

Deer Lake and Area
(Deer Lake, Pasadena, Howley, Reidville, Cormack, Bonne Bay Pond)
Tourism Development Plan

November 2020

GOAL



To bring together tourism stakeholders in the region to establish tourism development priorities to increase visitation and spending.

Objectives



1. Identify the gaps and opportunities in the Visitor Journey in the region.
2. Identify actions/recommendations for addressing gaps and opportunities.
3. Prioritize list of actions to increase visitation and spending.

Tourism Development Planning Process

Opportunities Identification Session – February 13, 2020

- Build awareness of provincial and regional priorities & partners
- Build awareness of trends, customer profiles, tourism opportunities
- Engage stakeholders in a facilitated session to identify priorities, gaps, opportunities and potential actions

Validation of Key Findings Session – November 16, 2020

- Presentation on the key findings and recommended actions
- Engage stakeholders to validate the gaps, opportunities, and priorities

Actioning/Implementation

- Engage stakeholders to prioritize and action the key recommendations

Tourism Planning Framework



Four Areas of Focus



Provincial Tourism Product Development Priorities

- People and program-based
- Food
- Accommodations
- Natural and Cultural Attractions
- Festivals and Events
- Destination Trails
- Craft and Arts
- Indigenous Tourism

- Market-Readiness Guidelines
- Experience Development Support
- Planning & Booking
- Visitor Services
- Sense of Arrival
- Digital/Online Presence



- Using research to inform decisions
- Market potential, customer profiles, survey results
- Establishing performance baselines, measuring success

- Destination areas versus silo tourism development
- Filling in gaps along the journey, clustering
- Leveraging existing infrastructure and attractions
- Sustainability of Anchor Attractions
- Packaging, itineraries, content
- Season extension



Our typical vacation visitor

Visitor Characteristics



Travel as couple (2)



Stay 10.4 nights



Always wanted to visit



Rent a vehicle



NL = Primary destination

Demographics



55+ years old



\$100,000+ HH Income



University graduates

Trip Planning



Plan ahead 5 months



Online

Destinations
Accommodations
Things to do
Reviews



In-destination

Printed materials
Locals
NL Traveller's Guide
Destinations (online)
Attractions (online)

Trip Characteristics



Hotels B&Bs/Inns



Top destinations

- St. John's
- Gros Morne area
- Bonavista area
- Twillingate area



\$3,500



Highly satisfied



Share experiences through email and Facebook

Visitors love walking and hiking

Top 5 outdoor activities visitors participate in (% of vacation travel parties)



Pleasure
walking

89%



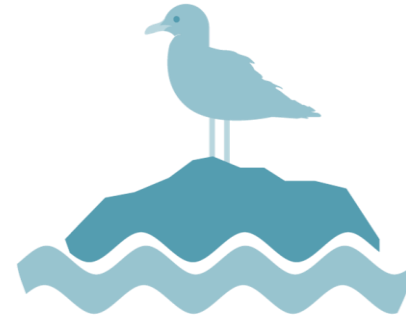
Hiking

79%



Visiting National
Parks

59%



Seabird
watching

55%



Whale
watching

52%

Visitors enjoy history, culture and food

Top 5 culture and heritage experiences (% of vacation travel parties)



Historic Sites/
museums

78%



Exploring small
communities

76%



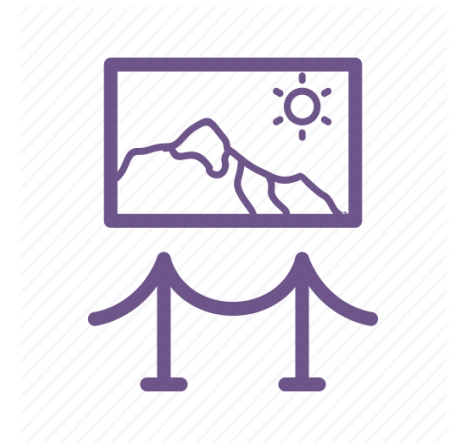
Lighthouse
experiences

74%



Culinary
experiences

70%



Galleries/exhibits

50%

Tourism Development Plan Challenge

The challenge is to create and deliver experiences that drive visitation and spending.

These experiences and how they are promoted will have to:

- Be relevant to the target market;
- Differentiate the region in the market;
- Reflect the provincial brand pillars of people, place and culture;
- Be packaged and available to purchase; and
- Address gaps and opportunities for high quality for all touchpoints along the Visitor Journey.

GOAL

**Increase tourism spending
by attracting more visitors and encouraging longer stays.**

Four Areas of Focus



Overarching – Key Findings 1



Deer Lake & Area (the surrounding communities) are strategically positioned with assets, attractions and amenities to be:

1. A destination area that attracts visitors for four seasons of outdoor adventure and authentic experiences; and
2. A major gateway core that serves as an important strategic partner for tourism destination in the Western region and beyond.

