### PROVINCIAL TOURISM STRATEGY

for Manitoba



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#### INTRODUCTION

#### **5 APPROACH & PROCESS**

- 7 Approach
- 8 Process & Timeline
- 9 DestinationNEXT Assessment
- 10 Industry, Stakeholders & Partner Consultations

#### **MANITOBA TODAY**

- 14 Visitor Profile
- 15 Travel Trade Findings
- 17 Meetings/Sports/Events Findings
- 21 Industry Trends
- 39 Key Takeaways

#### 43 VISION

44 Vision

#### 45 TARGETS

#### 47 GOALS & INITIATIVES

- 48 Overview
- 49 Goal 1 Lead Brand & Marketing Positioning
- 51 Goal 2 Invest in Destination and Experience Development
- 53 Goal 3 Improve Transportation & Connectivity
- 55 Goal 4 Foster Collaboration
- 57 Goal 5 Build Public Support for Tourism

#### 59 **NEXT STEPS**

#### 61 APPENDICES

- 61 Appendix A Steering Committee & Project Team
- 63 Appendix B Consultations
- 67 Appendix C Photo Credits





#### INTRODUCTION

This is Manitoba's time on the world's tourism stage. Powered by the iconic Manitoba, Canada's Heart Beats brand, its driven and progressive industry partners, and an array of transformative demand-generating visitor experiences in all its regions, tourism continues to deliver as a major economic engine for the Province.

Tremendous momentum has already been built by Manitoba in the visitor marketplace over the past few years, and market demand continues to grow. Part of this growth in recent years has been stimulated by the introduction of important new demand generators such as the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, the Assiniboine Park Conservancy, and the Winnipeg Convention Centre expansion. The re-introduction of the Winnipeg Jets hockey franchise and increased hotel capacity has further fuelled Winnipeg's growth as an even more vibrant and compelling urban destination.

Additionally, the introduction and successful marketing of new signature experiences across the Province has also driven growth. For example, Travel Manitoba and its industry partners began aggressively marketing beluga whale watching in Churchill just four years ago, and summer packages and tours are moving closer to sell-out status with each new season. To add to the growing momentum, important new visitor demand generators for Manitoba will be introduced to market in the next two years – namely the Inuit Art Centre, Canada's Diversity Gardens, the new location for the Royal Aviation Museum of Western Canada, and a redeveloped and rejuvenated Manitoba Museum.

Notably, progressive and innovative new tourism thinking in Manitoba has already been rewarded. The introduction of Plan 96/4 as a sustainable funding formula provided an incremental \$3.4 million contribution to Travel Manitoba for marketing and destination development activities in 2016. In turn, Travel Manitoba and the tourism sector at large then partnered to generate a significant return of investment of \$100 million in new tourism revenues for the industry and \$20 million in additional tax revenues for the provincial government that year. The Plan 96/4 model dedicates 4% of provincial tourism tax revenues to Travel Manitoba and as tourism revenues grow, the capacity of Travel Manitoba to partner and invest in innovative marketing programs increases.

Yet, for all these recent and significant successes, Manitoba's current tourism sector contribution to provincial GDP is just over 3%, in comparison to current average GDP contribution figures of more than 6% by Canada's tourism sector overall, and more than 10% by the tourism sector worldwide. Clearly, there is an opportunity for Manitoba's tourism sector to further increase its provincial impact and its economic contribution to GDP.

With this in mind, the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, Travel Manitoba and the Manitoba Government have partnered to consult tourism industry stakeholders and core customers on development of a new Provincial Tourism Strategy that can convert this

unprecedented opportunity for the tourism sector to maximize economic growth and significantly increase its contribution to GDP.

Maximizing opportunities and building Manitoba's tourism future also means addressing challenges that, left unchecked, could negatively affect Manitoba's tourism potential, destination competitiveness, and provincial economic impact in the long term. For example, among other challenges, tourism operators seek new working partnerships with federal and provincial parks agencies to responsibly and sustainably introduce new services and experiences in park lands, grow their businesses and operating seasons to meet growing market demand, and thus boost rural economies.

Relative to Manitoba's competitors, the tourism industry also has to regularly re-examine its products, experiences and service approach to ensure the Province stays ahead of visitor expectations and continues to drive demand and economic returns. While the tourism future looks bright, these are a few illustrations of the issues and challenges to work through to achieve success.

Building an ideal tourism future for Manitoba is founded on identifying and developing sustainable opportunities together, addressing key issues collectively and constructively, and fostering a new spirit of collaboration and innovation. These transformative elements lie at the heart of Manitoba's latest Provincial Tourism Strategy.





#### APPROACH

This Provincial Tourism Strategy sets a long-term roadmap that includes a vision, goals and key strategic initiatives for Manitoba's tourism industry and its stakeholders. It is an ongoing platform that will be used to incorporate the vision that is laid out for Manitoba. It will be the foundation for future engagement and collaboration, ongoing economic development and tourism business development, and support the growth of a new competitive advantage for the Province.

This Strategy is based on extensive research, analysis and community engagement. Input from tourism industry leaders, elected officials, residents, visitors and clients, as well as involvement from the next generation of tourism industry and community leaders, was instrumental in creating the plan's initiatives and recommendations. The Provincial Tourism Strategy also considers key recommendations found in other planning initiatives that are underway or were recently completed.

Manitoba's tourism industry and stakeholders are poised to partner in coordinating the next phase of the Provincial Tourism Strategy. As this Strategy incorporates numerous ideas and proposed actions that transcend the tourism industry, initiative planning and implementation will be shared responsibilities among local governments, the provincial government, the tourism industry, economic development organizations, and communities at large throughout all regions of the Province. The effective engagement and alignment of all stakeholders to develop solutions and outcomes together is critical to the success of the Provincial Tourism Strategy.

#### **Strategic Assessment**



1,000+ Pages of Documents and Data Summaries Review



DestinationNEXT Online Diagnostic Review



National & International Trend Analysis



Visitor & Industry Research

#### **Stakeholder Engagement**



5 Regional Workshops with 120 Participants



35 One-on-One Interviews



Travel Trade Survey



Meetings/Sports/Other Events Organizers Survey

#### PROCESS & TIMELINE

# PHASE 1 Project & Stakeholder Engagement Planning Project Kick Off Project Work Plan Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Jan 2018

#### PHASE 2

#### **Situation Review**

Data Analysis

**Asset Mapping** 

**Trend Analysis** 

Market Assessment

Integration of DestinationNEXT Assessment Findings

Jan - May 2018

#### PHASE 3

#### **Stakeholder Engagement**

35 Stakeholder Interviews

5 Regional Workshops

Travel Trade Survey

Meetings/Sports/Events Survey

Jan - July 2018

#### PHASE 4

#### **Plan Development**

Visioning Workshop (Jun 2018)

Strategic Plan Development (Jun - Sep 2018)

Plan Input & Validation (Aug - Sep 2018)

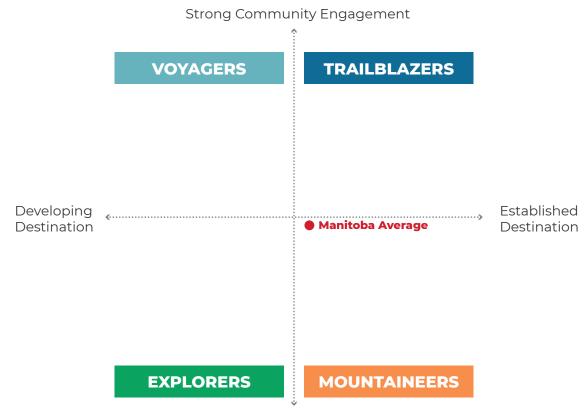
Board & Ministry Ratification (Sep 2018)

Jun - Sep 2018

#### **DestinationNEXT Assessment**

As a foundation element to the development of the Provincial Tourism Strategy, the Province of Manitoba conducted a DestinationNEXT assessment in December 2015. Destination International's DestinationNEXT assessment tool examines the viewpoints of a destination's tourism industry and its key stakeholders on the strengths and assets of the destination, and on its level of community support and engagement. More than 125 tourism representatives and stakeholders took the survey, as well as partner groups such as tour operators and meetings organizers who provided an external voice and viewpoint.

