Kincardine Kudos Event

February 28, 2026 - Davidson Centre

Tourism Strategy Input

The Kincardine Kudos event was held on February 28, 2026. The participants included businesses, special event organizers and any community partner involved in Tourism. 48 people attended the event. The goals of the event are to:

- Recognize and celebrate tourism partners for their contributions and the positive economic, social, and community impacts they create across the Municipality of Kincardine.
- Foster meaningful connections among tourism and event partners, encouraging peer learning, collaboration, and a stronger understanding of the tourism assets that exist across the municipality.
- Gather partner insights and feedback to inform and kick off the next phase of municipal tourism strategy planning.

The following information was gathered from participants during a break out session which followed keynote speaker Dr. Kelly McManus, who spoke on an Ecosystem Approach to Tourism in the Municipality of Kincardine

What is one thing that is amazing about your tourism ecosystem?

Participants highlighted the Municipality of Kincardine's strong sense of community, welcoming atmosphere and unique natural setting as its greatest strengths.

Key themes included:

- Strong Community Connections: A close-knit, supportive community where people know one another, collaborate and willingly help each other.
- Volunteerism and Community Engagement: Passionate residents and a dedicated volunteer base play an essential role in making local events and experiences possible.
- Natural Beauty and Waterfront: The proximity of downtown businesses to Lake Huron, year-round sunsets, beautiful lakefront and recreational trails were identified as unique assets.
- Welcoming and Inclusive Atmosphere: The Municipality of Kincardine offers a friendly environment where people of all ages and backgrounds feel welcome.
- Diverse Experiences: A variety of activities, events and experiences contribute to the community's appeal for both residents and visitors.

Together, these assets create a distinctive visitor experience and provide a strong foundation for future tourism development.

Opportunities to Strengthen the Tourism Ecosystem

Respondents emphasized the importance of greater collaboration, communication and resource sharing among local businesses, event organizers and community organizations to strengthen Kincardine's tourism ecosystem.

Key opportunities identified include:

- Strengthening Partnerships: Build relationships with similar businesses and organizations to create opportunities for collaboration and mutual support.
- Improving Event Coordination: Enhance communication and planning between event organizers to avoid scheduling conflicts, reduce duplication and improve visitor experiences.
- Sharing Knowledge and Resources: Encourage organizations to exchange expertise, information and resources to improve efficiency and collective success.
- Supporting Community Initiatives: Organize fundraising events that benefit local groups and strengthen community connections.
- Creating a Centralized Communication Platform: Establish a shared platform for event planning, information sharing and collaboration across the tourism sector.

There is a strong opportunity to strengthen Kincardine's tourism ecosystem through improved coordination, partnerships and shared resources. Establishing more structured opportunities for collaboration and communication could help organizations work more effectively together, enhance visitor experiences and maximize the collective impact of tourism initiatives.

Resources Needed to Strengthen the Tourism Ecosystem Over the Next Three Years

Respondents identified several resources and supports that would help their organizations grow, improve operations and contribute more effectively to the tourism ecosystem over the next three years.

Key themes included:

1. Transportation and Visitor Accessibility: Improve transportation options for residents and visitors, along with interactive maps highlighting amenities such as water stations, bike racks and other visitor services.

2. Volunteer Recruitment and Coordination: Establish a centralized volunteer database or portal to help organizations recruit, share and coordinate volunteers for events and community initiatives.

3. Event Planning Support and Shared Equipment: Develop a municipal event planning guide outlining requirements, policies and procedures. Provide access to shared equipment such as barricades, tables and fencing through municipal rentals or in-kind sponsorships.

4. Shared Facilities and Infrastructure: Increase access to affordable office space, storage facilities and other shared resources to support organizational operations and event delivery.

5. Environmental Sustainability: Develop an environmental sustainability policy and an accessible directory of sustainable organizations and resources to encourage environmentally responsible tourism practices.

