skiing, to hiking, ATVs, culinary experiences, a cidery, performance and arts, history, and nature/eco-tourism, historic sites, and heritage features including the area’s logging and railway history. There is a well-developed motor coach market drawing on area accommodations. Many food and beverage operators are beginning to feature locally produced goods on their menus and Clarenville Farm and Market serves as the public point of contact for locally produced goods including crafts and food stuffs.

Winter Destination

Clarenville is unique with a winter tourism offering based at White Hills with varied offerings including trails for downhill and cross-country skiing, snowboarding, or snowshoeing. There are ready linkages to snowmobile trails and backcountry adventures, and the developing sledding area in Shoal Harbour position the Clarenville area as one of the few truly winter destinations in the province.

Natural Features



Autumn colors in the foliage are distinct and hold potential for fall-themed activities. Natural assets include the area's ecology and the sense that as you approach Clarenville from either east or west, you are entering a different and unique landscape and typography with dramatic coastal vistas and inland hills. Coastal features include the Marina, Random Island and other coastal communities, a lighthouse, marine mammals, and sea bird colonies. Clarenville and the surrounding area offer multiple scenic view planes, many readily accessible by an extensive, and growing, multi-use trail network. Bare Mountain Lookout is one trail of note and there are others that might be part of a regional destination trail initiative.

Festival and Events

The Clarenville area has several well-established festivals and events, and numerous other community-based events and activities, that represent an activity program throughout the year. These include the Arts Under the Stars summer festival at Elizabeth Swan Park featuring a mix of performances, the bi-annual Bonavista Biennale, and the Port Blandford AppleFest. A new festival, Wheels and Heels, is planned for this fall.

Built Assets for Events

The area is served by multiple venues for events cultural activities including the Clareville Farm and Market, Elizabeth Swan Park, the Bill Davis Chalet, the East Link Performance Centre, and the Clareville School Complex. Other venues and facilities can be found throughout the greater Clareville area including notably the George’s Brook – Milton Community Cultural House. A significant emerging development is the Beaumont, planned as an event venue able to cater to weddings, large gatherings and conventions up to 575 guests.

2.2 Some Challenges

Place Brand and Marketing Needed

Despite a significant inventory of features and assets that align with visitor expectations and regional and provincial experience development priorities, the Clareville area still has some significant challenges to overcome to meet its fullest tourism development potential. There is a lack of things to do, or more appropriately, a lack of awareness of things to do, in the Clareville area. There are gaps in early evening entertainment activities and medium to high end food services, including place-based cuisine options. This is not to say that those activities do not exist – it is to say that they are generally not well profiled or promoted and visitors are not aware that these opportunities are there. What the Clareville area has lacked to date is a well-considered tourism place brand and an integrated tourism marketing strategy that profiles its fullest potential.

“The Clareville tourism industry has to work together to create a very clear image in the public mind regarding the reasons to travel to the area, stay and spend money.”

Wilma Hartmann
White Punt Consulting

Limited Sense of Arrival

For those driving east or west on the TCH, there is little to indicate a sense of arrival when entering Clareville. The Town lacks good signage and wayfinding and access to Memorial Drive, the primary eastern link to much of the Town, is not clearly marked with multiple points of entry, several of these across parking lots of commercial operations.

Collaboration, Capacity, and Lack of a Shared Vision

There is a sense that industry and volunteer organizations are working in silos and that barriers to collaborative development between business, and between NGOs, cannot be overcome. Voluntary organizations are at the limit of their capacity and need administrative and development supports. There is a lack of a strategic, actions-based approach to tourism product development and a vision for tourism business growth.

Human Resources

Many tourism operators, particularly in the accommodations and food and beverage sectors, are indicating significant challenges in recruiting and retaining staff. In some instances, this has led to reduced service levels and in some instances the temporary closure of dining facilities.

White Hills Resort

White Hills has been impacted by limited snow in recent years and this in turn has impacted operations and its overall financial sustainability. There are significant and immediate challenges with key infrastructure at White Hills that must be addressed to ensure continued operations. There is a need for a renewed approach to asset management and longer-term sustainability planning. The refresh will require updated capital, business development and site plans for White Hills based on a design program, with business modelling, for potential year-round nature-based adventure activities.

2.3 SWOT

The Consultants, with input from the Working Group, prepared an initial Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis in July 2022 and it has been revised and updated to reflect the area's key assets and attributes, along with its immediate issues and challenges. Priorities in each area are highlighted in **Figure 2** below. The detailed SWOT analysis is attached as **Appendix K**.

Figure 2 – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

Strengths

- Potential for year-round Visitor Destination
- Proximity to St. John's, and 50% of NL's Population
- Accessible mountainous landscape and coastline
- Small town feel with urban amenities
- Organized, experienced and supportive volunteer base
- Close to Bonavista Peninsula & Terra Nova National Park
- Variety of accommodation types
- Diversity of amenities & new visitor experience-based businesses opening
- Good weather
- White Hills is key winter tourism asset in eastern NL
- Trails that ties all assets together
- Partners, active sponsors, and good on-going business support
- Good parks, trails, sports, recreation special event facilities

Weaknesses

- Human resources
- Public high speed WIFI
- Accessible public washrooms
- Designated parking places for Motorcoach
- Staging areas for snowmobile, ATVs & boating
- Integrated multi-modal trail system (land & water)
- Early evening entertainment & "place-based" cuisine
- Marketing & communication lacking
- Signage & Wayfinding - no sense of arrival
- Cooperation among industry & volunteer organizations
- No cohesive, strategic actions-based approach to tourism product development
- Limited capacity in NGO's + experiencing volunteer burnout, administrative support needed
- Clarenville Marina is at capacity & limited room to expand without new infrastructure

Opportunities

- Capture motorcoach overflow market
- Bonavista Branch Line
- Clarenville Marina expansion, shore-side commercial development
- Waterfront Development with retail/restaurant district on waterfront
- ATV friendly Town/Multi-trails within the Town
- Integrated multi-modal trail system; + marine trails
- Develop and re-brand White Hills as a 4 season soft nature Adventure Centre with hard trail links into and through Clarenville
- More year-round Special Events

Threats

- Climate change – forest fires; lack of snow
- Gas prices limiting visitor travel
- Inflation
- Future pandemics
- Barriers to cooperative development between business, and between NGOs, cannot be overcome
- Lack of funding to support marketing & public realm infrastructure
- Lack of political will to provide support
- Demographic shift & lack of workforce to support business growth

2.4 Stakeholder Input

The Consultants conducted a number of site visits and led two stakeholder engagement sessions. The input from these site visits, interviews and engagement sessions identified a number of key areas for consideration within the Plan.

Unique Features

Stakeholders identified a number of key things that they felt made the Clarenville area unique as a destination. Many of these confirmed the Consultant’s findings of the SWOT analysis and included the natural environment, the scenery, the seasonal weather, and the fall colors. White Hills Resort was also seen as being unique. Clarenville’s location and proximity was considered unique including its ready access to St. John’s, the Bonavista Peninsula, and Terra Nova Park.

Assets

Assets included White Hills, the good ATV and hiking trail networks, water access including marina infrastructure and coastal communities and outdoor potential generally including fishing, hunting and back country access. A number of stakeholders identified the area’s proximity as its greatest asset, in particular as a gateway to the Bonavista Peninsula, Terra Nova Park and to the many smaller communities in the area and as well its closeness to the St. John’s Metro region.



Collaborative Opportunities

Collaborative opportunities were identified in a number of areas including festival and events, sports tourism, pre and post-conference activities, marine-related activities, and arts and culture. One particular area for collaborative approaches is in marketing, including an area-specific website and other digital marketing.

Preparing a Preliminary Vision, Identifying Goals, Setting Priorities and Determining Capacity Building Requirements

The second engagement session on February 1, 2023, provided stakeholders with an opportunity to provide insight on a vision, goals, priorities and capacity building requirements. There was a shared desire to see the following reflected within the vision statement:

- Year round/four season/multi-season
- Adventure/outdoor adventure
- Authentic/Quality/exceptional
- Collaboration/partnership
- Sustainable/sustainability

Participants identified a number of potential goals, including:

- Marketing, including branding and a marketing strategy
- Communications and stakeholder engagement
- Collaboration, partnership and leadership including the need for industry leadership and a governance model
- Capacity building
- Human resources
- Product and Visitor Experience Development including:
 - White Hills sustainability and longer-term development planning
 - Marine/Coastal
 - Arts
 - Conventions/Conference/Events
 - Trails
 - Wayfinding

Participants identified and ranked a number of priorities using a dotmocracy voting process. Those priorities ranked higher than 5 are provided in **Table 3** below.

