

A scenic sunset over a large body of water, likely a lake or bay. The sky is a mix of blue, orange, and yellow, with some clouds. In the distance, a person is standing on a surfboard or a small boat, silhouetted against the bright horizon. The water in the foreground is dark with white foam from a wave breaking.

# Wawa's 5-year Tourism Strategy & Action Plan

The Journey

**Wawa**<sup>CA</sup>  
Real algoma.





## **Community's Vision for Tourism in Wawa and Area:**

Wawa's thriving tourism industry is recognized as a cornerstone of our economy and a contributor to the well-being of our natural environment and quality of life. Tourism in Wawa connects visitors and locals to our welcoming community, whose unique Northern character, sustainable local businesses, spectacular scenery, and proximity to Lake Superior make it a great place to live and visit.



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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We respectfully acknowledge that the land known today as the Municipality of Wawa is the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg, specifically the Ojibwe Nation. We also acknowledge that the land is part of Treaty 60: Robinson-Superior Treaty, signed September 7, 1850, between the Crown and 12 First Nations, including Michipicoten First Nation. The land also forms part of the Métis Nation of Ontario's Region 4. The Ojibwe peoples have stewarded the lands, waters, and living things since time immemorial, and continue to live throughout many communities today including Michipicoten First Nation. Their continued presence, contributions, and culture can be seen and felt across the place we now call Wawa.

As the Ojibwe peoples have done since time immemorial, we strive to be responsible stewards and caretakers and to respect the cultures, ceremonies, and traditions of all who call these lands home. We thank the Ojibwe peoples, especially Michipicoten First Nation, for both their past, present, and future stewardship as Wawa would not be the magnificent place it is today for both residents and visitors.

The Municipality of Wawa's 5-year Tourism Strategy is the result of many highly engaged stakeholders in the community whose insight, knowledge, and participation in the development process was invaluable. We thank all residents, business owners, tourism industry staff, former and current Council members, and the Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee (EDTAC) for their support.

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Federal Economic Development  
Agency for Northern Ontario

Agence fédérale de développement  
économique pour le Nord de l'Ontario





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Highlights and Overview

Wawa is strategically located along an important transit corridor and home to diverse tourism offerings. Its location and surrounding assets inform the many reasons why a diversity of visitors choose to stop in or plan a visit to Wawa.

Recognizing tourism as a key economic driver and essential to community well-being, the Municipality of Wawa engaged Bannikin develop its 5-Year Tourism Strategy and Action Plan. This project builds off past work, including the “Municipality of Wawa Strategic Plan: Planning to Succeed 2021-2025” the Municipality’s last tourism strategy, “The Trail: A Work Plan for Wawa’s Tourism Industry” which was produced in 2002 and expired in 2008. The process designed and implemented to research and develop Wawa’s 5-year Tourism Strategy and Action Plan sought to engage diverse tourism stakeholders using a community-based participatory research approach. The research and engagement for this project took place from July 2022 to February 2023, with the ongoing support and involvement of Municipal staff. In addition, the Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee played an important role participating in key informant interviews, attending community engagement sessions, and providing feedback on select outputs produced.

Important tourism assets include a strong base of local accommodations, outdoor attractions, food and beverage providers, festivals and events, outfitters, retailers, and service providers. Framing the context for Wawa’s tourism assets are a number of overarching

points of differentiation that include but are not limited to the fall colours, a variety of 4-season outdoor activities, and vibrant local histories and heritage including Ojibway culture and traditions. The area’s friendly people, beautiful scenery, and a closeness to nature and wildlife are key strengths that can boost any visitor’s trip and can be experienced through the variety of activities connected to the community, lakes, rivers, and wide-open spaces in and around Wawa.

Wawa’s visitors can be organized into “pass-through visitors”, those who are typically passing through or visiting the community for its services, and “destination visitors”, those who have deliberately planned a visit to Wawa as their primary place to visit based on its assets, amenities, and activities. Working with existing and potential visitors presents an important opportunity for Wawa to grow the role of tourism in the community’s development. Looking to make the most of these tourism assets, the main categories of travellers to Wawa are:

- Hunters and anglers
- Eco-adventurers
- Snowmobilers
- Lake Superior Circle Tour participants
- Road trippers
- Provincial Park Visitors and campers
- Organized tour participants
- Local event participants



Although many strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and challenges were identified across the research and analysis process, four key factors were identified as essential to understanding tourism the current context and opportunities for tourism development in Wawa, these are:

- The need for resident support of and involvement in tourism development.
- The positioning of and the story told about Wawa to residents and visitors.
- The need to increase community capacity to further develop tourism.
- The need to enhance tourism offerings and encourage investment in the community across all seasons.

The resulting comprehensive and actionable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan will be implemented in collaboration with partners over a five-year period, while working towards the following inspiring vision:

## The Way Forward

With a strong understanding of the context surrounding tourism and an inspiring vision for the future of tourism in Wawa, four areas of opportunity were identified to guide the future of tourism growth in Wawa and area.

The areas of opportunity are the foundation of Wawa's Tourism Strategy and Action Plan. Specific objectives make up each action toward identifying what will be achieved through the pursuit of the opportunities and the objectives are accompanied by specific and implementable actions. Importantly, the actions present the priorities the Municipality and its tourism partners and community will focus on toward addressing the needs and seizing the opportunities for tourism as shared by industry, residents, partners, and other stakeholders across the research. In total, 21 actions were identified to inform tactics and implementation

planning for the strategy and action plan over its 5-year lifespan. Further detail is included in the "Roadmap: Strategic Direction" section of this report.

### 1 Engage Stakeholders to Strengthen Support for Tourism knowledge

- To increase knowledge and understanding of tourism's benefits, opportunities, challenges, and risks.
- To position tourism development as a contributor to the community and something to get involved in.

### 2 Position Wawa as a Place for Visitors and Locals to Explore and Enjoy

- To establish and develop effective partnerships that position Wawa as a place to visit and explore.
- To present Wawa with a unified voice and consistent messaging.

### 3 Increase Community Capacity to Focus on and Pursue Tourism Development

- To build capacity within the Municipality's tourism team.
- To support industry capacity development.

### 4 Enhance Tourism Assets, Products, and Services that Support Visitation Across the Year

- To encourage entrepreneurship and promote business opportunities.
- To support the enhancement and development of four-season tourism products, assets, and experiences.

The Municipality of Wawa is confident that through the collaborative implementation of its 5-Year Tourism Strategy and Action Plan an exciting next chapter for tourism in Wawa can be worked towards. A future that leverages the opportunities and combats the challenges outlined across strategy report that follows.





# INTRODUCTION

## Project Overview

The Municipality of Wawa recognizes tourism as an important economic driver and contributor to the wellbeing of Wawa's businesses and broader community. Tourism growth is an opportunity for both existing and new businesses to thrive in harmony with the community and its residents. To plan for continued community improvement and economic prosperity, the development of a tourism strategy and action plan was identified as a need and important first step in the right direction. The Municipality of Wawa engaged Bannikin to facilitate the development of its 5-Year Tourism Strategy and Action Plan in 2022. The project team was made up of Municipal staff who worked closely with the Bannikin team. The research and development of the tourism strategy took place from July 2022 until the end of February 2023. To respond to the needs of the Municipality and to ensure a strong foundation for the research and development of the strategy and action plan, a goal and related objectives were set to guide the process.



## Project Goals

By March 2023, the Municipality of Wawa will have a comprehensive and actionable 5-year tourism strategy and action plan to implement in collaboration with partners. The plan will establish an inspiring vision for Wawa and set the foundation to build resilience in and diversify its economy through tourism in collaboration with community and tourism partners.

## Objectives

- To identify and engage with diverse tourism stakeholders.
- To identify opportunities to enhance Wawa's tourism offerings and drive visitation.
- To grow understanding of target markets.
- To build upon Wawa's points of differentiation and establish a tourism vision for the future of tourism in Wawa and the surrounding area.
- To develop and secure community buy-in for Wawa's tourism vision.
- To leverage existing resources and mobilize implementation partners as part of the process.

## Background and Context

The Municipality of Wawa is a single-tier municipality located in the District of Algoma in Northern Ontario. It sits on the traditional territory of the ancestors of Michipicoten First Nation. The presence, contributions, and culture of Michipicoten First Nation and Anishinaabe peoples can be seen, felt, and experienced in the area today.

Toward researching and developing this 5-year tourism strategy, the focus area was set to include the municipal borders.

However, recognizing that many tourism assets and activities are outside of Wawa's municipal borders, the research activities also sought to include input from key neighbours, including Michipicoten First Nation, and consider assets on the way from Sault Ste. Marie to Wawa such as Lake Superior Provincial Park as well as the remote and fly in lodges whose guests pass through Wawa on their way to their destination.

## Key Research Activities

Informing the context for the project is the recent "Municipality of Wawa Strategic Plan: Planning to Succeed 2021-2025" which includes key priorities and action items connected to tourism. Of the six key priorities and action items, a key priority section is dedicated to tourism and economic development. Additionally, the strategic plan presents the Municipality's vision which has implications for its future tourism endeavours:

*"Wawa is a sustainable community focused on providing essential and cost-effective programs and services that contribute to the well-being of all residents."*

The research and development of a tourism strategy for Wawa was also informed by two major factors. First, the Municipality's last tourism strategy, "The Trail: A Work Plan for Wawa's Tourism Industry" was produced in 2002 and expired in 2008. Thus, it was long overdue to bring industry members, partners, and community members together to inform the development of a new tourism action plan. Second, the impacts of COVID-19 have changed the dynamic among the tourism industry, visitors, consumers, and the Municipality. Drawing from the needed shifts and adaptations that came from lockdowns and restrictions related to the pandemic, the Municipality recognized an initial opportunity to leverage FedNor funding to support its tourism industry members in their recovery and future growth efforts through the development of a dedicated tourism strategy for the area.



## Methodology

This project took a community-based participatory research approach across all the research and engagement methods. This means that key stakeholders were involved and engaged throughout the different stages of the process. Additionally, aside from Municipal staff, the Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee (EDTAC) played an important role in informing the process by participating in key informant interviews, attending community engagement sessions, and providing feedback on key outputs produced.

*Tourism growth is an opportunity for both existing and new businesses to thrive in harmony with the community.*

Overall, more than 20 context-setting documents were reviewed and summarized, including plans, strategies, reports, survey results, datasets, articles, and committee notes. A variety of primary and secondary research activities were used to facilitate the participation of a diversity of voices and perspectives. Specifically, these primary and secondary research activities included:

## Objectives

- A visitor/consumer survey with a total of 90 visitor responses.
- A 3-day, 2-night in-market research trip to explore Wawa and area as a visitor.
- Key informant interviews with a total of 16 interviewees identified by the Municipality.
- An industry and resident survey with a total of 58 industry member and 177 resident responses.
- A survey and presentation on progress to Council.
- Two community engagement sessions during November with a total of 18 community members attending.
- One partners' focus group with a total of seven tourism and community partners (including representatives from Algoma Country, Algoma Sno-Plan Affiliation, the Business Improvement Association, EDTAC, Superior Country, Wesdome Gold Mine, the Wawa SnoRiders Snowmobile Club, and Sandy Beach Caretakers.)
- An online review of tourism assets in Wawa and the surrounding area.
- Best practice research into four agreed-upon comparable and aspirational destinations (i.e., Blind River and Kenora in Northern Ontario, Mackinaw City in Michigan, and Moab in Utah).

## Key Terms

Key terms from the report are defined below as a guide to support reader understanding of Wawa's tourism context.



### Community

Wawa's tourism community is made up of diverse players, from residents to visitors to industry to partners to neighbours such as the Michipicoten First Nation, and others who are beyond the municipal border.



### Tourism Asset

A tourism asset is something that attracts visitors to a destination or enriches their time in the destination, including natural and cultural attractions, local businesses, established trails, purchasable experiences, events, etc.



### Tourism Destination

A tourism destination is a place with a concentration of tourism assets that draw in visitors. Tourism destinations come in many sizes, and for this report the Municipality of Wawa and the surrounding area are being considered as a destination where visitors stay to explore the area and enjoy its assets such as snowmobile trails or stop on their way to other regional assets such as remote lodges. This definition for Wawa is complemented by the explanation below of "tourism hub".



### Tourism Development

The process of maintaining Wawa's tourism industry. Community engagements, industry training sessions, business attraction activities, and designing new tourism products are all part of tourism development.



### Tourism Hub

A jumping off point for visitors exploring a broader region. Tourism hubs serve as basecamps because they have the infrastructure and services visitors need. For example, Wawa is a tourism hub for visitors travelling to the backcountry.



### Placemaking

A participatory process for planning, designing, and managing public places guided by input from people who use the places (including residents and visitors). In the context of tourism, placemaking also showcases local identity and differentiates one destination from another.



### Unique Selling Proposition

For Wawa, this is the main reason someone would come to Wawa over another destination. It is the attributes and characteristics that set Wawa and area apart from other places.



### Visitor Journey

For Wawa, this is the main reason someone would come to Wawa over another destination. It is the attributes and characteristics that set Wawa and area apart from other places.



# STARTING POINT: THE TOURISM LANDSCAPE

## Overview

Understanding Wawa's tourism landscape makes it easier to decide which areas of opportunity and actions will bring Wawa closer to its tourism vision. Identifying what tourism assets set Wawa apart and which drive visitation can help to pinpoint unique selling points to potential visitors, while informing product development and marketing campaigns. To make strategic decisions about the future of tourism in Wawa, it is essential to understand the profiles of today's visitors and consider how these may change in the future. Learnings from comparator destinations are also included in Appendix B.



## Tourism Assets and Demand Generators

Visitors come to Wawa for a variety of reasons, whether to visit friends and family, attend an event, explore the area's many hiking, snowmobiling, and other trails, shop for supplies before a trip to the backcountry, or fueling up as they drive cross-province or cross-country. Related to these different motivations are unique visitor activities, including stand-up paddleboarding, sampling blueberry wines, staying in a cabin, shopping for handmade pottery, or ice fishing, to name a few.

Throughout the year, leisure visitors are particularly attracted to Wawa's outdoor recreation offerings, including its waterfalls, beaches, and trails. Most of these tourism assets can be experienced by visitors free of charge or for a minimal park entrance fee. Maintenance costs for these, however, are likely to increase as visitation grows, and as costs of products and services increase throughout the country. To ensure that residents and visitors can continue to enjoy these places for years to come, sustainable management is essential, and it is important to explore how outdoor tourism assets can be monetized to increase the economic benefits they bring to Wawa, while also ensuring continued accessibility to visitors and residents alike.

Similarly, extending visits to overnight and multi-night stays maximizes the benefits of tourism to Wawa. When visitors stay longer, they spend more on accommodations and are more likely to engage in local activities, such as renting sporting equipment or dining out. However, whether accommodations are available to visitors while they are planning their trip greatly influences their decision to stay overnight or not. In other words, when accommodations are filled with contract workers, there are fewer options for

recreational travellers, even those willing to book their trips weeks or months in advance.

To better understand and pursue opportunities and solutions to facilitate accommodations for visitors and extend overnight stays, the Municipality can work with its tourism partners and accommodation providers to collect data on occupancy across the year. From an expanded understanding, work can begin to explore solutions that ensure accommodations are available for tourists, particularly around the busy summer months.

Wawa is a natural jumping-off point for travellers going to fly-in or remote lodges. Promoting Wawa as a gateway to adventure and activating it with the help of accommodation providers in Wawa and beyond can be a powerful tool for keeping Wawa top of mind as a "basecamp" or hub for backcountry adventurers. Links between Wawa and these businesses can be reinforced in creative ways; for example, by featuring local blueberry jam at breakfast or encouraging visitors to experience the scenic Trans-Canada Highway drive on their way to the lodge.



*From the visitor survey, 95% of visitors stated that they saw the Goose statue/Tourism Information Centre, followed by 48% visiting Scenic High Falls, 44% Young's General Store, 40% stopping for groceries, and 40% visiting Wawa Lake beachfront and/or downtown.*



When used strategically, tourism can enhance community placemaking, in other words, the improvement of public spaces for public use and enjoyment. Wawa's public spaces, tourism assets, community events, and other infrastructure all contribute to its sense of place, thereby influencing its local identity and image. From a visitor's perspective, the Tourism Information Centre (TIC) plays a big role in getting to Wawa. For many visitors, it is their introduction to the community and sets the foundation for positive visitor experiences by providing warm, welcoming, and personalized information so visitors can make the most of their time, along with aligning the visitor's interests with reasons to stay longer. The local food, crafts, and art on sale at the TIC help to create a sense of place, add cultural value, and show community pride. This is reinforced at many other local businesses like Algoma Highlands Blueberry Farm, Young's General Store, Superior Coast Outfitters, and Naturally Superior Adventures, to name a few. Similarly, the Heritage Doors, public art, and Wawa's waterfront interpretive panels create a sense of place and allow visitors to get to know the community better. However, there are opportunities to improve placemaking in Wawa, by expanding and improving wayfinding (i.e., informational and directional tourism signage); for example, installing welcome and departure signs will reinforce the friendly, small community atmosphere that makes a trip to Wawa memorable and encourage visitors to return.

Whether for sustenance, pleasure, or as part of exploring local culture, food and drink are a big part of every visitor experience. Local and regional food can be used as a tourism asset and help to establish points of differentiation between Wawa and other communities in Northern Ontario and beyond. When businesses feature local foods and foods that reflect the history and culture of the community, it reinforces to visitors that they are having

a unique experience only possible in this community. For Wawa, this means consistently serving and celebrating such things as Lake Superior trout, blueberry jam, and Northern Ontario craft beer.



*"Accommodation for tourists is very limited, and these have been taken over by the industry workers, miners and forestry, etc."*

*Key Informant Interviewee*

Wawa and area are home to several primary tourism assets, like restaurants and attractions, as well as secondary tourism assets that support tourism through essential infrastructure and community services, such as transportation, postal and health services, etc. Worldwide, using platforms like Airbnb Experiences, pop-up tourism offerings and experiences are changing the tourism landscape, adding flexibility and dynamism to local tourism offerings. This trend could be particularly interesting for Wawa. It could allow entrepreneurs to edit their offerings based on visitor demand and staff availability while limiting the risks associated with setting up a new business. It is also an example of how tourism can lead to one-of-a-kind activities, like a pop-up riverside dinner with visiting chefs, or a guided snowshoe walk and storytelling session under the stars, that can also appeal to residents, their visiting friends and family, and provide returning visitors a new experience to enjoy in the community.

Understanding the current context of tourism in Wawa and making decisions for future tourism development relies on knowing what tourism assets already exist and reflecting on potential gaps. The table below summarizes the results of the tourism asset scan undertaken in the development of this action plan.

## Primary Tourism Assets in Wawa and Area

### Asset: Accommodations

Hotels, motels, campgrounds, lodges, short-term rentals, etc. (n=37+)

- Additional Detail:**
- Several accommodation options are available outside the town site.
  - The drive along Highway 17 is an important part of journey to remote resorts (some promote their connection to Wawa).
  - Halfway Haven is an important rest and fuel stop for snowmobiling activities and access to the region.
  - There is room to improve online presence of accommodations.

### Asset: Attractions

Museums, galleries, historic sites, parks, trails, routes, etc. (n=28)

- Additional Detail:**
- #1 Thing to do in Wawa on TripAdvisor is Lake Superior Provincial Park (LSPP), many other attractions on the list (e.g., Agawa Rock pictographs) are also in the park. The value of the park to Wawa needs to be recognized and leveraged.
  - Wawa Ski Club has over 10 km of cross-country ski trails in town and there are also many snowshoe trails in town and at Lake Superior Provincial Park.
  - Several cultural attractions including: The Goose, Heritage Doors, local artisanal products (at locations across Wawa).
  - Tourism products including Lake Superior Circle Tour, Ride Lake Superior motorcycle tour, regional snowmobile trails are important tourism attractions.

### Asset: Food & Beverage Providers

Restaurants, food truck, café, producers, farms, etc. (n=16)

- Additional Detail:**
- Noteworthy options for local food and drink include blueberry wine and jams, and lake fish. There are opportunities to improve local and regional food offerings, making this a stronger part of Wawa's value proposition.
  - Hours of operation are limited (in part due to seasonality and staff shortages), impacting service offerings.

### Asset: Festivals & Events

Festivals, concerts, parades, etc. (n=14)

- Additional Detail:**
- Four seasons of festivals and events offerings.
  - These provide a reason to stay overnight.



## Asset: Retailers

### Stores, gas stations, etc. (n=9)

#### Additional Detail:

- Young's General store is widely promoted as an iconic stop.
- Algoma Highlands Blueberry offers strawberries, blueberries and a winery which is attracting tourists.
- The Wawa Goose Nest Market in Downtown Wawa offers opportunities on a seasonal basis for local crafters and artist to sell to tourists and residents.
- TIC is diversifying its offerings to showcase local vendors.

## Asset: Service Providers

### Tour operator, guiding services, outfitter, experience provider, etc. (n=9)

#### Additional Detail:

- Many lodges along with local businesses provide guiding and other services.
- There is opportunity for more pop-up services such as Airbnb Experiences, which can be a tool to monetize outdoor assets.

### Overarching assets mentioned through community engagement

Fall colours, 4-season activities, local history & heritage (e.g., Indigenous, Glenn Gould, Group of Seven), Ojibway culture and traditions, fresh air, friendly people, scenery, closeness to nature, gateway to Boreal Forest, wildlife, hunting and fishing, outdoor activities, lakes (including Lake Superior) and rivers, wide open spaces.

### Key Takeaways

When contemplating what the future of tourism development can look like, Wawa benefits from diverse tourism assets spread across a broad region. Wawa has signature visitor offerings within its municipal boundaries, including trails, waterfalls, retailers, accommodations, and the Goose. Other assets, like Lake Superior Provincial Park and fly-in lodges, sit in Wawa's

backyard or just beyond. When it comes to nearby and backcountry assets, Wawa should position itself as a natural hub or "basecamp" for exploring the region.

Wawa also benefits from regional products that promote it as a place to visit within a bigger trip, whether that is touring around Lake Superior or multi-day snowmobiling trips. To maximize the benefits of its situation, Wawa needs to maximize its connection to these assets through the enhancement of existing products or the development of new products and marketing initiatives. Wawa's location on the Trans-Canada Highway and its outdoor assets are the foundation of its tourism offering; however, through its other assets such as local businesses and rich heritage, Wawa can enhance visitor experiences, exceed expectations, and give people a multitude of reason to stay longer and come back.

