

# *FOURTH QUARTER REPORT 2024*



# Tourism Kingston quarterly report



Attn: Lanie Hurdle  
Chief Administrative Officer  
City of Kingston  
216 Ontario Street  
Kingston, ON K7L 2Z3

**January 6, 2025**

**RE: Tourism Kingston Q4 2024 report**

Please find attached our summary report on the activities undertaken by Tourism Kingston for Q4: October through December 2024.

Outlined in the service level agreement with the City of Kingston, Tourism Kingston will work cooperatively and collaboratively with the city, other levels of government, partner organizations, and other tourism stakeholders in developing products and services that will attract visitors, ensure longer stays, and increase spending. The core tourism activities will align with the updated Integrated Destination Strategy (IDS) and Council's Strategic Priorities.

We are pleased to deliver our fourth-quarter activity within each of the seven portfolios. This report measures and reflects our continued efforts this quarter to maximize the economic impact of tourism for the City of Kingston.

We look forward to our continued work together. If you have any questions or require clarification on our activities or outputs, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Megan Knott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end.

**Megan Knott**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
Tourism Kingston



# OVERVIEW OF TOURISM KINGSTON'S WORK IN 2024

# culture



Much of our work this year has supported the Strategic Priorities of City Council, notably:

## **Lead environmental stewardship and climate action.**

2.2 Support climate action and sustainability for residents, businesses, and partners.

## **Build an active and connected community.**

3.1 Expand parks and recreation opportunities and participation.

3.2 Beautify city streets and spaces.

## **Drive inclusive economic growth.**

5.2 Evaluate policies, programs, and services to support the use of the airport.

5.3 Diversify Kingston's economic base.

5.5 Continue to enhance Kingston as a tourist destination.

5.6 Consider opportunities to enhance sports tourism.

5.7 Foster culture, history, education, arts and recreation.

5.8 Ensure the downtown remains vibrant.

## **Investment attraction**

We have 14 active investment attraction files open, supporting projects to attract visitors to Kingston; support the city's creative industries strategy; grow the local economy; grow capacity for sport; and improve quality of life for residents. A key part of our work entails identifying opportunities to build a business pipeline for city-supported projects like the deep-water dock, conference centre, and film studio. We have been proactively working with tourism partners, funders, and provincial, national, and international organizations and businesses to raise awareness of these projects and generate business to Kingston in the coming years.

# awards

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## 2024

Tourism Kingston received a number of accolades this year. These awards are important not only to recognize the hard work of our staff and efficacy of our work, but they also bring national – and sometimes international – attention to Kingston, its history, cultural resources, and many other offerings for visitors.

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### WINNER

#### **EDAC Marketing Canada Award**

Promotional Event:  
Total Solar Eclipse

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### WINNER

#### **Ontario Tourism Award of Excellence**

Culinary Leadership

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### WINNER

#### **Ontario Tourism Award of Excellence**

Culinary DEI

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### WINNER

#### **Ontario Tourism Award of Excellence**

Digital Marketing

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### SILVER

#### **Summit Creative Award**

Integrated Campaign,  
Consumer: Total Solar  
Eclipse

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### SILVER

#### **Summit Marketing Effectiveness Award**

Social Media Marketing:  
Visit Kingston

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### FINALIST

#### **TIAC Canadian Tourism Award**

Culinary Tourism  
Experience

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### FINALIST

#### **Seatrade Cruise Award**

Destination of the Year

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### FINALIST

#### **Canada Live Music Award**

Music City of the Year

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### FINALIST

#### **PCMA Canada East Chapter**

**Ted Robinson**  
Inspirational Supplier  
of the Year Award

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### FINALIST

#### **EDCO Award of Excellence**

Visitor Attraction:  
Total Solar Eclipse

*Awarded February 2025*

# MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS



Our brand campaign continued in Q4 with a focus on late fall and holiday experiences including historic inns, holiday markets, culinary, live music, and holiday “shop on us” overnight packages featuring \$100 Visa cards. In early December, we began promoting Kingstonlicious with a holiday gift-giving campaign focused on Kingstonlicious signature events. Our fall/winter media buy included paid search (Google Ad Words), digital ads (Google Display and YouTube), Food & Drink, and Edible Ottawa magazines. Brand campaign ads connect visitors with our [campaign landing page](#), which is updated seasonally, while Kingstonlicious ads take visitors to a [dedicated landing page](#).

Our business events campaign continued as well. Targeted to event planners, HR professionals, and sector associations, this campaign promotes Kingston for small- and medium-sized meetings and events and as an ideal meeting location near several large cities. The [campaign landing page](#) had more than 77,000 visits since launching this spring. The [campaign video](#), which showcases footage of previous successful business events in Kingston as well as local attractions, also features music by Kingston band Oakridge Avenue.

Our weddings campaign also continued in Q4, positioning Kingston as an ideal domestic weddings destination for nearby markets. The campaign included brand assets along with partner ad units, taking visitors to a dedicated microsite: [visitkingston.ca/weddings](#). The campaign generated 200,000+ website sessions.

In total, our campaigns and tactics delivered 57,714,378 advertising impressions and 2,738,974 website sessions to visitkingston.ca in 2024 – a 62% increase over last year. We also sent 379,826 referrals to operators and accommodation providers.

In fall 2024, we made enhancements to our Destination Insights Dashboard, which captures key sector metrics such as hotel and short-term rental occupancy/room nights; visitor insights via mobile data; and economic impact. We added ratings and reviews to the dashboard, a product that captures visitor reviews on platforms like Trip Advisor and Google, allowing us to assess visitor sentiment. An additional 45 points of interest were added to our visitor mobile insights dashboard. We launched a visitor survey on the city’s free WiFi, allowing us to capture insights such as reason for visit. Finally, we added more detailed economic impact and visitation data, working with our partners at ROVE and using data from [Destination Canada’s Tourism Data Collective](#), allowing us to see visitation and visitor spend monthly, quarterly, and annually.

The Marketing and Communications team continues to work with Alphabet, our agency of record, to complete a full redesign of [visitkingston.ca](#). We have completed the wireframe, user interface, and design phases. We delivered 100 pages of content for the site and reviewed 1,000+ existing stories. The project is on track for a spring 2025 launch.



# MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS



Chief Marketing Officer Alison Migneault spoke at two conferences in Q4. She presented the Kingston brand and journey to a shared place brand at the Economic Developers Council of Ontario regional conference in October. In December, she joined colleagues from Destination Toronto, Destination Vancouver, and Destination Canada on a panel at the Tourism Industry Association of Canada's Tourism Congress, discussing how to leverage and amplify the impact of major events. Alison shared our strategy and results of the total solar eclipse in April 2024.

The Marketing and Communications team was recognized with several industry awards in Q4. Tourism Kingston's efforts to generate tourism around the total solar eclipse were recognized with an Economic Developers Association of Canada Marketing Canada Award for best promotional event. The Marketing and Communications team was also recognized with a Summit International Creative Award for integrated campaign – consumer for our total solar eclipse campaign. Tourism Kingston and our partners won three Ontario Tourism Awards: culinary leadership, culinary DEI, and digital marketing. We are also a finalist for an Economic Developers Council of Ontario Award for Visitor Attraction & Tourism Product Development (Urban Award) for the total solar eclipse project, which will be handed out in February 2025.