Table 3 Sustainable Tourism Plan Priorities

Priority	Ranking
Communication	19
Branding	18
Collaboration	17
Destination development plan	16
Regionalization	12
Sustainability	11
Packaging	7
Cooperation	7
Human resources	7
Community buy-in	6
Marketing	6

Capacity Building Requirements

Participants identified a number of key capacity building requirements for their groups or businesses. Capacity building requirements included:

- Human resources
- Marketing/social media
- Networking
- Sustainability
- Event planning
- Volunteer building
- Affordability/pricing
- Fundraising/funding
- Incentive(s)
- Partnership packaging

2.5 Clarenville’s Digital Footprint

As noted in 1.6 above, White Punt Consulting completed an assessment of Clarenville’s digital footprint during the winter of 2023, working with multiple operators to prepare individual reports for participating businesses, while providing a regional level assessment of Clarenville and area.



“Clarenville is a beautiful destination within easy driving distance from St. John’s and Central Newfoundland. It is at the gateway of a very busy summer tourism region, the Bonavista Peninsula and is also currently well-positioned as an overnight stop on a cross-island trip. It has the hotel capacity for group tours, and it also has a winter tourism product. Clarenville has outdoor products: hiking trails, skiing, snowmobiling and golf within an easy drive. The marina is an asset with potential for further development and there is a cluster of food and beverage products that are trip motivators: the Milton cluster, Farm and Market and Bare Mountain Coffee, not to forget the shopping experience at Mercer’s Marine. This all forms a foundation for building a stronger tourism sector” (Destination Report: Digital Footprint Clarenville NL, White Punt April 2023). White Punt made a number of recommendations for business owners and the region in building and enhancing their digital footprint and in growing tourism generally.

These include:

- Get organized as a tourism sector
- Partner and collaborate
 - Work with marketing partners NewfoundlandandLabrador.com and LCEN to make the most of their marketing opportunities.
 - Ignite operator engagement to foster collaboration - improve business web content and social media and collaborate online by sharing, commenting on, and liking each other’s content and using shared hashtags.
 - Collaborate with nearby destinations to develop joint itineraries including Bonavista, Trinity, Port Rexton and Elliston.
 - Foster collaboration whereby businesses cross-promote each other, add itineraries and things to do to their online content and develop a shared hash-tag strategy.
 - Work with groups like the DTSA and the Yacht Club to help them create a stronger online presence.
- Build capacity
 - Create workshops for tourism operators to develop new tourism experiences and itineraries and create packages that combine some of the existing tourism products.
 - Provide a training strategy to get more from Instagram, TripAdvisor and Google My Business accounts.

Clareville Area Sustainable Tourism Plan – August 2023

- Create a distinct brand
 - Create opportunities for tourism businesses to come together and discuss the tourism brand for Clareville.
 - Greater visual cohesion in the footprint will enhance the appeal of the region.
 - Develop a Visit Clareville website and supporting social media.
- Support new and emerging visitor experience development
 - Develop more festivals and events, especially outside the summer months.
 - Create an event calendar on a Visit Clareville website to encourage local travel.
 - Artisan-style food and craft beverages are important trip motivators, and such options are emerging in Clareville (Milton Inn, Cabin Six Pizza, Newfoundland Cider Company, Stellar Kitchen, Farm and Market, Bare Mountain Coffee) – consider a food festival.
 - Snowmobiling and sailing could be potential niche offerings for Clareville.

White Punt’s findings on the area affirm those of the SWOT analysis and stakeholder input.

2.6 Market Readiness



As noted in 1.6 above, during the spring of 2023 Broad Reach Strategies completed an Advanced Market Readiness (AMR) assessment of four tourism operators within the Clareville area and provided some general insights on the shared needs of operators and on the Clareville destination.

Operator Insights

Operators are hungry for help and were enthused to work through business development issues and were receptive to the assistance offered. There is considerable opportunity for partnerships and collaboration, however operators have limited, if any, experience with partnering or packaging. Operators are generally unaware of the size or scope of the industry in the area and have no idea of tourism’s impact on the local economy or employment. Operators have little contact with other tourism operators. There is a need for local tourism leadership and operators require a Tourism Champion to help optimize their investments. Clarenville and Shoal Harbour, Random Island, George’s Brook-Milton and Port Blandford should be working together as a “destination area” with common interests, goals, and shared momentum. An organized local leadership team is needed to speak for the destination area. Operators need information on resources and are often unaware of programs and assistance that are available to businesses and organizations. Help in creating a better digital footprint is required and also in understanding the importance of both an individual and regional digital footprint.

Destination Insights

Be a destination - The Clarenville area needs to be seen as a destination. The area is “invisible” to visitors. Clarenville has little profile except as a preface to the Bonavista Peninsula when in fact it is strategically positioned – close to St. John’s and the 75% of the non-resident visitation who travel here by air and to the tens of thousands who visit the Bonavista Peninsula in one direction and Terra Nova National Park in the other.

Be welcoming - Industry has not addressed important and empowering issues of sense of arrival and wayfinding throughout the area.

Communication is everything - In the absence of industry communication and interaction, there has been little if any opportunity for the magic that can be conjured from brainstorming together.

Online presence for the area - Visitors are attracted to destinations where they can linger and explore a critical mass of experiences – daytime and nighttime - within an area. A consolidated website for the area must include all locales, collaborative itineraries, unique experiences and industry operators from (at least) Port Blandford to Random Island.

“Visitors could care less about town lines and municipal jurisdictions. Visitors choose to spend their money and their precious vacation time in memorable (not jurisdictional) areas where they are stimulated and excited and welcomed.”

Marsha Burse

2.8 Alignment with Regional, Provincial and Federal Priorities

Clarenville area assets and potential align highly with federal, provincial and Eastern region tourism development priorities.

Federal Priorities

The Federal Tourism Strategy (<https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/canadian-tourism-sector/en/creating-middle-class-jobs-federal-tourism-growth-strategy>) and ACOA's Atlantic Growth Strategy (<https://www.canada.ca/en/atlantic-canada-opportunities/atlanticgrowth.html>) prioritize tourism, particularly shoulder and winter season development.

Provincial Priorities

The new provincial tourism plan, called Transition. Transform. Thrive. A Tourism Vision and Strategy for Newfoundland and Labrador or simply Vision 2026, recognizes the challenges the sector has faced in recent years. However, it renews the emphasis on people and place in experience development, continuing a focus on the priority areas of arts and culture, culinary, Indigenous and nature experiences. The renewed plan targets high quality, authentic, and market-ready experiences, reflective of Newfoundland and Labrador's brand of welcome and hospitality (Transition. Transform. Thrive - A Tourism Vision and Strategy for Newfoundland and Labrador).

Eastern Destination Development Priorities

The Eastern Newfoundland Tourism Destination Visitor Appeal Assessment (TDVAA), commonly known as the Destination Development Plan (DDP), outlines a number of key findings of relevance to the Clarenville area including a focus on natural and cultural attractions, people and programs, craft and art, destination trails, festivals and events, food and culinary tourism, and accommodations.



3.0 CLARENVILLE’S VISITORS

3.1 A Visitor Centric Approach

The key to Newfoundland and Labrador’s Vision 2026 is an understanding of the visitor and an ability to deliver on the Province’s brand promise throughout the visitor journey (Vision 2026). Visitors, regardless of where they are from or why they are travelling, must be at the center of the sustainable tourism plan. Consistent with Vision 2026 priorities, our area must be responsive to visitors’ needs and deliver high quality experiences along all touch points on the visitor journey.

3.2 Non-Resident Visitors

DTCAR undertakes periodic non-resident visitor surveys, generally known as the exit survey and the last of these was conducted in 2016. While somewhat dated, the Department has found that overall visitor characteristics within the survey remained relatively consistent from 2011 to 2016 and is confident that the 2016 exit survey remains a good representation of who our visitors are. Nearly 40% of non-resident visitor parties coming to the province overnight in the Clarenville/Bonavista area. Non-resident visitor characteristics include:

- More likely to be from Ontario, less likely to be from the Maritimes.
- More likely to be in the province for vacation.
- The length of stay in Clarenville-Bonavista Peninsula area is 3.4 nights.
- The average party size was 2.2 persons, same as vacation visitors overall and slightly higher than that of all visitors at 1.8.
- More likely to travel as couple with no children, less likely to travel “solo”.

The 2016 Visitor Exit Survey highlighted primary trip motivators. For those visiting Zone 15, these motivators are highlighted in **Table 3** below.

Table 3 Travel Motivation

	%
Always wanted to come/on my bucket list	34%
Nature & Wildlife (scenery, icebergs, whales, puffins)	23%
See a specific site/place/area	9%
Experience culture/people/heritage	7%

The Exit Survey identified what visitors are doing while here. Outdoor activities rank highly and are highlighted in **Table 4** below.

Table 4 Top 5 Outdoor Activities

	%
Pleasure Walking	91%
Hiking	77%
Seabird Watching	65%
Visiting National parks	61%
Whale Watching	56%

The Exit Survey also identified that visitors to Zone 15 enjoy history, culture, and food. These activities are highlighted in **Table 5** below.