## Visitor Markets

Limited visitation data is a key obstacle to plan the future of tourism development in Wawa. Although visitor surveys provided by the Algoma Kinniwabi Tourism Association (AKTA) were widely distributed at Wawa's Tourism Information Centre before the COVID-19 pandemic, this data collection activity did not resume until the Tourism Information Centre reopened in 2022. At the same time, the surveys collected information from existing visitors, not prospective visitors, which makes it difficult to judge how new markets might respond to Wawa's tourism offerings. Moreover, the Tourism Information Centre is not open during the winter season, leaving out important data about winter visitation numbers and motivations.

**Visitors to Wawa have been previously differentiated as “pass-through visitors” and “destination visitors”:**

**Pass-through visitors** (originally called regional visitors) include those that see Wawa as a community that offers the services and facilities they need. They are typically passing through on business or recreational purposes and may stop in Wawa for one day or less, typically for provisions or short trips to specific locations.

**Destination visitors** are described as those that have chosen Wawa as their primary place to visit based on its assets, amenities, and activities. These visitors focus their time on a specific location, which may include a business such as a fly-in lodge, snowmobiling or visiting family.

## Past Visitation Data and Visitor Markets

The most recent visitor survey provided by AKTA and distributed at Wawa's Tourism Information Centre is from 2018. Therefore, the data does not reflect changes in visitor behaviour that have come about since the COVID-19 pandemic. Previous work led by the Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee (previously Tourism Advisory Committee) includes the drafting of a summary document of Wawa's tourism markets using the 2018 visitor survey data. This initial work is referred to and expanded upon in this report to present a baseline understanding of Wawa's visitors. Further information on previous market data is included in Appendix A.1.



*From the visitor survey, visitors describe a positive experience of visiting Wawa, with the vast majority likely to return to and recommend Wawa to others. If harnessed, positive visitor perceptions like these can help boost visitation. For example, encouraging visitors to share their experiences with others online and in-person would help to increase the visibility of Wawa as a tourism destination.*

## 2022 Visitation Data and Visitor Markets

To better understand who is visiting Wawa today, a visitor survey was conducted as part of the development of Wawa's 5-year tourism Strategy. The survey was distributed to 90 respondents at the Tourism Information Centre (TIC) from September to early October 2022. Overall, the information collected aligns with observational data collected by TIC staff throughout the 2022 operating season. It should be noted that the 2022 questionnaire was based on the 2018 AKTA survey but with an expanded focus on Wawa and area. Furthermore, not all visitors, especially those from nearby, stopped by the TIC or participated in the survey, and due to the survey's timing and the TIC's opening season, data for the winter period is lacking. That said, tourism organizations such as the local SnoRiders snowmobile club track the number of multi-day and season passes sold to use visitors during the winter season and represent a valuable partner in collecting data to better understand visitor markets and segments.

Although the 2018 and 2022 are largely consistent in the types of input provided by respondents, two key demographic shifts to note are a decrease in USA visitors and increase in Southern Ontario visitors to Wawa and area. These shifts were also observed by staff at the Tourism Information Centre across the 2022 summer season. 43% were first time visitors and 42% had visited more than three times. This shows Wawa's appeal

as a destination for repeat visitation. About a quarter of respondents were between 65-74 years old, while the remaining respondents' ages were equally spread across age groups.

Most people travel to Wawa as part of a road trip, with 86% travelling in their personal vehicles and with 12% travelling in an RV/travel trailer. Nearly a quarter of the visitors surveyed were travelling to Southern Ontario (22%), followed by 14% to Sault Ste. Marie and the surrounding US/ON area, 14% to Thunder Bay, and 14% to British Columbia. As such, 51% of the visitors surveyed stopped in Wawa for a short rest stop of 2 hours or less and 38% stayed overnight in Wawa. The two most common places where visitors are staying include campsites in the area and the hotels and motels in town.



*During their visit, 30% of visitor groups spent less than \$50 in Wawa and area, followed by 24% (n=18) spending \$50-\$100, and 22% (n=17) spending \$201-\$400. Working to increase visitor spending in Wawa will need a mix of product development to meet visitor demand, monetizing more of existing experiences and marketing to let visitors know about these offerings.*

Based on the 2021-2022 SnoRiders data, 126 multi-day and 199 season passes were sold, indicating an increase from the previous year which was highly affected by COVID-19.



## 2022 Survey Results: Canadian Travellers

48% of survey respondents identified themselves as coming from “elsewhere in Ontario” and “elsewhere in Canada” and can be looked at as the non-regional Canadian travellers. 70% of Canadian travellers from outside the region travelled in small groups with 1 or 2 other people, and 89% of Canadian travellers were travelling in a passenger vehicle. More than half of Canadian travellers had visited Wawa two or more times, and 45% were visiting for the first time.

70% of Canadian travellers were travelling as part of a road trip followed by 20% who were visiting Lake Superior Provincial Park. More than half (60%) of travellers were passing through, with Wawa being a short rest stop of 2 hours or less, and 17% staying in Wawa for one night as an overnight stop along their journey. Meanwhile, only about 20% had Wawa as their destination, with 10% visiting Wawa as part of a day trip and 10% identifying Wawa as their main destination, staying two or more nights.

Spending among visitors from Canada in Wawa ranged from 32% spending less than \$50, 28% spending \$50-\$99, 6% spending \$100-\$199, and 17% spending \$200-\$399, with only about 15% spending more than \$400.

## The most selected activities experiences by Canadian travellers include:



- Visiting local waterfalls and beaches (n=18)
- Exploring the downtown/waterfront (n=14)
- Hiking (n=13)
- Camping (n=12)
- Shopping (n=12)
- Viewing wildlife (n=12)

## Meanwhile, the least selected activities include:

- Paddling (e.g., canoe, kayak) (n=4)
- Participating in the Lake Superior Circle Tour (n=4)
- Cycling/biking (n=3)
- Guided tours (e.g., walking tour, food tour, nature tour, etc.) (n=2)
- Attending a festival or event (n=1)

*\*It should be noted that, since the visitor/consumer survey for the project took place during the end of the summer season and beginning of the fall, responses related to winter and shoulder-season activities are not represented.*



## 2022 Survey Results: American Travellers

A total of 21 respondents were identified as coming from the USA, with 10% coming from Michigan, Minnesota, or Wisconsin and 11% from elsewhere in the USA. All American travellers who completed the survey were above the age of 45, with the majority (71%) being above 65 years old. Two-thirds of travellers from the USA were travelling in small groups with 2 other people, and all travellers were either travelling in a passenger vehicle (65%) or an RV (35%). More than half (55%) of American travellers were visiting Wawa for the first time and a quarter had visited Wawa once before.

85% of travellers from the USA visited Wawa as part of a road trip. Most of these travellers were only passing through or stopping by, with 40% having Wawa serve as a short rest stop (two hours or less) and 35% staying in Wawa for an overnight stop (at least one night). A quarter of travellers from the USA had Wawa as their main destination for two nights or more. Importantly, the Lake Superior Circle Tour was named by travellers from the USA as the main way they found out about Wawa and planned their visit to the municipality.

Spending among travellers from the USA ranged from 30% spending less than \$50, 20% respectively spending \$50-\$99 and \$100-\$199, and 25% spending between \$200-\$399. Notably, visitors from the USA tend to spend more than domestic visitors.

### The most selected activities experiences by American travellers include:



- Visiting local waterfalls and beaches (n=11)
- Food and beverage sampling/tastings (n=8)
- Camping (n=7)
- Participating in the Lake Superior Circle Tour (n=7)

### Meanwhile, the least selected activities include:

- Paddling (e.g., canoe, kayak) (n=2)
- Shopping (n=2)
- Attending a festival or event (n=1)
- Cycling/biking (n=0)
- Guided tours (e.g., walking tour, food tour, nature tour, etc.) (n=0)

*\*It should be noted that, since the visitor/consumer survey disseminated for the project took place during the end of the summer season and beginning of the fall, responses related to winter and shoulder-season activities are not represented.*





## Key Takeaways

Most visitors drive to Wawa, travelling in their personal vehicles. The travel approach from Sault Ste. Marie is iconic, with many tourism assets scattered along the way including roadside restaurants, lake views and memorable hikes. Lake Superior Provincial Park is an emblematic part of the visitor journey to Wawa and offers many reasons to stop, including the Visitor Centre, Nokomis Trail, and Pictographs Trail. Other assets such as Michipicoten Post Park, are also within this journey and may require additional attention to infrastructure and maintenance to facilitate access from Wawa. That said, this abundance of assets slows down the drive between Sault Ste. Marie and Wawa, making it more likely that someone will choose to stay overnight in Wawa. Showcasing the travel approach to Wawa as a key part of the visitor journey, celebrating connections to Lake Superior Provincial Park, and sharing information along the highway, are strategies that can encourage visitors to stop in Wawa.

The original segments from 2018 have been further developed and are presented below:

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**Hunters and anglers:** These travellers come from Canada and the USA in May and September to November during hunting seasons, as well as throughout the year for fishing, including ice fishing. Many within this segment stop in Wawa to purchase supplies or for a rest stop on their way to their destination. Anglers also visit Wawa specifically for its fishing derbies including the Wawa Ice Fishing Derby, as well as the Wawa Salmon Derby.

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**Eco-Adventurers:** These are travellers who are primarily from Southern Ontario visiting during the summer, with some visitors coming in the fall and winter. This segment of travellers coming from Southern Ontario

and seeking outdoor experiences increased during the pandemic. This segment also overlaps with visitors travelling to Lake Superior Provincial Park.

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**Snowmobilers:** Primarily visitors from Ontario and some from the USA travelling during the winter, these travellers rely on Wawa's connection to Sault Ste Marie and the status and conditions of Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC) trails.

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**Lake Superior Circle Tour participants:** Primarily from the USA and Canada, these travel the Circle Tour mostly across the summer and fall. Many American visitors who completed the 2022 visitor survey were over the age of 45 and were in Wawa as part of their journey along the Circle Tour.

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**Road trippers:** Those stopping in Wawa as part of a larger trip are a segment to explore as a way to grow visitation. This segment also includes visitors to Sault Ste Marie who could be encouraged to visit Wawa as part of a day trip or overnight stay.

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**Provincial Park Visitors and Campers:** Respondents to both the 2018 and 2022 visitor surveys selected camping as one of their top activities in the area, most likely at Lake Superior Provincial Park. The COVID-19 pandemic has also had impacts on how often and where Southern Ontarians are looking to camp. Visitors staying at Lake Superior Provincial Park may be encouraged to visit Wawa through better connections and complementary products.



**Organized tour participants:** Primarily from Toronto, Quebec, and other international markets during the summer and fall, this market primarily travels using tour buses, and often have language barriers to fully exploring the area. This segment has significantly decreased since the pandemic and across the 2022 season.

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**Local event participants:** Mainly from Ontario and some from Michigan. Many local event participants are also other key visitor segments who are in the area for an event that is connected to a special interest. For example, anglers and ice fishers are the primary target for the ice fishing derby in Wawa.

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In addition to capitalizing on drive-by traffic associated with cross-country road trips and touring adventures, the potential to position Wawa as an outdoor tourism hub, “base camp”, or jumping-off point for regional adventures is reinforced. For example, based on the results of the 2018 and 2022 visitor surveys, there is an opportunity to grow visitor access and activities on water. With two key lakes, and a variety of rivers and smaller lakes in the area, it is surprising that paddling is one of the least selected activities among Canadian and American visitors who stopped at the TIC and completed the surveys. Product development along with the creation of an integrated marketing and communications plan would be needed to leverage this broader opportunity. This is specifically important to further conduct visitor market research and confirm “best bet” target visitor markets for Wawa.



## Factors Affecting Tourism

Wawa's tourism community is made up of diverse players, from residents to visitors to industry and partners, and neighbours such as Michipicoten First Nation, and those beyond. As such, there are many perspectives on tourism in Wawa that need to be considered when setting its strategic direction. Related to this, many factors affect tourism development because it overlaps with the interests and needs of several sectors, municipal departments, and even communities within the region. Across the variety of research and engagement methods used to develop this strategy, from the resident and industry survey to key informant interviews or the two in-person community sessions, community member contributions correspond to four key factors affecting tourism.

### Support for Tourism Development

The community made it clear that when developing tourism, it is important for residents and businesses to be engaged in the plans and initiatives that will ultimately impact their daily lives. It is important to build trust and understanding among community members around tourism development. This can be done by developing and sharing materials that demonstrate to residents how the tourism sector has a positive impact on their community (e.g., economically, socially, and/or environmentally). For example, tourism investments can benefit both residents and visitors, such as community improvement projects like a downtown beautification project, or the enhancement of recreational infrastructure across all seasons. Growing buy-in for tourism development among residents and businesses is an important factor to address moving forward.

### Wawa's Tourism Story

Ensuring that there is a common story being told about Wawa that positions the community as a place to explore for both residents and visitors alike is also important to address. The community highlighted the importance of celebrating its outdoor activities and picturesque landscapes while also showcasing its artistic, cultural, and historic assets.

To support telling a common story, Wawa must develop new and strengthen existing partnerships with organizations and major industries in the region that can share and amplify the story of Wawa. For example, Superior Country and the Lake Superior Circle Tour can support Wawa in telling its story through its communication channels and marketing materials. By developing new and strengthening existing partnerships in the region, Wawa will be able to develop new tourism products that connect the community and visitors to its surrounding area. Wawa will also have a greater reach to potential visitors and be able to share updates and engagement opportunities more easily with residents.

### Community Capacity Needs

Capacity limitations were identified by the community as a factor affecting tourism development. Community members expressed concern that there was limited capacity, both human and financial, from both the public and private sectors, to implement many actions for tourism development.

Additionally, the community highlighted the need for funds and resources to support the growth and development of local

businesses and tourism overall. For Wawa, this could mean identifying all relevant funding opportunities and resources for businesses and ensuring that they are clearly communicated to them in a timely manner. It is also important for Wawa to explore funding opportunities and resources to support agreed upon community tourism initiatives; for example, the FedNor CIINO Economic Development Officer program or the implementation of a Municipal Accommodations Tax.

Related to capacity, the community also highlighted the importance of developing a tourism-based relationship with Michipicoten First Nation in their own time and on their own terms. In the meantime, until this relationship is developed, Wawa will continue to share tourism initiatives and resources with Michipicoten First Nation and invite its representatives and tourism leads to contribute to and participate in tourism development activities.



*“There’s a way to brand the larger region with other communities. Some sort of initiative that goes beyond our boundary.”*

*Key Informant Interviewee*

### **Offering Tourism Across the Year**

Finally, the community highlighted the need to recognize Wawa as a place where visitors come for tourism activities across all seasons. To support this, community members pointed to the need to increase the number of businesses in retail and food and drink, specifically in the downtown. Residents also noted the need to have available accommodations for visitors year-round. The need for labour to keep existing

businesses open was recognized as a challenge worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic and which, along with other pandemic-related challenges, such as inflation and reduced visitor numbers, needs to be considered as part of possible solutions. Importantly, some of these challenges go beyond tourism and need to be addressed as part of broader community development efforts.

Moreover, to strengthen Wawa’s reputation as a four-season destination beyond the niche markets that currently exist for snowmobiling and ice fishing, the community spoke of the need to further develop infrastructure that presents a positive and appealing image of the downtown and facilitates access to different assets in the area for visitors and residents, such as the Voyageur Trail. They also highlighted the need for infrastructure that facilitates connectivity with the surrounding region, including beautifying multi-use trails and addressing wayfinding gaps.

The need to develop new and enhance existing tourism assets in the area that celebrate other aspects of the community besides the outdoors was also highlighted. The rich and varied local stories and histories of the area, such as the stories of Indigenous peoples and the Group of Seven were highlighted across the research. Community members also mentioned the diversity of local artisans and the variety of craft products available. However, they noted that there are limited festivals, events and activities and experiences year-round for visitors. As Wawa moves forward with tourism development, it is important to identify ways to increase offerings and experiences that highlight outdoor assets as well as the arts, culture, and heritage of the area across the year to attract diverse visitors that will stay longer and spend more at local businesses.

# ROADMAP: STRATEGIC DIRECTION

## Overview

For Wawa's 5-year tourism strategy to guide the way to positive outcomes for tourism, the direction needs to be based on a strong and shared vision for the future, implementable actions, and a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of those who will carry the plan forward. The following section outlines Wawa's vision for tourism and presents an overview of the action plan to be implemented in collaboration with partners.





## Vision for Tourism

With contributions from residents, tourism partners, and businesses, a clear vision of how tourism and community improvement co-exist and complement each other emerged. A foundational component to the future of tourism in Wawa is setting a shared vision that identifies an inspiring direction for the Municipality's and community's efforts to improve and develop tourism.

Community member contributions spoke of the future of Wawa as one where visitors recognize its picturesque beauty, friendly community members, and remoteness within the Heart of Algoma, among others. Participant contributions also pointed to a vision of the downtown as an area that has drastically changed with thriving businesses, places to visit, and a more beautiful look and feel. These community contributions were enriched by the strengths and opportunities identified across the research to draft Wawa's 5-year tourism action plan and helped form a fuller picture of what Wawa could become as a place to visit and explore. Through the first action planning session the project team, including municipal staff, crafted the initial vision which was then revised and finalized.



***Wawa is a welcoming and thriving community with a unique Northern character whose friendly people, diverse local businesses, spectacular scenery, and location by Lake Superior make it a great place to live and visit. Tourism is recognized as a contributor to the well-being of our natural environment and quality of life, and as a cornerstone of our economy.***

## Areas of Opportunity and Strategic Actions

Guided by this tourism vision presented in the previous section, as well as the review of the strengths, weakness, opportunities, and challenges identified across the research, four areas of opportunity have been identified to build resilience in and diversify Wawa's economy through tourism and in collaboration with community and tourism partners.

Each area of opportunity should be understood as an area of work and focus that is supported by specific objectives and actions that will be implemented by Wawa's tourism community, with leadership from the Municipality and support from partners and community members, over the next five years.

Below is an introduction to each area of opportunity, including details on the objectives for each opportunity and the actions that, once implemented, will make the opportunity a reality. The actions that grow out of each area of opportunity are included in tables and include example tactics or initiatives through which the action could take shape.

Importantly, the actions point to the direction to take but how each action takes shape needs to be determined in line with yearly or quarterly work planning for those leading the action as well as the needed adjustments that can be expected in the lifetime of a 5-year strategy and action plan. The anticipated outcomes for each action have also been identified and included in the tables. Note that the detailed action plan for the strategy, including the timeline, is outlined in the internal implementation plan developed as a separate and complementary document by and for the Municipality and its implementation partners.

## 1 Engage Stakeholders to Strengthen Support for Tourism

The Municipality and its partners will work to engage stakeholders to strengthen support for tourism and build up shared understanding and connections among the Wawa tourism community. This is not only the first area of opportunity, but it is also foundational for the success of the activities and collaborations that grow out of the 5-year tourism action plan. To capitalize on this area of opportunity, the Municipality and its tourism partners will first

work to increase understanding of tourism's economic, social, and environmental benefits, as well as the opportunities, challenges, and risks of Wawa's tourism landscape.

They will also target their efforts to position tourism development as a contributor to the community and something for the diversity of stakeholders to get involved in. Cross-industry collaborations that join tourism development with community improvement, along with clear and consistent communication, will be prioritized to achieve success.

<b>Objectives</b> What can be achieved?	<b>Actions</b> What needs to happen to achieve the objective?	<b>Anticipated Outcomes</b> What long-term changes can be achieved?
To increase knowledge and understanding of tourism's benefits, opportunities, challenges, and risks	Conduct a yearly community survey/check-in to understand perspectives and level of support for tourism (e.g., designing and disseminating a questionnaire to engage residents and businesses).	Increased clarity around resident and industry sentiment towards tourism  Conduct a yearly performance review of environmental, social, and economic impacts and benefits of tourism (e.g., using TREIM data analysis tool to size impact of community events)
<b>Objectives</b> What can be achieved?	<b>Actions</b> What needs to happen to achieve the objective?	<b>Anticipated Outcomes</b> What long-term changes can be achieved?
To position tourism development as a contributor to the community and something to get involved in	Regularly communicate ways that community members can participate in tourism initiatives (e.g., organizing a resident-focussed series of tourism events or activities during Tourism Week)  Identify and share community improvement projects that businesses and employers can collaborate on and support (e.g., creating a database of community infrastructure improvement sponsorship opportunities)	Increased community interest and involvement in as well as support for tourism  Increased cross-industry collaboration and support for tourism amongst non-tourism industries  Increased awareness of both the Municipality's strategic direction for tourism and opportunities to collaborate

**2****Position Wawa as a Place for Visitors and Locals to Explore and Enjoy**

Wawa is strategically positioned along the Trans-Canada Highway and by the shores of Lake Superior. Due to its distance from Sault Ste. Marie, it becomes nearly a mandatory stop for road traffic coming from that direction and for long-distance travellers. It is also a hub for services for adjacent near north communities. For those who have visited for experiences in the vast outdoor playground, many return to participate in the activities on a regular basis. As such, Wawa is not only a worthwhile destination and hub for experiences and services in the region, but it is also a necessary stop for many. However, Wawa is being featured in different ways and with different narratives across different channels. There is no consistent storyline being told as part of the visitor journey into the region. To capitalize on the variety of travellers that pass through or stop in Wawa, whether as a rest stop or multi-night trip, the opportunity exists to develop consistent messaging for Wawa as a basecamp for outdoor activities and to integrate marketing efforts through regional partnerships.

Supporting this area of opportunity includes working in partnership with regional marketing organizations. Moreover, there are several platforms, channels, and initiatives that could better entice potential visitors to learn more about Wawa. From the Group of Seven Tour to the Lake Superior Circle Tour, from the surrounding provincial parks, local accommodation providers, and more remote hunting and fishing lodges, there is opportunity for Wawa to be better featured across a wider range of online channels with a unified voice and consistent messaging. This will work to present a genuine imagine of Wawa's four-season tourism opportunities and the range of activities that could inspire visitors to extend their stay.

To fully pursue this opportunity, the Municipality will develop an integrated marketing and communications strategy, supported by a unique tourism brand. The Municipality will also work with its partners to increase understanding of the unique selling points and key messages that position Wawa as a place to visit and explore so that the area is being marketed as a destination through a unified voice and consistent messaging.





