

2023-2024

# Operations Plan



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# Land Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge that the land we identify as RTO 9 is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe, and Huron-Wendat Peoples.

RTO 9 and Indigenous Tourism Ontario honour and respect the land, the people, and the Treaties. We are extremely thankful for the original tour guides of these lands and all that they have shared. All those that reside, work, and play on these lands are treaty people and we must honour the treaties in a mutually beneficial and equitable manner.

With 1 in 5 Indigenous people in Canada living in Ontario, we believe working together in a mutually beneficial manner will help all Ontarians prosper through the joint development of the tourism industry. Ontario is home to one of the largest Indigenous tourism industries in Canada, RTO 9 and ITO are pleased to be working side by side, together under an MOU, to help advance the Indigenous Tourism industry in Ontario.

As an ally to Indigenous people and a partner of Indigenous Tourism Ontario, RTO 9 will commit to improving the socio-economic conditions of Indigenous people through tourism by creating space for Indigenous people to tell their stories on their terms.





# Executive Summary and Overview



As we look ahead to our 2023/2024 fiscal year, we look forward to tourism in South Eastern Ontario increasing and growing as we move past the pandemic. While we are optimistic about the future, we are cognizant of any unforeseen circumstances that may arise and understand that we may need to adjust our planning to compensate for changes. Regional Tourism Organization 9 (RTO 9) will continue to focus its efforts on connectivity that aligns the region, under the five pillars outlined by the Ministry. These efforts include a leadership role in communications, shared research knowledge, enhanced tourism experiences for the region, and support to destinations and operators to stimulate multi-destination cooperation and initiatives for the region. The goal of RTO 9 is to support destination development by heightening capacity building with our destinations.

Aligning with our vision and mission statements, the direction for the organization will provide further opportunities for RTO 9 to collaborate with our industry partners and to be the leader in regional tourism for South Eastern Ontario. RTO 9 will continue to support and facilitate initiatives with our stakeholders to increase tourism visitation and receipts to the region. RTO 9 will continue to develop partnerships that focus on destination and experience development for the region. RTO 9 is committed to work in partnership with our destinations, stakeholders, and sector associations to leverage resources and build a robust tourism economy for South Eastern Ontario.

RTO 9 has developed priorities for each of the five pillars that will deliver against our purpose of increasing visitation to South Eastern Ontario. Within each pillar we have identified the impact and objective, which will provide direction and our key activities outline the deliverables to accomplish our plan.

RTO 9's **Product Development** efforts will stimulate the development of new tourism products for the region by focusing on regional development, building partner capacity, and understanding the market to inform our activities. Initiatives will include – Regional Film, Indigenous Tourism, LGBTQ+ and Sustainable Tourism.

Through targeted regional marketing initiatives, through earned media and with continued collaborative effort with our Destination partners, RTO 9 will continue to

play a strategic regional **Marketing** role with a goal to increase multi-night visitation in South Eastern Ontario. Through our marketing and promotions efforts we will tell the regions stories to increase overnight visitation. RTO 9 will continue to be the leading regional tourism organization that provides guidance and management expertise to all 10 destinations in South Eastern Ontario.

The tourism industry continues to struggle with **Workforce** issues that are hindering business existence and growth. Businesses continue to struggle with recruitment and retention of front-line staff. RTO 9 will collaborate with regional and provincial partners to address these issues and bring recognition to the industry as a viable career option. RTO 9 will continue their collaboration with St. Lawrence College as they pursue post-secondary students to enter into a Tourism & Hospitality career.

By providing timely and relevant research for our tourism operators and economic development partners, RTO 9 is able to assist with strengthening opportunities for tourism **Investment** in South Eastern Ontario. By collecting key market accommodation data, RTO 9 can set benchmarks for the industry to understand their market share.

**Partnerships** are extremely important for RTO 9 as we foster tourism growth in South Eastern Ontario. RTO 9 will continue to build strong relationships with our destinations, stakeholders, and sector organizations. RTO 9's partnership fund program will offer opportunities for operators to partner with the RTO on – new events, development of guided experiences or trails, and development of Indigenous tourism.

RTO 9 will measure success of this operations plan through strong relationships and collaborations that have been built with their destinations and operators, along with an increase in tourism receipts. Real success for the RTO can be measured through tourism growth in South Eastern Ontario, in the form of increased visitation and increased investment. Tourism is a strong economic driver for South Eastern Ontario and RTO 9 will continue to be the leading strategic partner. RTO 9 will work collaboratively with its different municipalities to acknowledge the importance of tourism for their communities.

1.0

# Statements





## Vision Statement

To be recognized as the leading strategic tourism partner by destinations in our region.



### Mission Statement

Fostering successful destinations in RTO 9 that set the standard in Ontario.

## Values of RTO 9

The below key words reflect the current and desired values of RTO 9.

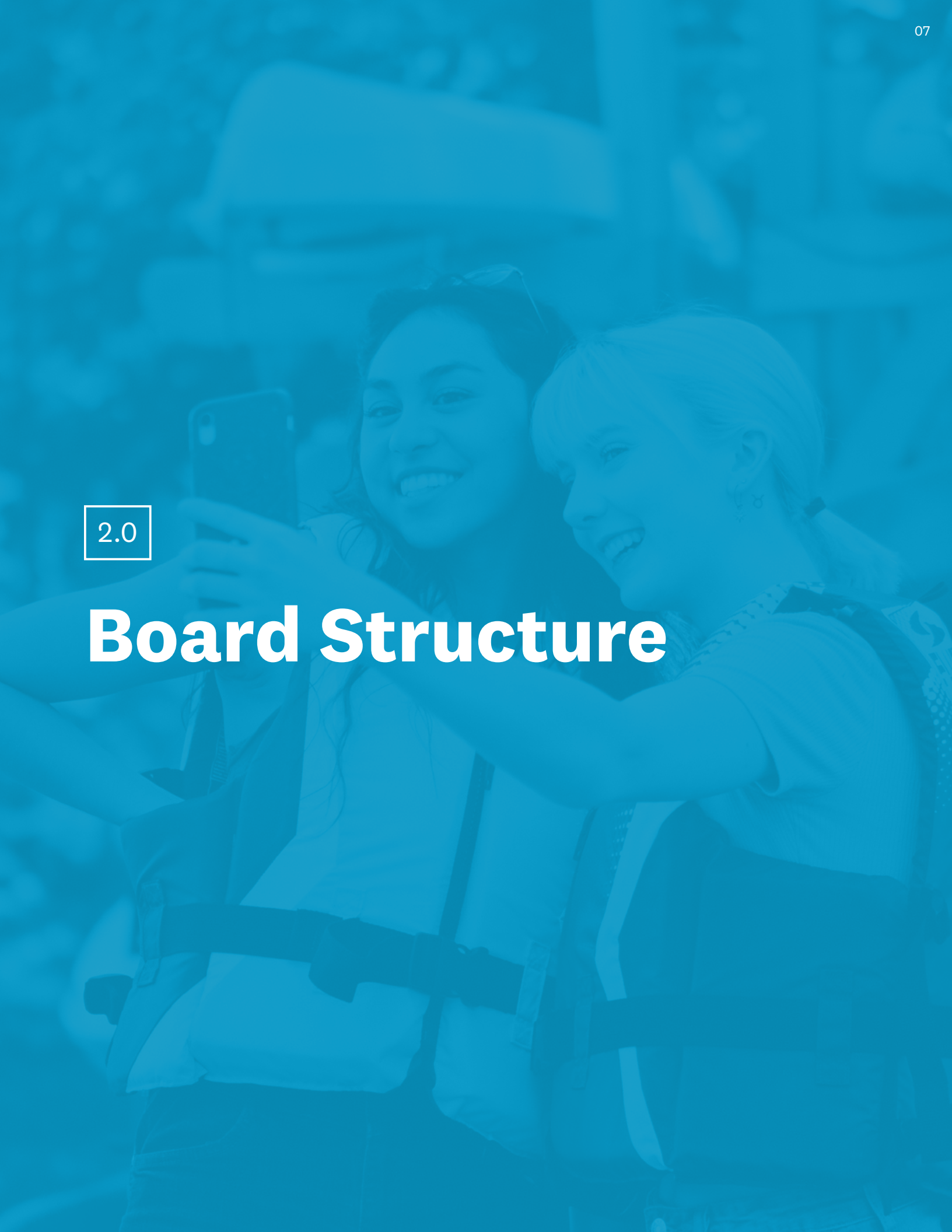
- Collaborative
- Approachable
- Accountable
- Leader

