



Town of Lunenburg Sustainable Cultural Tourism Plan

September 2025



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Executive Summary

Purpose of the Plan

The Town of Lunenburg's Sustainable Cultural Tourism Plan is a practical, community-driven roadmap for strengthening the cultural tourism sector while safeguarding the values, heritage, and quality of life that define Lunenburg. It captures the community's aspirations for a vibrant, inclusive, and resilient cultural tourism offer, aligns ambition with municipal capacity and governance realities, and emphasizes strong integration with other Town, regional, and provincial strategies.

What is Sustainable Cultural Tourism?

At its core, sustainable cultural tourism embodies the interplay between preserving cultural heritage and fostering economic vitality. It is an approach that seeks to balance the needs of visitors, host communities, and the environment, where the cultural assets and traditions that define a place are not only maintained but actively revitalized for future generations.

This framework is rooted in a philosophy of mutual flourishing, where the benefits of tourism extend equitably to all stakeholders while mitigating potential harms. Sustainable cultural tourism values regenerative innovations that emphasize community, the environment, and infrastructure wellbeing [1].

Ultimately, sustainable cultural tourism is not merely about sustaining the past; it is about envisioning a future in which cultural heritage becomes a living, adaptive force [2]. It is an invitation to tourists, hosts, and policymakers alike to participate in a shared project of care, ensuring that tourism becomes a mechanism for empowerment, resilience, and cultural vitality.

[1] Loretta Bellato, Niki Frantzeskaki, and Christian A. Nygaard, "Regenerative Tourism: A Conceptual Framework Leveraging Theory and Practice," *Tourism Geographies* 25, no. 4 (May 19, 2023): 1026–46.

[2] Huong T. Bui et al., "The Adaptive Resilience of Living Cultural Heritage in a Tourism Destination," *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 28, no. 7 (July 2, 2020): 1022–40, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2020.1717503>.



Why Sustainable Cultural Tourism Matters

Sustainable cultural tourism is both a defining strength and a vital contributor to Lunenburg's economy, social life, and international reputation. It embraces the visual and performing arts, music, culinary and creative industries, maritime and agricultural heritage, and the living traditions of the Mi'kmaq and other communities. Managed sustainably, it supports local businesses, attracts visitors, fosters pride of place, and creates opportunities for year-round economic activity.

Planning Approach

The planning process was shaped by the Town's Municipal Government Act (MGA) framework and designed to work in tandem with key municipal strategies, the ongoing Cultural Tourism Economic Impact Study, and regional/provincial tourism programs. It was developed using three overlapping methods:

1. **Engagement and consultation** with more than 100 residents, over 30 stakeholders, and a dedicated Working Group.
2. **Research and analysis** of cultural tourism trends, the UNESCO landscape, case studies, and Lunenburg's current assets and positioning.
3. **Iterative drafting and feedback**, incorporating Cultural Tourism Working Group, Council, and staff review.

Strategic Framework

Four shared goals emerged from consultation and analysis:

- Tell a more inclusive, bold, and multi-vocal story reflecting diverse voices, including Mi'kmaq and newcomer perspectives.
- Leverage the UNESCO designation through community stewardship using heritage status as both a marketing asset and a stewardship framework.
- Support cultural enterprises, youth, and the working waterfront sustaining authentic economic and cultural vitality.
- Improve collaboration, coordination, and cultural infrastructure: strengthening partnerships and facilities for year-round cultural activity.

These goals are supported by guiding principles emphasizing stewardship, inclusion, phased and capacity-aligned implementation, integration with core planning tools, partnership-driven delivery, evidence-based decision-making, and balancing economic and social benefits.



Strategic Priorities and Recommended Actions

Six strategic priorities translate the framework into action:

Governance and Coordination: Establish a cultural tourism coordination function, a partnership forum, and a simple tracking framework.	
Cultural Programming and Partnerships: Leverage the annual programming calendar and prioritize the annual programming function ensuring that is encompasses all events, pilot collaborative initiatives, and pursue regional partnerships.	
UNESCO Site Management and Stewardship: Develop a stewardship and interpretation plan in partnership with Parks Canada.	
Waterfront Activation and Infrastructure: Continue collaborating on implementing the Lunenburg Waterfront Master Plan , balancing cultural programming and marine operations, as well as the Lunenburg Waterfront Association’s upcoming 5-Year Strategic Plan .	
Indigenous Engagement and Cultural Inclusion: Build and maintain collaborative relationships; support Indigenous-led storytelling and programming.	
Marketing, Promotion, and Visitor Experience: Coordinate marketing efforts, enhance wayfinding and hospitality training, and spotlight diverse narratives.	

Each action is linked to a project lead, partners, phasing, and resource considerations.

Next Steps

Phased Implementation

The plan uses a temporal continuum to manage ambition and build momentum:

- **Phase 1 (2025–2026):** Foundation and early wins achievable with current resources.
- **Phase 2 (2027–2029):** Expansion through partnerships and modest new resources.
- **Phase 3 (2029+):** Long-term integration, major investments, and policy alignment with broader municipal planning cycles

Implementation will begin with Phase 1 actions, focusing on governance coordination, marketing planning, and programming pilots. Annual progress reviews and public reporting will maintain transparency and allow for course adjustments based on emerging opportunities, challenges, and partner capacity.

Introduction and Purpose

The Town of Lunenburg's Sustainable Cultural Tourism Plan is intended to serve as a practical, community-driven roadmap for strengthening the town's cultural tourism sector while safeguarding the values, heritage, and quality of life that define Lunenburg.

This plan builds on an extensive engagement process that included over 100 residents, more than 30 stakeholders, two public engagement sessions, and the input of a dedicated Cultural Tourism Working Group representing municipal, business, cultural, and community perspectives. It also draws on complementary research streams, including case study analysis, tourism trend reviews, and a scan of the UNESCO landscape, and will be further informed by including the Town's concurrent Cultural Tourism Economic Impact Study.

Purpose of the Plan

The plan has three primary purposes:

1. Articulate a shared vision to capture the community's aspirations for a vibrant, inclusive, and resilient cultural tourism sector that honours Lunenburg's heritage while adapting to future opportunities and challenges.
2. Provide a phased, actionable framework to align ambition with municipal capacity, resources, and governance contexts through a sequence of achievable steps.
3. Strengthen alignment with broader strategies to ensure cultural tourism initiatives complement other Town plans and strategies, integrate with regional and provincial tourism priorities, and leverage Lunenburg's UNESCO World Heritage designation effectively.

Project Scope

The Sustainable Cultural Tourism Plan was developed in response to the Town's goal of creating a long-term, sustainable approach to managing and growing its cultural tourism offer. The project scope included:

- **Defining sustainable cultural tourism in the Lunenburg context:** building a shared understanding of what cultural tourism means for Lunenburg, grounded in local identity, heritage, and capacity.
- **Engaging stakeholders and the public:** facilitating working group sessions, targeted stakeholder interviews, and public engagement activities to gather diverse perspectives.
- **Conducting market and sector analysis:** examining cultural tourism trends, Lunenburg's competitive positioning, and opportunities for product and experience development.
- **Identifying strengths, challenges, and gaps:** based on engagement findings and case study comparisons.
- **Developing a strategic framework:** outlining guiding principles, strategic priorities, and recommended actions that align with Town capacity and community aspirations.
- **Creating an implementation roadmap:** sequencing actions into short, medium, and long-term phases, with resource and partnership considerations.