The results of this assessment placed Manitoba in DestinationNEXT's "Mountaineer" category, demonstrating above industry average destination strength and slightly below industry average levels of community support and engagement. A "Mountaineer" destination is viewed as realizing some key benefits of tourism, but has the capability to reach its full potential through building greater destination strength and boosting levels of community support and engagement. The plot below displays where the Province of Manitoba placed in the assessment.



Weak Community Engagement

Key considerations for Manitoba to review at the time included: becoming an internationally friendly destination; improving accommodations capacity within each region; developing more air access to the Province and within the Province; enhancing convention & meeting space to remain competitive in the long-term; establishing diverse, high-quality shopping opportunities in key centres; and establishing new ways to attract and retain a high-quality workforce.

Five core strategic issues also emerged from the DestinationNEXT assessment. Industry leaders and stakeholders sought resolution on: (1) bolstering and unifying the provincial brand; (2) enhancing the range and quality of tourism products and experiences; (3) improving transportation networks and signage throughout the Province; (4) achieving greater industry collaboration and partnerships; and (5) developing higher levels of public support for tourism as a key provincial economic driver.

These key considerations and core strategic issues for Manitoba were brought forward and reviewed in all interviews and regional workshops associated with developing the Provincial Tourism Strategy.

#### **Industry & Stakeholder Consultations**

An extensive series of consultations were developed with Manitoba's tourism industry and other partners and stakeholders as a critical input in building this Provincial Tourism Strategy. A broad range of ideas have been considered based on this input.

In total, 120 participants were involved in five regional workshops held across the Province, and an additional 35 individuals representing various industry sectors, regions and stakeholder groups were interviewed in a one-on-one interview setting.

The five strategic issues revealed during the DestinationNEXT assessment, namely Brand, Products and Experiences, Transportation, Public Support and Industry Collaboration, were used as key topics during these consultations.

In addition, the consultations provided rich feedback for consideration in terms of proposed enhancements and new directions for tourism products, amenities, programming and experiences throughout Manitoba. Specifically, all industry stakeholders provided insights on the critical gaps and opportunities in the Province's assets in the following areas: Arts & Culture; Attractions & Events; Dining, Nightlife & Shopping; Accommodations; Meetings & Conventions; and in Outdoor Recreation & Sports.

#### **Partner Surveys**

The DestinationNEXT assessment and stakeholder feedback was augmented with surveys to capture input from specific partner groups. A total of 66 surveys were completed by these segments:

- · 49 surveys completed by the travel trade
- $\cdot$  17 surveys completed by sports and meeting organizations





### 2016 Visitor Spending & Visitation by Area of Origin

#### **MANITOBA**

**\$906.7** Million **9.05** Million person visits **\$100** per person visit

#### **OTHER CANADIAN PROVINCES**

**\$373.8** Million **1.04** Million person visits **\$358** per person visit

#### **UNITED STATES**

\$167.3 Million

0.40 Million person visits

\$424 per person visit

#### **OVERSEAS**

**\$124.3** Million **0.08** Million person visits **\$1,636** per person visit





Source: Statistics Canada – Travel Survey of Residents of Canada (TSRC), Research Resolutions – 2016 Detailed Tabulations, Statistics Canada International Travel Survey - 2016 Customized Analysis

#### VISITOR PROFILE

In developing this Provincial Tourism Strategy to set the path for a successful future, it is important to take stock of Manitoba's current performance in delivering travel market visitation and expenditures. Manitoba welcomed 10.6 million visitors in 2016, who spent \$1.6 billion throughout the Province. Although the overall number of visitors and spending declined from its peak in 2014, the overnight portion of this total increased during that period. In fact, spending from overnight visitors reached more than \$1 billion in 2016, the highest level recorded since 2012. Manitoba's 3.7 million overnight visitors in 2016 stayed an average of 3.2 nights in the Province and spent \$274 on average.

The vast majority (95%) of visitors to Manitoba are Canadian, including Manitobans. A total of 4% are from the U.S., with 1% arriving from international markets. Some 79% of travellers are drawn to Manitoba for its leisure assets and opportunities, with 39% stating leisure as their primary trip purpose, and an additional 40% verifying that visiting friends and relatives was the main reason for their trip. Twelve percent of visitors are business travellers, with the remaining nine percent stating other reasons for their trip to Manitoba.

The Winnipeg area received 31% of all visitation, and 50% of the spending. Visitors to Winnipeg tended to stay longer (4.0 nights) than other parts of the Province. Each of the six other regions in the Province had varying levels of visitation, from a high of 20% of all provincial visitors being hosted in the Eastern region to 4% in Parkland. From a spending standpoint, however, the yield varies by region. While the Eastern region has four times the number of visitors than the Northern region, it only experienced slightly more in overall spending compared with the Northern region (9% vs 8%).

Manitoba's reliance on the Canadian market, including same-day visitors from the Province itself, leaves it more vulnerable to shifting economic conditions, such as rising gas prices. By further developing and enhancing its tourism and business events offerings, Manitoba should be able to attract more visitors from further afield who tend to spend more. As well, elevating the diversity of experiences available throughout the Province will enable each region to make greater contributions to generating increased visitation and visitor spending in Manitoba.

#### **Travel Trade Survey - Summary Findings**

Some 88% of travel trade representatives were pleased with the packages and itineraries that Manitoba currently has on offer. Almost two-thirds of the travel trade surveyed felt that more demand-generating products and experiences have been made available in recent years, and they believe that travel market demand for Manitoba will grow in the future. This sense of opportunity from the marketplace aligns with stakeholder views that the Province has the assets to attract greater visitation, although there is a need for more development and promotion.