Table 5 Top 5 Heritage and related Activities

	%
Exploring small communities	82%
Historic site and museums	79%
Lighthouse experiences	79%
Culinary experiences	72%
Galleries and exhibits	55%

DTCAR estimates that the Clarenville and Bonavista Peninsula area receives approximately **80,000 to 85,000 overnight non-resident visitors** during the peak season from May to October. This does not include non-resident day visitors who do not stay overnight, resident visitors, or off-peak season visitation. The Department estimates that non-resident **visitor spending in the Clarenville-Bonavista Peninsula area (Economic Zone 15) during the May-October peak season is \$46 million**. This would be a conservative estimate only as a) it only considers the May to October period which accounts for most (75%) but not all of total non-resident visitor travel and b) only accounts for overnight visitors but not for any visitors who may have visited the destination but did not stay overnight.

The Department will be updating its non-resident visitor survey in 2023. In line with Come Home Year celebrations in 2022 however, the Department did complete a more limited non-resident visitor survey whose results affirm the provincial visitor profile from 2016 (DTCAR – 2022 Come Home Year Survey). Unlike the Exit Surveys, the Come Home Year surveys did not use a random sampling methodology, and therefore is only reflective of respondents; it cannot be generalized like the Exist Surveys. Nonetheless, the survey does provide a snapshot of non-resident visitation to the province during the May to October 2022 peak season.

The survey affirms that most visitors are coming from Ontario, 70% of these are here for vacation, most are 55 years or older, and the average party size is two persons. The top four experiences and attractions non-residents participated in during the 2022 peak season were visiting local restaurants (94%), historic sites (83%), walking/hiking trails (81%, and visiting a local pub/bar (71%). Hiking and walking remain by far the most popular *outdoor* experiences and attractions visitors participated in activity (87%) followed by seabird watching (e.g., puffins) (51%), whale watching (46%) and sightseeing boat tour (44%). Nearly 9 in 10 survey respondents (87%) indicated that they would consider taking another trip to NL in the future.

Planning for travel to Newfoundland and Labrador

When planning prior to their trip, vacationers rely most heavily on web-based sources, with destination websites (75%), local accommodation websites (73%), websites of specific attractions or activities (72%), and newfoundlandlabrador.com (71%) being the most popular trip planning resources. While travelling in the province, vacation visitors still utilize web-based resources to some extent, however, printed materials such as attraction brochures (70%), the NL Traveler's Guide (65%), and local residents (71%) and service personnel (71%) play an essential role in helping visitors plan their trip while in-destination (DTCAR, Vacation Visitor Profile FINAL REVISED, June 2018).

3.3 Resident Visitors

Peak Season

Resident visitation is a significant part of overall tourism visitation in the province, and of course in the Clarenville area. Peak season resident tourism complements the non-resident market and is also essential to help support shoulder season and winter tourism across the province. The Department conducted an online resident travel survey in the late fall of 2022 to evaluate resident travel during the peak season (May to October) 2022 (DTCAR, Newfoundland and Labrador Resident Travel Survey, December 2022). The results presented are provincial in scope.

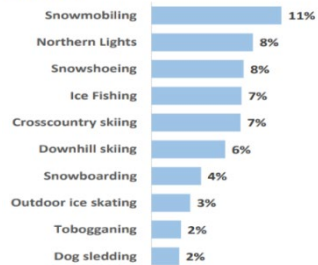
The survey results showed that travel patterns are shifting with more residents travelling further afield as COVID-19 concerns are waning and restrictions are lifted. 44% of residents took an overnight pleasure trip between May and October 2022. The most popular destinations were St. John's/Northeast Avalon and the Central region. Over half the trips were just one night. St. John's residents travelled mostly to the Central region, with the Eastern region being the second most popular destination. Residents were most likely to travel with a spouse or partner only, so most parties were two persons. Residents mostly travelled to visit relatives or friends, while just over a third travelled for vacation. Just under a third (31%) travelled for a weekend getaway. Over half of the trips were 1 (25%) or 2 nights (33%) long. Hotels, motels and resorts were the most popular type of accommodation. The most popular activity

Clareville Area Sustainable Tourism Plan – August 2023

Activities of interest during winter travel

Residents who plan to take a trip in NL between December 2022 and March 2023 (n=97)

Interest in snow-based / outdoor activities



Interest in general travel activities

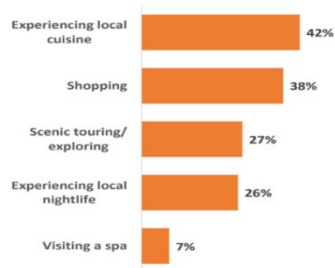


Figure 7 Activities of Interest During Winter Travel

Among residents who plan to take a winter trip, interest is highest in experiencing local cuisine (42%) and shopping (38%) versus snow-based outdoor activity (11%). Fewer than one in 10 indicated they would take part in various snow-based and other outdoor activities.

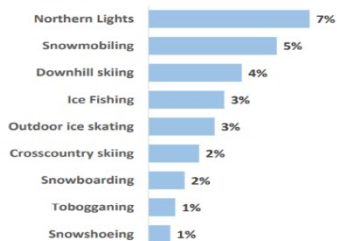
The top activities are snowmobiling (11%), seeing Northern Lights (8%) and snowshoeing (8%). Snowmobiling is a top outdoor activity among 35–54-year-olds, while snowshoeing and downhill skiing are preferred by those aged 18-34.

According to **Figure 8**, about one quarter of potential winter travelers indicated they would plan a trip around experiencing local cuisine (24%), shopping (23%) or scenic touring (22%). Only a few potential winter travelers would plan a trip around snow-based/outdoor activities, with snowmobiling (5%) near the top of the list.

Activities of interest during winter travel around which residents would plan an entire trip

Residents who plan to take a trip in NL between December 2022 and March 2023 and taking part in certain activities (n=82)

Trip anchors: Snow-based / outdoor activities



Trip anchors: General travel activities



Figure 8 Winter Activities and Trip Planning

Snowmobiling was a top outdoor activity to plan a trip around for those 35 years or older, while those 18-34 identified downhill skiing as their top choice. Younger winter travelers (18-34) identified experiencing local nightlife as their most likely trip anchor, while local cuisine and shopping topped the list for older residents (35-54 and 55+).

was visiting restaurants (74%), followed by walking/hiking trails (48%). Visiting a local pub/bar, historic site, craft brewery, museums and farmers market were also popular, though less so. Residents 35-54 years of age are more likely to participate in whale watching, guided outdoor tours, and ATVing. Residents 18-34 years are more likely to visit historic sites and museums.

Winter Travel Intentions

DTCAR has also assessed resident winter travel intentions. As noted in **Figure 7** below, thirty four percent (34%) of residents with in-province travel plans during 2023 are planning to take an overnight pleasure trip during the winter months December through March.

Clarenville VIC Utilization

Table 6 below highlights VIC utilization for the past 5 years. After significant declines in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID, overall use of the VIC increased in 2022 and is approaching pre-COVID levels (DTCAR – Clarenville Visitor Information Center).

Table 6 VIC Utilization

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
May	392	305	closed	92	302
June	1,827	1,639	24	462	1,352
July	2,806	2,736	474	1,095	2,065
August	2,753	2,711	555	1,557	2,262
September	1,211	1,011	251	602	1,105
October	143	168	64	89	162
	9,132	8,570	1,368	3,897	7,248

Terra Nova National Park Overnight Camping

Table 7 below highlights Terra Nova National Park camping usage for the past 5 years. 2021 and 2022 usage has returned to pre-COVID levels. (DTCAR – Terra Nova Park Accommodation Statistics).

Table 7 Terra Nova National Park Camping

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Newman Sound Totals	20509	21698	n/a	22561	20406
Malady Head Totals	3919	4010	n/a	0	4058
Total Nights	24428	25708	n/a	22561	24464

3.4 Clarenville Area Accommodations

One of the key strengths identified in Section 2 above was the volume of accommodation in the immediate Clarenville area. One of the Plan’s key indicators is year-over-year occupancy rates. A review of occupancy rates, supported by anecdotal input from accommodations operators, has helped us paint a picture of overnight visitation to Clarenville.

Occupancy in Peak Season

As noted in **Table 8** below, 2022 represented a comeback year for tourism in Newfoundland and Labrador and within the Clarenville area as occupancy rates returned to pre-COVID levels of 2019 (DTCAR – Occupancy Rates).

Table 8 **Occupancy in Peak Season**

Month	Total Rooms/Mt	Total Rooms Sold	Occupancy Rate
2022			
June	4,950	3,435	69.39%
July	5,115	4,188	81.88%
August	5,115	4,531	88.58%
September	4,950	3,360	67.88%
2019			
June	4,950	3,204	64.73%
July	5,084	4,042	79.50%
August	5,425	4,363	80.42%
September	5,190	2,923	56.32%

Occupancy in Shoulder and Winter Seasons

As noted in **Table 9** below, occupancy rates in 2022 ranged from a low of 12.38% in January 2022 to a high of 46.53% in May 2022. The relatively high occupancy rate for May would indicate that shoulder season travel is increasing, at least in the Clarenville area (DTCAR – Occupancy Rates).

