



# Council Update and 2025 Budget

March 25, 2025

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# History

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- The Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce & Visitor & Convention Bureau (NOTL Chamber of Commerce) was incorporated in July 1995
- In 2000, the NOTL Chamber of Commerce and Tourism NOTL began operating as an inter-related organization with one board of directors
- Operated out of the same location, sharing resources and operating costs, allowing for cost efficiencies
- Revenue was dependent on Town grants and Chamber of Commerce event profits



# Where We Were

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- November 2023 - Council motion to separate the two organizations and create two separate boards with separate people in each.
- March 2024 – Organization transitioned the leadership out of their role.
- May 2024 - Executive Director was hired on a four-month contract.
- September 2024 – Four-month contract transitioned to full-time.
- Staffing – one full-time marketing person, two part-time visitor information staff, and one part-time bookkeeper
- Health and Safety issues in the Workplace
  - Renovations; paint, flooring, repairs to walls
  - Junk Removal
  - Chairs, Desks, Phone System, Computers
  - Bugs, Mice Droppings

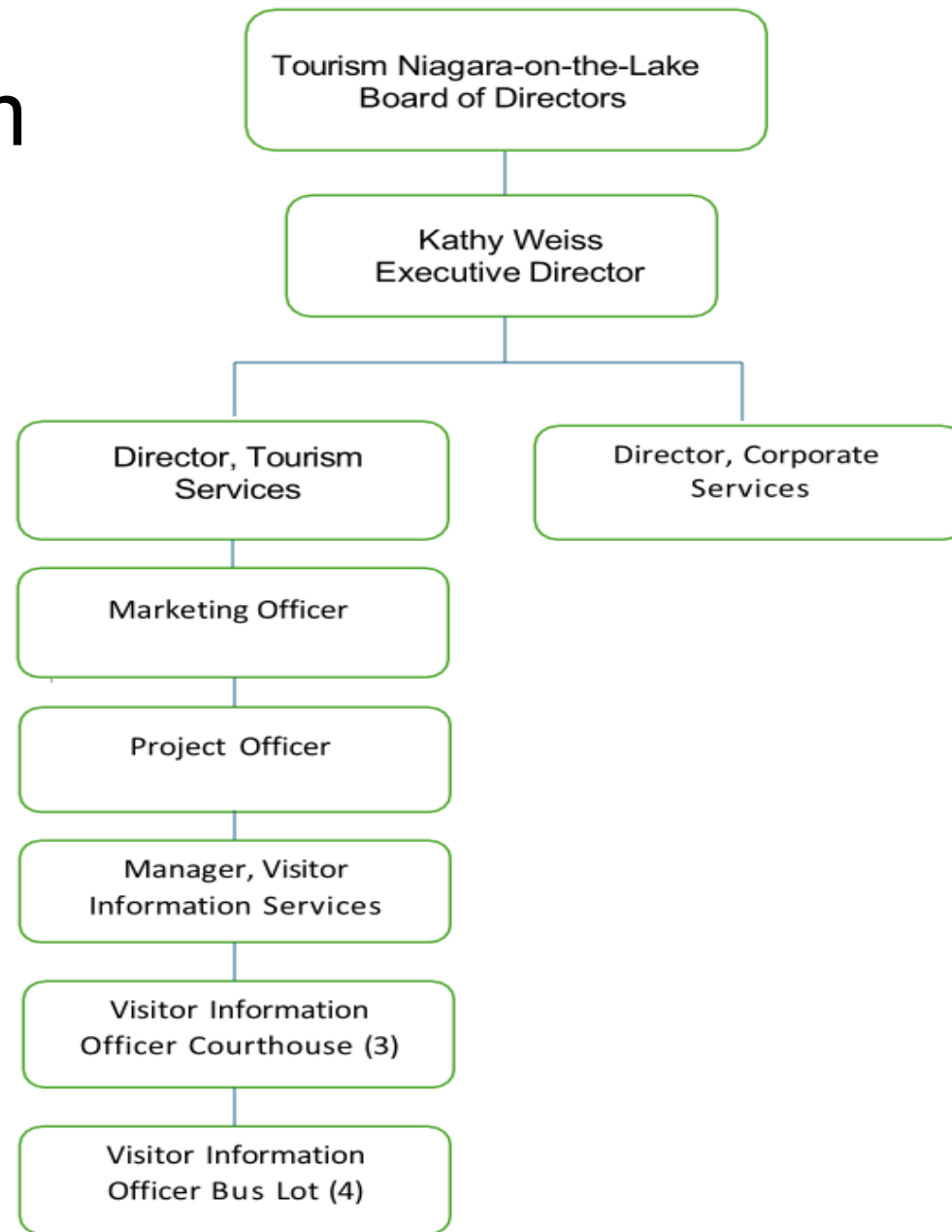
# Actions Completed

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- Two independent organizations with separate boards and separate board members
- New strategic, expertise-driven Board of Directors
- Seven-month process; completed in four
- Financial position remains strong, with a sustainable funding source and a clear strategy for continued growth
- Implemented new systems and processes that improve efficiency and accountability
- Workplace - significant improvements, creating an environment prioritizing professionalism, teamwork, and employee well-being.
- New team has been developed from the ground up, bringing expertise, new energy, and innovation.