- The strong level of satisfaction amongst the travel trade with Manitoba is underscored by continuous improvement in approval over the past five years. Not one of the respondents to the survey mentioned that their satisfaction with the destination has decreased, with 28% saying it has increased.
- The tour operators that do not currently sell and market Manitoba generally cite low market awareness of Canada. Building the awareness of Canada will undoubtedly help build interest in Manitoba.
- The 64% of the travel trade who mentioned increases in the availability of packages and experiences attributed much of this increase to Northern experiences, such as polar bear packages, belugas, Northern Lights, wildlife and wilderness.
- The same percentage of clients (64%) also stated they saw a growth in demand of Manitoba within five years, with much of this related to demand for Northern experiences.
- When asked to compare Manitoba to key competitors for wildlife viewing, the travel trade considers that Manitoba lags behind British Columbia, Galapagos Islands, Africa and Iceland, yet is now viewed as only marginally behind Norway in destination appeal.
- The attributes that the travel trade believe distinguish Manitoba from other Canadian and U.S. destinations and make it authentic are mostly related to polar bears, belugas, untouched wilderness, and the North.
- When asked to compare Manitoba to other Canadian leisure destinations, the highest relative scores given by the travel trade were for safety/security, positive service/ hospitality, beauty/scenic appeal, and both land-based and water-based outdoor recreation and parks.
- Four of the five lowest ranked destination scores given by the travel trade were associated with transportation and connectivity, with the most common themes related to ease of access and navigation within cities and towns throughout Manitoba.

#### **Travel Trade Input - Destination Rankings**

#### How Does Manitoba Compare to Other Destinations for Wildlife Viewing?

#### RANKING

- 1. British Columbia
- 2. Galapagos Islands
- 3. Africa
- 4. Iceland
- 5. Norway
- 6. Manitoba







#### **Travel Trade Input - Packages/Itineraries & Future Market Demand**



#### **Meetings/Sports/Events Survey - Summary Findings**

Although this survey had a smaller sample size than the travel trade survey (17 event organizations responded out of 30 groups approached), there was a solid cross-section of organizations in meetings, sports and other events who participated.

Meetings/sports/other events organizers showed strong support for Manitoba as an events destination. Ninety-one percent of survey respondents awarded the Province an excellent or good rating as an events destination, with Manitoba scoring 4.5 on a 5.0 scale overall. In addition, 84% of organizers surveyed are satisfied with Manitoba as a destination to hold events, with 43% mentioning that their satisfaction levels have been on the rise in the past five years.

Meeting and sports organizations are generally positive about the venues that are available for them to hold events in Manitoba, which is a significant advantage when looking to grow this type of business.

#### Other key findings are:

- The main strengths of the Province cited by event organizers are its central location, good infrastructure, strong volunteer and community support, and the significant positive impact that Manitoba's professional sports franchises (the Winnipeg Jets and the Winnipeg Blue Bombers) have made in markedly increasing the Province's profile within the events sector.
- The primary challenges or weaknesses expressed by event organizers are related to: Manitoba's air access (and Winnipeg's air access in particular) relative to large Canadian and U.S. urban centres hosting events; and a perceived secondary status as an events destination.
- Although not as positive as the travel trade's assessment of future demand for Manitoba, 50% of event organizers feel that market demand for Manitoba as an events destination will grow in the next five years.
- Compared to other events destinations in Canada, Manitoba is viewed by event organizers as having strong assets in dining/restaurants, venues and service/ hospitality.
- Importantly, the availability, quality, size and options for Manitoba's sport venues and meeting and exhibition spaces was also seen as a destination strength.
- While event venues were viewed positively, event organizers were less favourable on the availability, options and quality of accommodation found throughout Manitoba.
- The lowest rated elements among event organizers were related to accommodations, air access (flights and number of destinations), and climate/weather.
- Respondents relayed that increased awareness building of Manitoba as an events destination is needed, as well as a more proactive approach to soliciting and acquiring events in general.
- Meeting and sports organizers in particular conveyed the need to attract and establish global brand hotels in Winnipeg.
- A number of meetings/business event organizers mentioned that the level of financial and resource support offered to assist in developing and winning bids (with assistance provided by Tourism Winnipeg primarily) should also extend to the hosting of events and delegates.

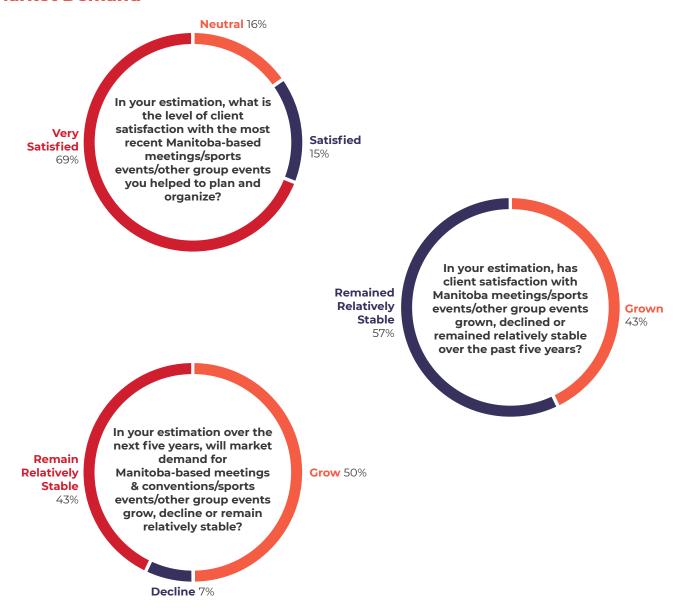
- Although sports organizations are mostly positive about Manitoba, they are less satisfied with their experiences throughout the Province, and less likely to see significant market demand in the future.
- Sports organizations also seek: greater financial and resource support for local organizing host committees; increased funding for sports events generally; greater coordination among key stakeholders; assurances that a formal provincial hosting strategy and program will be established.

#### Manitoba's Relative Rating as a Meetings/Sports/Events Location Versus Other Host Destinations in Canada

RANKING	CATEGORY	SCORE
1	Dining/Restaurants	4.33
2	Sports/Events Venues - Availability of Facilities	4.08
2	Sports/Events Venues – Overall Quality of Facilities	4.08
4	Meeting Venues – Availability of Exhibition Space	4.00
4	Service/Hospitality	4.00
6	Meeting Venues - Overall Quality of Facilities	3.92
7	Meeting Venues - Size of Main Convention Center	3.92
8	Sports/Events Venues – Range of Options	3.91
9	Ease of transportation when in the city/province	3.85
10	Walkability of Cities/Towns	3.83
11	Attractions	3.69
11	Meeting Venues – Off-Site Meeting Venues	3.69
13	Destination Organizations	3.67
14	Level of Support & Partnership	3.67
15	Entertainment/Music/Nightlife	3.62
15	Safe/Secure	3.62
17	Accommodation - Availability of Rooms	3.58
17	Accommodation - Range of Options	3.58
19	Digital Connectivity	3.58
20	Shopping/Retail	3.54
21	Innovation/Technology	3.42
22	Accommodation - Quality of Accommodation	3.33
23	Air Service - Number of Flights and Number of Destinations	3.15
24	Favourable Climate	2.85

Scale: 1 - Weak; 5 - Strong

#### Meetings/Sports/Events Groups Input - Client Satisfaction & Future Market Demand



The travel trade and the event organizations have differing views of Manitoba's strengths and shortcomings, primarily as they look for different factors when choosing a destination. However, two areas are consistent when both the travel trade and event organizers were asked to compare Manitoba to other parts of Canada. First, on a positive note, all groups ranked Manitoba's hospitality culture near the top relative to other parts of Canada. Yet, they also ranked the Province's air service levels (number of flights and destinations) near the bottom relative to other parts of Canada, which could be a significant hurdle for future growth.

