

Strategic Tourism Expansion Program (STEP)  
***Sustainable Tourism Plan: Parrsboro Shore***  
***Executive Summary***



November 2016

## Background

The Strategic Tourism Expansion Program (STEP) along the Parrsboro Shore was triggered in early summer 2015 by a community committed to working for tourism growth. A mature tourism area with the experience, motivation and momentum to benefit from strategic action, STEP Parrsboro Shore kicked off the project with clear understanding of the fundamental pillars for success in tourism:

- 1. Visitors today seek “sight doing” and not “sight seeing”; they find enjoyment in destinations offering unique and enticing experiences that encourage participation and learning in well-serviced and welcoming environments. Customer focus is critical to success.**
- 2. Visitors view destinations as “areas of interest” not geographically or politically. With this in mind, early into the process, the area of scope for STEP was expanded (loosely) to the Parrsboro Shore, from Economy to Advocate.**
- 3. Local communities and residents make essential contributions to successful tourism and community members need to be engaged.**

**Comment [David Bea1]:** Need to reduce text for summary. Goals, Objectives, Actions completed and Recommendations are the key elements, most everything else could be deleted.

Proponent for the Parrsboro Shore STEP project was the Town of Parrsboro in partnership with ACOA-Tourism Atlantic and Tourism Nova Scotia; all of whom were engaged with active representation financial support to develop a Sustainable Tourism Plan AND to deliver workshops specifically designed to meet the needs of the area. Broad Reach Strategies Ltd, Halifax was contracted to serve as project Consultant. A strategically-selected and industry-led Working Committee chaired by David Beattie, Gillespie House Inn led the initiative and continues to manage project execution.

The local enthusiasm for STEP is clearly aligned with the Nova Scotia tourism goal to double tourism revenues by 2020, outlined in the Ivany Report.

A six-stage process delivered over more than a year, STEP is designed to increase the quality and calibre of visitor experiences offered by operators and communities in Atlantic Canada, in order to help communities, realize greater benefits from tourism in economic, social and cultural ways. Parrsboro Shore qualified as a STEP “candidate community” because of its unique and enticing tourism offerings, the commitment of its industry to work for growth and recognition of the Parrsboro Shore potential to develop as a destination.

## Building Blocks of Parrsboro’s Plan

Parrsboro Shore’s STEP Plan was well-informed; it drew from a wealth of information and understanding of the area. Much of the information can be used as benchmarks to measure progress going forward.

- A *Sustainable Tourism Community Screening Tool* was completed by key stakeholders in summer 2015 to “rate” the Shore on a number of factor that influence tourism.
- Important elements of developing this plan were drawn from a well-attended and energetic, *Ideas Generation Workshop* in September 2015 where xxx tourism operators, local business people, municipal leaders and residents offered their insights and thoughts about tourism. Community support for tourism can never be underestimated!
- A Tourism Asset Inventory was developed to capture the area’s tangible and intangible assets and was designed to expose gaps and tourism opportunities along Parrsboro Shore.
- Extensive research, interviews and environmental scanning was conducted to prepare the plan and continued throughout the course of the project.

- An extensive assessment of the demographic profile and (developing) psychographics of “the visitor” to Atlantic Canada, Nova Scotia and Parrsboro Shore was developed. Knowing the needs and habits of visitors is central to offering enticing experiences and services.

Details on all are included in the Final Report for the Sustainable Tourism Plan: Parrsboro Shore.

## Guiding Principles

Six guiding principles are the philosophical foundation on which the Plan is built. They are:

- Visitor focus is of foremost importance in everything we do
- Optimizing strong, existing assets and connecting-the-dots can be profitable
- Commit to evolving world-class experiences and “learn from the best”
- Adhere to pillars of Sustainable Tourism:
  - satisfying needs of visitors and residents
  - safeguarding natural, cultural and historical resources while
  - contributing to the economy and community quality of life
- Communicate effectively everyday with visitors, partners, residents and stakeholders
- Work collaboratively and cohesively among local operators and with provincial and regional efforts to reach target markets.

## Tourism Goal: Parrsboro Shore

*By 2020, the Parrsboro Shore is recognized as the outstanding Bay of Fundy destination for coastal geology and dinosaurs, the power of the Fundy tides and cultural participation.*

*Parrsboro Shore tourism economy will grow at a rate that contributes strongly to Nova Scotia’s goal of doubling tourism revenue.*

## Tourism Objectives: Parrsboro Shore

*To realize the Goal, Parrsboro Shore focused on five (5) objectives working together to:*

- 1. Develop, enhance and deliver outstanding Parrsboro Shore-specific, Bay of Fundy experiences generating longer stays and increased expenditures.*
- 2. Action key opportunities for cultural development.*
- 3. Work as active Ambassadors for the Parrsboro Shore as a tourism destination.*
- 4. Communicate ONLINE creatively and precisely, speaking to target/niche visitors.*

**5. Benchmark, measure and report progress.**

**Plan Accomplishments 2015-2016**

The Working Committee completed significant tasks to benefit tourism development on Parrsboro Shore.

