

Destination Antigonish

Request for Proposals: Tourism Strategy

December 2021



ST. FRANCIS XAVIER
UNIVERSITY



1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this Request for Proposal is to develop a fully integrated strategic plan for tourism in Antigonish Town and County. The Destination Antigonish working group includes StFX University, Antigonish Chamber of Commerce, Destination Eastern Northumberland Shores (DEANS), Paqtnkek Mi'kmaw Nation, the Town of Antigonish and the Municipality of the County of Antigonish. The intention of this strategy is to develop a sustainable governance structure for the local industry, drive opportunities to increase shoulder season capacity, facilitate growth for local operators, create an environment that leads to increases in visitor yields, and explore opportunities to work with industry partners to further enhance our tourism potential.

2.0 Overview

2.1 Working Group Partners

[Antigonish Chamber of Commerce](#) – The Chamber of Commerce provides maximum value to its membership by recognizing and encouraging the private sector's role as the driving force in the economy. The Chamber focuses on advocacy, networking, and education. The Chamber's objective is to support, encourage and develop business within the Antigonish Community and to engage its members in ways that inspire a progressive business climate and contribute to steady economic growth in the region.

[Destination Eastern Northumberland Shores \(DEANS\)](#) – DEANS is a registered not for profit tourism destination marketing association that represents 12 municipal units along the Eastern and Northumberland Shores. DEANS' three pillars include destination marketing, visitor servicing, and building strategic industry partnerships that includes supporting events. Their efforts are supported through their municipal partners, provincial and federal funding, as well as their membership. DEANS is led by their 16-member Board of Directors who represent various sectors and communities within the Eastern and Northumberland Shores.

[StFX University](#) – St. Francis Xavier University is located within the downtown core of Antigonish and is recognized as one of Canada's best undergraduate universities. StFX attracts half of its student population from outside the Atlantic region and have alumni in 140 different countries. StFX is known for its academic programs, focus of leadership development, commitment to social justice and community development, as well its close-knit residence environment. For nearly 165 years, StFX has cultivated its strong and resilient spirit, dedication to intellectual rigour, and commitment to engaging students who aspire to be community-minded citizens of the world. StFX has also established itself as a premier event facility in Antigonish. StFX offers a range of amenities from indoor and outdoor sport facilities to lecture halls and conference space for large and small gatherings.

[Paqtnkek Mi'kmaw Nation](#) – Paqtnkek Mi'kmaw Nation was established in 1820, 24 km east of Antigonish. The name Paqtnkek means 'by the bay' and is a distinction emphasizing the importance of the local bay and its resources to the Mi'kmaw people. Commercial developments such as the Bayside Travel Centre and the development of the Paqtnkek Fisheries Enterprise are examples of how the community maintains its cultural identity while driving economic development. Paqtnkek is a welcoming community that serves as a stopping point for many Mi'kmaw people travelling to and from Unama'ki. With a strong sense of culture, tradition, and resilience, Paqtnkek is forming and developing economic and social ventures that will embody its past, present, and future.

[Municipality of the County of Antigonish](#) – The Municipality of the County of Antigonish has incredible assets including the natural environment, rich artistic culture, and commitment to sustainability. The County represents communities from the fringe of Antigonish to smaller rural communities that reflect the abundance and culture of our region. The County’s economy has strong ties to the land and sea with agriculture, forestry, and fisheries being our region’s major economic generators.

[Town of Antigonish](#) – The Town of Antigonish is a small community located in northeastern corner of Nova Scotia. Antigonish’s Celtic connections run strong and proud along with its second-to-none hospitality. Antigonish is the central hub for activity within the area, providing many different spaces and options for business, recreation, dining, arts, and culture. Antigonish Town is home to St. Martha’s Regional Hospital and nestled in the heart of Town is the picturesque campus of St. Francis Xavier University.

2.2 Current Landscape

Antigonish is located in Mi’kma’ki, the traditional unceded territory of the Mi’kmaw people. Antigonish and the surrounding area is a vibrant community filled with rich cultural heritage and second-to-none hospitality. Antigonish has built upon the sporting tradition of the Highland Games to establish a proud hosting history that has brought several major events to the community, including: Torch Relay for the Vancouver 2010 Olympics, Grand Slam of Curling, CIS Women’s Hockey Championships, Canadian University Rowing Championships, and most recently the Special Olympics Canada 2018 Summer Games.