Core Deliverables

The terms of reference identified the following deliverables, all of which have been completed and inform this final plan:

1. **What We Heard Report:** summarizing public and stakeholder engagement feedback (see Appendix B: What We Heard).
2. **Case Study Analysis:** examples of relevant cultural tourism initiatives from comparable destinations (see Appendix A: Case Studies).
3. **Tourism Trends Analysis:** current market and visitor trends relevant to Lunenburg.
4. **Stakeholder Interviews:** narrative insights from key cultural, business, and community leaders.
5. **Community Engagement Sessions:** synthesis of discussions and themes emerging from two public community engagement sessions.
6. **Draft Sustainable Cultural Tourism Plan:** incorporating research, analysis, and engagement findings into a coherent strategy.
7. **Final Sustainable Cultural Tourism Plan:** revised to reflect Working Group and Town feedback and aligned with operational and governance realities.

Why Sustainable Cultural Tourism Matters for Lunenburg

Cultural tourism is woven into the fabric of Lunenburg's identity, shaping how the town sees itself and how it is experienced by the world. It is both a defining strength and a vital contributor to the local economy, social life, and international reputation. In Lunenburg's context, cultural tourism embraces a wide spectrum: the visual and performing arts, music, culinary and creative industries, maritime and agricultural heritage, and the living traditions of the Mi'kmaq and other communities whose histories and contemporary contributions continue to shape the town. It is present in the craftsmanship of boatbuilders, the rhythms of local festivals, the tastes of the working waterfront, and the stories passed down through generations. Managed sustainably, cultural tourism can be a catalyst for multiple forms of value, strengthening local businesses, drawing new visitors, inspiring civic pride, and creating opportunities for year-round economic and cultural activity that benefits residents and visitors alike.



Plan Linkages

The Town of Lunenburg (TOL) was clear that this plan must operate within defined limits, respecting both the scope of the study and the Town's overarching planning and governance frameworks under the Municipal Government Act (MGA). The plan is not intended to create new governance structures, alter municipal mandates, or prescribe changes to staffing or budgets outside of Council's established decision-making processes. Instead, it provides a sustainable cultural tourism lens through which existing and future planning efforts can be informed, coordinated, and enriched.

To achieve this, the plan is designed to work in tandem with:

- **The Cultural Tourism Economic Impact Study**, which provides detailed asset mapping and sector data beyond the scope of this plan.
- **The Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS), Land Use By-Law (LUB), Community Comprehensive Plan (CCP)**, and other adopted Town strategies that collectively set the policy and regulatory direction for Lunenburg's growth and development.
- **Regional tourism initiatives and provincial programs** aimed at destination development, heritage stewardship, and visitor experience enhancement, so that local actions are aligned with broader strategies and funding opportunities.

Through its vision, priorities, and phased implementation roadmap, the Sustainable Cultural Tourism Plan positions Lunenburg to celebrate its heritage, broaden its cultural offerings, and do so in a way that is financially, socially, and environmentally sustainable for years to come, while remaining grounded in the Town's established authority and integrated within its long-term planning processes.



Planning Process and Engagement Summary

These parameters shaped not only the scope of recommendations but also the way the planning process was carried out. Engagement activities, research, and analysis were structured to ensure that community and stakeholder input could be meaningfully reflected within the Town's existing planning and governance frameworks.

Approach

The planning process unfolded through three overlapping processes:

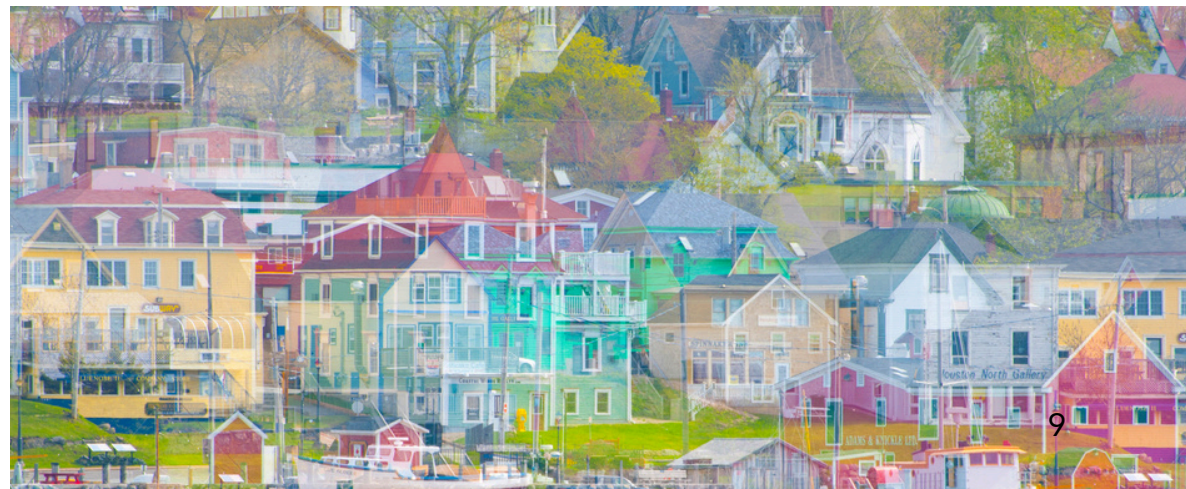
1. **Engagement and consultation:** Direct dialogue with residents, cultural and business leaders, and key institutional partners.
2. **Research and analysis:** Review of tourism trends, case studies from comparable destinations, a scan of the UNESCO landscape, and an assessment of Lunenburg's current cultural tourism assets and positioning.
3. **Iterative drafting and feedback:** Development of a draft plan, followed by structured review with the Working Group, Town administration, and Council.

This trifold approach has allowed for the creation of a plan that is both evidence-based and firmly grounded in the community's aspirations and the Town's operational realities.

Engagement Activities

Before identifying specific engagement activities, it is important to note that the process was designed to balance breadth and depth. Broad outreach ensured that a wide range of community members and stakeholders could contribute, while targeted sessions allowed for more detailed exploration of complex or sensitive topics. This blended approach not only captured a diversity of perspectives but also provided the Working Group and Town with insights grounded in both lived experience and sector expertise.

Engagement was carried out through a combination of structured activities and informal exchanges, designed to draw in a broad spectrum of voices while also allowing for deeper exploration of key themes. At the core of this process was the Working Group, comprised of representatives from the Town of Lunenburg, the Lunenburg Board of Trade, cultural institutions, tourism operators, and community organizations. Meeting multiple times over the course of the project, beginning with in September 2024 with a workshop to refine priorities, clarify scope, and shape the engagement design, the group served as a sounding board for draft recommendations, helping to identify potential risks and ensure alignment with Council direction and community expectations.