## PARTNERSHIPS

### Estimated economic impact of special projects in Q4: \$17,104

In early October, we hosted Destination Ontario in collaboration with The Weather Network to promote spooky season in Kingston with 12 pre-recorded segments featuring the Ghost and Mystery Trolley Tour, Pumpkinferno, Fort Fright, Improbable Escapes, Haunted Walks, as well as information on where to stay and eat in Kingston. This broadcast resulted in a total reach of 16,940,143. In late November, we showcased Kingston's holiday season highlights during an Attractions Ontario webinar. The session attracted 200 consumers actively seeking festive activities and experiences for the holidays.

In late October, we hosted Jami Savage of [Adventure Awaits](#) to promote year-round travel, highlighting activities like taking in fall foliage from a cruise or trolley tour, Creative Kingston Walking Tours, culinary, and shopping. In November, we hosted Marie Julie Gagnon of Le Devoir to promote sustainable activities in Kingston. This itinerary showcased Green Key certified hotels, Feast On® certified restaurants, and an interview with Lionhearts to discuss their Food Recovery and Redistribution program. To date, we have hosted four media/influencers whom we met at the Travel Media Association of Canada (TMAC) conference earlier this summer. In early December, Ashley Bradshaw, Destination Development Manager, travelled to Toronto to attend the Travel Media Association of Canada (TMAC) holiday social. This was an opportunity to meet with media and industry and begin planning media visits in 2025. We gave each attendee a copy of *Coke Machine Glow* by Gord Dowie (purchased through local bookstore Novel Idea) wrapped in a custom Kingston book jacket.

# MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS



We supported Queen's University's Homecoming programming in October. We welcomed alumni at the check-in event at Grant Hall and at the Harvest Festival alumni gathering at Benidickson Field. With support from Visitor Services staff, we provided visitor information, offered merchandise for sale, and presented an interactive game in partnership with Improbable Escapes. This game, "The Limestone Seekers Society," challenges participants to crack the Kingston code, all the while learning about Kingston's unique history, heritage, and attractions. This game had premiered at the Travel Media Association of Canada (TMAC) conference with great success.

Outreach to restaurant partners for [Kingstonlicious](#) 2025 began in late Q3, with those who expressed interest in hosting an event confirmed in Q4. 2025 marks the fifth year of the program, which runs February 3–March 31. In partnership with the Culinary Tourism Alliance, we curated five signature events and an additional two signature events with Tourism Kingston's support. These seven signature events launched in late November with the intent to offer gift-giving experiences to visitors. To date, one event has sold out. Additionally, we have engaged more than 30 restaurant partners to participate in the prix fixe menu, ranging from high-end dining to breweries and a farmers' market.

In November, we launched a four-week Visa incentive promotion ahead of the winter holidays to support Kingston's local makers through overnight hotel stays. This included a \$100 Kingston Visa gift card and a 20% discount voucher for use at the Visitor Information Centre (VIC). The addition of the 20% discount voucher leverages the locally made products within the VIC along with Kingston-branded merchandise. This program aligned with holiday markets and ran November 18–December 13. Hotels reported the sale of 81 one-night packages and 16 two-night packages for a total of 97 room nights.

We wrapped up the last Attractions Committee meeting in early December with partners reflecting on the year and sharing plans for 2025. There are several community milestone events occurring in 2025 that will be incorporated into earned media pitches and leisure marketing strategies.



# MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

# storytelling



## These activities supported our 2024 annual plan goals:

- // Connect travellers and residents with Kingston.
- // Drive sales for local businesses, supporting the continued recovery of Kingston's tourism industry.
- // Leverage incentives, funding opportunities, and strategic campaigns and initiatives to extend reach.
- // Support the sales sectors with targeted communications strategies and tactics that reach their unique audiences.
- // Support the culinary tourism strategy and shoulder- and low-season tourism; further develop Kingstonlicious offerings; and partner on key culinary programs such as Open Farm Days.
- // Continue strategic sponsorships that align with the Integrated Destination Strategy and have the potential to drive overnight stays in the shoulder and low seasons.
- // Continue to augment Kingston imagery, using an inclusive approach that supports strategies and identified gaps.
- // Feature diverse voices through our influencer and media hosting program.
- // Collaborate with the Sales team to develop tradeshow and event experiences that lead with the Kingston brand.

## Marketing and Communications work this quarter supported the following IDS initiatives:

- 10 – Develop/enhance enticing shoulder/winter tourism products.
- 11 – Enhance culinary tourism in Kingston.
- 15 – Create targeted, flexible campaigns in Ontario.
- 16 – Create flexible campaigns targeting key provincial markets.
- 17 – Create flexible campaigns targeting new markets.





2024 annual goals

Marketing and Communications	2024 goal	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2024 result	% goal actual
Website sessions	2,000,000	512,738	676,882	937,177	612,177	2,738,974	137%
Website pageviews	2,500,000	670,211	899,648	1,179,509	1,179,509	3,928,877	157%
Referrals to partners (web + phone)	315,000	92,353	85,821	118,140	83,512	379,826	121%
Advertising impressions	110,000,000	32,933,373	63,348,167	54,759,285	57,714,378	208,755,203	190%
Social media link clicks	400,000	127,284	106,432	166,809	88,440	488,965	122%
Social media engagements	1,200,000	247,880	535,273	421,402	313,540	1,518,095	127%
Social media impressions	35,000,000	10,333,803	8,352,572	9,069,539	4,891,191	32,647,105	93%
Total followers	127,000	123,522	125,011	120,984	129,833	129,833	102%
Proactive high-value earned media stories*	425	76	307	49	12	444	104%
Total media stories	1,400	348	847	251	140	1,586	113%
Total earned media impressions	1,700,000,000	765,458,067	733,536,398	431,952,929	402,180,192	2,333,127,586	137%

\*Website, advertising, social media, and earned media goals adjusted (increased from start of year) due to success of solar eclipse campaign



## 2024 annual goals

Packaging*	2024 goal	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2024 result	% goal actual
See + Do packages	45	1	12	13	18	44	98%
Eat + Drink packages	45	18	2	11	2	33	73%
Rest + Relax packages	20	0	2	1	4	7	35%
Family packages	20	4	4	9	2	19	95%
Package referrals to partners	40,000	16,890	8,373	11,628	8,471	45,362	113%
Minimum room nights	700	514	55	146	105	820	117%
Estimated economic impact		\$1,600,000	\$10,443	\$28,242	\$17,104	\$1,655,789	

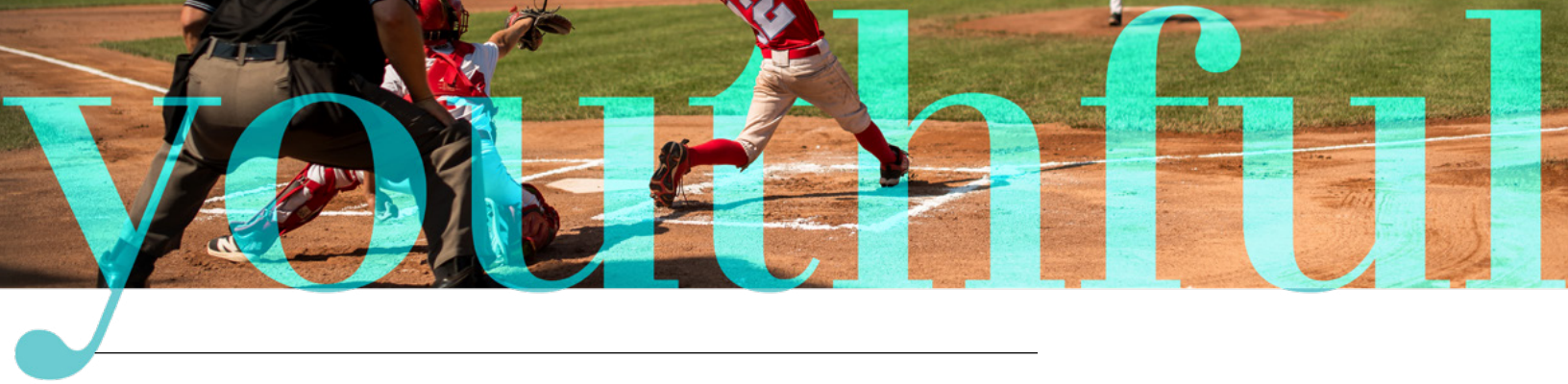
\*Tourism Kingston supported or created packages

