

# **Akwesasne Tourism Strategic Action Plan**

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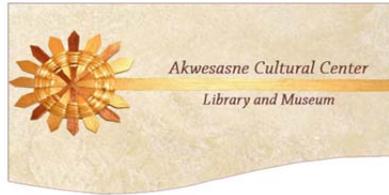
***Community of Akwesasne***

as of August 26, 2016

by



## Akwesasne Tourism Planning Partners



**Akwesasne Cultural  
Centre Museum**



**Native North American  
Travelling College**



**Onkwehon:we  
Arts Council**



**Akwesasne Area  
Management Board**

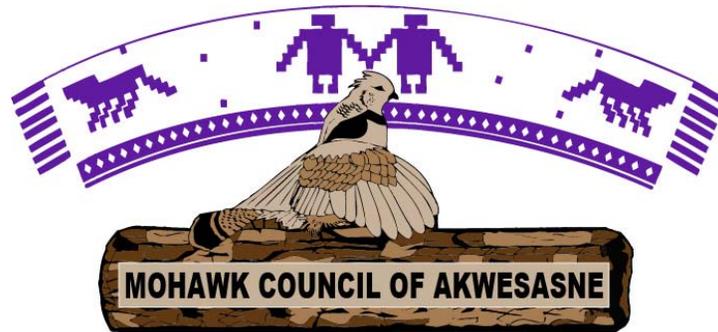


**Mohawk Nation  
Council of Chiefs**



## Project Funding Support

*Work on this updated draft 2016 Strategic Action Plan for Akwesasne Tourism was supported by;*



*The previous version of the Strategic Action Plan dated March 2016 was supported by;*



and



**Workforce Development Institute**

## Community Acknowledgement

This project has included a detailed review of various reports on historic, recent and current Akwesasne cultural heritage and tourism development work over many decades. We acknowledge the tireless work in these areas by Akwesasne community members, organizations and leaders. **Niá:wen!**

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# Introduction

This updated Akwasasne Strategic Action Plan report is focused on ‘Year One’ which commenced on April 1, 2016 and extends to March 31, 2017.

The overall Strategic Action Planning assignment steps were as follows:

- Step One: Start-up and Initial Assessment
- Step Two: Planning Session – Setting the Strategic Direction
- Step Three: Action Planning

This updated report is part of Step Three. All three steps have been carried out through collaborative, joint planning meetings and work with representatives from the Mohawk Council of Akwasasne (MCA), Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe (SRMT), and the Akwasasne Tourism Working Group (ATWG). The consulting work has been carried out by partners Rick and Pauline MacLeod Farley (Principal Consultants, MacLeod Farley & Associates). As well, specialist advice was provided by Mike Robbins with <sup>the</sup> Tourism Company.

There is an earlier version of this report dated March 24, 2016. That version addressed overall Akwasasne tourism as well as specific southern portion aspects. This updated version once again addresses overall Akwasasne tourism. It also incorporates additional, specific aspects for the northern portion of the community.

Earlier within the project, three key reports were produced. These are available upon request from Tracy Sunday-Cook at Mohawk Council of Akwasasne;

- Akwasasne Tourism Initial Assessment Report ( revised July 22, 2016)
- Akwasasne Tourism Organizational Structure Case Studies (February 3, 2016)
- Updated Akwasasne Tourism Strategic Direction Report (July 25, 2016)

In addition, copies of joint planning meeting presentations and meetings notes are available by request for sessions held with the available Tourism Working Group members on January 11, 2016 (Strategic Direction Planning Session), February 8, and June 17, 2016 (Action Planning Session).

We anticipate that this version of the Strategic Action Plan will be updated every month or two through the offices of Tracy Sunday-Cook (MCA) and/or Lindsay Tarbell (SRMT).

## Joint planning participants

The Tourism Strategic Action Planning project is being managed by SRMT, MCA and the Akwasasne Tourism Working Group. The MCA effort is being led by:

Tracy Sunday-Cook, Special Projects Officer, Department of Tehotiiennawakon, MCA

The SRMT effort is being led by:

Lindsay M. Tarbell, Economic Development Planner, SRMT

Christopher Thompson, Director, Office of Economic Development, SRMT

For the work between December 2015 and March 2016, SRMT secured partial funding support from the Workforce Development Institute led by Greg Hart (Regional Director for the North Country, Workforce Development Institute).

In addition to the individuals named above, the list below captures some (but not all) of the people who have been actively involved in the strategic action planning project including attendance at one or more of the joint planning meetings;

Beatrice Johnson, Business Development Officer, Akwasasne Area Management Board

Bob Stevenson, Thompson Island Cultural Camp (Youth & Elders Camp)

Brendan White, Communications Director, SRMT

Corrine Johnson, Social Services, MCA

Curtis Lazore, Environment, Department of Tehotiiennawakon

Ed Smoke, Business Services Specialist, Environment Division, SRMT

Elvera Sargent, Akwasasne Freedom School

Geraldine Jacobs, A'nowara'ko:wa Arena

Julie Jacobs, Brownfields Redevelopment Specialist, Environment Division, SRMT

Kylee Tarbell, Assistant Director, Department of Tehotiiennawakon, MCA

Latoya Rourke, Tourism Coordinator, Experience Akwasasne Welcome Centre

Mamie David, A'nowara'ko:wa Arena

Natalie Jacobs, Quebec Liaison Officer, MCA

Nathan Cole, Akwasasne Area Management Board

Penny Peters, Community CCP Coordinator, MCA

Sarah Herne Rourke, Manager, Native North American Travelling College (NNATC)

Sue Ellen Herne, Manager, Akwasasne Cultural Center & Museum (ACCM)

Tracy Sunday-Cook, Special Projects Officer, Department of Tehotiiennawakon, MCA

Waylon Cook, Thompson Island Cultural Camp (Youth & Elders Camp)

# Strategic Direction for Akwasasne Tourism

The strategic direction for Akwasasne Tourism was established by the ATWG at a full day planning session on January 11, 2016, and approved at a full day planning session on February 8, 2016.

## Vision

*We are a proud community sharing world-class tourism experiences that celebrate our environment, heritage and language.*

## Mission

*We develop sustainable tourism through mutually beneficial partnerships.*

## Guiding Principles

- Guiding Principle #1: Akwasasne tourism respects, protects and preserves our natural environment for seven generations.
- Guiding Principle #2: We work with Akwasasro:non on tourism development that strengthens our quality of life, language, culture and heritage.
- Guiding Principle #3: As tourism hosts, we continually improve the guest experience.
- Guiding Principle #4: We work together effectively and respect individual endeavours.

## Unique Challenges for Akwasasne

Akwasasne is one community. Akwasasne has a southern portion (part of New York) and a northern portion (part of Ontario and Quebec). Akwasasne has three governments including Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe (SRMT), Mohawk Council of Akwasasne (MCA) and the Traditional Mohawk Council. SRMT and MCA each have access to different funding mechanisms. MCA has access to two provincial agencies (Ontario and Quebec) as well as Canadian federal agencies and foundations. SRMT has access to federal and state agencies, and US foundations.

Guests who come to Akwasasne arrive through various 'entry points'. The major road entry points for the northern portion are via the International Road which includes the Cornwall Island Bridge to Cornwall Island. The major road entry points for the southern portion are via Route 37 at both the east and the west end of Hogansburg. There are numerous minor road and water entry points throughout Akwasasne, and there is also an access bridge to Hamilton Island (northern portion).

There are border crossing challenges for residents of Akwasasne and for guests. Akwasasne tourism guests seeking to visit all of Akwasasne will need to deal with crossing the international border (Canada and the US agencies). Some guests coming from Canada will choose to visit Akwasasne north only. Like Akwasasne residents, the Akwasasne north only guests who come to Cornwall Island will still have to deal with the Canadian border crossing. Some guests coming from the US will choose to visit Akwasasne south only to avoid crossing the international border. Some guests will choose to visit both Akwasasne north and south. This will require passport documents for these guests at the border crossing stations.

