



Destination Assessment  
and Audit Program

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# Recommendation Report Kingston, ON

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## About the CGLCC & Tourism HR Canada

Canada's LGBT+ Chamber of Commerce (CGLCC) fosters economic growth by supporting and nurturing LGBT+ businesses, entrepreneurs, students and allies, and by helping Canada's corporate world connect with the LGBT+ business community. A leader in supplier diversity, CGLCC is also the certifying body in Canada for LGBT+ businesses.

Tourism HR Canada (THRC) is a pan-Canadian not-for-profit organization with a mandate aimed at building a world-leading tourism workforce. Tourism HR Canada facilitates, coordinates, and enables human resource development activities that support a globally competitive and sustainable industry and foster the development of a dynamic and resilient workforce. Tourism HR Canada works on behalf of all constituency groups that make up the tourism sector's labour market, including employers, labour unions, national and provincial/territorial associations, government, and equity groups.

As part of an Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED)-funded initiative, Tourism HR Canada (THRC) is working with its principle partner, CGLCC, to deliver a responsive, comprehensive and sustainable LGBT+ Tourism Market-Ready Program aimed at helping tourism businesses and communities access the lucrative and fast-growing LGBT+ market. A series of inclusion workshops, market-ready seminars and Train the Trainer sessions are being delivered across Canada, along with a series of resource guides designed to support the project.

## Introduction

LGBT+ travellers represent a major opportunity for post COVID-19 recovery within the Canadian tourism industry. According to *2020 CGLCC market research*<sup>1</sup>, the LGBT+ travel segment outspends heterosexual segments, rebounds faster after industry shocks, and seeks many of the travel experiences your destination already offers. However, they value their personal safety significantly more than heterosexual travellers. In order to attract this segment, there is work to do to ensure LGBT+ travellers feel safe and welcome in Kingston.

Over the past few months, our team has conducted an audit and assessment of your city and organization in order to identify strengths and areas for improvement in your LGBT+ market-readiness. In doing so, we've worked with Tourism Kingston's Director of Sales, Allyson Tonelli in order to identify key stakeholders who could bring valuable insight and unique perspectives to a stakeholder call and subsequent surveys that were completed by

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<sup>1</sup> 2020 market research as outlined in the CGLCC LGBT+ Travel Market Ready Seminar <https://www.cglcc.ca/programs/tourism/lgbt-travel-market-ready-seminars/>

most participants. The data was analyzed alongside a DMO Survey and our independent research using a standardized tool to ensure an unbiased and complete review.

This report will categorize our recommendations within the Six Essential Elements of Successful LGBT+ Tourism Strategies, as developed by the CGLCC, and may serve as a benchmarking tool to help your organization continue to assess and elevate your LGBT+ travel market strategy.

**A NOTE ON METHODOLOGY:** In choosing stakeholders, it was important to represent the diversity of both the LGBT+ community and the business community at large. There was a great deal of effort put forth to bring voices to the table that represent different genders, ethnic backgrounds, and sexual orientations. By doing so, we were able to ensure that our recommendations encapsulate the diverse views of the community and industry members in Kingston. **It should be noted** that while effort was put into including indigenous and transgender voices in our stakeholder group, suitable stakeholders were not found.

## Overview of Findings

The City of Kingston boasts a rich history along with strong cultural assets like the Agnes Etherington Gallery, the Grand Theatre, Kingston Pride, the Reelout Queer Film Festival, a vibrant drag performance scene, and a variety of events year round. In addition, its pedestrian-friendly downtown core, food scene, access to the outdoors, and proximity to three major cities and the LGBT+-popular Prince Edward County make it appealing to LGBT+ travellers.

It is clear that Tourism Kingston is eager to be more LGBT+ welcoming and market-ready which has been illustrated in the Pre-Assessment and DMO Surveys, the first draft of the 3-year LGBT+ plan<sup>2</sup>, and the inclusion of an LGBT+ stakeholder on the internal Tourism Kingston marketing committee.

Through our audit and assessment efforts, we discovered that Tourism Kingston has a great deal of online content and cohesive strategies which can be built on to appeal to an LGBT+ audience. There is also an active local LGBT+ community that is able and willing to contribute to these efforts.

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<sup>2</sup> Tourism Kingston 3 Year LGBT+ Plan:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/10ANRu6aU724esMe529pspfjDKv6WnHuG/view?usp=sharing>

As outlined by our stakeholders in their stakeholder surveys<sup>3</sup>, LGBT+ market-readiness efforts need to be authentic, and must start from within through diversity and inclusion training, and encouragement to local businesses to embark on their own path towards being more LGBT+-welcoming and inclusive in general. There has been some work done in the past, and The City of Kingston has made promising recent progress through the Inclusion Charter and the Workplace Inclusion Charter, both of which could prove to be great resources to leverage through this multi-year process.

In addition, there is an opportunity to build long lasting and meaningful relationships with your local LGBT+ community through engagement with Kingston Pride, Reelout, and other initiatives that highlight and provide exposure to the LGBT+ community in Kingston.

## Disclaimer

This report is intended to be used by Tourism Kingston as a roadmap to develop an LGBT+ tourism strategy which will require long-term commitment. There is a chance you'll be unable to act on all of our recommendations right away, but that doesn't mean you can't work towards becoming an LGBT+-welcoming destination. Work at your organization's own pace and abilities while ensuring you're always moving forward to achieve the end goal of developing an LGBT+-welcoming destination. Throughout this document, you will see points highlighted as **Need to do**, **Nice to do**, and **Minimal investment**, to help guide priorities.

It should also be noted that CGLCC uses the acronym 'LGBT+' when referring to the community, pertaining collectively to people who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, Two-Spirit, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, along with people with gender expressions outside traditional norms, other queer people and their allies.

**CGLCC TOOLKIT RESOURCE GUIDES:** Throughout this report there are references to further resources available free of charge through CGLCC. Some resources may not be fully available until the end of March, 2021, and in order to download them you must register at <https://www.cglcc.ca/programs/tourism/>.

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<sup>3</sup> Stakeholder Survey Results:  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IRRvVX3r83okVjCYMz0pIQYwEt6ZDF9M/view?usp=sharing>

## Before You Get Started

Before Tourism Kingston gets started on an LGBT+ tourism strategy, it's essential to make the necessary organizational changes to ensure all internal stakeholders are onboard.

### a) Identify Internal Champions

As outlined in the *CGLCC Community Engagement Resource Guide*<sup>4</sup>, the initial step is to find and appoint ideally one or more internal LGBT+ tourism leaders to champion your destination's goals, in this case Allyson Tonelli, Director of Sales. If your internal champion/s are not part of the LGBT+ community, it's important to find a local LGBT+ community champion who can support your efforts, help make suggestions on external working group members and connect your DMO with the LGBT+ community. The roles of the internal and community champions don't have to be onerous, as long as they have a few hours per month to spare and can attend any working group meetings. We recommend that your external champion be Ted Robinson due to his role on your marketing committee, and his extensive experience working within various LGBT+ nonprofit organizations.

### b) Building a Business Case

In order to engage key internal and external stakeholders, a business case must be made for LGBT+ inclusion and market-readiness in Kingston. As noted in the *CGLCC Business Case for LGBT+ Inclusion Resource Guide*<sup>5</sup>, the importance of understanding this market is not just about the segment itself, but also the changing demographics of all travellers. For example, millennials are the fastest-growing travel demographic and they have different expectations around diversity and inclusion. They expect, appreciate and are more tolerant of diverse experiences<sup>6</sup>, and in order to remain competitive for this demographic, destinations need to reflect these expectations. This is not lost on Tourism Kingston as illustrated in the Tourism Kingston Annual Plan, COVID-19 Recovery (2020)<sup>7</sup> where two of the three target audiences, Up and Coming Explorers & Youthful Socializers, encompass this demographic.

As outlined throughout the audit and assessment program, the LGBT+ segment has the potential to be a key component to a strong COVID-19 recovery strategy. According to LGBT+ travel veteran Bob Witeck<sup>8</sup>, "past research tells us travel remains a high priority

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<sup>4</sup> CGLCC Community Engagement Resource Guide: <https://www.cglcc.ca/programs/tourism/>

<sup>5</sup> CGLCC Business Case for LGBT+ Inclusion Resource Guide: <https://www.cglcc.ca/programs/tourism/>

<sup>6</sup> Accelerating Acceptance 2017 Harris Poll Survey: [https://www.glaad.org/files/aa/2017\\_GLAAD\\_Accelerating\\_Acceptance.pdf](https://www.glaad.org/files/aa/2017_GLAAD_Accelerating_Acceptance.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Tourism Kingston Annual Plan, COVID-19 Recovery (2020) <https://www.visitkingston.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/TK-1YearPlan-KingstonTourismCovid-2020-05-20.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Skift The Big Business of LGBT Travel: <https://research.skift.com/report/big-business-of-lgbt-travel/>

for LGBT+ consumers — even when overcoming setbacks. We witnessed this in 2001 following 9/11, as well as post-recession in 2009 when LGBT+ adults showed strong personal appetite to travel once again. As conditions permit, and the economy reopens, we anticipate LGBT+ travellers again will be found towards the front of many lines at airports, hotels and desirable destinations.”