**Comment [David Bea2]:** Significant completed actions should be listed

**Go Forward Recommendations**

	<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
<b>Keep the Plan Relevant!</b>	Establish tourism leadership model for Parrsboro Shore (PS) to drive the Plan to 2020.	PS Working Committee/ Municipality	In place by January 2017
	Work with Municipality to identify a staff “point-person” and sources for funding to support Plan priorities to 2020.	Leadership Team/ Municipality	In place by January 2017
	Ask tourism leaders & influencers to update the Tourism Community Screener to assess progress since 2015.	Leadership Team	March 2017; subsequently every 18 months
	Update Tourism Asset Inventory annually; review for gaps and opportunities	Leadership Team/ Municipality	Annually
	Update Visitor Data with information from NS 2015 Exit Survey and EQ updated information	Leadership Team	For 2017
	Ensure achievable measures to track progress/ success are identified (2016) and reported annually to the industry.	Leadership Team	2017 - 2020
<b>Experience/ Product Development</b>	Undertake an Accelerated Market Readiness (AMR) initiative with operators along PS. In 2017 involve 5 to 10 operators. Contact: Johanna Egan, Tourism Atlantic-ACOA; <a href="mailto:johanna.egan@canada.ca">johanna.egan@canada.ca</a>	Leadership Team/ Municipality/ NS Tourism/ Tourism Atlantic	July-September 2017. Additional years pending operator interest.
	Survey PS operators for preferences/ needs re: professional development sessions for 2017/18. Consider PD/ BP sessions online & social media, small business development & St. John Ambulance	Leadership Team	November 2017, beginning with Plan Presentation
	Work with Tourism NS to offer Best Training and experience training sessions as indicated by the operator survey	Leadership Team/ Tourism NS	As required for 2017-2020
	Support efforts of the committee working to develop a brand-consistent, Global Geopark in the region	Leadership Team	On-going to 2020
	Continue to leverage priorities of Parrsboro Creative into Plan activities, capturing cultural tourism opportunities.	Leadership Team/ P-Creative	On-going to 2020
	Festival planning: Support planning efforts (underway) for new season-extending fall festival and enhancements to the established Gem & Mineral Show	Leadership Team	As required
<b>Community Capacity Building</b>	Develop Parrsboro Shore Ambassador Program including Tourism Fair and operator familiarization initiatives.	Tourism Fair sub-committee/ operators	May 2017. Annual evaluation drives planning for subsequent year.
	Identify <u>priority</u> game-changing infrastructure for PS. Consider tourism goal, brand-consistency, uniqueness, and opportunity to connect-the-dots among primary and secondary motivators. Use Tourism Inventory + visitor information to inform.	Focused brain-storming session among key stakeholders	2018
	Continue World Host training with frontline staff	Leadership Team/ TIANS	May/ June 2017; 2018-2020 as required.

	Update Operator Toolkit		January 2018
<b>Marketing</b>	Discuss with Municipality next-steps for positioning of PS tourism information on centralized website site including coordinated approach to social media connections/positioning of Route 2 as “the road to the Bay of Fundy” in Nova Scotia.	Leadership Team/ Municipality	
	Enhance placement & use of online Calendar of Events as important visitor & operator tool	Leadership Team	2017
	Ensure branding effort align with Municipality and provincial efforts.	Leadership Team	2017 - 2020

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	Work with Municipality to identify a staff “point-person”/ funding sources to support priorities.	Leadership Team/ Municipality	In place by January 2017 until 2020
	Ask tourism leaders & influencers to update the Tourism Community Screener to assess progress since 2015.	Leadership Team	March 2017; subsequently every 18 months
	Update Tourism Asset Inventory annually; review for gaps and opportunities	Leadership Team/ Municipality	Annually
	Update Visitor Data with information from NS 2015 Exit Survey and EQ updated information	Leadership Team	For 2017
<b>Experience/ Product Development</b>	Undertake an Accelerated Market Readiness (AMR) initiative with operators along PS. In 2017 involve 5 to 10 operators.	Leadership Team/ Municipality/ NS Tourism/ Tourism Atlantic	July-September 2017. Additional years pending operator interest.
	Survey PS operators for preferences/ needs re: professional development sessions for 2017/18. Consider online/ business development options.	Leadership Team	November 2017, beginning with Plan Presentation
	Work with Tourism NS to offer Best Practice and experience training sessions as indicated by the operator survey	Leadership Team/ Tourism NS	As required for 2017-2020
	Support efforts of the committee working to develop a brand-consistent, Global Geopark in the region	Leadership Team	On-going to 2020
	Continue to integrate efforts of Parrsboro Creative into Plan activities.	Leadership Team/ P-Creative	On-going to 2020
	Support planning efforts (underway) for new season-extending fall festival and enhancements to the Gem & Mineral Show	Leadership Team	As required
<b>Community Capacity Building</b>	Continue to develop Parrsboro Shore Ambassador Program including Tourism Fair and operator familiarization initiatives.	Tourism Fair sub-committee/ operators	May 2017. Annual evaluation drives planning.
	Using Tourism Asset Inventory + visitor information identify <u>priority</u> game-changing infrastructure for PS. Consider tourism goal, brand-consistency, uniqueness, and opportunity to connect-the-dots among primary and secondary motivators.	Focused brainstorming session among key stakeholders	2018
	Continue World Host training with frontline staff.	Leadership Team/ TIANS	May/ June 2017; 2018-2020 as required.
	Update Operator Toolkit		January 2018
<b>Marketing</b>	Discuss with Municipality next-steps for positioning of PS tourism information on centralized website site including coordinated approach to social media connections/positioning of Route 2 as “the road to the Bay of Fundy” in Nova Scotia.	Leadership Team/ Municipality	

	Enhance placement & use of online Calendar of Events as important visitor & operator tool	Leadership Team	2017
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