To complement this, more than 30 stakeholder interviews were conducted with tourism businesses, cultural organizations, Indigenous partners, economic development agencies, and other community leaders. Using a semi-structured interview guide, these conversations explored vision, strengths, opportunities, challenges, strategic priorities, and sustainability considerations, while leaving space for participants to highlight unique perspectives and emerging issues.

Public engagement formed another key pillar of the process. Two well-attended community engagement sessions (held at the Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic in March 2025) invited residents to share their views on cultural tourism priorities, opportunities, and concerns. Additional feedback was sourced through an online survey, informal discussions, and follow-up communications to enrich the overall dataset.

The engagement process also drew on supplementary input from concurrent initiatives, including the Cultural Tourism Economic Impact Study. Relevant municipal plans and provincial tourism strategies were also reviewed to integrate recommendations in existing policy frameworks and avoid duplication of effort.

Together, these activities created a well-rounded foundation for understanding both the aspirations and practical considerations shaping cultural tourism in Lunenburg. The combination of community-wide input, targeted stakeholder perspectives, and alignment with broader planning efforts provided a clear picture of where priorities converge, and where differing viewpoints will need to be balanced. The following section summarizes the key themes and insights that emerged from this engagement process.

Engagement Highlights: What We Heard

The What We Heard Report (Appendix B) captures the voices of more than 100 residents, over 30 stakeholders, and the members of the project's Working Group. It distils the themes, ideas, and cautions shared throughout the engagement process into clear priorities for action.

Key themes included:

- **Pride in Cultural Assets** – Strong attachment to Lunenburg's heritage, creative sector, and working waterfront.
- **Need for Inclusive Storytelling** – A desire to see Mi'kmaq history, newcomer contributions, and diverse cultural perspectives woven into interpretation and programming.
- **Balancing Growth and Stewardship** – Support for cultural tourism expansion tempered by concerns about capacity, infrastructure, and preservation of small-town character.
- **Year-Round Vitality** – Broad interest in extending cultural activity beyond the summer season to benefit residents and businesses.
- **Collaboration and Coordination** – Recognition that better alignment among cultural groups, the Town, and regional partners is needed to maximize impact.

This report provided the foundation for the plan's shared goals and strategic priorities, ensuring that community perspectives are embedded in every stage of implementation.

Participation Highlights

180 + residents engaged through public sessions, online survey, and community outreach.

30+ stakeholders interviewed across cultural, business, tourism, Indigenous, and public sectors.

6 formal Working Group meetings and interim check-ins.

Written feedback received from the Working Group, Council, and staff at key milestones.



Sustainable Cultural Tourism Plan
Town of Lunenburg

Engagement Tools and Methodology

The planning process used a blend of broad outreach and targeted engagement to ensure that both community-wide perspectives and specialized sector insights shaped the final plan. This approach balanced inclusivity with depth, ensuring that ideas were grounded in both lived experience and operational realities.

Key Methods Used:

- **Working Group Sessions** – A dedicated cross-sector group representing the Town, Lunenburg Board of Trade, cultural institutions, tourism operators, and community organizations. The group met regularly to refine priorities, review drafts, and identify potential risks.
- **Community Survey** - a community survey was circulated to gain further insights on priorities, strengths, opportunities, and challenges within the cultural tourism sector in Lunenburg. The survey received 111 responses.
- **Stakeholder Interviews** – Semi-structured interviews with leaders from tourism, arts and culture, Indigenous communities, businesses, and economic development agencies, exploring vision, opportunities, challenges, and priorities.
- **Public Engagement Sessions** – Two community sessions inviting residents to share their views on cultural tourism priorities.
- **Supplementary Input** – Insights from the concurrent Cultural Tourism Economic Impact Study, related Town strategies, and provincial/regional tourism initiatives.
- **Research Integration** – Case studies, market trends analysis, and a high-level cultural asset scan to validate and contextualize community input.

Research and Supporting Analysis

The engagement and consultation process was complemented by targeted research and analysis that grounds recommendations in local realities and broader industry trends. This work provided a fact base against which community input could be tested, helping to distinguish between aspirational ideas and those with strong precedent or market viability. It included:

- **Tourism sector analysis:** An examination of tourism travel trends, labour force trends, demand trends for tourism experiences both generally and in Nova Scotia, the tourism ecosystem in Lunenburg and how it aligns with these trends, and summary statistics of visitation to the south shore using available data up to 2023.
- **Case study analysis:** The case study research profiled Camden, Maine; Husavik, Iceland; Bamberg, Germany; and Ouro Preto, Brazil - each offer compelling examples of tourism destinations that have leveraged their natural assets, historic economic culture, and/or UNESCO designation to build successful, sustainable, and thriving tourism industries.
- **Cultural asset scan:** A high-level review of the town's key cultural assets, grouped into categories such as heritage and historic sites, cultural venues, festivals and events, cultural enterprises, and natural/working landscapes. While this scan provided a contextual overview for the current plan, detailed mapping and economic valuation are being undertaken separately through the concurrent Cultural Tourism Economic Impact Study.

Feedback Integration

Following the release of the Draft Sustainable Cultural Tourism Plan, feedback from the Working Group and Town identified adjustments, including the adoption of a phased implementation framework, enhanced governance clarity, and strengthened linkages to existing municipal strategies.

Comparative Insights: Case Studies

The case studies (Appendix A) were selected to provide examples of, and key takeaways from, working waterfront towns and UNESCO sites with successful sustainable cultural tourism sectors, with a focus on those that balance both heritage and growth.

The case study research was conducted using desktop research methods including a scan of academic literature, travel blogs, official tourism websites, governmental reports, and available census data and tourism data.

The case studies emphasize the following key takeaways for fostering sustainable cultural tourism:

- Leverage heritage designation and cultural narratives
- Create sustainable economic opportunities through tourism
- Develop comprehensive, collaborative management plans
- Invest in public infrastructure and environmental resilience
- Foster academic and technical partnerships
- Plan for seasonality and visitor flows
- Celebrate natural and wellness assets

Situational Overview

The planning process generated a strong understanding of community priorities, stakeholder perspectives, and operational realities. To translate those insights into actionable strategies, it is essential to first establish a clear picture of Lunenburg's current cultural tourism environment.

This section provides that context. It offers a high-level snapshot of the town's cultural assets, identifies the key factors shaping its cultural tourism offer today, and highlights how the current situation aligns with other municipal plans and strategies. The intent is not to provide an exhaustive asset inventory, that work is being undertaken through the concurrent Cultural Tourism Economic Impact Study, but rather to set the stage for the strategic framework and recommendations that follow.