Kingston’s proximity to three well-established LGBT+ populations in Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto make it very desirable to a greater than normal portion of this demographic that will be seeking small and welcoming destinations closer to home during the pandemic and through its recovery.

### c) Buy-in from Stakeholders

Preparing a business case and presenting it to stakeholders will help create buy-in and ensure LGBT+ Inclusion is a core pillar of your overall tourism strategy as you move forward. Internal stakeholders must include both upper management and employees, and external engagement should include local government, LGBT+ organizations and community representatives, DMO members, BIAs and tourism industry associations, to name a few.

It is very important to have consistent internal and external communication of the strategy and expectations for employees, partners and members. It is also critical to ensure employees understand, support and align with diversity and inclusion requirements and accountabilities, and there should be clear timing communicated to all parties involved directly and indirectly to ensure consistency, clarity and alignment with organizational goals.

The *CGLCC LGBT+ Inclusion Guide & Diversity & Inclusion Policies and Practices Guide*<sup>9</sup> outlines the necessary steps to implementing inclusion on an organizational level. As noted in the resource guides, the voice of the customer (internal and external) needs to be considered and addressed. Some resistance may occur and should not be ignored. Tourism Kingston must be prepared to have potentially difficult conversations with employees, suppliers, and sometimes other customers about why they are choosing this inclusion strategy. Be clear that being inclusive is the right thing to do and everyone benefits from diversity, as outlined in the *CGLCC Business Case for LGBT+ Inclusion Resource Guide*<sup>10</sup>. Canadian DMOs and tourism companies need to reflect the global demographics of their customers. To be truly Inclusive means organizations cannot partially exclude anyone, especially since the LGBT+ community has so much diversity within.

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<sup>9</sup> CGLCC LGBT+ Inclusion Guide & Diversity & Inclusion Policies and Practices Guide: <https://www.cglcc.ca/programs/tourism/>

<sup>10</sup> CGLCC Business Case for LGBT+ Inclusion Resource Guide: <https://www.cglcc.ca/programs/tourism/>



#### d) Stay up to Date

The LGBT+ community is constantly evolving. It's important not to assume that any advertising and communication created in the past is appropriate today. As an example, for many years the segment was referred to as the gay market, then GLBT, and more commonly now LGBT+, LGBTQ+, and even 2SLGBTQ+ at times, depending on geographic location.

Meeting the needs of the transgender community is another shift. Major cities and pioneering destinations such as Fort Lauderdale have actively started courting trans travellers. Gender-neutral washrooms have grown in popularity and are now being viewed as essential to attracting transgender and non-binary visitors, and also signals acceptance to LGBT+ people and their allies.

Participating in the *CGLCC Travel Market Ready Seminar*<sup>11</sup> and *Diversity & Inclusion Workshops*<sup>12</sup> are a great way to stay up to date with the most appropriate language and best practices, as is participating in the KEYS/Kingston Workplace Inclusion Charter<sup>13</sup>. Due to staff turnover and constantly changing norms, regular and ongoing diversity and inclusion training is essential. Constantly engaging with your LGBT+ stakeholders is another way to avoid falling behind.

## Six Elements to Help Kingston Create a Successful LGBT+ tourism strategy

There are six elements for destinations and tourism businesses to become LGBT+ travel market-ready, which have been identified through best-practice case studies of destinations and tourism businesses that have successfully entered and served the LGBT+ travel market. Below we will present our analysis of Kingston through these six elements, highlighting potential actions and goals. We've also included sample goals for your organization to consider, adapt or build on. While these elements do not need to be approached in this specific order, where possible, community engagement and strategic planning should be your first priorities.

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<sup>11</sup> CGLCC Travel Market Ready Seminar:

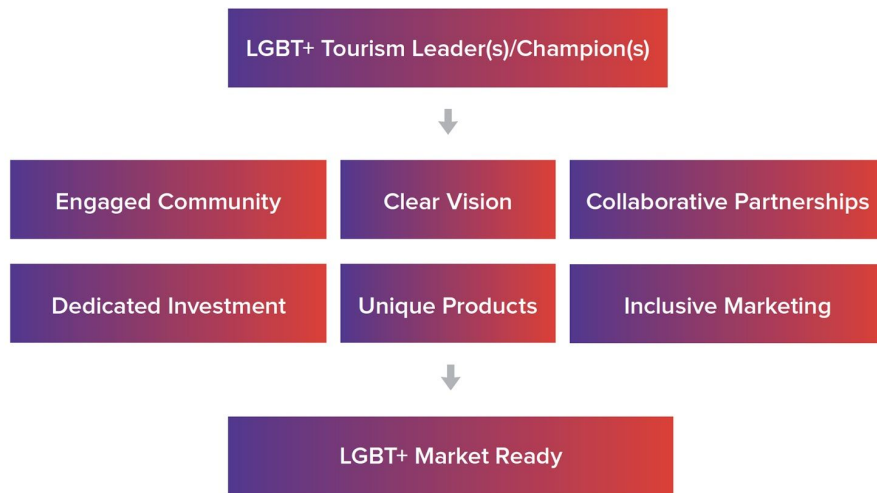
<https://www.cglcc.ca/programs/tourism/lgbt-travel-market-ready-seminars/>

<sup>12</sup> CGLCC Diversity & Inclusion Workshops:

<https://www.cglcc.ca/programs/tourism/diversity-inclusion-workshops/>

<sup>13</sup> KEYS/Kingston Workplace Inclusion Charter:

[https://www.cityofkingston.ca/documents/10180/173394/Careers\\_WorkplaceInclusionCharter.pdf/fde1e68d-75f8-fe47-8903-34c976004c0d?t=1603308793278](https://www.cityofkingston.ca/documents/10180/173394/Careers_WorkplaceInclusionCharter.pdf/fde1e68d-75f8-fe47-8903-34c976004c0d?t=1603308793278)



To learn more about the LGBT+ market, case studies that were part of the creation of the six essential elements, and more, read the *CGLCC LGBT+ Travel Market Guide & Tourism Development Toolkit*<sup>14</sup>.

## #1 Engage with the local community

Destinations that have been most successful in their LGBT+ tourism strategies have involved and engaged with their local community. Doing so ensures you are always using the appropriate language and imagery, drawing on the resources and knowledge of the community, and that you are fully aware of any potential challenges.

### a) Learn about Your Local LGBT+ Community

Develop an understanding of Kingston’s local community by identifying LGBT+-owned businesses, organizations & community leaders that could contribute engaging stories to your business case, strategy and marketing efforts. It is clear that Kingston Pride, Reelout Queer Film Festival, Beers for Queers and personalities like Rowena Whey and Tyffanie Morgan are the most well established and obvious choices to contribute, however to build trust in the community you should consider getting to know organizations such as Transfamily Kingston<sup>15</sup>, the folks at Gender Talk<sup>16</sup>, or the relatively new LGBTQ+ Softball League<sup>17</sup>. While these may not seem like obvious choices from a tourism perspective, they can be excellent resources when it’s time for you to recruit locals to create authentic LGBT+ marketing assets, and they may be a fit for your working group.

<sup>14</sup> CGLCC LGBT+ Travel Market Guide & Tourism Development Toolkit: <https://www.cglcc.ca/programs/tourism/>

<sup>15</sup> TransFamily Kingston: <https://transfamilykingston.com/>

<sup>16</sup> Gender Talk: [https://www.cfrc.ca/gender\\_talk](https://www.cfrc.ca/gender_talk)

<sup>17</sup> LGBTQ+ Softball League: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/lgbtqsoftball/>

Seek out and follow local LGBT+ bloggers, websites and other local media outlets such as OutIn Kingston<sup>18</sup>, the LGBT Kingston Ontario Facebook Group<sup>19</sup>, and the Kingston Queer Women & Gender Diverse Group<sup>20</sup> – and become familiar with their content. Then, learn about your local LGBT+ history along with the activities your community leaders are engaged in, and where possible, be part of the conversation. Stones Kingston<sup>21</sup> is a great historical resource to gain a deeper understanding of the community. Have initiatives been fought on a local or regional level in relation to Pride, rainbow flags, rainbow sidewalks, etc? Ask yourself how those stories can be told and carried forward through your content creation.