Table 9 Shoulder and Winter Season Occupancy

Month	Total Rooms /Mt	Total Rooms Sold	Occupancy Rate
January	5,103	632	12.38%
February	4,620	1,145	24.78%
March	5,105	1,537	30.11%
April	4,950	1,754	35.43%
May	5,115	2,380	46.53%
October	5,115	1,893	37.01%
November	4,950	1,711	34.57%
December	4,656	1,528	32.82%
OVERALL	39,614	12,580	31.76%

3.5 Occupancy Drivers

Bonavista Peninsula attractions are key for Clareville area Visitation

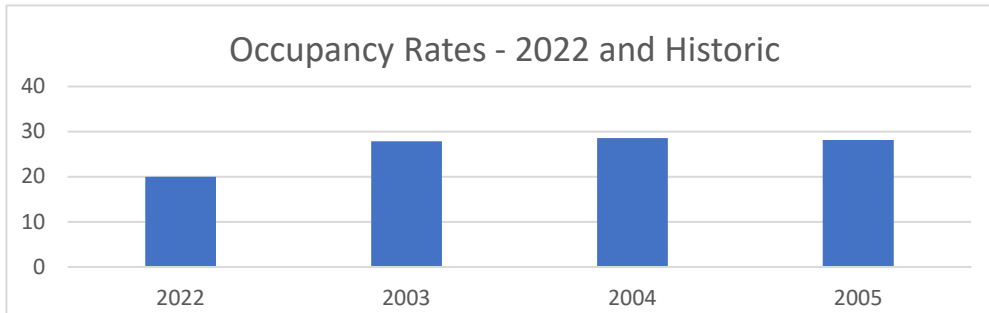
The Bonavista Peninsula is key to driving visitation to the Clareville area. The Peninsula is the key focal point within Zone 15 and 43% of all non-resident visitors spend at least one overnight in Zone 15, among the highest destinations where visitors spend at least one night. The Bonavista Peninsula hosts a higher-than-the-provincial average, educated and affluent guest and is the destination of choice, hosting seven (7) of the top eight (8) attractions in the region including Bonavista, Trinity, Cape Bonavista, Elliston, the Skerwink Trail, trails and hiking generally, and Tickle Cove/King’s Cove. The eighth top attraction within the Eastern region, ranked at number four, is Clareville itself, confirming that the Bonavista Peninsula and Clareville is a key destination of choice for visitors to the Eastern region (2016 EXIT SURVEY – Result Highlights, DTCAR, p. 12).

Motorcoach returning to 2019 Levels

Anecdotal input from major accommodation operators in the area suggest that 2022 was a strong year for motorcoach, returning to near historic levels of 2019. Considering the four (4) major accommodations in the area, including the Clareville Inn, the Quality Inn, the Restland Motel and the Wave Hotel, close to 200 motorcoach tours overnights in Clareville 2022 comprising close to 5,000 visitors. A number of tours include Clareville within their itineraries, primarily as a base of accommodations for Bonavista Peninsula tours; however, there is limited inclusion of other Clareville area visitor services and experiences within these detailed itineraries. A significant percentage of room nights in peak season can be attributed to motorcoach. Motorcoach activity reported at the National Park in 2022 would support a return to pre-COVID levels of visitation.

Overnight Skiers

Figure 9 Historic Winter Occupancy Rates



There are no reliable data sources that indicate the number of skiers to Clarendville who are overnighiting. Anecdotally though, major accommodations operators have indicated that ski-based accommodation is minimal, accounting for a low, and declining, percentage of occupancy during the winter season. One operator estimated that overnight skiing represents less than 1% of their total volume while another indicated that it would be low, an average of 30 nights each season.

Figure 9 above provides a comparison of 2022 occupancy rates with those of 2003-2005. A detailed review for the most recent year (2022) indicates a winter occupancy rate comprising January, February and March of 19.98%. Comparing 2022 occupancy rates with historic occupancy rates when White Hills was operating at a fuller capacity provides an interesting contrast. Occupancy rates were at 27.87% in 2003, 28.60% in 2004, and 28.16% in 2005 (DTCAR – Occupancy Rates). While some of this difference might be accounted for by an increase in the number of overall rooms available by 2022, declining occupancy rates seem to support what has been heard anecdotally from accommodations operators – namely that skiing is a low, and declining, percentage of the overall occupancy rate.

ATVs

There are no reliable data sources that indicate the number of ATV users to Clarendville who are overnighiting. Anecdotally though, major accommodations operators indicated that ATV-based accommodation is limited. One operator reported that ATV’s account for less than 1% of their total overall volume, another indicated that it would be 70 room nights while another indicated 50 room nights.

Sporting Events

Again, there are no reliable data sources that indicate the number of sports-related visitors to Clarendville who are overnighiting in area accommodations. A review of school-based and other sporting events indicates significant visitation to the area though. In volleyball alone, Clarendville hosted over 2,000 players and coaches across multiple tournaments this past year (email - Clarendville Middle School). Other sports related activities including multiple softball

Clareville Area Sustainable Tourism Plan – August 2023

and hockey tournaments, had an additional 1,400 players and coaches visit the area. This does not include the estimated 2,850 who would have attended Clareville Caribou's senior hockey games. These overall numbers have diminished somewhat due to COVID 19 but appear to be on the rebound (Summary Note - Town of Clareville Recreation and Arts). In terms of how this significant volume of sporting activity impacts occupancy rates, one operator reported that it represents about 15% of total occupancy during the shoulder season (May – October). Another indicated that it accounts for an average of 250 rooms nights each year while another indicated that it accounts for 100 room nights.



4.0 VISION, GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM GOALS

4.1 Vision

The Sustainable Tourism Plan defines a vision for sustainable tourism development in Clarenville and is supported by a series of guiding principles. It sets high levels goals and priorities and highlights specific actions to make the Plan a reality. Our vision is:

“The Clarenville area will be recognized as a year-round destination attracting visitors through authentic and high-quality visitor experiences.”

4.2 Guiding Principles

Leadership and Industry Commitment

The Clarenville area recognizes that for tourism to grow it must be led by industry champions. This implies that local business leaders and tourism knowledge holders are dedicated to driving the growth of the tourism industry and are willing to invest time, resources, and expertise to achieve the vision.

Communication and Collaboration

The Clarenville area understands that effective communication and collaboration are the key to achieving measurable growth outcomes. Industry leadership and the Town will engage tourism stakeholders to support a coordinated business-led effort in developing Clarenville as a tourism destination. Communication will play a crucial role in conveying the Plan's vision and supporting industry leaders in the tourism development process.

Partnership

The Clarenville area realizes the importance of partnerships in achieving its tourism goal. Industry leadership and the Town will promote collaborations with relevant partners to enhance the visitor journey. Partnerships and an active volunteer base are critical to success and can support leverage resources, expertise, and funding to create a more welcoming, socially cohesive and attractive tourism destination.

High-quality Authentic Experiences

The Clarenville area believes that the tourism experiences offered must be of high quality and authentic, indicating a commitment to providing value for visitors' money.

Sustainability

Clarenville aims to develop tourism in a way that “celebrates place” and tells our specific stories while preserving and celebrating local culture, heritage, and the built and natural environment. The focus on authentic visitor experiences implies a long-term sustainability perspective, ensuring that tourism development benefits both the local community and the environment, and is engrained in the community fabric.

4.3 Goal

“By 2028, the Clarenville area will be a tourism destination hub, benefitting from more and longer visitor stays and increased revenue by offering a more diverse mix of visitor experiences year-round.”

This goal will be met by:

- Engaging industry leadership in strategic tourism development and marketing;
- Enhancing communication and collaboration among operators, influencers and partners at the local, regional and provincial level;
- Intercepting visitors travelling to other areas and encouraging them to extend their stay in the area;
- Sustaining a strong core season while growing shoulder and winter season activities;
- Aligning planning efforts with those of the eastern region’s destination management organization (DMO) the Legendary Coasts of Eastern Newfoundland (LCEN), the Province and the Atlantic Canada opportunities Agency (ACOA).

4.4 Overview of Strategic Priorities

The Plan defines five (5) strategic priorities and 32 actions that will transform tourism in the Clareville area in the coming 3-5 years. These priorities include:

Priority 1 - Organize and Build industry Capacity to Grow - There is a need to transition from the current Working Group into a longer-term, industry-led leadership model. Governance will be met initially through an industry-led Sustainable Tourism Action Committee (STAC). The STAC will prepare a sustainable tourism workplan, hire and direct Tourism coordination supports, and develop and implement an industry engagement and communications strategy. Actions will be advanced through specific task teams.