<b>Objectives</b> What can be achieved?	<b>Actions</b> What needs to happen to achieve the objective?	<b>Anticipated Outcomes</b> What long-term changes can be achieved?
To establish and develop effective partnerships that position Wawa as a place to visit and explore	Meet with regional partners regularly to collaborate on marketing and other relevant initiatives (e.g., developing marketing objectives and confirming priority channels for Wawa with partners)	Increased collaborations and alignment on tourism marketing and development initiatives
	Work with nearby destinations to develop itineraries that feature Wawa as a key destination (e.g., co-developing content with Lake Superior Provincial Park that connects the park to, and feature assets in Wawa)	Complementary itineraries and increased exposure for Wawa as a place to visit and explore
<b>Objectives</b> What can be achieved?	<b>Actions</b> What needs to happen to achieve the objective?	<b>Anticipated Outcomes</b> What long-term changes can be achieved?
To present Wawa with a unified voice and consistent messaging	Develop an integrated tourism marketing and communications plan to position Wawa as a must-see stop and hub to visit and explore (e.g., designing a strong tourism brand and refreshing promotional and placemaking materials)	Clear direction and plan for marketing Wawa as a hub for tourism activity
	Ensure that Wawa is being presented as the basecamp for outdoor activities by local and surrounding businesses and attractions (e.g., nurturing relationships with local and regional accommodations to promote Wawa in their marketing materials)	Increased exposure of Wawa at first-contact businesses in the area
	Improve identified wayfinding information and infrastructure barriers (physical and digital) for visitors arriving to and exploring Wawa (e.g., integrating an interactive online map into the tourism website that lists must-visit spots in Wawa)	Increased ease with which people seek information about, get to, and explore Wawa

**3****Increase Community Capacity to Focus on and Pursue Tourism Development**

The third area of opportunity highlights the need to increase capacity to focus on and pursue tourism development. This opportunity includes both the Municipality's internal capacity and the community's capacity to attract, welcome and serve visitors. From the research, it has been identified that most current visitors to Wawa leave with positive experiences and are likely to return and recommend visiting Wawa.

To fully pursue tourism as an economic and community-building opportunity, the Municipality, its partners, business owners and operators, and residents need to work together toward growth. To achieve this, Wawa's tourism community needs to explore and secure reliable

funding streams for tourism initiatives; for instance, the implementation of Municipal Accommodations Tax, paid by visitors staying at accommodations within Municipal boundaries, as a consistent funding stream for tourism marketing and human resource needs and which was previously identified as a strategic action in the "2021 Municipality of Wawa Strategic Plan." Further work needs to be done to inform the community of its planned implementation, including anticipated uses and benefits. Complementing this is the need to grow tourism service and product delivery capacity to reach and service visitors across all seasons. Efforts to support local businesses and entrepreneurs, as well as tourism volunteers, should be encouraged by connecting businesses with funders, encouraging collaborations, and supporting entrepreneurs to develop new tourism products and services.



<b>Objectives</b> What can be achieved?	<b>Actions</b> What needs to happen to achieve the objective?	<b>Anticipated Outcomes</b> What long-term changes can be achieved?
To build capacity within the Municipality's tourism team	Consistently apply to tourism funding programs to secure financial and human resources for the implementation of the Tourism Strategy and Action plan (e.g., pursuing funding, such as CIINO program, for tourism-dedicated human resource support)	Increase financial and human resource support for tourism projects that align with the Tourism Strategy and Action plan
	Establish a tourism development fund by implementing a Wawa Municipal Accommodation Tax (e.g., drafting a fund use plan that outlines how the MAT will be collected, who will manage funding and how it will be used)	Sustainable revenue to use for tourism development and marketing
<b>Objectives</b> What can be achieved?	<b>Actions</b> What needs to happen to achieve the objective?	<b>Anticipated Outcomes</b> What long-term changes can be achieved?
To support industry capacity development	Support opportunities for partnerships with Michipicoten First Nation and other Indigenous tourism organizations (e.g., exploring industry support opportunities and regional collaborations with Indigenous Tourism Ontario)	Increased communication and stronger relationship with Indigenous peoples
	Conduct and share research into existing and potential target markets to inform targeted marketing efforts and product enhancement (e.g., developing target visitor profiles to share with marketing partners and industry members)	Increased clarity around who, how, and why people are visiting Wawa
	Support industry members in improving their services and products and enhancing their online and in-person storytelling (e.g., supporting tourism businesses to participate in Destination Northern Ontario's Tourism Excellence North program)	Increased industry capacity to develop/improve their tourism offer



#### 4 Enhance Tourism Assets, Products, and Services that Support Visitation Across the Year

The last area of opportunity for Wawa and its tourism community to work on over the next five years is enhancing its assets, products, and services so that they offer variety and quality across all four seasons. Closely connected to the third area of opportunity, Wawa has a good base of assets and resources to draw from and enhance through better coordination, collaboration, and dedicated supports. For instance, Wawa has impressive and easily accessible outdoor assets and activities and could benefit from a dedicated effort to better connect these to local businesses or purchasable experiences. Wawa also has an exciting and appealing number of stories and histories, from the local

connections to A.Y. Jackson of the Group of Seven to the long resource-based histories of the region, that could be better featured as part of the tourism experiences and activities made available to both locals and visitors. Equally important is the need to continue improving, or in some cases fully revamp, certain infrastructure, such as the look and feel of Broadway Avenue downtown.

Wawa's efforts to take advantage of this opportunity focus on two main objectives. The first is to encourage entrepreneurship and promote business opportunities that draw from or evolve existing spaces. The second is for Wawa and its partners to support the enhancement and development of tourism assets, products, including experiences, and services that contribute to Wawa's value as a place to enjoy tourism across all four seasons.



### A.Y. Jackson on Sandy Beach

In 1918, just as World War I was ending, Algoma became a place of inspiration for artists who later formed the "Group of Seven". A.Y. Jackson, a member of the Group, was wounded in action but survived and returned to Algoma with renewed vigor. Joined by his like-minded friends, he searched for new ways to express the spirit of Canada in landscape art. Algoma was an excellent catalyst for this. A.Y. Jackson co-owned a cottage here on Sandy Beach from 1955 until he died in 1974. This painting shows a scene that is at the end of the beach, in a tiny cove (compare this painting to the modern-day photo). Jackson was renowned for creating rhythm in his paintings. Notice how he does that here. The s-curved birch in the foreground provides a path for the eye to follow that links the ripples on one side with the shapely shore on the other.

### A.Y. Jackson à la plage Sandy

En 1918, vers la fin de la Première Guerre mondiale, Algoma est devenu un lieu d'inspiration pour les artistes qui ont plus tard formé le « Groupe des Sept ». A.Y. Jackson, membre du groupe, a été blessé au combat, mais a survécu et est retourné à Algoma avec une vigueur renouvelée. Rejoint par ses amis partageant les mêmes valeurs que lui, il a cherché de nouvelles façons d'exprimer l'esprit du Canada dans l'art du paysage. Algoma était un excellent élément catalyseur pour cette quête. A.Y. Jackson était copropriétaire d'un chalet situé ici à la plage Sandy de 1955 jusqu'à son décès en 1974. Cette peinture montre une scène qui se trouve au bout de la plage, dans une petite anse (comparez cette peinture à la photo moderne). Jackson était reconnu pour la création de rythme dans ses peintures. Remarquez comment il le fait ici. La courbe de bouleau en S au premier plan invite les yeux à suivre un chemin qui relie les ondulations d'un côté avec la rive bien arrondie de l'autre côté.



<b>Objectives</b> What can be achieved?	<b>Actions</b> What needs to happen to achieve the objective?	<b>Anticipated Outcomes</b> What long-term changes can be achieved?
To encourage entrepreneurship and promote business opportunities	Support new commercial development and business activations in the downtown (e.g., growing pop-up activations opportunities during select times across the year at Goose Nest market for small businesses and craft makers)	Increased visitor-facing businesses and activations
	Use the TIC to promote and incentivize visitation to the variety of visitor-facing businesses in Wawa (e.g., partnering with local business to offer unique direct promotions at the TIC)	Increased connection between stops at the TIC and visits to businesses
<b>Objectives</b> What can be achieved?	<b>Actions</b> What needs to happen to achieve the objective?	<b>Anticipated Outcomes</b> What long-term changes can be achieved?
To support the enhancement and development of four-season tourism products, assets, and experiences	Improve the attractiveness of the downtown core and enhance accessibility to key tourism assets (e.g., installing public art such as murals or sidewalk planters along Broadway))	Downtown aesthetic and supporting infrastructure for people access and appreciate key assets
	Support activity, industry, and volunteer groups to maintain, enhance, and expand trails and infrastructure that can be used by locals and visitors (e.g., partnering with Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs to inform their ongoing infrastructure efforts)	Stronger and more diverse tourism collaborative
	Review existing accommodation availability in Wawa to identify gaps and strains across the year (e.g., collecting data on occupancy rates and demographics from accommodations)	Clarity around the tourism gaps and opportunities associated with Wawa accommodations
	Support the enhancement, development, and delivery of unique tourism products/experiences (e.g., enrich existing outdoor products and programs with local arts, culture, and history)	Increased number of tourism products/experiences that leverage local history, culture, and natural assets across the four seasons





**WAY FORWARD:  
COLLABORATING FOR  
SUCCESS**



## Outcomes and Measures of Success

Positive and lasting change takes time. The areas of opportunity identified and presented forge the path for Wawa's tourism community to take advantage of immediate opportunities, while not losing sight of longer-term changes such as strengthening and growing the tourism industry, implementing community improvement projects, and developing additional assets and infrastructure.

To achieve the successful implementation of the actions that will guide the growth of tourism in Wawa and area, it is crucial that the Municipality, with support from its existing and potential tourism partners, identify the measures of success for each year of implementation. In other words, there is a need for shared monitoring and evaluation efforts that will accompany the process of collaborative implementation, including recognizing when the desired outcomes have been achieved or when there is a need to adjust these outcomes throughout the implementation process. Anticipated

outcomes have been identified for the actions presented within this strategy report; however, these anticipated outcomes mean very little without the work of following progress, adjusting implementation timelines, and celebrating successes across the community taking the plan forward.

Several of the recommended actions focus on the need for collaborative efforts such as, "connect with existing and potential partners to share action plan and areas for collaboration" and "regularly communicate ways that community members can participate in tourism initiatives". For these collaborative efforts to succeed, they need to be supported by a shared understanding of the purpose and intended results of each initiative. Therefore, as part of the efforts to establish new and strengthen existing tourism-focused relationships, it will be key to pay attention to how implementation efforts are being tracked and measured, as well as the roles that different collaborators play.



## Roles and Responsibilities

This strategy sets the direction for Wawa's tourism community, which is made up of residents, industry members, partners, neighbouring businesses and communities such as the Michipicoten First Nation, among others, and led by the Municipality. Collaborating on the way forward is crucial to co-creating the destination that Wawa has the potential to become. Whether as a hub for exploring the broader region and visiting neighbouring assets or a destination for those who choose to extend their road trips or attend an event, Wawa has much potential to benefit from an informed tourism community that shares in its future.

Implementation in collaboration with others has the added challenge of needing a lead that can coordinate among diverse stakeholders, including identifying who may be best suited to lead or contribute certain actions and continually follow up on implementation efforts. However, with this potential challenge come the opportunities to strengthen connections, grow relationships, help to align priorities, and share resources. The partners' focus group, held as part of the development of this Strategy, was an important step in establishing a collaborative outlook for the future of tourism in Wawa and area. Partners who were engaged at the focus group included representatives from Algoma Country, Algoma Sno-Plan Affiliation, the Business Improvement Association, EDTAC, Superior Country, Wesdome Gold Mine, the Wawa SnoRiders Snowmobile Club, and Sandy Beach Caretakers. Partner inputs and contributions have informed the

identification of areas of opportunity and their corresponding actions. Moving forward, there is room to grow and strengthen tourism-based relationships and dialogue with others, including Michipicoten First Nation, the mining companies active in and around Wawa, industry organizations such as Superior Country Travel, Destination Northern Ontario, Indigenous Tourism Ontario, and the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario, as well as neighbouring hubs and destinations like Sault Ste. Marie.

For the 5-year Strategy and Action Plan to bring about benefits through tourism for Wawa and area, the Municipality will need to lead the process of connecting with its network of partners and collaborators, including residents and industry members, to share the planned actions for each year of implementation, and to discuss and confirm how initiatives will move forward through collaborative efforts. This role for the Municipality requires the support of tourism partners such as regional marketing organizations, neighbouring communities, and Provincial Park management to identify and communicate alignments and opportunities for collaboration. Importantly, support and participation by industry members and residents is key for the implementation of the action plan. This can include communicating their perceptions, ideas, and sentiments regarding tourism, directly participating in tourism-related initiatives, supporting local businesses, and continuing to play the role of welcoming and caring hosts to the diversity of visitors that choose to come to Wawa.





# **Wawa's 5-year Tourism Strategy & Action Plan**

The Journey



## **OUR JOURNEY**

### **Wawa's 5-Year Tourism Strategy & Action Plan Appendix**

Municipality of Wawa

## Appendix A: Canadian and American Market Profiles from 2018 AKTA Survey

### A.1 2018 Survey Results: Canadian Travellers

64 Canadian respondents to the 2019 AKTA visitor survey travelled to Wawa as “destination visitors”. Close to a quarter (22%) of travellers to Wawa from Canada were families, and of these, 54% were travelling with children and 46% without children. This was followed by groups of friends (15%) and those travelling alone (15%). Pre-pandemic, the main reasons for travelling to Wawa included for pleasure or vacation (70%) and visiting friends and relatives (21%), with a minority visiting for a convention/business (8%). Most Canadians were travelling from Ontario (91%) while a minority were travelling to Wawa from a different province (9%).

The most selected activities Canadian travellers engaged in while in Wawa included:

- Camping (n=10)
- Visiting local attractions (n=7)
- Fishing or hunting (n=6)
- Hiking or sightseeing (n=5)

Meanwhile, the least selected activities identified included:

- Canoeing or kayaking (n=1)
- Visiting local cultural sites (n=2)

*\*Notably, none of the Canadian survey respondents to the 2019 survey selected boating or touring by car/RV, and only a couple (n=2) selected touring by motorcycle.*

### A.2 2018 Survey Results: American Travellers

57 “destination visitor” respondents were from the USA. Most were families without children (40%) and groups of friends (32%), followed by families with children (21%) and a minority were travelling alone. Nearly all these travellers visited Wawa for pleasure or vacation (98%), with the largest percentage coming to fish or hunt. The majority USA visitors travelled from Michigan (70%), and about 10% came from a mix of Minnesota, Illinois, and Pennsylvania.

The most selected activities selected by visitors to Wawa from the USA included:

- Fishing or hunting (n=19)
- Camping (n=10)
- Visiting local attractions (n=6)
- Hiking or sightseeing (n=5)

Meanwhile, the least selected activities included:

- Canoeing or kayaking (n=1)
- Visiting cultural or historical sites (n=1)

## Appendix B: Summary of Learnings from Comparators

Around the world and closer to home, there are a wide variety of tools and techniques being applied to tourism development and growth. The following section looks at innovative approaches being used by three places similar to Wawa. The comparators were selected because of their geographies, contexts, locations, population sizes, market segments, tourism assets and positioning. Below is a profile of each comparator along with key learnings for Wawa. Note that while four places were initially explored, the three below were deemed to be the best fit.

### **Moab, Utah (population: 5,430)**

*Moab has successfully positioned itself as a gateway community to two popular outdoor attractions: Arches National Park and Canyonlands National Park.*

Grand County Economic Development is responsible for Moab's destination management and marketing, while the chamber of commerce supports with business training. Tourism is recognized in policy documents as an economic driver and contributor to the community's wellbeing, including the City of Moab's General Plan, and the Community Vision and Strategic Action Plan. The community positions itself as a basecamp or hub for exploring neighbouring outdoor assets. A key tool for visitors is the Discover Moab website, which is an industry best-practice example providing a one-stop-shop for trip planning. It gives clear and detailed information about the many outdoor activities on offer and caters to different niche markets. For example, there is a webpage dedicated to fishing, with photos and maps of each fishing spot, information on how to get a fishing license, etc. Moab has a "Do it like a local" marketing campaign that provides insider tips for experiencing the destination, as well as an etiquette guide that outlines how to be a responsible visitor. Moab also has programs to address infrastructural barriers to tourism development, including workforce attraction.

#### **Key Learnings:**

- Well-designed digital platforms allow visitors to easily access all the information they need to plan their trip. By using or revamping existing digital platforms, Wawa can provide clear and detailed information about how to engage with its diverse offerings.
- Trip planning tools can help establish a destination's positioning as a basecamp or hub for regional explorations. Through storytelling, Wawa can use its digital platforms, itineraries, and visitor guides to secure this positioning.
- Provide detailed information to different niche outdoor markets, like hikers, campers, or fishermen, so they can safely, respectfully, and deeply explore the region. Wawa should always promote complementary assets, such as local food and beverage.
- Achieving resident buy-in for tourism development relies on working with partners to address cross-sectoral challenges such as those related to workforce and housing issues.
- The "Do it like a local" campaign provides inspiration for managing tourism-resident and promoting responsible use of local assets and resources such as beaches and trails.

### **Blind River, Ontario (population: 3,472):**

*Known for its outdoor experiences, including its well-designed and well-maintained trails, Blind River also has done work toward its downtown revitalization.*

The municipality's Director of Facilities and Communications leads tourism development because the programs and initiatives that benefit residents, such as parks, recreation, and community centres, also appeal to visitors. Tourism is prioritized in Blind River's strategic plan and community improvement plan. Additionally, the municipality prioritizes its decades-long



relationship with Mississauga First Nation, which is based on trust, mutual understanding, and friendship. They meet on a regular basis and work together on trail projects. Also, businesses strongly support the municipality's community improvement program because they see the benefit of beautifying their downtown and other clusters of attractions like the marina to encourage visitors to stay longer and spend more in the community.

#### Key Learnings:

- Programs and initiative such as local events, festivals and other local activities that benefit residents can also attract visitors and improve their stay.
- Business owners recognize the value of downtown beautification. Wawa should consider ways to work with businesses to beautify the downtown.
- Social media geared to residents is a tool to share how tourism and community development can work together to benefit resident quality of life.
- Wawa can use its outdoor assets to attract visitors and develop strategies to lengthen their stay and encourage spending before and/or after outdoor activities.
- Relationship building with Indigenous communities takes time and must be based on trust, mutual understanding, and friendship. Strong relationships are the foundation for tourism development.

### **Kenora, Ontario (population: 14,970):**

*Known for its proximity to Lake of the Woods, a lake with over 14,500 islands and 105,000 km of shoreline, Kenora has also done work towards its downtown revitalization.*

There are four main players who lead tourism development in the community, including the municipality's tourism department, the Kenora Hospitality Alliance, the Harbourtown BIZ, and Team Kenora. Team Kenora is made up of representatives from economic development, planning, building, operations, engineering, and the Northwest Business Centre. Work in tourism development is driven by multiple plans that recognize it as a priority. These include the Tourism and Economic Development Strategic 5-year Plan, the Harbourfront Strategic Plan, and the Economic Diversification Plan. Overall, a recent initiative has been a rebranding campaign that encourages visitors to experience more than just the Lake of the Woods, by focusing on indoor attractions and culture. Funding for many recent initiatives, including the downtown revitalization and new arts centre have come from the implementation of the Municipal Accommodations Tax.

#### Key Learnings:

- Resident buy-in and support for tourism will make it easier for the Municipality of Wawa to prioritize tourism. Wawa needs to be proactive in engaging residents to ensure they have input in the direction of tourism development.
- Develop tourism through partnerships and working groups with key stakeholders (e.g., public/private partnerships to fill gaps in visitor experience, beautify the downtown, etc.).
- Tourism development intersects with different sectors, departments, and communities. As such, working to develop tourism means working collaboratively.
- Define the visitor market to identify other assets to highlight, such as culture, arts, or history. This can help attract new markets to the destination or enhance the experience of current visitors.