Engage with the Local Community	
<p><b>NICE TO DO</b> - Learn about your local LGBT+ History.</p>	<p><b>NEED TO DO</b> - Meet LGBT+ leaders in your community.</p>
<p><b>MINIMAL INVESTMENT</b> - Feature local LGBT+ community leaders or organizations in future LGBT+ storytelling content.</p>	<p><b>SAMPLE GOALS</b> - Meet 5 local LGBT+ community leaders - Include at least 2 in blog posts within a year of beginning your LGBT+ tourism strategy.</p>

### b) Invite the Community to Be Part of a Working Group

Invite prominent members of the LGBT+ community to be part of a working group that will guide and assess all LGBT+ tourism efforts in Kingston. This group could include stakeholders already engaged in this audit and assessment initiative.

Your working group should have no more than 12 members in order to remain effective and productive but not overwhelming, and if possible, should include multi-sector LGBT+ and allied businesses and organizations. It is essential that you strive for the working group to be diverse in race, gender/gender expression and sexual orientation. When considering potential members, also identify non-LGBT+ movers and shakers that impact the traveller experience such as BIAs and hotel associations. However, don't limit the group just to organizations and individuals that are easy to identify, i.e., cisgender caucasian gay men. Make every effort to include individuals that identify as transgender and two-spirit, or those representing black, indigenous, people of colour and younger queer communities.

<sup>18</sup> OutIn Kingston: <https://outin.ca/>

<sup>19</sup> LGBT Kingston Ontario Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2224026992/>

<sup>20</sup> Kingston Queer Women & Gender Diverse Group:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/973351622872611>

<sup>21</sup> Stones Kingston: <http://www.stoneskingston.ca/gay-and-lesbian-history/>

It is important to give LGBT+ representatives ample opportunities to share their unfiltered opinions, which will go a long way to ensure they don't feel the working group is just a token "pink washing" gesture.

The following chart represents stakeholders that were present on our stakeholder call, and who completed a stakeholder survey.

<b>Name/Title</b>	<b>Are you/your organization interested in participating in an LGBT+ tourism development and marketing initiative with your destination/DMO?</b>	<b>Are you/your organization willing to support this initiative by committing resources (whether it be time, in-kind or cash)?</b>	<b>Are you interested in participating in a working group? If so, what is your maximum time commitment per month?</b>
Amber Lockwood & Ian Burns, Kingston Pride	Yes - the organization, not Amber or Ian specifically.	Yes - the organization can support with time and in-kind measures.	Yes - recommended Board Member Étienne Clément.
Colin Wiginton, Cultural Director, Cultural Services, City of Kingston	Yes - on a personal level.	Yes - time/in-kind.	Yes - but time constraints could be possible during working hours.
Gary Cork, General Manager, Tiran O'g Irish Pub/Board Chair, Reelout	Yes.	Yes - time/in-kind.	Yes - 2-6 hours per month.
Heather Ford, Owner, Kingston Food Tours/GM, Green Acres Inn	Perhaps - time permitting.	Yes.	Perhaps - 1-2 hours per month.
JC Kenny, Director, Communications & Customer Experience, City of Kingston	Yes - supporting communications around LGBT+ travel initiatives.	Yes - supporting communications.	Yes - not JC, but she is happy to recommend a candidate from her department. She would like to stay in the loop regardless of her involvement, as The City of Kingston is trying to be more meaningfully inclusive.
Jean Pfeleiderer, Associate Director, Human Rights Advisory Services, and Coordinator, Sexual and Gender Diversity, in the Human Rights and Equity Office, Queen's University	Not sure what role Queen's might play, but willing to consider.	See previous statement.	See previous statement.
Jim Puckalo, Secretary, Kingston Pride/Entertainer & Event Organizer	Yes - as an individual/performer.	Yes - as an individual/performer.	Yes - 4-6 hours per month.
Marc Garniss, Director, Kingston Canadian Film Festival	Yes - as an arts group that caters to all, not as an LGBT+ expert/leader.	Yes - in-kind (marketing, survey distribution, etc).	Yes - up to 5 hours per month during summer and fall.
Matt Salton, Executive Director, Reelout Arts Project Inc./Reelout Queer Film Festival	Yes.	Yes.	Yes - up to 4 hours per month.

Michèle Langlois, Interim Executive Director, Downtown Kingston! BIA	Yes - time permitting.	Probably - if it matches the organization's mission.	Yes - approximately 2 hours per month.
Ted Robinson, Board Chair, HIV/AIDS Regional Services (HARS)/Past Festival Director, Kingston Pride/Kingston Liaison, Friends for Life Bike Rally	Yes - as an individual.	Yes - as an individual.	Yes - 5-10 hours per month.

We recommend you invite the following individuals and/or organizations to your working group based on our interaction with stakeholders during the audit and assessment.

### Current Stakeholders Recommended for Working Group

**Colin Wiginton** of the City of Kingston had by far the most critical, but also thoughtful feedback during the stakeholder call and subsequent survey. Due to his role with the city, we believe he will be a good fit for the working group.

**Gary Cork's** eagerness to participate, his volunteer experience, and business management skills make him an ideal candidate. He is outgoing, willing to help, and has longstanding relationships in both the LGBT+ and allied communities.

**Marc Garniss** has a unique point of view as the Festival Director of Canada's largest all-Canadian film festival which prides itself on its inclusive nature. Marc, or someone else from the Kingston Canadian Film Festival could provide unique insight and recommendations for other festivals and events to be more LGBT+ welcoming.

**Matt Salton's** history in the community as the sole full time employee of the Reelout Queer Film Festival brings a unique voice to the table. His constructive view that the tourism industry hasn't done enough for the community could be useful, or a liability, depending on how he is received in the allied community. Matt made clear that he will not participate nor work with Paul Fortier.

**Michele Langlois**, or the incoming Chair of Downtown Kingston! BIA. Education has been identified as a priority for these efforts, so it will be important to have a working group member who can advise on the needs and concerns of local businesses.

**Ted Robinson's** experience in the not for profit sector and on various boards within the LGBT+ community, along with him being a newcomer to the region could be perceived as a unique perspective.

## Additional Considerations

We recognize that the above list of recommendations is fairly homogeneous, and that further diversity within the working group is necessary. We recommend considering the following individuals and organizations, and it should be noted that Kingston Pride and Queen's University are included in this section due to the fact that the engaged stakeholders are not suitable for the working group, as outlined in the stakeholder chart above:

**Accommodations Representation**, possibly through Kingston Accommodations Partners (KAP), in order to have a wide reach to hotels in the area. This representative could be eliminated if Tourism Kingston can ensure efforts will be shared by KAP with all local accommodation members.

**Black or Person of Colour Representation**, possibly through Queen's Black Academic Society<sup>22</sup>.

**Ian Burns** or **Jim Puckalo** as performers and high-profile community members.

**Indigenous or Two-Spirit Representation**, possibly through the Ontario Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Strategy<sup>23</sup> or Queen's Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre<sup>24</sup>.

**Kingston Pride** must be involved, and Étienne Clément, the new Board Treasurer, has been put forward by Amber Lockwood and Ian Burns.

**Queen's University** should also have a seat at the table, either from their Education On Queer Issues Project (EQulP)<sup>25</sup> or the Positive Spaces Program<sup>26</sup>, or even The Queen's University Association of Queer Employees (QUAQE)<sup>27</sup> which seems to have been recently revived. Our recommendation is to lean on the Positive Spaces Program as it represents the interests of a younger demographic, but can also provide guidance and insight surrounding diversity and inclusion training. On the other hand, The Education On Queer Issues Project would include student representation, however turnover of the working group representative may be more frequent.

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<sup>22</sup> Queen's Black Academic Society: <https://qbasqueensu.wordpress.com/>

<sup>23</sup> Ontario Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Strategy: <https://www.oahas.org/>

<sup>24</sup> Queen's Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre: <https://www.queensu.ca/fourdirections/home>

<sup>25</sup> Queen's University Education On Queer Issues Project (EQulP): <https://www.facebook.com/equipqueens/>

<sup>26</sup> Queen's University Positive Space Program: <https://www.queensu.ca/positivespace/home>

<sup>27</sup> Queen's University Association of Queer Employees (QUAQE): hosted by Sarah Bunting ([sarah.bunting@queensu.ca](mailto:sarah.bunting@queensu.ca))

**Transgender Representation** through TransFamily Kingston<sup>28</sup> or Gender Talk<sup>29</sup> will ensure efforts are authentic and genuine for the transgender and gender nonconforming community.

Invite the Community to Be Part of a Working Group	
<p><b>NEED TO DO/MINIMAL INVESTMENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure LGBT+ diversity within your working group</li> <li>- Seek out allied organizations and businesses that have a wide reach in the tourism industry.</li> </ul>	<p><b>SAMPLE GOALS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure trans/gender nonconforming, black/person of colour, and indigenous representation.</li> <li>- Meet twice per year.</li> </ul>

## #2 Establish Clear Values, a Vision and Plan

To move forward with your LGBT+ market strategy, you must establish clear values as they pertain to the LGBT+ community, communicate a concrete vision of what you’d like to achieve, and create a formal action plan with a detailed timeline and measurable goals and KPIs.