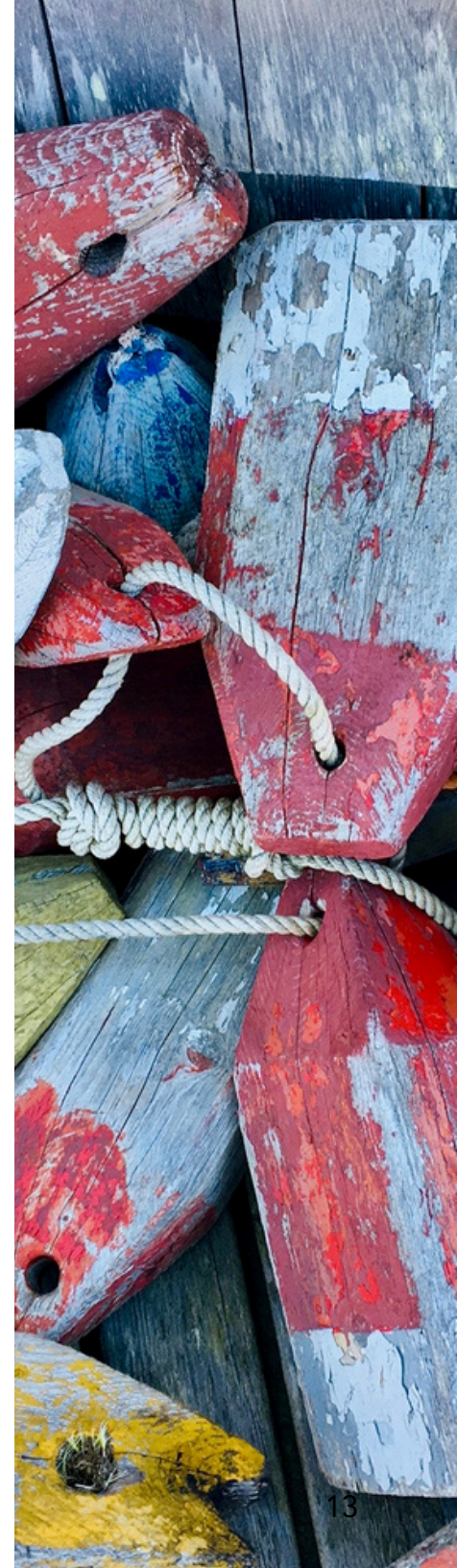
Current Cultural Tourism Context

Lunenburg is recognized nationally and internationally as a cultural destination of exceptional significance. The town's UNESCO World Heritage Site designation, distinctive built heritage, working waterfront, and rich cultural traditions have shaped a visitor economy that is both a source of pride and a vital contributor to the local economy.

Cultural tourism in Lunenburg encompasses a wide spectrum of activities and experiences, including:

- Maritime heritage interpretation and shipbuilding traditions
- Arts and music festivals, galleries, and performance venues
- Culinary and craft-based enterprises rooted in local culture
- Agricultural heritage and seasonal events
- The living traditions of Mi'kmaq and other communities whose histories are interwoven with the town's development

While Lunenburg's cultural profile is a major asset, it also carries unique challenges. The demands of preserving and interpreting heritage at an international standard must be balanced with the needs of residents, the capacity of municipal resources, and the realities of operating within a small-town tax base. Seasonal visitor peaks create economic opportunities but also place pressure on infrastructure, housing, and public spaces.





High-Level Cultural Asset Scan

A comprehensive cultural asset inventory is being developed through the concurrent Cultural Tourism Economic Impact Study; for the purposes of this plan, a high-level scan identifies the following categories:

- Heritage and historic sites: UNESCO-designated Old Town; Lunenburg Academy; fisheries and shipbuilding heritage sites; museums and interpretive centres.
- Cultural venues and spaces: Performance halls, community centres, art galleries, and multipurpose spaces hosting cultural programming.
- Festivals and events: Signature annual events such as the Lunenburg Folk Harbour Festival, along with seasonal markets, exhibitions, and heritage celebrations.
- Cultural enterprises: Artisans, craft producers, culinary businesses, and creative industry entrepreneurs contributing to Lunenburg's cultural brand.
- Natural and working landscapes: The waterfront, harbour, surrounding farmland, and coastal trails that provide both functional and experiential value to residents and visitors.

These assets collectively underpin Lunenburg's cultural tourism offer, providing both the content and the setting for year-round experiences.

Alignment with Existing Town Strategies

The Sustainable Cultural Tourism Plan has been developed with attention to the goals, policies, and priorities in the Town's existing strategies, including:

- Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS): Heritage preservation, land use, and community development objectives that support cultural activity.
- Land Use By-Law (LUB): Regulations affecting cultural facilities, events, and tourism-related enterprises.
- Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP): Adopted as Lunenburg's current strategic plan in 2020, ambitiously guiding decision-making for the next 40 years.
- Other thematic plans and initiatives: Waterfront redevelopment concepts, signage and wayfinding strategies, and regional tourism marketing efforts.

A crosswalk between this plan and the Town's key strategies and plans is provided in Appendix C.

Tourism Sector Analysis Findings

As part of the research and strategic planning process in developing this Plan, the following findings comprise a diagnostic and sector analysis of the global tourism industry and its relevance to the industry in the Town.

Travel Trends

In 2023, domestic visitation to Nova Scotia recovered to 91% of 2019 figures, with the largest recovery in visitation from Western Canada (which in 2023 exceeded pre-pandemic figures by 18.7%).

Between 2020 and 2023, occupation rates for accommodations on the South Shore surged and exceeded 50% for the first time since at least 2010. Moreover, room nights sold for 2023 were 13.5% higher than in 2019 – a larger improvement than in the province outside of Halifax (12%).

Labour Force Trends

Another notable trend is the labour force shortages facing the industry nationally and provincially. As with other jurisdictions, the limited labour availability nationally and in Nova Scotia may restrict the TOL's capacity to accommodate rising tourism demand over the next two decades.

Scaling the provincial-level data on labour requirements suggests that the county (from which TOL will continue to draw elements of its workforce) will confront a shortfall of 133 workers by 2040.

Summary Stats: Visitation to the South Shore in 2023

- Occupancy rates were higher in the South Shore than in the province as a whole (outside of Halifax), reversing the trend from 2015 to 2019.
- Occupancy rates exceeded 50% for the first time since at least 2010 – the last year for which records are available through Tourism Nova Scotia.
- Room nights sold in the South Shore were much stronger in 2023 than in 2019 (+13.5%), despite a drop in 6000 room nights sold from 2022 to 2023. This illustrates just how strong the recovery was in the South Shore in the first years after the pandemic.

Source: TNS Visitation and Accommodation Statistics

Demand Trends

Major trends in consumer demand globally and in Canada include:

- A preference for **solo travel**, the market for which is projected to expand by 212% over the next 10 years.
- The prioritization of **experiences over “things”** and material possessions by travelers, as measured by the change in spending levels by category over time.
- The expansion of the **luxury tourism market**, driven by a growing base of travelers with net worths above \$100,000.00.
- Growing interest in **sustainable tourism** with a focus on environmental stewardship.
- Surging interest in **authentic cultural tourism** – including **Indigenous tourism**.
- **Wellness tourism**, which is expected to grow at a Compound Annual Growth Rate of over 16% per year between 2023 and 2027.

In Nova Scotia, the wellness trend has been among the most active developments from tourism operators in terms of renovations and new offerings in recent years. This activity includes:

- The construction a new hydrothermal spa at Oceanstone Resort (June 2023).
- A new oceanside golf course at Fox Harb’r Resort (September 2024).
- New lakeside “Glomes” at White Point Beach Resort (2021).
- The construction of new wellness resorts, including Nalu Retreat and Nordic Spa near Porters Lake (August 2022), and Sensea Nordic Spa in Chester (January 2020).
- A new Nordic spa “Saltair” in Baxter’s Harbour (2024).