Special projects	2024 goal	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2024 result	% goal actual
Facilitated events or activations	70	12	45	2	5	64	91%
Attendees, facilitated events or activations	12,000	345	10,033	202	350	10,930	91%
Partners involved or impacted	220	65	81	27	47	220	100%

Economic impact source: Destination Insights Dashboard. Direct spend based on average daily rate and room night data.



# SPORT AND WELLNESS



## **Economic impact of Sport & Wellness initiatives in Q4: \$4,365,750**

As we prepare to deliver our 2025 goal of better communicating with and about the local sport system in Kingston, we were thrilled to launch a new [Visit Kingston – Sport Instagram](#) page this quarter. Already this page has seen 520+ followers and significant engagement from local, provincial, and national sport organizations, as Instagram continues to become a place where athletes and their influencers go to learn what's going on in their community and in sport more broadly.

Working closely with the marketing team, we promoted several sport events and activities this quarter for Kingston residents and visitors to enjoy including the Vanier Cup, Football Ontario's "Try Football" day, Kingston Frontenacs games, and the IIHF World Junior's Exhibition game between USA and Slovakia at Slush Puppie Place. An overview of sport & recreation activities for families was shared across our channels to promote businesses in Kingston offering sport and wellness experiences to take in over the holidays. This included rock climbing at the Boiler Room, bowling at the newly renovated Splitsville, The Bunker at BGC South East, and indoor golfing at the recently opened YGK Sports Factory.

From an event hosting perspective, Kingston saw a great variety of sport events across the city this quarter. The major events supported by Tourism Kingston in Q4 were:

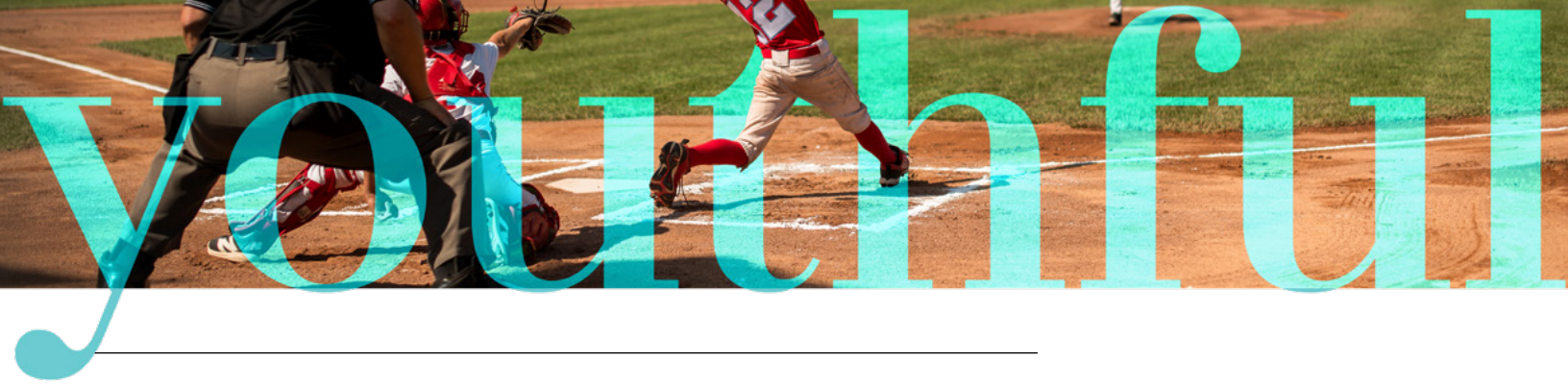
### // AAA OFSAA Boys Volleyball – Provincial High School Championship

- This event drew more than 360 athletes from across the province for a three-night stay across three hotel properties.
- Games were held at Kingston Secondary School and Holy Cross Catholic Secondary School.
- A banquet for student-athletes and coaches, local sponsors, and special guests was held at St. Lawrence College. The banquet featured a keynote speech from Queen's University head men's volleyball coach Gabe deGroot and recognized local long-time volunteer coach Todd Collard with the OFSAA Leadership in School Spirit Award.
- A significant volunteer base was needed for OFSAA event hosting, requiring many hours from local teachers. This turned out to be extremely beneficial for our local sport system as it led to training more than 100 high school students as volunteers, who now have transferable sport event experience.

### // Vanier Cup – National U SPORTS Football Championship

- Hosted at Richardson Stadium, the game between Université Laval and Laurier University saw 7,000 fans in attendance, the majority from out of town.

# SPORT AND WELLNESS



## // Canadian Collegiate Flag Football Championship & Showcase

- This women's university flag football tournament was hosted at Queen's University, welcoming more than 200 collegiate athletes from Ontario and Quebec.
- The event took place alongside a "Try Football" day for Kingston youth coinciding with the launch of the new Kingston Minor Football League.
- This event further energized the sport as we look forward to the introduction of flag football in the 2028 Summer Olympic Games.

## // Battle in the Bubble – adult pickleball tournament

- Hosted at the Kingston Pickleball Centre, this event saw 200 players over two days of competition. Participants were a mix of local residents and out-of-town visitors who stayed overnight in Kingston.

## // Hockey Helps the Homeless

- Tourism Kingston was an event sponsor, helping to secure hotel rooms for visiting volunteers and hockey pros. Event attendees were a mix of local residents and out-of-town visitors.
- The event, which utilized weekday day-time ice at the INVISTA Centre, raised more than \$150,000 for local charities Lionhearts & Pathways to Education.

The city also welcomed athletes and their families for a number of hockey tournaments including the Jr. Gaels GK Fall Bash, two KAMHA Kingston Canadians tournaments, and the Church Athletic League Causeway Classic. We also provided support in sourcing a significant number of hotel rooms for GKGHA Ice Wolves Cup which is the first sport tournament of the new year, happening January 3–5, 2025.