## Focus Areas for RTO 9

- Take a leadership role in communications to share and disseminate information within the South Eastern Ontario tourism industry
- Share research knowledge amongst the tourism industry in South Eastern Ontario
- Play a facilitation role to enhance the tourism experiences for visitors in South Eastern Ontario
- Provide support to destinations and operators to stimulate pan-regional cooperation, through connections and alignment
- Support pan-regional initiatives to increase tourism assets across South Eastern Ontario
- Leverage assets with stakeholders to grow tourism offerings in South Eastern Ontario

2.0

# Board Structure





# Board and Committee Structure

The RTO 9 Board consists of 9 private and public-sector tourism stakeholders, with representation from the original eight destinations that were established upon the RTO 's conception in 2010. Bi-monthly Board meetings are held to measure against the strategic priorities of the organization and ensure financial accountability. The role of the Board is to govern the organization. The Executive committee is comprised of the following four positions:

## Sean Billing – Chair

Managing Partner

### Frontenac Club

225 King Street East  
Kingston, ON K7L 3A7

📞 705.330.5685  
✉ bracehospitality@gmail.com  
Kingston position

## Trevor Norris – Vice Chair

Business & Program Development Manager

### Bay of Quinte Regional Marketing Board

11 Bay Bridge Rd, Suite 114  
Belleville, ON K8P 3P6

📞 613.968.4427  
✉ trevor@bayofquinte.ca  
Bay of Quinte position

## Kevin Lajoie – Treasurer

Tourism Coordinator

### Cornwall Tourism

100 Water St East  
Cornwall, ON K6G 6G4

📞 613.930.2787 ext 2547  
✉ klajoie@cornwall.ca  
Cornwall position

## Brett Christopher – Secretary

Managing Artistic Director

### Thousand Islands Playhouse

185 South Street  
Gananoque, ON K7G 1Y4

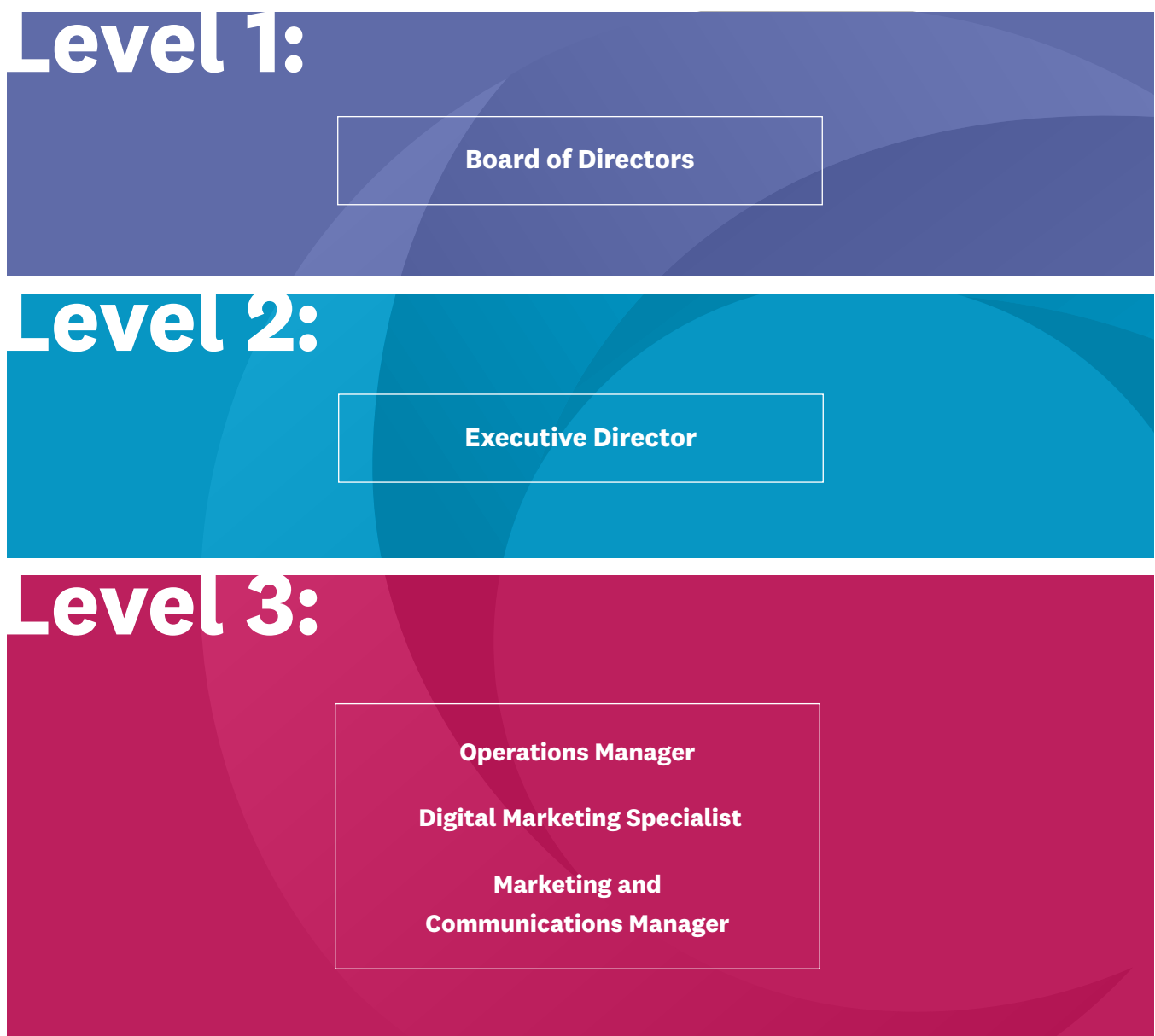
📞 613.382.7086 ext 22  
✉ brett@1000islandsplayhouse.com  
Gananoque position



RTO 9 completed a Partnership Framework plan in coordination with all destinations. One of the outcomes of the plan was to dissolve the Regional Advisory Committee and have regularly scheduled meetings with the destinations based on an established meeting schedule. RTO 9 will meet (a minimum) of once a year with all of the destinations for a round table update/networking session.

The **Product Development Committee (PDC)** advises on market and export ready issues and opportunities, with a focus on regional experiences within South Eastern Ontario.

## Organizational Chart





2.1

# Current Board of Directors



## Sean Billing

### Chair (At Large position)

Sean is the Managing Partner of the Frontenac Club. Sean, and his wife Nancy, own and operate the Frontenac Club, in downtown Kingston. Sean brings a wealth of hospitality, accommodation, and tourism experiences with him, having held corporate, regional, and senior property positions during his 26-year career. Sean's path has seen him lead in resort areas around the globe, including the Canadian Rockies, East Africa, the United States and in Central Ontario. He has also held executive positions at luxury city-centre hotels in Ottawa, Guelph, Chicago, and Nairobi. Over his career, Sean has been heavily involved in organizational learning, business transition and integration, and in strategic operations planning. Sean's approach is to assist leaders in growing their businesses through consistent engagement with key stakeholders – turning greater understanding into outstanding experiences. Sean is a graduate of the University of Western Ontario and attended hospitality school at St. Lawrence College.

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## Trevor Norris

### Vice-Chair (Bay of Quinte position)

Trevor is the Business and Program Development Manager for the Bay of Quinte Regional Marketing Board. As part of BOQ RMB, he leads Tourism Product Development, Travel Trade, Sport Tourism, as well as developing Marketing Products and Packages for partners and businesses in the Bay of Quinte region. Before moving to Prince Edward County, Trevor worked in Toronto as a VP of Business Development for Canada's largest music services company Indie Pool for over 9 years. His passion for wine saw him retrain and certify as a Sommelier in 2013. Once in PEC, Trevor managed Rosehall Run Winery and Karlo Estates Winery and established his own vineyard. He has also worked for Prince Edward County's past tourism organization Taste, served on the Board of Directors for the Prince Edward County Winegrowers Association and was responsible for running key events such as Terroir and Taste Community Grown.

## Kevin Lajoie

### Treasurer (Cornwall position)

Kevin is the Tourism Coordinator at Cornwall Tourism, a division of the City of Cornwall's Economic Development Department. In this role, Kevin oversees Cornwall's tourism efforts in the areas of marketing, visitor services and tourism product development. Kevin brings with him extensive experience in communications, marketing, and community development. Prior to his current role as Tourism Coordinator, Kevin oversaw the City of Cornwall's corporate and external communication efforts. He also worked as a journalist for the Cornwall Standard-Freeholder and as a Coordinator with Heart of the City, an organization dedicated to the revitalization of Cornwall's traditional commercial areas. As a proud Cornwall resident and ambassador, Kevin is also heavily involved in his community through various causes and initiatives. He has previously served on the local United Way campaign and is currently a Director of the Cornwall Sports Hall of Fame.