### a) Establish Clear Values & Communicate a Vision

Authenticity is fundamental when developing an LGBT+ tourism strategy, and must not appear as “pink washing” for financial benefit alone. Think about what you’d like to accomplish in the coming years, how your LGBT+ community will be involved, and how they will benefit. Then, consult with your community working group so you can communicate a vision of what you’d like to achieve, and better understand what the LGBT+ community would like to see from your LGBT+ tourism strategy. You may learn about concerns they have, along with any upcoming initiatives that may be of interest to LGBT+ visitors.

It is important to understand that your strategy and annual plan for the LGBT+ market must be approached from a long term perspective, and you may not see results within a few months, or even a year, but don’t give up. Eventually your efforts will bear fruit through steadfast commitment.

Amber Lockwood & Ian Burns of Kingston Pride stated “There should be direct and clear plans for how the tourism development and marketing strategy will support the existing organizations who are already doing the work to make Kingston an LGBT+ friendly community. There should be a variety of 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals from our community that are involved at all stages in developing that plan. It should be developed through a clear consulting process with intersectionally diverse members of our community who represent a wide range of backgrounds (not just those in the

<sup>28</sup> TransFamily Kingston: <https://transfamilykingston.com/>

<sup>29</sup> Gender Talk: [https://www.cfrc.ca/gender\\_talk](https://www.cfrc.ca/gender_talk)

tourism field). The plan should be developed and implemented in partnership with existing organizations so that the “ownership” of the plan is not that of one group but is one that belongs to the community itself.”

Ted Robinson of HARS stated “I’m most interested in seeing a comprehensive strategy that will highlight all that the city and region have to offer, but with much stronger emphasis on the great strides that have been made over the last 30+ years to make Kingston an oasis of progressive and inclusive thought and feeling in eastern Ontario...”

Included in your LGBT+ tourism strategy could be Tourism Kingston’s intent to bid on the CGLCC Annual Business Summit which would be an opportunity to showcase the destination to LGBT+ and allied tourism professionals and media from across the country. There should also be mention of how Tourism Kingston intends to support the local LGBT+ community and events year round, highlighting them during said summit.

Establish Clear Values & Communicate a Vision	
<p><b>NICE TO DO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Build a 1-year action plan and a 3- to 5-year strategic plan.</li> </ul>	<p><b>NEED TO DO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clearly communicate your goals for the first year, keeping COVID-19 limitations top of mind.</li> <li>- Record working group meetings or have detailed notes taken, then follow up to clearly outline takeaways and an action plan.</li> </ul>
<p><b>MINIMAL INVESTMENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focus on expanding LGBT+ tourism awareness by dedicating a portion of existing niche market and marketing budgets to this market, and being inclusive in your efforts rather than exclusive.</li> </ul>	<p><b>SAMPLE GOALS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create a plan of incremental efforts for this market, year over year.</li> <li>- Receive input from a minimum of five LGBT+ community/working group members.</li> </ul>

**b) Create an Action Plan & Goals**

Once you’ve had a chance to determine takeaways from your working group meeting, you can then consult internally with your colleagues and leadership about the actual development of the plan. This way you can understand what is realistic from a time and resource perspective before committing to an initial strategic plan. Once a first draft is complete, present it internally, then to your working group and community partners, highlighting what is realistic from a human resources, cost, and time perspective. The longer term the overall plan, the easier it will be to justify “baby steps” that may be closely aligned to available resources within the first few years.

Aim to develop a 1-year action plan with measurable goals and key performance indicators (KPIs) and a 3- to 5-year strategic plan. Highlight the support needed from the local LGBT+ community along with the reciprocal support you’ll provide to them through this initiative. From there, you can finalize your plan with an understanding that



situations change and this is a living document that can be updated and adjusted on an annual basis. Finally, make sure to communicate your intention to include your LGBT+ plan in your organization’s annual and strategic plan.

Create an Action Plan & Goals	
<p><b>NICE TO DO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Allocate exclusive resources for your LGBT+ tourism strategy.</li> </ul>	<p><b>NEED TO DO/MINIMAL INVESTMENT</b></p> <p>Include LGBT+ content in all facets of your overall strategic plan, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-marketing</li> <li>- internal diversity and inclusion training</li> <li>- the audit of forms and policies</li> </ul>
<p><b>SAMPLE GOALS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Finalize your LGBT+ tourism strategy and plan within 3 months of initial meeting and consultation with your LGBT+ working group.</li> <li>- Receive buy-in from a minimum of 75% of your LGBT+ working group.</li> </ul>	

### #3 Build Collaborative Local, Regional and Broader Partnerships

All destinations that have found success in the LGBT+ travel market created strong and lasting partnerships. Even the smallest DMOs can access a wealth of resources and information by working together with the various tourism organizations, associations and businesses in their region.

#### a) Present to DMO Members & Partners

Now that the audit is complete, the next step is to reach out to a broader group of members and partners beyond the stakeholders who were included in the audit and assessment process, and those in your working group. This should include existing partners, The City of Kingston, Kingston Accommodation Partners, Downtown Kingston! BIA, Kingston Economic Development Corporation, possibly Kingston East Business Association, hotel concierges, and major events and festivals. Explain the initiative to them along with the findings of the audit; demonstrate the business case for LGBT+ inclusivity; share the CGLCC Toolkit Resources with them; invite them to be a part of future LGBT+ tourism efforts through a short survey; and ask if they have any assets such as experiences, media, mailing lists, or newsletters that could be leveraged as part of the plan.

Present to DMO Members & Partners	
<p><b>NEED TO DO/MINIMAL INVESTMENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Present to relevant members and partners.</li> </ul>	<p><b>SAMPLE GOAL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create your attendance list for presentation and set a target for actual attendance, with regular follow ups to bolster attendance.</li> <li>- Send a post-presentation survey with a completion goal of 75%.</li> </ul>

## b) Build Regional Partnerships

A key partner for many destinations is often your provincial marketing organization (PMO), Destination Ontario. Reach out to them to determine what current efforts are being made to court LGBT+ travellers, and if Tourism Kingston can access additional resources through coop marketing partnerships, media assets, press trips, research, training materials or other opportunities.

Destination Ontario has a robust LGBT+ website<sup>30</sup> including the following:

- Experience LGBTQ+ Ontario<sup>31</sup> where Kingston could be mentioned alongside Prince Edward County, and Kingston Pride could be mentioned alongside Pride London and Pride Toronto.
- LGBTQ Events<sup>32</sup> where Kingston Pride could be included.
- LGBTQ2+ Friendly Places to Stay<sup>33</sup> where accommodations such as Frontenac Club can be mentioned. They recently advertised in PinkPlay Magazine<sup>34</sup>.

Additional partnership opportunities may exist through:

- RTO9's Experiential Tourism initiative (see section #5 *Offer Unique Products & Experiences* in this report).
- St Lawrence Parks Commission by listing any LGBT+ Packages, and ensuring they participate in diversity and inclusion training opportunities.
- Building on current and proposed efforts with neighboring regions such as Prince Edward County and Frontenac (see section #5 *Offer Unique Products & Experiences* in this report) to capture overflow during peak season.

Build Regional Partnerships	
<b>NICE TO DO/MINIMAL INVESTMENT</b> - Seek out opportunities with RTO9's Experiential Tourism Initiative - Share LGBT+ written content with Destination Ontario to provide further exposure to LGBT+ events and efforts in Kingston through Destination Ontario social media.	<b>NEED TO DO/MINIMAL INVESTMENT</b> -List Kingston on all relevant Destination Ontario LGBT+ web pages.

<sup>30</sup> Destination Ontario LGBTQ+ website: <https://www.ontariotravel.net/en/play/lgbt>

<sup>31</sup> Destination Ontario Experience LGBTQ+ Ontario: <https://www.ontariotravel.net/en/play/lgbt/experience-ontario>

<sup>32</sup> Destination Ontario LGBTQ Events: <https://www.ontariotravel.net/en/play/lgbt/pride>

<sup>33</sup> Destination Ontario LGBTQ2+ Friendly Places to Stay: <https://www.ontariotravel.net/en/play/lgbt/places-to-stay>

<sup>34</sup> PinkPlayMags Fall 2020 Edition featuring Frontenac Club advertisement (pg 19): <https://pinkplaymags.com/downloads/PPM202003-WEB.pdf>

**SAMPLE GOALS**

- List Kingston and Kingston Pride on main Destination Ontario LGBT+ webpage
- List Kingston Pride on Destination Ontario LGBTQ Events webpage
- List Kingston LGBT+-welcoming accommodations on Destination Ontario LGBTQ2+ Friendly Places to Stay webpage

**c) Collaborate with Marquee Events**

Tourism Kingston already provides support to major festivals and events that draw tourists to your region. Reach out to these marquee events to determine if they have LGBT+ content, programming, or performers, and if they are featuring the content in a visible manner, or marketing this content to the LGBT+ community. If not, encourage them to do so, ensure they are taking the same steps as other stakeholders and partners to be LGBT+ inclusive, and assist them by including their LGBT+ content in your efforts to promote their events. In return, ask them to include LGBT+ questions in any event surveying. A great resource to point them towards is *CGLCC’s Guide to Hosting LGBT+ Inclusive Events and the LGBT+ Inclusion Guide*<sup>35</sup>.