6. Collaboration and Coordinated Fundraising: Strengthen relationships between businesses and event organizers through shared planning, reciprocal partnerships and coordinated fundraising approaches that align with common community priorities.

Tourism partners are seeking practical resources, shared infrastructure and stronger collaboration to support their long-term success. Priorities include improving transportation, coordinating volunteers, simplifying event planning and increasing access to shared equipment and facilities.

Strategic Opportunity: The Tourism Strategy could explore a coordinated tourism support framework that brings together municipal resources, volunteer networks, event planning tools, sustainability initiatives and opportunities for collaboration. This would help reduce operational barriers, strengthen organizational capacity and support a more connected, sustainable and resilient tourism ecosystem.

Who else should be invited to the ecosystem network?

Participants were asked who else (not here at today's event) should be invited to be part of the tourism eco system as well as be engaged in the development of the strategy.

- Sports Event Organizers: Engage organizers of sporting events and tournaments, such as Bulldogs Volleyball, to explore opportunities for sports tourism.
- Wellness and Recreation Organizers: Include events such as Yoga Fest to strengthen connections with wellness tourism and attract diverse visitor groups.
- Social Services and Community Support Organizations: Involve social workers and support service providers to ensure tourism planning considers accessibility, inclusivity and broader community needs.
- Winter Sports and Recreation Groups: Engage winter sports organizations to identify opportunities to expand tourism beyond the peak summer months and support four-season visitation.

Participants emphasized the importance of expanding the tourism network beyond traditional tourism businesses and summer events. Greater involvement from sports, wellness, social services and winter recreation organizations could help diversify visitor experiences, strengthen community partnerships and address the perception that Kincardine's tourism season is limited to approximately two months.

Strategic Implication: The Tourism Strategy should explore opportunities to broaden stakeholder participation and develop a more inclusive, year-round tourism ecosystem that supports both visitor experiences and community well-being.

Positive Tourism Impacts in the Municipality of Kincardine

Organizations across the Municipality of Kincardine play an important role in attracting visitors, enhancing the visitor experience, supporting local businesses and strengthening the community's reputation as a welcoming and vibrant destination. Participants were asked to provide a brief summary of the positive impact their organization has on tourism in the Municipality of Kincardine.

Responses highlighted several key contributions to the Municipality of Kincardine's tourism sector:

1. Events, Festivals and Entertainment: Community organizations attract visitors through festivals, theatre productions, concerts, art exhibitions, cycling events, agricultural fairs, Pride celebrations and other special events. These activities create unique experiences, encourage repeat visits and generate economic activity for local businesses.

2. Tourism Promotion and Marketing: Organizations such as Explore the Bruce, the Kincardine BIA, the Chamber of Commerce and local businesses actively promote the Municipality of Kincardine through websites, social media, marketing campaigns, visitor information and partnerships. These efforts increase awareness of local attractions and encourage visitors to explore the community.

3. Accommodations and Hospitality: Hotels, campgrounds, restaurants and other hospitality businesses support tourism by providing quality accommodations, dining experiences and visitor services. These businesses encourage longer stays, support year-round visitation and direct visitors to local attractions and businesses.

4. Outdoor Recreation and Natural Attractions: Trails, waterfront activities, cycling events, camping, canoeing and agricultural experiences attract visitors seeking outdoor recreation. Organizations help showcase Kincardine's natural assets while promoting healthy lifestyles and sustainable tourism.

5. Arts, Culture and Heritage: The Kincardine Lighthouse, local museums, theatre productions, art exhibitions and cultural events preserve and celebrate the community's heritage and creativity. These experiences contribute to Kincardine's unique identity and provide additional reasons to visit.

6. Community Engagement and Volunteerism: Service clubs, churches, non-profit organizations and volunteers contribute through fundraising events, community gatherings, charitable initiatives and recreational programming. Their efforts strengthen community connections and create a welcoming environment for residents and visitors.