## **Appendix C: Research Results**

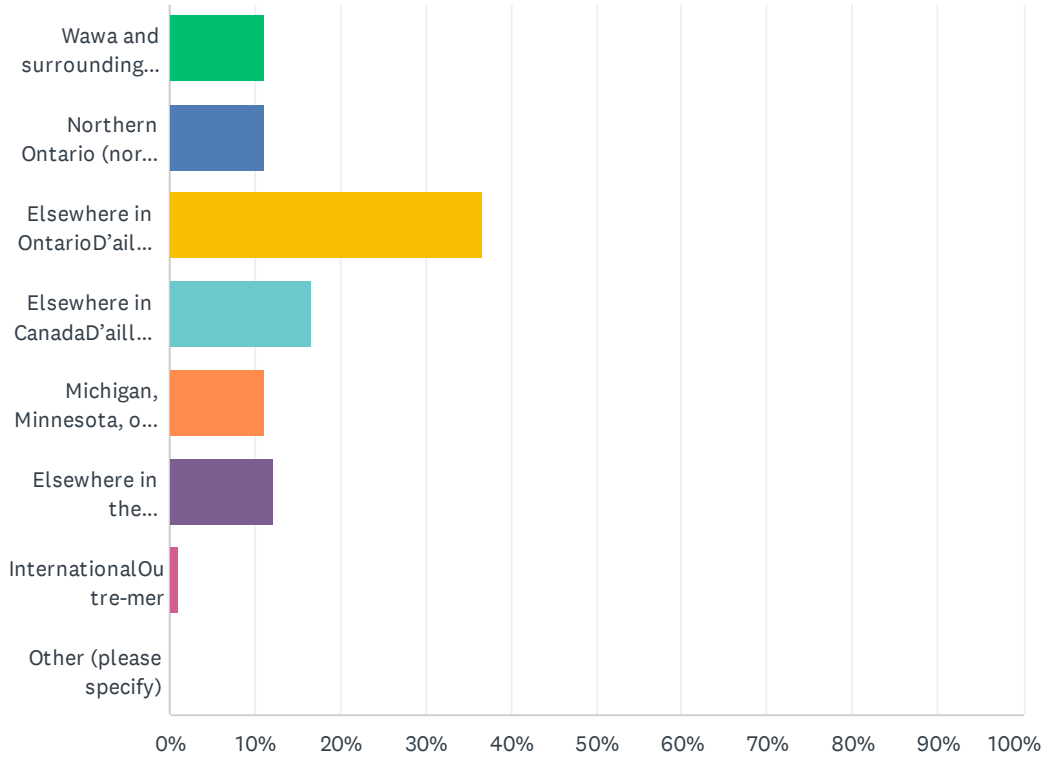
1. Visitor Survey Data
2. Industry Survey Data
3. Resident Survey Data
4. Community Session Summary Notes
5. Tourism Asset Scan Results
6. SWOC

## **1. Visitor Survey Data**



# Q1 Where are you coming from? Please the option that best describes you.

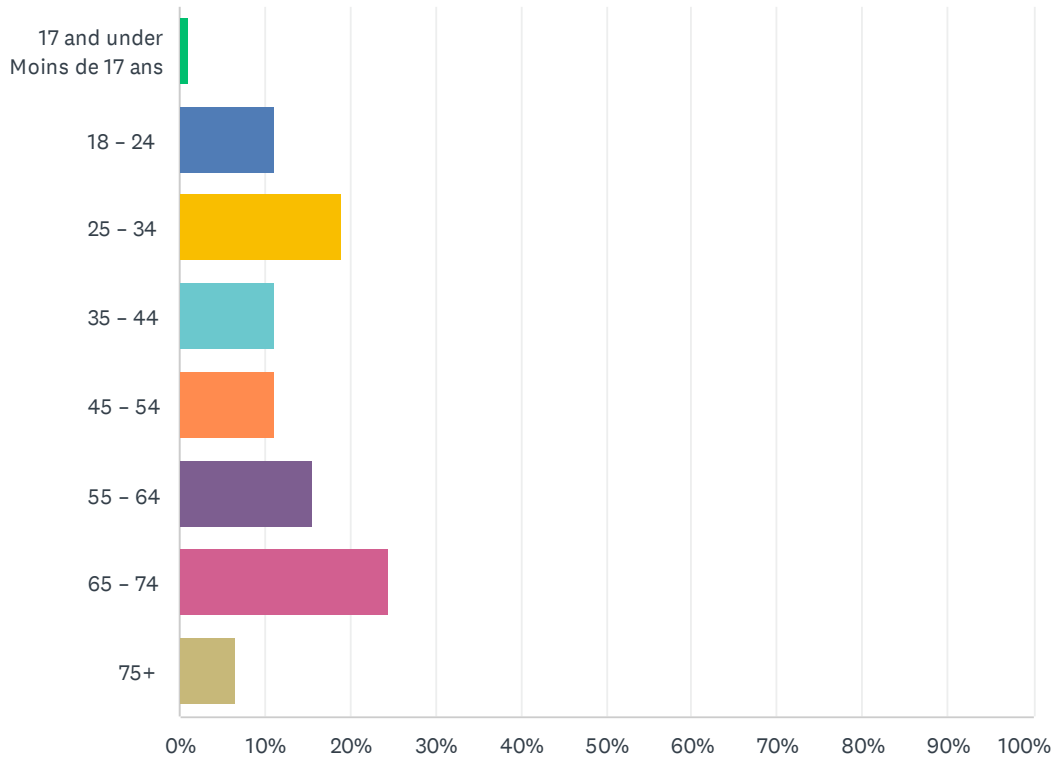
Answered: 90 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Wawa and surrounding area (resident of Wawa) Wawa et sa région environnante (résident(e) de Wawa)	11.11%	10
Northern Ontario (north of Pary Sound) Nord de l'Ontario (nord de Pary Sound)	11.11%	10
Elsewhere in Ontario D'ailleurs en Ontario	36.67%	33
Elsewhere in Canada D'ailleurs au Canada	16.67%	15
Michigan, Minnesota, or Wisconsin (U.S.) Michigan, Minnesota ou Wisconsin (États-Unis)	11.11%	10
Elsewhere in the U.S. D'ailleurs aux États-Unis	12.22%	11
International Outre-mer	1.11%	1
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>90</b>

## Q2 Please select your age range: Sélectionnez votre âge :

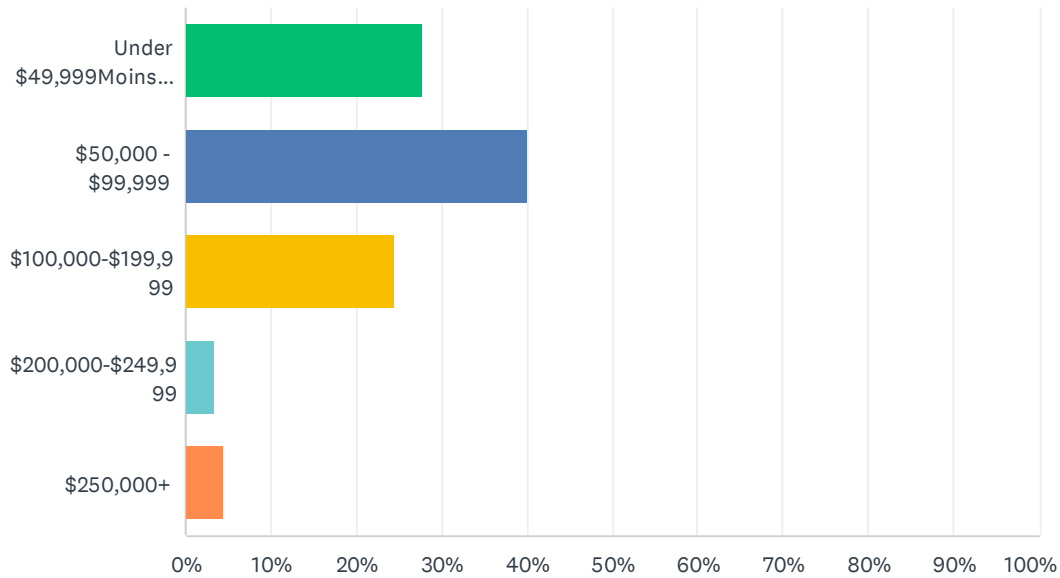
Answered: 90 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
17 and under Moins de 17 ans	1.11%	1
18 - 24	11.11%	10
25 - 34	18.89%	17
35 - 44	11.11%	10
45 - 54	11.11%	10
55 - 64	15.56%	14
65 - 74	24.44%	22
75+	6.67%	6
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>90</b>

Q3 Please select your yearly household income range in Canadian dollars and before taxes. Sélectionnez votre revenu familial annuel brut (en dollars canadien).

Answered: 90 Skipped: 0

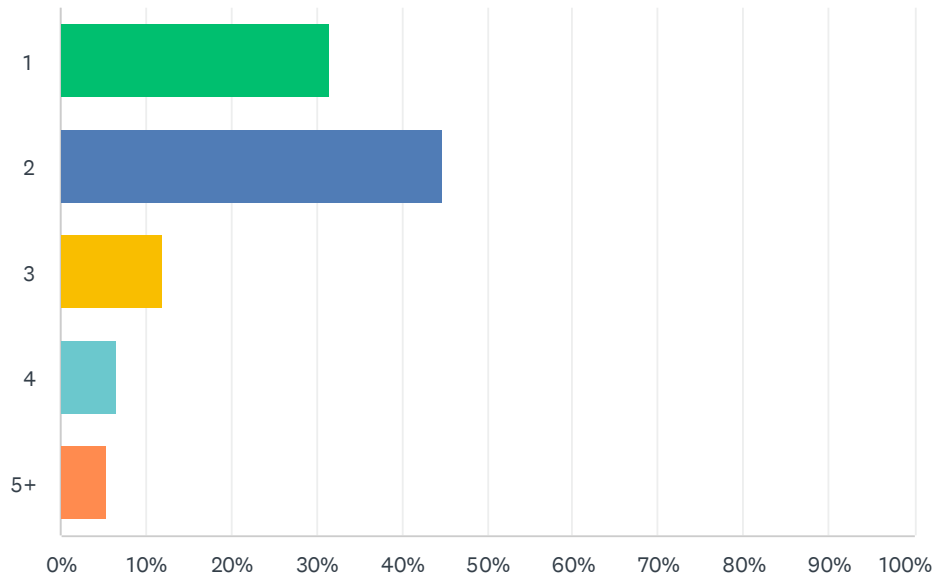


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Under \$49,999 Moins de \$49 999	27.78%	25
\$50,000 - \$99,999	40.00%	36
\$100,000-\$199,999	24.44%	22
\$200,000-\$249,999	3.33%	3
\$250,000+	4.44%	4
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>90</b>



Q4 How many people are you traveling with? Please select one option. Quel est le nombre de gens avec qui vous voyagez? Veuillez choisir une option.

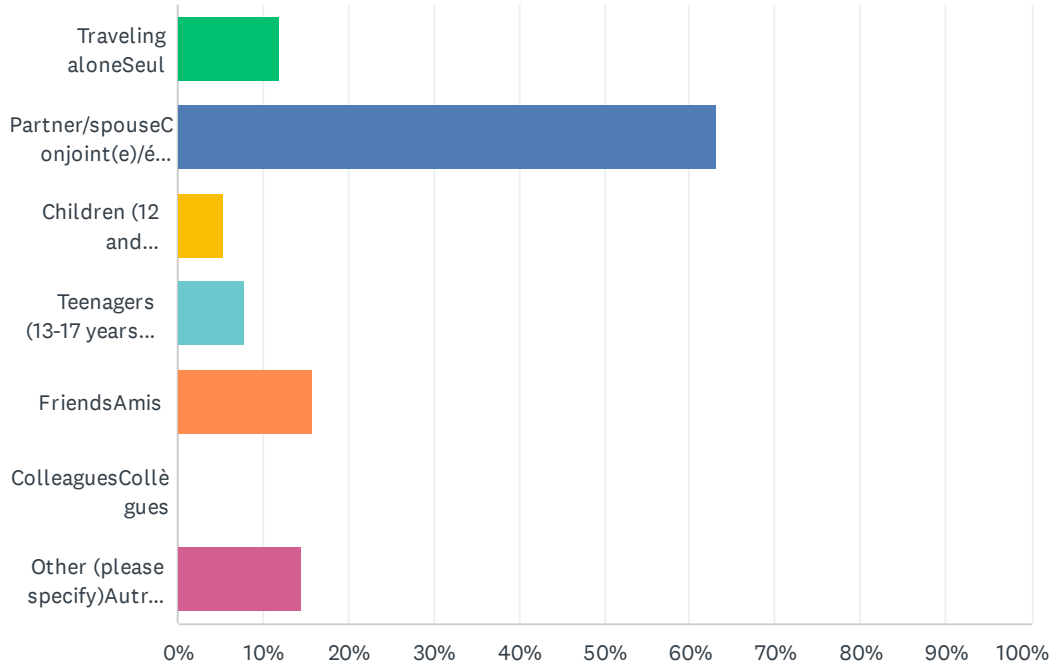
Answered: 76 Skipped: 14



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
1	31.58% 24
2	44.74% 34
3	11.84% 9
4	6.58% 5
5+	5.26% 4
TOTAL	76

Q5 Who are you traveling with? Please select all that apply. Avec qui voyagez-vous? Veuillez choisir toutes les options qui s'appliquent.

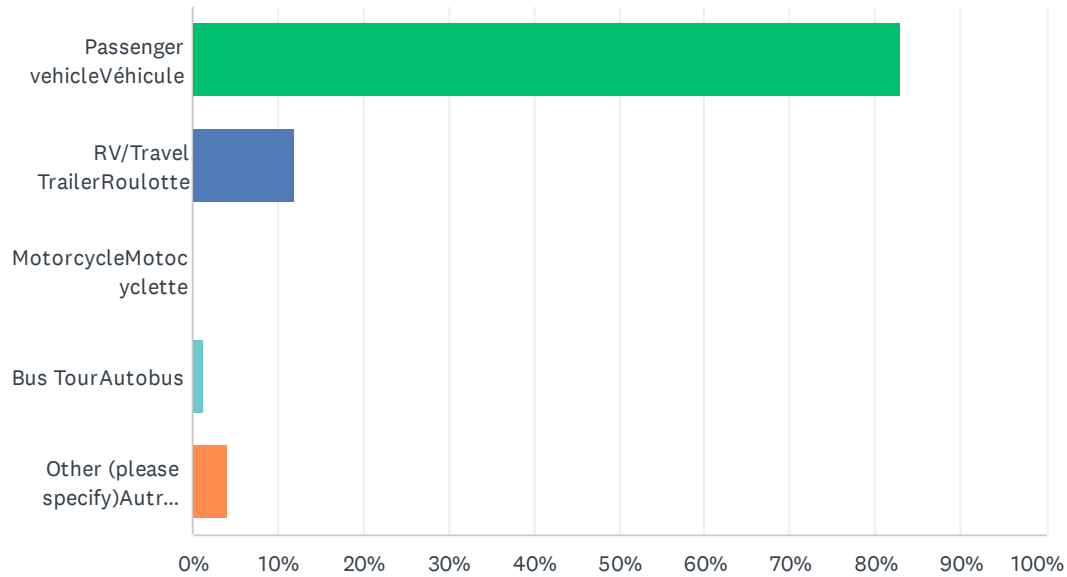
Answered: 76 Skipped: 14



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Traveling alone	11.84%	9
Partner/spouse	63.16%	48
Children (12 and under)	5.26%	4
Teenagers (13-17 years old)	7.89%	6
Friends	15.79%	12
Colleagues	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	14.47%	11
Total Respondents: 76		

## Q6 How are you travelling? Please select one option. Votre mode de transport. Veuillez choisir une option.

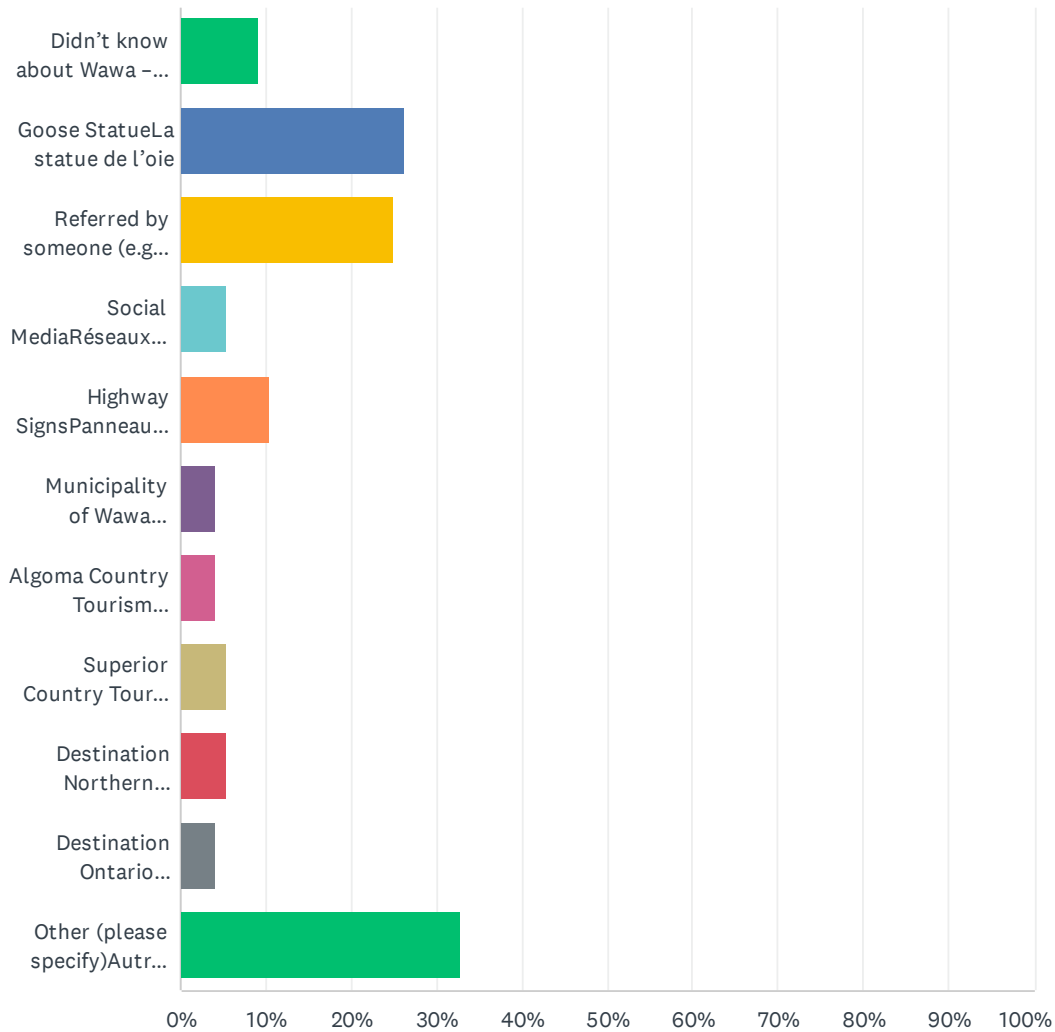
Answered: 76 Skipped: 14



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Passenger vehicle/Véhicule	82.89%	63
RV/Travel Trailer/Roulotte	11.84%	9
Motorcycle/Motocyclette	0.00%	0
Bus Tour/Autobus	1.32%	1
Other (please specify)/Autres (préciser)	3.95%	3
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>76</b>

Q7 How did you find out about Wawa? Please select all that apply. Comment avez-vous « découvert » Wawa? Veuillez choisir toutes les options qui s'appliquent.

Answered: 76 Skipped: 14



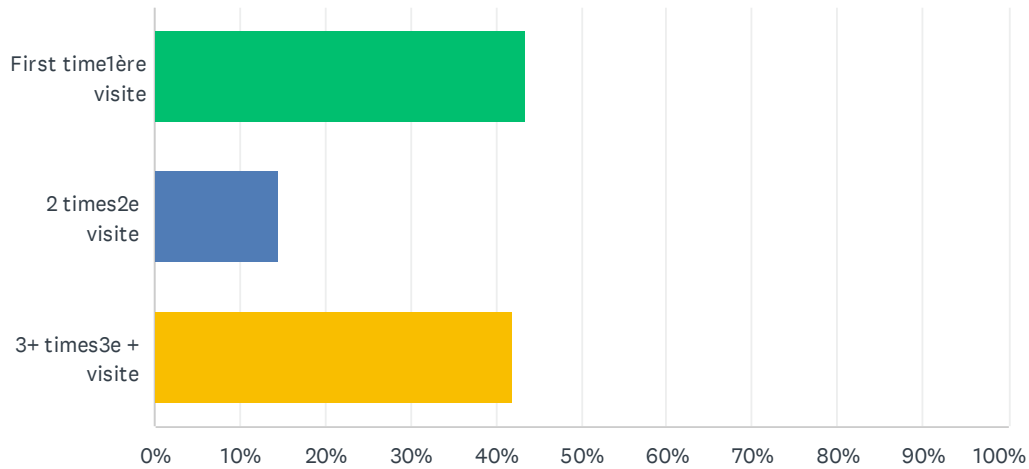


## Municipality of Wawa - Visitor Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Didn't know about Wawa – was just passing through En passant/voyage autoroute	9.21%	7
Goose Statue La statue de l'oie	26.32%	20
Referred by someone (e.g., Family, friends, colleagues) Recommandé par famille/amis/collègues	25.00%	19
Social Media Réseaux sociaux	5.26%	4
Highway Signs Panneaux routiers	10.53%	8
Municipality of Wawa "Experience Wawa" webpage Page web « Experience Wawa »	3.95%	3
Algoma Country Tourism website Site web « Algoma Country Tourism »	3.95%	3
Superior Country Tourism website Site web « Superior Country Tourism »	5.26%	4
Destination Northern Ontario website Site web « Destination Northern Ontario »	5.26%	4
Destination Ontario website Site web « Destination Ontario »	3.95%	3
Other (please specify) Autres (préciser)	32.89%	25
Total Respondents: 76		

Q8 How many times have you visited Wawa? Please choose one option. Combien de fois avez-vous visité Wawa (et les régions environnantes)?

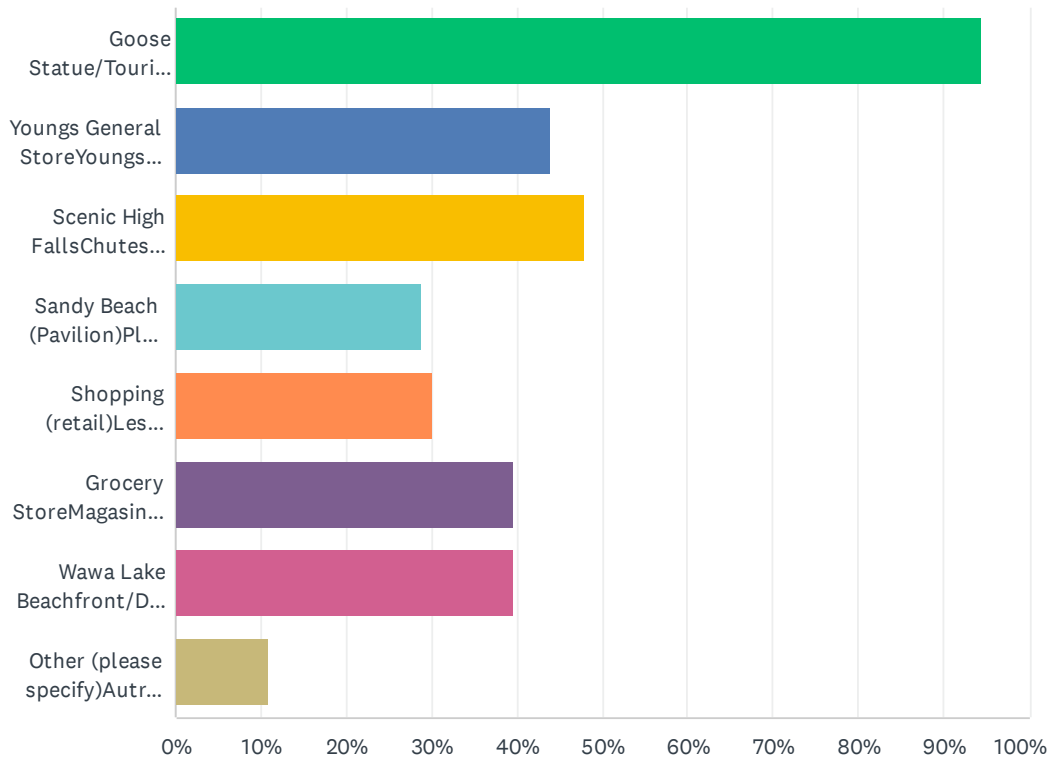
Answered: 76 Skipped: 14



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
First time 1ère visite	43.42%	33
2 times 2e visite	14.47%	11
3+ times 3e + visite	42.11%	32
TOTAL		76

Q9 Have you visited any of the following while in Wawa? Please select all that apply. Avez-vous visité les endroits suivants? Veuillez choisir tous qui s'appliquent.