Priority 2 – Market the Clareville area - The Clareville area requires a marketing strategy that maximizes and profiles its potential as a year-round destination featuring authentic and high-quality visitor experiences. There are several key opportunities for action. The first is enhancing the Town's digital footprint through an updated website. The second is building and enhancing the visitors' sense of arrival. The third is a preliminary investment in enhanced wayfinding to direct visitors into and through the Town and its attractions and services. Finally, there is a need for a promotional video to support in-market tourism promotion activities in key areas including tourism trade shows, motorcoach and so on.

Priority 3 – Visitor Intercept Strategy - Enhancing the sense of arrival to the community and investing in enhanced wayfinding are a good beginning. Better directing visitors down Memorial Drive will have an immediate and positive impact on existing attractions and visitor services. Given its strategic location, the Clareville area's focus must be on intercepting those many thousands who are passing through everyday or are planning to. The effort must be on encouraging visitors to spend some time in the Clareville area while on the way somewhere else, or to stay longer if they are already visiting.



Clarenville Area Sustainable Tourism Plan – August 2023

Priority 4 – Enhance Tourism Operator Capacity - Growing sustainable tourism in the Clarenville area requires a focused approach on key opportunities and an investment in capacity building, networking and collaboration. Formal and informal networking among tourism operators will allow creative collisions leading to new collaborations in product development. Building capacity among business owners and managers, and among not-for-profit organizations is key.

Priority 5 - Monitor & Measure Progress & Report Results - The success of the tourism plan depends on ongoing monitoring and measurement of performance. Key performance indicators (KPIs) will be identified, and data collection processes requirements will be established. There will be ongoing reporting, on an annual basis, to operators, stakeholders and governments. Measurements will indicate the progress of an activity and whether it should be either revised or dropped.

5.0 PRIORITY 1 - ORGANIZE AND BUILD INDUSTRY CAPACITY TO GROW

There is a need to transition from the current Working Group into a longer-term, industry-led leadership model. The Plan will not succeed if driven primarily by the Town and not-for-profit tourism attractions. Governance will be met initially through an industry-led Sustainable Tourism Action Committee (STAC). The STAC will prepare a sustainable tourism workplan, hire and direct Tourism coordination supports, and develop and implement an industry engagement and communications strategy. Actions will be advanced through specific task teams.

Action 5.1 Establish a Sustainable Tourism Action Committee (STAC)

The transition from the current Working Group to the STAC will take place by late September 2023, following a further Stakeholder Engagement session. A draft TOR for the STAC is attached as **Appendix L**.

By Fall 2023, establish the STAC.

- Update/revise/adopt Terms of Reference for the STAC STEP Working Group
- Identify/select STAC STEP Working Group

Cost: N/A

Action 5.2 Build STAC Capacity

The STAC Leadership Team will need specific capacity building to aid them in governing a tourism-based organization. In particular, there is an expectation of capacity building needs in relation to strategic planning and organizational governance/management as the STAC is established.

By Fall 2023, the STAC will complete capacity building in strategic planning and organizational development, utilizing resources under DIET's Community Capacity Building (CCB) Program.

- Host a capacity building workshop on strategic planning and organizational development STAC

Cost: \$2,500

Action 5.3 Prepare and Maintain a Workplan for Sustainable Tourism

The STAC will prepare a detailed workplan for the Sustainable Tourism Plan and keep the workplan updated on a regular basis as activities are initiated and completed. The preliminary draft of the workplan will be completed during the strategic planning capacity session referenced in 5.2 above.

By Fall 2023, the STAC will prepare a detailed Sustainable Tourism Workplan.

- Review and prioritize activities and prepare workplan STAC

Cost: N/A

Action 5.4 Utilize Task Teams for Key Plan Priorities

Key priorities of the Plan will be implemented by engaging key stakeholders in a particular activity or initiative as a Task Team. The STAC will establish relevant Task Teams as recommended, and when required, in the Plan. A TOR template for the Task Teams is attached as **Appendix M**. Priority Task Team requirements include Marketing, White Hills Sustainability, Human Resources and Conference and Events.

By Fall 2023, establish Task Teams as identified within the workplan.

- Identify priority Task Teams and include calls for engagement within communications plan STAC
- Prepare/approve a Terms of Reference for Task Teams as required STAC

Cost: N/A

Action 5.5 Identify Tourism Coordination Support

The current STEP contract provides \$25,000 in resources to support implementation in Year II of STEP. These resources will be key to guiding implementation in the coming year. In addition, other project-based activities of the Town and other partners might be leveraged to provide overall coordination support.

The STAC, Town and other partners will determine how best to utilize these resources. In particular, the STAC and Town must determine how to support a full or part-time Tourism Coordinator (TC). A notional job description for the TC is attached as **Appendix N**.

By Fall 2023, identify resources and a rationale for a Tourism Coordinator.

Clarendville Area Sustainable Tourism Plan – August 2023

- Identify budget and supporting rationale Town/STAC
- Initiate recruitment Town/STAC

Cost: \$45-\$50K/annum, exclusive of Mandatory Employer Related Costs (MERCs) and expenses

The STAC must also have a clear understanding of the resources and supports it might expect from the Town on an ongoing basis.

By Fall 2023, develop a Memorandum of Agreement between the STAC and the Town that identifies the Town’s overall resource commitments to the Plan for the initial year of implementation.

- Prepare draft and final MOA Town/STAC

Action 5.6 Industry Engagement in Sustaining Plan Activities

The STAC must determine how best to sustain Plan activities beyond the end of support available for Year II implementation, including contributions from industry and other municipal partners, utilization of other funding sources, cost-sharing with other partners, or project management resources associated with major project activity. In the longer term, the Plan will be driven by an industry-led, membership-based organization, notionally called the Clarendville Area Tourism Alliance (CATA) Incorporated. There is a need to complete a detailed assessment of this model, however this will likely not commence until the beginning of Year III.

By Spring 2025, identify a sustainable governance model for the CATA.

- If required, extend administration/operations agreement with Town of Clarendville Town/STAC
- Identify membership fee structure STAC
- Complete an assessment of a voluntary tourism market levy for the Clarendville area STAC

Cost: \$5,000 for professional fees to complete assessment of governance model

Action 5.7 Prepare and Implement Communications and Engagement Plan

There is a need to ground the STEP process in a stakeholder engagement and communications plan. A draft Stakeholder Engagement and Communications Plan/Framework is attached as **Appendix O**.

By Fall, 2023, update and continue implementation of a communications and stakeholder engagement plan for the Plan.

- Establish an enhanced FB and website presence for Clarendville STEP program Town
- Update the Communications Plan, if necessary, drawing on DIET's (CCB) Program for support Town/STAC/DIET
- Implement Communication Plan STAC

Cost: \$2,500 - DIET/CCB Program



6.0 PRIORITY 2 – MARKET THE CLARENVILLE AREA

The Clarendville area requires a marketing strategy that maximizes and profiles its potential as a year-round destination featuring authentic and high-quality visitor experiences. In particular, there are several key opportunities to act. The first is enhancing the Town's digital footprint through an updated website guided by the recommendations of the *Destination Report: Digital Footprint Clarendville NL April 2023*. The second is building and enhancing the visitors' sense of arrival. The third is a preliminary investment in enhanced wayfinding to direct visitors into and through the Town and its attractions and services. Finally, there is a need for a promotional video to support in-market tourism promotion activities in key areas including tourism trade shows, motorcoach and so on.

The Town is considering best approaches to enhancing the sense of arrival to the community through investments in enhanced signage. This is a good beginning. Further discussion with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DTI) is required to determine an approach that might be integrated within an overall wayfinding strategy for the Town. This preliminary wayfinding and signage program will be undertaken in the immediate term with longer term requirements around brand development to be addressed later – for now, the existing *Clarendville - Your Adventure Starts Here!* will suffice.

Action 6.1 Develop a Destination Clarendville (and area) Website

By Fall 2023, initiate development of a Destination Clarendville tourism website.

- Identify resources to support website development and implementation STAC/Town/ACOA/DIET
- Prepare Terms of Reference STAC/Town
- Prepare proposal to funding partners STAC/Town

Cost: \$25,000 with ACOA, DIET and Town/industry as funding partners

Action 6.2 Build a Sense of Arrival

By Fall 2023, erect new arrival signage on TCH east and west of Town access points and along Route 230A at or near the Town limits with George's Brook – Milton.

- Identify resources to support project development and implementation STAC/Town/ACOA/DIET
- Prepare Terms of Reference STAC/Town

Clarendville Area Sustainable Tourism Plan – August 2023

- Prepare proposal to funding partners STAC/Town

Cost: \$50,000 with ACOA, DIET and Town/industry as funding partners

Action 6.3 Determine Approach to Enhanced Memorial Drive/TCH Access

By Fall 2023, the Town of Clarendville will meet with representatives of DTI to determine an approach to enhancing access at the TCH/Memorial Drive intersection.