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## Brett Christopher

### Secretary (Gananoque position)

Brett has been an active member of the Canadian theatre sector for over twenty years. Celebrated as both an actor and a director, he has worked with a variety of theatre companies including the Stratford Festival, Vancouver's Arts Club, Montreal's Segal Centre, Toronto's Canadian Stage, and many more. He has worked in an administrative capacity for several theatre companies, including Buddies in Bad Times, Actors Repertory Company, and Theatre Kingston where he founded the Storefront Fringe Festival and co-founded the Kick & Push Festival. For the last 4 years, he has led the Thousand Islands Playhouse in Gananoque, ON as Managing Artistic Director. He has sat on the Boards of the Kingston Arts Council, Arts Advisory of the City of Kingston, Tourism Kingston, and currently serves on the TIAP Board and is a member of the Economic Development Committee of the Town of Gananoque.

## **Heather Ford** **(Kingston position)**

Heather owns & operates the Green Acres Inn in Kingston and Kingston Food Tours. The Ford Family celebrated their 60th year at Green Acres in 2016. After earning a degree in Economics from Queen's University in 1983, Heather joined the family business and in 1998, after purchasing the inn from her parents. In 2016 she founded Kingston Food Tours with her son Daniel – combining her passion for food, and travel with her interest in Kingston's culinary scene and the people who make it outstanding. Heather was on the Alumni Teaching Award Committee at Queen's and for a period of six years, she sat on the Tourism Advisory Board for the Kingston Area Economic Development Commission. She has also volunteered her time at the Marine Museum, and the Kingston Festival of Trees, as well as the Summer Business Mentoring Program and the Kedco Review Committee. From 1998-2004, Heather sat on the St. Lawrence Parks Commission and currently she is on the Board of the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario, Tourism Kingston Board, KAP Board as past Chair and is Past President of the Kingston Frontenac Rotary Club.

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## **Elizabeth Pilon** **(At Large position)**

Elizabeth is a Visitor Experience Product Development Officer for Parks Canada, Georgian Bay and Ontario East Field Unit, working specifically with Parks Canada historic sites in Eastern Ontario. Elizabeth has been working for Parks Canada for over 25 years in numerous National Parks and National Historic Sites in Ontario and PEI. She has worked in various functions including Heritage Presentation, Marketing, Event Planning, Partnering and Communications. Elizabeth has a B. Sc from the University of Guelph. She enjoys her boating time in the Thousand Islands throughout the summer months.

## **Megan Knott** **(Kingston position)**

Megan, Executive Director of Tourism Kingston, has more than a decade of experience in leadership and development, strategic marketing, media and public relations, and business and fiscal management. Her proven capabilities in stakeholder engagement and idea generation have led to the development, implementation, and continuation of many revenue-generating partnerships and projects for organizations such as Tourism Kingston, Kingston Accommodation Partners, and St. Lawrence Parks Commission, building their capacity and profile. An active member of the Kingston community, Megan has participated on several boards of directors, including RTO 9, Kingston Economic Development Corporation, Downtown Kingston, and the Greater Kingston Chamber of Commerce. Under Megan's leadership, the Visit Kingston brand has been recognized with 12 national and international awards.

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## **Rob Plumley** **(Land O'Lakes position)**

Rob is the Community Development Officer for Lennox and Addington County. Working in the Community & Development Services Department for Lennox & Addington, Rob is very involved in destination marketing duties on behalf of the county and its tourism stakeholders. He has developed and promotes a number of successful products, including the L&A Dark Sky Viewing Area, the L&A County Trails road cycling system and the L&A County Geocaching Experience. In addition, Rob has sat on the executive committees of several major sporting events to take place in the county in recent years. Tourism is a major economic driver in Lennox & Addington County and having a strong, influential RTO will benefit all tourism stakeholders in the region.



## **Ann Weir**

### **(Leeds & Grenville position)**

Ann is the Economic Development Manager for the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville and Co-Chair of the 1000 Islands and Rideau Canal Garden Trail. She has a track record of bringing communities and organizations together to strategically advance their goals. Ann currently works regionally on behalf of the Counties and its 10 member municipalities. Over the past seven years, she has created an environment for the communities of Leeds Grenville to work together, through corridors of mutual interest while maintaining their individual priorities. Ann holds a Business Administration Diploma in Finance from Durham College and is currently completing her EcDev designation at the University of Waterloo.

RTO 9 recognizes the contributions of Mia Robertson, Regional Development Advisor, Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport.





2.2

# Administrative Plan

Four positions have been hired to serve the Corporation. Three positions are full time; one is part time, with an understanding that funding is dependent on the renewal of a TPA with the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport, each fiscal year. Complete job descriptions are contained in the Operational Policy and Procedures Manual.

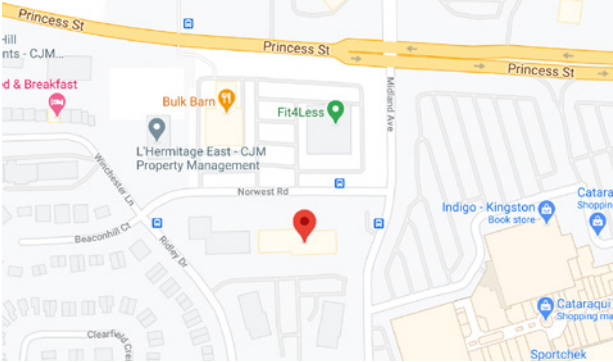
1. The Executive Director is responsible for leadership to implement the RTO strategic direction and the development of the annual operations plan that includes initiatives and programs to grow visitation revenues and positively influence the growth of investment within the Region. These initiatives and programs include but are not limited to research and planning, marketing, product development, workforce development and investment attraction. The Executive Director reports directly to the Board of Directors and is responsible for the day-to-day management of staff.
2. The Operations Manager is responsible for the development, organization, and implementation of Partnership Funds. Additionally, any administrative duties regarding Board meetings, workshops, and Indigenous Tourism initiatives. This position works cohesively with the Executive Director on various projects throughout the year.
3. The Marketing and Communications Manager’s role is to implement the partnership framework as a communications tool with our destinations. This position has a responsibility to work cohesively for the region by working with RTO 9’s ten destinations. The Marketing and Communications Manager will oversee the Digital Marketing Specialist role to ensure cohesion in planning. This role will also directly coordinate with the agency of record, PR agency and maintain the industry website ([RTO9.ca](http://RTO9.ca)).
4. The Digital Marketing Specialists role is to develop and implement a digital marketing strategy in coordination with RTO 9’s ten destinations. The goal of this position is to assist each destination in its marketing efforts to grow tourism receipts. Additionally, this position is also responsible for consumer and industry communications for RTO 9 and management of the consumer website ([southeasternontario.ca](http://southeasternontario.ca)).

RTO 9 retains qualified staff to ensure the goals of the organizations are met. Staff are compensated fairly through competitive wages, benefits, and vacation time.

Annually, the Executive Director reviews the staffing needs of the organization to assure the goals and objectives of the operations plan will be met.

All RTO 9 staff work remotely. The mailing address for RTO 9 is:

829 Norwest Road, Suite 403  
Kingston, ON, K7P 2N3



The Board retains professional services such as banking, accounting, insurance, and legal professionals. RTO 9’s financial institution is the Royal Bank of Canada. McDougall Upper Canada Insurance is retained as the Corporation’s insurance provider, Secker Ross & Perry LLP, act as the Corporation’s accounting firm and Soloway Wright, as the Corporation’s legal counsel. All services are located within the City of Kingston.



3.0

# Regional Assessment and Research

## RTO 9 Consumer and Industry Research

A market research study was conducted by Twenty31 Consulting on behalf of the RTO 9 Regional Tourism Organization. The study was conducted online in February/March 2022, using market research panels from Toluna/SSI. A representative sample (1,011) of the adult online population in the target regions was drawn, and stratified by age, gender, and region. This sample was then sent a survey invitation by email, and respondents screened to identify domestic leisure travellers. Samples included the key regional travel markets for South Eastern Ontario:

- The Greater Toronto Area (GTA)
- Eastern Ontario
- Ottawa
- Montreal
- Quebec

Individuals were defined as those who either:

1. Had taken an overnight holiday/vacation trip in the past three years within Canada (i.e., since February 2019); and/or
2. Were likely to take an overnight holiday/vacation trip within Canada in the next 12 months (i.e., by February 2023).

Results are representative of the online adult traveller population in each market and full-sample results are considered accurate within +/-2 to 3 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Sampling tolerances for results from sub-groups will be larger.

The survey uses a questionnaire developed by Twenty31 Consulting in collaboration with RTO 9. Several questions track those asked in the first wave of this research in January 2021. However, changes to answer scales mean that tracking is indicative in some cases.