For example, the Kingston Canadian Film Festival, which draws approximately 20% of attendance from out of town visitors, regularly includes LGBT+ programming and event headliners like Scott Thompson of Kids in the Hall. Tourism Kingston can ensure such LGBT+ content is included in some of the blog and social media posts about the event.

Collaborate with Marquee Events	
<p><b>NICE TO DO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourage events and festivals to highlight any LGBT+ content, or to create such content in the future.</li> </ul>	<p><b>NEED TO DO/MINIMAL INVESTMENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Include all major events in communication around your LGBT+ market readiness efforts, and point them specifically to CGLCC’s Inclusive Events guide.</li> </ul>
<p><b>SAMPLE GOALS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Get buy-in from non-LGBT+ events that you sponsor, and ask them to collect LGBT+-specific data in their surveys, if possible.</li> </ul>	

**d) Foster Links between LGBT+ and Allied Tourism Businesses and Organizations**

In addition to creating partnerships between Tourism Kingston and stakeholders, you can also foster links between LGBT+ organizations and festivals with allied mainstream businesses. This will be partly achieved through the creation of your LGBT+ working group, and can be expanded upon by encouraging those allied businesses to collaborate and share resources wherever possible.

<sup>35</sup> CGLCC’s Guide to Hosting LGBT+ Inclusive Events and the LGBT+ Inclusion Guide: <https://www.cglcc.ca/programs/tourism/> OR <https://www.cglcc.ca/programs/tourism/?lang=fr>

A good example of collaboration are the past efforts made by Reelout to build packages for out of town visitors that included discounted restaurant and hotel rates, and transportation through Via Rail. The efforts fell flat due to change of ownership at local LGBT+ establishments, Via Rail no longer being willing to sponsor the event, and staff shortages at Reelout. Tourism Kingston can include Reelout in future packages and facilitate introductions to suitable partners such as Kingston Destination Group and their popular Kpass.

Foster Links between LGBT+ and Allied Tourism Businesses and Organizations	
<p><b>NICE TO DO</b></p> <p>- Create a list of LGBT+ welcoming businesses and establishments that could potentially be connected to LGBT+ organizations.</p>	<p><b>NEED TO DO/MINIMAL INVESTMENT</b></p> <p>- Ask working group members to brainstorm potential links that can be made between LGBT+ events/festivals and the allied community to enhance LGBT+ market readiness efforts, and increase LGBT+ visitors to Kingston.</p>
<p><b>SAMPLE GOALS</b></p> <p>- List 3 LGBT+ itineraries or experiences on the Visit Kingston website that feature various LGBT+ and allied partners.</p>	

## #4 Provide Dedicated Investment and Support

Your LGBT+ tourism strategy will require dedicated investment and in-house support to succeed. Look at the budget you assign to other niche markets as a starting point, and think long term. Where can you start, and what are your goals in one, three, and five years?

### a) Internal Diversity & Inclusion Training/HR Policy

It's important to have an understanding of diversity and inclusion, and to set a good example for your partners. *CGLCC LGBT+ Inclusion Guide & Diversity & Inclusion Policies and Practices Guide*<sup>36</sup> and *Diversity & Inclusion Workshops*<sup>37</sup> are excellent resources you can access to assist with your efforts. Also, it's important to do an audit of all HR related materials and forms to ensure they ask for pronouns and only ask for gender when absolutely necessary.

Tourism Kingston has not done diversity and inclusion training in quite some time, and there is a great opportunity to work in tandem with The City of Kingston and their Diversity & Inclusion efforts as part of the Inclusion Charter, and the Workplace Inclusion Charter.

<sup>36</sup> CGLCC LGBT+ Inclusion Guide & Diversity & Inclusion Policies and Practices Guide: <https://www.cglcc.ca/programs/tourism/>

<sup>37</sup> CGLCC Diversity & Inclusion Workshops: <https://www.cglcc.ca/programs/tourism/diversity-inclusion-workshops/>

While diversity and inclusion training is in progress, Tourism Kingston can work with Downtown Kingston! BIA, Kingston Accommodation Partners, the Kingston Economic Development Corporation, the Greater Kingston Chamber of Commerce, Kingston Association of Museums, Art Galleries and Historic Sites, and other attractions to distribute information about D&I, along with the organization’s greater LGBT+ tourism strategy.

Internal Diversity & Inclusion Training/HR Policy	
<p><b>NICE TO DO/MINIMAL INVESTMENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Share news of Tourism Kinston’s diversity and inclusion training efforts with the general public.</li> </ul>	<p><b>NEED TO DO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Start diversity and inclusion training, and an internal audit of forms and policies prior to asking partners to do the same.</li> </ul>
<p><b>SAMPLE GOALS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have all Tourism Kingston staff complete diversity and inclusion training               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Audit all internal forms and HR materials</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Ensure onboarding includes diversity and inclusion training within six months of your initial working group meeting.</li> </ul>	

**b) External Diversity & Inclusion Training**

Ensure your members and stakeholders are strongly encouraged to undergo diversity & inclusion training. Work with The City of Kingston and potentially Destination Ontario to see if they have any programs, support or funding to contribute to your efforts. Work with Downtown Kingston! BIA, Kingston Accommodation Partners, the Kingston Economic Development Corporation, the Greater Kingston Chamber of Commerce, and the Kingston Association of Museums, Art Galleries and Historic Sites, and other attractions to see how their members can be encouraged to execute training for their staff, putting an emphasis on those that are customer facing. If resources allow, consider an incentive for tourism businesses that undergo training by creating a “safe space” directory on your consumer-facing website, or offering additional marketing or co-op marketing opportunities.

External Diversity & Inclusion Training	
<p><b>NICE TO DO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Share the <i>CGLCC Business Case for LGBT+ Inclusion Resource Guide</i><sup>38</sup> with partners, offer an incentive for tourism businesses that undergo training.</li> </ul>	<p><b>NEED TO DO/MINIMAL INVESTMENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourage abovementioned associations and partners to take part in The City of Kingston’s Workplace Inclusion Charter or CGLCC Diversity &amp; Inclusion Workshops</li> </ul>
<p><b>SAMPLE GOALS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have 50% of associations listed above, and/or others, buy-in and distribute diversity and inclusion messaging and action items to their members.</li> </ul>	

<sup>38</sup> CGLCC Business Case for LGBT+ Inclusion Resource Guide: <https://www.cglcc.ca/programs/tourism/>

- Have 15% of association members complete some form of diversity and inclusion training within the first year of your LGBT+ tourism strategy and market readiness efforts.

**c) Support Local LGBT+ Festivals & Events**

LGBT+ festivals and events are usually short on resources and staff, and any amount of support can go a long way in helping them grow and succeed. Sponsor Kingston Pride, continue to sponsor Reelout Queer Film Festival and possibly specify that a percent of your sponsorship must go towards marketing efforts aimed at attracting outside visitors.

That said, support goes beyond financial contributions. Attend Kingston Pride events, be visible, march in the parade, and attend other LGBT+ galas and opening events. Tourism Kingston could also request access to Kingston Pride and Reelout digital assets for marketing efforts in exchange for in-kind marketing support to bolster out of town attendance of their events, or offering them space or programming time as part of the Love Kingston Marketplace, in an effort to allow these festivals more opportunity to create year-round programming and exposure.

Amber Lockwood of Kingston Pride stated “additional support from the LGBT+ travel market would be an added and welcome benefit to not just the Pride events in June, but in our efforts throughout the year that focus on supporting our diverse community.”

Matt Salton of Reelout stated that they have “practically zero dollars budgeted for marketing”, and therefore any support from Tourism Kingston would provide to be valuable, whether that be more exposure of the event through social media and the annual visitors guide, possibly in exchange for the distribution of attendee/visitor surveys.