## Overall Strategies for Akwasasne Tourism Development

To address the unique challenges, and to create a sustainable organizational structure for tourism for Akwasasne, the overall strategies for Akwasasne tourism development are as follows;

- **We reinforce Akwasasne as ‘one community’ for tourism markets through branding, advertising and tourism services delivery – providing a consistent, positive and unified public message on-line, at each entry point and throughout;**
- **We strive to reduce complications for our guests to Akwasasne – making the entire guest experience as ‘seamless’ and ‘streamlined’ as possible;**
- **We are establishing an organizational structure for tourism which can take advantage of market and funding opportunities in each jurisdiction (New York, Ontario and Quebec), while also reinforcing tourism for the benefit of the entire community;**
- **We will ensure a solid financial footing for the Experience Akwasasne organizational structure through careful financial and overall business planning including identification of revenue sources for the start-up period as well as ongoing operations.**

# Phases One through Four

The Akwasasne community is addressing tourism development as follows:

## **Phase One – Initial Efforts**

(up to 2015/16)

- Phase One includes all work to date by the community through March 2015.
- This includes cultural heritage and tourism development work over many years.

## **Phase Two – Strengthening Within**

(2016/17 and 2017/18)

- This two year Phase is focused on working primarily within the community to strengthen community engagement and dialogue, support, planning and training to develop a successful tourism industry for Akwasasne.
- Year One = 2016/2017 (the focus of the Action Plan), Year Two = 2017/18

## **Phase Three – Regional Reach**

(2018/19 and 2019/20)

- Phase Three will include extensive marketing to regional markets, while continuing to refine and enhance Akwasasne tourism development.

## **Phase Four – Broader Outreach**

(2020/21 plus)

- As the tourism offerings are further strengthened, Phase Four expands the marketing to include target markets around the world. By this time, there will be solid Akwasasne tourism offerings in place, with ongoing improvements and continued growth for tourism.

By design, the phasing approach is iterative (rather than linear) with a continued focus on key areas of development, strengthened with each iteration. Like ripples created in a pond by dropping a small rock, the circles gradually increase in size within and through each phase. In each phase, there is an opportunity to strengthen and solidify the community tourism development work, before then proceeding to a slightly broader set of activities. By design, this provides the opportunity for the continual improvement by and for Akwasasne tourism.

For example, this Strategic Action Plan includes the development of group tours. Accordingly, the plan calls for these tours to be developed, tested and strengthened in an ever expanding manner. The initial tour will be first offered to members of the Working Group. It can then be improved and offered to a slightly larger group of community tourism partners. Once it has been further improved it can then be offered to all community members. In Year Two, the group tours will be expanded then offered to friendly media and regional partners as a Familiarization Tour, with feedback gathered for further improvement. This ‘feedback, improvement and expansion’ cycle will be ongoing.

## Goals for “Phase Two – Strengthening Within”



**Goal 1:  
Organize**

Organize,  
Resource and  
Manage

**Goal 2: People**

Engage our  
Kanien’ke:ha  
community,  
language and  
culture

**Goal 3: Places**

Develop major  
tourism draws

## **Goal 1: Organize**

*We will organize ourselves effectively to develop, manage and market Akwasasne Tourism.*

## **Goal 2: People**

*We will engage with our community, train our people, and reinforce our Kanien'ké:ha language, arts and culture.*

## **Goal 3: Places**

*We will develop three primary cultural tourism attractions (one each for New York, Ontario and Quebec). We will continue work on parks and trails as well as ecotourism and adventure tourism sites including Thompson Island Cultural Camp. We will also address beautification and basic physical infrastructure for tourism.*

## Goal 1 – Organize

***We will organize ourselves effectively to develop, manage and market Akwasasne Tourism.***

The Akwasasne Tourism Working Group (ATWG) is currently functioning very effectively. The Working Group is meeting monthly and includes representatives from SRMT, MCA, Akwasasne Cultural Center and Museum (ACCM), Native North American Travelling College (NNATC) and others. SRMT and ACCM are addressing specific tourism opportunities for the New York portion of Akwasasne. SRMT recently applied for comprehensive funding support from the Administration for Native American, Sustainable Employment and Economic Development Strategy (ANA SEEDS) program. ACCM applied and received funding from the Citizens' Institute on Rural Design for a two-and-a-half day community design workshop. Likewise, the NNATC, MCA (for the A'nowara'ko:wa Arena and for Thompson Island) have applied to Canada 150 funds and are pursuing specific opportunities from Ontario, Quebec and Canada. The Akwasasne Area Management Board is providing funding for a community wide beautification project. We are very impressed by the current level of overall coordination and momentum and commitment to the joint effort.

The Goal 1 plans include an objective to create a business plan for the creation of a new Experience Akwasasne organization. Step by step financial and business planning for the new entity is required to maximize the chances for success. (For a detailed description of two organizational structure options, please see Annex A.) This Action Plan calls for the business planning for this new organization to be carried out with professional support with the consultants selected by tender process. SRMT has applied to the ANA SEEDS program for funding to develop the business plan. MCA is also seeking funding for this step. Meanwhile, the current working group members will oversee the full implementation of Year One of this Action Plan and the development of plans for Year Two.

Solid financial planning for the new organization is a key area. The Akwasasne Tourism Organizational Structure Case Studies report shared information on five Destination Management and Marketing Organizations (DMMOs) from Indian Country and elsewhere. Despite award winning success, two of the five organizations studied were 'in limbo' financially after initial pilot funding expired. This research clearly supports the need for a complete Business Plan for Experience Akwasasne including a sustainable financial plan for the launch and ongoing operations.

Another major Goal 1 objective is to develop a comprehensive marketing strategy and professional branding. Once this work is completed, professional web site design and development will take place to create a single Experience Akwesasne web site. Both MCA and SRMT are seeking funding opportunities to cover these costs.

## Objectives for Goal 1 – Year One

- Objective 1.1: Develop a business plan (including full financials) for new **‘Experience Akwesasne’ Tourism Destination Management & Marketing Organization (DMMO)**, or organizations, with proposed offices in both the Northern and Southern portions of Akwesasne.
- Objective 1.2: Oversee the **effective implementation of this Strategic Action Plan** at Akwesasne Tourism Working Group meetings and successfully address resourcing and other challenges as required.
- Objective 1.3: Create a comprehensive **Experience Akwesasne marketing and branding plan followed by the development of a single integrated website** for Experience Akwesasne.
- Objective 1.4: Undertake a **Group Tour Development Project** in order to develop and test group tours (step by step, with an incrementally larger audience) starting with existing market ready products.
- Objective 1.5: Encourage MCA and SRMT to each plan and pursue joint or parallel **tourism business incubator support projects** for small tourism businesses, crafters, and artists.
- Objective 1.6: Start to develop **internal policies**, quality control guidelines and licences as required to regulate and support the tourism industry in Akwesasne, while also addressing **external government regulation** and licencing requirements including border crossing challenges.

## Action Charts for each Goal 1 Objective

Goal 1 - We will organize ourselves effectively to develop, manage and market Akwasasne Tourism.

**Objective 1.1:** Develop a business plan (including full financials) for new 'Experience Akwasasne' Tourism Destination Management & Marketing Organization (DMMO), or organizations, with proposed offices in both the Northern and Southern portions of Akwasasne.

#	Action	Lead	April - June	July - Sept.	Oct. - Dec.	Jan. - Mar.	2017 - 2018
a	Apply for funding to hire a consultant to develop a business plan for the Experience Akwasasne organization(s).	SRMT	✓				
b	Issue RFP and hire consultants. RFP to address organizational development options (including Annex One option 1 (two orgs with one partnership agreement) or option 2 (one org with two offices)	SRMT with MCA & ATWG					
c	Work closely with hired consultants to select business structure option, develop full financials and full business plan.	SRMT with MCA & ATWG					
d	Community presentation and consultation process.	ATWG					
e	Final decision to proceed with new Experience Akwasasne organization(s).	ATWG, SRMT and MCA					
f	Legal incorporation of new entity(ies).	SRMT and MCA					
g	Launch and start to operate the new Experience Akwasasne organization(s).	ATWG, SRMT and MCA					

Note: The Business Plan for Experience Akwasasne will address the structure options (Annex One), address incorporation as a non-profit or for-profit, any needed interim MOUs, clear identification of roles and responsibilities (of partners or offices) as well as a sustainable financial model.