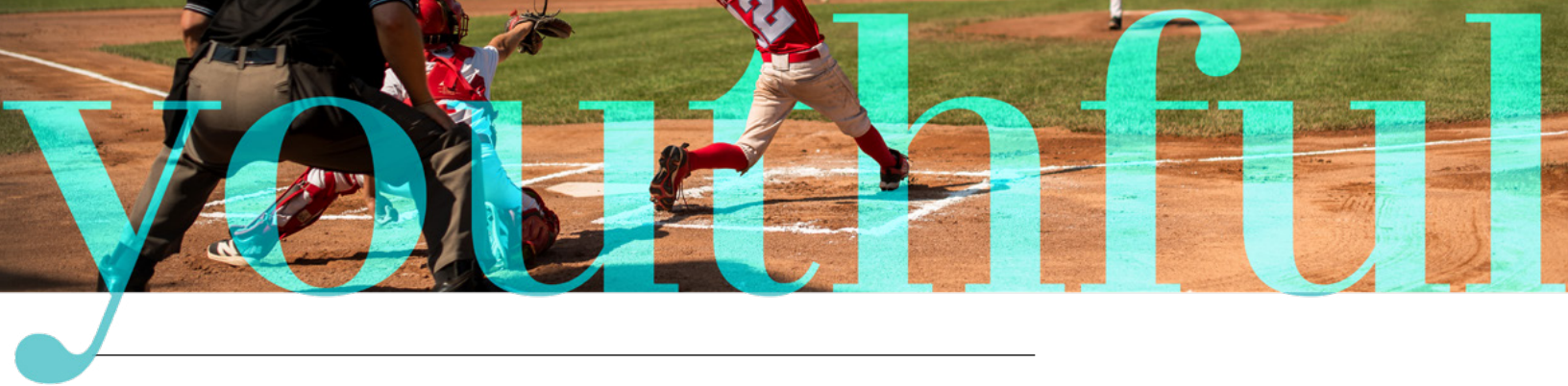
We continue to meet with representatives from local sport organizations to support event hosting efforts and participate in community meetings as they relate to advancing our local system capacity. This quarter, these efforts included facilitating or attending meetings related to:

## // 2025 OFSAA AAA Boys and AA Girls Soccer

## // 2025 Kids for Kids Hockey Tournament



# SPORT AND WELLNESS



- // 2025 Ontario Cycling Criterium
- // CORK Sail Kingston & Sail Canada events
- // The launch of the new Kingston Minor Football League
- // City of Kingston's Field User Group consultation
- // Swim Ontario East Regional Championships
- // Limestone City Race Weekend
- // Coaching conference hosting

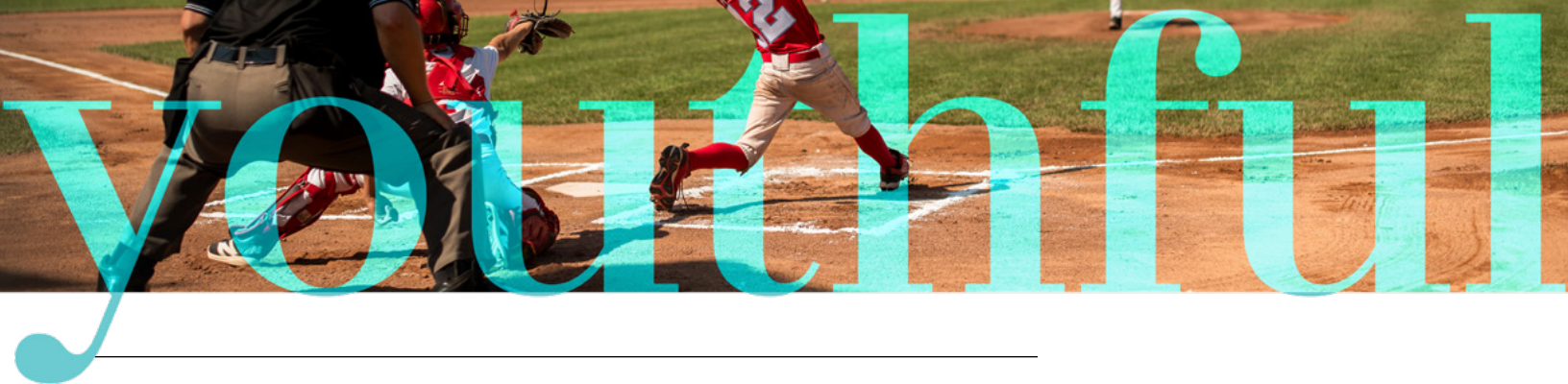
## **Sport and Wellness activities this quarter supported the following 2024 annual plan goals:**

- // Work with local organizations to support off-season events and tournaments.
- // Prospect sport-adjacent events to Kingston in collaboration with Business Events.
- // Proactively build our business in the sport tourism industry through networking, business-to-business, and educational opportunities.
- // Showcase the contribution of sport to Kingston's tourism economy.
- // Act on key strategy documents developed to support Kingston's sport tourism capacity.
- // Collaborate with local educational institutions to enhance their sporting events.
- // Measure and report on the economic impact of sport and wellness events in Kingston.

## **Sport and Wellness activities this quarter supported the following IDS initiatives:**

- 10 – Develop/enhance enticing shoulder/winter tourism products.
- 21 – Improve relationship with Queen's University.
- 25 – Implement a sport and wellness tourism strategy.

# SPORT AND WELLNESS



## 2024 annual goals

Sport and Wellness	2024 goal	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2024 result	% goal actual
Number of traces	2,000	408	695	350	400	1,853	93%
Number of bids prospected	50	22	14	5	10	51	102%
Number of bids submitted	20	4	10	2	5	21	105%
Number of bids won	10	3	5	2	2	12	120%
Number of events hosted	70	15	30	25	12	82	117%
Room nights	40,000	18,140	16,223	13,170	11,700	59,233	148%
Event attendees	38,000	32,604	26,270	7,073	17,150	83,097	219%
Estimated economic impact		\$1,475,376	\$1,440,334	\$10,157,098	\$4,365,750	\$17,438,558	

*Numbers are based on the date that traces/leads begin*

*Bids prospected – potential events*

*Bid submitted include both led and supported bids; not all bids require a formal bid proposal.*

*Economic impact source: Sport Tourism Canada's STEAM calculator for Q1 and Q2, Destination International's Event Impact Calculator Sport Model for Q3 and Q4.*



# TRAVEL TRADE

# Historic

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## The estimated impact of travel trade in Q4: \$378,550

Throughout Q4, our team welcomed two cruise ships and held several familiarization tours (FAMs). We attended two key trade shows: the Ontario Motor Coach Association Marketplace in Windsor and Showcase Canada in Paris, France.

While at the OMCA Marketplace, we had 28 meetings with tour operators. As part of "Team Kingston," we were also joined by partners DoubleTree by Hilton, Home2 Suites, Kingston Destination Group, The Haunted Walk, and McCoy Bus Services.

Showcase Canada Europe 2024 was held in Paris this year. This Destination Canada-coordinated event features tour operators from the U.K., France, Germany, and Belgium. Travel and Tourism Development Specialist Noelle Piche attended at the invitation of Destination Ontario to represent Kingston on the international stage. During the week of November 10–16, she held meetings with 62 tour operators and attended several networking events.

We shared our contact lists from both OMCA and Showcase Canada Europe to our local tourism partners in sales, so that they can follow up on interest and opportunities generated at the trade shows.

We also shared with partners the International Market Update from Destination Ontario, which offers a snapshot of key international markets coming to Ontario. We use this data when deciding which groups to target for FAMs and to bolster our travel trade efforts.

[You can read the full report on our website.](#)

In November, International Travel Trade Coordinator Ella Wang represented Kingston at Destination Ontario's virtual series for more than 200 Chinese tour operators. The event included a live Q & A and presentation. Outside of special events like this, we continue to raise Kingston's profile through Tourism Kingston's WeChat and Weibo channels. Kingston is ready to receive these operators once Canada joins the list of approved countries for Chinese outbound group travel.