- Meeting(s) with Town and DTI Town/DTI
- Identify and commence implementation of an agreed approach Town/DTI
- One focus being a significant entry feature + visitor information at the existing lookout Town/DTI

Cost: N/A – pending determination of best approach to access and approval for entry feature

Action 6.4 Initiate Preliminary Wayfinding Strategy

By Fall 2023, initiate development of preliminary wayfinding

- Complete inventory of overall current signage and interpretation STAC
- Prepare Terms of Reference for preliminary design and notional costing STAC/Town
- Prepare proposal to funding partners STAC/Town

Cost: \$25,000 with ACOA, DIET and Town/industry as funding partners

Action 6.5 Prepare a Promotional Video

By Fall 2023, initiate the development of a promotional video that can be marketed at Tradeshows, to motor coach organizers and on social media.

- Prepare Terms of Reference for a promotional video STAC/Town
- Prepare proposal to funding partners STAC/Town

Cost: \$25,000 with ACOA, DIET and Town/industry as funding partners



7.0 PRIORITY 3 – VISITOR INTERCEPT STRATEGY

As noted above, enhancing the sense of arrival to the community and investing in enhanced wayfinding are a good beginning. Better directing visitors down Memorial Drive will have an immediate and positive impact on existing attractions and visitor services. Given its strategic location, the Clareville area’s focus must be on intercepting those many thousands who are passing through everyday or are planning to. The effort must be on encouraging visitors to spend some time in the Clareville area while on the way somewhere else, or to stay longer if they are already visiting. The following activities might be considered part of a visitor intercept strategy.

Action 7.1 Encourage Itinerary Development and Packaged Experiences

By Fall 2023, the STAC will encourage greater itinerary development and packaged experiences. This will be met through increased networking and engagement activities and specific capacity building activities focused on product development.

- Define the Goals and Objectives of the strategy STAC

Cost: N/A – costs included within 8.0 below

Action 7.2 Create a Regional Event Calendar

By Fall 2023, as part of the website development initiative in 5.0 above, undertake the development of a regional event calendar.

- Develop regional event calendar within renewed website STAC
- Market event calendar utilizing social media STAC

Cost: N/A – cost included within 6.0 above.

Action 7.3 Sports Tourism Initiative

Accommodation operators affirm a significant amount of sport-based visitation already ongoing, based in great part on school-related competitions and Clareville’s well-developed recreation infrastructure and programming. There is an opportunity to encourage visitors to experience more of the community and spend less time at the rink, the field or the gym and to also extend their stay.

By Fall 2024, commence development of a Sports Tourism Experience Initiative for the Clareville area.

Clareville Area Sustainable Tourism Plan – August 2023

- Establish a Sports Tourism Task Team STAC/Sports organizations
- Hold a Roundtable to consider sports tourism program development STAC/Sports organizations
- Commence program development STAC/Sports organizations

Cost: \$2,500 – DIET/CCB Program

Action 7.4 Conference Initiative

There is a collaborative opportunity to develop pre and post-convention/conference activities for major provincial and national conferences. There is available accommodation to attract conferences of 200 attendees, and multiple event and conference facilities and the soon-to-be established Beaumont facility.

By Fall 2024, commence development of a Conference Initiative for the Clareville area.

- Establish a Conference Task Team STAC
- Engage Destination St. John's, LCEN and other partners STAC/LCEN/DSJ/Other
- Hold a Roundtable to consider Conference and Special Event program development STAC/LCEN/DSJ/Other
- Commence program development STAC

Cost: \$2,500 – DIET/CCB Program

Action 7.5 Festivals and Special Events Initiative

There is an opportunity to develop an enhanced festival and events program building on current activities in Clareville and adjacent areas and growing other community-based events and activities into a more fulsome events program offering. The Clareville area has several well-established festivals and events, and numerous other community-based events and activities, that represent an activity program throughout the year. Plans are currently underway for a new festival this fall called Wheels and Heels led by the Town and engaging multiple local partners. There is an opportunity to encourage collaboration among existing events and integrate and cross-promote festival activities and to build additional activities and events where possible, particularly during the evenings.

Clarenville Area Sustainable Tourism Plan – August 2023

By Fall 2024, commence development of an enhanced festival program for the Clarenville area.

- Establish Festival and Special Events Task Team STAC
- Identify/update inventory of festivals and events STAC
- Hold a Festival and Community Event Roundtable STAC
- Commence program development STAC

Cost: \$2,500 – DIET/CCB Program

Action 7.6 Motorcoach Initiative

The motorcoach market in the area is well established, with many motorcoaches basing their Bonavista area tours out of Clarenville due to the accommodation available. There may be an opportunity to develop more community-based activities during overnight stays and potentially increase the length of stay of motorcoaches in the Clarenville area from one night to two by developing a Clarenville area itinerary. This should include shopping, early evening entertainment, and retail opportunities at the Barn Loft and Mercers. There may be a way to integrate use of the Town’s age-friendly bus program, the Crest Bus, to aid in transporting tour participants to other venues and activities within Town. There is some question over price sensitivity and whether tour operators, or tour guests, are prepared to pay for additional activities beyond those provided within the original tour package. It is critical to ensure that increases in overnight visitation through motorcoach do not come at the expense of other areas but represent an actual increase in the duration of in-province motorcoach travel.

By Spring 2024, commence development of an enhanced motorcoach program for the Clarenville area:

- Establish a Motorcoach Task Team STAC
- Engage LCEN and other partners STAC/LCEN/DSJ/Other
- Commence program development STAC

Cost: N/A

Action 7.7 Marine/Urban District Development

Clarenville lacks an urban visitor district, and the marina/waterfront and adjacent area is the closest to meeting this requirement with a specific design focused on existing marina facilities, engaging partners including Mercer’s Marine, the Marina and other tour operators. There is potential to create a “Main Street” pedestrian centric environment with links to the marina and to an expanded trail network and to physically link the Marina and waterfront to the proposed urban development area.

By Fall 2024, commence planning for a marine/urban district development.

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| • Establish Marine/Urban District Development Task Team | STAC/Town/Marina |
| • Identify resources to support strategy development | STAC/Marina/ACOA/DIET |
| • Prepare Terms of Reference for strategy development | STAC/Town/Marina |
| • Prepare proposal to funding partners | STAC/Town/Marina |

Cost: \$25,000 for assessment with ACOA, DIET and Town as funding partners

Action 7.8 Hiking and ATV Trail Development

Walking and hiking are the highest rated activities among non-resident visitors to the province. At the same time, there is an emerging ATV touring market among resident, and increasingly non-resident visitors.

Clarenville and partners have invested considerably in hiking, walking, ATV and snowmobile trails, however there is an opportunity for a more integrated approach to overall trail development and planning. The objective must be to move people through the region using multi-purpose trails and wherever possible, to use those trail networks to integrate and connect with existing and emerging visitor services and attractions. Establishing and ensuring trail development standards is required as is ensuring TAP compliance on all trails. There is a need to include trails within enhanced way finding systems and to ensure additional staging and parking areas within overall planning approaches. Addressing trail ownership and rights of way and establishing management agreements with owners of trails currently located on private property is a critical need. A detailed overview of trail types is attached as **Appendix R**. The current and growing snowmobile and ATV trail network requires a sustainable approach to maintenance and upkeep and to develop a longer-term sustainability and maintenance plan and to address requirements for the DTSA.

Clarenville Area Sustainable Tourism Plan – August 2023

Engagement with Hike Discovery

By Fall 2023, determine the potential for Clarenville area TAP compliant trails to become part of Hike Discovery destination trail initiative.

- Determine Hike Discovery trail standards STAC/Town
- Assess TAP compliant trails against Hike Discovery standards STAC
- Include Clarenville area trails within Hike Discovery to agenda of meeting with Bonavista STAR STAC

Cost: N/A

Assess Trail Ownership

By Winter 2024, identify areas of conflicted ownership within Clarenville’s current trail system and initiate the process of establishing agreements with impacted property owners.

- Prepare inventory of trail/private property ownership overlap Town/STAC
- Initiate discussions with private property owners, seeking interest in agreement on use Town/STAC

Cost: \$5,000 for GIS assessment with ACOA, DIET and Town as funding partners

Identify TAP Compliant Trails

By Fall 2023, identify current and potential TAP compliant trails in the Clarenville area and prepare related listings for Tourism NL.

- Affirm existing “Making Tracks” Committee as Trail Task Team Town/STAC
- Include trails as part of TAP compliance session identified incapacity building above STAC
- Identify current and potential TAP compliant trails STAC
- Complete Tourism NL listings as required STAC

Cost: N/A

Clarenville Area Sustainable Tourism Plan – August 2023

Laydown and Parking

By Winter 2024, identify potential lay-by and parking areas for snowmobile and ATV use, determining property ownership and title.

