

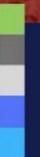


RED ROCK
a superior treasure

Project Charter: All-Season Tourism Strategy & Action Plan

PRESENTED BY:

Limestone
PARTNERS



LimestonePartners.ca

Project Background and Purpose

Background

Red Rock, a world-class tourism destination on Lake Superior, is a special place. Its location creates an experience that can truly be unmatched from anywhere. As a tourist destination, Red Rock has had tremendous success in being a great destination for many water-based sports, yachting and nature-based recreation with regional parks. The Municipality is home to a number of resorts where tourists explore the Lake Superior and Nipigon Bay's famous vistas. The pristine shorelines and the people all add to this area, as does the history from World War II. Alongside its strength in summer tourism, Red Rock is strongly positioned to grow as an all-season tourism destination. With spectacular boating, canoeing, winter snowshoeing, snowmobiling, ATVing, all season camping and hiking, Red Rock's northern location is its best asset. There is indeed something special about Red Rock: serenity, sight-seeing and sports based on water, that are unlike anywhere else. With a world-class marina and lodging, Red Rock has a solid foundation for all-season tourism development.

Project purpose or justification

With dramatic changes in consumer behaviour and motivations for travel moving away from individual offerings of one tourism business or product towards an immersive full experience of a "destination", tourism strategy and branding are much different now than even ten years ago. As seeing the sights are no longer enough, visitors want to get to know the people and places they are visiting with meaningful ways for them to return home with lasting memories. Success in tourism strategy is hence determined by how well it can make a memory no other municipality embraces in the same way, in order for it to lead to a unique and meaningful brand position.

The tourism strategy and action plan proposed, is an evidence-based strategy that examines carefully, trends in the macro environment, rivalry within competitive space and assets within the community to inform systematic strategic formulation. The action plan will be built with detailed objectives that lay the groundwork for it to further develop into a premier all-season destination. As a believer in end-to-end solutions, Limestone will also prepare the groundwork for implementation within the digital and online area.

Objectives

- a) identify **ideal target audiences** and identify what travel experiences they are seeking,
- b) identify what **experiences** are currently offered, or can be easily enabled to be offered, and can be best aligned to opportunities in the market,
- c) identify accessible **tourism opportunities**, creating new reasons to visit and give reasons for visitors to return throughout all four seasons,
- d) identify what **issues** should be addressed to maximize **economic potential**,
- e) facilitate creation of a **vision statement and brand promise**,
- f) identify potential for how a **technology-immersed tourism experience** can be deployed,
- g) create accessible **tourism marketing assets** that could generate digital buzz,
- h) suggest a performance measurement to track tourism progress,
- i) provide implementation strategy for how further tourism investments, products and events can be further developed with considerations of **funding, labour force and infrastructure considerations** and
- j) identify **specific business opportunities**.

Scope

The scope of this project is to provide an all-season tourism strategy and implementation plan. In particular, this project will provide a concise yet comprehensive overview of current operations, research the external, competitive and internal environment and provide an evidence-based plan to guide continued growth and prosperity of the tourism economy in the municipality as a premiere all-season tourist destination.

An Evidence-Based Approach

To develop an analysis as objectively as possible, the consultants will rely on evidence including academic literature, primary research and market databases for a thorough and comprehensive review of the macro-environment, the tourism industry, and competition. The consultants aim to develop a tourism plan from the starting perspective of the macro-environment first, before invigilating the industry, competitive dynamics, and resources of the municipality.

Limestone hopes to begin by engaging the municipality with a two-hour introductory kickoff with relevant municipal staff. The kickoff session will be to review the current operations and markets, priorities for growth and plan for community consultation. The plan will ultimately need to achieve a collective understanding of and support for the strategy among all relevant stakeholders, including the community and provide a framework for action that supports implementation. Accordingly, throughout the study, Limestone will engage some tourist organizations, through phone interviews, to collaboratively identify some internal resources which will be used in creation of the new strategy. Upon completion of the draft plan, Limestone will issue a public survey for commentary to add to the discussion. Revisions would then be completed before presenting the final draft sent to relevant staff, and if desired, presented at Council.

A Focus on Differentiation

Recently, consumer behaviour and motivations for travel have moved away from desiring individual offerings (ie going to one, specific place) and towards desiring immersive full experiences of a “destination.” Destinations are collections of experiences that, collectively, create a memory for the consumer. As seeing the sights is no longer enough, visitors want to interact with real people from the community and with the places they are visiting in meaningful ways, for them to return home with lasting memories.