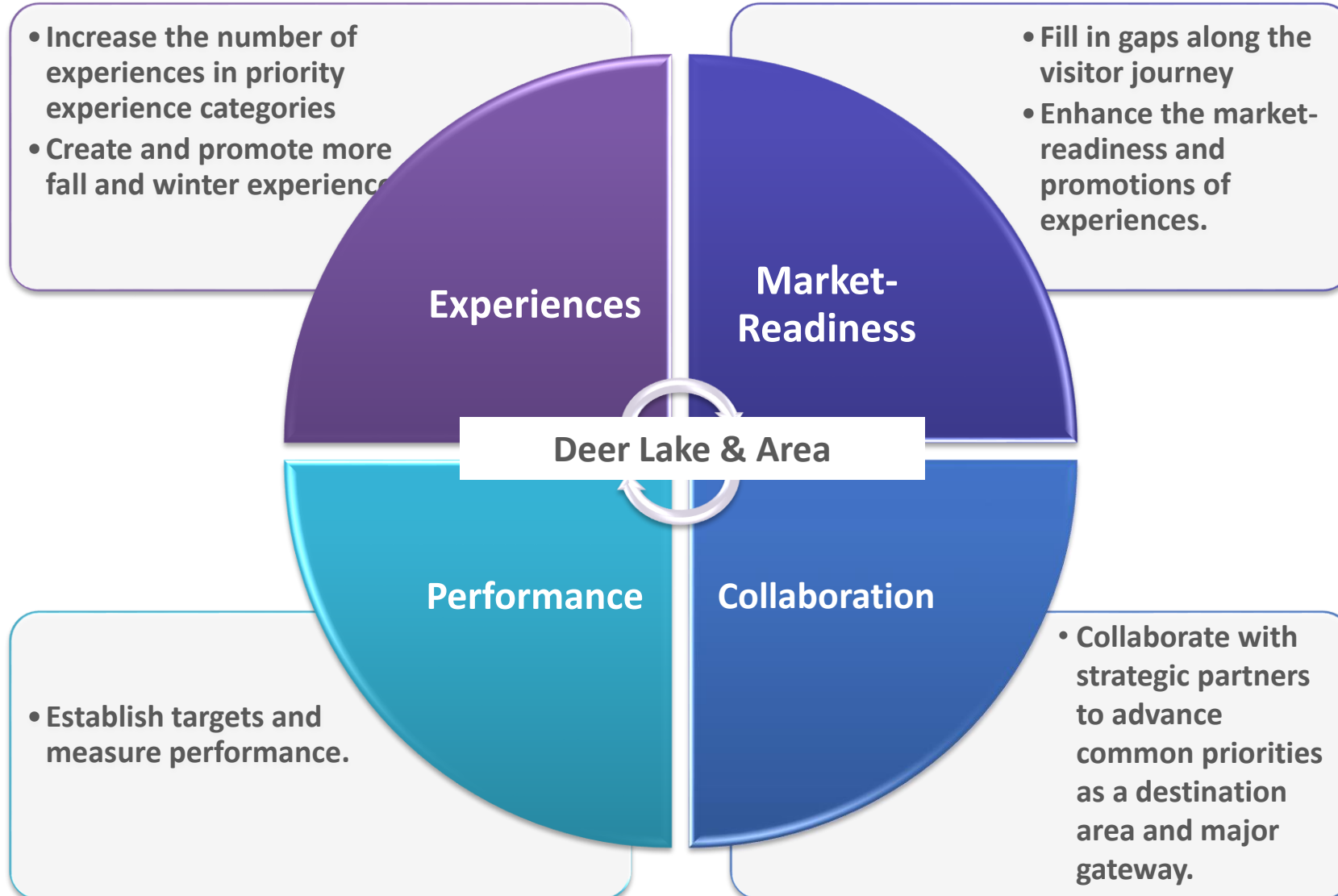
Overarching – Key Findings 2



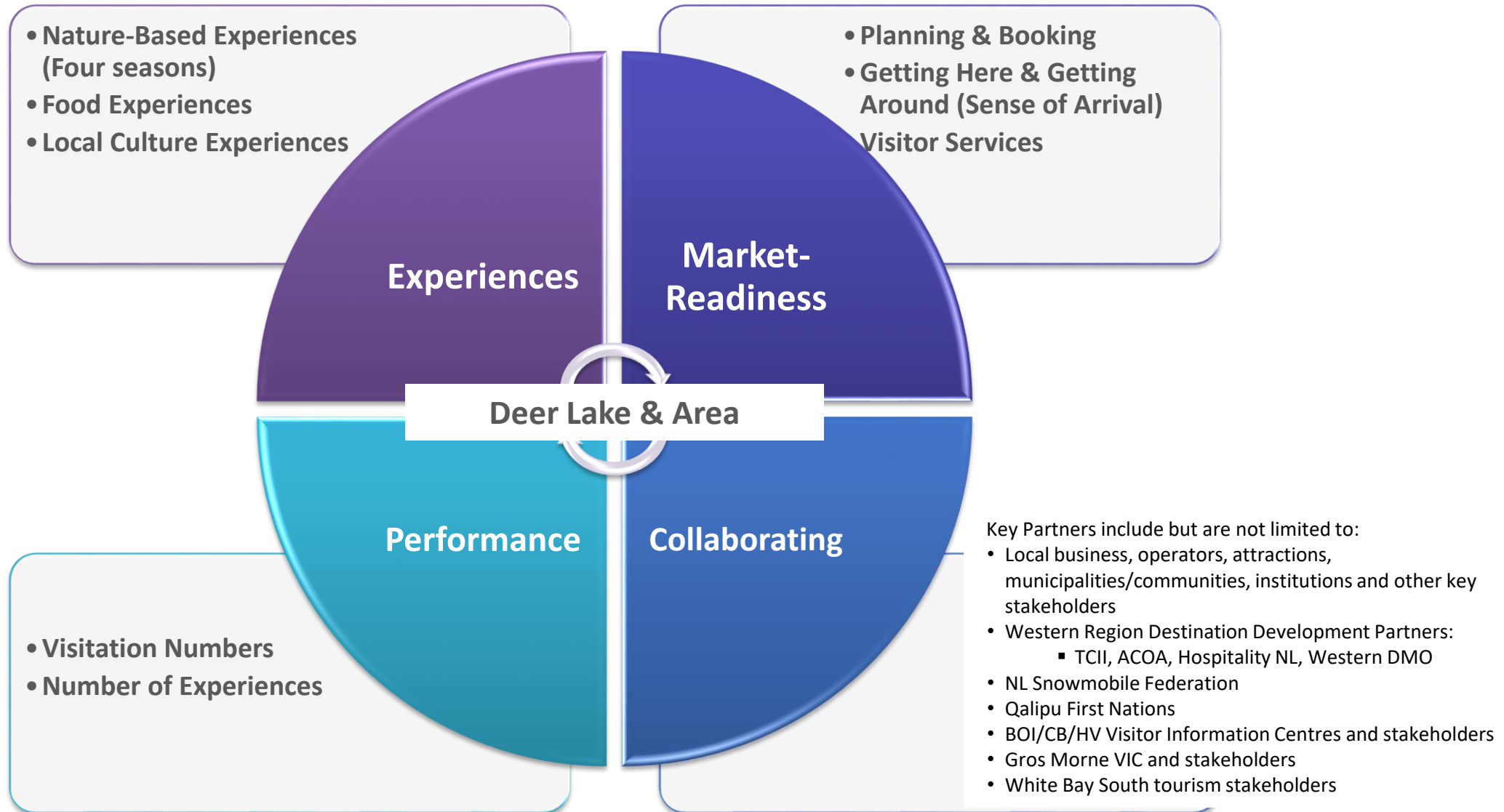
Efforts should be focused on:

- Filling identified gaps in the visitor journey;
- Enhancing promotions and market-readiness of existing experiences;
- Collaborating as a destination area to create and promote new experiences, especially for fall and winter seasons; and
- Strengthening regional partnerships as a major gateway that supports tourism growth throughout the Western region and beyond.

Objectives



Tourism Development Plan Priorities



Priorities for Market-Readiness



Tourism Planning Framework



Tourism Planning Framework

What are the touchpoints on the visitor journey?