- Identify areas DTSA
- Initiate discussions with DTI on potential repurposing of former highway area DTSA/DTI

Cost: \$5,000 for GIS assessment with ACOA, DIET and DTSA as funding partners

Bonavista ATV Trail Development

By Fall 2023 hold an engagement session with trail development partners and other stakeholders on the Bonavista Peninsula.

- Prepare CCB application DTSA/DIET
- Host meeting DTSA
- Include Bonavista Branch Line to agenda of meeting with Bonavista STAR DTSA/STAC/Bonavista STAR

Cost: \$2,500 – DIET/CCB Program

8.0 PRIORITY 4 – ENHANCE TOURISM OPERATOR CAPACITY

Growing sustainable tourism in the Clarenville area requires a focused approach on key opportunities and an investment in capacity building, networking and collaboration. Formal and informal networking among tourism operators will allow creative collisions leading to new collaborations in product development. Building capacity among business owners and managers, and among not-for-profit organizations is key. For example, the critical mass of emerging operators in Milton represents a distinct opportunity for collaboration for the Clarenville area.

Action 8.1 Enable Collaboration and Networking

Networking activities will comprise formal events such as the Annual Tourism Forum to be held in April/May each year and other less formal events and activities. In addition, specific capacity building opportunities around product and experience development have been identified below around which networking, collaboration and partnership will be encouraged.

By Fall 2023, the updated Stakeholder Engagement/Communications Plan will identify opportunities for ongoing formal and informal networking.

- Identify networking activities within updated Stakeholder Engagement/Communication Plan STAC
- Implement formal and informal networking activities STAC

Cost: \$3,000/year @ \$500/event x 6 events/year

Action 8.2 Engage Bonavista STAR and Terra Nova National Park

Given the importance of the Bonavista Peninsula and Terra Nova National Park in overall Eastern and Clarenville visitation, the Plan encourages engagement with both the Bonavista STAR and TNNP leadership Teams. By Fall 2023, the STAC will meet with the Bonavista STAR and TNNP Leadership Teams to review plans and determine how Clarenville can engage with both areas on sustainable tourism development.

- Send Clarenville Sustainable Tourism Plan to Bonavista STAR and TNNP Leadership Teams STAC
- Arrange meeting between STAC and both groups STAC

Cost: N/A

Action 8.3 Build Capacity

The STEP planning process has identified a number of areas where capacity building is required, and a detailed listing of capacity building needs is included as **Appendix P**. Ongoing capacity building activities will provide an opportunity for industry networking and engagement. While there are many capacity building requirements, there are also a number of programs available to support capacity building activities and a number of partners who may be called upon to become engaged on capacity building initiatives. A summary of capacity building support is provided in **Appendix Q**. Several key areas have been identified as priority capacity building activities including continued capacity building of operators’ digital footprint and TAP compliance.

By Fall 2023, the STAC will affirm longer term priorities for capacity building identified and develop a notional schedule of activities for Winter/Spring 2024. Immediate capacity building requirements should focus networking and capacity building activities on these two key areas.

- Prioritize capacity building activities STAC
- Identify capacity building supports STAC/ACOA/DIET
- Schedule activities for Winter/Spring 2024 STAC
- Hold TAP compliance session in November 2023 STAC/LCEN/DTCAR

Cost: N/A – costs included within 8.1 above

Action 8.4 Enhance the Industry’s Digital Footprint

By Fall 2023, the Town and STAC will continue to support implementation and build capacity among industry on the key recommendations arising from the digital footprint report prepared by White Punt Consulting.

- Additional capacity building sessions on digital footprint STAC
- Work directly with operators to ensure that all are online effectively with www.nl.com STAC
- Use incremental project resources as available to support individual digital footprint upgrades STAC

Cost: \$5,000 from Year II implementation resources for additional digital online assessments and capacity building

Action 8.5 Human Resource Development

Addressing emerging labor market challenges is critical in developing sustainable tourism in the Clarenville area. Both Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador (Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador, Human Resource Management Toolkit, <https://hnl.ca/resources/human-resource-management/>) and Tourism HR Canada (Tourism HR Canada, <https://tourismhr.ca/>) provide resources. There is a need for a Clarenville-area focused human resource development, recruitment, and retention strategy for tourism, beginning with capacity building and followed by longer term strategy development.

By Fall 2023, the STAC will hold a Human Resource capacity building session.

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| • Establish a HR Task Team | STAC |
| • Obtain workforce report status from HNL | STAC/HNL |
| • Hold HR capacity building session | STAC/HNL/LCEN |
| • Determine support for the development of a potential Clarenville human resources strategy | STAC |

Cost: N/A – costs included within 6.2 and 8.1 above

Action 8.6 Social Enterprise Sustainability Planning

Ensuring the sustainability of key social enterprise-based attractions is a common challenge across the province and has been recognized as such within the province’s updated tourism strategy, Vision 2026. Social enterprise sustainability planning involves supports in several key areas including volunteer recruitment and retention, fundraising and funding development and Return on Investment (ROI) modelling, along with many of the capacity building and HR priorities noted in 8.2 and 8.3 above.

By Fall 2024, the STAC will hold a roundtable on Sustainable Social Enterprise.

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| • Establish a Sustainable Social Enterprise Task Team | STAC/NGOs/Community Sector Council |
| • Host a Roundtable on Sustainable Social Enterprise | STAC/NGOs/Community Sector Council |

Cost: \$2,500 – DIET/CCB Program

Action 8.7 White Hills Sustainability Planning

As Marsha Burse of Broad Reach indicated in her feedback on the AMR project, White Hills is “...one focused plan and some strategic investment away from [re]claiming winter dominance in eastern NL.” The Hill represents more to Clarendville than just a ski resort – it is a fundamental part of the community’s image as a young, vibrant, active outdoor-loving community. White Hills has just successfully competed in the McKenzie Top Peak Challenge and has resources to leverage for investment. Immediate planning requirements will focus on assessing the overall condition of facility infrastructure and assets and reviewing land assembly and ownership. The Town’s continued engagement at White Hills would be best reflected in an update MOA with the ADAC.

By Fall 2023, key partners at White Hills including the Town of Clarendville, the ADAC, the DTSA and Nordic Ski Club will engage in a shared approach to overall site development with White Hills sustainability as a key imperative. This recommendation was highlighted within the one-on-one AMR with White Hills.

- Establish a White Hills Sustainability Task Team Town/ADAC/Nordic/DTSA
- Hold a White Hills Sustainability Roundtable Town/ADAC/Nordic/DTSA/Others

Cost: \$2,500 – DIET/CCB Program

By Winter 2024, the Town of Clarendville and the ADAC, along with the DTSA and Nordic Ski Club, will conclude a MOA on White Hills operations and sustainability.

- Conclude MOA Town/ADAC/Nordic/DTSA

Cost: N/A

9.0 PRIORITY 5 - MONITOR & MEASURE PROGRESS & REPORT RESULTS

"If you can't measure it, you can't improve it."

Peter Drucker

The success of the tourism plan depends on ongoing monitoring and measurement of performance. Performance measures for the Sustainable Tourism Plan will be relevant and reflect a change over time for tourism in the Clareville area. There are significant gaps in local and regional information that will be met through a local industry-wide approach to data collection. Key performance indicators (KPIs) will be identified, and data collection processes requirements will be established. There will be ongoing reporting, on an annual basis, to operators, stakeholders and governments. Measurements will indicate the progress of an activity and whether it should be either revised or dropped. For the time being, until new data collection methods are determined, there is a need to work with existing indicators to measure the impact of Plan activities. Key measurements here will include Clareville area occupancy rates, VIC utilization, online activity relating to Clareville on Provincial online channels and current and updated Resident and Non-Resident Surveys available from DTCAR.

Action 9.1 Develop a Visitor Experience Survey

There is an immediate opportunity utilizing modest resources to prepare and action an online visitor experience survey in the current season.

By Fall 2023, prepare an online Visitor Experience survey.

- Prepare survey content/template
- Determine online hosting requirements via SurveyMonkey (or similar survey platform)
- Establish URL link to survey
- Promote survey at visitor points of contact

Cost: N/A utilizing free version of SurveyMonkey

Action 9.2 Identify Performance Measurement Framework

There is an opportunity to engage key partners within DTCAR, LCEN and potentially RANLab at Memorial University’s Harris Centre to develop a Clarenville-specific data collection model and performance measurement framework.

By Spring 2024, commence development of a Performance Evaluation Framework for tourism in the Clarenville area.