Following the success of the Special Olympics Canada 2018 Summer Games, Antigonish has realized its potential to become a world-class host of major events and the greater impact this would have on the local tourism industry. Through a strong partnership between the Town, County and StFX along with the support of the Chamber and DEANS, Antigonish has identified event hosting as a strong component of an overall tourism strategy.

In January 2021, DEANS and the Chamber announced a new partnership to better serve Antigonish’s local tourism industry, which has suffered due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Chamber and DEANS are focused on enhancing tourism and making Antigonish a destination of choice for travelers. The partnership highlights the importance of combining resources to make a stronger and more sustainable impact as the landscape around tourism is changing into the digital age. The Town and the County of Antigonish elected councils have made destination planning a priority for their current term. These five partners have established a Destination Antigonish working group to pursue the project and associated scope of work outlined in this RFP.

To date, there is no one organization that has centralized the efforts to effectively promote or market Antigonish in a coordinated way. The pandemic has proved that to collectively thrive as a community all partners and stakeholder need to be invested in creating an environment where business and tourism opportunities can collaborate and grow. The Town and County are committed to financially and logistically supporting community groups that are interested in raising the profile of Antigonish or contributing to the vibrancy of the community.

2.3 Relevant Reports:

Tourism Assessment

In 2009, a regional assessment of the Northumberland Shore was done by the Roger Brooks Destination Development Association (DDA). Communities along the Northumberland Shore, including Antigonish, were visited and DDA staff performed a marketing assessment. Communities were assessed for how effective the marketing was in convincing a visitor that the area would be worth a special trip, stop or overnight stay. Communities were provided recommendations for how to improve their tourism efforts.

Following the publication of this report, investments have been made in Antigonish on wayfinding and beautification projects. To read the full report, [click here](#).

Antigonish Regional Economic Assessment

In 2019, the Municipality of the County of Antigonish and the Town of Antigonish wished to explore initiatives to support and expand the local economic area. The Assessment reviews methods to develop, expand and promote Antigonish's tourism assets and visitors' experiences. To date, Antigonish's tourism promotion has been centered on the natural environment and rich Celtic history. The Assessment outlines various methods to build the Antigonish Brand and expand the local tourism potential through community-based partnerships.

To read the full Antigonish Regional Economic Assessment, [click here](#).

Town of Antigonish Municipal Planning Strategy

The Town of Antigonish recently underwent a review of its Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS). This review process included various rounds of community consultation where members of the public were able to provide feedback and share their ideas to help shape the future of Antigonish. The final MPS was adopted in May 2020. The MPS places a large emphasis on placemaking and the investment in public spaces that are accessible for all ages and abilities.

To read the full Town of Antigonish MPS, [click here](#).

Municipality of the County of Antigonish Municipal Planning Strategies

The Municipality of the County of Antigonish have four Municipal Planning Strategies that are divided by region, which include the Fringe Area, Central Antigonish, Eastern Antigonish, and Keppoch-Beaver Mountain Area. The County of Antigonish is a vast area that contains long coastlines with busy wharves, a high volume of local and provincial trail systems, a huge density of large- and small-scale farms, land for forestry, combined with new subdivisions being built in the fringe area. Agriculture and tourism are two of the main economic sectors identified in the County's multiple MPS. The County's MPS contain policies and direction for Council to support further development and enhancements to local tourism through retail, accommodations and creating a business-friendly environment.

To read the Municipality of the County of Antigonish's MPS, [click here](#).

DEANS Event Strategy

Destination Eastern Northumberland Shores (DEANS) contracted a consultant to support the development of an event strategy for the region that includes Pictou County, Antigonish County, and

Guysborough. The region has hosted some significant sporting events and has an annual calendar of festivals and events that provide great experiences for attendees and residents who participate. DEANS identified the need to develop a strategy to better position the Northumberland Shores to become an event hosting destination.

To read the full DEANS Event Strategy, [click here](#).

2.4 Municipal Support

Both Town and County Councils have identified destination planning as one of their top priorities for the 2020-2024 term. Both Councils are actively working on projects that enhance public spaces, invest in local infrastructure to make the community more accessible and identifying opportunities to partner with local stakeholders to attract major events to the area. The Town and County of Antigonish are focused on enhancing local tourism offerings, making Antigonish a visitor's destination by collaboratively working with Paqtnkek Mi'kmaw Nation, stakeholders in the tourism industry, and bringing engaged community members together to generate more economic and social benefits for the people that live and work in Antigonish. The Town and County are looking for support in the development of a tourism strategy that focuses on building long term economic growth and the creation of a governance/committee structure that allows for longevity, community participation, and accountability to deliver on action items.