PRE-Journey

Planning & Booking

Planning & Booking

- Regional USP/Positioning
- Newfoundlandlabrador.com
- Individual websites
- Partnerships/Promotions
- Social Media
- Customer Service (email, text, voice, etc)
- How to book your product

Getting here & getting around

Visitor Services

Visitor Journey

Food

Accommodations

Things to Experience!

POST-Journey

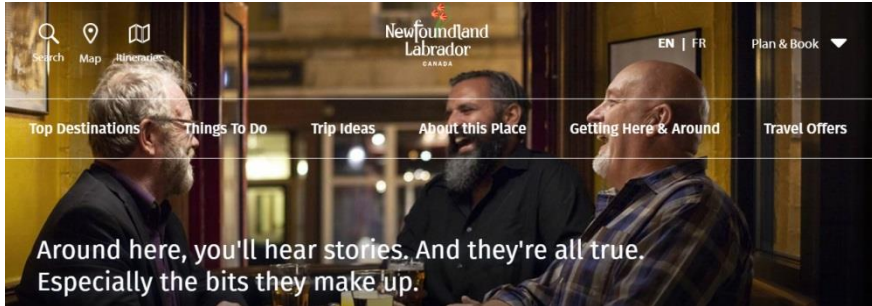
Word of Mouth & Mouse

Key Findings – Planning and Booking

- There is a need for a cohesive, collaborative approach to promoting the distinct unique selling proposition for the area as both a destination in itself and as a major gateway for the rest of the Western region and beyond.
- There is a need to improve the region's tourism presence and awareness on Newfoundlandlabrador.com, travel offers, and social media to build more reasons for them to stay in the area before they head to their next destination – especially in the fall and winter season.
- There is a need to build more connections and awareness about what is available and what events are happening that all operators can use for promoting longer stays.
- Operators could use more guidance about who is eligible to be listed on newfoundlandlabrador.com and how to use all the promotional tools available (i.e. travel offers).
- There is a need to ensure operator and town websites have accurate information, information is current and dynamic and tourism operators are accessible year-round.

Recommended Actions – Planning and Booking 1

1. Work with NL Tourism and Western DMO to arrange a **marketing-focused session** with tourism partners.



Focus should include:

- Unique selling proposition of the region
- Marketing partnerships and packages
- Itinerary development
- Experiential content for marketing and promotions
- Online presence enhancements
- Experience listing on Newfoundlandlabrador.com and engaged in NL Tourism promotional opportunities
- Engagement with regional marketing partners
- Networking opportunities with regional partners, especially other local businesses
- Social media training and engagement
- Tourism Assurance Plan

www.newfoundlandlabrador.com

Instagram/NewfoundlandLabradorTourism

Facebook/NewfoundlandLabradorTourism

Youtube/NewfoundlandLabrador

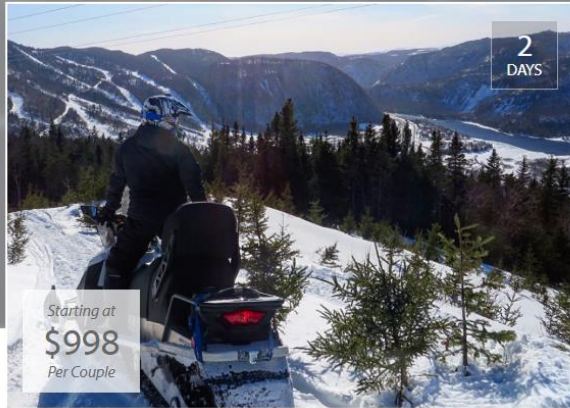
Twitter/NLTweets

#ExploreNL

#IcebergsNL

Next step: Western DMO/TCAR to arrange a marketing-focused; customer research session.

Recommended Actions – Planning and Booking 2



Rugged West Coast with Rugged Edge Tours – Stay and Play

Holiday Inn Express Deer Lake

📍 Deer Lake

2. Engage local attractions and services to **get their business listings on newfoundlandlabrador.com** and enhance existing listings with **experiential language, photos, stories** – with particular emphasis on more fall and winter experiences.
3. Create a **calendar of events** where all towns/operators in the region can list their events so that all stakeholders know what is happening daily/weekly.
4. Enable more operators to **engage in social media content development** by offering training and guidance.
5. Offer **engagement sessions and networking opportunities** so that operators are familiar with what is in the region and to encourage more partnerships/packages.
6. Ensure all **town and operator websites** have accurate information, promoting each other and the region's USP's.

Tourism Planning Framework



Getting Here & Getting Around

- Transportation
- Signage and Wayfinding
- Sense of Arrival
 - Welcome
 - Greeting
 - Wayfinding
 - Wow factor
 - First Impressions

Key Findings – Getting Here & Getting Around

- Deer Lake & Area is a major gateway core that serves as an important strategic partner for the western region and beyond.
- Deer Lake Airport Authority is a critical strategic partner for improving air access to the region.
- Additionally:
 - Car rentals are extremely important and partnerships are needed with agencies; and
 - Visitors to Deer Lake & Area also arrive through Marine Atlantic in Port aux Basques.
- Signage can be confusing and there is a need to place a focus on wayfinding not only for the destination area but also for directing people to the other tourism destination areas in the Western Region.
- As a major gateway for the province, there needs to be a more powerful sense of arrival at the airport and as visitors navigate Deer Lake & Area, and when they are off to other destinations in the region.

Recommended Actions – Getting Here & Getting Around 1



1. Collaborate with DL Airport and other key stakeholders on the **Deer Lake Sense of Arrival Initiative**.
2. Investigate opportunity for a **Welcome to Newfoundland and Labrador sign when leaving the Deer Lake Airport**.
3. Partner with local municipalities/community representatives and local operators on an initiative to **address known gaps with signage and wayfinding**.
4. Identify, **enhance and promote iconic scenic viewpoints and pull offs** for 'selfie'/social media/sense of arrival opportunities.
5. Work with local tourism operators, attractions and taxi companies to **enhance the sense of arrival at and to services and attractions**.