## Executive Summary:

### Perspectives on leisure travel in 2022

Leisure travel priorities and barriers in 2022 have not shifted significantly since 2021 among those in the key regional markets for South Eastern Ontario covered by this survey. Relaxation remains the top priority; however, the last year has seen an uptick in those citing the need for a break from routine and to spend time with their family as well as a slight decline in those interested in gastronomy, culture, and shopping-driven trips. This context ought to be favorable for South Eastern Ontario, given its tourism offering.

The overwhelming majority say they plan to take a leisure trip this year; the few who do not most commonly cite cost and COVID anxiety as a barrier.

### Travel within Canada and Ontario

However, travel intentions have evolved a little in the context of ongoing COVID-related travel restrictions in early 2022. The numbers who say they plan to take their next leisure trip within their own province is stable, but there has been a significant increase in those planning to travel outside their province, and a corresponding decrease in the proportions looking to go abroad for their next trip.

The effect of two years of the pandemic is also apparent in the pattern of leisure travel within Ontario – the proportion reporting that they have travelled very or fairly often within the province over the last three to five years has declined, and now stands at less than two in five.

The profile of Ontario's main destinations remains consistent from 2021. Toronto, Ottawa, and the Niagara region remain well ahead in terms of familiarity, but two South Eastern Ontario destinations, Kingston and the 1000 Islands, continue to be better known than important destinations outside the region such as Muskoka and Algonquin Park.

### Perspectives on leisure travel within South Eastern Ontario

Consideration of South Eastern Ontario has declined somewhat since 2021. The proportion indicating they are likely to consider the region for their next leisure trip has fallen from 42% to 36% in the last year. This may reflect latent demand for out-of-province travel, potentially to visit friends and family, that has built up during the course of the pandemic, and a slightly different travel mindset among those willing to contemplate leisure travel during COVID.





The profile of South Eastern Ontario considerers remains consistent. They are much more likely to have children in their household, and somewhat more likely to be middle to high earners, more highly educated and more concentrated in Eastern Ontario.

Spontaneous associations with the South Eastern Ontario brand often link it with natural beauty and relaxation. Few negative associations are apparent. Promotions and other initiatives to reduce the cost of a trip appear most likely to incentivize travel to the region, though events and festivals in the region would also be appealing for some.

The value of word of mouth is apparent when it comes to selecting South Eastern Ontario as a destination. Referrals and recommendations from family and friends are well ahead of other channels when it comes to destination inspiration and trip planning. When it comes to booking travel, accommodation or attractions, Expedia emerges as the top channel.

Gastronomy continues to be the most popular itinerary type for leisure travel to South Eastern Ontario, with nearly two-thirds interested. However, around half are also interested in wildlife viewing, river cruising and history.

### **Perspectives on South Eastern Ontario destinations**

The profile of different areas within South Eastern Ontario remains consistent with 2021. Kingston, the 1000 Islands and Rideau Canal are ahead of other destinations, including Prince Edward County, in terms of profile. Consideration is clearly closely linked to familiarity –these most familiar areas are also the only destinations that a majority say they would consider for their next trip.

The brand image of South Eastern Ontario is consistent across all its constituent areas. Natural beauty, accessibility and relaxation are the defining

features of most of the individual areas, although Prince Edward County also has a strong association with good food and wine. This suggests that a unified marketing strategy with consistent messaging has the potential to work across the region.

Most leisure travellers are not familiar with specific destinations within South Eastern Ontario. The 1000 Islands is the only specific destination that a majority feels familiar with, although Belleville, Sandbanks and Cornwall are all familiar to more than two in five.

When it comes to individual attractions, Sandbanks, Upper Canada Village, Fort Henry, and the Kingston 1000 Islands Cruises are both the most familiar and the most appealing. Most potential Sandbanks visitors think they would likely make a day trip and bring their own food –but large majorities also think they would take part in activities across the local area.

### **Contextual issues**

Despite the impact of COVID on travel patterns, there is no evidence that tourism to South Eastern Ontario is particularly likely to be hit hard. Travellers overwhelmingly see the COVID risk in South Eastern Ontario as the same or lower than their usual destination, and a majority also tend to believe that the risk of COVID will not prevent them from taking their preferred vacation.

Even so, those with higher COVID risk tolerance are significantly more likely to be considering a visit to South Eastern Ontario. This probably reflects a generally higher appetite for travel to a range of destinations.

Awareness of the staffing crisis is moderate, but there appears little evidence it will hit traveller numbers to the region. Around a half say they are aware of it. On balance, travellers tend to see it as a serious problem in South Eastern Ontario –but most also say it is unlikely to impact their likelihood to choose the destination.

A photograph of two men sitting at a wooden table in what appears to be a market or cafe. The man on the left is wearing a dark t-shirt and sunglasses, looking towards the man on the right. The man on the right is wearing a plaid shirt and sunglasses, smiling. The background shows shelves with various items, possibly food or goods. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

3.1

# Digital Analytics

## South Eastern Ontario (Consumer) Digital Analytics

Summary of data from [southeasternontario.ca](https://southeasternontario.ca) and its social channels from April 1 – September 30 (YOY).

April 1 – September 30 YOY	2022	2021	%
Sessions	Total	Total	Change & Notes
Total English Website Traffic	376,051	348,077	Destination Ontario campaigns have contributed to these results.
Total French Website Traffic	1,559	107	In 2021 we updated the website to include all converted pages.
Total Consumer Newsletter	39,206	34,757	Results are from Giveaways and sign-ups from our website.
Website Referrals to Destination Websites	7,982	11,688	Less content creation from previous fiscal 117,415 outbound links to operator & destination websites.
Social Media Community Size	61,104	57,118	Results are from community building & Giveaways.
Total Reach (Social)	3,819,673	3,231,050	Campaigns were paused at the start of Q1 2021.
Total Engagement (Social)	219,927	306,318	Less content creation from the previous fiscal.
YouTube Views	1,082	1,852	No changes to content developed.
Client FAM Tours	7	9	RTO 9 led FAM Tours. An additional 4 FAM Tours were executed through the Drive for Excellence program in collaboration with RTO 9's destinations.



## RTO 9 (Industry) Digital Analytics

Summary of data from [RTO9.ca](https://rto9.ca) and its social channels from April 1 – September 30 (YOY).

April 1 – September 30 YOY	2022	2021	%
Sessions	Total	Total	Change & Notes
Total English Website Traffic	19,510	7,291	Increase in visitors to our Home Page (5,474) plus visitors to the Work in Tourism campaign.
Total Industry Newsletter	1,807	1,854	Clean up of subscriber list.
Social Media Community Size	2,843	2,140	Results are from campaigns with Alphabet and sign-ups from our website and community building.
Total Reach (Social)	1,081,572	780,022	Results are from campaigns with Alphabet and promoting key pieces of content including upcoming webinars.
Total Engagement (Social)	26,216	12,007	Results are from campaigns with Alphabet and promoting key pieces of content including upcoming webinars.
YouTube Views	129	411	Less online webinars and spotlight content from the previous fiscal year.



3.2

# Economic Impact of Tourism in Region 9



The COVID-19 pandemic continues to deal an unprecedented blow to the travel and tourism industry in Canada and Ontario. There was limited tourism economic activity during the 2021 summer high season, but expectations of tourism and related businesses and municipalities fell well short of expectations.

With the pandemic continuing to affect destinations in Canada and Ontario and little sign of when it will end or what the tourism landscape will look like in its wake, RTO 9 is taking a short- to medium-term approach to supporting the recovery of the tourism economy in South Eastern Ontario. This means directly supporting RTO 9's destination partners – to protect and nurture tourism supply to ensure the region is able to market to segments of the population the most likely to travel.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport released the Regional Tourism Profiles for each of the Regional Tourism Organizations, as well as the Province of Ontario. The following is a summary of Region 9 Regional Tourism Profile – based on 2019 data (the most recent available).

In 2019, RTO 9 welcomed 6,979,451 visitors to the region. 87% of visitors to South Eastern Ontario were from Ontario. Another 10% of visitor traffic travelled from other regions of Canada, 3% were overseas visitors. US data is not available.

The visitors to RTO 9 were primarily travelling to the region for one day, representing 64% of the total visits, and 32% of the visitors to the region stayed overnight. Hotel occupancy in 2019 was 61.4%, unfortunately due to the pandemic occupancy rates dropped 40.7%.

The main motivation for travel was predominantly pleasure and VFR (5.457 million visitors). Domestic

travellers were more likely to visit the region to visit friends or family and overseas travellers were almost split evenly between pleasure trips and VFR.

When visiting RTO 9, travellers participated in a number of activities. Aside from visiting friends and relatives, the activity that drew the most participation from visitors was outdoor and sport activities. This includes some of RTO 9's key sectors: boating, beaches, hiking, camping, and fishing. Other main activities included: wildlife/birdwatching, cycling, and canoeing.

