Municipality of Kincardine | Tourism Strategy Engagement

Summary of input Youth - Tourism Student Staff

Background

The Municipality of Kincardine is developing a Tourism Strategy to guide how tourism grows and evolves in a way that supports residents, strengthens local businesses, and enhances the visitor experience.

As part of the Municipality of Kincardine's Tourism Strategy development, feedback was gathered from the youth tourism staff members (5) to better understand their perspectives on the Municipality of Kincardine as a visitor destination, opportunities for improvement, and ways to make the community more appealing to younger generations.

While the feedback represents a small group of youth , they did work in Tourism for the summer, which provides valuable perspectives to inform a forward-looking Tourism Strategy.

Key Themes

Overall, participants expressed pride in the Municipality of Kincardine's natural beauty, beaches, festivals, restaurants and welcoming community. Their feedback highlights an opportunity to build on these strengths by offering more diverse experiences that appeal to younger generations. Their feedback also identified opportunities to diversify tourism experiences, expand youth-focused activities, enhance tourism merchandise and explore parking improvements.

A recurring message was the desire for more activities, entertainment and experiences specifically designed for youth and young adults, helping position the community not only as a great place to visit, but also as a community where young people want to stay or return.

1. The Municipality of Kincardine's Strengths as a Tourism Destination

Participants consistently identified the Municipality of Kincardine's beaches, trails, festivals, local restaurants and downtown businesses as key attractions. The community's walkability, natural setting and variety of events were also highlighted as important features that contribute to a positive visitor experience.

2. Opportunities to Enhance Tourism

Several common opportunities emerged:

- Youth-focused experiences: Expand entertainment, music festivals, activities and events designed for teenagers and young adults.
- Tourism merchandise: Increase the variety of branded merchandise, including stickers, postcards, colouring books and locally designed products.
- Parking: All participants suggested exploring paid parking, with some also identifying a need for additional parking availability.
- Event diversity: Broaden tourism programming beyond traditional Scottish-themed events to appeal to a wider range of interests and age groups.

3. Operational Challenges

Participants identified challenges associated with difficult interactions with some community members and visitors, particularly during events. Additional feedback highlighted the need for greater behind-the-scenes staff support, improved event cleanup and access to dedicated transportation for tourism operations.

4. Tourism Location Experiences

Students identified their experiences at various tourism locations/events based on visitor volume, engagement and overall experience.

The Monday Market, Welcome Centre and festivals consistently ranked among the strongest experiences. Beach locations generally received lower rankings, suggesting an opportunity to explore additional programming and visitor engagement at these locations.

5. Making the Municipality of Kincardine More Appealing to Young People

Participants emphasized the importance of creating more opportunities for young people to live, work and spend time in the Municipality of Kincardine. Suggestions included expanding entertainment and recreational activities, increasing shopping options, improving access to affordable housing and creating more employment opportunities.

Implications for the Tourism Strategy

The feedback suggests several potential directions for consideration in the Tourism Strategy:

1. Diversify tourism programming to attract younger audiences while maintaining Kincardine's established events and cultural traditions.
2. Enhance visitor experiences through expanded beach activities, tourism merchandise and partnerships with local artists and businesses.

3. Explore parking management opportunities, including the feasibility and implications of paid parking in high-demand tourism areas.
4. Strengthen tourism operations through improved event coordination, staff support and recognition.
5. Support youth attraction and retention by considering how tourism development can contribute to entertainment, employment and broader community vibrancy.

Putting the insights together

Theme	What youth told us	Opportunity for the Tourism Strategy
1. Kincardine's Strengths as a Tourism Destination	Beaches, trails, festivals, local restaurants, and downtown businesses are key attractions. Walkability, the natural setting, and a variety of events create a positive visitor experience.	**Leverage and promote core assets:** Build upon the community's existing walkability and natural features to anchor new tourism initiatives.
2. Opportunities to Enhance Tourism	**Youth experiences:** Need more entertainment, music festivals, and events for teens/young adults. **Merchandise**: Want more branded, locally designed items (stickers, postcards, colouring books). **Parking**: Suggest exploring paid parking and increasing availability. **Event diversity**: Broaden programming beyond traditional Scottish themes.	**Diversify programming and revenue:** Develop targeted youth events, expand modern municipal merchandise partnerships with local artists, explore paid parking feasibility in high-demand areas, and introduce non-Scottish cultural events.
3. Operational Challenges	Difficult interactions occur with some community members and visitors during events. Staff need better behind-the-scenes	**Strengthen tourism operations:**

Theme	What youth told us	Opportunity for the Tourism Strategy
	support, improved event cleanup, and dedicated operational transportation.	Improve event coordination, increase on-site staff support and recognition, optimize cleanup logistics, and secure dedicated vehicles for operations.
4. Tourism Location Experiences	The Monday Market, Welcome Centre, and festivals offer the strongest experiences. Beach locations rank lower in engagement despite high visitor volume.	Activate the waterfront: Introduce dedicated programming, visitor engagement activations, and expanded activities specifically tailored for beach locations.
5. Making Kincardine More Appealing to Young People	Young people need more reasons to live, work, and stay. They want expanded entertainment, more shopping, affordable housing, and better employment opportunities.	Support youth retention through tourism: Align tourism development with broader community vibrancy by creating youth employment paths and expanding year-round recreational entertainment.