Recommended Actions – Getting Here & Getting Around 2

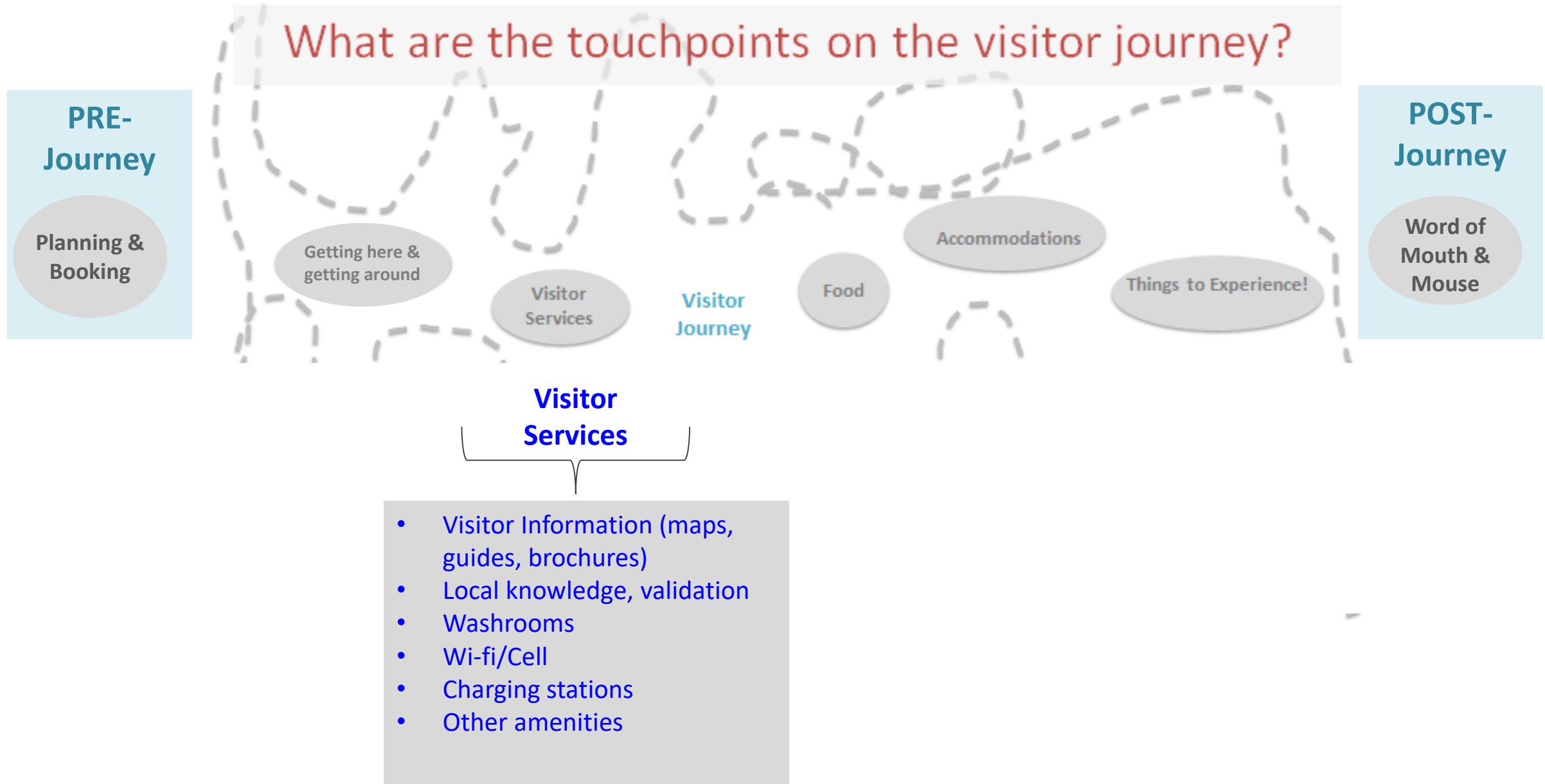


6. Investigate opportunities to partner with local businesses and tourism stakeholders to **implement sense of arrival and welcome** for visitors:
- Especially at peak times for air travel arrivals; and
 - For peak niche arrivals, such as outfitting and snowmobiling;
 - Group tour arrivals; and
 - At major gateway points in the region.

Additional ideas:

- Potential for Airport Ambassadors at peak times
- Sharing local cultural experiences
- Local food vendors available
- Working to expand food options at the airport
- Baggage storage area at airport

Tourism Planning Framework



Key Findings – Visitor Services

- There is an opportunity to enhance Deer Lake & Area promotion by operators engaging directly with local Visitor Information Centres (Deer Lake Airport, Deer Lake Highway) and other tools available through NL Tourism.
- There is also a need for local tourism stakeholders to be familiar with experiences available in entire region and adjacent communities/regions to utilize these experiences to promote itineraries for longer stays.
- There is a need to build familiarization among all operators and stakeholders about all there is to do and experience, what is open, operating hours/seasons, etc. (Accommodations and other frontline operators/staff dealing directly with visitors, in particular, need this information to encourage longer stays).
- Basic facilities and amenities exist but there is a need to build awareness of where everything is and can be accessed (i.e washrooms, charging stations, dumping stations, etc.).
- There is limited print material available about the destination area and much is in need of a refresh.

Recommended Actions – Visitor Services



1. Experience providers and tourism attractions engage directly with VICs and accommodations to ensure they are **familiar with their products/services** and to **enhance promotions**. (Should include VIC's in Port aux Basques and Gros Morne)
2. Engage in **familiarization sessions with local businesses and frontline employees annually** to enhance knowledge of tourism experiences and **share local knowledge and stories** to help promote experiences to visitors.
3. Partner with Western DMO to explore opportunity to **develop a map/itinerary style brochure of local attractions, trails, experiences**, etc. (*TAP Approval for VICs)
4. **Collect and share information and hours of operation** about the availability of services/amenities.
 - In particular: free wifi, charging stations, public washrooms, dumping stations, gas stations, equipment rentals.

Tourism Planning Framework

What are the touchpoints on the visitor journey?

PRE-Journey

Planning & Booking

POST-Journey

Word of Mouth & Mouse

Getting here & getting around

Visitor Services

Visitor Journey

Food

Accommodations

Things to Experience!

Food & Accommodations

- Availability
- Options
- Opportunities

Key Findings – Food & Accommodations

FOOD

- Food establishments are key frontline ambassadors that can promote all the things to do and experience in the area.
- There is generally diverse food options within the region but a focus is needed on local food options.
- However, there is a lack of food establishments listed on newfoundlandlabrador.com.
- There is a tremendous opportunity with the number of local agriculture operations to significantly enhance local food culture/experience offerings in the area.

ACCOMMODATIONS

- Accommodations are often the first point of contact in the planning/booking stage for visitors, which make them vitally important in encouraging longer stays.
- Accommodations also often serve as on the ground validation and provide local knowledge and promote all the things to do to visitors when they're here.
- Strategic partnerships/packages with accommodations could help create more experiences to be listed on Newfoundlandlabrador.com, travel offers, and social media

Recommended Actions – Food & Accommodations



1. Engage in **familiarization sessions with local businesses and frontline employees, especially food establishments and accommodations**, to enhance knowledge of tourism experiences and **share local knowledge and stories** to help promote experiences to visitors.
2. Make a concerted effort to have **more food establishments listed on newfoundlandlabrador.com**.
3. Utilize the opportunity to **enhance promotions and partnerships with craft breweries** located in the area.