<b>Support Local LGBT+ Festivals &amp; Events</b>	
<p><b>NICE TO DO/MINIMAL INVESTMENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sponsor more local LGBT+ events, if possible.</li> <li>- Trade resources with local LGBT+ festivals to build your digital asset database while providing them additional exposure to an out of town audience.</li> </ul>	<p><b>NEED TO DO/MINIMAL INVESTMENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Show up and be visible at LGBT+ community events.</li> </ul>
<p><b>SAMPLE GOALS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sponsor Kingston Pride and Reelout conditional upon a percentage of funding being used towards marketing/increasing out of town attendance, and the collection of data through event surveys.</li> </ul>	

**d) Join LGBT+ Chambers & Regional/International Organizations**

Sign up for memberships with as many LGBT+ chambers as your budget will allow, including the Ontario LGBTQ2+ Chamber of Commerce (OGLCC)<sup>39</sup>, the CGLCC, and the International LGBTQ+ Travel Association (IGLTA)<sup>40</sup>. *Note that CGLCC has a partnerships with OGLCC which will allow you to be a member of both for one fee<sup>41</sup>.*

You can also attend the CGLCC Annual Global Business Summit & Supplier Diversity Forum<sup>42</sup>, the International LGBTQ+ Travel Association (IGLTA) and their Annual Convention<sup>43</sup>, and Community Marketing & Insights' (CMI) Annual Symposium. *Note that CMI publishes LGBT+ consumer research every year which is free to download online<sup>44</sup>, including but not limited to the 2018 Canadian LGBTQ Tourism & Hospitality Survey<sup>45</sup>. They also offer learning opportunities via youtube videos<sup>46</sup>, and you can collaborate with them on custom research for your destination.*

Join LGBT+ Chambers & Regional/International Organizations	
<p><b>NICE TO DO/MINIMAL INVESTMENT</b></p> <p>- Join IGLTA and attend IGLTA and CMI virtual and in-person events. <i>Note, two out of three IGLTA annual conventions are held in North America which makes them more affordable to attend. We encourage you to review the agenda before registering to ensure the educational content will provide a strong ROI for your organization.</i></p>	<p><b>NEED TO DO/MINIMAL INVESTMENT</b></p> <p>- Leverage your existing CGLCC membership by joining the OGLCC.</p>
<p><b>SAMPLE GOALS</b></p> <p>- Attend one IGLTA annual convention within three years of launching your LGBT+ tourism strategy, and present your learnings to your working group. <i>Note, the key takeaway for many attendees is the opportunity for meaningful networking.</i></p>	

**e) Earmark a Dedicated Budget**

Set out a realistic goal of what can be set aside for LGBT+ marketing, advertising, memberships and HR initiatives, and what can be accomplished in one, three and five years. If your destination has not undergone diversity training recently, set aside a budget to do so every few years. If it is not possible to dedicate a budget to this niche,

<sup>39</sup> Ontario LGBTQ2+ Chamber of Commerce (OGLCC): <http://www.oglcc.com/>

<sup>40</sup> International LGBTQ+ Travel Association (IGLTA): <https://www.iglta.org/>

<sup>41</sup> CGLCC Memberships: <https://www.cglcc.ca/membership/>

<sup>42</sup> CGLCC Annual Global Business Summit & Supplier Diversity Forum: <https://www.cglcc.ca/events/cglcc-lgbt-global-business-summit-supplier-diversity-forum/>

<sup>43</sup> IGLTA Annual Convention: <https://www.igltaconvention.org/>

<sup>44</sup> CMI's LGBTQ Tourism & Hospitality Studies: <https://cmi.info/lgbtq-research-downloads/#tourism-hospitality-studies>

<sup>45</sup> CMI 2018 Canadian LGBTQ Tourism & Hospitality Survey: [https://cmi.info/documents/temp/CMI\\_Canada-LGBTQ-Travel-Survey2018.pdf](https://cmi.info/documents/temp/CMI_Canada-LGBTQ-Travel-Survey2018.pdf)

<sup>46</sup> CMI's LGBTQtube Marketing & Advertising Symposium <https://cmi.info/lgbtq-learn/>

determine if you are able to allocate a portion of other budgets (i.e., geographic outreach, culinary or archetypes) to be inclusive of this segment within those efforts. It is important to acknowledge that these efforts must be longterm in order to yield true results.

Join LGBT+ Chambers & Regional/International Organizations	
<p><b>NICE TO DO</b></p> <p>- Allocate dedicated budget towards your LGBT+ market-readiness efforts.</p>	<p><b>NEED TO DO/MINIMAL INVESTMENT</b></p> <p>- Include LGBT+ market readiness efforts within other budgets.</p>
<p><b>SAMPLE GOALS</b></p> <p>- Incrementally increase the amount your organization spends on the LGBT+ market each year.</p>	

## #5 Offer Unique Products & Experiences

Kingston does not need a gay village nor substantial LGBT+ nightlife in order to implement a successful LGBT+ tourism strategy. Look at your destination’s unique offerings, and build on those assets.

### a) Showcase Authentic Tourism Product Offerings

Every destination has offerings that will appeal to the LGBT+ travel market. Remember, the LGBT+ segment is a diverse group of people with a variety of interests and travel motivations. The *CGLCC Guide for Developing LGBT+ Products and Tours*<sup>47</sup> outlines various archetypes identified by recent CGLCC Canadian research such as Metropolitan Foodies and Cultural Explorers. Look at offerings that are unique to your destination, which archetype they would appeal to most, and how they line up with your own archetypes of Up and Coming Explorers, Knowledge Seekers, and Youthful Socializers.

It has been identified through stakeholder and DMO survey results that some of these unique offerings include Fort Henry, Kingston Pen tours, Kingston City Hall, the Grand Theatre, the Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Kingston Food Tours, 1,000 islands boat tours, your pedestrian-friendly downtown core, food scene, access to the outdoors and provincial parks like Sandbanks and Frontenac, and proximity to Prince Edward County.

Showcase these unique offerings to potential LGBT+ visitors through your LGBT+ or regular tourism promotional strategies (see section #6 *Implement Inclusive Marketing Strategies and Promotional Activities*).

<sup>47</sup> CGLCC’s Guide for Developing LGBT+ Products and Tours: <https://www.cglcc.ca/programs/tourism/>



Showcase Authentic Tourism Product Offerings	
<p><b>NEED TO DO/MINIMAL INVESTMENT</b></p> <p>- Match unique offerings to the CGLCC or Tourism Kingston archetypes in order to build into both your LGBT+ Tourism or General strategies.</p>	<p><b>NEED TO DO/MINIMAL INVESTMENT</b></p> <p>- Choose five unique product offerings to showcase within the first year of launching your LGBT+ tourism strategy.</p>

**b) Liaise with Tourism Providers to Ensure Inclusivity**

Every effort should be made to work with the major tourism operators and businesses in Kingston to ensure that the products and services they offer are inclusive to LGBT+ travellers. This does not necessarily mean creating exclusive products for the segment, but rather making sure they have taken the necessary steps to be inclusive, such as diversity training and using gender neutral language. Reference the *CGLCC Guide for Developing LGBT+ Products and Tours*<sup>48</sup> for more details on adapting existing offerings to be more inclusive. Businesses that take steps towards inclusivity can add attributes like “LGBTQ Welcoming” and “Transgender Safe Space” to their Google business listings<sup>49</sup>.

Examples of tourism providers that may benefit from such steps are:

- St. Lawrence Parks Commission and their various attractions
- Kingston Destination Group/Kpass
- Kingston Association of Museums, Art Galleries and Historic Sites
- Kingston Bike Tours
- Ahoy Rentals
- Frontenac Provincial Park
- Wedding venues & providers, along with their primary vendors

Liaise with Tourism Providers to Ensure Inclusivity	
<p><b>NICE TO DO/MINIMAL INVESTMENT</b></p> <p>- Encourage tourism businesses to review the CGLCC resource guides, including but not limited to their <i>Business Case for LGBT+ Inclusion</i><sup>50</sup>, and potentially offer an incentive for those that undergo training.</p>	<p><b>NEED TO DO/MINIMAL INVESTMENT</b></p> <p>- Encourage abovementioned tourism providers to take part in The City of Kingston’s Workplace Inclusion Charter or <i>CGLCC Diversity &amp; Inclusion Workshops</i><sup>51</sup></p>

<sup>48</sup> CGLCC’s Guide for Developing LGBT+ Products and Tours: <https://www.cglcc.ca/programs/tourism/>

<sup>49</sup> Google Safe Spaces Attributes: <https://www.blog.google/outreach-initiatives/small-business/adding-lgbtq-friendly-and-transgender-safe-space-attributes-google-my-business/>

<sup>50</sup> CGLCC Business Case for LGBT+ Inclusion Resource Guide: <https://www.cglcc.ca/programs/tourism/>

<sup>51</sup> CGLCC Diversity & Inclusion Workshops: <https://www.cglcc.ca/programs/tourism/diversity-inclusion-workshops/>

**SAMPLE GOALS**

- Have 25% of Kingston tourism providers complete some form of diversity and inclusion training within the first year of your LGBT+ market readiness efforts.