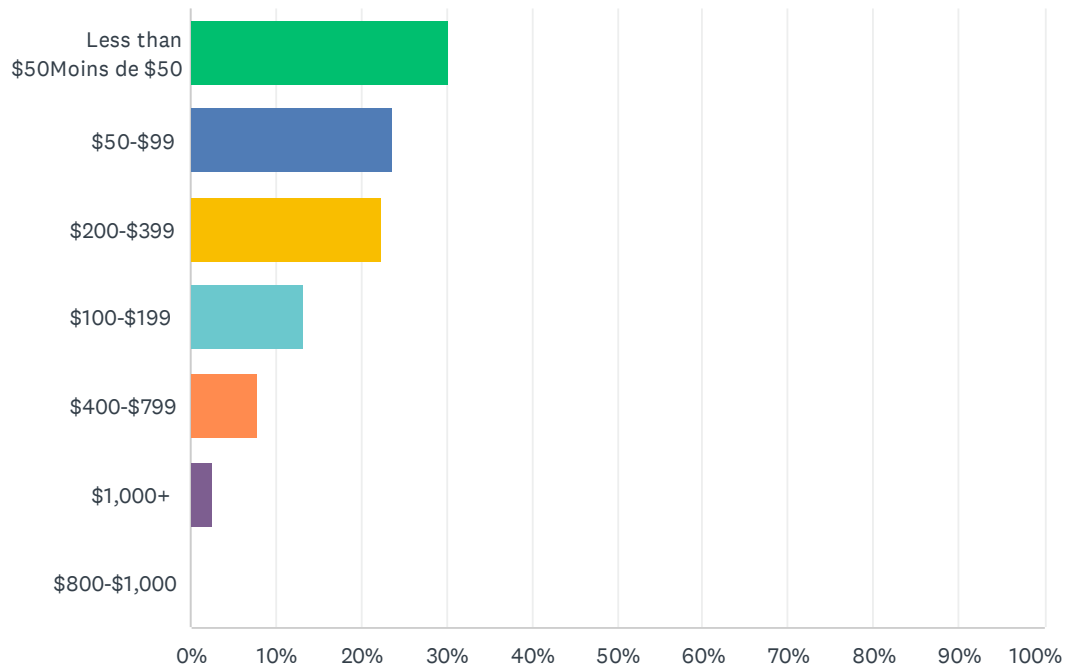
Answered: 73 Skipped: 17



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Goose Statue/Tourist Information CentreCentre d'information touristique/la statue de l'oie	94.52%	69
Youngs General StoreYoungs General Store	43.84%	32
Scenic High FallsChutes Scenic High Falls	47.95%	35
Sandy Beach (Pavilion)Plage Sandy Beach	28.77%	21
Shopping (retail)Les magasins d'achats	30.14%	22
Grocery StoreMagasin d'épicerie	39.73%	29
Wawa Lake Beachfront/DowntownCentre ville/Plage du lac Wawa	39.73%	29
Other (please specify)Autres (préciser)	10.96%	8
Total Respondents: 73		

Q10 Approximately how much money did your group spend/will spend in Wawa and area during your visit, in Canadian dollars? (e.g., accommodation, food & drink, activities, etc.). Please choose one option. Environ combien d'argent a dépensé ou dépensera votre groupe à Wawa et dans la région pendant votre visite, en dollars canadiens (par exemple, hébergement, nourriture et boissons, activités, etc.) Veuillez choisir une option.

Answered: 76 Skipped: 14

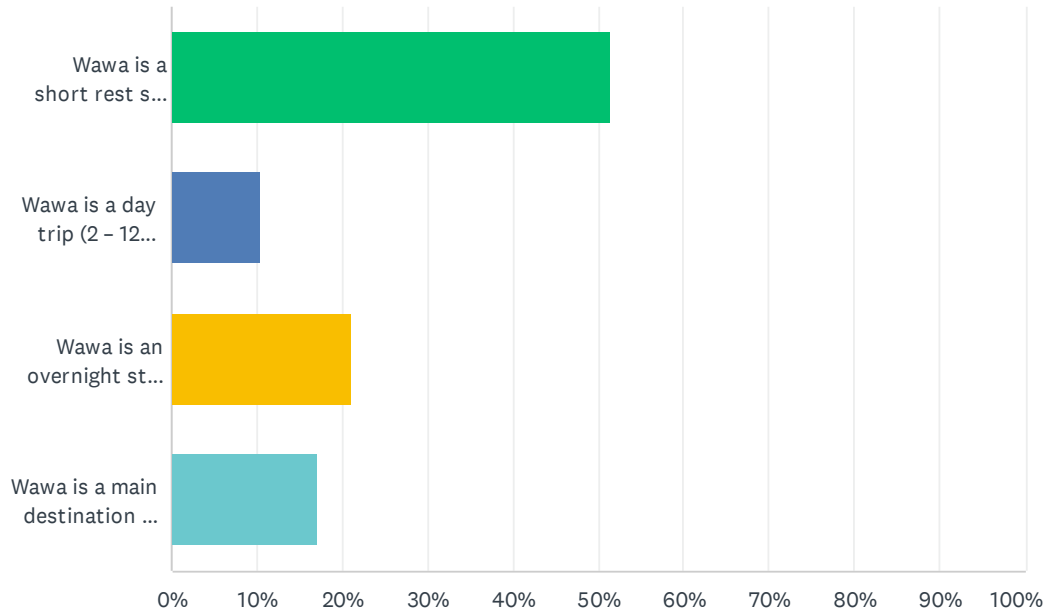


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than \$50Moins de \$50	30.26%	23
\$50-\$99	23.68%	18
\$200-\$399	22.37%	17
\$100-\$199	13.16%	10
\$400-\$799	7.89%	6
\$1,000+	2.63%	2
\$800-\$1,000	0.00%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>76</b>



**Q11 How long are you staying in Wawa? Please select the best option. Quelle est la durée de votre séjour? Veuillez choisir une option.**

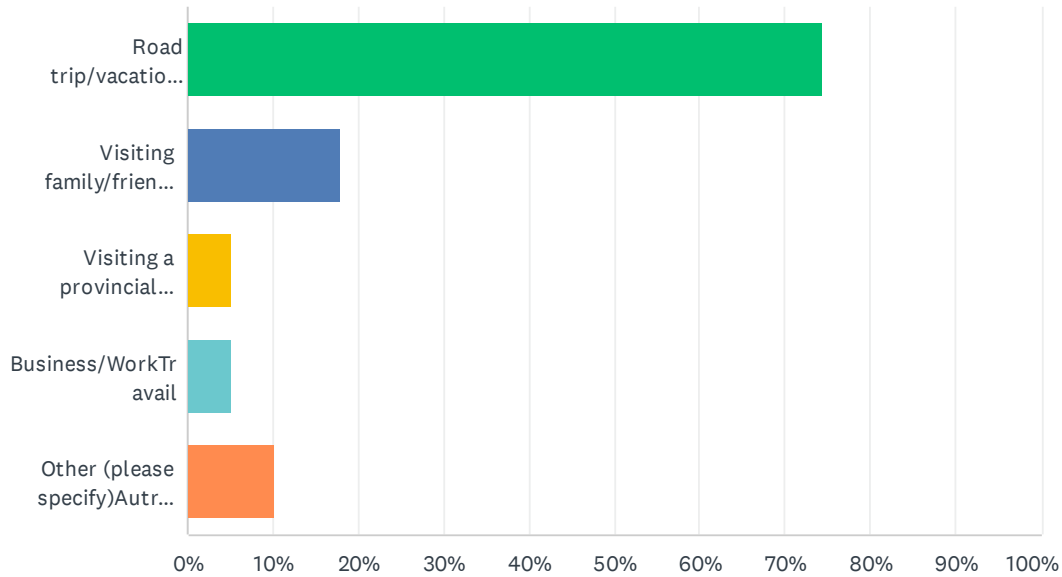
Answered: 76 Skipped: 14



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Wawa is a short rest stop (2 hours or less)Wawa est une halte routière	51.32%	39
Wawa is a day trip (2 – 12 hours)Wawa est une excursion d'une journée (2 - 12 heures)	10.53%	8
Wawa is an overnight stop (at least 1 night)Wawa est un arrêt de nuit (au moins 1 nuit)	21.05%	16
Wawa is a main destination (2 nights or more)Wawa est le destin principal (2 nuits +)	17.11%	13
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>76</b>

Q12 Why are you travelling? Please select all that apply. Votre raison de voyage/visiter Wawa. Veuillez choisir toutes les options qui s'appliquent.

Answered: 39 Skipped: 51



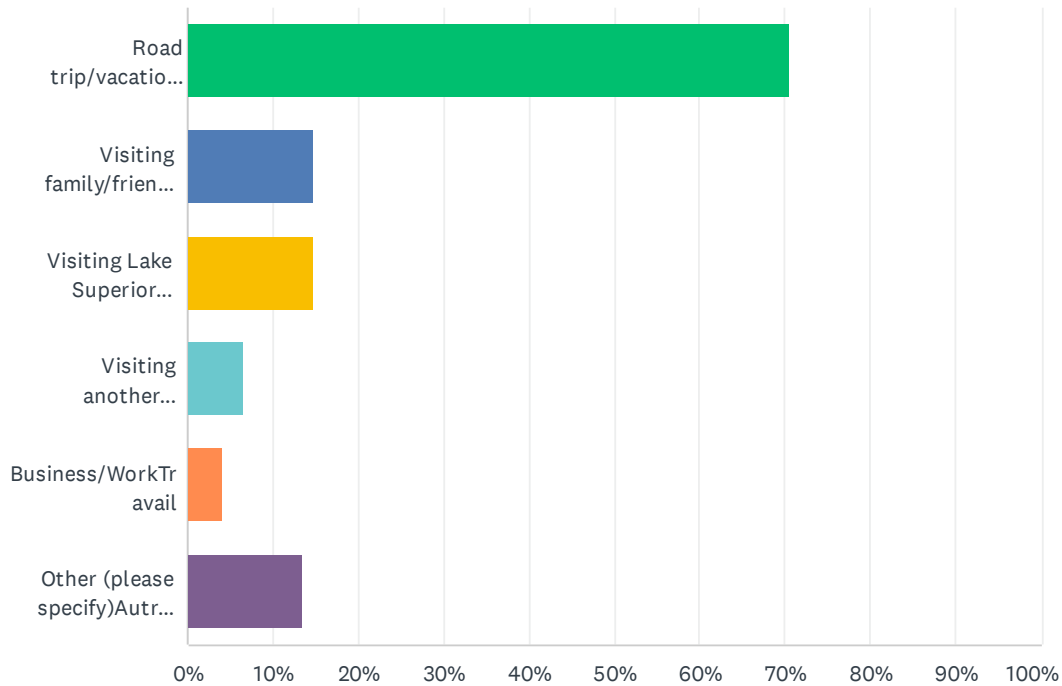
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Road trip/vacationVacances	74.36%	29
Visiting family/friends elsewhereVisite familles/amis ailleurs de Wawa	17.95%	7
Visiting a provincial park/natural areaVisite parcs provinciaux/zone naturelle	5.13%	2
Business/WorkTravail	5.13%	2
Other (please specify)Autres (préciser)	10.26%	4
Total Respondents: 39		

Q13 What is your final stop/destination for your travel journey? Please write the name of the community, town, city or area. Quelle est votre destination? Veuillez écrire le nom de la communauté/ville/région :

Answered: 38 Skipped: 52

Q14 What is the purpose of your visit to Wawa and area? Please select all that apply. Quel est l'intention de votre visite/séjour? Veuillez choisir toutes les options qui s'appliquent.

Answered: 75 Skipped: 15

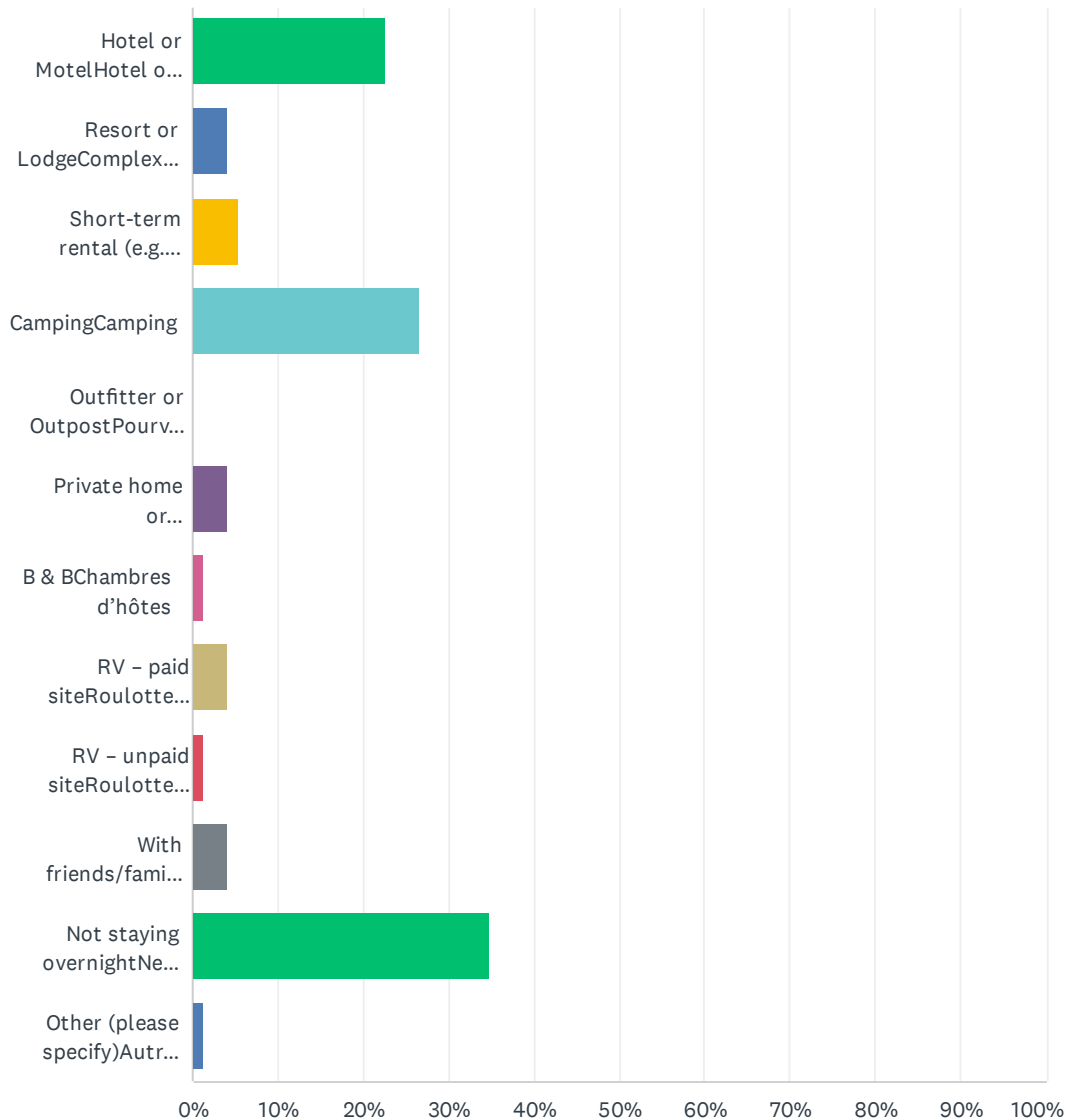


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Road trip/vacationVacances	70.67%	53
Visiting family/friendsVisite familles/amis	14.67%	11
Visiting Lake Superior Provincial ParkVisite au parc provincial du lac Supérieur	14.67%	11
Visiting another provincial park/natural areaVisite des autres parcs provinciaux/zone naturelles	6.67%	5
Business/WorkTravail	4.00%	3
Other (please specify)Autres (préciser)	13.33%	10
Total Respondents: 75		



Q15 Where are you staying while in Wawa and area? Please select all that apply. Où séjournez-vous à Wawa et dans la région ? Veuillez sélectionner toutes les réponses qui s'appliquent.

Answered: 75 Skipped: 15

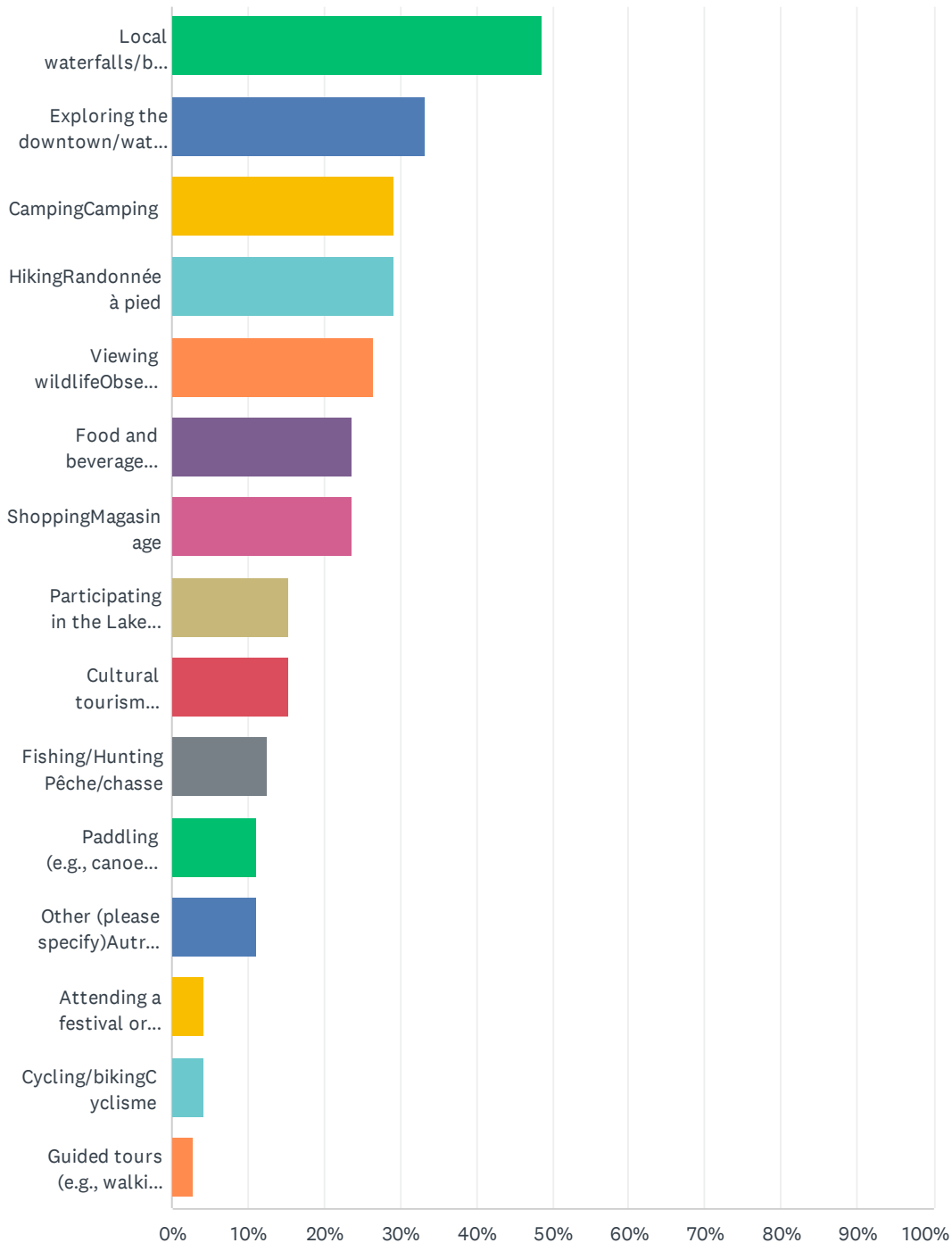


## Municipality of Wawa - Visitor Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Hotel or Motel Hotel ou Motel	22.67%	17
Resort or Lodge Complexe touristique	4.00%	3
Short-term rental (e.g., cottage, Airbnb property) Location/AirBnB	5.33%	4
Camping Camping	26.67%	20
Outfitter or Outpost Pouvoirie (Outfitter)	0.00%	0
Private home or cottage Maison privée ou chalet	4.00%	3
B & B Chambres d'hôtes	1.33%	1
RV – paid site Roulotte - site payé	4.00%	3
RV – unpaid site Roulotte - site non payé	1.33%	1
With friends/family Avec amis/famille	4.00%	3
Not staying overnight Ne nécessite pas de nuitée	34.67%	26
Other (please specify) Autres (préciser)	1.33%	1
Total Respondents: 75		

Q16 What sorts of activities/experiences will you participate in during your visit to Wawa and area? Please select all that apply. Indiquer les activités/expériences dont vous (avez) participez lors de votre visite. Veuillez sélectionner tous les options qui s'appliquent.

Answered: 72 Skipped: 18



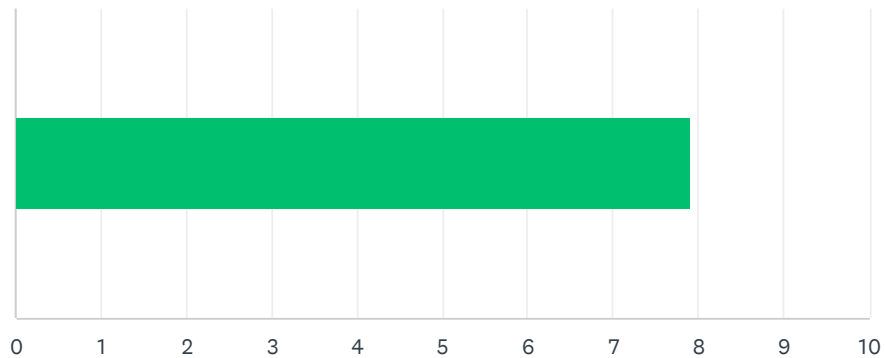
## Municipality of Wawa - Visitor Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Local waterfalls/beachesPlages/chutes	48.61%	35
Exploring the downtown/waterfrontExplorer le centre-ville/bord de l'eau	33.33%	24
CampingCamping	29.17%	21
HikingRandonnée à pied	29.17%	21
Viewing wildlifeObservation de la faune	26.39%	19
Food and beverage sampling/tastingsÉchantillonnage d'aliments et de boissons	23.61%	17
ShoppingMagasinage	23.61%	17
Participating in the Lake Superior Circle TourParticiper à la tournée « Lake Superior Circle Tour »	15.28%	11
Cultural tourism experiences (e.g., Indigenous tourism experience, Group of Seven)Expériences de tourisme culturels	15.28%	11
Fishing/HuntingPêche/chasse	12.50%	9
Paddling (e.g., canoe, kayak)Canotage/kayak	11.11%	8
Other (please specify)Autres (préciser)	11.11%	8
Attending a festival or eventFestival/événement	4.17%	3
Cycling/bikingCyclisme	4.17%	3
Guided tours (e.g., walking tour, food tour, nature tour, etc.)Visites guidées (p.ex. tour de nature, tour culinaire, etc.)	2.78%	2
Total Respondents: 72		



Q17 On a scale from 1 to 10 (with one being not likely at all and 10 being extremely likely) how likely are you to come back to visit and explore Wawa and surrounding area? Selon une échelle de 1 à 10 (1 étant "absolument pas", 10 étant "absolument"), est-ce que vous tentez de revenir à Wawa?