MORE ABOUT FOOD EXPERIENCES IN EXPERIENCES SECTION!

Priorities for Experiences

- Increase the number of experiences in priority experience categories
- Create and promote more fall and winter experiences



Experiences

Tourism Planning Framework



Things to Experience

- People and Program-based
- Natural and Cultural Attractions
- Festivals and Events
- Craft, Art, Music
- Destination Trails
- Culinary
- Indigenous experiences

Experiences – Key Findings 1



- Deer Lake & Area has many nature-based assets and experiences already in place that are being utilized to create and deliver experiences to visitors.
- There is a four season outdoor culture among the people who live in and visit the area – building on this brand and promoting these experiences can enhance visitation and spending.
- There are a number of nature-based assets that could be developed as the foundation of new experiences. The region's partners will need to collaboratively prioritize these assets for investment.
- Investments in assets and experiences should be prioritized on those that:
 - Differentiate Deer Lake & Area in the market
 - Reflect established priority experience categories
 - Offer people and program-based experience potential

Experiences – Key Findings 2



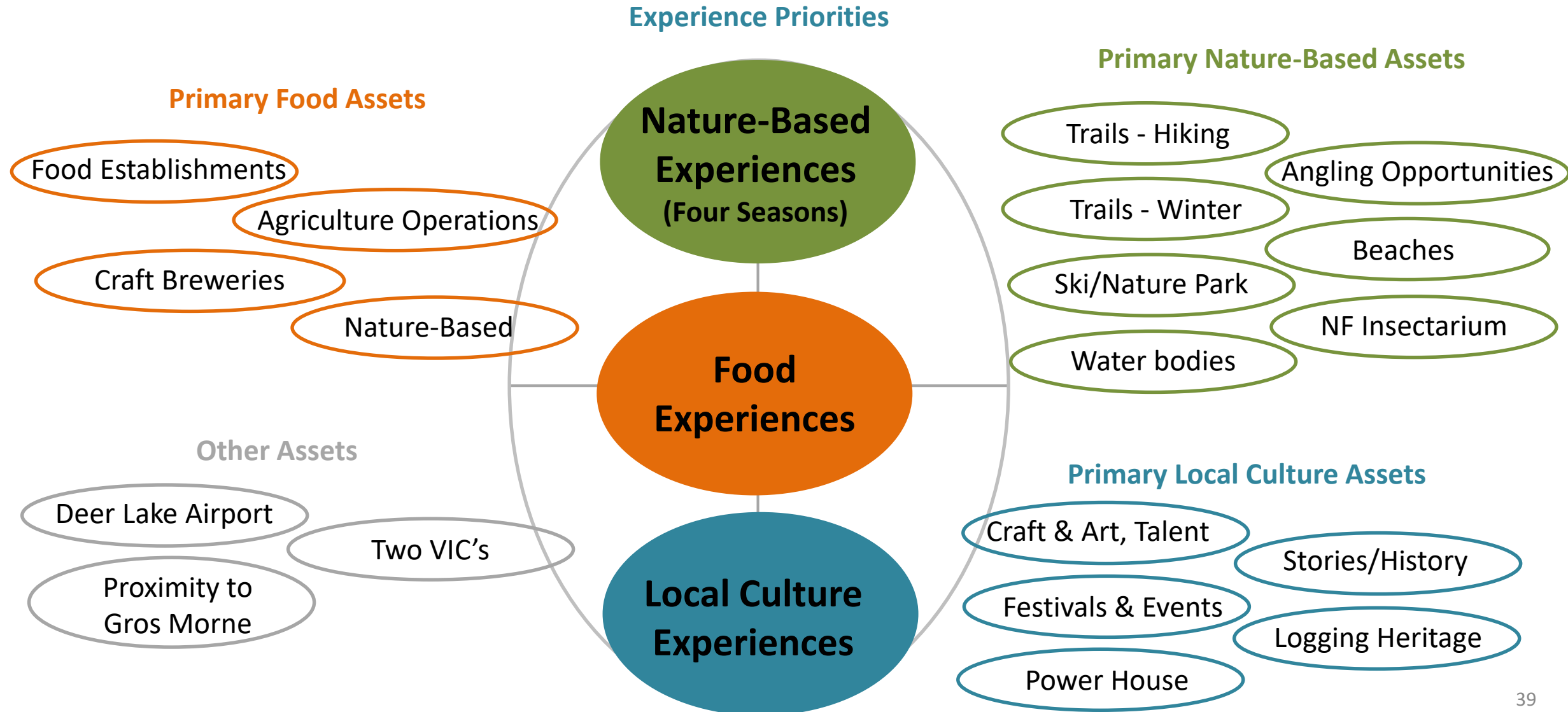
- There is an opportunity with the number of agricultural operations in the community and interest among operators to look for ways to tap into the tourism market and offer agritourism experiences.
- There is an opportunity to link businesses in tourism, food and agriculture to advance collective priorities.
- The community could use more people and program-based experiences that tell the stories of Deer Lake & Area. There is much potential for offering experiences but there is a need to identify local talent (talent, storytellers, musicians, guides, etc.) that could provide these experiences.
- Forestry/Logging and power development has deep roots and history and endures as an industry in the area.

Experiences – Key Findings 3



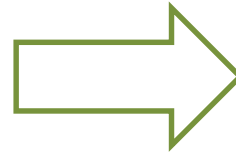
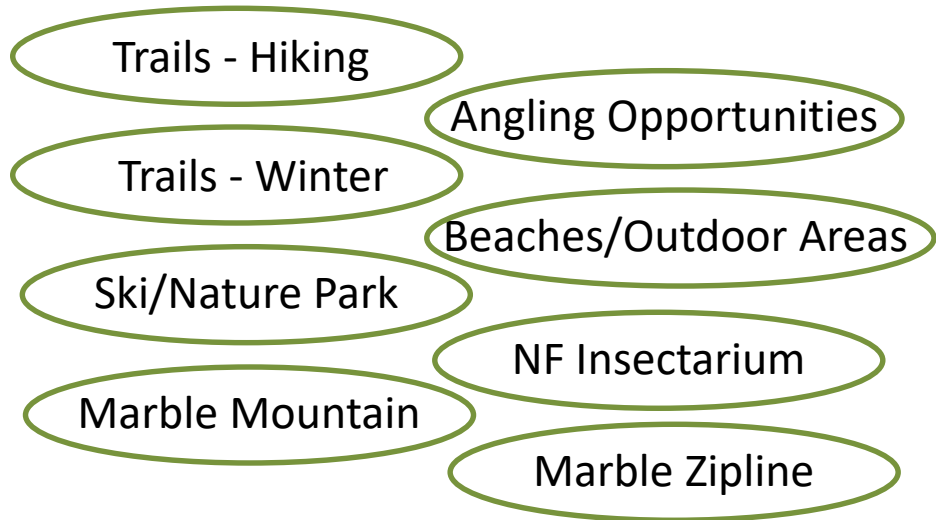
- Establishing more collaboration among the major attractions/assets will advance opportunities to better leverage the entire visitor experience in the destination area, in addition to individual promotions.
- Strategic partnerships within Deer Lake & Area is important in providing visitor experiences that will draw and keep them into the region longer.
- Strategic partnerships with other destination areas in the western region will cement Deer Lake & Area as the major gateway hub and supporter of tourism growth in the western region and beyond.
- There is a need for continued experience development and market-readiness coaching and mentoring to ensure experiences are high quality, market-ready, priced appropriately and partnership opportunities are explored.