# The Team



# Governance

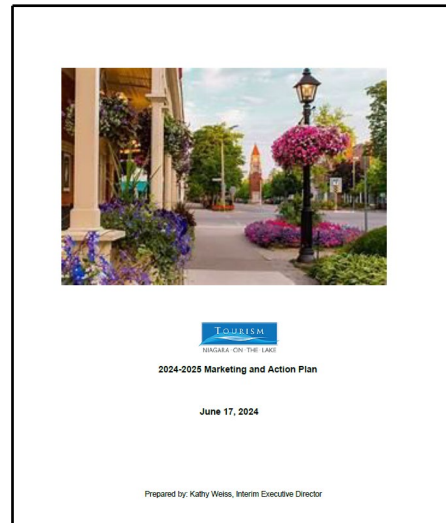
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- Prioritizing governance to move the organization forward
- Chair and Governance Committee established at the first board meeting
- Strong governance will establish accountability, transparency, and strategic leadership
- Established by-laws to be compliant with ONCA
- Retained Governance Consultant, John Dunn, Floor 13 to create the Governance Framework
- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for board members
- Develop policies and procedures, and enhance By-laws
- Accountability and Transparency
  - Open Communication with the Town, stakeholders, and the community
  - Regular financial and operational reporting



# Guiding Documents

- Tourism Strategy, Master Plan, and Action Plan
- 2022-2027 Tactical Marketing Plan
- 2024/2025 Marketing Action Plan



# Looking Ahead - 2025 Marketing Action Plan

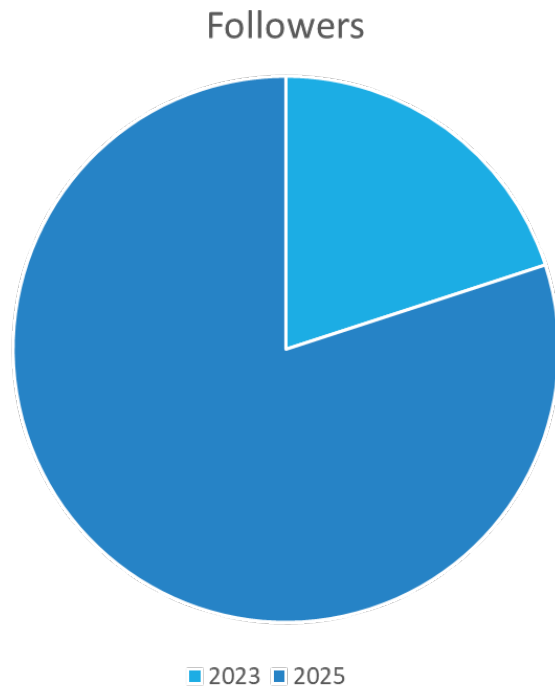
See Appendix 1 for Marketing Activities Details

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- Re-branding and New Website – **Completion Date – Spring 2025**
  - Digital Library and Content – **Launched January 2025 – Ongoing**
  - Research and Data – **Launched in February 2025 - Partnership with TPN**
  - New Social Media Campaigns – **Launched January 2025 - Ongoing**
  - Marketing Collateral – **Launching in April 2025 - Ongoing**
  - Paid Advertising – Canada Magazine, Billboard in GTA, Ontario by Bike – **Launched in January 2025 and on-going**
  - Travel Writer – **Launching Q3 2025**
  - Seasonal Marketing Campaigns – **Launched January 2025 – Winter complete, Spring April 2025**
  - Sector Marketing Campaigns – **Launching Q2 2025**
  - Industry Events and Consumer Shows – **Starting with Rendez-vous Canada May 2025 – with Industry Partners**
  - Strategies: Romance, Business Conferences and Incentives – **Launching Q3 2025**



# Social Media@visitniagaraonthelake

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- 300% growth in 15 months
- Focus on visually captivating content, engaging storytelling, and optimizing post frequency
- Driven entirely by increased reach

# Partnerships

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- Tourism Partnership Niagara (TPN)
- Town Staff
- NOTL Ambassadors
- Tourism Stakeholders
- Wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake
- Regional Tourism Organizations
- TAIO/TIAC
- Ontario Culture Days
- Culinary Tourism Alliance