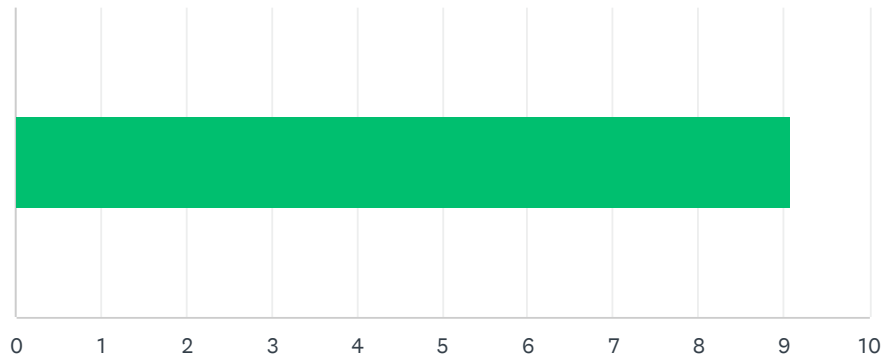
Answered: 71 Skipped: 19



ANSWER CHOICES	AVERAGE NUMBER	TOTAL NUMBER	RESPONSES
	8	562	71
Total Respondents: 71			

Q18 On a scale from 1-10 (with one being not likely at all and 10 being extremely likely), how likely to recommend Wawa as a place to visit to others? Selon une échelle de 1 à 10 (1 étant "absolument pas", 10 étant "absolument"), recommanderiez-vous à autres de visiter Wawa?

Answered: 71 Skipped: 19



ANSWER CHOICES	AVERAGE NUMBER	TOTAL NUMBER	RESPONSES
	9	645	71
Total Respondents: 71			

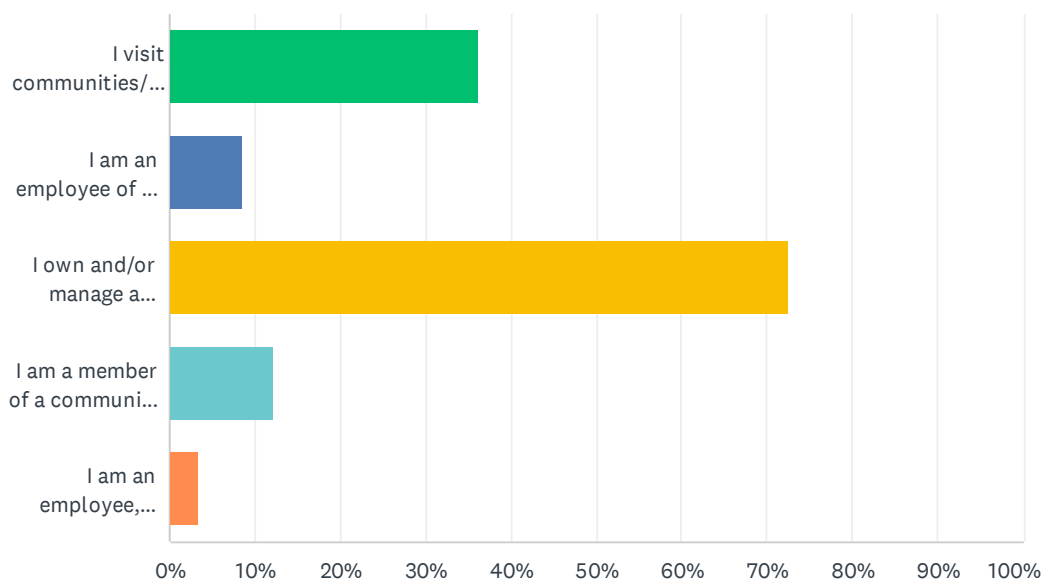
**Q19 Please use the comment box below to describe any ways your visit to Wawa could have been improved or enhanced, including activities, experiences, or assets that would make you want to come back. Indiquer dans la case ci-dessous, des suggestions, des améliorations et activités qui vous intéresseraient pour votre visite.**

Answered: 25 Skipped: 65

## **2. Industry Survey Data**

### Q1 What is your relationship to tourism? Select all that apply.

Answered: 58 Skipped: 0

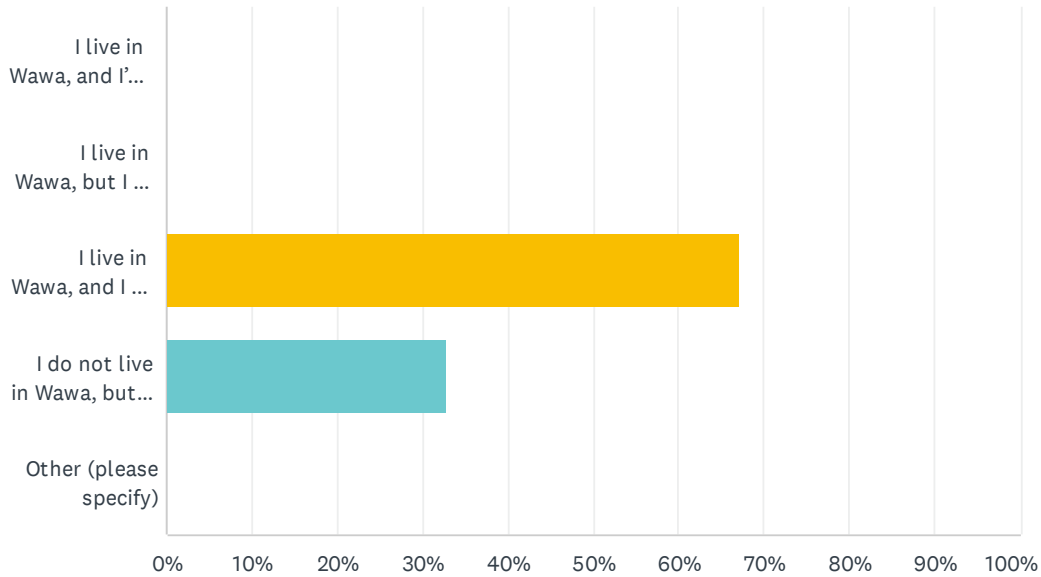


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I visit communities/destinations (tourist)	36.21%	21
I am an employee of a business/organization that provides products and services to visitors	8.62%	5
I own and/or manage a business that provides products and/or services to visitors	72.41%	42
I am a member of a community group or committee that focuses on tourism	12.07%	7
I am an employee, within an institution or industry organization, that directly works in providing tourism support to businesses/organizations (e.g., regional tourism organization, destination marketing organization, municipality, etc.)	3.45%	2
Total Respondents: 58		



## Q2 What is your relationship to Wawa and area? Please select the best option.

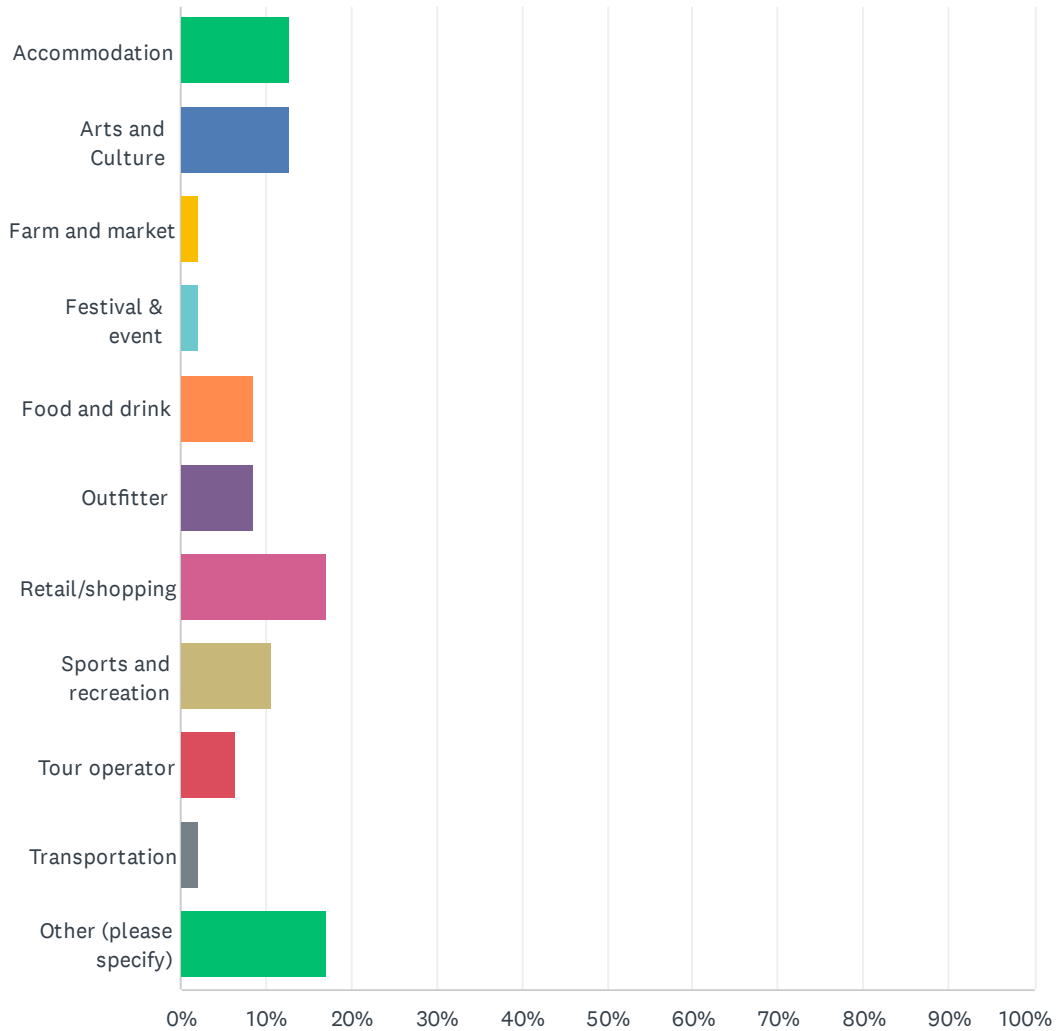
Answered: 58 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I live in Wawa, and I'm an employee of a business in Wawa and surrounding area that provides products and/or services to visitors	0.00%	0
I live in Wawa, but I am not an employee of a business in Wawa and surrounding area that provides products and/or services to visitors	0.00%	0
I live in Wawa, and I own and/or manage a business in Wawa and surrounding area that provides products and/or services to visitors	67.24%	39
I do not live in Wawa, but I own and/or manage a business in Wawa and surrounding area that provides products and/or services to visitors	32.76%	19
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>58</b>

### Q3 What type of business do you own? Please select the option that best describes the primary focus of your business.

Answered: 47 Skipped: 11

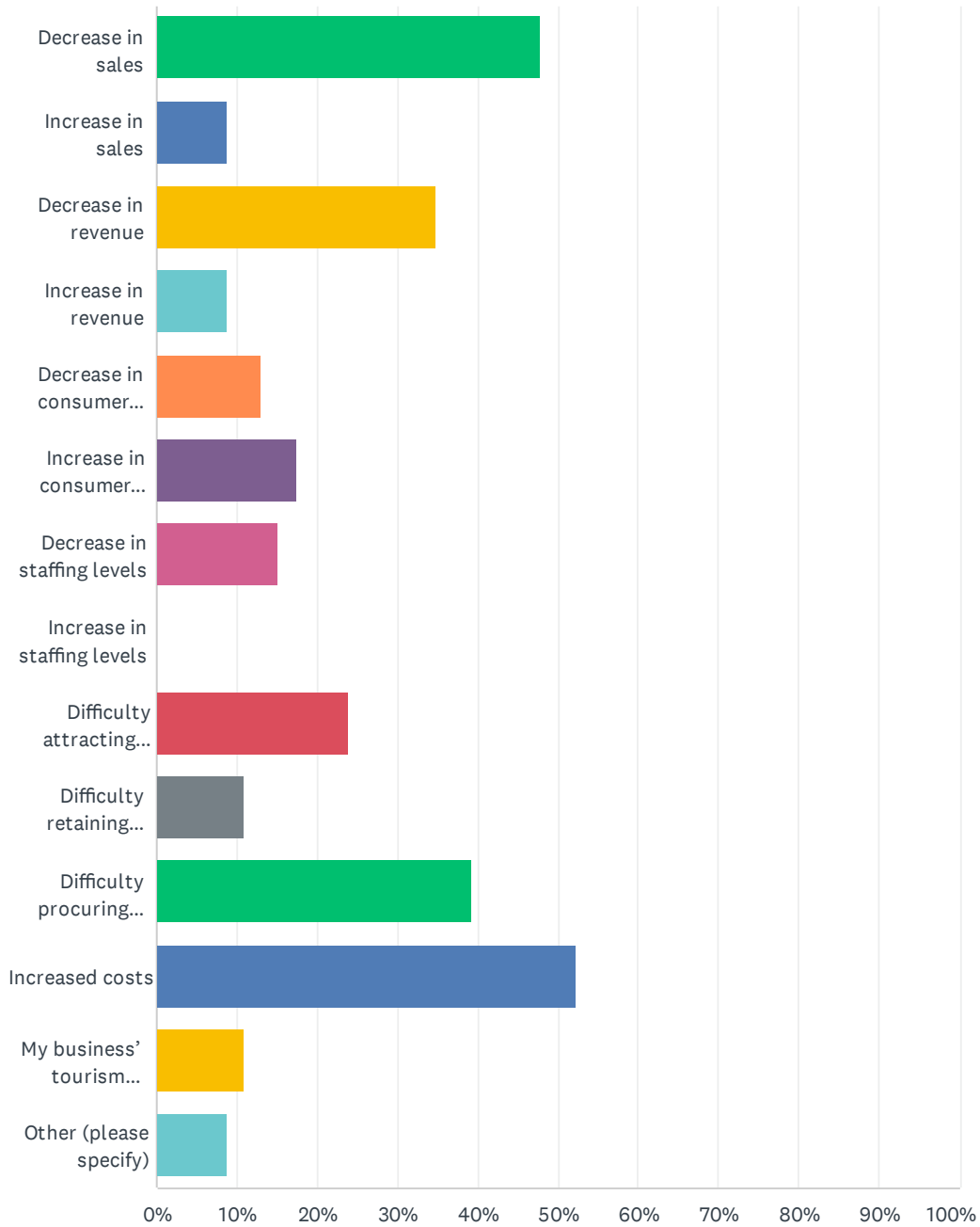


## Municipality of Wawa - Industry & Resident Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Accommodation	12.77%	6
Arts and Culture	12.77%	6
Farm and market	2.13%	1
Festival & event	2.13%	1
Food and drink	8.51%	4
Outfitter	8.51%	4
Retail/shopping	17.02%	8
Sports and recreation	10.64%	5
Tour operator	6.38%	3
Transportation	2.13%	1
Other (please specify)	17.02%	8
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>47</b>

### Q4 How has COVID-19 impacted your business' tourism offerings? Select all that apply.

Answered: 46 Skipped: 12



Municipality of Wawa - Industry & Resident Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Decrease in sales	47.83%	22
Increase in sales	8.70%	4
Decrease in revenue	34.78%	16
Increase in revenue	8.70%	4
Decrease in consumer interest	13.04%	6
Increase in consumer interest	17.39%	8
Decrease in staffing levels	15.22%	7
Increase in staffing levels	0.00%	0
Difficulty attracting employees	23.91%	11
Difficulty retaining employees	10.87%	5
Difficulty procuring supplies	39.13%	18
Increased costs	52.17%	24
My business' tourism offerings have not been impacted by COVID-19	10.87%	5
Other (please specify)	8.70%	4
Total Respondents: 46		



Q5 How has COVID-19 impacted your customers/visitors? (i.e., What COVID-19-related shifts have you observed with your customers/visitors?)

Answered: 28 Skipped: 30

Q6 On a scale from 1 to 10 (with 1 being 'not interested at all' and 10 being 'extremely interested'), how interested are you in receiving tourism development support from the Municipality?

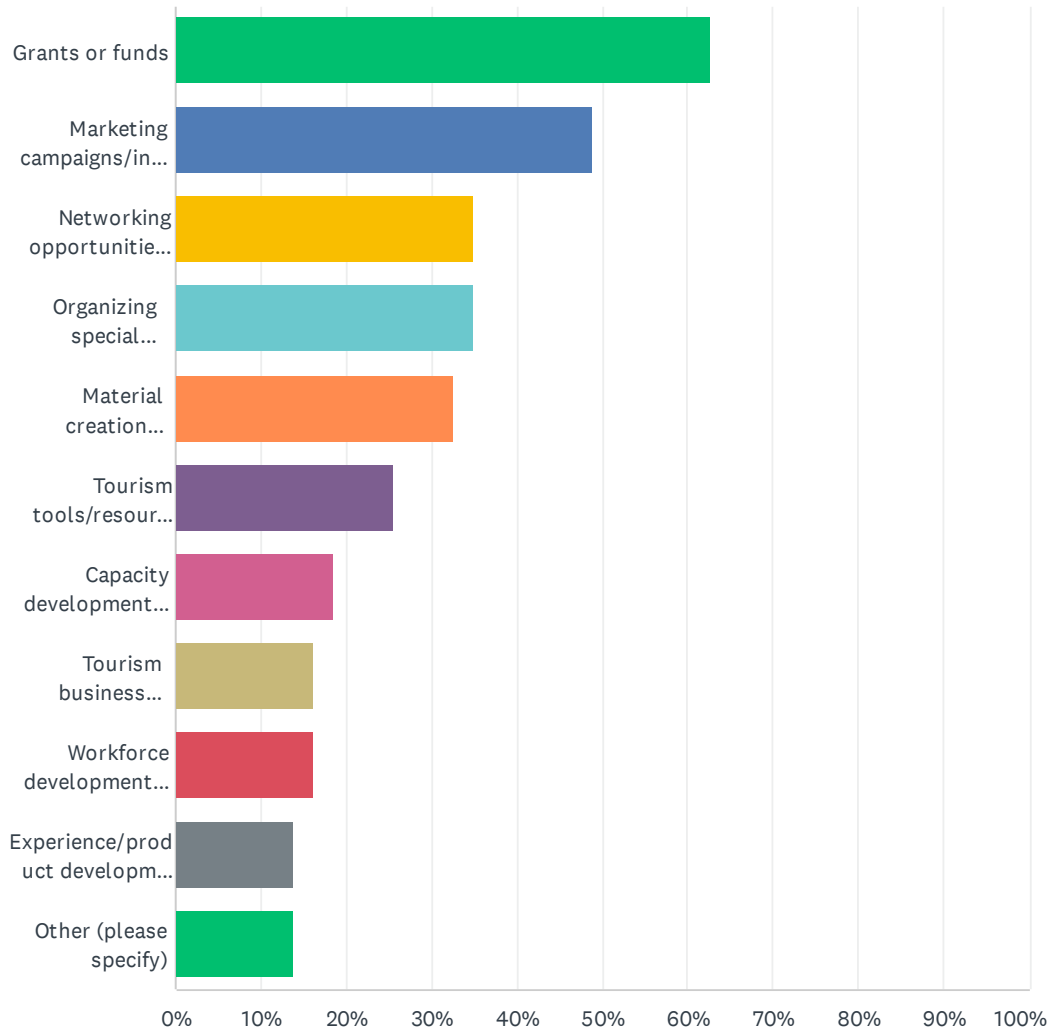
Answered: 46 Skipped: 12



ANSWER CHOICES	AVERAGE NUMBER	TOTAL NUMBER	RESPONSES
	7	333	46
Total Respondents: 46			

### Q7 What types of resources and supports would you need to help tourism growth at your business or operation? Select all that apply.

Answered: 43 Skipped: 15

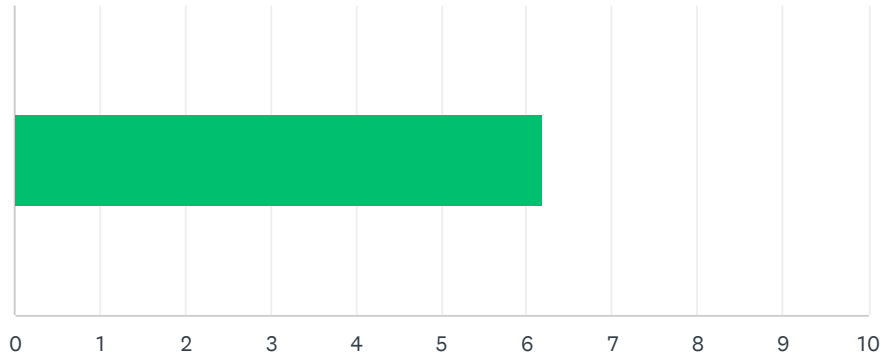


Municipality of Wawa - Industry & Resident Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Grants or funds	62.79%	27
Marketing campaigns/initiatives	48.84%	21
Networking opportunities (e.g., meet and greets, information nights, etc.)	34.88%	15
Organizing special products/events	34.88%	15
Material creation support (e.g., professional photos, videos, articles, etc.)	32.56%	14
Tourism tools/resources (e.g., market research, best practice checklists, etc.)	25.58%	11
Capacity development initiatives (e.g., webinar; workshop; best practice tour; accessibility support; diversity, equity and inclusion training, etc.)	18.60%	8
Tourism business start-up/innovation supports	16.28%	7
Workforce development support	16.28%	7
Experience/product development supports	13.95%	6
Other (please specify)	13.95%	6
Total Respondents: 43		

Q8 On a scale from 1 to 10 (with 1 being 'not interested at all' and 10 being 'extremely interested'), how interested are you in actively participating or contributing to the implementation of the upcoming 5-year tourism action plan?