Experience Categories – PRIMARY ASSETS



Primary Assets– Nature-based

Primary Nature-Based Assets



Recommended Actions – Nature-based



1. Work with **existing local nature-based businesses/attractions** as key experience providers and drivers of visitor traffic to the area to support their promotions, identify potential partnerships and explore opportunities for adding new experiences, **especially focused on enhancing summer experience content/promotions and enhancing fall and winter experiences and content.**

Key areas include:

- Marketing partnerships and packages and Itinerary development
- Experiential content and imagery for marketing and promotions
- Social media presence enhancements
- Provide networking opportunities to regional partners, especially other local businesses

Recommended Actions – Nature-based



2. Work with key industry, government, community and tourism partners to **prioritize and implement market-readiness and experience development enhancements on Nature-based Assets.**

Depending on the asset, this may include:

- Wayfinding/signage
- Sense of arrival initiatives
- Parking improvements
- Trail markers
- Safety
- Experience listing on Newfoundlandlabrador.com and engaged in NL Tourism promotional opportunities
- Engaged with regional marketing partners
- Online presence best practices
- Experiential content for marketing and promotions
- People and program-based experiences or elements
- Links to regional partners, especially local businesses

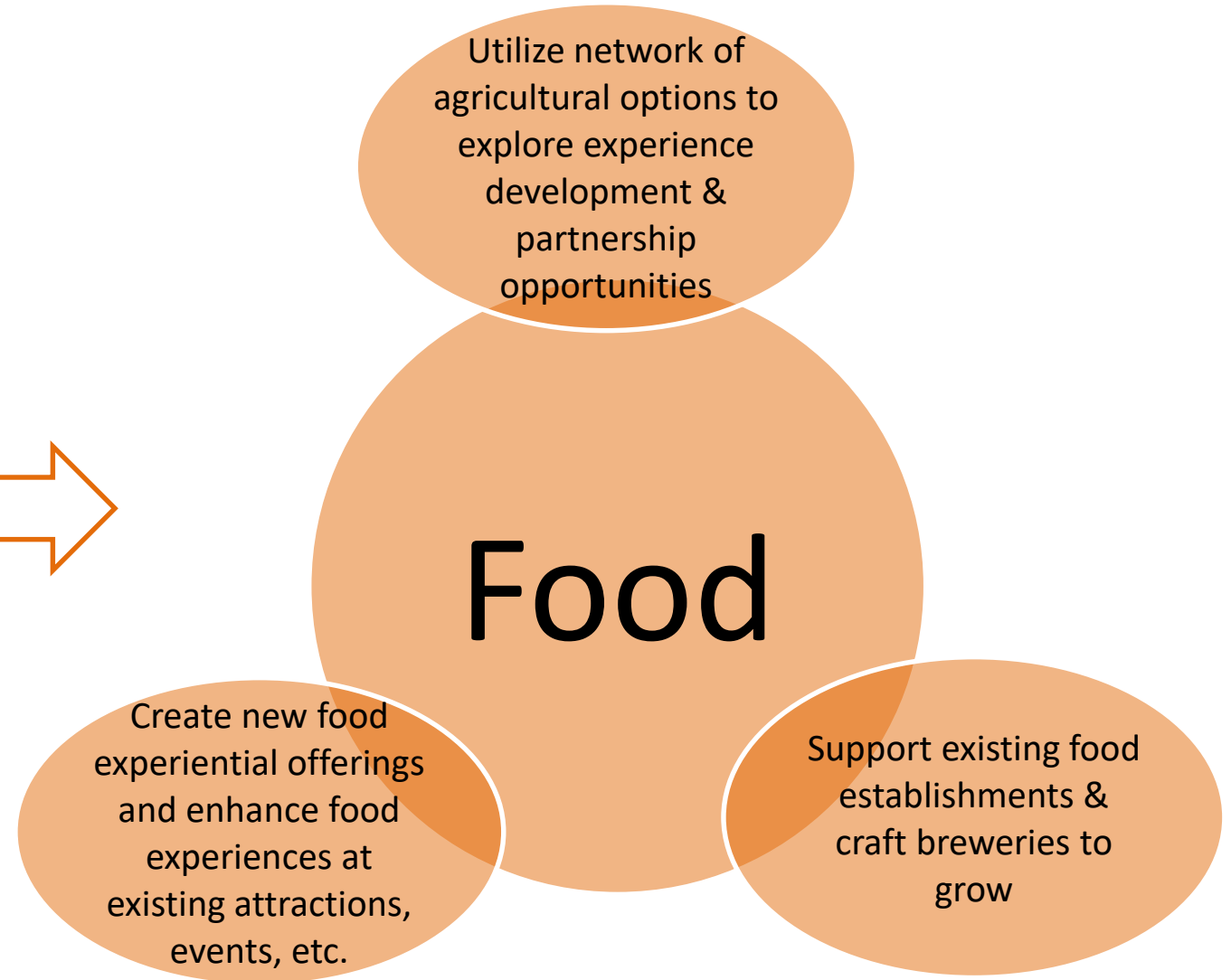
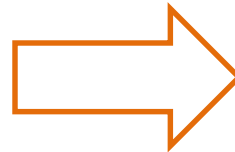
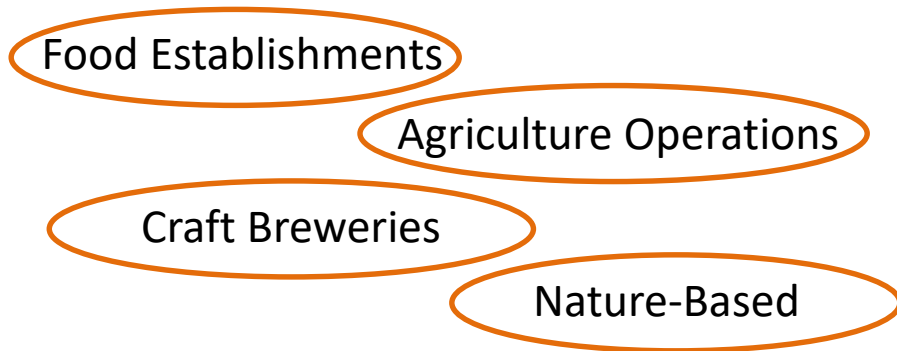
Recommended Actions – Nature-based