- Establish a Performance Measurement Task Team, including DTCAR, LCEN and RANLab STAC
- Identify potential data sources STAC
- Identify key visitor touchpoints, opportunities and methods to collect data STAC
- Identify specific measurements within each priority action/task STAC
- Host a data collection capacity building session STAC
- Include data within stakeholder engagement/communications activities STAC

Cost: \$5,000 for RANLab engagement in data collection design/methodology

Action 9.3 Measure Stakeholder Engagement

By Fall 2023, begin to measure stakeholder engagement in the Plan roll-out and related activities. Utilize past and future engagement activities, including:

- Participation in an annual Tourism Forum and networking events
- Membership in STEP-related Facebook site
- Participation in capacity building sessions
- Engagement in Task Teams
- Uptake by operators in future Accelerated Market Readiness (AMR), digital footprint programming and other programming

Cost: N/A

Action 9.4 Endorse the STEP Plan through a Clarenville Sustainable Tourism Accord

Key industry stakeholders must endorse the Plan and support its implementation. This will be met through the endorsement of a Clarenville Area Tourism Accord.

By Spring 2024, provide an opportunity for stakeholders to endorse the Plan in a formal way through a sustainable tourism accord.

- Prepare draft Tourism Accord STAC
- Endorse Sustainable Tourism Accord at a Fall Stakeholder Engagement event STAC

Cost: N/A – costs included within Annual Tourism Forum

Action 9.5 Hold Annual Tourism Forum

An Annual Tourism Forum will be held in the off season each year, notionally in late April/early May, to align with Tourism Awareness Week activities. The Forum will be an opportunity to report on past year’s activities and highlight new activities planned for the coming year. On the formation of the CATA, it will serve as an annual general meeting for the membership.

By Spring 2024, and each year afterwards, hold the initial Annual Tourism Forum.

- Hold Annual Tourism Forum STAC

Cost: \$2,500/year – DIET/CCB Program

10.0 BUDGET

From the perspective of project-based activities identified within this Plan, there is an expectation that STEP partners will have recourse to available public funding sources as required, and, assuming the activities meet related eligibility and program requirements, to advance particular project initiatives. Depending on the program requirement, lead partner contributions can be expected to be a minimum of 10% of total project cost and beyond. Responsibility for ensuring that those contribution requirements can be met will rest with the lead project partner.

Project Budget

		Initial \$ Required	Source
5.0 - Priority 1 - Organize and Build Industry Capacity to Grow			
5.1	Establish a Sustainable Tourism Action Committee (STAC)	N/A	N/A
5.2	Build STAC Capacity	\$2,500	CCB/DIET
5.3	Prepare and Maintain a Workplan for Sustainable Tourism	N/A	N/A
5.4	Utilize Task Teams for Key Plan Priorities	N/A	N/A
5.5	Identify Tourism Coordination Support	\$50,000	STEP Year II/Other
5.6	Engage Industry in Sustaining Plan Activities	\$5,000	CAS
5.7	Prepare and Implement Communications and Engagement Plan	\$2,500	CCB/DIET
6.0 - Priority 2 – Marketing the Clarenville Area			
6.1	Develop a Destination Clarenville Area Website	\$25,000	ACOA/DIET/Town/industry
6.2	Build a Sense of Arrival	\$50,000	ACOA/DIET/Town/industry
6.3	Determine Approach to Enhanced Memorial Drive/TCH Access	N/A	N/A
6.4	Initiate Preliminary Wayfinding Strategy	\$25,000	ACOA/DIET/Town/industry
6.5	Prepare a Promotional Video	\$25,000	ACOA/DIET/Town/industry
7.0 - Priority 3 – Visitor Intercept Strategy			
7.1	Encourage Itinerary Development and Packaged Experiences	N/A	N/A
7.2	Create a Regional Event Calendar	N/A	N/A
7.3	Sports Tourism Initiative	\$2,500	CCB/DIET
7.4	Conference Initiative	\$2,500	CCB/DIET
7.5	Festivals and Special Events Initiative	\$2,500	CCB/DIET
7.6	Motorcoach Initiative	N/A	N/A

Clarenville Area Sustainable Tourism Plan – August 2023

		Initial \$ Required	Source
7.7	Marine/Urban District Development	\$25,000	ACOA/DIET/Town/industry
7.8	Hiking and ATV Trail Development	\$12,500	ACOA/DIET/Town/Industry
8.0 - Priority 4 – Enhance Tourism Operator Capacity			
8.1	Develop Networking Program	\$3,000/year x 3	Year 1 through STEP Year II
8.2	Engage Bonavista STAR and Terra Nova National Park	N/A	N/A
8.3	Build Capacity	N/A	N/A
8.4	Enhance the Industry’s Digital Footprint	\$5,000	STEP Year II
8.4	Human Resource Development Capacity Session	N/A	N/A
8.5	Social Enterprise Sustainability Planning Roundtable	\$2,500	CCB/DIET
8.6	White Hills Sustainability Task Team and Roundtable	\$2,500	CCB/DIET
9.0 - Priority 5 - Monitor & Measure Progress & Report Results			
9.1	Develop a Visitor Experience Survey	N/A	N/A
9.1	Identify Performance Measurement Framework	\$5,000	STEP Year II
9.2	Measure Stakeholder Engagement	N/A	N/A
9.3	Endorse the STEP Plan through a Clarenville Sustainable Tourism Accord	N/A	N/A
9.4	Hold Annual Tourism Forum	\$2,500/year x 3	CCB/DIET
Total		\$261,500	

Contributions

Source	Amount
ACOA/ICF	\$105,625
DIET/RDF	\$40,625
DIET/CCB	\$25,000
STEP Year II	\$25,000
CBDC/CAS	\$5,000
Town Of Clarenville	\$8,125
Industry	\$8,125
Other	\$44,000
Total	\$261,500

11.0 IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

Implementation of the Plan will be tracked in quarters with Fall 2023 (Q1) representing the initial quarter of implementation. The table below highlights implementation of activities across the initial three (3) years of the plan from September 2023 to August of 2026. The implementation plan is presented with numbered priorities, actions and in some instances tasks. It is assumed that activities identified within a particular quarter will be completed by the end of that quarter.

As actions are advanced, the Implementation Schedule below may be used to track progress on activities, determine if continued effort is warranted and actions dropped, be re-prioritized or deferred as circumstances require.

#	Priority, Actions and Tasks	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12
		2023/2024				2024/2025				2025/2026			
5.0 - Priority 1 - Organize and Build Industry Capacity to Grow													
5.1	Establish STAC												
5.2	Build STAC Capacity												
5.3	Prepare & Maintain a Workplan												
5.4	Utilize Task Teams for Key Plan Priorities												
5.5	Identify Tourism Coordination Support												
5.6	Industry Engagement in Sustaining Plan												
5.7	Prepare & Implement Communications Plan												
6.0 - Priority 2 - Marketing the Clarenville Area													
6.1	Develop Destination Clarenville Area Website												
6.2	Build a Sense of Arrival												
6.3	Determine Approach to Enhanced Access												
6.4	Initiate Preliminary Wayfinding Strategy												
6.5	Prepare a Promotional Video												
7.0 - Priority 3 - Visitor Intercept Strategy													
7.1	Itinerary Development & Packaged Experiences												
7.2	Create a Regional Event Calendar												
7.3	Sports Tourism Initiative												

Clarenville Area Sustainable Tourism Plan – August 2023

#	Priority, Actions and Tasks	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12
		2023/2024				2024/2025				2025/2026			
7.4	Conference Initiative												
7.5	Festivals and Special Events Initiative												
7.6	Motorcoach Initiative												
7.7	Marine/Urban District Development												
7.8	Hiking and ATV Trail Development												
8.0 - Priority 4 - Enhance Tourism Operator Capacity													
8.1	Develop Networking Program												
8.2	Engage Bonavista STAR & Terra Nova Partners												
8.3	Build Capacity												
8.4	Enhance the Industry's Digital Footprint												
8.5	Human Resource Development Capacity \												
8.6	Social Enterprise Sustainability Planning												
8.7	White Hills Sustainability												
9.0 - Priority 5 - Monitor & Measure Progress & Report Results													
9.1	Develop a Visitor Experience Survey												
9.2	Identify Performance Measurement Framework												
9.3	Measure Stakeholder Engagement												
9.4	Sustainable Tourism Accord												
9.5	Hold Annual Tourism Forum												

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LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendices are provided within a separate attachment.

- Appendix A WG meetings
- Appendix B WG Terms of Reference
- Appendix C Tourism Asset Inventory
- Appendix D Communications and stakeholder framework
- Appendix E Interviews and site visits
- Appendix F Online survey
- Appendix G Stakeholder Engagement Session 1 - Summary Report
- Appendix H Stakeholder Engagement Session 2 - Summary Report
- Appendix I Digital Footprint
- Appendix J AMR Report
- Appendix K Detailed SWOT
- Appendix L STAC Terms of Reference
- Appendix M Task Teams Terms of Reference
- Appendix N Tourism Coordinator Job Description
- Appendix O Stakeholder Engagement and Communications Plan/Framework
- Appendix P Detailed listing of capacity building needs
- Appendix Q Capacity building supports
- Appendix R Overview of trail types