While not currently a focus in Lunenburg, the prevalence of the wellness trend provincially is worth noting given the proximity of these developments to the Town.



Town of Lunenburg Tourism Ecosystem and Alignment with Trends

Based on a high-level scan of the TOL tourism ecosystem, the Town hosts a large and diverse tourism ecosystem that already aligns with many of the key trends in travel. Among the Town's major strengths include dozens of arts and culture assets, categorized by Upland Planning and Design for Project Lunenburg. These include 13 art galleries and 8 performance venues.

While TOL only hosts a reported ~100 hotel rooms, occupancy rates indicate there is slack available to house more overnight stays, and a stable short-term rental market (50-55 active listings during peak season) offers additional room. However, there is speculation that new provincial STR regulations will likely reduce STR availability and the number of active listings in the coming months.

Finally, diverse recreational assets, from the emOcean Spa to plentiful parks and open spaces, aligns with surging interest in wellness tourism.

Although global travel rates and tourism in Canada are returning to pre-COVID levels, new trends and consumer expectations are anything but familiar.

The protracted lockdown, worsening cost of living crisis, US-Canada relations and shifting tariff regulations, and ongoing global geopolitical instability are changing the way travelers position themselves in the world and how they allocate their time and resources.

In comparing trends to the current state in Lunenburg, there are also opportunities to better align the town's sector with emerging trends, essential infrastructure, and expectations of travelers.

Additionally, Tourism Nova Scotia (TNS) has developed new visitor segmentation profiles, replacing the former Explorer Quotient (EQ) psychographic market segmentation approach. According to an April 2025 TNS webinar, these new profiles are: 1) Outdoor explorers, 2) Culture seekers, 3) Refined globetrotters, 4) Purpose driven families, 5) City trippers, 6) Simplicity lovers, and 7) Fun and sun families

As TNS releases more information on these segmentation profiles, the Town may wish to align tourism offerings and marketing approaches to these profiles.



Cross-Border Travel Dynamics and Cultural Tourism Implications for Lunenburg

Current travel trends between Canada and the U.S. have direct implications for Lunenburg's cultural tourism strategy.

Canadian outbound travel to the U.S. is sharply down in 2025:

- Cross-border car travel is down roughly one-third compared to last year, and air travel has dropped 17–24 %.
- Airlines and accommodation providers in the U.S. are reporting steep booking declines from Canadians.
- Many Canadian travellers are choosing domestic trips or alternative international destinations such as Europe, Mexico, and Asia.

This shift creates a potential boost for Lunenburg to attract more Canadian visitors seeking high-quality domestic experiences. Cultural tourism, particularly heritage-rich, small-town destinations with strong authenticity credentials, aligns well with the profile of these travellers, who typically spend more and engage more deeply with local culture.

American visitation to Nova Scotia remains strong:

- Nova Scotia welcomed about 172,000 U.S. visitors in 2024, up 11 % from the previous year.
- Early 2025 shows continued growth, with a 5 % year-over-year increase in the first four months.
- Higher per-capita spending from U.S. visitors is contributing to provincial tourism revenues rising to \$3.5 billion in 2024.

Implications for Lunenburg's cultural tourism plan:

- **Target Canadian markets:** Re-tool marketing to capture Canadians re-allocating U.S. travel budgets to domestic trips, especially in Ontario and Western Canada.
- **Sustain and grow U.S. market share:** Maintain visibility in key U.S. feeder markets (New England, Mid-Atlantic) with messaging that pairs UNESCO heritage with experiential, small-town culture.
- **Leverage shoulder seasons:** Both Canadian and U.S. travellers could be nudged toward off-peak visits through special events, cultural programming, and packaged experiences.
- **Maximize yield:** Focus on high-spend, experience-seeking segments that are less sensitive to short-term travel disruptions and more engaged with cultural offerings.

By aligning outreach and programming with these evolving cross-border dynamics, Lunenburg can strengthen its competitive position, grow visitation from both sides of the border, and reinforce its identity as one of Canada's most distinctive cultural destinations.



Strategic Framework and Guiding Principles

The Sustainable Cultural Tourism Plan is anchored by a strategic framework that connects community aspirations to achievable, phased actions. The framework reflects the input of residents, cultural organizations, businesses, and municipal leadership, and is grounded in the realities of available resources, governance mandates, and partnership potential.

Shared Goals for Sustainable Cultural Tourism

Through consultation and analysis, four overarching goals emerged as the foundation for this plan:

1. Tell a More Inclusive, Bold, and Multi-Vocal Story of Lunenburg

- Present the community's history and culture in ways that reflect multiple voices, including Mi'kmaq perspectives, newcomer contributions, and diverse cultural expressions.

2. Leverage the UNESCO Designation Through Community Stewardship

- Use the World Heritage status not only as a marketing asset but as a framework for preserving and enhancing heritage values through local engagement and leadership.

3. Support Cultural Enterprises, Youth, and the Working Waterfront

- Strengthen the role of cultural and creative enterprises in the local economy, foster opportunities for youth, and ensure the waterfront remains an active and authentic part of Lunenburg's identity.

4. Improve Collaboration, Coordination, and Cultural Infrastructure

- Enhance connections between cultural organizations, the Town, and other partners, and invest in facilities and infrastructure that enable cultural activity year-round.





Guiding Principles for Decision-Making

To ensure that future cultural tourism initiatives remain aligned with the community's values and the Town's operational realities, the following guiding principles will inform decisions:

- **Stewardship First:** Protect and enhance Lunenburg's heritage, cultural assets, and natural environment for future generations.
- **Inclusion and Representation:** Ensure that cultural tourism reflects the diversity of the community and provides opportunities for participation by all residents.
- **Phased, Capacity-Aligned Implementation:** Match the scale of initiatives to available resources, sequencing actions to build momentum without overextending capacity.
- **Partnership-Driven Delivery:** Leverage relationships with community groups, regional organizations, and external partners to expand reach and resources.
- **Evidence-Based Planning:** Use data, research, and evaluation to guide decisions and measure progress.
- **Economic and Social Balance:** Pursue cultural tourism in ways that support both economic vitality and community well-being.

Linking the Framework to Action

These shared goals and guiding principles form the bridge between the plan's vision and the specific recommendations in the next section. Each strategic priority and recommended action in Section 5 is explicitly linked back to one or more of these goals and is designed to be implemented in alignment with the guiding principles.

Strategic Priorities and Recommended Actions

The Sustainable Cultural Tourism Plan is anchored by a strategic framework that connects community aspirations to achievable, phased actions. The framework reflects the input of residents, cultural organizations, businesses, and municipal leadership, and is grounded in the realities of available resources, governance mandates, and partnership potential. Central to this framework is the use of a temporal continuum, a deliberate phasing of initiatives over short, medium, and long terms, to balance the community's bold vision with the Town's operational capacity. This approach ensures that early successes are achievable with existing resources, while more complex initiatives are sequenced alongside the Town's core planning cycles and other major projects.