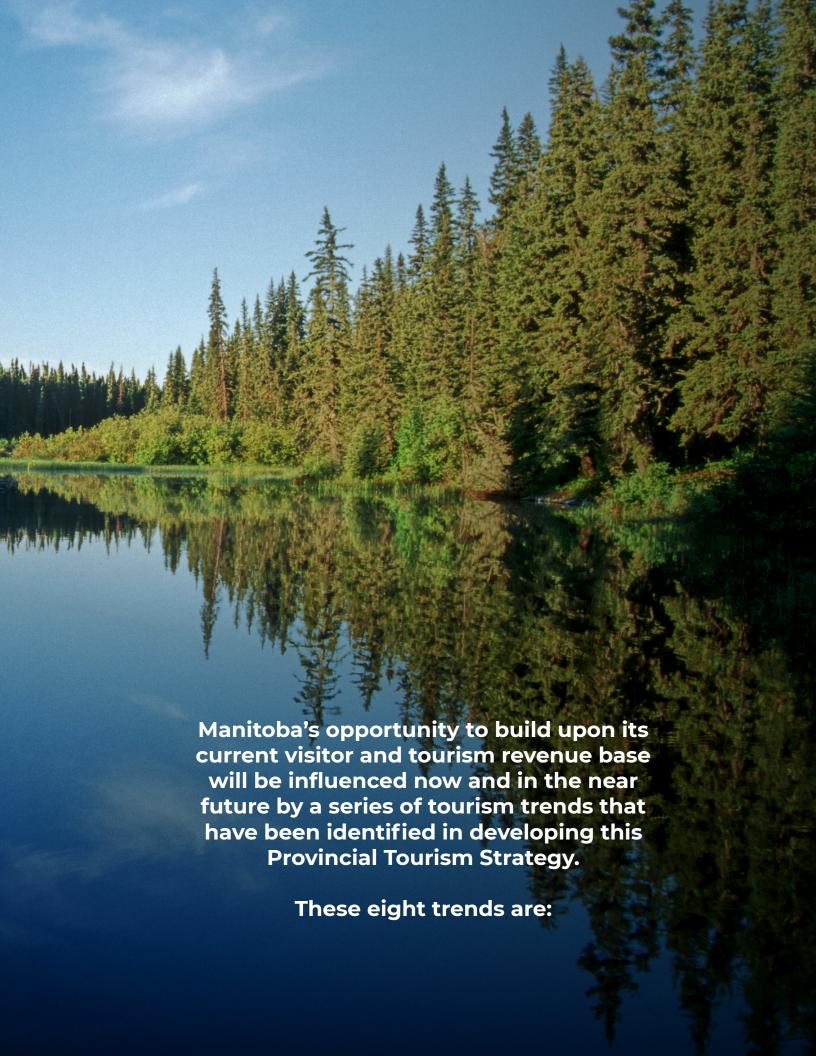
Overall, the perspectives of Manitoba were generally similar between those who sell and market the Province, and those who organize and book business or leisure groups. Unquestionably, Manitoba's travel trade and event partners are both positive about the Province's future potential as a significant events destination.





INDUSTRY

TRENDS





#### Positive outlook for tourism.

The tourism industry has experienced record growth during the past six years. The outlook remains strong, with experts predicting continued growth, albeit at slower rates. Efforts to improve the destination can be rewarded with an increase in visitation and visitor spending.



# Demand for transformational, personalized, unique & authentic experiences.

Travellers seek individualized, local engagement that deeply connects them to a destination's history, people and culture and provides transformative experiences. They desire authentic interactions with the community throughout their trip. This trend has led to increased demand for niche travel and highly customized visitor servicing.



# Feature events driving regional & longer-haul visits.

Events can play a major role in generating visitation from longer-haul markets. The key is to create events which have the uniqueness and scale to be a significant draw for potential visitors in the region and further afield.



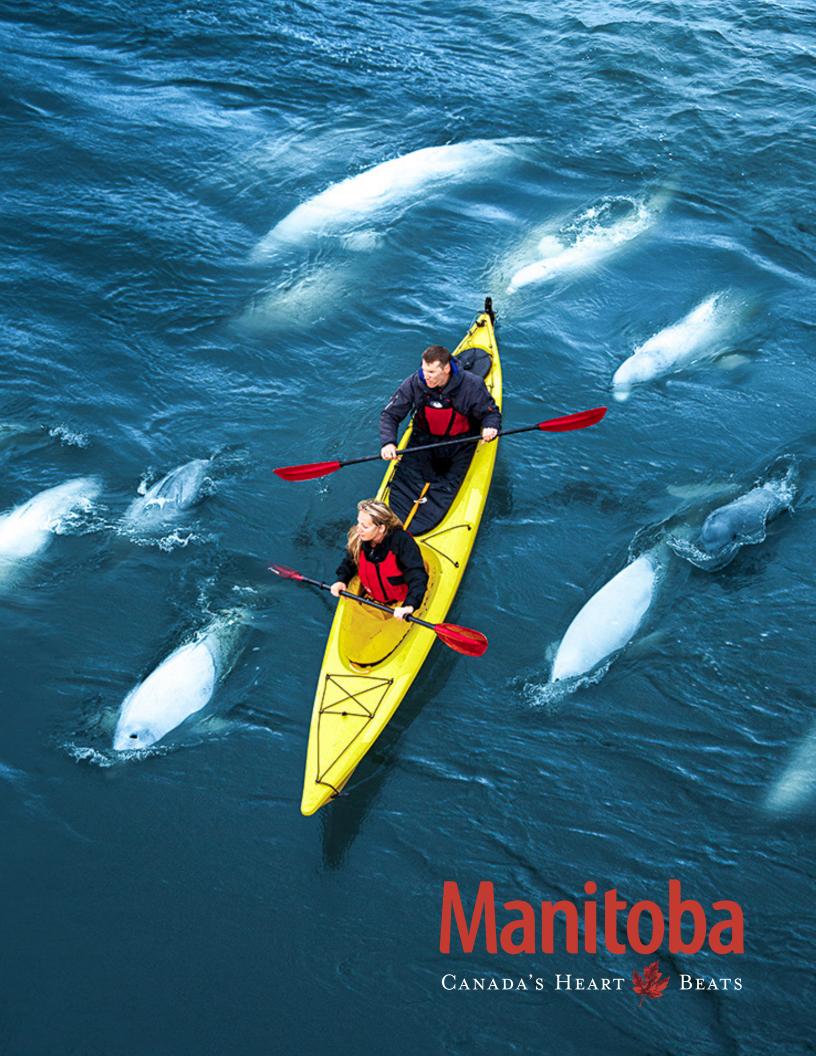
#### More combined business/ leisure & multi-generational trips.

More people on business trips are extending their visits with family members and friends for leisure purposes. There are also more multigenerational leisure trips and visits to destinations.



## Mobile & social media the communication norm.

Travellers expect to have internet connectivity, wherever and whenever they want, to share their travel experiences, and receive recommendations and read reviews across multiple social media platforms. Today's travellers demand instantaneous communication from the destinations and tourism services that are of interest to them.



### **Brand matters.**

The brand of a destination is becoming less influenced by marketers and more by those who visit the destination, such as meeting attendees and leisure travellers. The proliferation of peer-to-peer sharing sites is playing a key role in shaping a destination's brand.