Current Target Funding Source: SRMT has applied to ANA SEEDS (decision pending). If necessary, MCA could apply to Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport - Tourism Fund, Industry Capacity Building Stream. On-going in-take of proposals.

Goal 1 - We will organize ourselves effectively to develop, manage and market Akwesasne Tourism.

**Objective 1.2:** Oversee the **effective implementation of this Strategic Action Plan** at Tourism Working Group meetings and successfully address resourcing and other challenges as required.

#	Action	Lead	April - June	July - Sept.	Oct. - Dec.	Jan. - Mar.	2017 - 2018
a	Identify a “champion” from SRMT and MCA who will monitor fulfillment of action charts with Tourism Working Group on regular basis.	ATWG, SRMT and MCA	✓				
b	Review progress on Strategic Action Plan every 2 months, and adjust plan as necessary to pursue new opportunities and address any challenges.	ATWG	✓				
c	Develop Action Plan for Year Two	ATWG					
d	Implement Year Two Action Plan	ATWG or new organization					

Current champions identified: Tracy Sunday-Cook for MCA, and Lindsay Tarbell for SRMT.

Notes: Regular progress reviews are vital for ensuring that the Strategic Action Plan actually is implemented. Through the regular reviews, all identified ‘leads’ will need to report on their progress and any challenges or new opportunities. It is very important to check in and adjust the plan or the timing of specific actions if necessary.

Current Target Funding Source – internal human resources.

Goal 1 - We will organize ourselves effectively to develop, manage and market Akwasasne Tourism.

**Objective 1.3:** Create a comprehensive **Experience Akwasasne marketing and branding plan** followed by the development of a single integrated website for Experience Akwasasne.

#	Action	Lead	April - June	July - Sept.	Oct. - Dec.	Jan. - Mar.	2017 - 2018
a	Apply for funding for this entire objective.	SRMT					
b	Issue RFP and hire consultants for Experience <b>Akwasasne Marketing Plan</b> .	SRMT					
c	Participate in the Marketing Planning project.	ATWG					
d	Identify an individual to collect existing photographs and video for the branding and website projects.	TBD by ATWG					
e	Issue RFP for the <b>Tourism Branding Project</b> and hire consultants.	SRMT					
f	Participate in the Branding Project	ATWG					
g	Issue RFP for the <b>Website Development Project</b> and hire consultants.	SRMT					
h	Participate in the Website Development Project.	ATWG					
i	Implement the plans.	SRMT, MCA					

Notes: The Marketing Plan and Branding Planning will lay the foundation for the Website Development Projects. The Marketing Plan and Branding Plan will need to be completed before the Website work. The Marketing Plan and Branding Plan will be tendered with a Request for Proposal (RFP) at the same time. Akwasasne may select the same or different firms for these assignments. The brand strategy and elements will include the name, logo, tag line, ownership, brand identity package (colours, font etc.), brand use rules, images, etc. The branding process will likely take place over a 3-6 month period, and should include community artists and residents in the process.

Current Target Funding Source: SRMT is applying to the EDA Planning Program and Local Technical Assistance Program – submitting Sept 2016 (on-going program, no deadline to apply). MCA may be able to seek support from the Tawatohni'saktha Business Contribution Fund (tbc).

Goal 1 - We will organize ourselves effectively to develop, manage and market Akwasasne Tourism.

**Objective 1.4:** Undertake a **Group Tour Development Project** in order to develop and test group tours (step by step, with an incrementally larger audience) starting with existing market ready products.

#	Action	Lead	April - June	July - Sept.	Oct. - Dec.	Jan. - Mar.	2017 - 2018
a	Select initial target markets for initial programming tour(s). Research their needs and wants.	MCA Tourism Coordinator with ATWG					
b	Identify existing `market ready` products to put in the `Round One` tour package with portions in NY, ON and QC. Develop tour pricing estimates (for future reference).	MCA Tourism Coordinator with ATWG					
c	Develop detailed plan and schedule for developing and testing the tour for Round One (ATWG), Round Two (local tourism partners), Round Three (community leaders), and Round Four (broader community members).	MCA Tourism Coordinator with ATWG					
d	Create a draft promotional package for the tour package(s).	Tourism Coordinator(s)					
e	Conduct Round One Tour Day, then assess and improve with participant feedback (surveys, interviews).	Tourism Coordinator(s)					
f	Conduct Round 2, 3 and 4 Tour Days (each time asses & improve with feedback).	Tourism Coordinator(s)					
g	Write a report summarizing lessons learned, and develop plans for Year 2.	MCA Tourism Coordinator					
h	Plan and conduct expanded tours Year 2.						

Note: Resource – “Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership - Guide to Packaging”

Current Target Funding Source: Internal resources for Year One, and may be supplemented by funding from ANA SEEDS. Plan B – DEC or other source TBD.

Goal 1 - We will organize ourselves effectively to develop, manage and market Akwesasne Tourism.

**Objective 1.5:** Encourage SRMT and MCA to each plan and pursue joint or parallel **tourism business incubator support projects** for small tourism businesses, crafters, and artists.

#	Action	Lead	April - June	July - Sept.	Oct. - Dec.	Jan. - Mar.	2017 - 2018
a	SRMT to develop plans for a tourism business incubator support project	SRMT	✓				
b	MCA to develop plans for a tourism business incubator support project	MCA					
c	SRMT to implement plans for a tourism business incubator support project						
d	MCA to implement plans for a tourism business incubator support project						

Notes:

South (SRMT):

Current Target Funding Source: SRMT has applied to ANA-SEEDS (decision pending).

Future Target Funding Source for incubator support / training: RBDG is a potential future funder – apply by May 2017 -100% funding. Or potentially seek 50% funding from Rural Community Development Initiative (RCDI) Grants (opportunity released each May, apply in July) – in the past the Mountain Ute Tribe received \$250K from RCDI.

North (MCA):

MCA target funding source to be confirmed: MCA could apply for funding from various sources including ACCGP (deadline end of September 2016), the Ontario Trillium Foundation – GROW Program (deadline December 2016), ABFP (Aboriginal Business Financing Program - on-going), DEC (Canada Economic Development), or the Quebec Aboriginal Initiatives Fund (TBC).

Goal 1 - We will organize ourselves effectively to develop, manage and market Akwasasne Tourism.

**Objective 1.6:** Start to develop **internal policies**, quality control guidelines and licences as required to regulate and support the tourism industry in Akwasasne, while also addressing **external government regulation** and licencing requirements including border crossing challenges.

#	Action	Lead	April - June	July - Sept.	Oct. - Dec.	Jan. - Mar.	2017 - 2018
a	Research best practices and do an internal inventory to determine what is already in place internally in terms of tourism policies and regulations and what will be required for compliance with external governments (including border crossings).	Tourism Coordinator(s)					
b	Identify gaps in internal policies and regulations.	Tourism Coordinator(s)					
c	Work with SRMT and MCA and other partners to develop a draft plan to fill the internal gaps.	Tourism Coordinator(s), SRMT, MCA, partners					
d	Meet with border security to discuss ways in which tour group border crossings could be streamlined.	SRMT, MCA representatives TBD					
e	Research and develop quality control guidelines to articulate to partners what they need to do to be included on the Experience Akwasasne website and future tours.	Tourism Coordinator(s), ATWG					
f	Work within SRMT to seek on-going access to Hotel Use and Occupancy Fee revenues.	SRMT					
g	Work within MCA to establish a similar Hotel Use and Occupancy Fee mechanism.	MCA					

Note: Proposed MCA Hotel Use and Occupancy Fee could apply to any future accommodations only and exclude Thompson Island.

Current Target Funding Source: Internal resources within SRMT (existing) and MCA (proposed).

## Goal 2 – People

***We will engage with our community, train our people, and reinforce our Kanien'ké:ha language, arts and culture.***

The objectives and actions for Goal 2 are designed to ensure that Akwasasne cultural tourism is built and operated with the consent of the community and that it benefit *all* members by supporting the on-going strengthening of the Kanien'ké:ha culture and through the creation of new employment opportunities.