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4. Improve Collaboration, Coordination, and Cultural Infrastructure

- Enhance connections between cultural organizations, the Town, and other partners, and invest in facilities and infrastructure that enable cultural activity year-round.



Linking the Framework to Action

These shared goals and guiding principles form the bridge between the plan's vision and the specific recommendations in the next section. They will be operationalized through a temporal continuum. By phasing initiatives in this way, cultural tourism development can progress steadily, building on early successes and integrating naturally with the Town's ongoing planning and stewardship efforts.



Priority Action and Coordination Areas

The following six priority areas translate the plan's shared goals and guiding principles into concrete, implementable actions. Each area includes a clear rationale, proposed actions, lead roles, timing, key partners, and resource considerations. Together, they form an integrated approach to strengthening Lunenburg's cultural tourism offer while ensuring that initiatives are coordinated across organizations, aligned with municipal capacity, and sequenced to complement other Town priorities. This structure allows the Town and its partners to act strategically, advancing multiple objectives in parallel while maintaining focus on the areas of greatest impact.

Governance and Coordination



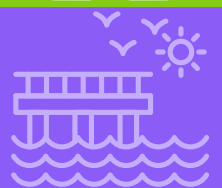
Cultural Programming and Partnerships



UNESCO Site Management and Stewardship



Waterfront Activation and Infrastructure



Indigenous Engagement and Cultural Inclusion



Marketing, Promotion, and Visitor Experience



GOVERNANCE AND COORDINATION



Priority area

Effective governance and coordination are the backbone of sustainable cultural tourism. Engagement feedback underscored the need for clearer roles, stronger inter-organizational communication, and coordination mechanisms that avoid duplication while fostering collaboration. While the community expressed interest in more inclusive and participatory leadership, the Working Group affirmed that any governance adjustments must align with the Town's existing mandates and be introduced in step with Council direction and capacity.

Proposed Actions

Establish a Cultural Tourism Coordination Function within existing Town administration to act as a central point of contact for partners, cultural organizations, and event organizers.

Develop a Cultural Tourism Partnership Forum (virtual or in-person) to meet annually or semi-annually, allowing cultural, tourism, and business stakeholders to share updates, align calendars, and identify joint initiatives.

Create a simple tracking framework for cultural tourism initiatives to support Council reporting and link actions back to the plan's goals and guiding principles.

Lead

Town of Lunenburg: in collaboration with the Lunenburg Board of Trade.

Phasing

phase
— 01 —
2025-2026

Define and pilot coordination function within existing staff roles; initiate first partnership forum; begin initiative tracking.

phase
— 02 —
2027-2029

Assess and refine coordination model; consider modest resourcing adjustments if warranted by outcomes.

phase
— 03 —
2029+

Explore governance enhancements or formalized cultural tourism leadership structures if consistent with broader municipal governance reviews.

Key Partners

Lunenburg Board of Trade | Cultural and heritage organizations | Event and festival producers | Provincial tourism bodies | Parks Canada (where applicable to UNESCO/NHS coordination)

Resource Considerations

- Initial actions achievable with existing staff capacity through role adjustments.
- Modest costs for hosting partnership forums and producing summary materials.
- Potential future resource requirements dependent on scope of governance enhancements.

CULTURAL PROGRAMMING AND PARTNERSHIPS



Priority area

Lunenburg’s cultural vibrancy is anchored in its diverse programming, from signature festivals and performances to grassroots events and community-led initiatives. Engagement feedback emphasized the value of existing programs and the opportunity to strengthen them through coordination, shared promotion, and partnerships that extend reach and impact. The aim is to build on what is already working while encouraging innovation and inclusivity in cultural offerings.

Proposed Actions

Continue to develop the annual cultural programming calendar that integrates municipal, partner, and independent events, improving promotion and reducing scheduling conflicts.

Support **collaborative programming pilots** between cultural organizations, schools, and community groups to broaden participation and audience diversity.

Explore **regional partnerships** with neighbouring municipalities and cultural institutions to co-host or tour events, sharing costs and audiences.

Identify and apply for **grant opportunities** to expand programming, with a focus on inclusive and youth-oriented initiatives.

Lead

Town of Lunenburg: in partnership with cultural organizations and the Lunenburg Board of Trade.

Phasing

phase
— 01 —
2025-2026

Launch cultural calendar; initiate one or two collaborative programming pilots; identify funding streams.

phase
— 02 —
2027-2029

Scale up successful pilots; formalize regional partnerships; secure multi-year funding where feasible.

phase
— 03 —
2029+

Integrate larger-scale or permanent cultural programming elements into the Town’s long-term event strategy.

Key Partners

Local arts and cultural organizations | Schools and youth groups | Lunenburg Board of Trade | Regional municipalities | Provincial arts and culture agencies | Private sponsors and philanthropic foundations

Resource Considerations

- Modest staff time for calendar coordination and partnership facilitation.
- Event-specific budgets drawn from grants, sponsorships, and partner contributions.
- Potential for cost-sharing with regional partners to reduce municipal expenditure.

UNESCO SITE MANAGEMENT AND STEWARDSHIP



Priority area

Lunenburg's designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site is both a significant opportunity and a responsibility. It brings global recognition, attracts visitors, and reinforces the town's cultural identity, but it also requires ongoing stewardship to meet international standards. Engagement feedback emphasized the importance of connecting this designation to community pride and participation, rather than relying solely on external oversight. Coordination with Parks Canada, heritage organizations, and other partners will be essential to ensure that site management integrates heritage preservation, interpretation, and sustainable tourism practices.

Proposed Actions

Maintain active collaboration with Parks Canada and the national historic sites process to ensure alignment of local initiatives with federal heritage obligations.

Collaborate with the Atlantic Canada UNESCO Tourism Corridor on initiatives that can benefit Lunenburg.

Develop a UNESCO stewardship and interpretation plan that highlights the site's significance for both residents and visitors, integrating inclusive narratives and diverse perspectives.

Link UNESCO messaging to the annual cultural programming calendar to encourage year-round engagement with the designation.

Explore digital interpretation tools (e.g., virtual tours, mobile apps) to expand access and deepen visitor understanding without adding pressure to physical infrastructure.

Lead

Town of Lunenburg: in collaboration with Parks Canada.

Phasing

phase
— 01 —
2025-2026

Initiate joint planning discussions with Parks Canada; integrate UNESCO messaging into cultural programming; pilot at least one interpretation enhancement.

phase
— 02 —
2027-2029

Formalize the UNESCO stewardship and interpretation plan; secure funding for ongoing interpretation and preservation initiatives.

phase
— 03 —
2029+

Implement long-term infrastructure or policy changes identified through the stewardship plan, in step with municipal and federal planning cycles.

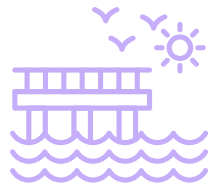
Key Partners

Parks Canada | Heritage Trusts and preservation societies | Cultural and educational institutions | Tourism operators | Local historians, interpreters, and cultural practitioners

Resource Considerations

- Initial actions largely achievable within existing heritage and tourism program budgets.
- Funding for interpretation tools or infrastructure improvements may require federal or provincial grants.
- Potential for cost-sharing with Parks Canada and other heritage organizations.