In November, Kingston was featured in Group Tour magazine. This double page spread features six of Kingston's top attractions with an article detailing why Kingston is one of the top travel trade destinations in Ontario. [This article is available online.](#) Group Tour magazine, which has an international circulation, is a powerful tool for assisting tour operators with their annual planning process.

# TRAVEL TRADE

# Historic

In December, staff identified tour operators interested in participating in a spring 2025 FAM tour in Kingston. We have already secured two FAM tours for 2025 with international tour operators. The first will welcome the U.K.-based company Frontier Travel, which specializes in creating bespoke Canadian holidays for its clients. In partnership with Destination Ontario, we will also host a German specialist FAM tour, which will welcome more than 12 Germany-based tour operators to Kingston.

**These activities supported our 2024 annual plan goals:**

- // Host prospective domestic and international clients from primary markets.
- // Increase brand awareness and intensify the travel trade market.
- // Position Kingston as a key cruise hub.

**Travel Trade work this quarter aligned with the following IDS initiatives:**

- 9 – Support the creation of flexible packages and itineraries.
- 18 – Support multi-channel visitor services program with a focus on operators.





2024 annual goals

Travel Trade	2024 goal	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2024 result	% goal actual
Number of traces	600	181	484	79	468	1,212	202%
Definite leads	75	6	52	33	5	96	128%
Referrals	450	141	80	8	46	275	61%
Cruise passengers	1,300	330	0	687	302	1,319	101%
Number of buses booked	75	4	50	31	10	95	127%
Estimated economic impact		\$248,968	\$1,876,030	\$1,238,180	\$378, 550	\$3,363,178	

Numbers are based on the date traces/leads begin and buses booked; cruise numbers reflect actual passengers each quarter.

Traces – contact with clients and prospects

Definite leads – potential business that has turned into booked business

Referrals – provision of local partner information to clients

Buses booked are accommodation partner statistics and do not always reflect the booking and the activity in the quarter recorded.

Economic impact sources: TourTracker Pro (buses); University of Minnesota (Duluth) Great Lakes traffic study calculator (cruises)

A photograph of a man and a woman smiling and looking towards the camera. The man is on the left, wearing glasses and a blue patterned shirt. The woman is on the right, with red curly hair and glasses. They are standing in front of a waterfront city skyline with many boats in the water. The word "BUSINESS EVENTS" is written in large white letters at the top, and "vibrant" is written in large blue letters across the middle of the image.

# BUSINESS EVENTS

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## Estimated economic impact of Business Events in Q4: \$547,764

### Events supported:

- // RXN (Reaction) HUB Innovation/Ecosystem Summit & Grand Opening – October 10, 100 room nights at the DoubleTree by Hilton and Holiday Inn Kingston-Waterfront hotels
- // Queen's University's Annual University Council meeting – October 16–17, 55 room nights at the Kingston Market Square Hotel
- // Tarot Lenormand Biannual Conference – November 8–10, 200 room nights at the Kingston Market Square Hotel
- // 1000 Islands Bi-National Tourism Summit – November 12–13, 75 room nights at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel
- // Queen's University Conference in Business & Governance – November 23–24, 200 room nights at various hotels and on campus
- // LUMEO Go Live Project – multiple dates in December, 300 room nights at the Delta Kingston Waterfront, Holiday Inn Kingston-Waterfront, and Kingston Market Square hotels

### October and November were extremely busy with attendance at a variety of key industry events:

- // Canadian Society of Association Executives (CSAE) National Conference, October 29 to November 1 in Ottawa; three-day trade-show component involving one-on-one meetings with association executives from across Canada; event sponsorship that provided speaking time on the main stage prior to the keynote address plus the [premiere of our new Business Events promotional video](#); hosted a dinner for eight meeting planners/event organizers.
- // Presentation at the Canadian Association of Movers conference in Mississauga to promote Kingston as the host of the CAM 2025 conference next November.
- // Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) Canadian Innovation Conference, November 24–27 in Saskatoon; participation on the mainstage keynote address as a member of the "Ask Me Anything" panel.
- // Attendance at the Canadian Society of Professional Event Planners (CanSPEP), PCMA, and Meeting Planners International (Toronto Chapter) seasonal events in Mississauga and Toronto on December 3–4.





# *BUSINESS EVENTS*

# vibrant

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We worked throughout the quarter to plan for and support a number of key conferences and events coming to Kingston in 2025, including the CanSPEP National Conference (June), the Great Canadian Cheese Festival (May), Ontario Clay & Glass Association FUSION conference (May), Canadian Safe Boating Council (September), and the Creative City Network Annual Conference (October).

We worked with local accommodation, venue, and restaurant partners to partner with Lionhearts in the Food Recovery and Redistribution Program that will ensure that food leftovers from business events will be collected, repurposed, and distributed to those in our community facing food insecurity.

**The activities supported our 2024 annual plan goals:**

- // Conduct sales missions in key markets.
- // Create plans targeting specific business events sectors that lend themselves to engagement with local partners.
- // Prioritize sustainability in business event planning.
- // Accurately measure economic impact of business events.

**Our work aligned with the following IDS initiatives:**

- 10 – Develop/enhance enticing shoulder and winter tourism products.
- 13 – Create a sustainable tourism development plan.
- 15 – Create targeted, flexible campaigns.



2024 annual goals

Business Events	2024 goal	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2024 result	% goal actual
Number of traces	1,000	351	425	515	552	1,843	184%
Tentative leads	30	13	12	4	11	40	133%
Definite leads	40	2	17	7	7	33	83%
Contracted room nights	9,000	3,523	5,676	2,082	830	8,988	100%
Estimated economic impact		\$228,770	\$2,808,839	\$1,188,087	\$547,764	\$4,773,460	

Contracted room nights have been adjusted for Q1 and Q2, as we now show the actual room nights used during each quarter, instead of the quarter in which they were booked.

- Traces – contact with clients and prospects
- Definite leads – future business booked in quarter
- Economic impact reflects room nights and indirect spend by delegates.
- Economic impact calculator: [Destinations International Event Impact Calculator](#)



# FILM & MEDIA



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**Estimated economic impact of Film & Media in Q4: \$971,670**

## **Productions**

Q4 saw 11 new film and television productions in Kingston and the surrounding regions. Three of these were the result of location tours, logistics, and tech scout support in Q3, and three of these were the result of support in Q4. Two of these productions were student films.

*Murdoch Mysteries, season 18* – a TV series for CBC from Shaftesbury in Toronto. Production used multiple locations around downtown Kingston, including The Rosemount Inn, Tir Nan Og, Market Street, King Street, and the Frontenac Club. The production filmed for three days, which also included two days of prep and one day of wrap. It also used 130 hotel rooms for three nights, or 390 hotel nights. View an [Instagram reel](#) of Murdoch Mysteries behind-the-scenes in Kingston.

*Strawberries* – an independent short film from Toronto. The production filmed for two days and nights at Kingston Penitentiary, using 11 hotel rooms for one night. Three local crew and 14 local talent were also sourced using Kingston Film & Media's help.

*Underbelly* – a TV series for NBC Universal from Shaftesbury in Toronto. This production filmed at Ivy Lea Campground in the 1000 Islands. Kingston Film & Media collaborated with the town of Gananoque to coordinate the location. The production filmed for two days with two days of prep and wrap, and used 60 hotel rooms for five nights, or 300 hotel nights.