# Public policy has a big impact on destinations & tourism organizations.

Government policies at federal, provincial and local levels can have a profound impact on the competitiveness of a destination. This includes critical decisions about how much to fund tourism promotion and development efforts.



# Fierce competition for meetings/conventions & sports/other group events.

Many destinations are becoming increasingly sophisticated to win business for conventions, meetings and events. These destinations are making significant investments in new and updated meeting facilities, and in lodging, infrastructure and amenities. They are marketing more effectively, and connecting attendees to highly customized and authentic local experiences.

# TAKEAWAYS

from a comprehensive review of all available market research and trends research, Manitoba's DestinationNEXT assessment findings, and all consultations, surveys and input gathered from Manitoba's tourism industry, its stakeholders and partners. These takeaways were carefully considered in developing the goals and initiatives for the Provincial Tourism Strategy. The ten key takeaways are:



1. Strong continuing industry support for Manitoba, Canada's Heart Beats brand nationally & internationally as the provincial signature.



2. Continue to support Winnipeg as Manitoba's leading national-level meetings, conventions, festivals & events destination.



**3.** Continue to support Churchill as Manitoba's leading global destination for wilderness and wildlife experiences.



4. Manitoba's national and provincial parks must embrace economic opportunities such as expanding operating seasons and allowing sustainable growth of visitor demand generators.



5. Strong province-wide demand for additional Place Branding initiatives throughout Manitoba to strengthen market position, and align with provincial brand.



**6.** Foster and integrate unique market-ready Indigenous experiences province-wide.



7. Invest in the following experiences with the potential to generate significant new visitation: Winter, Francophone, Water-Based (Fishing and Paddling), Aquasaurs, and Human Rights.



8. The travel trade and meetings/events partners believe in Manitoba's current facilities, and emerging products and experiences, and are willing to invest and work collaboratively to grow business for the long term.



9. Investment in enhanced tourism signage, ground transportation and digital networks is critical to the success of the tourism industry.



**10.** Assess the merits of a new approach to delivering regional tourism initiatives.



The following Vision responds to all key learnings and inputs gathered throughout the process of developing the Provincial Tourism Strategy.

As importantly, the Vision reflects the aspirations of all stakeholders to maximize Manitoba's opportunities as a key travel destination now and in the future.

This Vision is founded on the need for progressive partnerships, innovative approaches and industry-wide collaboration.

The Vision creates a platform to: target greater visitation, yield and visitor revenues; and to deliver increased economic development and benefits to Manitoba and its citizens.

Manitoba is a must-visit four season destination generating significant & sustainable economic growth by delivering inspiring & authentic experiences in its unique urban, rural & wild settings





Successful execution of the strategic initiatives identified in this Plan has the potential to generate transformative economic benefits for Manitoba over and above current expectations. Achieving these results will have a significant impact on the provincial economy now and in the future, with the Plan targeting \$2.2 billion in annual spending generated by 12.6 million visitors in 2022.

These targets build upon visitor revenue targets set upon confirmation of the additional Plan 96/4 funding, and are based on generating an additional \$100 million province-wide in incremental spending from visitors annually. This equates to a 40% increase in total annual visitor spending by 2022 relative to the \$1.6 billion target set in 2016.

Also, based on an assessment of future day and overnight visitor market demand relative to Plan initiatives, overall visitation for Manitoba is targeted to increase 19% to reach 12.6 million annual visitors in 2022 from the 10.6 million visitor figure set in 2016.\*

2016

10.6

+19% over six years of the six years

2022

**12.6** million visitors

\$1.6
billion spending



**\$2.2** billion spending

\*Domestic day and overnight visitation growth rates were set at 2.9% annually, based on the Canadian Travel Market Research Institute's Travel Market Outlook for Canada (2017). U.S. and international day and overnight visitation growth rates were set at 3.3% annually, based on the World Travel & Tourism Council's Economic Forecast for Canada for 2017-2027.





### OVERVIEW

A series of goals and initiatives were designed for the Provincial Tourism Strategy to support the delivery of Manitoba's future vision. These goals and initiatives provide a focused framework of tangible actions and desired outcomes for stakeholders to collaborate on and embrace together. Each goal and initiative was carefully crafted, and then validated and prioritized by provincial stakeholders.

The five overarching goals of the Provincial Tourism Strategy set a structure to maximize Manitoba's opportunities, yet also respond to the continued importance placed by stakeholders on addressing the key strategic issues initially identified in Manitoba's DestinationNEXT assessment. The five goal categories are:



**Lead Brand & Market Positioning** 



**Invest in Destination & Experience Development** 



**Improve Transportation & Connectivity** 



**Foster Collaboration** 



**Build Public Support for Tourism** 

Each goal has a corresponding set of specific initiatives that have been created to directly address gaps or leverage key opportunities in all goal categories.

# 01

### LEAD BRAND & MARKET POSITIONING

The Manitoba, Canada's Heart Beats brand resonates strongly as the Province's national and international signature. Coupled with compelling imagery of polar bears, belugas, Northern Lights, and other distinctive provincial experiences, the brand clearly differentiates and positions Manitoba in the visitor marketplace. The provincial brand has helped support growth in both market awareness and visitation, and has also been wholly embraced and endorsed by the travel trade as a key selling tool to build even more visitor traffic for the Province.

The development of this new Tourism Strategy creates the opportunity to expand beyond these current brand placement successes which have primarily featured the demand-generating wilderness and wildlife assets of Churchill and the North. The Manitoba, Canada's Heart Beats brand can also be used to highlight aligned themes of the urban pulse and vitality of Winnipeg as the Province's lead destination for city experiences, meetings/conventions, festivals and events.

The Manitoba, Canada's Heart Beats brand can also be deployed to showcase additional destination differentiators and authentic, transformative experiences that can drive significant market demand. These opportunities would include: Indigenous and Francophone events and cultural exchanges; embracing and featuring Manitoba's world-class Winter experiences; presenting the signature fishing, paddling and lakeside relaxation experiences offered by Manitoba's unique river systems and lakes.

At the same time, the expansion of the successful province-wide community Place Branding program must be strongly supported. Emerging demand-generating locations and experiences throughout the Province can attract additional visitation with a compelling Place Brand and a new, focused destination profile that aligns with and is supported by the provincial brand.

### **Key Initiatives & Implementation**

INITIATIVE	TIMING		LEAD	
	S	М	L	
1. Continue the Manitoba, Canada's Heart Beats brand nationally and internationally as the provincial signature.				Travel Manitoba
<ul> <li>2. Utilize the Manitoba, Canada's Heart Beats brand to position and showcase Manitoba's: <ol> <li>i. Indigenous and Francophone events and cultural exchanges;</li> <li>ii. Unique and vibrant four seasons, including Canada's home of exceptional and world-class Winter experiences;</li> <li>iii. World-class water-based experiences such as fishing, paddling, lakeside relaxation.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>				Travel Manitoba
3. Support ongoing Place Branding initiatives throughout the Province to elevate profile and market position, and to strengthen and align with the provincial brand.				Travel Manitoba
4. Support Winnipeg as Manitoba's leading national meetings, conventions, festivals and events destination.				Travel Manitoba
5. Support Churchill as Manitoba's leading international destination for wilderness and wildlife experiences.				Travel Manitoba
6. Develop ongoing brand alliances with global product players to elevate Manitoba destinations (e.g. Diageo alliance with Gimli on its Crown Royal product)				Travel Manitoba

<sup>\*</sup>Note: S- Short Term (< 1 year); M-Medium Term (1-3 years); L- Long Term (> 3 years)

# INVEST IN DESTINATION & EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT

It is critical to continue the drive to invest in the destination, further develop Manitoba's signature experiences, and leverage these unique differentiators in the marketplace. These key differentiators include Winter, Indigenous, Francophone, Urban, Wilderness, and Park-Based and Water-Based activities. These types of demand-generating experiences amplify a deep sense of place and destination DNA that enables the Province to further grow its distinctive presence in the marketplace.