The average party size for travellers to the region was 2.3. This is on par with Ontario's average party size, which also saw on average 2.3 people. The overall tourism spend in RTO 9 in 2019 was \$1.138B, with the average spend per person (overnight) being \$278.00.

Visitors to RTO 9 ranged in age; however, the most common age of a visitor was 47.8. RTO 9 has a slightly older visitor than that of Ontario at 45.6.

Overall, RTO 9 is comparable to Ontario; however, to achieve RTO 9's mission of *Fostering successful destinations in RTO 9 that set the standard in Ontario*, RTO 9 must continue to work towards implementing initiatives that will stimulate growth and tourism receipts. The actions outlined in this operations plan are dedicated to this goal.

*This analysis is based on Statistics Canada microdata which contain anonymized data collected in the Travel Survey of Residents of Canada and the International Travel Survey.*

*All computations on this microdata were prepared by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport and the responsibility for the use and interpretation of these data is entirely that of the authors.*

### Ontario Tourism Industry Health Check Report – as of November 24, 2022

Region	Occupancy Percentage							Average Daily Rate						
	2019	2020	2021	Point Change (2019 vs 2020)	Point Change (2020 vs 2021)	Point Change (2019 vs 2021)	September 2022	2019	2020	2021	% Change (2019 vs 2020)	% Change (2020 vs 2021)	% Change (2019 vs 2021)	September 2022
Region 9 (South Eastern Ontario)	61.4%	40.6%	47.4%	-20.8	6.8	-14.0	72.7%	\$133.85	\$117.60	\$129.95	-13.8%	9.5%	-3.0%	\$167.00

4.0

# Pillar 1 – Product Development



Product and experience development is the creation of products with new or different characteristics that offer new or additional benefits to the customer. Product development may involve modification of an existing product or its presentation, or formulation of an entirely new product that satisfies a newly defined customer want or market niche. Experience development is taking product development to a higher-level and linking lifestyle expectations into vacation needs.

RTO 9 will position itself as the leader in tourism for the region by focusing on the development of a regional film initiative, building capacity for Indigenous tourism, LGBTQ+, and sustainable tourism.

**Impact Statement:**

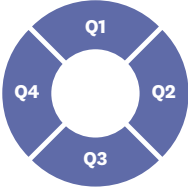
That by December 2025, we will have recognized new regional tourism experiences.

**Objective Statement:**

To stimulate the development of new tourism products for the region.

**Priority:** Focusing our efforts on product development that results in broad regional impact.

**Key Activities:**



Regional Film Initiative

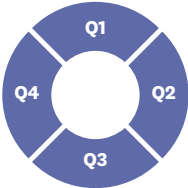
**Outputs:**

- Increase the number of film productions year over year (5%)

**Outcomes:**

- South Eastern Ontario will become the destination of choice for film producers

**Key Activities:**



Indigenous Tourism

**Outputs:**

- Increase the number of market ready indigenous experiences (5%)

**Outcomes:**

- Increased Indigenous tourism products for South Eastern Ontario



**Key Activities:**



LGBTQ+ Initiatives

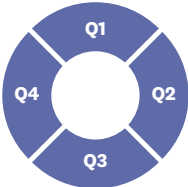
**Outputs:**

- Increase the number of Rainbow Registered tourism businesses by 10%

**Outcomes:**

- South Eastern Ontario is recognized as a safe place to travel

**Key Activities:**



Sustainable Tourism

**Outputs:**

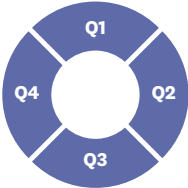
- Target 5 businesses in each destination to complete the Green Step program

**Outcomes:**

- South Eastern Ontario has an abundance of tourism businesses that are committed to sustainability

**Priority:** Working towards being a sought-after partner in education and building capacity for the sector.

**Key Activities:**



Workshops

**Outputs:**

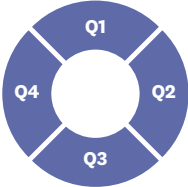
- Minimum of six workshops offered

**Outcomes:**

- Training for tourism operators to enhance and grow their business

**Priority:** Understanding the market to inform our activities.

**Key Activities:**



Research

**Outputs:**

- Understanding needs based on current ecosystem and economic impact

**Outcomes:**

- Positioning RTO 9 as the regional hub for data collection

5.0

# Pillar 2 – Marketing

FARM

RTO 9 has built a very strong working relationship with all ten destinations in South Eastern Ontario and through targeted regional marketing initiatives and with continued collaborative effort, RTO 9 will continue to promote each destination and will encourage multi-destination travel. RTO 9 will reach target markets to encourage visitation and increase overnight stays through consumer integrated regional marketing campaigns (visitor first philosophy) and through earned media. RTO 9 will continue to analyze our efforts through monthly and quarterly reporting, progressing based on our findings to evolve our online identity and position. The South Eastern Ontario brand is an important means

to demonstrate a cohesive approach to showcasing the region’s assets, in collaboration with Destination partners and support from Destination Ontario.

**Impact Statement:**

That by December 2025, we will be the travel region of choice, having a growing, thriving, and high-value tourism sector.

**Objective Statement:**

To increase multi-night visitation to South Eastern Ontario.

**Priority:** Being a recognizable brand for South Eastern Ontario.

**Key Activities:**



Agency of Record/Public Relations

**Outputs:**

- Reach target markets to encourage visitation and increase overnight stays through consumer integrated marketing campaigns and Earned Media
- Tell South Eastern Ontario success stories to help encourage visitation to the region

**Outcomes:**

- Increase in earned media coverage of events and tourism activities
- Increase tourism revenue by educating and motivating tourist to come to the region through regional marketing campaigns
- Be a trusted voice for Tourism in the Region



**Key Activities:**

Destination Ontario/CTA/OBB etc.

**Outputs:**

- RTO 9 will partner with Destination Ontario (DO), Culinary Tourism Alliance (CTA) and Ontario By Bike (OBB) and the like, on joint provincial, national, international and RTO initiatives

**Outcomes:**

- Increase tourism revenue by educating and motivating tourist to come to the region through joint marketing campaigns with trusted tourism brands
- Strengthen and enhance South Eastern Ontario brand recognition

**Key Activities:**

Owned digital marketing tactics

**Outputs:**

- Blog creation (15)
- Social Media post
- Website updates

**Outcomes:**

- Maintain current website visits & pageviews
- Increase in Social Media following
- Maintain Organic Traffic visits
- Increased awareness of destination brands
- Increased visitor spending and tourism receipts
- Increased visitation in all seasons

**Key Activities:**

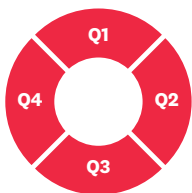
FAM tours (media/tour operators)

**Outputs:**

- Continue to bring media through South Eastern Ontario to experience what the region offers and to help tell the stories of the region
- Increase media FAMS (10)

**Outcomes:**

- Increase tourism revenue by educating and motivating tourist to come to the region through earned and paid media stories
- Increase awareness of the region, and for South Eastern Ontario to be top of mind when consumers are in their trip planning cycle

**Key Activities:**

Maps (cycling/road)

**Outputs:**

- Print and increase distribution of SEO maps through Visitor Information and OnRoute Centres in Ontario
- Update and post electronic versions of cycling routes on South Eastern Ontario website as well as broadcast through Ontario By Bike website
- Increase distribution at Trade Shows; partner with others attending

**Outcomes:**

- Increase awareness of the region, and for South Eastern Ontario to be top of mind when consumers are in their trip planning cycle

**Priority:** Enhancing awareness of regional tourism assets and new products.

### Key Activities:



FAM tours (influencers)

### Outputs:

- Continue to bring media through South Eastern Ontario to experience what the region offers and to help tell the stories of the region
- Increase media FAMS (10)

### Outcomes:

- Increase tourism revenue by educating and motivating tourists to come to the region through earned and paid media stories
- Increase awareness of the region, and for South Eastern Ontario to be top of mind when consumers are in their trip planning cycle

### Key Activities:



Owned digital marketing tactics

### Outputs:

- Blog creation (15)
- Social Media post
- Website updates for Search Engine Optimization

### Outcomes:

- Maintain current website visits & pageviews
- Increase in Social Media following (4,000)
- Maintain Organic Traffic visits

### Key Activities:



Continuing to survey current database

### Outputs:

- 2 x surveys per fiscal year to 35,000 subscribers

### Outcomes:

- Engagement from 2% of the database resulting in helpful insights



**Priority:** Increasing visitation to new regional products.

### Key Activities:



Owned digital marketing tactics

### Outputs:

- Blog creation (15)
- Social Media post
- Website updates
- Things to do guides/storytelling campaigns (4)

### Outcomes:

- Maintain current website visits & pageviews
- Increase in Social Media following (4,000)
- Maintain Organic Traffic visits
- Content created contributes to pageviews, increasing newsletter subscribers (2,800), and Social Media followers (4,000)
- Increased awareness of destination brands
- Increased visitor spending and tourism receipts
- Increased visitation in all seasons

### Key Activities:



Development of itineraries/  
'things to do' guides

### Outputs:

- Itinerary promotions (8)
- Things to do guides/storytelling campaigns (4)

### Outcomes:

- Increase in seasonal itinerary Pageviews by 2% YoY
- Content created contributes to pageviews, increasing newsletter subscribers (2,800), and Social Media followers (4,000)
- Increased awareness of destination brands
- Increased visitor spending and tourism receipts
- Increased visitation in all seasons

6.0

# Pillar 3 – Workforce Development

RTO 9 will collaborate with regional and provincial partners to address the workforce development challenges that the Tourism industry is facing. A workforce development plan with short- and long-term goals was created in 2021/2022 in collaboration with RTO 9’s ten destinations, and implementation of the plan was executed in Q4. Many initiatives in the plan will continue into the 2023/2024 fiscal year. Initiatives will support the retention and survival of tourism operators across the region.