*Drag Brunch Saved My Life* – an unscripted TV series for Bell Media in Toronto. The production filmed at The Smokin' 116 Bistro. Production filmed for one day in Belleville and used four local drag queens and kings, as well as 40+ residents who were restaurant patrons.

*A Christmas Story in Kingston* – an independent short film by a local production company Creatopia Studios. The production filmed at various locations around Kingston, including City Hall, Market Square, and Princess Street. Kingston's Santa Claus Parade and Tree Lighting Ceremony were featured in the film, with coordination assistance from the Downtown Business Improvement Area (DBIA). The production used 13 crew and 30 talent, all local to Kingston. [The film can be viewed on YouTube.](#)



# FILM & MEDIA



*Good Trouble in Canada: From Lab to Love* – a documentary film by a local filmmaker, produced for the Kingston Canadian Film Festival (KCFF) 2025 Doc Factory program.

*From the Tigris to the St. Lawrence River* – a documentary film by a local filmmaker, produced for the KCFF 2025 Doc Factory program.

*Race Across the World* – a reality TV series for the BBC. The production passed through Kingston in early November. Although no teams made pit stops in Kingston, B-roll of the city was captured to be used in the show.

*Continuity Error* – an independent short film by a Queen's alumnus from Ottawa. The production filmed at various locations around Kingston and in Frontenac County. The film premiered at the Digi60 Filmmakers' Festival in Ottawa in December. The production used one local talent and 11 local crew, four of whom were students in training roles.

## **Student films**

Two student films contributed \$400 in economic impact through local rentals and food spend. Kingston Film & Media also issued film permits to help students follow correct municipal filming policies.

*The Price of Purity* filmed at various west-end Kingston locations.

*Desolation Row* filmed at various downtown Kingston apartments and locations.

## **The following productions lined up for 2025 were the result of our location tours and support in Q4:**

*Devil in Disguise: John Wayne Gacy* – an NBC Universal series filming at Kingston Penitentiary in January–February.

*The Amazing Race Canada Season 11* – a reality TV series filming at various locations around Kingston and the 1000 Islands region in May.

## **Other location tours and support in Q4 included work with:**

A new TV series for Netflix, looking to film at Kingston Penitentiary in April–May 2025.

An untitled independent feature film by a local filmmaker who received funding from Telefilm.

*Burps, Butts and Bones* – a new kids' TV series for TVO. The production is looking at using St. Lawrence College and Kingston Airport.



# FILM & MEDIA



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## **Esports and immersive media:**

In November, we hosted Ryan Andal from Secret Location, a digital production studio, for a tour to find potential venues for a new, Kingston-based immersive art exhibition.

Also in November, we hosted Carl-Edwin Michel from Northern Arena Entertainment for a tour of potential venues for a new esports café. Carl is also interested in hosting future video game tournaments in Kingston, so we showed him potential competition venues in the city.

## **Workshops and events**

In October, we presented a Production Assistant (PA) Fundamentals workshop at Loyalist College for 27 students in the TV and Film diploma program and Advanced Filmmaking certificate program. Students learned about the role of a PA on set, how to be a successful PA, and basic on-set etiquette. This workshop was a direct result of our Bay of Quinte locations photography workshop held in Belleville in August.

In December, digital artist Karen Vanderborgh led a two-day workshop on digital storytelling at École Secondaire Publique Mille-Îles. Francophone participants learned how to create stories with digital multimedia tools in VR, AR, and XR. Support for this project was secured by the Marketing team through the Francophone Community Grants Program, as part of Tourism Kingston's work to expand French-language offerings in the creative industries.

Throughout November and December, we prepared for the late-January launch of our new Producer Accelerator Program. The Producer Accelerator Program is a series of four workshops that each touch upon a different aspect of production. After completion of the workshops, four individuals will be chosen to receive a paid mentorship opportunity with a local production. Interested individuals submitted applications throughout December, and participants chosen to participate in the workshop series will be finalized in early January.

Kingston Film & Media joined the Film Incentive Coalition of Ontario (FICO), led by Film London. FICO is advocating for an increase to the Ontario Film Television Tax Credit regional bonus system. Currently, the regional bonus system allows Ontario-based producers shooting outside the Greater Toronto Area to access a 10% bonus on their tax credit for eligible Ontario labour expenditures incurred for production. The FICO group met with Justin Cutler, the Ontario Film Commissioner, and Karen Thorne-Stone, CEO of Ontario Creates (OC), to discuss this effort from film commissions on behalf of the industry.



# FILM & MEDIA



Kingston Film & Media staff attended training sessions for OC's new filming locations and production guide directory. As OC has transitioned to using Reel-Scout for their database, which is the platform used for our online locations and production directory, we initiated conversations with them to connect Kingston and area locations and support services to their database. This should happen later this month.

On October 1, we hosted our final Makers Meetup of 2024 at the Broom Factory. On October 8, we hosted the final Show and Tell: A Filmmaker's Open Mic Night in collaboration with the Cinema Society of Kingston at The Screening Room. Ten pieces of work by local filmmakers were shown, including short films, snippets of features, and music videos.

## Permitting

We issued seven film permits for four different productions on behalf of the City of Kingston. Through these permits, seven different city locations were used, including Market Square, City Hall, Dunham Park, and portions of King Street East and Princess Street.

We have developed a new film permitting form to streamline the process of gaining appropriate information from productions. We have developed specific forms for different aspects of filming that require specific municipal approvals. This includes a new drone permit and special effects (SPFX) permit. Existing parking, road closures, and paid duty officer (PDO) forms have been added to our website. In addition, a new Production Registration form has been created; all future productions in Kingston will be required to fill out this registration form before receiving a film permit. This will help us to track the economic impact of productions.

## These activities supported our 2024 annual plan goals:

- // Expand activities and share expertise as the film office for South Eastern Ontario, supported by RTO 9.
- // Roll out a new workshop training series.
- // Promote locations beyond Kingston Penitentiary for big-budget studio productions to increase pipeline and diversify the style and genres of productions we welcome to Kingston.
- // Attract esports and other interactive media productions.

## Film & Media work this quarter aligned with the following IDS initiatives:

- 4 – Develop a creative industries tourism plan.
- 13 – Create a sustainable tourism development plan.
- 14 – Leverage underutilized assets.





### 2024 annual goals

Productions	2024 goal	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2024 result	% goal actual
Tier 1 (over one week)	4	1	2	2	1	6	150%
Tier 2 (overnight to one week)	10	5	7	3	8	23	230%
Tier 3 (single day)	10	0	0	1	2	3	30%
Local productions (within 100 km)	12	6	3	3	5	17	142%
Non-local productions (>100 km travel)	12	0	6	3	6	15	125%
Room nights (new for Q3)				483	702	1,185	
Estimated economic impact		\$229,150	\$761,280	\$591,748	\$971,699	\$2,553,877	

Workshops/events							
Events	15	9	5	4	4	22	147%
Participants	800	620	124	112	141	997	125%

Location tours							
Tours	20	2	9	10	7	28	140%
Participants	200	15	38	42	23	118	59%

Location/production directory							
Location listings	100	12	64	41	7	124	124%
Vendor/crew listings	100	19	34	34	19	106	106%
Vendor/crew/talent hires on productions				127	164	291	

Economic impact source: Producers’ reporting and Film & Television EI calculator for Q1–Q3; Reel-Scout EI calculator for Q4  
Beginning in Q3, we tracked room nights and local hires on productions.