Manitoba's winter season is a unique global differentiator in its own right that presents an array of compelling and authentic experiences and adventures in demand by many visitor market segments worldwide. There was universal consensus among the tourism industry and all stakeholders to embrace winter as an extraordinary asset, and deliver truly world-class winter experiences to visitors in Manitoba's communities and throughout its outdoors.

There is also significant potential to develop transformational experiences based on increased park-based investments and extended park seasons, further support of paddling and fishing assets, and expansion of the Aquasaurs exhibit and its related tours.

Yet, the strategic approach to destination and experience development goes beyond only fostering those assets and experiences that are inherently Manitoban. It is clear that also acquiring experiences and business or sports events from elsewhere for Winnipeg and many rural centres offers significant opportunities for growth. It is essential to create an integrated province-wide events strategy to augment other experience development initiatives, and ultimately attract increased volumes of national and international high-yield visitors.

Another key destination and experience development initiative highlights the approach of building upon a prominent provincial milestone. Manitoba's 150th anniversary and Hudson's Bay Company's 350th anniversary occurs in 2020. This provides an immediate opportunity to significantly leverage and focus media and public interest in visiting Manitoba while promoting new assets and experiences such as Canada's Diversity Gardens, the Inuit Art Centre and the Royal Canadian Aviation Museum.

### **Key Initiatives & Implementation**

INITIATIVE	T	IMIN	G	LEAD
	S	М	L	
1. Ensure the tourism industry has access to advice on business case formulation, market readiness, business development and funding sources.				Travel Manitoba
<ol> <li>Foster and expand Manitoba's world class demand-generating experiences and attractions. For example:         <ol> <li>Experiences: Winter, Indigenous, Francophone, Water-Based (Fishing and Paddling), Human Rights;</li> <li>Attractions: Canada's Diversity Gardens, Inuit Art Centre, Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre, Brandon's Back to the River, Thompson's Boreal Discovery Centre.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>				Travel Manitoba
3. Facilitate sensitive, incremental, appropriate and sustainable tourism development in Manitoba's provincial and national parks year round.				Manitoba Sustainable Development & Parks Canada
4. Develop a province-wide events strategy that maximizes the potential of Winnipeg and rural destinations to host meetings, conventions and major events.				TBD
5. Leverage the Year 2020 opportunity – Manitoba's 150th anniversary and Hudson's Bay Company's 350th anniversary – to promote new assets and experiences in Winnipeg and the rural communities (e.g. Canada's Diversity Gardens, Inuit Art Centre, Royal Canadian Aviation Museum etc.)	-			Travel Manitoba

\*Note: S- Short Term (< 1 year); M-Medium Term (1-3 years); L- Long Term (> 3 years)

# 03

# IMPROVE TRANSPORTATION & CONNECTIVITY

Manitoba's unprecedented opportunity to transform its destination status and economic future will be compromised if it does not immediately address its major transportation and digital connectivity problems. Numerous stakeholders and key business development partners (such as tour operators and meetings and event organizers) spoke candidly about the threat of lost business, competitiveness and reputation if issues are not resolved.

There are significant ground transportation access problems within and between communities, a lack of urgency in dealing with province-wide wayfinding and signage issues, and generally poor service with digital network coverage and WiFi access throughout the Province. More so than ever, the tourism customer demands a seamless end-to-end journey experience as a key part of the trip. Unencumbered access through and between communities, extensive cellular network coverage and high-capacity WiFi service for navigation and social media broadcast, are expected as the norm by increasingly discerning destination customers.

There is a fear that the longer the wait is to solve these issues, the further Manitoba will slip back in position and relevancy relative to the competition. A collective will to solve these urgent transportation and connectivity issues quickly and effectively among public and private sector partners is essential to preserving the major tourism development and economic development opportunities for Manitoba.

### **Key Initiatives & Implementation**

INITIATIVE	1	IMIN	G	LEAD
	S	М	L	
1. Develop province-wide directional signage and wayfinding standards and enhancements within and between communities.				Manitoba Infrastructure
2. Maximize direct air access to Winnipeg, Brandon, Thompson and Churchill.				All Airports
<ul> <li>3. Pursue additional transportation and access options in Winnipeg and other centres, including: <ol> <li>Ride share vehicle networks, attractions-based hop on/hop off bus circulator services;</li> <li>Public bicycle rentals, bicycle lanes, pedestrian walking paths, public access to rivers/lakes;</li> <li>Bus service to rural areas.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>		_		Economic Development Winnipeg & Travel Manitoba
4. Ensure reliable cellular service on major highways and high-speed service/WiFi in communities and parks.				Manitoba Chambers of Commerce
5. Restore train access to Churchill and utilize existing rail infrastructure for tourism purposes.	_			Manitoba Chambers of Commerce
6. Improve transportation between rural and remote Northern communities.				Manitoba Chambers of Commerce

<sup>\*</sup>Note: S- Short Term (< 1 year); M-Medium Term (1-3 years); L- Long Term (> 3 years)

# FOSTER COLLABORATION

Setting a progressive new tourism course and ideal future for the Province with this Strategy demands a whole new way of thinking on how stakeholder organizations should interact and partner on initiatives to realize the collective opportunity. This Tourism Strategy is too important to the economic development and success of Manitoba for existing relationships and organizational approaches to simply be updated in a status quo manner for the next 5 year planning cycle ahead.

As tourism is such a key economic driver for the Province, a wholeof-government approach is necessary for the industry to remain competitive, maximize visitor experiences, and achieve growth. All government departments and agencies must have a common collaborative approach with the tourism sector to enable critical province-wide destination improvements to areas such as roads, wayfinding, digital connectivity, park season extensions, and park amenities and services.

Other key stakeholder partnerships must also be re-examined, re-invigorated, and in some cases re-invented, to enable and accelerate successful tourism and economic development outcomes for Manitoba. To ensure that Manitoba effectively and holistically implements and delivers this unprecedented tourism opportunity to transform its economic future, it is incumbent upon all levels of government, industry representatives and other stakeholders to foster a new spirit of collaboration and innovation in moving forward together.