An on-going Community Tourism Engagement Process is planned to help build consensus, comfort and support for the tourism efforts. The engagement process will give all community members the opportunity to provide important feedback on this strategic action plan (initially) and later on various matters including suggested interpretive themes, tourism zones and 'off limit' areas and other topics. The plan also calls for community members to be invited to visit existing cultural heritage sites during Community Tourism Open House Days this summer to experience for themselves the new cultural programs. Through ongoing engagement, the community will have the opportunity to take ownership over their own cultural tourism industry.

An overall Tourism Interpretive Plan will be created for Akwasasne in Year One and will build on current and past work by cultural leaders including NNATC and ACCM. The Tourism Interpretive Plan will present the cultural themes that the Akwasasne community wants to share and then suggest ways to communicate these effectively through vehicles such as guided walks, exhibitions, talks, drama, art displays, signs, artwork, brochures, or audio-visual media.

This action plan includes the development of Akwasasne Cultural Tourism Guidelines to outline the themes and standards for cultural tourism sites and services. The Guidelines will help make all Akwasasne tourism experiences accurate, high quality, and consistent in the messaging. The plan includes the creation of cultural training videos for the tourism sector based on the created guidelines. Guidelines are never mandatory; however they can be very helpful in supporting all individuals and businesses involved in tourism, and the entire industry.

The action plan includes an objective that addresses the development of a comprehensive Experience Akwasasne Human Resource Strategy. This will help ensure that everyone has the opportunity for professional development, training and employment.

Finally, Goal 2 includes an objective focused on designating and improving Welcome sites (northern Welcome Centre, southern Welcome Center) with Tourism Coordinator(s) to support community tourism businesses, assist and coordinate tourism guests and promote tourism related events.

## Objectives for Goal 2 – Year One

- Objective 2.1: Begin an on-going **Community Tourism Engagement Process**, to provide opportunities for all community members and tourism stakeholders to provide feedback on tourism plans through regular Open House Days and other community focused tourism events.
- Objective 2.2: Create an overall **Tourism Interpretive Plan** with and for the entire community which includes the identification of major interpretive themes and identifies the tourism zones and routes where guests will be welcome.
- Objective 2.3: Building from the Interpretive Plan, create a set of **Akwesasne Cultural Tourism Guidelines** and related training videos and materials.
- Objective 2.4: Develop and start to implement a comprehensive **Experience Akwesasne Human Resources Strategy** addressing all levels of professional development and training for the tourism industry.
- Objective 2.5: Encourage SRMT and MCA to both establish guest **Welcome Centre** sites with **full time Tourism Coordinators** (to work together, support tourism industry development & **promote events**).

## Action Charts for each Goal 2 Objective

Goal 2 - We will engage with our community, train our people, and reinforce our Kanien'ké:ha language, arts and culture.

**Objective 2.1:** Begin an on-going **Community Tourism Engagement Process**, to provide opportunities for all community members and tourism stakeholders to provide feedback on tourism plans through regular Open House Days and other community focused tourism events.

#	Action	Lead	April - June	July - Sept.	Oct. - Dec.	Jan. - Mar.	2017 - 2018
a	Jointly organize and announce public presentation meetings and stakeholder group meetings to share this Strategic Action Plan and gather feedback to incorporate.	SRMT (Lindsay, Brandon), MCA (Tracy)	✓				
b	Jointly organize and announce quarterly Open House community meetings for presentation of each draft plan created (i.e. Business Plan, Marketing Plan, Interpretive Plan) and to gather feedback.	SRMT (Lindsay, Brandon), MCA (Tracy)					
c	Set up quarterly meetings with specific stakeholder groups to present draft plans and gather feedback.	SRMT, MCA					
d	Set up meetings with key individuals to present draft plans and gather feedback.	SRMT, MCA					
e	Incorporate feedback.	ATWG & Consultants	✓				
f	Issue press release and communicate to external communities once plans ratified.	SRMT and MCA					

Current Target Funding Source: This objective will be addressed using internal resources for Year One.

Goal 2 - We will engage with our community, train our people, and reinforce our Kanien'ké:ha language, arts and culture.

**Objective 2.2:** Create an overall **Tourism Interpretive Plan** with and for the entire community which includes the identification of major interpretive themes and identifies the tourism zones and routes where guests will be welcome.

#	Action	Lead	April - June	July - Sept.	Oct. - Dec.	Jan. - Mar.	2017 - 2018
a	Apply for funding for needed work on Tourism Interpretive Plan.	SRMT	✓				
b	Issue RFP and hire consultant.	SRMT					
c	Work closely with the consultants on the Tourism Interpretive Planning process.	ATWG					
d	Present the draft Interpretive Plan to the community for feedback through the Community Tourism Engagement Process.	ATWG					
e	Begin to use the Tourism Interpretive Plan for enhanced tour package development and with on-going attraction development.	SRMT, MCA, ATWG					

Notes: Local Akwasasne community historians, museum professionals or other heritage experts within the community may be hired as individuals or as part of a consulting team to develop the Tourism Interpretive Plan. The RFP will specify a requirement and `additional scoring points` for bids which are submitted by or include a significant component of expertise from the community.

Current Target Funding Source: SRMT – has applied to ANA-SEEDS.  
If desired, MCA could seek support from Canadian Heritage (tbc).

Goal 2 - We will engage with our community, train our people, and reinforce our Kanien'ké:ha language, arts and culture.

**Objective 2.3:** Building from the Interpretive Plan, create a set of **Akwesasne Cultural Tourism Guidelines** and related training videos and materials.

#	Action	Lead	April - June	July - Sept.	Oct. - Dec.	Jan. - Mar.	2017 - 2018
a	Research best practices in Cultural Tourism Guidelines from other Native American Tribes and/Indigenous communities around the world	Tourism Coordinator(s) and ATWG					
b	Use the Tourism Interpretive Plan to develop clear Akwesasne Cultural Tourism Guidelines for community tourism partners to articulate interpretive themes and cultural components that will be encouraged and considered credible and authentic for all Experience Akwesasne tourism products and services.	Tourism Coordinator(s) and ATWG					
c	Develop training materials (videos, handbooks and/or workshops) in order to pass this information on.	Tourism Coordinator(s)					

Notes:

Resource – “Aboriginal Cultural Experiences National Guidelines” – 2013 - Canada

Current Target Funding Source: SRMT has applied to ANA-SEEDS.  
If desired, MCA could apply to the Ontario Tourism Fund (tbc).

***Please note further that the Akwesasne Cultural Tourism Guidelines are not proposed to be mandatory.***

***Rather, they will be designed to assist interested stakeholders in creating accurate, authentic and high quality tourism products that the community will be proud of.***

***The related training will be an opportunity to reinforce language and culture and provide an economic incentive for its continued preservation and revitalization.***

***If desired, the Cultural Tourism Guidelines could be used for future Experience Akwesasne voluntary certification programs.***

Goal 2 - We will engage with our community, train our people, and reinforce our Kanien'ké:ha language, arts and culture.

**Objective 2.4:** Develop and start to implement a comprehensive **Experience Akwesasne Human Resources Strategy** addressing all levels of professional development and training for the tourism industry.

#	Action	Lead	April - June	July - Sept.	Oct. - Dec.	Jan. - Mar.	2017 - 2018
a	Apply for funding to develop comprehensive Experience Akwesasne Human Resources Strategy.	SRMT	✓				
b	Issue RFP and hire consultant. RFP to include identification of 'best practices' in this area with other Tribal / Indigenous tourism efforts – at all levels of professional development and training.	SRMT					
c	Work closely with the consultants on the Tourism HR Strategy development.	ATWG and Akwesasne Area Management Board					
d	Present the draft Tourism HR Strategy to the community for feedback through the Community Tourism Engagement Process.	ATWG					
e	Begin to use the Tourism HR Strategy to lead professional development and training for the tourism industry.	SRMT, MCA, ATWG					

Notes: Akwesasne Area Management Board is a key local partner to be involved in this process.

Current Target Funding Source: SRMT has applied to ANA-SEEDS.  
If desired, MCA could possibly apply to AAMB (tbc).

Goal 2 - We will engage with our community, train our people, and reinforce our Kanien'ké:ha language, arts and culture.