3. Actively engage with locals, potential entrepreneurs, businesses and community stakeholders to investigate **NEW people and program-based experiences** that can be created using existing assets
 - Offer Tourism Opportunities/Experience Development sessions
4. Provide a **collaborative environment/network** that offers regular opportunities for operators to partner, share, learn from each other and build a regional brand of high quality experiences.

Primary Assets– Food

Primary Food Assets



Recommended Actions – Food



1. Work with the **network of agricultural operations** to establish key priorities and actions for enhancing and creating food and nature-based experiences.

Actions include:

- Work with a network of agricultural operations that are interested in pursuing tourism opportunities and establish priorities for driving opportunities.
- Provide collaboration opportunities for nature-based operators, food establishments and agricultural businesses to network and create product, marketing and experience partnerships.
- Provide opportunities for experience development and market-readiness and marketing support and mentoring
- Provide networking opportunities to regional partners, especially other local businesses

Recommended Actions – Food



2. Support the **existing local food establishments, particularly the craft breweries as key experience providers and drivers of visitor traffic to the region**, to enhance their market-readiness, experience development using local food options and promotions.

Key areas include:

- Experience Development
- Marketing partnerships and packages
- Itinerary development
- Experiential content for marketing and promotions
- Online presence enhancements
- Experience listing on Newfoundlandlabrador.com and engaged in NL Tourism promotional opportunities
- Engagement with regional marketing partners
- People and program-based experiences or elements
- Provide networking opportunities to regional partners, especially other local businesses

Recommended Actions – Food

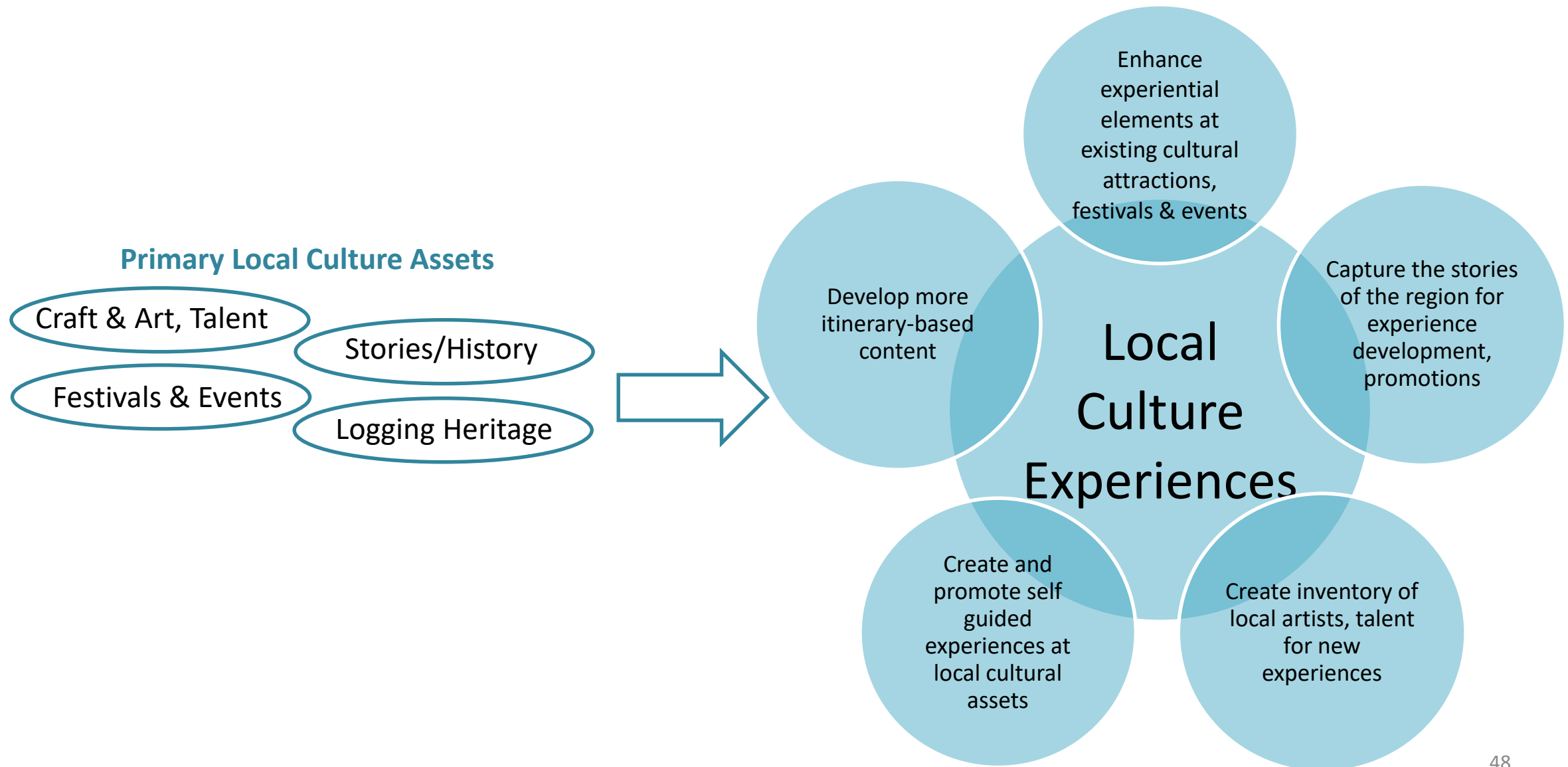


3. Actively engage with locals, potential entrepreneurs, businesses and community stakeholders to **investigate the addition of new food experiences and/or enhancement of food experiences at existing attractions, events, etc.**

Actions include:

- Offering tourism opportunities sessions
- Working with community festival and event organizers for promotional opportunities and to add food, nature-based and cultural experience offerings as part of the event programming.
- Investigating barriers that exist to accessing nature-based food assets and implement actions to address.