### **Key Initiatives & Implementation**

INITIATIVE	Т	IMIN	G	LEAD
	S	M	L	
1. Travel Manitoba and Tourism Winnipeg to renew discussions on optimizing partnerships, and to clarify roles, responsibilities and accountabilities.	-			Travel Manitoba & Tourism Winnipeg
2. Assess the merits of a new approach to delivering regional tourism initiatives.				Travel Manitoba
<ul> <li>3. Ensure a whole-of-government approach to tourism as a key economic sector, and maximize alignment between all provincial government departments and agencies to: <ol> <li>Pursue improvements to road networks, wayfinding via signage installations and digital networks, and key provincially-owned buildings (e.g. The Manitoba Museum);</li> <li>Expand park operating seasons, and enable sustainable development and expansion of parks-based facilities and amenities;</li> <li>Enforce province-wide operator licencing and service standards.</li> </ol> </li></ul>	-			Manitoba Growth, Enterprise and Trade
4. Collaborate with Parks Canada to expand national park operating seasons in Manitoba, and to enable sustainable development and expansion of national parks-based facilities and amenities.	-			Travel Manitoba
5. Collaborate with Indigenous, Francophone and other communities on tourism marketing and economic development opportunities.	_			Travel Manitoba
6. Collaborate with Destination Canada on leveraging the Provincial Tourism Strategy and driving future opportunities for Manitoba.				Travel Manitoba

<sup>\*</sup>Note: S- Short Term (< 1 year); M-Medium Term (1-3 years); L- Long Term (> 3 years)

# BUILD PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR TOURISM

The bold vision in this Strategy can only be realized if Manitobans can fully embrace that tourism has the ability to positively transform their communities and enrich their quality of life. Many Manitobans simply do not appreciate the significant role tourism plays in creating sustainable jobs, and in laying the foundation for broader economic development initiatives such as infrastructure investment, and talent retention and acquisition. Residents are also not universally aware of the key role they also play in welcoming and assisting visitors, and their impact in helping to deliver transformative, authentic, unique and local visitor experiences.

Businesses, universities and colleges, and community organizations and institutions, also need to be rallied to become strong ambassadors of the destination, continuing to promote the Province to colleagues and organizations nationally and internationally. The Strategy needs to be aggressively promoted across Manitoba to ensure broad understanding of the power and positivity of tourism, cement maximum support and buy-in, and mobilize Manitobans to become true destination champions.

### **Key Initiatives & Implementation**

INITIATIVE	TIMING			LEAD
	S	М	L	
1. Timed with the release of the Provincial Tourism Strategy, create a new public awareness campaign on the province-wide value of tourism and Manitobans' role and connection to tourism.	-			Manitoba Chambers of Commerce
2. Build awareness of tourism as an economic driver, key employer and dynamic career.				Manitoba Tourism Education Council
3. Ensure that provincial and municipal governments and their officials recognize and regularly communicate tourism's key role in economic growth, job creation and retention, residential tax savings, innovation and education, infrastructure improvements, and quality of life.				Manitoba Chambers of Commerce
4. Engage Manitoba's new international immigrants as global champions of tourism and capitalize on their key connections as tourism ambassadors to their countries of origin.		_		Travel Manitoba

<sup>\*</sup>Note: S- Short Term (< 1 year); M-Medium Term (1-3 years); L- Long Term (> 3 years)



economic driver for the province than it is today."

**Chuck Davidson** 

Manitoba Chambers of Commerce

President & CEO



This Plan will be supported by a measurement and monitoring system that will ensure stakeholders test and confirm its relevance and success over time. In addition to the review process that each lead stakeholder group will conduct, the Plan's measurement and monitoring system includes:

#### **Steering Committee Reviews**

A Steering Committee will be appointed to regularly monitor and measure progress of the Plan. This group will be composed of stakeholders accountable for key activities in the Plan and others who can help accelerate achievement of goals and initiatives.

#### **Stakeholder Feedback**

Stakeholders will have the opportunity to provide input as the Steering Committee and lead organizations evaluate the Plan over time. This feedback will ensure that the Strategy remains grounded, relevant, and valued by stakeholders throughout Manitoba.

#### **Ongoing Tracking of Market Performance**

Travel Manitoba will support the implementation of the Strategy, provide progress updates in delivering the Strategy, and track and present performance relative to expenditure and visitor volume targets in the Plan.

## APPENDIX A

Steering Committee & Project Team

#### **STEERING COMMITTEE**

#### **Provincial Tourism Strategy Steering Committee**

Stuart Murray, Travel Manitoba
Chuck Davidson, Manitoba Chambers of Commerce
Tara Stefansson, Lazy Bear Expeditions
Maureen Hrechkosy, Trail End Camp and Outfitters
Sky Bridges, Aboriginal Peoples Television Network
Paul Conchatre, Birdtail Waterfowl Inc.
Margaret Redmond, Assiniboine Park Conservancy
Simon Resch, Emerson Duty Free Shop
Rob Nedotiafko, Manitoba Sustainable Development
Michelle Wallace, Manitoba Growth, Enterprise and Trade

#### **PROJECT TEAM**

#### **Travel Manitoba Staff**

Colin Ferguson, President & CEO
Brigitte Sandron, Senior Vice President, Strategy and Business Development
Linda Whitfield, Vice President, Marketing and Communications
Lilian Tankard, Director, Partnership and Visitor Experiences
Rebecca McKie, Director, Corporate Services

#### InterVISTAS Consulting Inc.

Paul Ouimet, Consultant
Paul Clark, Consultant
Doris Mak, Consultant
Jordan Young, Consultant
Noel Szelewski, Consultant
Brooks Lai, Graphic Designer
Cheryll Girard, Project Team Coordinator

#### **Gaining Edge**

Paul Vallee, Consultant

## APPENDIX B

Consultations

### The following individuals and organizations were consulted in the development of this Provincial Tourism Strategy for Manitoba.

Ida Albo, The Fort Garry Hotel, Spa and

Conference Centre

Hipolito Alibin Jr., Trivenity Corporation

Sam Anthony, Twin River Travel

Laurie Barkman, ALT Hotel Winnipeg

Sean Barnes, PCL Constructors Canada Inc.

Georges Beaudry, Oroseau-Rapids Park

Pascal Belanger, Winnipeg Airports

Authority

Gary Bell, Calm Air International LP

Manfred Boehm, The Marlborough Hotel

Sky Bridges, Aboriginal People's Television

Network

Karina Bueckert, The Inn Keepers

Les Campbell, Riding Mountain National

Park

Peter Cantelon, Canadian Fossil Discovery

Centre

Carissa Caruk-Ganczar, Dauphin Economic

Development & Tourism

Angela Cassie, Canadian Museum for

Human Rights

David Chizda, RBC Convention Centre

Winnipeg

Cody Chomiak, Economic Development

Winnipeg & Tourism Winnipeg

Caleigh Christie, Falcon Trails Resort

Trevor Clearwater, Assiniboine Park

Conservancy

Paul Conchatre, Birdtail Waterfowl Inc.

Yan Cong, Travel Manitoba

Andrea Coulling, Manitoba Hotel

Association

Dave Daley, Chair - Manitoba Indigenous

Tourism Advisory Committee

Chuck Davidson, Manitoba Chambers of

Commerce

Larry Desrochers, Manitoba Opera

Kevin Donnelly, True North Sports &

Entertainment Ltd.

Angela Driedger, Holiday Inn Winnipeg

Airport West

Jenny Dupas, Eastman Tourism

Barry Dyck, Mennonite Heritage Village Inc.