**Objective 2.5:** Encourage SRMT and MCA to both establish guest **Welcome Centre sites with full time Tourism Coordinators** (to work together, support tourism industry development & promote events).

#	Action	Lead	April - June	July - Sept.	Oct. - Dec.	Jan. - Mar.	2017 - 2018
a	MCA continues with active Welcome Centre site and Tourism Coordinator with budget in place through end March 2017.	MCA and Tourism Coordinator	✓				
b	SRMT to apply for funding to establish temporary site for Southern Welcome Centre and a Tourism Coordinator.	SRMT		✓			
c	Jointly determine and implement short term action plan for improved tourism related event promotion (including arena).	MCA Tourism Coordinator	✓				
d	SRMT to hire Tourism Coordinator once funding approved.	SRMT					
e	MCA review of MCA Welcome Centre project with regards to initial objectives, progress to date, areas for improvement, options for the future (particularly beyond March 2017)	MCA and MCA Welcome Centre Tourism Coordinator					
f	Plan and then implement plans for 2 Welcome Centre sites, 2 Tourism Coordinators and Year 2 Event Promotion.	MCA, SRMT					

Notes: Combining Welcome Centre(s) role with others could reduce costs. MCA may relocate its Welcome Centre to (1) Arena, (2) NNATC and/or (3) port lands owned jointly by Cornwall and MCA. SRMT short-term Welcome Centre could be through museum, and long-term with Heritage Complex.

Current Target Funding Source: SRMT - Hotel Occupancy Fees.

MCA – Ontario Trillium Foundation Grow program for funds to launch new DMMO, Tourism Ontario – Industry Capacity Building program, Ontario Indigenous Economic Development Fund (deadline Jan 2017), Quebec Aboriginal Initiatives Fund.

## Goal 3 – Places

***We will develop three primary cultural tourism attractions (one each for New York, Ontario and Quebec). We will continue work on parks and trails as well as ecotourism and adventure tourism sites including Thompson Island Cultural Camp. We will also address beautification and basic physical infrastructure for tourism.***

The Goal 3 objectives and actions are focused on physical tourism sites, facilities and basic tourism infrastructure. The history and culture of Akwasasne will be of interest to many guests. Akwasasne can provide world class, authentic Akwasasne Mohawk cultural and adventure tourism experiences, in part by further developing key tourism sites and basic infrastructure.

This Strategic Action Plan focuses heavily on further developing three primary cultural tourism attractions (one each for New York, Ontario and Quebec) in order to serve as ‘core attractions’ and attract significant visitation. The three primary attractions are:

- Akwasasne Heritage Complex (New York)
  - possibly relocate and expand the existing Akwasasne Culture Centre and Museum (maybe archives and other functions)
- Native North American Travelling College (Ontario)
  - continued growth at existing site
- Interpretive site near the St. Regis Catholic Church (Quebec)
  - establish new interpretive elements at or near the church

These primary cultural attractions will emphasize Akwasasne’s unique culture and traditions and be of sufficient size and quality to attract guests to the community. For maximum effectiveness, these attractions should be developed to continue to differ significantly from other Native American tourist attractions in the region.

The Goal 3 area also addresses parks, trails ecotourism and adventure tourism. Three noteworthy projects are sustainable business planning for the Thompson Island Cultural Camp, the proposed Art Park and the AKTIV Akwasasne Trails Project.

Finally, the goal 3 objectives and actions also address beautification and basic tourism infrastructure. This will benefit local residents, while also enhancing the guest experience and attract more of the market. This effort will focus on the tourism zones and routes identified in the Interpretive Plan (objective 2.2). Actions include clean-up, beautification and signage. This will likely include entry points, border crossings, Art Park, International Road, St. Regis Road, Route 37 and the arena area.

## Objectives for Goal 3 – Year One

Objective 3.1: Develop three **primary cultural tourism attractions**;

- A. Akwesasne Heritage Complex (New York)**
- B. Native North American Travelling College (ON)**
- C. Interpretive Site near Catholic Church (Quebec)**

Objective 3.2: Create a conceptual design and full business plan for the proposed **Art Park**.

Objective 3.3: Improve the facilities at **Thompson Island Cultural Camp** and create a sustainable business plan (including full financials).

Objective 3.4: Develop a **five year plan for AKTIV Akwesasne to address existing and new parks and trails as well as ecotourism and adventure tourism sites** (north and south portions - including Land Claims areas such as Robert Moses State Park and near Ramsar site).

Objective 3.5: Undertake **Beautification Projects** focusing on primary tourism travel zones for Akwesasne South and North (including roadside clean-up and the painting of the water tower).

Objective 3.6: Develop and implement detailed plans to **improve basic tourism infrastructure** including welcome signage, wayfinding signage and public washrooms.

Objective 3.7: **A'nowara'ko:wa Arena** capital facility expansion and improvements (including creation of outdoor sports facilities, trails development and installation of a lacrosse monument).

## Action Charts for each Goal 3 Objective

Goal 3 - We will develop three primary cultural tourism attractions (one each for New York, Ontario and Quebec). We will continue work on parks and trails as well as ecotourism and adventure tourism sites including Thompson Island Cultural Camp. We will also address beautification and basic physical infrastructure for tourism.

### Objective 3.1-A: Develop three primary cultural tourism attractions;

#### - Akwasasne Heritage Complex (New York)

#	Action	Lead	April - June	July - Sept.	Oct. - Dec.	Jan. - Mar.	2017 - 2018
a	Gather all planning documents to date on possible museum expansion and relocation.	Akwasasne Cultural Centre and Museum (ACCM)	✓				
b	Seek funding to conduct a feasibility study and business plan on development of Akwasasne Heritage Complex to include relocated museum, small welcome centre, crafter and artist market-place, space for events, performances and Mohawk cuisine catering commercial kitchen and dining	SRMT	✓				
c	Issue RFP and hire consultant. RFP to include review of all past related docs and to address organizational development.	SRMT					
d	Carry out Feasibility Study and Business Plan including full financials for capital project and operations	Consultants with SRMT and ATWG					
e	Work towards securing funding for capital project and to implement business plan.	SRMT					

Current Target Funding Source: SRMT ANA-SEEDS application includes AHC planning.

Future Target Funding Sources for Planning and for Capital Project: (1) North Country Rural Economic Development Council (2) DOC-EDA LTAP (no deadline – this program approved \$2M in 2013 for Chemehuevi Indian Tribe for hotel and marina related costs) and (3) Art Place America (check 2017 deadlines in November 2016).

Goal 3 - We will develop three primary cultural tourism attractions (one each for New York, Ontario and Quebec). We will continue work on parks and trails as well as ecotourism and adventure tourism sites including Thompson Island Cultural Camp. We will also address beautification and basic physical infrastructure for tourism.

### Continued

#### Objective 3.1-B: Develop three primary cultural tourism attractions;

- Native North American Travelling College (Ontario)
- 

#	Action	Lead	April - June	July - Sept.	Oct. - Dec.	Jan. - Mar.	2017 - 2018
a	Review existing and proposed NNATC developments determine any gaps or challenges to be addressed with operations and with marketing to attract new guests.	NNATC	✓				
b	Develop building expansion plans for NNATC interpretive elements, including the purchase of neighbouring property.	NNATC					
c	Apply for capital funding and marketing enhancement support for NNATC.	NNATC					
d	Implement expansion and marketing plans for NNATC once funding is secured.	NNATC					

Current Target Funding Source: Internal sources at NNATC and within Akwasasne.

Potential target funding sources:

For NNATC expansion planning and capital project; Department of Cultural Heritage – Cultural Spaces Program (no deadline).

Funding for purchase of property, Culture et Communications Québec (CCQ) – Capital Program (tbc).

Marketing support – ABFP (Aboriginal Business Financing Program) Marketing Component, the Ontario Trillium Foundation – Grow Program, Regional Tourism Organization #9.

Goal 3 - We will develop three primary cultural tourism attractions (one each for New York, Ontario and Quebec). We will continue work on parks and trails as well as ecotourism and adventure tourism sites including Thompson Island Cultural Camp. We will also address beautification and basic physical infrastructure for tourism.