# MUSIC

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## **Estimated economic impact of Music in Q4: \$ 73,125**

To position Kingston as a contender for hosting a major Canadian music conference, the Kingston Music Office organized a FAM tour for Folk Music Canada representatives in Q4. By showcasing Kingston's outstanding venues, music talent, and accommodation partners, we are on track to secure this conference, which would attract over 800 delegates and provide a substantial economic boost. Updates on the bid are forthcoming.

In November, Music Officer Moira Demorest attended the Venue x Venue Festival by INDIE WEEK, which explored the future of live music and provided ongoing networking opportunities from Ontario music offices, organizers, and entertainment bookers. Touring over ten venues, live performances, and a preview of Canada's largest indoor entertainment complex, 100 Kellogg Lane, were key highlights. This visit sparked discussions about bringing Kingston artists to London stages and advancing inter-city collaborations.

## **Professional development/workshops**

The launch of our travelling Youth Open Mic series engaged young performers across venues like the Broom Factory, Pedal Works Café, and the Kingston School of Art. The December showcase aligned with the Youth Imagine the Future exhibition which featured over 200 participants and integrated music with visual arts and storytelling. Support from Long & McQuade Kingston included a guitar raffle that boosted engagement. Plans for 2025 include expanded collaborations with this exhibition across Kingston music venues.

On December 6, Melissa Ouimet conducted a songwriting workshop for more than 50 students at École Secondaire Publique Mille-Îles, sharing insights into songwriting and industry dynamics. Her workshop was followed by an all-ages performance, cultivating local audience development and enrichment. This workshop was organized and supported by the Kingston Music Office and funded through the Francophone Community Grant Program.

Additional professional development opportunities included an in-classroom visit to Calvin Park Public School and barrier-



# MUSIC

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free workshops on social media marketing for artists. Event feedback forms were collected, and one participant said: “It was really encouraging to see how Miesha and the Spanks make a career out of music; it made it seem more attainable for me. I also got the names of a couple of quality music promotion companies to reach out to when I begin releasing music with my band in the coming months...” The success of these in-class visits has led to the pilot project Amplify: Education, which has been drafted in collaboration with an equity and inclusion consultant with Limestone District School Board. Plans to expand this program, and the development of a sustainable financial structure, are slated for early Q1.

In partnership with the Canadian Live Music Association (CLMA) and Good Night Out Vancouver, the Kingston Music Office hosted a webinar led by Stacey Forrester, addressing strategies for creating safer and more inclusive concert environments. This session advanced discussions on fostering welcoming spaces for live music attendees. This workshop was recorded for further research and education purposes.

### **Community engagement**

On October 28, the Kingston Music Office, in collaboration with CLMA, hosted The Next Stage. The event brought together Kingston’s business leaders and music organizers, featuring performances by Paul Langlois (The Tragically Hip) and Luella. Attendees also enjoyed a fireside chat with business leaders Kevin Ford and Tourism Kingston’s Megan Knott, hosted by CLMA CEO Erin Benjamin. The event strengthened cross-sector partnerships, vital for advancing the local live music sector. This event brought together Kingston business and music leaders, offering a fantastic opportunity to cultivate connections, spark partnerships, and build relationships that open doors for growth within the local music community. Engagement continues with plans to incorporate future elements of this event in the music and film sector’s Makers Meetup in spring 2025. Conversations continue following this event, as CLMA reported back: “Your vision, support, and guidance were invaluable. Just a huge thanks from me personally for giving this project so much of your time and energy – and for inviting us in the first place... your hospitality was next level. Can’t wait to work with you again! The City of Kingston is very lucky to have you.”

In Q4 our Release Radar program spotlighted over 20 local artists, promoting their work via social media, CFRC Radio, and community venues. A Listener’s Choice survey culminated in a top ten countdown broadcast on December 22. Looking ahead, we aim to expand this initiative with CFRC and Kingston Live partnerships.

# MUSIC

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Participation in two merch markets supported local artists and stimulated economic activity during slower periods. Plans for 2025 include aligning these events with community festivals for greater impact. Three local artists participated in these collective events.

Our marketing efforts saw strong pickup this quarter, with a 1.94% increase in newsletter subscribers and a 33% rise in Instagram followers. Engagement rates on social media reflected growing community interest, driven by strategic partnerships, event promotions, and artist highlights.

Music Office marketing growth	Q3	Q4
Newsletter subscribers	669	682
Newsletter click rate	8.3%	6.5%
Social media impressions	57,697	111,043
Social media engagement	847	1,370
Social media link clicks	60	167
Social media followers	819	1,087
Release Radar participants	15	20

## These activities supported our 2024 annual plan goals:

- // Strengthen music-friendly infrastructure.
- // Create professional development and networking opportunities for local artists.
- // Support activation and development of spaces for musical experiences.
- // Increase connections and visibility in the community to support Creative Industries growth.



# MUSIC

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**Music work this quarter supported the following IDS initiatives:**

- 4 – Develop a creative industries tourism plan.
- 9 – Support creation of flexible packages and itineraries.
- 14 – Leverage under-utilized assets for tourism.

**Our work this quarter addressed the following Kingston Music Strategy goals:**

- 1.2 – Support community and industry efforts to create and activate music spaces, hubs, and incubators where artists can gain access to resources and support.
- 1.7 – Leverage outdoor and city-owned public spaces for performance opportunities with a focus on getting outside of the downtown core.
- 2.1 – Develop new programming and performance opportunities that promote local musicians and access to music in neighbourhoods across Kingston.
- 2.3 – Partner with local experts, community organizations, and post-secondary institutions to expand reach of city-sponsored residency programs for both musicians and music industry workers, develop barrier-free workshops, programming, and tool kits, and resources on building a career in music.
- 2.7 – Enhance awareness of grant funding opportunities available (locally, provincially, and federally) to local musicians, and explore possibilities for new grant streams as part of the City of Kingston Arts Fund (CKAF) that would support musicians including the creation of music (recording projects) and supporting emerging musicians and industry workers.
- 2.8 – Identify collaborative opportunities between City of Kingston and local schools to provide Kingston youth access to early career supports and services.
- 3.5 – Facilitate networking opportunities for local musicians (music and other creatives) through further investment in existing programs (Bandwidth, Slight Music Video Program) and collaborate with partners to create.
- 4.3 – Create a public-facing webpage where members of Kingston's music community can learn about the Music Officer's (and, when applicable, Office's) work, activities, programs, and impact.

# MUSIC

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## 2024 annual goals

Live events	2024 goal	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2024 result	% goal actual
Kingston facilitated roadshows	8	1	1	4	2	8	100%
Artists/bands impacted	25	3	2	4	2	11	44%
Workshops/professional development events	20	5	15	2	10	32	160%
Attendees at workshops/events	750	240	490	45	382	1,157	154%

Sponsored events							
Sponsored music events	25	4	5	3	2	14	56%
Attendees - sponsored events	15,000	1,325	6,200	922	2,300	10,747	72%
Artists/bands impacted	600	49	239	3	33	324	54%
Estimated economic impact of sponsored events		\$67,490	\$69,638	\$62,186	\$73,125	\$272,439	

Location/production directory							
Music listings	25	5	15	5	2	27	108%

Economic impact source: TREIM





# VISITOR SERVICES

## Q4 visitor insights

We track data on visitors to Kingston as a whole. These insights are based on Near mobile data, part of our Destination Insights Dashboard.