WATERFRONT ACTIVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



Priority area

Lunenburg's working waterfront is central to its identity, offering both a living connection to maritime heritage and a focal point for cultural tourism. Engagement feedback consistently highlighted the importance of maintaining the authenticity of the waterfront while enhancing its role as a year-round gathering place. Infrastructure investments, public realm improvements, and sensitive activation can support economic vitality, cultural programming, and community use without undermining traditional marine activities. Coordination with waterfront stakeholders is essential to balance operational needs with visitor expectations.

Proposed Actions

Continue to collaborate on implementing the Lunenburg Waterfront Master Plan and the upcoming 5-year Strategic Plan (RFP issued by Lunenburg Waterfront Association in August 2025) as well as with other partners on integrating cultural programming, public space enhancements, and marine operations.

Enhance wayfinding and interpretive signage to connect the waterfront to the UNESCO designation, heritage assets, and town centre.

Identify opportunities for additional seasonal and year-round events that showcase the working waterfront (e.g., boatbuilding demonstrations, seafood festivals, artist-in-residence programs). A comprehensive asset map is part of the Cultural Tourism Economic Impact Study.

Lead

Town of Lunenburg: in collaboration with Build Nova Scotia, Lunenburg Waterfront Association, and waterfront stakeholders.

Phasing



Key Partners

Build Nova Scotia | Lunenburg Waterfront Association | Waterfront property owners and operators | Cultural and heritage organizations | Tourism and hospitality businesses | Event and festival producers | Fisheries and marine sector representatives

Resource Considerations

- Modest investment for early-phase signage and programming pilots.
- Potential need for capital funding in later phases, sourced through municipal budgets, provincial/federal infrastructure programs, and private investment.
- Staffing or contracted support for event coordination and public realm management.

INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT AND CULTURAL INCLUSION



Priority area

Lunenburg's cultural story is incomplete without the voices, histories, and contemporary contributions of the Mi'kmaq. Engagement feedback emphasized that Indigenous engagement must be authentic, relationship-based, and grounded in formal reconciliation processes, not prescriptive actions developed without Indigenous leadership. Cultural inclusion also extends to recognizing and integrating the contributions of diverse communities who have shaped Lunenburg over time. This approach strengthens the authenticity of the visitor experience and fosters greater community cohesion.

Proposed Actions

Initiate and maintain relationship-building discussions with Mi'kmaq communities and organizations to explore opportunities for cultural tourism collaboration.

Support Indigenous-led storytelling, programming, and interpretation initiatives within Lunenburg, ensuring leadership remains with Indigenous partners.

Expand cultural inclusion by showcasing the contributions of diverse cultural communities in programming, interpretation, and marketing materials.

Coordinate with Parks Canada to integrate Indigenous narratives into UNESCO and National Historic Site interpretation, where appropriate.

Lead

Town of Lunenburg: in collaboration with Indigenous partners and Parks Canada.

Phasing

phase
— 01 —
2025-2026

Initiate conversations with Indigenous partners; identify potential collaborative projects; begin integrating inclusive narratives into existing programming.

phase
— 02 —
2027-2029

Support delivery of Indigenous-led initiatives; expand cultural inclusion efforts in events and interpretation.

phase
— 03 —
2029+

Embed long-term Indigenous and cultural inclusion initiatives into municipal cultural tourism planning and infrastructure projects.

Key Partners

Mi'kmaq communities and organizations | Parks Canada | Cultural and heritage institutions | Local and regional multicultural organizations | Arts and performance groups

Resource Considerations

- Initial costs centred on staff time and relationship-building activities.
- Project-specific budgets to be determined in collaboration with Indigenous and cultural partners, potentially supported by targeted grants.
- Longer-term funding opportunities through federal and provincial cultural and reconciliation programs.

MARKETING, PROMOTION, AND VISITOR EXPERIENCE



Priority area

Lunenburg's cultural tourism success depends not only on the quality of its offerings but also on how they are presented and experienced. Engagement feedback pointed to the need for consistent, authentic storytelling that reflects Lunenburg's heritage, creative energy, and community diversity. Effective marketing and promotion should work hand-in-hand with visitor experience improvements, from wayfinding and interpretive tools to hospitality training, ensuring that every touchpoint reinforces the town's identity and encourages longer stays. Coordination across partners will avoid duplication and amplify reach.

Proposed Actions

Develop a coordinated cultural tourism marketing plan that aligns with regional and provincial tourism campaigns while highlighting Lunenburg's unique stories and assets.

Integrate inclusive narratives into promotional materials, showcasing diverse voices and perspectives.

Enhance visitor wayfinding and interpretation to create a seamless experience from arrival to departure.

Support hospitality and service training for frontline staff and volunteers to ensure high-quality, welcoming interactions.

Strengthen digital presence, including the use of social media, video, and virtual experiences to extend engagement before and after visits.

Lead

Town of Lunenburg: in partnership with the Lunenburg Board of Trade and tourism operators.

Phasing

phase

— 01 —

2025-2026

Create coordinated marketing plan; implement quick-win wayfinding and interpretation improvements; begin hospitality training initiatives.

phase

— 02 —

2027-2029

Expand digital marketing reach; develop immersive storytelling tools; evaluate visitor experience improvements.

phase

— 03 —

2029+

Integrate marketing and visitor experience upgrades into long-term infrastructure and programming investments.

Key Partners

Lunenburg Board of Trade | Tourism Nova Scotia | Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia | Cultural and heritage organizations | Event and festival producers | Local businesses and hospitality providers | Regional tourism networks

Resource Considerations

- Modest early-phase costs for marketing coordination and training can be shared among partners.
- Potential for co-investment with provincial tourism marketing programs.
- Later phases may require capital investment for wayfinding infrastructure and advanced digital tools.

Implementation Roadmap

The Implementation Roadmap provides a clear view of how the Sustainable Cultural Tourism Plan will unfold over time. It organizes the recommended actions into three phases, aligning with the Town's capacity, municipal planning cycles, and the availability of external partnerships and funding.

This phased approach ensures that early actions build visible momentum, while more resource-intensive initiatives are sequenced to coincide with broader planning and capital investment windows.



phase

01

2025-2026

Foundation and Early Wins

Focus on actions achievable within existing resources, strengthening coordination, and demonstrating tangible progress.

Priority Area	Key Early Actions	Lead	Key Partners	Resources
 Governance & Coordination	Pilot cultural tourism coordination function; launch partnership forum	Town	Board of Trade, cultural orgs	Staff time; meeting costs
 Cultural Programming & Partnerships	Launch annual programming calendar; start collaborative pilots	Town	Cultural orgs, schools	Staff time; small event budgets
 UNESCO Site Management	Begin joint planning with Parks Canada; integrate UNESCO messaging	Town	Parks Canada, heritage groups	Staff time; modest interpretation costs
 Waterfront Activation	Initiate activation plan; pilot events; update basic signage	Town	Build NS, waterfront operators	Staff time; small capital for signage
 Indigenous Engagement & Inclusion	Begin relationship-building; integrate inclusive narratives	Town	Mi'kmaq partners, Parks Canada	Staff time; meeting costs
 Marketing & Visitor Experience	Develop marketing plan; quick-win wayfinding; launch hospitality training	Town	Board of Trade, Tourism NS	Shared marketing budget; training fees

phase

02

2027-2029

Expansion and Partnership Development

Scale up successful pilots, secure additional resources, and implement medium-scale projects in alignment with municipal and partner priorities.