### Continued

**Objective 3.1-C: Develop three primary cultural tourism attractions;**

- **Interpretive site near the St. Regis Catholic Church (Quebec)**

#	Action	Lead	April - June	July - Sept.	Oct. - Dec.	Jan. - Mar.	2017 - 2018
a	Seek permission of St. Regis Church and MCA to discuss possible planning for interpretive site near the church.	MCA, ATWG					
b	If proceeding, develop interpretive concept paper for community review and feedback.	MCA with Interpretive Planner (tbc)					
c	If proceeding, apply for funding for site plan, exhibit design and possibly business planning.	MCA					
d	If proceeding, issue RFPs and hire consultants.	MCA					
e	If proceeding, do detailed site plan, exhibit plans business plan.	Consultants with MCA					
f	If proceeding, apply for funding to construct the exhibits and site improvements.	MCA					

Notes: The land around the church is under MCA jurisdiction. While it is difficult to obtain funding for churches, the church could benefit from having an interpretive site adjacent to their building.

Current Target Funding Sources: Exhibit planning and construction: Museums Assistance Program (deadline Nov. 1, 2016). Site planning and capital costs: PADAT (Tourisme Quebec), Canada Economic Development, Culture et Communications Québec (CCQ). Business Planning: ABFP . Monument: Canada Council for the Arts, New Horizon program. If desired: DCH Legacy Fund in 2020 for site improvement to commemorate the 225<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the construction of the Church.

Goal 3 - We will develop three primary cultural tourism attractions (one each for New York, Ontario and Quebec). We will continue work on parks and trails as well as ecotourism and adventure tourism sites including Thompson Island Cultural Camp. We will also address beautification and basic physical infrastructure for tourism.

**Objective 3.2: Create a conceptual design and full business plan for the proposed Art Park.**

#	Action	Lead	April - June	July - Sept.	Oct. - Dec.	Jan. - Mar.	2017 - 2018
a	Jointly work on initial planning for Art Park.	NNATC, MCA, SRMT and ATWG	✓				
c	Further joint planning as needed.	NNATC, MCA, SRMT and ATWG					
d	Present the concept and draft business plan to the community for feedback.	ATWG					
e	Implement the plan with support from the Pratt Institute.	ATWG, SRMT, community partners					

Notes: The Art Park project will need to be designed in cooperation with the SRMT Environmental Division. In design, include consideration for canoe and kayak launches at the site for future recreational, trails and eco-tourism developments.

Current Target Funding Sources: SRMT has applied to ANA-SEEDS.

Additional Potential Target Funding Sources:

- (1) New York Park Historic Preservation Grants Program (if eligible re: State or National Register of Historic Places) [www.nysparks.com/grants/historic-preservation/default.aspx](http://www.nysparks.com/grants/historic-preservation/default.aspx)
- (2) Art Place America (check 2017 deadlines in November 2016).
- (3) Northern New York Community Foundation, INC. (tbc).

Goal 3 - We will develop three primary cultural tourism attractions (one each for New York, Ontario and Quebec). We will continue work on parks and trails as well as ecotourism and adventure tourism sites including Thompson Island Cultural Camp. We will also address beautification and basic physical infrastructure for tourism.

**Objective 3.3:** Improve the facilities at **Thompson Island Cultural Camp** and create a sustainable business plan (including full financials).

#	Action	Lead	April - June	July - Sept.	Oct. - Dec.	Jan. - Mar.	2017 - 2018
a	Review internal documents and plans from Thompson Island Cultural Camp (TICC).	TICC and MCA	✓				
b	Apply for facility improvements funding.	TICC and MCA		✓			
c	Once approved, start to improve facilities.	TICC and MCA					
d	Seek funding for business plan and marketing improvements.	TICC and MCA					
e	Prepare RFP for business plan and marketing improvements (address review of past docs, plans and financials, org. dev. tourism and other markets, etc.) and then tender and hire consultant.	TICC and MCA					
f	Once funding approved, carry out the improvements and business planning project.	TICC and consultants					
g	Implement the business plan	TICC and MCA					

Notes: MCA working with existing staff as they have identified issues and opportunities.

Current Target Funding Source: MCA has applied to CED Canada 150 Fund for infrastructure improvements.

Possible planning and additional funding targets: Investissement Québec, Support for Tourist Attraction Development Program (PADAT), Canada Economic Development (DEC), Regional Tourism Associations, Tourism Quebec, INAC.

Goal 3 - We will develop three primary cultural tourism attractions (one each for New York, Ontario and Quebec). We will continue work on parks and trails as well as ecotourism and adventure tourism sites including Thompson Island Cultural Camp. We will also address beautification and basic physical infrastructure for tourism.

**Objective 3.4: Develop a five year plan for AKTIV Akwesasne to address existing and new parks and trails as well as ecotourism and adventure tourism sites (north and south portions – including Land Claims areas such as Robert Moses State Park and near Ramsar site).**

#	Action	Lead	April - June	July - Sept.	Oct. - Dec.	Jan. - Mar.	2017 - 2018
a	Seek funding for work on Five Year Plan to benefit residents (active community living) and tourism industry.	SRMT, MCA					
b	Consider proposing co-management of Robert Moses State Park / Ramsar site (in advance of future settlement of related Land Claim). Do detailed project plans.	SRMT, MCA					
c	Gather various past and current plans for existing and new parks, trails, ecotourism and adventure tourism sites.	SRMT and MCA					
d	Prepare RFP and Hire Consultant	SRMT, MCA					
e	Develop Five Year Plan	SRMT and MCA					
f	Review plan through Community Engagement Process	ATWG					
g	Start to implement the plan	SRMT and MCA					

North: funding target TBC - MCA - Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport – Tourism Fund.

South: Current Target Funding Sources: Within ANA-SEEDS submission already.

Potential trail funding source for future years (all TBC):

(1) Northern New York Community Foundation.

(2) New York Parks Snowmobile Trail Grant Program (annual deadline each Sept 1).

(3) Potential boating infrastructure source for future years: New York Parks Boating Infrastructure Grant Program (annual deadline early September).

Goal 3 - We will develop three primary cultural tourism attractions (one each for New York, Ontario and Quebec). We will continue work on parks and trails as well as ecotourism and adventure tourism sites including Thompson Island Cultural Camp. We will also address beautification and basic physical infrastructure for tourism.

**Objective 3.5: Undertake Beautification Projects** focusing on primary tourism travel zones for Akwasasne South and North.

#	Action	Lead	April - June	July - Sept.	Oct. - Dec.	Jan. - Mar.	2017 - 2018
a	Secure CIRD funding (submitted Jan 2016, approved April 2016).	ACCM and SRMT	✓				
b	Within CIRD project, work with project professionals to plan and host Route 37 design workshops in the community.	ACCM and SRMT with ATWG					
c	Use existing summer student employment funds to undertake a Route 37, St. Regis Road and Cornwall Island Bridge corridor community cleanup project.	AAMB, NNATC	✓				
d	Work with corporate support (Home Depot) for Cornwall Island Beautification.	MCA	✓				
e	Seek funding to develop overall beautification plan for MCA.	MCA					
f	Seek funding to develop overall beautification plan for SRMT and to hire artists to create a <b>Water Tower Basket Mural</b> .	SRMT					
g	Implement planning projects	SRMT, MCA and ATWG					

Current Target Funding Sources: ACCM has received support from CIRD for beautification planning. MCA funding target – tbd.

Goal 3 - We will develop three primary cultural tourism attractions (one each for New York, Ontario and Quebec). We will continue work on parks and trails as well as ecotourism and adventure tourism sites including Thompson Island Cultural Camp. We will also address beautification and basic physical infrastructure for tourism.

**Objective 3.6:** Develop and implement detailed plans to **improve basic tourism infrastructure** including welcome signage, wayfinding signage and public washrooms.