Accordingly, tourism strategizing, and branding is much different now than even ten years ago. Success in tourism strategy is determined by how well it can make a memory no other place embraces in the same way, in order for it to lead to a unique and meaningful brand position. Accordingly, this means that the value proposition of a place should stand on its own without the need to rely on being known for a profile event or attraction to support it. Further, it should be relevant across all touchpoints of the tourism journey, including the highway, businesses, the people and the town itself. Having touch points for tourists to interact with locals and get to know them is a key differentiator that Red Rock could capitalize on. Limestone’s focus on differentiation and thinking outside the box will ensure the municipality develops a unique brand promise that will guide strategy and its branding.

Deliverables

1. All-Season Tourism Market Growth Strategy

The tourism strategy will primarily be based on evidence in the form of academic literature, strategic analysis and economic research. This will include the following sections:

- **Current Situation**
 - This section will describe the municipality, its administration and council and current situation of the tourism economy.

- **Situational Analysis and Market Opportunity**
 - The goal of this section would be to assess a comprehensive overview of opportunities and threats in the macro-environment and identify the key drivers of change in all-season tourism markets effecting northern Ontario. Accordingly, segmented market conditions

within the region, feeder jurisdictions and similar areas will be reviewed for relevant political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal trends.

- **Competitive Landscape**

- The goal of this section would be to determine the competitive landscape, and to identify key success factors. This includes studying the market for conferences, nature-based tourism and the leisure market. This will use *Porter's competitive five forces framework* to analyse municipal success in achieving all-season tourism, its value drivers, and ultimately, determine industry economic attractiveness. The five forces include rivalry, threat of entrants, substitute threats, tourist power, and supplier power. The goal of the five forces model is to identify external competitive forces in a market. It assumes that the market is competitive by nature, and is not determined by other players, but rather by external forces such as tourists themselves, suppliers, substitutes, and potential entrants that comprise *competitive rivalry*. The collective strength or weaknesses of the five forces is what determines the profitability and performance in the industry, forming the basis for strategic decisions.

- **Analysis of All-Season Tourism Assets and Capabilities**

- The tourism assets and capabilities of a municipality contribute to its long-term competitiveness. Tourism Assets are the assets that municipalities have of a tourism nature. Capabilities are the ways those assets are used or deployed. Threshold capabilities, or “qualifiers”, are those needed for a municipality to meet the necessary requirements to compete in a given market, and to achieve parity with competitors in that market. Distinctive, or unique capabilities, or “winners”, are those that are required to achieve competitive advantage, and that are of value to customers, and to which competitors find difficult to imitate. These will be identified from Limestone's consultations and research.
- The four key criteria by which tourism capabilities can be assessed, in terms of providing a basis for achieving sustainable competitive advantage are: value, rarity, inimitability, and organizational exploitation. Valuable resources are those which are important for success in the industry. Rare resources are those which few direct competitors hold. Inimitability are resources for which are expensive to imitate by other competitors. Municipal exploitation is measured by how operable they are within the organization at present. This analysis, VRIO for short, enables classification of distinctive resources, which are discerned from Porter's Five Forces analysis in the industrial context section, as either serving as a competitive parity, temporary competitive advantage, under-used resources and those which are means to long-term competitive advantage. This is important for strategy formulation, as those with long-term advantage are those which are built the most, while efforts must be directed to sustaining temporary competitive advantages, and those which have competitive parity.

- **All-Season Tourism Strategy**

- SWOT is an often-used matrix that assesses opportunities and threats relevant to an organization's activities and strengths and weaknesses relative to competitors. In order for a SWOT analysis to be effective however, it should prioritize and not generalize nor be a substitute for analysis. Accordingly, previous sections of the tourism plan will inform strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Hence, SWOT will organize the key themes from the analysis and be used to guide strategy. In this lens, SWOT is not an end in itself, but rather a summarization tool for tourism strategy analysis.
- **TOWS matrix** provides a visual way in which how different strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats can be analyzed holistically for strategic formulation. This will

then determine the target markets and how best to reach those markets. Strategies hence stem from academic literature of how the municipality can build on each area of development:

- Strength/ Opportunities – How the municipality can build on areas of strength to address future opportunities.
 - Strength/Threat- How the municipality can leverage strengths to address threats effectively.
 - Weakness/Opportunity – How the municipality can address current weakness in light of future opportunity.
 - Weakness/Threat – How the municipality can best mitigate threats in areas they are weak.
- **Development of a brand promise, or vision**, which would stem from the analysis would be developed during a working session via Zoom with the committee