- // 76.7% of visitors came from Ontario.
- // 17% of visitors came from Quebec.
- // 1.5% of visitors came from the U.S.
- // 4.8% of visitors came from outside North America.
- // Visitors travelled an average of 403 km.
- // 47% of visitors stayed overnight.
- // 25 hours was the average length of stay.

In Q4, we welcomed just over 16,000 visitors to the Visitor Information Centre, based on internal door counters tracking. Approximately 600 of these guests were surveyed to gather more information about their origins.

- // 46% were visiting for leisure.
- // 31% were residents.
- // 16% were visiting friends or family.
- // 89% of visitors were from Ontario.
- // 5% of visitors were from Quebec.
- // 5% were from outside North America.



# VISITOR SERVICES

October saw many guests visiting from Europe, largely France and Germany. Fort Fright and Pumpkinferno performed very well. Many of Kingston's main attractions ended their season at the end of October. So, in November, the traffic flow decreased as expected, but we still had offerings for the Tour Trolley and Kingston Food Tours on the weekends. Stoked Sauna Co. also started their operation in mid-November.

As we do every year, in November and December, we promoted Downtown Kingston's pewter ornaments initiative, now in its 30th year. Ornaments for the Visitor Information Centre building and the Wolfe Islander 3 did very well, but the most popular ornaments this year were of the Causeway and The HIP sign. The Causeway ornaments sold out in less than two days and the Downtown Kingston team needed to order more. The VIC also added a new product, 3D holiday specs, which enhance and transform streetlights and holiday lights.

Our sustainability initiatives this quarter included setting up a system to track the uptake of print brochures in order to reduce overprinting, both for ourselves and our partners. We also developed a sustainable purchasing policy and a sustainability pledge for visitors. The latter outlines the simple steps that visitors can take to support Kingston's sustainability goals, including shopping at locally owned stores, using public transportation, and bringing their own water bottles and using Kingston's water refill stations. [The full visitor sustainability pledge, in English and French, is online.](#) We also worked with municipal staff to create and put up "No idle zone" signs for tour buses.

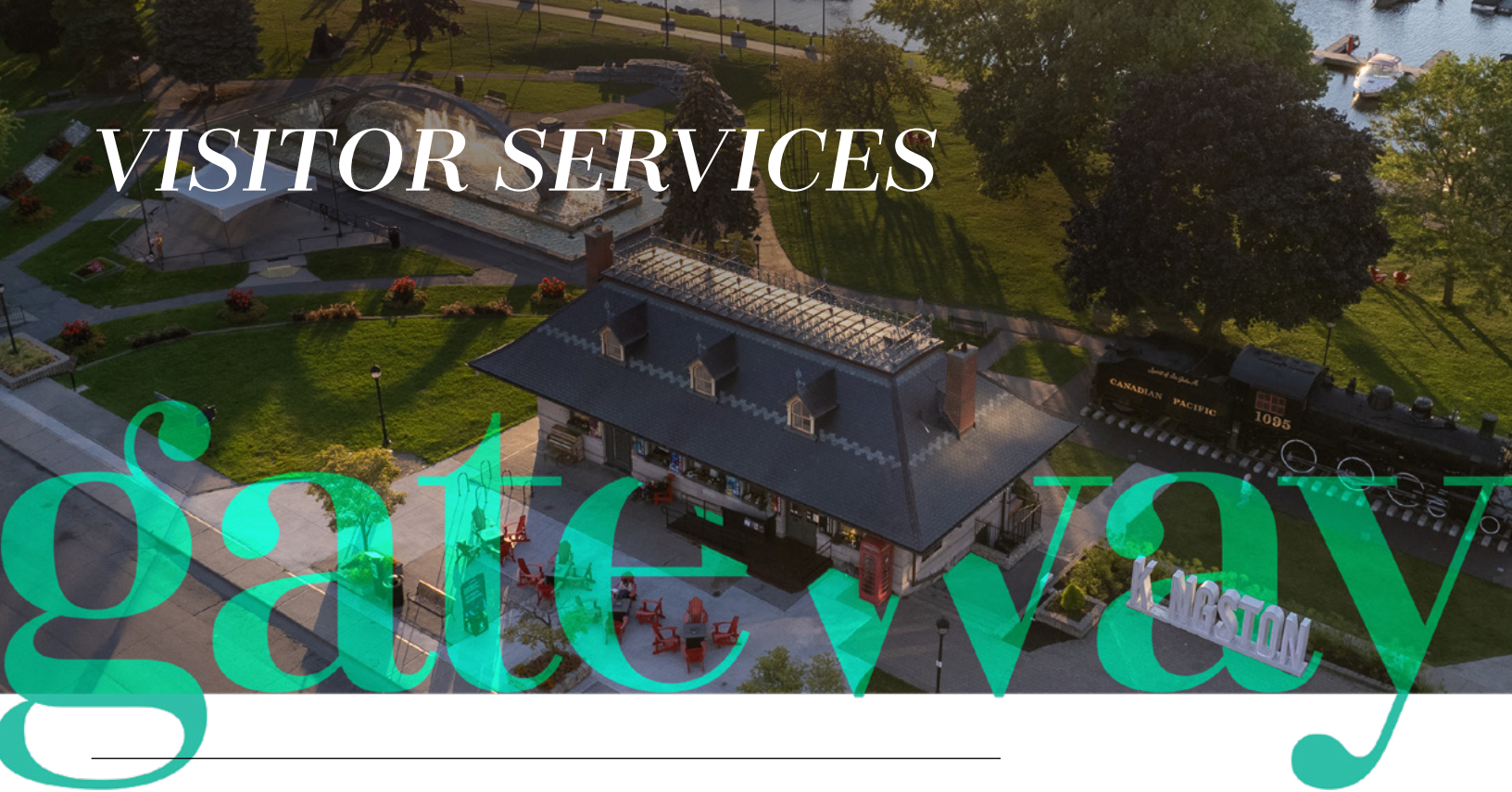
## **These activities supported our 2024 annual plan goals:**

- // Develop a strong and diverse seasonal staff team.
- // Increase attraction ticket sales.
- // Improve visitor data collection.

## **Visitor Services work this quarter supported the following IDS initiatives:**

- 13 – Create a sustainable tourism development plan.





# VISITOR SERVICES

## 2024 annual goals

Visitors	2024 goal	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2024 result	% goal actual
Number of interactions	60,000	9,197	42,998	69,060	16,005	137,260	229%

Partner support							
Tickets sold for partners	\$28,500	0	\$2,100	\$23,937	\$10,824	\$36,861	129%

Revenue							
Enhanced Profile Program	\$26,300	\$7,722	\$17,876	\$2,475	\$379	\$28,452	108%
Merchandise	\$65,000	\$108,881	\$50,333	\$48,109	\$21,066	\$228,389	351%

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# GUIDING DOCUMENTS

Work each quarter is measured against a number of guiding documents, including:



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Kingston's Integrated Destination Strategy 2022–2027



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Kingston Music Strategy



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Sport Tourism Strategic Framework







Tourism Kingston  
177 Wellington Street, Suite 200  
Kingston, Ontario  
K7L 3E3

— *Tourism* —  
**KINGSTON**