#	Action	Lead	April - June	July - Sept.	Oct. - Dec.	Jan. - Mar.	2017 - 2018
a	Seek funding for <b>Basic Tourism Infrastructure Situational Review and Improvement Planning project</b> (including Tourism Traffic Flow Planning, Wayfinding Signage plan, Public Washroom planning, etc.).	SRMT	✓				
b	Issue and RFP and hire consultants	SRMT					
c	Participate in the Basic Tourism Infrastructure Situational Review and Planning project	ATWG, SRMT, MCA					
d	Present the draft Tourism Traffic Flow Planning and Signage plan to the community through Community Tourism Engagement Process.	ATWG					
e	Begin to implement the Basic Tourism Infrastructure Improvements Plan	SRMT, MCA					

Notes: There are likely enough washrooms in the community. This should be confirmed, and they will need appropriate signage for tourism purposes.

Current Target Funding Sources: SRMT has applied to ANA-SEEDS for basic infrastructure improvement planning.

MCA may be able to apply to Tourism Ontario (tbc) or DEC (tbc).

Goal 3 - We will develop three primary cultural tourism attractions (one each for New York, Ontario and Quebec). We will continue work on parks and trails as well as ecotourism and adventure tourism sites including Thompson Island Cultural Camp. We will also address beautification and basic physical infrastructure for tourism.

**Objective 3.7: A'nowara'ko:wa Arena** capital facility expansion (including creation of outdoor sports facilities, trails development and installation of a lacrosse monument) and operational improvements.

#	Action	Lead	April - June	July - Sept.	Oct. - Dec.	Jan. - Mar.	2017 - 2018
a	Seek capital funding to expand arena and make improvements to grounds.	MCA	✓				
b	Seek funding for design and construction of a lacrosse stick statue on arena grounds.	MCA					
c	Begin partnership discussions with potential partners/tenants in expanded arena building (i.e. Welcome Centre, Lacrosse Hall of Fame, Health Department, tourism business incubator, restaurant, ...)	MCA					
d	Once funding approved, implement capital facility expansion plans.	MCA					
e	Plan for operational improvements.	MCA					

Notes: Detailed plans for the arena expansion, grounds development and trails have already been developed by MCA. The focus of this objective is the implementation of the existing plans.

Current Target Funding Sources;

MCA has secured an approval from Mohawk Community Settlement Trust (CST) for arena grounds development (to build a Pavilion, Fall 2016 – seek matching funds from Akwasasne AEDF).

MCA applied in July for capital funding for the arena expansion and grounds development from FedDev Canada 150 (decision expected by Sept 2016).

MCA will need to identify another funder for the lacrosse statue.

## Summary Timing Chart - for Year One (2016/17)

as of August 26, 2016

<b>Legend:</b>	<b>TWG</b>	Tourism Working Group
	<b>SRMT</b>	Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe
◆	<b>MCA</b>	Mohawk Council of Akwesasne
■	<b>TCs</b>	Tourism Coordinators
✓	<b>all</b>	all the above

(quarter) (month)	Lead	2016/2017				2017/18
		1 Apr-Jun	2 July-Sept	3 Oct-Dec	4 Jan-Feb	
<b>Goal 1 – Organize</b> <i>We will organize ourselves effectively to develop, manage and market Akwesasne Tourism.</i>						
1.1	Business planning for new Experience Akwesasne Tourism Organization(s)	TWG	◆ ✓	■	■	■
1.2	Effectively coordinate the implementation of this Strategic Action Plan	TWG	✓	■	■	■
1.3	Develop Marketing Plan, Branding Plan, Tourism Web Site (sequential order)	TWG		◆	■	■
1.4	Undertake a Group Tour Development Project	all		■	■	■
1.5	Pursue incubators to provide support for tourism related business - South	SRMT	◆ ✓		■	■
	Pursue incubators to provide support for tourism related business - North	MCA			◆	■
1.6	Develop internal tourism policies and address outside regs & borders	TWG			■	■
<b>Goal 2 – People</b> <i>We will engage with our community, train our people, and reinforce our Kanien'ké:ha language, arts and culture.</i>						
2.1	Community Tourism Engagement Process	TWG	✓	■	■	■
2.2	Create overall Tourism Interpretive Plan	TWG	◆ ✓	■	■	■
2.3	Build a set of Cultural Tourism Guidelines	TWG	◆ ✓	■	■	■
2.4	Develop and implement a Tourism Human Resource Strategy	TWG		◆	■	■
2.5	Manage two Welcome Centre sites, and tourism events with Tourism Coordinators	TCs	■	■	■	■
<b>Goal 3 – Places</b> <i>We will develop three primary cultural tourism attractions (one each for New York, Ontario and Quebec).</i>  <i>We will continue work on parks &amp; trails, plus ecotourism and adventure tourism sites including Thompson Island Camp.</i>  <i>We will also address beautification and basic physical infrastructure for tourism.</i>						
3.1	Develop three primary cultural tourism attractions (NY,ON,QC)	all	✓	■	■	■
3.2	Art Park - create concept design and business plan	SRMT	✓	■	■	■
3.3	Thompson Island Cultural Camp - improve facility and business planning	MCA		◆ ✓	■	■
3.4	Create 5 year plan for AKTIV Akwesasne for parks, trails, eco and adventure tourism	TWG/MCA/SRMT		◆	■	■
3.5	Beautification Projects - planning and implementation - South & North	all	✓	■	■	■
3.6	Develop and implement plans to improve basic tourism infrastructure	all	◆ ✓	■	■	■
3.7	A'nowara'ko:wa Arena capital facility expansion, improvements and planning	all	◆ ✓	■	■	■

## Annex A – Two Organizational Structure Options

It is anticipated that the community will be establishing one or two new organization(s) to serve the role of Destination Management and Marketing Organization (DMMO). A DMMO is sometimes referred to as a Destination Management Organization (DMO) or a Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB). In this Strategic Action Plan, the term DMMO is used as this best encompasses management and marketing. The overall role of a DMMO is to;

- 1) Develop and implement a tourism strategy;
- 2) Manage all components of the tourism industry (including product development where needed);
- 3) Market the destination, attract more guests, and build the industry and community benefits.

With the Tourism Working Group, two options have been discussed thus far for the Experience Akwasasne Organizational Structure / DMMO:

- Option A: One partnership, two DMMO organizations (South and North Akwasasne)
- Option B: One DMMO organization, two offices (South and North Akwasasne)

### **Option A: One partnership, two organizations (South and North Akwasasne)**

Option A features one over-arching tourism umbrella called 'Experience Akwasasne' Marketing Partnership which will serve as a tourism marketing umbrella for the entire community (including the South and North portions of Akwasasne). Holding up this umbrella will be two strong partners – Tourism Akwasasne South (TAS) and Tourism Akwasasne North (TAN). The marketing partnership will not be a separate legally entity'. It will simply be a joint project of both partners. TAS and TAN will be new organizations.

TAS and TAN will each be Destination Management and Marketing Organizations (DMMOs) responsible for tourism development, management and marketing in their portion of Akwasasne. For establishing TAS and TAN, the southern portion and the northern portion can each decide for themselves whether they will operate through their existing government (SRMT or MCA), through an existing body (such as Akwasasne Cultural Centre for TAS, or the Native North American Travelling College for TAN), or establish new incorporated organizations. We anticipate that TAS and TAN will be open to membership from tourism industry stakeholders from both portions of Akwasasne including cultural tourism attractions and other tourism and tourism related operators.

The 'Experience Akwasasne' umbrella will be developed and managed by TAS and TAN through a formal written partnership agreement. If possible, we envision SRMT and MCA providing equal annual base funding every year (for example - \$20,000 each), with supplementary funding applied for and secured from various internal and external sources. This could include accessing the 'Room Tax' through SRMT and perhaps a similar future mechanism for MCA. The role of the 'Experience Akwasasne' umbrella will be primarily focused on joint tourism marketing and joint tourism development and delivery coordination.

TAS will be established by SRMT and members, and TAN will be established by MCA and members. Each will seek and secure licensing to become the official Destination Management and Marketing Organization (DMMO) for their portion of Akwasasne. One or both may also apply for licensing to become a licensed trip operator as well. If neither wants to adopt this take this role, then a partnership with an existing tour operator or operators will be required.