**c) Seek Out Existing LGBT+ Community Events and Festivals**

While LGBT+ festivals and events exclusive to the community are not a necessity in attracting this segment, they can be a worthwhile draw. In addition to Kingston Pride and Reelout Queer Film Festival, you can engage with the Friends for Life Bike Rally<sup>52</sup> (FFLBR) to capitalize on their captive audience of up to 600 crew and riders each summer through a Tourism Kingston-sponsored event, or by encouraging collaboration between Kingston Pride and/or Reelout to provide an evening of programming with a portion of proceeds benefiting fundraising efforts for the ride, and ultimately HIV/AIDS Regional services (HARS). As mentioned in the section on dedicated investment & support, you can enhance the efforts of Friends for Life Bike Rally through sponsorship, marketing support and by helping them forge partnerships with allied businesses. These efforts will not only show your support of the LGBT+ community and an organization doing important work within it, but will also allow you the opportunity to actively market to your Knowledge Seekers archetype.

Seek Out Existing LGBT+ Community Events and Festivals	
<p><b>NICE TO DO/MINIMAL INVESTMENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourage Ted Robinson, Kingston Liaison at FFLBR to discuss opportunities for Kingston Pride and/or Reelout to participate in, or create new programming for the FFLBR.</li> </ul>	<p><b>NEED TO DO/MINIMAL INVESTMENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have a Tourism Kingston representative attend an official FFLBR event.</li> </ul>
SAMPLE GOALS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Set an attendance goal for locals and FFLBR participants at a Tourism Kingston sponsored event, and survey them during the event.</li> </ul>	








**d) Mentor and Assist the Community in Developing New LGBT+ Product**

Creating new exclusive LGBT+ product will be most successful when it happens organically with involvement from the local community, and these efforts will fit nicely with product development priorities in all phases of the Tourism Kingston Annual/COVID-19 Recovery Plan. Provide mentorship and assistance to local LGBT+ organizations, tourism businesses and allied organizations to assist them in creating their own programs, experiences and products. Examples could be a tour operator like Kingston Food Tours providing a departure in conjunction with Pride (as it has done in the past), or Kingston Walking Tours partnering with Pride to offer an LGBT+ Historical

<sup>52</sup> Friends for Life Bike Rally: <https://bikerally.org/>

Walk utilizing the information found on Stones Kingston<sup>53</sup>, adding in a sprinkling of additional content geared towards the trans and BIPOC community.

Your expertise, knowledge and resources can go a long way in assisting these local organizations to create authentic content. It should also be noted that creating and marketing new LGBT+ products and services doesn't have to be onerous. You can show the local community other mainstream efforts that have worked, such as adding their products and experiences to sites like Tours By Locals<sup>54</sup> or Airbnb Experiences<sup>55</sup>.

**Additional ideas include:**

As recommended by stakeholder Jim Puckalo, Tourism Kingston could work with local drag performers, or connect them to venues in order to bring the internationally popular Ru Paul's Drag Race, or any of its offshoot travelling performances to Kingston. These events are often sold out across North America, and have a cult following that could boost regional out of town attendance, creating the opportunity for local LGBT+ organizations or community members to work with local tourism providers to sell packages that keep attendees within walking distance of venues and accommodations.

Building on efforts to work with local travel providers and neighboring regions such as Prince Edward County and Frontenac County to highlight LGBT+ welcoming experiences, restaurants and tourism providers.

<b>Mentor and Assist the Community in Developing New LGBT+ Product</b>	
<b>NICE TO DO/MINIMAL INVESTMENT</b> - Liaise with tourism providers outside of your working group to brainstorm ideas for new LGBT+ tourism products.	<b>NEED TO DO/MINIMAL INVESTMENT</b> - Brainstorm ideas with your working group, utilizing the skills and services offered within the group, thus keeping most of the work and responsibilities outside of the Tourism Kingston organization.
<b>SAMPLE GOALS</b> - Create two new LGBT+ packages or experiences for visitkingston.ca.	

## #6 Implement Inclusive Marketing Strategies and Promotional Activities

There are three ways to approach your inclusive marketing strategies and promotional activities: through owned media, earned media and paid media. It's best to start by analyzing how you are promoting, or will promote, LGBT+ travel and the LGBT+ community through your

<sup>53</sup> Stones Kingston: <http://www.stoneskingston.ca/gay-and-lesbian-history/>

<sup>54</sup> Tours by Locals: <https://www.toursbylocals.com/>

<sup>55</sup> Airbnb Experiences: <https://www.airbnb.ca/s/experiences>

owned channels such as your website or blog. By developing authentic and inclusive content there, you'll be better prepared to start earned media efforts or paid marketing campaigns. In addition, beginning with your owned media is more affordable and the workload can be shared between people in your organization.

#### a) Owned Media

Start by doing an inventory of what owned media you can work with, such as:

- Website/Blog:
  - <https://www.visitkingston.ca/>
- Social media:
  - <https://www.facebook.com/stayinkingston>
  - <https://www.instagram.com/visitkingston/>
  - <https://twitter.com/VisitKingston1>
  - <https://www.linkedin.com/company/tourism-kingston/>
  - <https://www.youtube.com/user/VisitKingston1>
- Media image library
- Newsletters
  - Industry
  - Consumer
- Visitor guides

To create authentic and inclusive LGBT+ content for your owned channels, you should start by asking for help from your local LGBT+ community. If possible:

- Build on your current LGBT+ media library by doing a photo and/or video shoot using local LGBT+ photographers and people, or at minimum include LGBT+ people in other photo and video shoots. Unless absolutely necessary, avoid the use of stock photos.
- Highlight local LGBT+ retail business owners and managers, along with other LGBT+ personalities and business leaders into your content plan, perhaps as part of your 'Love Kingston' or 'Makers' campaigns to feature on your website and social media. Some examples are:
  - Chris Healy, Luce Hair Salon
  - Gary Cork, Tir nan Og Irish Pub
  - Gilles Charette, Executive Director for HIV/AIDS Regional Services Kingston
  - Ian Burns, Drag Performer Rowena Whey
  - Jess Huddle and Cade Pentland-Boyce, Northside Café
  - Jim Puckalo, Drag Performer Tyffanie Morgan
  - Matt Salton, Executive Director, Reelout
  - Paul Fortier, Public House

Note that you may need to seek out greater transgender, female and gender nonconforming representation which could be achieved by

inquiring within the Kingston Queer Women & Gender Diverse Group<sup>56</sup>, TransFamily Kingston<sup>57</sup> or Gender Talk<sup>58</sup>.

- Ask local partners like Kingston Pride and Reelout, as well as Destination Ontario, and Destination Canada if they have LGBT+ images or content they'd be willing to let you use.
- Hire a local LGBT+ writer or content creator, such as someone from Pride Kingston or InOut Kingston to create content for your blog, website, or social media specifically aimed at LGBT+ travellers.
- Utilize a user-generated content provider such as CrowdRiff<sup>59</sup> to build out your visual asset library. If Tourism Kingston has this tool already, ask the person using it to start searching for local LGBT+ imagery as part of their regular work. Examples of hashtags are #LGBT, #LGBTcommunity, #LGBTtravel, #LGBTQtravel, #LGBTQ2travel, #Pride, #LGBTpride, #KingstonPride, #gaytravel, #gaytraveler, #gaytraveller, #gaycation, #lesbiantraveler, #lesbiantraveller, #lesbiantravel, #gayhoneymoon, #lesbianhoneymoon, to name a few.

As part of this process, think about where you are not including LGBT+ representation in Tourism Kingston's promotional content and make a conscious decision to include it. One thing to know about the LGBT+ community is that they like to be represented within all of your regular marketing efforts, be it your visitor's guide, or sections of your website such as family travel and destination weddings. It's important to use inclusive and non-gendered language such as spouse or partner (instead of husband and wife) and parents (instead of mother and father).

If you have the resources to do so, you should also consider a specific section of your website that is dedicated to the LGBT+ community linked from your homepage, such as [visitkingston.ca/lgbt](http://visitkingston.ca/lgbt), which will highlight Kingston Pride, Reelout, past and future LGBT+ written content, LGBT+ owned/welcoming businesses, and event listings, the latter of which could be provided by OutIn Kingston. In addition, you should consider updating your use of the rainbow flag to the inclusive rainbow/progress flag<sup>60</sup>, but only if your other efforts truly represent the trans and BIPOC LGBT+ community.