**Impact Statement:**

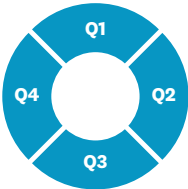
That by December 2025, our tourism region will have a healthy, diverse workforce to successfully support visitors.

**Objective Statement:**

To build employer capacity by sharing knowledge and providing access to tools for attracting and retaining great people.

**Priority:** Partnering with regional and provincial service agencies with aligned objectives.

**Key Activities:**



OTEC/EEC/KEYS/Career Edge etc.

**Outputs:**

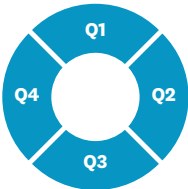
- Providing businesses with education tools to recruit and retain employees

**Outcomes:**

- Businesses being able to operate at full capacity with a full workforce

**Priority:** Building capacity with partners to enhance the sector’s focus on equity, diversity, inclusivity and accessibility in the workforce.

**Key Activities:**



CGLCC (rainbow registry)

**Outputs:**

- Supporting our destinations/operators in the process of becoming rainbow registered

**Outcomes:**

- A minimum of 5 RTO 9 destinations are registered and a 10% increase in operators



**Key Activities:**

ITO (three fires initiatives)

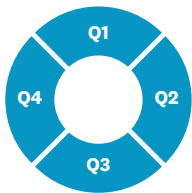
**Outputs:**

- Increase the number of participating businesses in RTO 9

**Outcomes:**

- Increase in the number of Indigenous employees in tourism

**Priority:** Facilitating access to tools, resources, and education.

**Key Activities:**

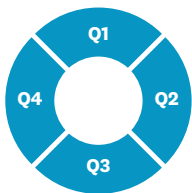
Workshops

**Outputs:**

- Minimum of six workshops offered

**Outcomes:**

- Trained staff to support tourism operators in the region

**Key Activities:**

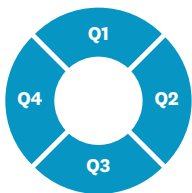
Job fairs with partners

**Outputs:**

- Provide outlets in collaboration with employers to connect them with job seekers

**Outcomes:**

- Tourism businesses within RTO 9 have the platform to secure employees

**Key Activities:**

SLC mobile unit

**Outputs:**

- A collaborative agreement that guides the relationship with St. Lawrence College and Post secondary schools

**Outcomes:**

- St. Lawrence College engages with multi school boards to recruit students into the tourism stream
- Better coordination of RTO 9 and OTEC training programs

7.0

# Pillar 4 – Investment Attraction

A man and a woman are standing in a cafe, looking at a smartphone together. The man is on the right, wearing a dark long-sleeved shirt and shorts, and the woman is on the left, wearing a light-colored top and a patterned skirt. They are both looking at the phone held by the man. In the background, there is a counter with a menu board, a hanging lamp with a scalloped shade, and a window with curtains. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent red filter.

RTO 9 will continue to coordinate efforts with local organizations that are mandated to support investment and business retention and growth in the region. We will also actively engage with FedDev, the Ontario East Economic Development Cooperation (OEEEDC), CBRE, and the Great Lakes Cruising Association.

#### Impact Statement:

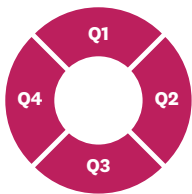
That by December 2025, we will have identified and planned for strategic investment opportunities, enhancing the region's competitive positioning and sustainable tourism.

#### Objective Statement:

To be a place operators want to locate, collaborate, and do business.

**Priority:** Exploring funding opportunities to pursue, to facilitate strategic investments in the region.

#### Key Activities:



FedDev

#### Outputs:

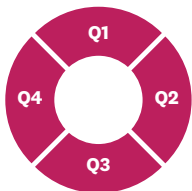
- Working in collaboration with partners to secure funding

#### Outcomes:

- Engagement with destinations to identify potential investment opportunities

**Priority:** Partnering with organizations mandated to support investment and business retention and growth in the region.

#### Key Activities:



Ontario East Economic Development Commission (OEEEDC)

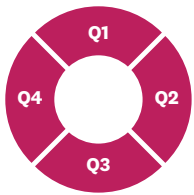
#### Outputs:

- Continued collaboration with organization

#### Outcomes:

- Increased tourism investment for the region



**Key Activities:**

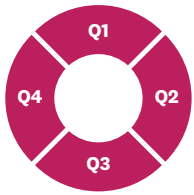
CBRE

**Outputs:**

- Review of data for reporting – Monthly

**Outcomes:**

- Increase data available for operators

**Key Activities:**

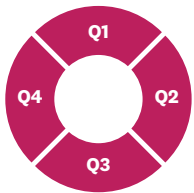
Research

**Outputs:**

- Understanding needs based on current ecosystem

**Outcomes:**

- Positioning RTO 9 as the regional hub for data collection

**Key Activities:**

Great Lakes Cruising Association

**Outputs:**

- Continued facilitation of cruising opportunities for the destinations

**Outcomes:**

- Increase in overnight cruise ships – shore excursions

8.0

# Pillar 5 - Partnerships



RTO 9 will continue to build relationships with key stakeholders and organizations within the region that strive to increase overnight visitation and tourism receipts – all aligned to recovery of the tourism economy. RTO 9 will continue to build meaningful relationships through their destination communications and Industry newsletter. RTO 9 has identified the following Partnership Fund categories – new events, development of guided experiences or trails, and development of Indigenous tourism. RTO 9 recognizes that industry stakeholder needs vary and will consider other projects that meet established criteria. RTO 9 will continue to focus on off season (winter/spring) initiatives to encourage year-round visitation to the region.

All Partnership Fund initiatives will be cost shared at 1:1 with RTO 9. Destinations will be advised of applications received from their area. All projects will be reviewed by a committee and scored based on established criteria.

**Impact Statement:**

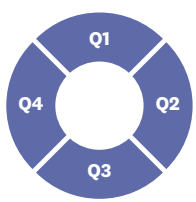
That by December 2025, we will have a strong, collective, regional voice amplifying South Eastern Ontario as a destination of choice.

**Objective Statement:**

To drive strategic alignment towards broad regional impact.

**Priority:** Proactively engaging in meaningful relationship building across the region.

**Key Activities:**



Destination communications

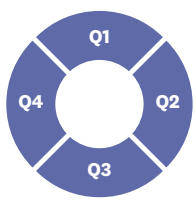
**Outputs:**

- Bi-weekly communications with destinations – 26 per fiscal

**Outcomes:**

- Increased communications with destinations for alignment of initiatives

**Key Activities:**



Destination industry newsletters

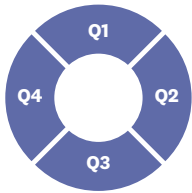
**Outputs:**

- Monthly communications with stakeholders and destinations – 10-12 per fiscal

**Outcomes:**

- RTO 9 is recognized as the leading tourism partner for connectivity



**Key Activities:**

Collaboration with industry associations

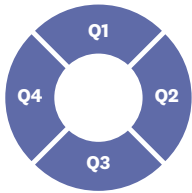
**Outputs:**

- Continued communications with various sector associations across the province

**Outcomes:**

- Opportunity for collaborations on initiatives, leveraging resources

**Priority:** Securing and offering partnership fund opportunities, recognizing the most significant regional impact.

**Key Activities:**

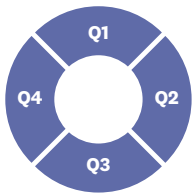
New events

**Outputs:**

- Minimum of six new products developed

**Outcomes:**

- Increase in tourism assets for the region

**Key Activities:**

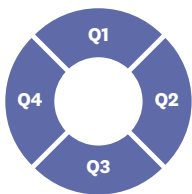
Development of guided experiences or trails

**Outputs:**

- Minimum of three new products developed

**Outcomes:**

- Increase in tourism assets for the region

**Key Activities:**

Development of Indigenous Tourism

**Outputs:**

- Minimum of three new products developed

**Outcomes:**

- Increase in tourism assets for the region

9.0

# Risk Identification



## Risk Management Philosophy

RTO 9 aspires to operate in a way that protects the health, safety and security of stakeholders and staff members while magnifying RTO 9's mission and safeguarding assets needed for mission-critical programs and activities.