Answered: 44 Skipped: 14



ANSWER CHOICES	AVERAGE NUMBER	TOTAL NUMBER	RESPONSES
	6	272	44
Total Respondents: 44			



**Q9 What types of resources and supports are you able and willing to contribute to grow tourism in Wawa and area?**

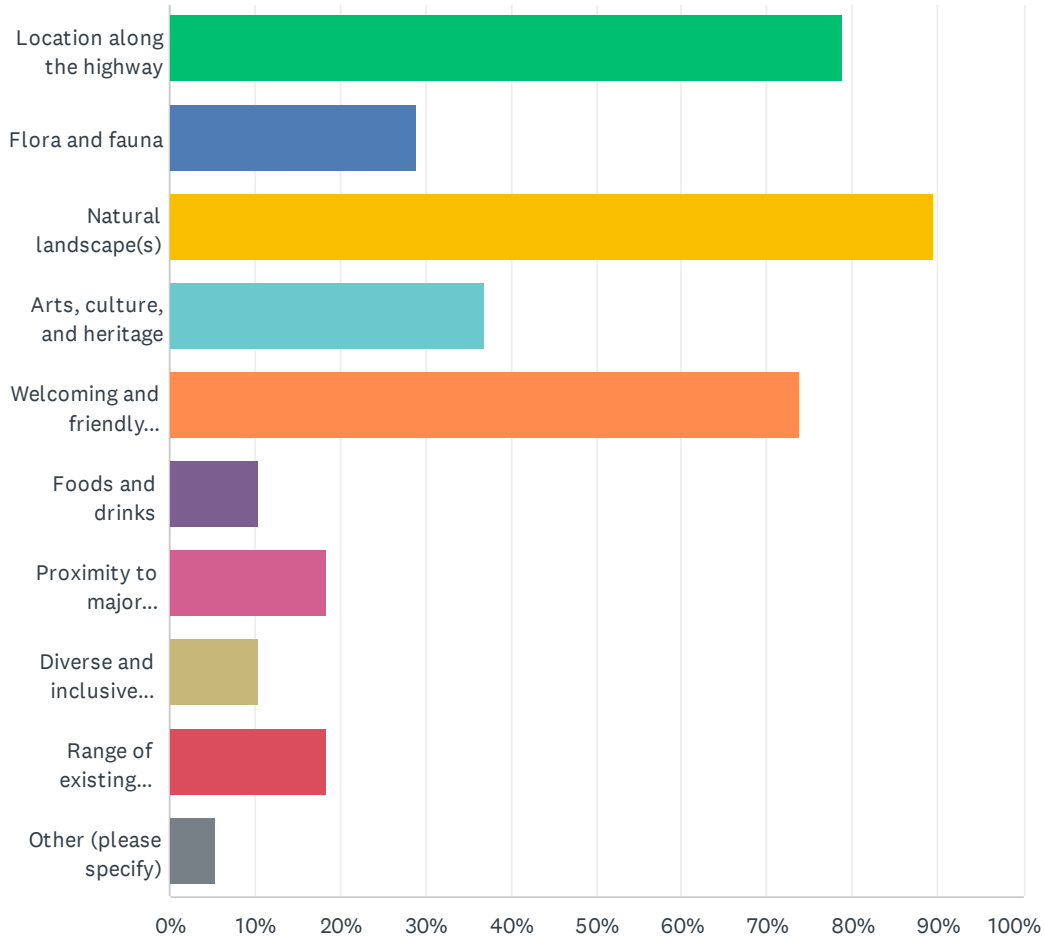
Answered: 24 Skipped: 34

**Q10 In one sentence, how would you describe Wawa and area to someone who was unfamiliar with, but interested in visiting the area?**

Answered: 39 Skipped: 19

### Q11 What makes Wawa different and unique in comparison to other communities/destinations across Northern Ontario? Select all that apply.

Answered: 38 Skipped: 20



Municipality of Wawa - Industry & Resident Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Location along the highway	78.95%	30
Flora and fauna	28.95%	11
Natural landscape(s)	89.47%	34
Arts, culture, and heritage	36.84%	14
Welcoming and friendly community	73.68%	28
Foods and drinks	10.53%	4
Proximity to major attractions	18.42%	7
Diverse and inclusive community	10.53%	4
Range of existing infrastructure that supports different accessibility types (e.g., physical, and cognitive)	18.42%	7
Other (please specify)	5.26%	2
Total Respondents: 38		

**Q12 What are three unique/hidden gems tourism assets (e.g., sites, attractions, activities, etc.) that a visitor may not be aware of if they do not know someone who lives in the area?**

Answered: 34 Skipped: 24

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1.	100.00%	34
2.	97.06%	33
3.	94.12%	32

## Q13 How has COVID-19 impacted tourism in Wawa and area?

Answered: 24 Skipped: 34



**Q14 What types of tourism activities, experiences, or businesses are needed to strengthen the tourism offering in Wawa and area?**

Answered: 29 Skipped: 29

# Q15 What are the top 3 opportunities for developing tourism in Wawa and area?

Answered: 31 Skipped: 27

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1.	100.00%	31
2.	96.77%	30
3.	90.32%	28

# Q16 What are the top 3 challenges for developing tourism in Wawa and area?

Answered: 31 Skipped: 27

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1.	100.00%	31
2.	96.77%	30
3.	90.32%	28

Q17 What positive impacts (i.e., benefits) do you associate with tourism development in Wawa? (e.g., What are potential benefits for residents that could come from tourism development?)

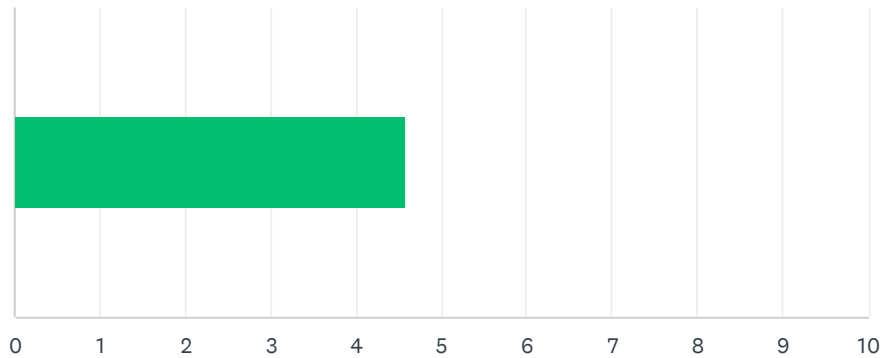
Answered: 29 Skipped: 29

Q18 What negative impacts (i.e., concerns) do you associate with tourism development in Wawa? (i.e., What are your concerns about tourism development in Wawa?)

Answered: 27 Skipped: 31

Q19 On a scale from 1 to 10 (with 1 being 'not beneficial at all' and 10 being 'extremely beneficial'), how beneficial would the introduction of an "Accommodation Tax" for all short-term accommodations (less than 30 days, e.g., motels, Airbnb's, RV Parks, etc.) be to generate revenue for tourism initiatives (e.g., marketing and promotion, tourism product and experience development, etc.)?

Answered: 27 Skipped: 31



ANSWER CHOICES	AVERAGE NUMBER	TOTAL NUMBER	RESPONSES
	5	124	27
Total Respondents: 27			



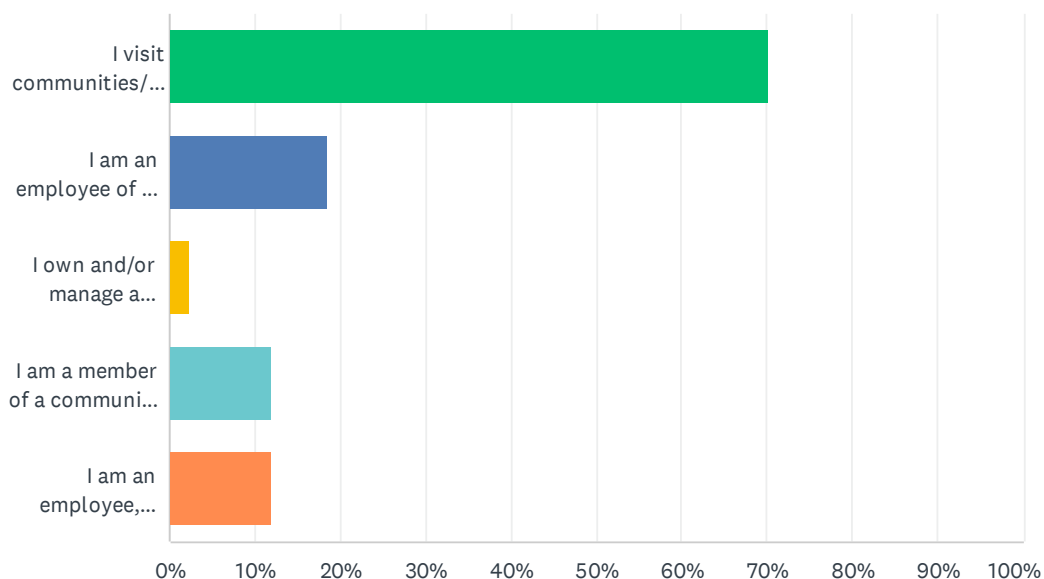
**Q20 Is there anything else you would like to share with the project team, including your perspective on top priorities for the Municipality's Tourism Department?**

Answered: 21 Skipped: 37

### **3. Resident Survey Data**

### Q1 What is your relationship to tourism? Select all that apply.

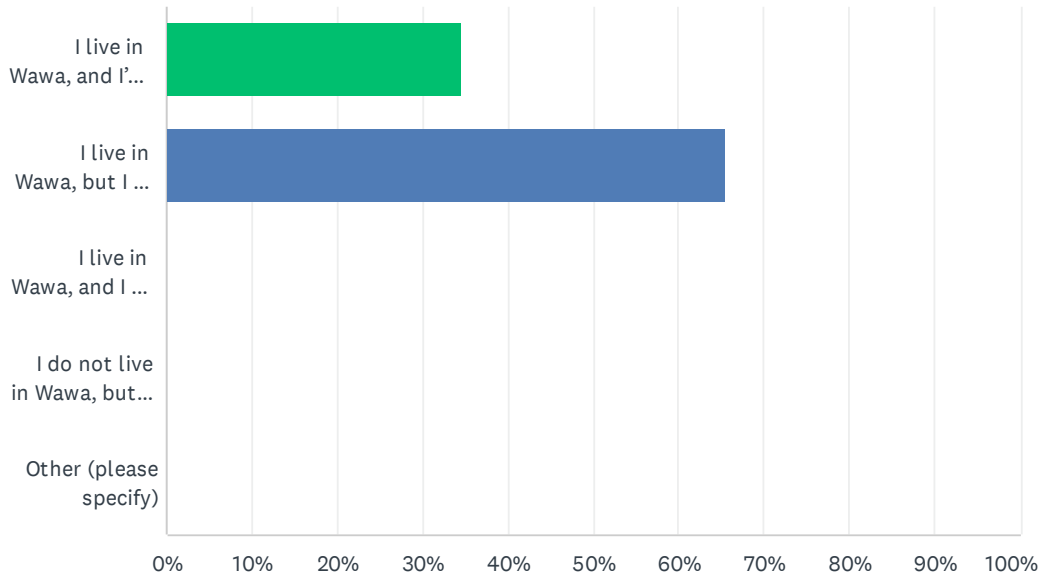
Answered: 177 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I visit communities/destinations (tourist)	70.06%	124
I am an employee of a business/organization that provides products and services to visitors	18.64%	33
I own and/or manage a business that provides products and/or services to visitors	2.26%	4
I am a member of a community group or committee that focuses on tourism	11.86%	21
I am an employee, within an institution or industry organization, that directly works in providing tourism support to businesses/organizations (e.g., regional tourism organization, destination marketing organization, municipality, etc.)	11.86%	21
Total Respondents: 177		

## Q2 What is your relationship to Wawa and area? Please select the best option.

Answered: 177 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I live in Wawa, and I'm an employee of a business in Wawa and surrounding area that provides products and/or services to visitors	34.46%	61
I live in Wawa, but I am not an employee of a business in Wawa and surrounding area that provides products and/or services to visitors	65.54%	116
I live in Wawa, and I own and/or manage a business in Wawa and surrounding area that provides products and/or services to visitors	0.00%	0
I do not live in Wawa, but I own and/or manage a business in Wawa and surrounding area that provides products and/or services to visitors	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>177</b>

### Q3 What type of business do you own? Please select the option that best describes the primary focus of your business.

Answered: 0 Skipped: 177

 No matching responses.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Accommodation	0.00% 0
Arts and Culture	0.00% 0
Farm and market	0.00% 0
Festival & event	0.00% 0
Food and drink	0.00% 0
Outfitter	0.00% 0
Retail/shopping	0.00% 0
Sports and recreation	0.00% 0
Tour operator	0.00% 0
Transportation	0.00% 0
Other (please specify)	0.00% 0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>

## Q4 How has COVID-19 impacted your business' tourism offerings? Select all that apply.

Answered: 0 Skipped: 177

 No matching responses.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Decrease in sales	0.00%	0
Increase in sales	0.00%	0
Decrease in revenue	0.00%	0
Increase in revenue	0.00%	0
Decrease in consumer interest	0.00%	0
Increase in consumer interest	0.00%	0
Decrease in staffing levels	0.00%	0
Increase in staffing levels	0.00%	0
Difficulty attracting employees	0.00%	0
Difficulty retaining employees	0.00%	0
Difficulty procuring supplies	0.00%	0
Increased costs	0.00%	0
My business' tourism offerings have not been impacted by COVID-19	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 0		



Q5 How has COVID-19 impacted your customers/visitors? (i.e., What COVID-19-related shifts have you observed with your customers/visitors?)

Answered: 0 Skipped: 177

Q6 On a scale from 1 to 10 (with 1 being 'not interested at all' and 10 being 'extremely interested'), how interested are you in receiving tourism development support from the Municipality?

Answered: 0 Skipped: 177

 No matching responses.

ANSWER CHOICES	AVERAGE NUMBER	TOTAL NUMBER	RESPONSES
	0	0	0
Total Respondents: 0			

## Q7 What types of resources and supports would you need to help tourism growth at your business or operation? Select all that apply.

Answered: 0 Skipped: 177

 No matching responses.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Grants or funds	0.00%	0
Tourism tools/resources (e.g., market research, best practice checklists, etc.)	0.00%	0
Capacity development initiatives (e.g., webinar; workshop; best practice tour; accessibility support; diversity, equity and inclusion training, etc.)	0.00%	0
Experience/product development supports	0.00%	0
Marketing campaigns/initiatives	0.00%	0
Networking opportunities (e.g., meet and greets, information nights, etc.)	0.00%	0
Organizing special products/events	0.00%	0
Material creation support (e.g., professional photos, videos, articles, etc.)	0.00%	0
Tourism business start-up/innovation supports	0.00%	0
Workforce development support	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 0		

Q8 On a scale from 1 to 10 (with 1 being 'not interested at all' and 10 being 'extremely interested'), how interested are you in actively participating or contributing to the implementation of the upcoming 5-year tourism action plan?

Answered: 0 Skipped: 177

 No matching responses.

ANSWER CHOICES	AVERAGE NUMBER	TOTAL NUMBER	RESPONSES
	0	0	0
Total Respondents: 0			

**Q9 What types of resources and supports are you able and willing to contribute to grow tourism in Wawa and area?**

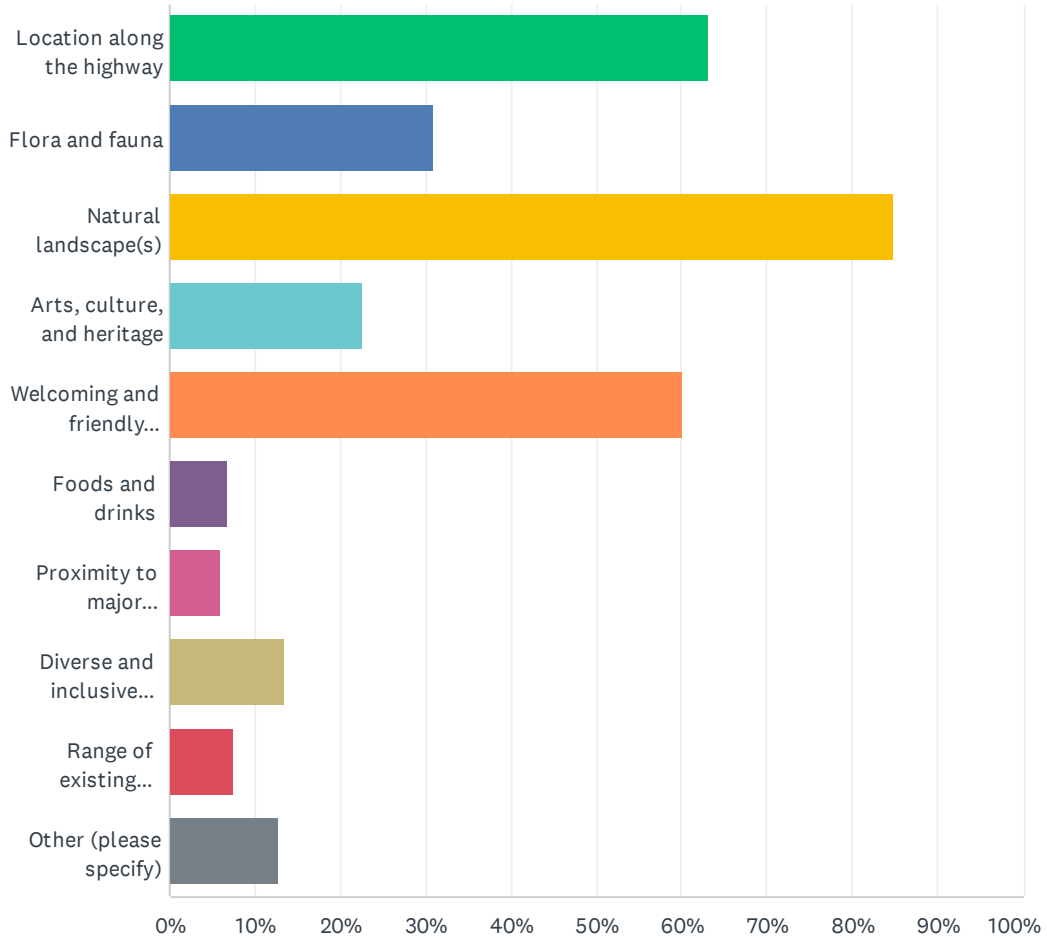
Answered: 0 Skipped: 177

**Q10 In one sentence, how would you describe Wawa and area to someone who was unfamiliar with, but interested in visiting the area?**

Answered: 133 Skipped: 44

### Q11 What makes Wawa different and unique in comparison to other communities/destinations across Northern Ontario? Select all that apply.

Answered: 133 Skipped: 44





Municipality of Wawa - Industry & Resident Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Location along the highway	63.16%	84
Flora and fauna	30.83%	41
Natural landscape(s)	84.96%	113
Arts, culture, and heritage	22.56%	30
Welcoming and friendly community	60.15%	80
Foods and drinks	6.77%	9
Proximity to major attractions	6.02%	8
Diverse and inclusive community	13.53%	18
Range of existing infrastructure that supports different accessibility types (e.g., physical, and cognitive)	7.52%	10
Other (please specify)	12.78%	17
Total Respondents: 133		

**Q12 What are three unique/hidden gems tourism assets (e.g., sites, attractions, activities, etc.) that a visitor may not be aware of if they do not know someone who lives in the area?**

Answered: 128 Skipped: 49

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1.	100.00%	128
2.	96.88%	124
3.	85.16%	109

## Q13 How has COVID-19 impacted tourism in Wawa and area?

Answered: 120 Skipped: 57

**Q14 What types of tourism activities, experiences, or businesses are needed to strengthen the tourism offering in Wawa and area?**

Answered: 97 Skipped: 80

# Q15 What are the top 3 opportunities for developing tourism in Wawa and area?

Answered: 101 Skipped: 76

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1.	100.00%	101
2.	93.07%	94
3.	78.22%	79

# Q16 What are the top 3 challenges for developing tourism in Wawa and area?

Answered: 101 Skipped: 76

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1.	100.00%	101
2.	93.07%	94
3.	74.26%	75

Q17 What positive impacts (i.e., benefits) do you associate with tourism development in Wawa? (e.g., What are potential benefits for residents that could come from tourism development?)

Answered: 94 Skipped: 83

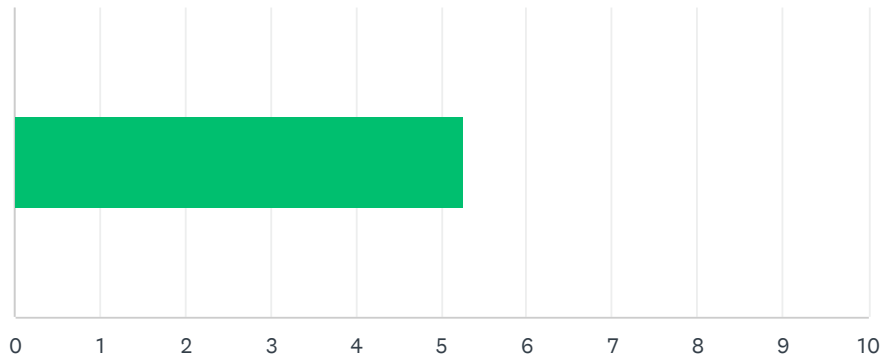


Q18 What negative impacts (i.e., concerns) do you associate with tourism development in Wawa? (i.e., What are your concerns about tourism development in Wawa?)

Answered: 91 Skipped: 86

Q19 On a scale from 1 to 10 (with 1 being 'not beneficial at all' and 10 being 'extremely beneficial'), how beneficial would the introduction of an "Accommodation Tax" for all short-term accommodations (less than 30 days, e.g., motels, Airbnb's, RV Parks, etc.) be to generate revenue for tourism initiatives (e.g., marketing and promotion, tourism product and experience development, etc.)?