# Visitor Information Statistics - 2024

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## COURTHOUSE

MONTH	IN-PERSON	TELEPHONE	EMAIL
JANUARY	194	147	70
FEBRUARY	117	137	58
MARCH	314	204	61
APRIL	690	214	194
MAY	1333	332	285
JUNE	2011	205	263
JULY	1791	224	230
AUGUST	2264	203	161
SEPTEMBER	2374	144	194
OCTOBER	1708	199	173
NOVEMBER	462	173	105
DECEMBER	309	141	102
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13,657</b>	<b>2,323</b>	<b>1,896</b>

## BUS LOT

MONTH	BUSES	PEOPLE
APRIL	190	4,325
MAY	455	12,887
JUNE	659	20,551
JULY	703	22,033
AUGUST	721	23,206
SEPTEMBER	888	29,419
OCTOBER	669	19,789
NOVEMBER	17	434
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,302</b>	<b>132,644</b>

# Key Performance Indicators - 2025

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## Marketing KPI's

- 25% increase in social media followers
- 30% increase in social media engagement
- 25% increase in e-newsletter subscribers
- 5 new influencer/affiliate partnerships developed
- 10 influencer partnerships activated
- 10 media pitches successfully circulated
- 20 blogs created, published, and shared across social media channels

## Visitor Information KPI's

- 25% increase in query responses at Queen Street and Bus Lot Visitor Centres
- 25% increase in the distribution of marketing collateral
- 25% increase in interactions with visitors and Ambassadors

# Executive Director Profile

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## Experience

- 1996 - 2000 **General Manager**, St. Catharines Chamber of Commerce
- 2000 – 2009 **Director, Economic Development**, City of Kitchener
- 2009 – 2011 **Director, Economic Development and Tourism**, Chatham-Kent
- 2011 – 2019 **Director, Economic Development and Tourism**, Region of Durham
- 2019 – 2021 **President**, Weiss Choice Group
- 2021 – 2023 **Project Facilitator** – Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake
- 2023 – 2024 **Economic Development Consultant** - Hickey Global
- 2024 – Today **Executive Director**, Tourism NOTL and NOTL Chamber of Commerce

# Financial Overview and Budget

See Appendix 2 for Detailed Budget

GENERAL INCOME	2024 Budget	2024 Actual	2025 Budget	Comment
<b>Revenue</b>				
2024 Bank Balance Carry-over	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$396,634.00	
2022, 2023, 2024 Q1 & Q2	\$0.00	\$1,495,570.75	N/A	
2024 Projected Q3 & Q4 MAT Revenue	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$574,081.43	Based on Town's projection minus what has been received
2025 projected MAT Revenue	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,250,000.00	Town projection \$1.25 M.
Town Fee For Service - VI	\$83,600.00	\$77,076.00	\$0.00	
Ambassador Funding from Town	\$2,980.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$86,580.00</b>	<b>\$1,572,646.75</b>	<b>\$2,220,715.46</b>	
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
2022/2023 Expenses	\$0.00	\$514,065.77	\$0.00	See Appendix 3
Marketing	\$582,000.00	\$214,905.77	\$1,214,300.00	
Discretionary Grants	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$100,000.00	
Memberships/Subscriptions	\$3,500.00	\$3,808.00	\$7,268.00	
Conferences/Business Events	\$30,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$10,000.00	
Office Expenses - Shared Services 66%	\$20,010.00	\$77,634.00	\$72,331.40	
Prof. Fees and Services	\$24,236.00	\$34,176.50	\$81,495.00	One-Time Consultant Expense - \$50,000
Promotion / Public Relations /Sponsorship	\$0.00	\$3,200.00	\$45,000.00	
City Spark (Event Platform)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$3,450.00	
Professional Development	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	\$10,000.00	
Leadership Training	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$10,000.00	
Other, TBD	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00	
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$659,746.00</b>	<b>\$848,790.04</b>	<b>\$1,555,844.40</b>	

# Financial Overview and Budget

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Payroll & Related Expenses	2024 Budget	2024 Actual	2025 Budget	Comment
Salaries	\$277,296.00	\$286,727.00	\$607,760.00	Includes Bus Lot Staff * NEW
Employer Deductions	\$0.00	\$22,863.00	\$48,013.00	
Group Insurance	\$0.00	\$7,132.00	\$19,108.00	
<b>Total Payroll and Related Expenses</b>	<b>\$277,296.00</b>	<b>\$316,722.00</b>	<b>\$664,871.00</b>	
<b>Profit/Loss</b>	<b>-\$857,962.71</b>	<b>\$396,634.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	

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Thank you

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