## Risk Management Goals

To protect the health, safety and security of staff and stakeholders while safeguarding assets.

## General Safety Principles

The safety of personnel receiving or engaged in delivering services sponsored by RTO 9 shall at all times be regarded as a top priority and this emphasis shall be communicated throughout RTO 9 in order to ensure its understanding.

RTO 9 seeks to involve appropriate personnel, whether Board or staff, at all levels in the identification of risks and creation of practical strategies in order to make certain that RTO 9's approach to risk management considers diverse perspectives and that staff understand their responsibility to protect the confidentiality of our stakeholders, the safety and security of our resources, the integrity of our reputation, the preservation and future growth of assets as well as the fulfillment of our mission.

## Board of Directors

- Adopts annual operating objectives with risk management included
- Adopts annual budget with risk management in mind
- Reviews operational reports to determine compliance and future priorities
- Ensures compliance with policies and standards imposed by the Province of Ontario
- Reviews RTO 9's insurance program periodically

## Executive Director

- Assigns staff to design and carry out safety and risk management activities
- Assigns staff to perform annual review of the safety and risk management activities
- Executes and actions contracts according to RTO 9's Policy & Procedures Manual and Ministry guidelines for RTO 9
- Keeps the Board apprised of emerging threats and opportunities facing RTO 9

## Operations Manager

- Manage all aspects of Partnership Allocation Funding and conducts a yearly review of procedures
- Manage all product and experience development initiatives of RTO 9
- Manage Indigenous Tourism portfolio including stakeholder relations, product development and website content

## Marketing and Communications Manager

- Manage all aspects of consumer and industry website and communications and conducts a yearly review of procedures

## Digital Marketing Specialist

- Manage all consumer and industry social channels



## Board Operations

RTO 9 has adopted a Policy & Procedures Manual containing the key policies and expectations of the Board, Committees and Staff. The Manual is reviewed every year by the Board of Directors and updates are made on an as-needed basis.

## Board Orientation

To ensure that the members of the Board of RTO 9 are properly trained and prepared for their service, the Executive Director conducts a Board orientation training for all Board members on an annual basis. The experienced Board members will share their insights and coach the new members in fulfilling their Board duties.

## Board Assessment

To become a more effective Board, the Board members of RTO 9 will conduct a Board self-assessment once every year. The Board will use the self-assessment as a tool to improve its performance and energize RTO 9 to achieve its mission.

## Board Recruitment and Nomination

RTO 9 strives to have a diverse and qualified Board with people who bring the skills, qualities, and expertise needed to lead and govern RTO 9 in accomplishing its mission.

## Board Minutes

RTO 9 recognizes the importance of recording accurate and contemporaneous minutes of Board meetings and minutes of committees that are authorized to act on the Board's behalf, and each Board member is aware of their responsibility for ensuring the accuracy of the minutes.

## Risk Financing Strategy

To safeguard the organization's assets and resources, RTO 9 will purchase insurance for those insurable risks of major importance to mission-critical operations and the financial health of the organization. It is the Executive Director's responsibility to oversee RTO 9's insurance program and provide an annual insurance report to the Board.

## Job Descriptions

RTO 9 has developed job descriptions for all paid and contracted employee positions in the organization. These documents are finalized before the recruitment process begins and used during interviews with prospective candidates to inquire whether the candidate is able to perform all the duties listed. The positions' essential functions are listed.

## Employee Orientation

The Executive Director at RTO 9 is responsible for conducting an orientation session for all new employees on the first day of employment. During this session, key provisions of the Policy & Procedures Manual are discussed, the employee is asked to provide any additional information necessary for benefits enrollment, and the employee is encouraged to ask questions about any aspect of employment policy or operations. Employees are also introduced to other staff and provided with an overview of equipment and systems they will be required to use.

## Staff Supervision

RTO 9 views effective staff supervision as an essential component of risk management. The Executive Director is expected to communicate their expectations of direct reports clearly and consistently and hold employees accountable with regard to key tasks and responsibility and compliance with RTO 9's employment policies. All employees are encouraged to raise concerns or questions about work priorities and assignments with the Executive Director.

## Performance Appraisal Process

RTO 9 requires annual reviews for all employees. The Executive Director is responsible for scheduling review meetings and completing the Performance Review form. A goal-setting and professional development exercise is part of this process.

## Staff Code of Conduct

Staff will adhere to the Code of Conduct as described in the current Policy & Procedures Manual.

## Financial Management

In respect of all financial matters including procurement, RTO 9 will adhere to guidelines as stipulated by the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism, and Culture Industries including contractual provisions of transfer payment agreements (TPAs) issued by the Province of Ontario.

## Financial Responsibilities and Objectives

The Executive Director of RTO 9 acts as the primary fiscal agent, with responsibility for implementing all financial management policies and procedures on a day-to-day basis. The Executive Director may delegate qualified professional staff the responsibility for managing various aspects of financial management.

The financial management objectives of RTO 9 are to:

- Preserve and protect financial assets needed for mission critical activities
- Exercise appropriate care in the handling of incoming funds and disbursement of outgoing funds
- Strive for transparency and accountability in fiscal operations

## Budgeting Process

The Executive Director shall be responsible for developing and presenting to the Board of Directors a proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year no less than 60 days prior to the beginning of the new fiscal year. The Board of Directors shall review and approve the budget. The budget shall contain detailed projections for revenues and expenditures as well as cash flows.

## Financial Statements

The Executive Director and Treasurer will review financial statements prior to each Board meeting and the full Board will review the financial statements at each Board meeting. The financial statements will show a comparison of budget to actual revenue and expenses and also a list of grants or funding that is anticipated but not yet received.

## Audit

It is the policy of RTO 9 to engage the services of a reputable, independent Charter Accountancy firm to conduct an annual audit of RTO 9's financial statements. The audit is required to be completed within three months of the end of each fiscal year. The audit firm is appointed at each annual AGM and reports to RTO 9's Executive Director.

## Resources Needs

RTO 9 seeks to utilize its resources and assets fully in achieving its mission. The prudent use of resources is required to protect the safety and well-being of all personnel including staff and stakeholders while safeguarding RTO 9's financial assets.

## Technology and Information Management

An employee's work computer is intended for RTO 9 use only; accordingly, their work computer, email use is not private, and all material, documents and communications on company provided electronic equipment are RTO 9's property. RTO 9 is committed to protecting its office technology assets. The organization takes all reasonable steps to protect and safeguard systems and equipment from damage. In addition, the organization guards against threats due to viruses, worms, malicious software and hackers. The position in the organization responsible for overseeing the security of office systems is the Executive Director and/or staff member designated to perform these duties.

The Executive Director or staff member designated to perform these duties is responsible for efforts to prevent an interruption to the organization's operations due to damage to technology assets, including data. The individual in this position will coordinate the development of appropriate policies and security measures to protect these vital assets.

## Computer/Email/Internet usage policy

All staff will adhere to the computer/Email/Internet usage policy as outlined within the most current version of the Policy & Procedures Manual.

## Systems Backup

RTO 9 understands the importance of maintaining computer operations in order to deliver services and programs. A major tool to mitigate damage to computer systems is to adopt procedures for creating and storing

system backups to enable the organization to quickly restore any lost files or systems. All computers are set up with a backup program that periodically backs up the system to the server several times each day. In the event of a crash the Executive Director will contact Weehooy Inc. to assist in the retrieval of data.

To protect both our stakeholders and our operations we shall adopt a disaster recovery plan for the repair, recovery, and restoration of our computer operations. The Executive Director is responsible for the development, maintenance and testing of the electronic disaster recovery plan. A test of the plan is conducted on an annual basis.

## Priority Board Member Risks – Top Risks relating to Volunteers:

- Not having the “right” Board members
- Board Member causing harm to stakeholders
- Board Member causing harm to the reputation of RTO 9

## Addressing Risks Through Recruitment, Screening and Selection

New Board members will be recruited when there is a vacancy on the Board.