7. Inclusivity and Welcoming Experiences: Events such as Kincardine Pride help position the municipality as an inclusive and welcoming destination, attracting visitors from surrounding communities and larger urban centres while celebrating diversity.

8. Economic Development and Local Business Support: Tourism-related organizations help generate spending at local restaurants, accommodations, shops and attractions. Through partnerships, events and promotion, they contribute to business vitality, local employment and economic growth.

The Municipality of Kincardine's tourism strength lies in its diverse and interconnected network of businesses, community organizations, volunteers and tourism operators. Together, they create memorable visitor experiences through events, arts and culture, outdoor recreation, hospitality and community engagement.

The responses demonstrate that tourism extends beyond traditional attractions and accommodations. It is supported by a broader community ecosystem that contributes to Kincardine's identity, economic vitality and welcoming atmosphere.

Strategic Opportunity: The Tourism Strategy can build on these strengths by fostering greater collaboration among tourism partners, coordinating marketing and events, connecting visitors with local businesses and experiences, and encouraging longer stays and year-round visitation.

Note: The engagement process generated a wide range of valuable ideas, opportunities and suggestions that reflect the passion and commitment of the Municipality of Kincardine's tourism partners. While these contributions provide an important foundation for the Tourism Strategy, it is recognized that not every idea can be pursued.

The next step will be to evaluate and prioritize the opportunities that are most pressing, achievable and likely to have the greatest positive impact on the Municipality of Kincardine's tourism sector and broader community. This will help ensure the Tourism Strategy is focused, realistic and actionable, with clear priorities that make the best use of available resources and position us for long-term success.

Putting the insights together – AI PRODUCED

Tourism Strategy – Summary of Participant Feedback

The following table consolidates feedback gathered at the Kincardine Kudos Event on February 28, 2026, attended by 48 tourism partners, businesses and community organizations. It highlights the strengths of Kincardine's tourism ecosystem, areas for improvement and opportunities to inform the development of the Tourism Strategy.

Theme	What They Told Us	Opportunity for the Tourism Strategy
Community Connections and Collaboration	The Municipality of Kincardine has a strong sense of community, with supportive businesses, organizations and residents. However, greater collaboration, communication and coordination are needed between tourism partners.	Establish a coordinated tourism network that encourages partnerships, information sharing, joint initiatives and stronger relationships between businesses and event organizers.
Volunteerism and Community Engagement	Dedicated volunteers are essential to delivering events and community experiences. Organizations would benefit from better volunteer recruitment and coordination.	Explore a centralized volunteer database or portal to connect volunteers with tourism events and community organizations.
Natural Assets and Waterfront	Lake Huron, beautiful sunsets, waterfront trails and the close proximity of downtown businesses to the lake are unique tourism strengths.	Leverage the waterfront and natural assets as key destination features through marketing, visitor experiences and connections to downtown businesses.
Events, Festivals and Entertainment	Festivals, theatre productions, concerts, sporting events, cultural celebrations and community activities attract visitors and support local businesses. Better coordination is needed to avoid overlapping events.	Strengthen event coordination through shared calendars, collaborative planning and opportunities to develop complementary visitor experiences.
Year-Round Tourism and Seasonality	Tourism is perceived as being concentrated within approximately two summer months. Winter sports, wellness activities and other experiences could	Identify opportunities to expand shoulder-season and winter tourism through sports, wellness, cultural experiences and year-round events.