Remember though, LGBT+ specific content needs to be interesting, useful and current. All too often destinations create LGBT+ microsites with information about LGBT+ events and businesses, but once the page is created, they never go back to review and

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<sup>56</sup> Kingston Queer Women & Gender Diverse Group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/973351622872611>

<sup>57</sup> TransFamily Kingston: <https://transfamilykingston.com/>

<sup>58</sup> Gender Talk: [https://www.cfrc.ca/gender\\_talk](https://www.cfrc.ca/gender_talk)

<sup>59</sup> CrowdRiff: <https://crowdriff.com/>

<sup>60</sup> Forbes back-story on the inclusive rainbow/progress flag:

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jamiewareham/2020/07/12/why-lgbt-people-have-started-using-a-new-pride-flag-nhs-black-lives-matters/?sh=57967408125a>

update it. As a result, a visitor to the page will likely encounter links to defunct businesses or past events, which is worse than having no page at all. Tourisme Montreal’s LGBT+ page<sup>61</sup> is a strong example of how to include specific content for the LGBT+ community on a website. Your page doesn’t have to be this detailed, but it provides ideas about what is possible. For your social media, include LGBT+ content among your regular social media posts, but also consider creating a specific destination LGBT+ hashtag that you’ll be able to track, such as #LoveLGBTKingston or #visitLGBTKingston.

Owned Media	
<p><b>NICE TO DO</b></p> <p>- Create an LGBT+ web page linked from your homepage.</p>	<p><b>NEED TO DO/MINIMAL INVESTMENT</b></p> <p>- Incorporate LGBT+ stories and content into as many of your existing web pages and digital/print assets as possible.</p>
<p><b>SAMPLE GOALS</b></p> <p>- Audit all digital and print assets within six months of launching your LGBT+ tourism strategy.</p>	

## b) Earned Media

Make sure someone from your media relations team is aware of your LGBT+ market efforts so they can incorporate content into their earned media strategies:

- Develop LGBT+-specific pitches that include your local community and events;
- Include LGBT+ content into your overall destination pitches to media;
- If it makes sense for the theme of your trip, host LGBT+ travel writers on non-LGBT+ FAM trips, including those that you have upcoming funding for;
- Host an LGBT+ FAM trip
- Let Destination Ontario know you’re open to hosting LGBT+ writers on FAM trips, or ask if they are willing to develop a regional LGBT+ group FAM with Tourism Kingston which could include cooperation with Prince Edward County and/or Bay of Quinte, Frontenac.

Earned Media	
<p><b>NICE TO DO</b></p> <p>- Develop LGBT+-specific media pitches.</p>	<p><b>NEED TO DO/MINIMAL INVESTMENT</b></p> <p>- Incorporate LGBT+ writers and influencers in your already planned FAM trips.</p>
<p><b>SAMPLE GOALS</b></p> <p>- Have two LGBT+ writers or influencers on a suitable FAM trip.</p>	

<sup>61</sup> Ride the LGBTQ rainbow in Montréal:  
<https://www.mtl.org/en/explore/montreal-for/ride-the-LGBTQ-rainbow-in-montreal>

### c) Paid Media

When you are at a point to start considering paid marketing opportunities, it may be easiest to start by working with an LGBT+ influencer. Not only will they create content that you'll have more influence over, but you will also have the ability to share that content through your own channels. We also recommend working with your current media buying agency to ensure they have an understanding of LGBT+ media, and if not, that they contract an expert. This is imperative.

Then, when you're ready to consider a paid marketing campaign on your own, or in partnership with a Destination Ontario or Destination Canada, consider what message you want to share and who you want to share it with. Also, LGBT+ coop marketing opportunities tend to be more affordable than other niches, or general campaigns.

For more insights into paid marketing to the LGBT+ community, read *CGLCC's Marketing to the LGBT+ Community: A Planning Toolkit*<sup>62</sup>.

Paid Media	
<b>NICE TO DO</b> - Engage an LGBT+ writer or influencer for paid marketing opportunities.	<b>NEED TO DO/MINIMAL INVESTMENT</b> - Include LGBT+ in your existing pay per click budget.
<b>SAMPLE GOALS</b> - Determine an appropriate maximum bounce rate for any LGBT+ paid efforts.	

## Measuring Success

Sample goals have been scattered throughout this document, and should be treated as suggestions, and a first step in measuring the success of your LGBT+ market readiness efforts:

### a) Set Goals & KPIs

Throughout this document we have provided examples of some initiatives you could undertake. Keep yourself accountable by quantifying what is realistic to achieve, for example having two meetings per year with your working group; hosting an LGBT+ journalist on a regular FAM trip; running an LGBT+ FAM if it makes sense; financially supporting two LGBT+ events per year; having a certain number of social media posts per year highlighting LGBT+ content and adding multiple LGBT+ blog posts to the destination blog each year, if not each quarter. Set the goals and KPIs that you want these initiatives to achieve, such as the number of stories published in LGBT+ media,

<sup>62</sup> CGLCC's Marketing to the LGBT+ Community: A Planning Toolkit:  
<https://www.cglcc.ca/programs/tourism/>

unique visits to your LGBT+ microsite and the number of LGBT+ visitors, which can be measured through edited versions of your regular event and visitor surveys.

## b) Create a Schedule of Milestones

It is critical to create and monitor milestones to ensure your LGBT+ tourism strategy stays on track. Before launching your LGBT+ market-readiness efforts, you should consider setting targets and dates for your internal and partnership goals, such as completion of diversity and inclusion training and/or workshops, updating of internal policies, procedures and forms, and creating LGBT+ tourism products or inclusive non-LGBT+ tourism products through local providers.

## c) Evaluate Traveller Feedback

Tourism Kingston should aim to continuously collect feedback that is inclusive in nature, offering the opportunity for LGBT+ travelers to self-identify and share their experience. You should ensure issues are addressed and take action if necessary. It is recommended that you identify further training opportunities where there has been negative traveller feedback. Remember that all feedback obtained should be kept confidential and align with your privacy policy and federal data protection laws. It should also be noted that asking questions around sexual orientation is legal in Canada, but should be treated in a sensitive manner. For tips, reference the *CGLCC Guide for Developing LGBT+ Products and Tours*<sup>63</sup>.

## d) Report on Goals

It is vital to report the status of your goals to staff and your LGBT+ working group and/or stakeholders. By meeting *at least* once a year you'll share your successes, stay accountable, and ensure efforts do not fall flat if your internal champion on the initiative departs the organization. Take the time to review and reassess your original goals or KPIs in order to determine if any areas need extra attention, and where important wins or progress can be celebrated. This could include how Tourism Kingston is tracking goals or KPIs, and sharing community or traveller stories, good or bad. This information can be presented in the form of team meetings, town halls, in trade newsletters, and at working group meetings. This will not only show progress made, but serve as a reminder of the importance of your LGBT+ market-readiness efforts.

## e) Adjust Your Goals

Regular reflection and adjustment of your goals will lead to the long-term success of your destination with the LGBT+ travel market. Be honest about areas that have room for improvement, and set more aggressive goals for those that have been accomplished with relative ease.

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<sup>63</sup> CGLCC's Guide for Developing LGBT+ Products and Tours: <https://www.cglcc.ca/programs/tourism/>



## Summary

Foreseeable challenges will include lack of budget during a COVID-19 recovery, potential disruptions internally through staff turnover, or a limited amount of time available for staff to work on this initiative due to budget cuts. Additionally, the lack of visible diversity within leaders of the LGBT+ community could pose a challenge when trying to better represent the BIPOC community, trans folk, and those that are gender nonconforming. Without placing priority on this diversity, your local LGBT+ community may see your efforts as disingenuous. It could also prove to be challenging to get buy in from non-LGBT+ local businesses that don't see the value in dedicating time and resources to being more inclusive.

As we have reiterated throughout the report, the work must begin from within. Ensure you have the necessary champion/s, a working group, then build a long term plan and present updates and adjustments internally and externally at least once a year, or as needed. The more Tourism Kingston leads by example, the more likely the community at large will appreciate the efforts, and see value in being more inclusive, creating important buy-in that will be critical to your long term success.

In order to minimize Tourism Kingston's initial financial investment, you should consider tagging on to The City of Kingston's Inclusion Charter efforts, leverage resources from Destination Ontario, and form new partnerships with neighboring regions like Prince Edward County to bolster LGBT+ tourism. And while it's important to continue to nurture your existing relationships with Kingston Pride and Reelout, new relationships can be fostered with the Friends for Life Bike Rally, and the CGLCC. These LGBT+ market readiness efforts can then be highlighted in content on [visitkingston.ca](http://visitkingston.ca) through an LGBT+ landing page, but also, and more importantly, throughout the entire website.

To conclude, Tourism Kingston is in an excellent position to move forward with an LGBT tourism strategy with the biggest assets being your willingness to embark on this path, your small but active LGBT+ community's interest in participation, and your excellent content and owned media, including the [visitkingston.ca](http://visitkingston.ca) website.



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