To be eligible for directorship, an individual must have an interest in tourism, and maintain on a de facto basis a personal residence or business location within one or more of the regions within RTO 9.

The Board is responsible for maintaining these policies and ensuring these policies are adhered to in the nomination and selection of candidate directors. The Board will ensure that all individuals are given a fair opportunity to apply for vacancies on the Board as they arise.



## Board of Directors

The roles and responsibilities of the Board Chair and Board Members will be detailed in a job description within the most current version of the Policy & Procedures Manual.

## Insurance Program for RTO 9

RTO 9 retains two types of insurance: Commercial General Liability Insurance and Directors and Officers Insurance.

The Board of Directors works with the Executive Director to review proposals submitted by qualified brokers and to determine the most appropriate limits of liability, deductibles and carriers given the resources, risks and requirements of the organization.

The current insurance program for RTO 9 consists of the following coverages:

### Commercial General Liability

General Aggregate: \$5,000,000  
(expiration date: March 31, 2023)

### Directors and Officers Insurance

Aggregate Limit: \$2,000,000 (expiration date: March 31, 2023)

### Insurance Advisors

Expectations of RTO 9's agent or broker:

- Help RTO 9 purchase adequate insurance coverage at an acceptable price
- Claims management assistance in reporting and handling claims and acting as our advocate

- Premium and loss reports on a periodic basis, contract review for insurance implications
- Loss-control and prevention activities
- Risk management services
- Educational resources, for example, provide training sessions for employees, volunteers, and the Board of directors
- Account reports and updates throughout the year
- Annual stewardship report; and client advocacy and business partnership

RTO 9's approach to working with an insurance professional to review its insurance program.

RTO 9 puts its insurance program out to bid every 3-5 years, or more frequently if the organization determines that a current provider is unable to meet the service needs of the organization.

It is the policy of RTO 9 to evaluate the performance of any and all insurance advisors (agents or consultants) on an annual basis and seek competitive bids for these services no less than every five years. The incumbent advisor will be invited to participate in the bidding process as long as their current performance meets the minimum requirements of RTO 9.

RTO 9 has retained the services of McDougall Upper Canada Insurance Brokers, Kingston, ON. Scott Lee performs a costing search annually to ensure Regional Tourism Organization 9 is receiving the best insurance rates possible.

10

# Budget

# RTO 9 Budget – 2023/2024

**TOTAL BUDGET \$1,390,297**

## Governance and Administration

### Administrative

Audit	\$ 10,500
Insurance	\$ 5,500
Consulting Fees	\$ 4,500
Payroll Fees	\$ 800
Professional Development	\$ 4,000
Bank Fees	\$ 1,200
Salaries	\$ 119,092
Benefits	\$ 6,193
Bookkeeper	\$ 10,700

### Governance

Board meetings	\$ 3,500
Annual General meeting	\$ 500

### Overhead

Office Overhead	\$ 15,000
CRM	\$ 6,000
Website hosting	\$ 7,500
Travel	\$ 3,500
IT maintenance	\$ 6,800

### Industry Relations/Stakeholder Engagement

Tourism Summit	\$ 6,000
Memberships/Conferences	\$ 20,000

**Total Governance and Administration \$231,285**

**Total Budget  
\$1,390,297**

## Product Development

LGBTQ+	\$ 5,000
Indigenous Tourism	\$ 25,000
Regional Film Initiative	\$ 20,000
Workshops	\$ 10,000
Meetings	\$ 2,000
Salaries	\$ 35,242
Benefits	\$ 3,097

**Total Product Development \$100,339**

## Marketing

Marketing Program	\$554,705
Platforms	\$ 22,500
Salaries	\$121,630
Benefits	\$ 13,500
Website Maintenance	\$ 3,000

**Total Marketing \$715,335**

## Workforce Development

Workshops	\$ 10,000
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**Total Workforce Development \$ 10,000**

## Investment Attraction

Tourism Investment Sector Team (OEEDC)	\$ 2,000
Market Research	\$ 62,000
CBRE	\$ 7,000
Great Lakes Cruising	\$ 5,000

**Total Investment Attraction \$ 76,000**

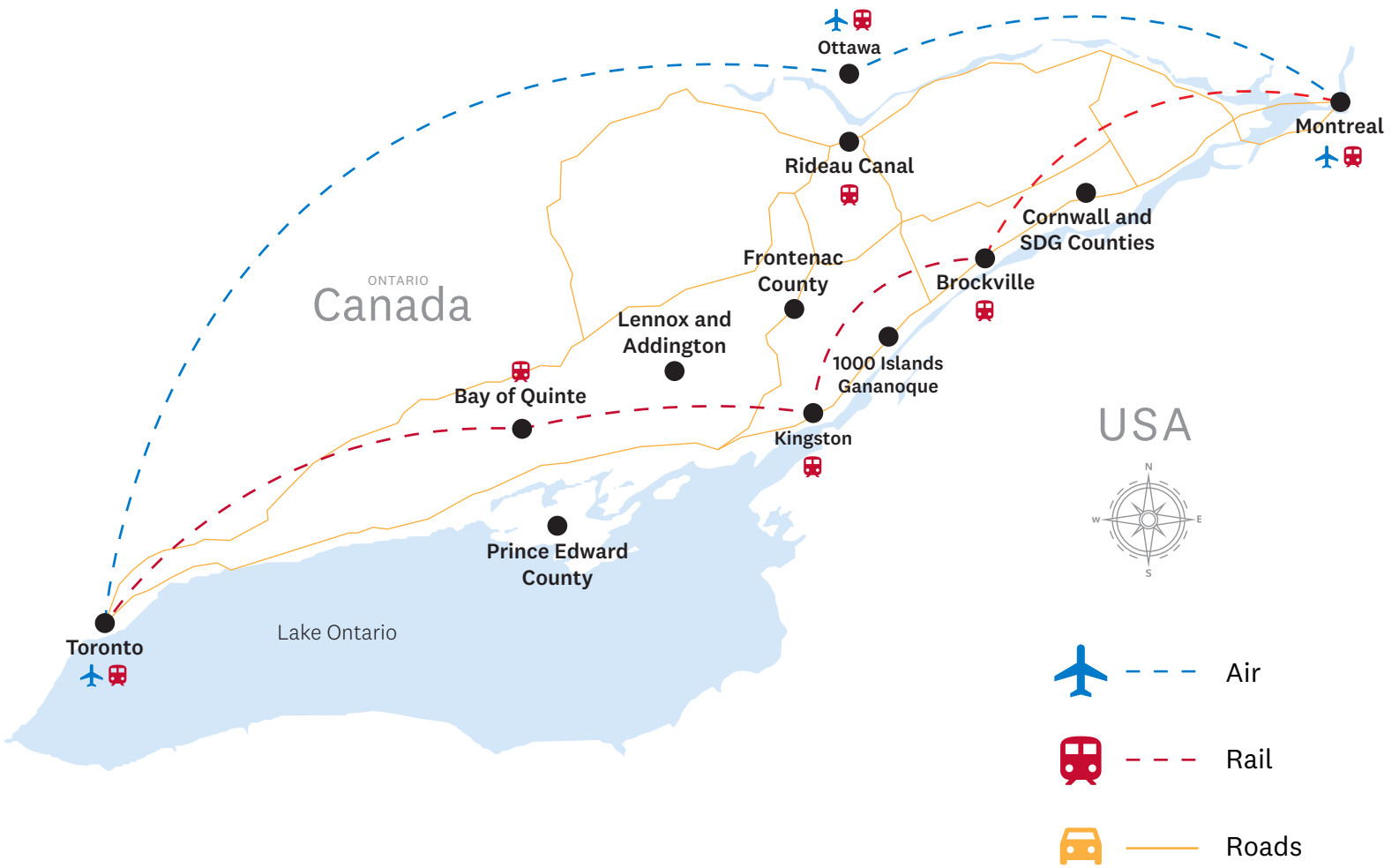
## Partnerships

Partnership Funds	\$219,000
Salaries	\$ 35,242
Benefits	\$ 3,096

**Total Partnerships \$257,338**



# Find your adventure in South Eastern Ontario





**Bonnie Ruddock, Executive Director**

C 613.329.2753 | [bruddock@region9tourism.ca](mailto:bruddock@region9tourism.ca)

**Meg Dabros, Operations Manager**

C 613.983.5215 | [mdabros@region9tourism.ca](mailto:mdabros@region9tourism.ca)

**Steve Weir, Marketing & Communications Manager**

C 613.341.6638 | [sweir@region9tourism.ca](mailto:sweir@region9tourism.ca)

**Lindsay Medeiros, Digital Marketing Specialist**

C 613.328.6983 | [lmedeiros@region9tourism.ca](mailto:lmedeiros@region9tourism.ca)