2. All-Season Tourism Action Plan

The action links strategic goals that follow those developed in the TOWS matrix and then translates them into specific, time-oriented, realistic and measurable objectives that specify how certain strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats can be leveraged for success. This will outline a roadmap for the continued growth and prosperity of the tourism economy within the municipality. This includes development of the following:

- **The action plan will prioritize recommendations**, break them down into tactics, identify responsible organizations, provide a evaluation strategy and realistic budget at achieving each recommendation. This will lead to an operations plan complete with gap analysis, market plan, human resource plan, logistics and operations plan, partnership plan and technological plan.
- **Draft Future RFPs** for implementation of the plan will be developed and would be linked to accessible funding opportunities in consultation with NOHFC and FedNor.
- **Business Opportunities** for tourism entrepreneurs would be identified for use in economic development advertising.
- **Opportunities for technology immersed travel.**

3. Value Added Strategy in Action: Branding Groundwork

Following the outcome of the strategy, Limestone can prepare the foundational branding groundwork to make strategy implementation as easily as possible by building on the exceptional work already underway in the township. Accordingly, upon completion of the strategic plan and the consultations during this process, Limestone will develop a **refreshed destination brand guidebook**. The brand guidebook, itself would be based on the *brand promise, and vision*, that is identified from the strategy and community consultations. This will incorporate the work done to date including the refreshed logo and signage and be aligned with the value proposition and ethos from the strategy and community.

By drawing on individual personas segmented on the memories they aim to seek from their destination, Limestone will develop story lines to highlight who, what and why people should visit the region to best achieve their memory. We know this region is rich in authentic experiences and we would like to bring those to life in marketing. Accordingly, Limestone will integrate stories from real people in the township, including business owners, suppliers and tourists themselves as seen on social media. This would hopefully lead to increased interaction between tourists and the local business community.

Also included would be a number of **accessible marketing assets** that can be used in marketing the municipality as a world-class, all-season tourism destination. These marketing assets will include tools to trigger digital buzz, including a social media posts, photos and a website and lay the foundation for future work in the area. Note, this project would exclude subscriptions to hosting which would be necessary for their implementation.

Project Management

Communication

In our extensive experience, solid project management plans are key for solid solutions, with continuous communication between Limestone and the municipality. Valuing engagement, Limestone will maintain regular communication as to the status of the engagement. Solid communication allows issues to be addressed and identified before they arise. This is particularly important for this project which may have a high public profile, involve many work efforts running simultaneously and extending over several months.

We wish to propose a reporting structure for this engagement, led by mayor and council, the CAO and the CDO. Jib Turner will act as the Lead Engagement Partner with Andrew Ault as the lead research partner working in conjunction with the Airport Service Review Team.

While the airport service review team will assist to identify potential service level alignments, the ultimate decisions rests with council. This will provide a menu of cost reduction opportunities as each opportunity will vary on impact on outcomes, labour implications and perception by community.



Task Name	Duration	Medium
Preliminary Meeting	June 25	Via Zoom
Bi-Weekly Update with Tourism Steering Committee	July 9	via Zoom
Facilitated Session with Tourism Steering Committee	TBD (Miid-July)	In Person
Consultation of action plan and branding	August 6	via Zoom
Greater Community Consultation	August 19-25	via Online
Draft Report Submitted for Committee Feedback	August 27	Digital
Final Report Delivered	August 31	In Person and Digital, or via Zoom

Project Communication

Our Lead Engagement Partner will ensure all resources are available, assume responsibility of a detailed work plan with the township and manage timelines to guarantee they are respected and report progress to the project authority on a biweekly basis. He will also identify risks and challenges throughout the project that could result in delays or not meeting required timelines. The identified risks and challenges will be documented in the status report with proposed suggestions.

We believe in keeping an open channel of communication between clients to act as a control and enable understanding with respect to the scope and mandate, as well as to provide value-added interaction. Regular communication is also an excellent tool to manage project risk by sharing concerns with the authorities and implementing corrective measures. The engagement team will ensure continued communication from the Preliminary meeting, biweekly status updates and meetings, and telephone calls and emails as-required.