Recommended Actions – Local Culture Experiences



Recommended Actions – Local Culture Experiences



1. Work with **existing culture attractions, especially festivals and events** to enhance their experiential offering elements, market-readiness, and promotions.
2. **Capture the stories** of those community assets, investigate tourism experiences and advance opportunities. Stories can also be used for content development/social media.
3. **Create an inventory of local talent and artists** willing to offer their skills as storytellers, guides and/or knowledge holders.
4. Create and promote an **inventory of self-guided experiences** at local cultural attractions.
5. Work with other communities and stakeholders in the region to **develop themed itineraries** and engage in regional partnerships/promotions.

Priorities for Collaboration



Collaboration

- Collaborate with strategic partners to advance common priorities.

Key Findings – Collaborating to Compete



- There is a need to establish more collaboration among local operators and stakeholders as part of a concerted, collective effort to increase visitation and spending in Deer Lake & Area. (This is the start of that collaboration!)
- It is important to collaborate with other communities, regions and partners to identify potential partnerships, particularly in the Humber Valley and Gros Morne regions.
- There is an opportunity to enhance collaboration efforts with key partners in the larger Western region and the province.

Recommended Actions – Collaborating to Compete

1. Explore opportunity to establish **tourism working group** to drive the implementation of tourism development plans and initiatives.
2. Enhance **collaboration with key local, regional, and provincial partners** to achieve collective priorities.



Key Partners* include but are not limited to:

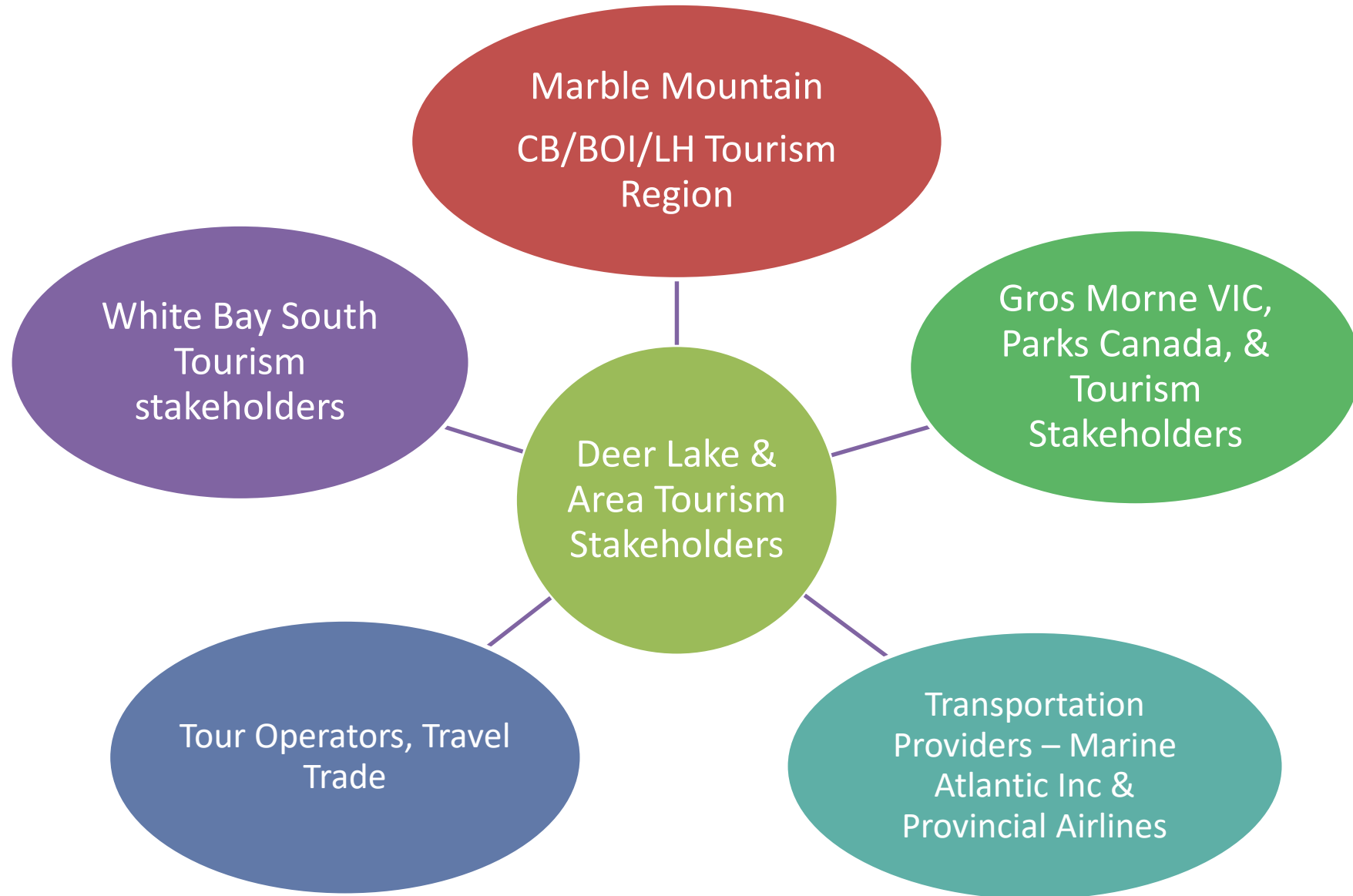
- Local business, operators, attractions, municipalities/communities, institutions and other key stakeholders
- Western Region Destination Development Partners:
 - TCII, ACOA, Hospitality NL, Western DMO
- NL Snowmobile Federation
- Qalipu First Nations
- BOI/CB/HV Visitor Information Centres and stakeholders
- Gros Morne VIC and stakeholders
- White Bay South tourism stakeholders

*Complete list is available in Tourism Planning session overview document

Within Deer Lake & Area– Recommended Priorities



Outside Deer Lake & Area– Recommended Priorities



Priorities for Performance



Key Findings – Performance



- There is an opportunity to ensure that tourism stakeholders are familiarized with the customer profiles and motivations of visitors to the community.
- There are statistics available regarding the current performance in tourism visitation that can be used as the foundation to measure performance.
- There is an opportunity to further collect and share statistics about visitors to the region to help inform tourism development.

Recommended Actions – Performance



1. Offer an **information session** to provide research and statistics information about the types of visitors coming to the region/province, things they like to experience while visiting, who our customers are, how they travel, etc.
2. Establish a baseline **measure of visitation** through existing local sources to establish growth targets and evaluate performance over time.
3. Establish a baseline **measure of the number of experiences** in the community and establish growth targets.