Shirley Dyck, Delta Waterfowl and Wetlands

Research Station

Lisa Dziedzic, Manitoba Children's Museum

Bill Elliott, FortWhyte Alive

Karl Fabian, Big Whiteshell Lodge

Debra Fehr, The Manitoba Museum

Colin Ferguson, Travel Manitoba

Don Finkbeiner, Heartland International

Travel & Tours

Jayde Finkbeiner, Heartland International

Travel & Tours

Laura Finlay, Community Futures North

Central Development

Drew Fisher, RBC Convention Centre

Winnipeg

Neil Fishman, Outlet Collection Winnipeg

Rose Flagg, Winnipeg Beach Art & Culture

Co-op (Wave Artist Tour)

Sylvie Foidart, Economic Development

Council for Manitoba Bilingual

Municipalities (CDEM)

Shannon Fontaine, Manitoba Tourism

**Education Council** 

Debbi Fortier, Community Futures

Triple R

Michelle Frechette, Tourism Westman

Jason Fuith, Office of the Mayor, City of Lynda D. Lambert-MacLean, Morden Corn Winnipeg and Apple Festival Rick Gaunt, Travel Manitoba Ginette Lavack, Centre culturel franco-Karen Goossen, Economic Development manitobain Winnipeg & Tourism Winnipeg Jacques Lavergne, Canadian Museum for Normand Gousseau, Enterprises Riel Human Rights Stacy Grindle, Swan Valley Rise Michael Lazer, Lakeview Resort and John Gunter, Frontiers North Conference Centre Gimli Merv Gunter. Frontiers North Claudette Leclerc. The Manitoba Museum Helen Halliday, Royal Aviation Museum of Carol Light, Turtle Mountain Resort Ltd. Western Canada Inc. Dan Lussier, Canad Inns Lois MacDonald. Brandon Tourism & Graham Harvey, Brandon First Brandon RiverBank Inc. Kelly Heape, Watchi Bay Bed & Breakfast Clare MacKay, The Forks North Portage Natalie Hebert. The Great Canadian Travel Company Ltd. Partnership Dr. Heather Hinam, Chair - Interlake Scott Marohn, Winnipeg Airports Authority Tourism Association Stephanie Matthews, Calm Air International ΙP Maureen Hrechkosy, Trail End Camp and Outfitters Peggy May, Southport - Airport and Scott Jocelyn, Manitoba Hotel Association Commercial Properties Leona Johnson. Gimli Film Festival Vern May, Portage Regional Economic Damon Johnston, Aboriginal Council of Development Gail McDonald, Interlake Tourism Winnipeg Paul Jordan, The Forks North Portage Association Partnership Meg McGimpsey, Province of Manitoba, Arts lan Kalinowsky, The Great Canadian Travel Branch Company Ltd. J. Bruce McKay, Holiday Inn Winnipeg Joe Kalturnyk, RAW: Almond Airport West Michaela Kent, Riding Mountain National Rebecca McKie, Travel Manitoba Park Penny McMillan, Upper Fort Garry Ilse Ketelsen, 9 Finger Ranch Karly McRae, The Lake House Tyler King, Town of Carman Scot McTaggart, Fusion Grill **Greg Klassen**, Manitoba Theatre for Young Mariette Mulaire, World Trade Centre People Winnipeg Donna Kowbel. Assiniboine Park Stuart Murray, The City of Human Rights

**Education** 

Enver Naidoo, Winnipeg Pass

Colleen Kyle, Central Manitoba Tourism

Conservancy

Association

Rob Nedotiafko, Manitoba Sustainable Bob Sparrow, Past Chair, Travel Manitoba Development Dayna Spiring, Economic Development Heather Nielson, Swan Valley Rise Winnipeg & Tourism Winnipeg Andrew Oakden, Royal Canadian Artillery Lynne Stefanchuk, TD Winnipeg Museum International Jazz Festival Nicole Stefaniuk, Winnipeg Airports Eric Palmondon, Artspace Bill Parrish Jr., Parrish & Heimbecker Ltd. Authority John Pearen, Days Inn Hotel & Suites Tara Stefansson, Lazy Bear Expeditions Kevin Penner, Wilderness Edge Retreat & Doug Stephen, WOW! Hospitality Conference Centre Allan Sulyma, Town of Winnipeg Beach Alexander Ouesnel, Musee de Saint-Corley Sweeting, The Laughing Loon in Boniface Museum Falcon Lake Margaret Redmond, Assiniboine Park Lilian Tankard. Travel Manitoba Natalie Thiesen, Economic Development Conservancy B.J. Reid, Investors Group Winnipeg & Tourism Winnipeg Princess Reid, Falcon Lake Hotel Stephanie Thiessen, Calm Air International Loren Remillard, Winnipeg Chamber of ΙP Commerce Paul Turenne, Manitoba Lodges and Barry Rempel, Winnipeg Airports Authority Outfitters Association Simon Resch, Emerson Duty Free Shop Pit Turenne, Aikens Lake Wilderness Lodge Dawn Riddle. Brandon Tourism & Brandon Rosie Turenne, Economic Development RiverBank Inc. Council for Manitoba Bilingual Pascale Rocher, Ivanhoe Cambridge Municipalities (CDEM) Brigitte Sandron, Travel Manitoba Jean-Francois Vary, Fairmont Winnipeg Mike Scatliff, Scatliff + Miller + Murray Inc. Louise Waldman, Canadian Museum for Tricia Schers, Frontiers North Adventures Human Rights Dean Schinkel, Deloitte Michelle Wallace, Manitoba Growth, Enterprise and Trade Tristan Schneider, Twin River Travel Ryan Schultz, Travel Manitoba Joel Waterman, Inn at The Forks Anne Schuster, Trailhead Ranch Jennifer Weinhandl, Brandon First DJ Seales, Barrier Bay Resort Warren Wenzel, Winnipeg Beach Art & Audrey Seip, Cottonwood Acres Bed and Culture Co-op (Wave Artist Tour) Breakfast Linda Whitfield. Travel Manitoba Murray Seip, Cottonwood Acres Bed and Joe Wiwchar, Manitoba Baseball Hall of Breakfast Fame and Museum Daryl Silver, Continental Travel Michael Woelke, VIA Rail Josh Simair, Skip TheDishes Kaley Young, Rural Municipality of Victoria

Lynne Skromeda, Winnipeg Folk Festival

Aaron Zeghers, Gimli Film Festival

## APPENDIX C

**Photo Credits** 

#### **Photo Credits**

Travel Manitoba, Cover Page

Irene Moore, Travel Manitoba, page 1-2

RBC Convention Centre, page 5-6

Maureen Hrechkosy, page 11-12

RBC Convention Centre, page 20

David Reede, 2005, page 21-22

Travel Manitoba, page 23

@boiledhippo Instagram Museum Morden Mosasaur CFDC, page 25

Brian Goldschmeid, page 27

Travel Manitoba, page 31

Travel Manitoba, page 33

Travel Manitoba, page 35

Travel Manitoba, page 37

Travel Manitoba, page 39

Travel Manitoba, page 40

Jerry Grajewski, 2011/ Grajewski Fotograph Inc., page 40

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Brian Sytnyk, 2001, page 41

Travel Manitoba, page 41

Travel Manitoba, page 41

David Reede, 2005, page 42

Travel Manitoba, page 42

Enviro Foto, 2016, page 42

Brian Sytnyk, 2001, page 43-44

Travel Manitoba, page 45-46

Travel Manitoba, page 47-48

Lance Thomson photography, 2010, page 59-60