Operationally, TAS and TAN can have their own meetings on 'odd' months, and a joint meeting of the 'Experience Akwasasne' Tourism Partnership every 'even' month. TAS and TAN will be responsible for doing all possible to develop and deliver tourism in their own portion of Akwasasne, while striving together through the Experience Akwasasne Partnership to present a consistent 'one community' message to the outside world through coordinated and integrated marketing, branding, sales, delivery and follow-up. The role of both DMMOs will be to represent their portion of Akwasasne and help organize their long-term development through a travel and tourism strategy.

As noted, part of the role of the DMMO is to increase the number of guests to a destination and the benefits to the community from tourism development. The DMMO's (TAS and TAN) will undertake some of their activities separately and they will also work effectively with each other. Through the Experience Akwasasne Marketing Partnership, TAS and TAN will also work very closely together to carry out joint projects on agreed areas including branding, marketing sales and joint tour delivery and possibly including additional agreed areas (i.e. quality control, training).

Experience Akwasasne Marketing Partnership (EAMP) will also serve as the ongoing forum for overall Akwasasne tourism coordination. The EAMP core members will be from TAS and TAN. Other stakeholders, who are in agreement with the Akwasasne Tourism Strategic Action Plan, will be invited to join EAMP. The members will continue to exchange ideas, build relationships, explore opportunities to work together, and jointly shape the future of tourism in Akwasasne.

**Option A – Organizational Structure**

**TAS = Tourism Akwasasne South**

**TAN = Tourism Akwasasne North**

TAS and TAN will each be licenced as a DMMO in their respective countries, and operate as a business and carry liability insurance. Each DMMO will be self-funded. TAS and TAN will be the lead agency responsible for overseeing the following within their portion of the community;

- Tourism Advocacy
- Tourism Business Support
- Government Regulations and Licencing
- Tourism Infrastructure Development
- Quality Control
- Guest Experience Development

Through Experience Akwasasne Marketing Partnership, tourism guests will access one single overall Experience Akwasasne tourism website in order to learn about the community. The website will market the community as a whole, and have “call to action” buttons to provide guests information for the south, north or the entire community if they wish to have the ‘complete’ Akwasasne experience.

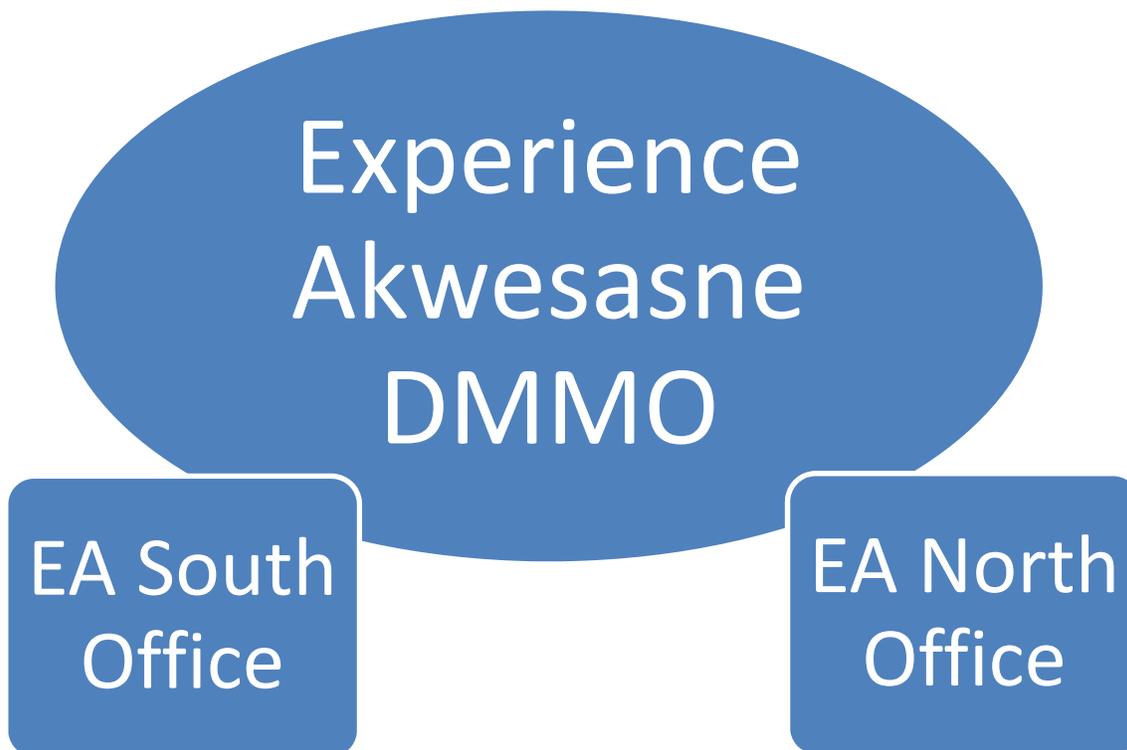
TAS and TAN will undertake both joint and individual marketing and sales duties in order to provide a seamless visitor experience to Akwesasne. The following chart with three columns AAT, ACT and EAMP is an example of an organizing tool which could be further developed in detail and used to clarify areas of sole and joint responsibility;

Task	Tourism Akwesasne South (TAS)	Tourism Akwesasne North (TAN)	Experience Akwesasne Marketing Partnership (EAMP)
Joint Marketing, Branding and Website			●
Lead South portion tours	●		●
Lead North portion tours		●	●
Work within own portion	●	●	

**Option B: One organization, two offices (South and North Akwesasne)**

The other option (B) features one new organization to be established and called Experience Akwesasne. This would serve as one new tourism DMMO for Akwesasne with two offices (one in the Southern portion of Akwesasne, and one in the Northern portion).

**Option B – Organizational Structure**



*EA = Experience Akwesasne*

Under Option B, the 'Experience Akwasasne organization will be the single Destination Management and Marketing Organization (DMMO) for Akwasasne Tourism, with all the responsibilities, licensing, etc. needed for a DMMO. Each of the two offices may require specific registrations and licensing in each jurisdiction to be recognized as a DMMO and/or as a Tour Operator Company. For Option B, the community will need to decide where exactly to legally establish the organization and other such details. This can be done within the business planning process.

We anticipate that the two Experience Akwasasne offices (North and South) will be open to membership from tourism industry stakeholders from both portions of Akwasasne including cultural tourism attractions and other tourism and tourism related operators.

### **When can the DMMO structure be selected?**

Within this Year One Action Plan, Objective 1.1 reads as follows:

Objective 1.1: Create a business plan (including full financials) to establish a new 'Experience Akwasasne' organization as a Tourism Destination Management & Marketing Organization (DMMO) with proposed offices in both the American and Canadian portions of Akwasasne.

***Therefore, if desired, a decision on 'option 1' versus 'option 2' for the organizational structure can wait and be addressed as part of the Business Planning Process.***

## **Planning for and transitioning to the new Tourism Organization**

In Year One (2016/17), the existing Akwasasne Tourism Working Group will continue to meet on a regular basis and continue with coordinated efforts to successfully develop and deliver the 'Akwasasne Experience'.

Objective 1.2 reads as follows:

Objective 1.3: Create a comprehensive Experience Akwasasne marketing and branding plan followed by the development of a single integrated website for Experience Akwasasne.

Combined with the business planning work noted earlier, by the end of Year One the new tourism organizational structure should be fully planned and work on the marketing and branding plan and the web site development work should be complete. At that time or as soon as the community decides to do so, the new tourism organizational structure can be formally launched utilizing the new brand and matching new web site.

However, should there be any delays in establishing the new Experience Akwasasne organizational structure, the community could decide to proceed under the continued direction of the Tourism Working Group.

Once the new Experience Akwasasne organization is fully operational, the Tourism Working Group will disband. The new organization will be legally established as a new legal entity (non-profit or for-profit), and under either option is envisioned to have an office on the Canadian portion and an office on the US portion.

The new organization(s) will have a Board of Directors (to be selected and appointed) and a lead staff person (perhaps an Executive Director). The two offices will likely also require a lead staff person or coordinator each.

***If there is space in the radio station building (which straddles the international border), perhaps this would be the ideal location for both offices of the Akwasasne Tourism DMMO(s). This applies to either option and could greatly enhance communications and partnership effectiveness.***



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