



# Explorer's Edge Regional Tourism Summit 2024



# Land Acknowledgement

The Tourism Industry Association of Ontario (TIAO) and Indigenous Tourism Ontario (ITO) recognize that all of our work, and the work of our community partners takes place on the traditional territories of the Anishinabek, Cree, and Haudenosaunee.

We acknowledge and respect that there are 46 treaties and other agreements that cover the territory we now call Ontario.

We acknowledge and embrace that all Ontarians are treaty people.

TIAO is thankful the original hosts welcomed visitors to work, live and benefit in these territories.

TIAO is thankful for the Anishinabek, Cree, and Haudenosaunee who have cared for these territories for thousands of years.

TIAO is thankful for the Indigenous community who continues to contribute to the strength of Ontario.

TIAO and ITO are honoured to collaborate with each other and to serve the wide variety of Indigenous and non-Indigenous businesses, stakeholders and communities throughout the territory.

# TIAO Priorities 2024

## TIAO is the voice of tourism across Ontario

- Advocacy & member programs to ensure tourism industry's economic sustainability and growth.
- Members are tourism operators, destination marketing organizations, regional tourism organizations, sector associations, supplier community, municipalities, economic developers, and educators.
- Federal, Provincial, & municipal.
- 2024 Priorities: marketing, infrastructure, workforce, & data.

# Industry Performance

## Ontario Sales:

- YTD Y/Y spending is up **4.8%**
- US & Domestic spending is up **6.4%** and **9%**
- Overseas spending is down **13.5%**
- Ahead of 2019 spending overall
- RTO12 outperforming Ontario overall
- Canada YTD Y/Y spending is up **6.6%\***

## Challenges & Opportunities:

- **Inflation** impact on sales & profits
- **Business** travel slow to return
- **Overseas** travel down
- **Competition** for Ontarians w/in Canada
- **Transportation** system gaps
- **Workforce** hits in 2024
- **Collaboration** mindset waning since pandemic
- **Tourism strategy** last updated in 2016

# TIAO's Focus in 2024

## **Marketing:**

- Champion interprovincial, US and international marketing
- Meet with Chinese Embassy, restart trade missions to China
- MAT reform consultation & recommendations
- Advocate for corporate and sporting event bid support

## **Infrastructure:**

- Expand Sustainable Tourism Certifications in Ontario
- Champion transportation system & EV investment (air in NWO, Via Rail, Committee)

# TIAO's Focus in 2024

## **Workforce:**

- Respond to international student caps
- Advocate for programs to match unemployed with job opportunities (team SDF application)

## **Advocacy:**

- Focused advocacy: Hill Days, AMO, ROMA, Queens Park Day, etc.
- Focused media relations: 260+ million impressions
- New Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Gaming
- Launch Ontario Tourism Strategy

# Ontario Tourism Strategy

## **Launch & Leadership**

- Initiated Fall 2024, independently led by TIAO and Ontario's tourism industry
- Guided by an advisory committee with full stakeholder representation, TIAO Board of Directors

## **Strategic Partners**

- Context Research Group & Canadian Ecotourism Services

## **Preliminary Insights**

- State of the Industry 2022 report, RTO strategies, DC 2030 Strategy, DO Playbook

## **Guiding Principles**

- Drive domestic/international competitiveness
- Prioritize operator input
- Strengthen industry teamwork



# Ontario Tourism Strategy

## **Industry Survey**

- Industry-wide survey of operators, RTOs, DMOs, sector organizations, partners, and government
- Market & Product Development, Infrastructure, Workforce, Sustainability
- Indigenous Tourism, Innovation, Support Systems' Effectiveness

## **Engagement & Development**

- Upcoming 5 Focus Groups across all regions, ensuring broad sector participation
- Online Destination & Operator/Sector Communities
- Target: Completion prior to the next provincial & federal elections for strategic advocacy

## **Working Goals for Ontario's Tourism Future (5-7 Years)**

- Unified vision, clear strategic priorities & actionable objectives
- Defined stakeholder roles with collaborative, accountable implementation plan
- Focused and more effective advocacy



# Rural Markets

- Many are outperforming larger markets
- New and emerging MATs are driving marketing development, product investment, municipal infrastructure
- Physical capacity for visitor growth and new investment
- Competition levelling- and heating-up
- Opportunity to be more a part of international story, interprovincial story
- While Province is focused on Niagara Region for investment, we have an opportunity to use as a template for identifying additional regions for prioritization
- Infrastructure & workforce plans will be critical to strategies

# Thank you!

Let's stay  
connected.



TIAOtweets



Tourism Industry  
Association of  
Ontario



TIAOgram



TIAOntario

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**tiao**   
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