Answered: 98 Skipped: 79



ANSWER CHOICES	AVERAGE NUMBER	TOTAL NUMBER	RESPONSES
	5	517	98
Total Respondents: 98			

**Q20 Is there anything else you would like to share with the project team, including your perspective on top priorities for the Municipality's Tourism Department?**

Answered: 66 Skipped: 111

## **4. Community Session Summary Notes**

## Municipality of Wawa 5-Year Tourism Action Plan

### Community Sessions: Notes & Analysis

Total participants: 18 community members over two 1.5-hour sessions held on November 9<sup>th</sup> and November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

#### *Exercise 1: Round-table discussion & SWOC dotmocracy*

*Top 3 SWOC elements identified by community session participants*

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong outdoor offerings and picturesque landscapes (15)</li> <li>• Rich and varied local stories and histories (6)</li> <li>• Variety of local artisans and craft products (5)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current infrastructure and visual appeal of the downtown (10)</li> <li>• Limited commercial options, and food and beverage options (9)</li> <li>• Limited availability of activities and experiences (5)</li> </ul>
Additional	Additional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong brand with Wawa goose</li> <li>• Michipicoten River Village and Marina</li> <li>• Snowmobile trails</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Condition of Marina</li> <li>• Lack of camping grounds</li> <li>• First impressions of the community</li> <li>• Lack of recycling</li> <li>• Highway shutdowns discourage travel</li> <li>• Lack of parking for visitors with large/RV vehicles</li> <li>• Lack of place for collaboration</li> <li>• Lack of visitor services (e.g., money exchange)</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening relationship with Michipicoten First Nation (10)</li> <li>• Developing new experiences and interactive activities (9)</li> <li>• Beautifying the downtown and building sense of a destination (8)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current labour shortage across visitor-facing businesses (12)</li> <li>• Limited community engagement with tourism development (6)</li> <li>• Attracting and retaining new businesses (6)</li> </ul>
Additional	Additional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing/growing greenspace downtown (incl. Benches, patios)</li> <li>• Information and supports to navigate funding landscape</li> <li>• Develop/establish place to hang out (e.g., brewery)</li> <li>• Growing identity beyond the goose</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism program leadership</li> <li>• Support MNR for tourism</li> <li>• Seasonal nature of tourism</li> <li>• Getting visitors past the goose</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicating history and culture to visitors</li> <li>• Develop designated ATV trails</li> <li>• Rental equipment for activities (e.g., boats, stand up paddle boards, etc.)</li> </ul>	
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***Exercise 2: Postcards from the Future***

Summary points from 13 postcards from written and shared by session participants, visualizing what Wawa and tourism in Wawa looks like 10 years from now in 2032:

**Description of Wawa in 2032:**

- Beautiful
- Friendly
- Helpful
- Picturesque
- Alpine
- Generous
- Accommodating
- Life-changing
- Remote
- Soul of Northern Ontario
- Heart of Algoma Country
- People in Wawa can recommend the next activity
- Connection to histories in the area (Michipicoten First Nation, fur traders, early settlers, etc.)
- Blueberries available
- Diverse cuisines available
- Variety of accommodations
- Connected to Lake Superior

**Downtown:**

- Cozy, appealing, modern, quaint, small, cute
- Thriving businesses
- Locals selling crafts
- Local experts offering their services (incl. guides, crafts, skills) at Goose Nets
- Brewery/place to hang out
- Patios available
- Businesses are open across the week
- Flower filled, gardens
- Outdoor cafes
- Various local shops and artisans
- Walkable

**Activities:**

- Rentals at Wawa beach (boat, paddle surfing, etc.)
- Bike and foot path
- Many opportunities for different kinds of vacation (nature, history, relaxing)
- Paddle down Michipicoten river

- Ability to visit Michipicoten First Nation and learn from FN
- Visiting Group of 7 painting sites
- Events (and major event) to celebrate Wawa
- Pool in town
- Performances available (theatre, spoken word, music)
- Guided hikes
- Superior Days
- Spirit campfires with ghost stories from the area

## **5. Tourism Asset Scan Results**



## MOW – Five-Year Tourism Action Plan

### Tourism Asset Scan

*Purpose:*

1. To identify internal and external factors affecting both tourism and destination development
2. To understand the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges for developing tourism

Primary Assets		
Asset Category	Assets	Comments
<b>Accommodations</b> (hotels, motels, campgrounds, lodges, etc.)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Airbnb (several on offer in the area)</li> <li>2. Air-Dale Hunting and Fishing</li> <li>3. Algoma Motel</li> <li>4. Beaver Motel</li> <li>5. Best Northern Resort &amp; Restaurant</li> <li>6. Big Bird Inn</li> <li>7. Bristol Motel</li> <li>8. Brunswick Lake Lodge</li> <li>9. Cameron Lake Fishing Lodges, Inc.</li> <li>10. Camp Michi Wawa (10 mi. N. of Wawa)</li> <li>11. Catfish Lakefront Cabins &amp; Campground</li> <li>12. Errington's Wilderness Islands Ltd.</li> <li>13. Halfway Haven Lodge</li> <li>14. Happy Day Lodge</li> <li>15. Hidden River Lodge</li> <li>16. High Falls Motel &amp; Cabins</li> <li>17. Highway 17 Motel</li> <li>18. Lake Superior Provincial Park Campground</li> <li>19. Lakeside RV Resort and Campground (Hawk Jct.)</li> <li>20. Lakeview Hotel &amp; Lounge</li> <li>21. Murray Lake Cottages</li> <li>22. Mystic Isle Motel</li> <li>23. Northern Lights Motel &amp; Chalets</li> <li>24. Lodge Eighty-Eight/Mar Mac Lodge</li> <li>25. Northern Walleye Lodge</li> <li>26. Northern Wilderness Cottages</li> <li>27. Outdoorsman Motel</li> <li>28. Pine Portage Lodge (Watson's Algoma Vacation)</li> <li>29. Parkway Motel</li> <li>30. Rock Island Lodge</li> </ol>	<p><b>Business-Specific Comments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Halfway Haven will be open this winter, enabling snowmobiling across the region (vital rest, fuel etc. stop)</li> <li>• See “accommodations” document for more details.</li> <li>• No longer North to Adventure, just Lodge 88 and Mar Mac Lodge</li> </ul> <p><b>General Comments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note many of the lodges also provide guiding and other services, so these businesses could fall into more than one asset category</li> <li>• Drive along N. Shore is an important part of the journey to get to the drive-in and fly-in resorts. Some promote this.</li> <li>• Wawa promotes fly-in and drive-in lodges on their digital assets. There is likely a group of accommodations that it makes sense to focus on as part of a hub and spoke model, using Wawa as the jumping off point and for these businesses to <b>celebrate</b> Wawa as part of the visitor experience (e.g., featuring local blueberry jam at breakfast, encouraging visitors to drive the LS North Shore on their way to the lodge).</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>31. Tatnall Camp</li> <li>32. Watson's Windy Point Lodge</li> <li>33. Wawa Motor Inn</li> <li>34. Wawa RV Resort &amp; Campground</li> <li>35. White Fang Motel</li> <li>36. Whitefish Lodge</li> <li>37. Long Beach Bed &amp; Breakfast</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Attractions</b>  (museums, galleries,  historic sites, parks,  trails, routes, etc.)</p>	<p><u>Outdoor Attractions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lake Superior Provincial Park</li> <li>2. Potholes Provincial Park</li> <li>3. Michipicoten Post Provincial Park (non-operating)</li> <li>4. The Shoals Provincial Park (non-operating)</li> <li>5. Nimoosh Provincial Park (non-operating)</li> <li>6. Silver Falls</li> <li>7. Wawa Creek Falls</li> <li>8. Scenic High Falls</li> <li>9. Snowmobiling &amp; ATVing trails (Wawa Sno-Riders Club maintain snowmobile trails)</li> <li>10. Cross Country Ski &amp; Snowshoeing trails</li> <li>11. Hiking trails, incl. Voyageur Trail</li> <li>12. Paddling routes (Lake Superior, rivers), outfitters, guides</li> <li>13. Views</li> <li>14. Geological Formations (Potholes PP, Pictographs, Old Woman Bay)</li> <li>15. Lake Superior, rivers, Wawa Lake</li> <li>16. Michipicoten Golf Club (Course)</li> <li>17. Sandy Beach &amp; Pavilion (storytelling pavilion)</li> <li>18. Lions Beach</li> <li>19. Wawa Beach</li> <li>20. Guided tours and adventures (e.g., wildlife viewing, hunting and fishing, paddling, hiking, etc.)</li> </ul> <p><u>Cultural Attractions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>21. The Goose</li> <li>22. Heritage Doors</li> <li>23. The Gallery by Spike Mills</li> <li>24. Faces of Gitchee Goomee</li> <li>25. Big Water Pottery</li> <li>26. Local Artisans</li> </ul> <p><u>Tourism Products</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>27. Lake Superior Circle Tour</li> <li>28. Ride Lake Superior Tour</li> </ul>	<p><b>Additional details (numbers and comments align)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 51 km from Wawa. # 1 Best Thing to Do in Wawa on Trip Advisor</li> <li>2. 70 km from Wawa. Potholes Provincial Nature Reserve. Boardwalks, hiking, interpretive signs, glacial potholes</li> <li>3. Day use, hiking, 7.7 km from Wawa, #8 on Trip Advisor</li> <li>4. 183 km from Wawa</li> <li>5. 30 km from Wawa, was designated a waterway park</li> <li>6. # 7 on TripAdvisor</li> <li>7. In Michipicoten Village</li> <li>8. #2 of 16 Things to do in Wawa on Trip Advisor; RV parking, platforms, washrooms, interpretive signs, picnic area (# 7 on Trip Advisor)</li> <li>9. Snowmobiling-District 13, OFSC sanctioned, fully operational. Also backcountry snowmobiling. ATV: <a href="#">Wawa, Ontario: A True North ATV Destination   Northern Ontario Travel</a></li> <li>10. Wawa Ski Club, over 10 km of trails, snowshoeing in town and Lake Superior Prov. Park. Winter tourism actively promoted.</li> <li>11. Voyageur Hiking Trail, Waterfall section from Scenic High Falls along Magpie River</li> <li>12. Lake Superior, rivers, outfitters, guides</li> <li>13. Waterfalls, Scenic Lookout (#7 on Official Visitors Map), Mr. Vallee Park (#13 on map)</li> <li>14. Agawa Rock pictographs # 5 on Trip Advisor</li> <li>15. World's largest freshwater lake, great views of lake, other waterways</li> <li>16. #15 of things to do TA</li> <li>17. White sand beach and dunes, #3 on TA</li> <li>18. Nice views, location of hole drill</li> <li>19. Main community beach: beach house, picnic tables, washrooms, pier, crane exhibit, floating dock</li> <li>20. Naturally Superior Adventures #12 on TA (not many reviews)</li> </ul> <p>Also: Government Dock Beach # 6 on TA; Dr. Ross Beach # 9; Katherine Cove beach #10; Wawa Falls # 16</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>21. #4 on Trip Advisor</li> <li>22. <a href="#">Wawa's Heritage Doors by Johanna Rowe   Blurb Books</a></li> <li>23. Art Gallery, various names, note that Mike Jacobs likes on FB</li> <li>24. Sculpted cedar masks, signs</li> <li>25. New to Wawa</li> <li>26. Numerous – several artisans do not have brick and mortar shops but their products are featured at the TIC, market or in the retail settings of other businesses (Rock Island Lodge and Algoma blueberry)– valuable assets in terms of celebrating local sense of place/identity especially since visitors will likely be exposed to them more than once.</li> <li>27. Lake Superior Circle Tour Facebook Group</li> <li>28. Motorcycle touring</li> </ul>
<p><b>Food + Beverage Providers</b> (restaurant, food truck, café, craft beverage producer, farm, etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Algoma Highlands Wild Blueberry Farm and Winery</li> <li>2. Bangin Burger N Chicken Shack</li> <li>3. Beer Store (The)</li> <li>4. Flying Geese Farm</li> <li>5. John's Independent</li> <li>6. Kinniwabi Pines Restaurant</li> <li>7. Crazy Fries</li> <li>8. Lai's Restaurant</li> <li>9. Liquor Control Board of Ontario</li> <li>10. North of 17</li> <li>11. Subway Sandwiches</li> <li>12. Tim Horton's</li> <li>13. Viking Restaurant &amp; Tavern</li> <li>14. Best Northern</li> <li>15. Embassy</li> <li>16. Wawa Goose Bar and Grill</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 9<sup>th</sup> Trip Advisor but not many reviews</li> <li>2. Seasonal</li> <li>3. Mission Road</li> <li>4. Vegetable farm 2.5 km south of Wawa</li> <li>5. President's Choice stor</li> <li>6. # 1 on TA in Wawa, recent reviews good, excellent</li> <li>7. #1 of 2 quick bites TA</li> <li>8. Only Chinese restaurant in Wawa</li> <li>10. Just reopened # 5 of 9 TA</li> <li>11. 3.5/5 Trip Advisor</li> <li>12. #2 of 2 quick bites Trip Advisor</li> <li>13. #3 of 9 in Wawa, good reviews</li> <li>14. # 2 on TA</li> <li>15. # 4 on TA</li> <li>16. # 6 on TA – good recent reviews</li> </ul>
<p><b>Festivals + Events</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Wawa Ice Fishing Derby</li> <li>2. Wawa Salmon Derby</li> <li>3. Wawa Winter Carnival</li> <li>4. Michipicoten First Nation Pow Wow</li> <li>5. Sport Tournaments</li> <li>6. Northern Nationals Drag Race</li> <li>7. Blueberry Fall Fair</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. March</li> <li>2. 3<sup>rd</sup> weekend in August</li> <li>3. Parade, pancake breakfasts, dances, waxed hands, cardboard box races</li> <li>4. No information</li> <li>5. Golf, hockey tournaments, curling bonspiels. There is a women's hockey tournament named after Lori Johnson.</li> </ul>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Wawa By-Hand Festival</li> <li>9. Wawa Music Festival</li> <li>10. Bonspiels</li> <li>11. Black Fly Run</li> <li>12. No Hassholes Trail Run</li> <li>13. Festival of Lights</li> <li>14. Goose Nest Markets</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. 4.7/5 Facebook</li> <li>7. Blueberry baking contest, farmers market, barbeque, artisan craft displays</li> <li>8. Local crafters, annual</li> <li>9. 3 days (2 in 2022), July, variety of local, regional and touring musicians</li> <li>10. Yes: mixed 3<sup>rd</sup> weekend Feb; women last weekend March; men second weekend April</li> <li>11. Last held 2017?</li> <li>12. Can't find current information</li> <li>13. November</li> <li>14. Goose Nest Market: community space</li> </ol>
<p><b>Retailers</b> (stores, gas stations, etc.)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Canadian Tire</li> <li>2. CANECO/ONE STOP Wawa</li> <li>3. Circle K</li> <li>4. The Thrift Barn</li> <li>5. Young's General Store</li> <li>6. Goose Nest Markets (market on select dates)</li> <li>7. Beachfront Trading Post</li> <li>8. Drug Store Gift Shop</li> <li>9. Red Apple</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Fishing supplies</li> <li>8. Wawa Pharmacy – has gift shop</li> </ol> <p>Note: Fenlon Pharmacy link leads to Hawk Air website</p>
<p><b>Service Providers</b> (tour operator, guiding services, outfitter, experience provider, etc.)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Botham's Bear Guiding</li> <li>2. Bristol Off-Roading Outfitters</li> <li>3. Dickson's Bear Hunt Ltd.</li> <li>4. Naturally Superior Adventures (workshops, tours, rentals, concerts)</li> <li>5. Superior Outfitters Inc.</li> <li>6. James Smedley Outdoors (photography workshops)</li> <li>7. Tyler Dunn Guiding</li> <li>8. Don Charbonneau Art, Music &amp; Fishing (fishing guide)</li> <li>9. Johanna's Airbnb Experience</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Overarching</b> (fall colours, local history, etc.)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fall colours</li> <li>2. 4-season climate</li> <li>3. Local History &amp; Heritage</li> <li>4. Glenn Gould heritage</li> <li>5. Dr. Bethune heritage</li> <li>6. Group of Seven</li> <li>7. Fur trade history &amp; heritage</li> <li>8. Mining history &amp; heritage</li> <li>9. Ojibway culture &amp; traditions</li> <li>10. Fresh Air</li> <li>11. Friendly People</li> </ol>	<p>List comes from background docs, with additions</p>

	12. Scenery – Closeness to Nature 13. Boreal Forest Gateway 14. Wildlife 15. Hunting and Fishing 16. Outdoor activities 17. Lake Superior 18. Wide open spaces	
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Supporting Assets		
Asset Category	Assets	Comments
Transportation	1. Airport & Remote flying 2. Marina/Boat Launches (Government Dock) 3. RV Dumping Stations 4. TransCanada Highway 5. Wawa Street System – Mission Road & Broadway 6. Power in airport parking 7. Tourist Information Centre 8. Hawk Air (remote flying) 9. Watson’s Skyway 10. Wilderness Helicopter 11. Shuttle Services 12. Buck’s Marina 13. National Car Rental 14. Ontario Northland 15. Car dealerships & Garages 16. Jones Power Sports	
Community Services	1. Post Office 2. Community Parks 3. Community Centre 4. Library Computers/Internet 5. Churches 6. Gym/Sauna 7. Waste Facilities – Recycling 8. Cell Service/No Cell Service zones 9. Veterinarian 10. Lady Dunn Health Centre	1. Open 7 days/week 2. Kid friendly: Centennial, Dr. Roses, Queens; Sandy Beach Eco-Interpretive Park, waterfront gateway to Boreal Forest, Heritage Park 3. Michipicoten Community Centre: • <u>Arena</u> • <u>Curling Rink</u> • <u>Banquet Hall and Lounge</u> • <u>Meeting Rooms</u> • <u>Gym and Fitness Facilities</u> • <u>Dance Studio</u> 4. Computers available in library; \$10 for month card 5. Wawa Baptist, Calvary, United Church of Canada, St. Monica 6. Gym, no sauna 7. Recycling program in review?, curbside collection, landfill site (expanding), hazardous waste day 8. Lots of dead zones between towns; Rogers service 9. Mobile and Dr. Simpson monthly at Lions Club

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Other	1.	10. Full service He is a fishing guide too
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## **6. SWOC**

## SWOC Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong outdoor offerings and picturesque landscapes (incl. Trails, vistas, fishing and hunting options in the area)</li> <li>• Position along Trans-Canada Highway (incl. quality of road and wayfinding infrastructure leading into Wawa)</li> <li>• Reputation as welcoming and friendly community</li> <li>• Variety and amount of accommodations in and around Wawa (incl. motels, lodges)</li> <li>• Rich and varied local stories and history (incl. First Nations stories, Group of Seven)</li> <li>• Variety of local artisans and craft products</li> <li>• Iconic goose statue and associated brand value</li> <li>• Good level of customer service and food and beverage quality in some restaurants</li> <li>• Four season tourism offerings (incl. trails, snowmobile trails, camping etc.)</li> <li>• Location along Lake Superior Circle Tour and associated marketing collateral</li> <li>• Information, service quality, and products available at TIC</li> <li>• Industry interest in growing tourism</li> <li>• Proximity of key assets and areas such as Lake Superior, Michipicoten River Village, beaches and marina</li> <li>• Growing Southern Ontario visitor segments</li> <li>• Established base of repeat visitors to the area, many travelling for leisure purposes</li> <li>• Strong interest among visitors to return to Wawa and recommend the area to others</li> <li>• Scenic value of Lake Superior drive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unattractive downtown core (incl. curb appeal and shut-off/abandoned buildings)</li> <li>• Lack of retail offerings (incl. lack of businesses with outdoor space)</li> <li>• Lack of food and beverage offerings</li> <li>• Limited business hours</li> <li>• Gap between amount of taxes paid and level of infrastructure upkeep and appeal (incl. downtown buildings, marina)</li> <li>• Lack of outdoor focused accommodations and supporting infrastructure (incl. camping, RV park and parking spots)</li> <li>• Limited opportunities to capture visitor spend through engagement in existing outdoor offerings (e.g., hikes on trails, swimming at Lake Superior)</li> <li>• Availability of accommodations (many booked by workers)</li> <li>• Limited social media presence and engagement for marketing the destination</li> <li>• Level and quality of industry's online presence and upkeep (incl. managing negative reviews, outdated websites, difficulties in booking)</li> <li>• Limited arts &amp; culture offerings for visitors</li> <li>• Lack of welcome and departure signage</li> <li>• Lack of visitor engagement with businesses beyond TIC and entrance</li> <li>• Lack of festivals, events, and activities</li> <li>• Limited range and availability of activities and experiences</li> <li>• Aging population</li> <li>• Limited of visitor segments based on lack of diversified activities/offers.</li> <li>• Limited municipal infrastructure to welcome visitors and service tourism businesses (e.g., recycling facility)</li> <li>• Lack of connectivity and collaboration among industry members</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beautifying the downtown and building sense of place</li> <li>• Attracting new businesses to fill existing gaps (incl. food and beverage businesses, camp sites/RV park, outdoors products)</li> <li>• Developing, maintaining, and beautifying multi-use trails, addressing any wayfinding gaps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited community engagement with and buy-in for tourism development</li> <li>• Current labour shortage across visitor-facing businesses</li> <li>• Lack of established relationship with Michipicoten First Nation</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing new partnerships for product development and marketing (e.g., packages, itineraries)</li> <li>• Developing new experiences and interactive activities, with a focus on cultural tourism experiences (incl. events)</li> <li>• Enhancing understanding and appreciation of tourism's role and potential among community members</li> <li>• Strengthening tourism-based partnerships with key organizations and major industries in the area</li> <li>• Exploring benefits of a Municipal Accommodations Tax</li> <li>• Strengthening relationship with Michipicoten First Nation</li> <li>• Leveraging the Lake Superior Circle Tour and Wawa's position within it</li> <li>• Leveraging Group of Seven tour</li> <li>• Growing Municipality's capacity to lead tourism growth in Wawa</li> <li>• Exploring how tourism can support infrastructure improvements for the community (e.g., Community Improvement Plan, new recreational and leisure activities for residents)</li> <li>• Expanding tourism offer to attract diverse segments of visitors to the area across the four seasons (esp. since majority are independent travellers)</li> <li>• Growing demand for distanced, outdoors experiences</li> <li>• Expanding the channels and platforms that enable visitors to learn about Wawa</li> <li>• Exploring more regional collaborations along North Shore of Lake Superior</li> <li>• Enhancing online presence and capacity of Municipal tourism marketing and industry members</li> <li>• Exploring additional funding and support for tourism growth (e.g., CIINO Economic Development Officer program through FedNor)</li> <li>• Exploring interest among expedition cruise ship companies in the North Shore of Lake Superior</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attracting and retaining key and support tourism businesses (incl. ability to provide supports by the Municipality)</li> <li>• Distance from larger markets and time needed to reach the area</li> <li>• Large base of temporary/short-term residents who are not engaged in the community</li> <li>• Limited services and connectivity in the immediate vicinity of Wawa</li> <li>• High demand on visitor-facing accommodations influenced by lack of housing for temporary residents</li> <li>• Lack of trust and understanding among industry and residents regarding Municipality's policies and regulations that impact tourism</li> <li>• Lack of access to funds and resources to support growth and development of tourism and industry-members</li> <li>• Enticing visitors to drive into town past TIC when available businesses are few and hours irregular</li> <li>• Uneven levels of quality for visitor experience across the area</li> </ul>
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