Priority Area	Key Early Actions	Lead	Key Partners	Resources
 Governance & Coordination	Refine coordination model; assess resourcing	Town	Board of Trade	Staff time; possible budget adjustment
 Cultural Programming & Partnerships	Formalize regional partnerships; expand funded programming	Town	Regional municipalities, arts councils	Grant funding; sponsorship
 UNESCO Site Management	Finalize stewardship plan; secure project funding	Town	Parks Canada, heritage orgs	External grants; staff/contract time
 Waterfront Activation	Launch priority infrastructure improvements; expand events	Town	Build NS, private sector	Capital funding; sponsorship
 Indigenous Engagement & Inclusion	Deliver Indigenous-led programming; expand inclusion efforts	Town	Mi'kmaq partners, multicultural orgs	Grants; partner budgets
 Marketing & Visitor Experience	Grow digital presence; immersive storytelling tools	Town	Tourism NS, private sector	Co-investment in digital tools

phase

03

2029+

Long-Term Integration and Major Investments

Introduce large-scale infrastructure, policy changes, and enduring partnerships, coordinated with major municipal planning cycles.

Priority Area	Key Early Actions	Lead	Key Partners	Resources
 Governance & Coordination	Consider broader governance reforms if warranted	Town	Council, community leaders	Staff and Council time
 Cultural Programming & Partnerships	Integrate permanent programming into event strategy	Town	Cultural sector	Ongoing municipal & partner funding
 UNESCO Site Management	Implement major infrastructure or policy changes	Town	Parks Canada	Capital and operational funding
 Waterfront Activation	Complete capital projects from activation plan	Town	Build NS, federal/prov programs	Major capital funding
 Indigenous Engagement & Inclusion	Embed Indigenous and inclusion initiatives into Town planning	Town	Indigenous partners	Sustained funding streams
 Marketing & Visitor Experience	Integrate marketing and visitor upgrades into capital works	Town	Board of Trade, Tourism NS	Capital & operational budgets

Monitoring and review complete the planning cycle, providing the feedback loop that links implementation back to the plan's goals and guiding principles, and ensuring that actions remain on track and responsive to changing conditions.

Monitoring and Review

Ongoing monitoring and periodic review are essential to ensure that the Sustainable Cultural Tourism Plan remains relevant, actionable, and aligned with Lunenburg's evolving needs and opportunities. A clear monitoring framework will help track progress, flag emerging challenges, and support adaptive decision-making over the life of the plan.

Annual Progress Review

- Conduct a formal review of progress on each priority area at least once per year.
- Document milestones achieved, resources used, and lessons learned.
- Identify where actions are ahead of schedule, on track, or delayed, and recommend adjustments as needed.
- Incorporate both quantitative indicators (e.g., number of events, visitation trends, partnership agreements) and qualitative measures (e.g., community satisfaction, stakeholder feedback).

Mid-Phase Check-Ins

- Schedule structured reviews at the midpoint of each implementation phase (e.g., 2026, 2028) to reassess priorities, timelines, and resource allocation.
- Use these check-ins to integrate new opportunities (e.g., funding programs, partnerships) and respond to challenges (e.g., economic shifts, infrastructure constraints, environmental events).
- Ensure alignment with concurrent Town planning cycles, including updates to the Municipal Planning Strategy, budget processes, and capital investment planning.

Public Reporting and Engagement

- Provide an annual public progress update to Council, stakeholders, and the broader community, highlighting achievements, upcoming priorities, and any course corrections.
- Use multiple channels for reporting, including Council presentations, the Town website, newsletters, and community meetings, to maintain transparency and build continued public support.
- Invite feedback during these updates to ensure the plan continues to reflect community values and aspirations.

By embedding monitoring and review into the plan's life cycle, the Town can remain proactive, agile, and accountable, ensuring that cultural tourism development continues to advance in step with Lunenburg's broader growth and stewardship objectives.

To support consistent tracking and accountability, the following draft monitoring framework outlines the key indicators, data sources, and review timelines for each priority action area. It is intended as a practical tool for Council, staff, and partners to assess progress at a glance and guide the annual and mid-phase reviews.

Priority Area	Key Indicators	Data Sources	Review Frequency	Lead Responsibility
 Governance & Coordination	Number of partnership forum meetings held- Stakeholder satisfaction with coordination function- Tracking system in active use	Town admin records, meeting minutes, stakeholder surveys	Annual	Town of Lunenburg (Cultural Tourism Coordination Function)
 Cultural Programming & Partnerships	Number and diversity of events on annual calendar- Attendance levels at collaborative programs- Number of regional partnerships established	Event calendars, ticket sales/attendance data, partner reports	Annual	Town of Lunenburg, Lunenburg Board of Trade
 UNESCO Site Management	Completion of UNESCO stewardship plan - Number of interpretation initiatives launched - Joint projects with Parks Canada - UNESCO Atlantic Canada Corridor partnership	Parks Canada reports, Town heritage files, visitor feedback	Annual; mid-phase review	Town of Lunenburg & Parks Canada
 Waterfront Activation	Waterfront activation plan status- Number of waterfront events held- Public realm enhancements completed	Town capital project tracking, event logs, site inspections	Annual	Town of Lunenburg, Build Nova Scotia
 Indigenous Engagement & Inclusion	Number of relationship-building meetings with Mi'kmaq partners- Indigenous-led projects supported- Inclusion of diverse cultural narratives in programming	Partnership agreements, event/program reports, marketing materials review	Annual; ongoing	Town of Lunenburg with Indigenous partners
 Marketing & Visitor Experience	Marketing plan completion and updates- Website/social media engagement metrics- Visitor satisfaction ratings- Hospitality training participation	Marketing analytics, tourism surveys, training attendance records	Annual	Town of Lunenburg, Lunenburg Board of Trade

Conclusion

The Sustainable Cultural Tourism Plan sets out a clear, achievable, and community-driven path for strengthening Lunenburg's cultural tourism offer while protecting the heritage, values, and quality of life that make the town unique. Its phased approach ensures that ambition is matched with municipal capacity, allowing the Town and its partners to build early wins, expand through strategic partnerships, and pursue major initiatives in step with broader planning and investment cycles.

Successful delivery will depend on sustained commitment from Council, staff, cultural organizations, local businesses, and residents. By embedding monitoring and review into the life of the plan, the Town can remain agile and responsive, adjusting priorities as new opportunities and challenges emerge.

Lunenburg's cultural story, one that is rich, diverse, and globally recognized, is also a living one. Through shared stewardship, inclusive storytelling, and coordinated action, the community can ensure that its cultural tourism sector continues to thrive, contributing to economic vitality, community pride, and a visitor experience that is both authentic and memorable for years to come.