Project Governance and Conflict

Strong project governance starts with documenting key aspects for the review. We start with a co-established work plan with the township to monitor quality service delivery, including the preliminary scope and objectives, timing, milestones, measures of success, and risks. The suggested work plan will be validated from planning, to confirm it meets Red Rock's expectations. Limestone considers the importance of periodic update meetings with the project authority to track progress against the timeline, deliverables and the budget to identify variances. We will have regular biweekly meetings to allow engagement between Limestone, the project authority and the airport review team.

We embrace conflict as an opportunity for innovative problem solving. Accordingly, we plan to deal with issues as soon as possible. If conflict develops, it is a good time to address it head on. We will then facilitate agreement and come to resolution. We know we seek the same goal and desire to build a relationship around trust elements.

Schedule Procedures

Scope Management

The Lead Engagement Partner is responsible for adhering to the scope of the project, defined by the scope statement aforementioned within this document. Any changes to the scope statement must be done through a change request, made via email. The project schedule is an important document as, if used properly, is used for planning, execution, monitoring and communication. The main purpose is to deliver the scope on time. We use a chart of project elements with milestones, as outlined in the preceding section.

Time Management

The Lead Engagement Partner will be responsible for managing and reporting on the timeliness aspects of the project. For any timing to the client that will be delivered late, the Project Authority would have authorization. The Client will need to be notified should the variance (increase) be of one day or greater. This would be done by a change request initiated by the Lead Engagement Partner. Report updates will be provided on biweekly basis. A work breakdown structure, attached in this document, highlights key milestones during the project, expected duration and parties involved. Any delays to the milestones (provided in the Reports and Deliverables table of *Communication and Conflict Resolution Strategies*) or overall project by one day or greater cumulatively, must be approved by the client. Since it is a small project, this makes sense. The Lead Engagement Partner would ensure cost and time schedule reviews after each milestone is passed. The project team will be responsible to validate any changes made to the schedule, and the Project Authority must review and decide on approval for the final schedule to become baselined, and again each time it changes by 1 day or greater.

Integration Management

The Lead Engagement Partner will lead integration processes in order for the project plan to be consistent and coherent. The Lead Engagement Partner will ensure coordination of dates and, upon dates changing, would ensure that is reflected throughout along with an entry to the revision summary. The Lead Engagement Partner will monitor and control the project. Change requests, which are approved by the Lead Engagement Partner and Project Authority, will be reflected in all documents ensuring all entries are correct, and signed off by the Lead Engagement Partner. All activities will be complete when the Project Authority signs off as appropriate.

Responsibilities in the Schedule Control Processes:

	Stakeholder Relations, Project Management	Research and Development	Technology Development	Steering Committee Meeting Schedule	Scheduling the Preliminary Meeting, Presentations to Council and Site visits
Jib Turner	P	S	S	S	S
Andrew Ault	S	P	S	S	S
Tom Ondrejicka	S	S	P	S	S
Project Authority				P	P

P = Primary Responsibility S = Support Responsibility

Project Plan and Schedule

Work Breakdown Structure

ID	Task Name	DURATION OR DATE	PREDE-CESSORS	MEMBERS INVOLVED
1	Phase I - Preliminary Meeting	June 25		Limestone, PA, Committee
2	Phase II – All-Season Tourism Growth Strategy Research & Writing	June 26 – July 20	1	Limestone
3	Bi-Weekly Update	July 9	1	Limestone, PA, Comm.
4	Site Visit	TBD (Mid July)	1, 3	Limestone, PA, Comm.
5	Facilitated Session with Municipal Review Team	TBD (Mid July)	1, 3	Limestone, PA, Comm.
6	Consultation II of growth strategy	July 23	1 to 5	Limestone, PA, Comm.
7	Phase III – Action Plan and Branding Research & Writing	July 20 – August 10	1 to 6	Limestone
8	Consultation III of action plan and branding	August 6	1 to 6	Limestone, PA, Comm.
9	Phase IV – Final Report Writing and Greater Consultation	August 10 - 27	1 to 8	Limestone
10	Greater Community Consultation	August 19 – 25	1 to 9	Limestone, Community
11	Draft Submitted to Committee	August 27	1 to 10	Limestone, PA, Comm.
12	Final Report Submitted	August 31	1 to 11	Limestone, PA, Council
13	Final Presentation	TBD	1 to 12	Limestone, PA, Council

Legend: **Limestone** = Andrew Ault, Jib Turner | **PA** = Project Authority | **Council** = Municipal Council | **Comm.** = Tourism Steering Committee | **Community** = Greater Stakeholders in Red Rock