Theme	What They Told Us	Opportunity for the Tourism Strategy
	help attract visitors outside the peak season.	
Tourism Marketing and Promotion	Tourism organizations, businesses and community partners actively promote Kincardine through websites, social media, visitor information and marketing partnerships.	Explore coordinated destination marketing, cross-promotion and visitor itineraries that connect attractions, events, accommodations and local businesses.
Transportation and Visitor Accessibility	Improved transportation options are needed for residents and visitors to access local events, attractions and businesses.	Explore event shuttles and other transportation options to improve accessibility and connections between tourism destinations.
Visitor Information and Wayfinding	Visitors would benefit from interactive maps identifying trails, water stations, bike racks, attractions and other amenities.	Enhance digital visitor information, interactive mapping and wayfinding to make it easier to navigate and explore the municipality.
Arts, Culture and Heritage	Local museums, the lighthouse, theatre productions, art exhibitions and cultural events contribute to Kincardine's identity and attract visitors.	Strengthen the promotion and integration of arts, culture and heritage into tourism experiences, itineraries and destination marketing.
Outdoor Recreation and Sports Tourism	Trails, cycling, camping, canoeing and waterfront recreation attract visitors. There are opportunities to involve more sports event organizers and winter recreation groups.	Expand partnerships with recreation and sports organizations to develop outdoor experiences, tournaments and events that attract visitors throughout the year.
Inclusivity and Welcoming Experiences	Kincardine's welcoming atmosphere and events such as Pride contribute to its appeal as an inclusive destination. Social services and community support organizations should also be involved in tourism planning.	Embed accessibility, diversity and inclusion into tourism development and broaden stakeholder engagement to ensure tourism benefits residents and visitors.

Theme	What They Told Us	Opportunity for the Tourism Strategy
Accommodations and Hospitality	Hotels, campgrounds, restaurants and other hospitality businesses support tourism, attract visitors and generate spending in the local economy.	Strengthen connections between accommodations, attractions, events and local businesses to encourage longer stays and increased visitor spending.
Event Planning and Municipal Support	Event organizers need clearer municipal requirements and access to equipment such as barricades, tables and fencing.	Develop a municipal event planning toolkit outlining requirements and procedures and explore shared equipment rentals and in-kind sponsorship opportunities.
Shared Facilities and Infrastructure	Some organizations need affordable office space, storage facilities and access to shared resources to support their operations.	Explore opportunities for shared municipal or community facilities, storage and infrastructure to reduce operational barriers for tourism partners.
Environmental Sustainability	Organizations identified a need for sustainability guidelines, policies and information about environmentally responsible organizations and resources.	Incorporate sustainable tourism principles into the strategy and develop resources to support environmentally responsible events and tourism operations.
Fundraising and Resource Sharing	Community organizations rely on fundraising and would benefit from a more coordinated approach to sponsorships, shared resources and community priorities.	Encourage collaborative fundraising, shared sponsorship opportunities and partnerships that align with broader tourism and community objectives.
Economic Development and Local Business Support	Tourism events, attractions and organizations generate economic activity by bringing visitors into local restaurants, accommodations, shops and other businesses.	Strengthen tourism's contribution to economic development by encouraging partnerships, cross-promotion, visitor spending and opportunities to extend stays.
Broader Stakeholder Engagement	Tourism planning should involve additional groups, including sports organizers, wellness providers, social	Expand the tourism network to include a broader range of community partners and ensure the strategy reflects diverse visitor

Theme	What They Told Us	Opportunity for the Tourism Strategy
	services and winter recreation organizations.	experiences and community needs.

Feedback demonstrates that the Municipality of Kincardine has a strong foundation for tourism built on its natural beauty, community spirit, volunteerism, diverse events and welcoming atmosphere.

The Tourism Strategy has an opportunity to build on these strengths by focusing on five overarching priorities:

1. Strengthen collaboration and coordination among tourism businesses, event organizers and community partners.
2. Expand year-round tourism opportunities by developing experiences beyond the peak summer season.
3. Enhance the visitor experience through improved transportation, wayfinding, marketing and connections between attractions.
4. Build organizational capacity through volunteer coordination, shared resources, municipal support and streamlined event planning.
5. Advance sustainable and inclusive tourism that supports economic development, celebrates community identity and balances visitor opportunities with resident needs.

These themes provide a foundation for developing strategic priorities and potential actions within the Municipality of Kincardine's Tourism Strategy.