3.0 Scope of Work

The terms and conditions of the Tourism Strategy Development apply in full to the services and products under this Scope of Work.

The Destination Antigonish working group is looking for an experienced tourism consultant with demonstrated expertise in strategic planning and a strong understanding of tourism to lead the development of this new fully integrated strategic plan for tourism in Antigonish.

The Destination Antigonish working group is looking for an individual or firm to develop an integrated tourism strategy that includes strategic direction, recommendations for sustainable sources of revenue, recommendations for the creation of a governance set up that includes representation from local stakeholder groups, and development of a three to five year action plan that focuses on collaborative tourism leadership, branding and marketing, sustainable asset development, communications and engagement, and extension of the shoulder season.

The successful individual or firm will lead the Destination Antigonish working group through a strategic planning process by liaising with the management team, scheduling meetings either in person or virtually, leading public consultation sessions, management of the project to ensure that all milestones are met and completed by contract dates, and provide the final materials and supporting documentation are delivered in all required formats.

3.1 Tourism Strategy Project Tasks & Deliverables

Develop an integrated tourism strategy for Antigonish and its position as a destination of choice for visitors to Atlantic Canada. The scope of the strategy can be separated into five main categories: Research, Community Consultation, Action Plan Development, Marketing Collateral, and Final Report.

1. Research

- Antigonish and surrounding area focused tourism statistics.
- Knowledge and understanding of relevant industry documents including Tourism Nova Scotia's Provincial Tourism Strategy, Destination Canada's Tourism Vision and Explorer Quotient Profiles.
- Creation of a full tourism asset inventory of the Antigonish region.
- Review of comparable destination development strategies.
- SWOT analysis of the region.

2. Community Consultation

- Stakeholder engagement/consultation sessions with local operators.
- Town and County Council engagement/consultation sessions.
- Identifying infrastructure investment opportunities that support operators, increase accessibility and community attractiveness.

3. Action Plan Development

- Proposed governance or leadership structure that includes community stakeholders.
- Review of revenue models and income generators.
- Proposed investments to anchor attractions and local tourism infrastructure.
- Communications and outreach that include visitor profiles and methods of engagement.
- Evaluation tactics to monitor growth and success.

4. Marketing Collateral

- Assistance with digital asset development including refinement of current logo and branded materials.
- Creation of visitor profiles and attraction tactics.
- Marketing timeline and suggestions for collateral and digital asset development.

5. Final Report

- Draft copy of final strategy to the Destination Antigonish working group for review and input.
- Final presentation to both Town, County, and Paqtnkek Councils, Chamber Board, DEANS Board and StFX leadership team.

3.3 Value Added Services or Innovative Methods

Given the individual or firm's experience, there may be additional product or service offerings that are aligned with Destination Antigonish's objectives and overall long-term success. Final submissions may include ideas beyond the scope of the RFP that provide added benefit that the Destination Antigonish working group has not specifically asked for in this RFP. Proponents are encouraged to present to the Destination Antigonish working group any value-added services, innovative methods, or cost saving opportunities that could be applied to the scope of work above and to achieve the project objectives.

Individuals or firms are free to suggest alternative approaches to the work that could result in project efficiencies or improved results, while still meeting the overall objectives. This could result in omission, or additions, of certain scope items and a change in overall project cost. Final submissions should

describe their approach to the work to realize efficiencies and present the potential impact on cost and schedule alongside the description of the alternative approach (ex. this alternative approach could result in an approximate 5% reduction in overall project cost and reduce the reporting turn-around time by one week).

3.4 Budget

The budget of this project is conditional on funding approval. The total project cost should not exceed \$48,000 CAD (HST inclusive).

Individuals or firms are asked to please outline the estimated cost per line item in the final proposal.

The Destination Antigonish working group thanks all those for their interest, however only submissions from individuals and/or vendors based in Atlantic Canada will be accepted.

Total Budget: \$48,000 HST inclusive.

3.3 Submission Details

Project Name	Destination Antigonish Tourism and Marketing Strategy Development
Company	Town of Antigonish
Contact Name	Kate Gorman
Contact Phone	902-318-6758
Contact Email	kgorman@townofantigonish.ca
Submission Date	Monday, January 21, 2022, at 12 p.m.
Begin Date	Upon awarding of the contract
End Date	TBD between Destination Antigonish and successful applicant.

Please be advised that questions on this RFP will be taken via email during the following time periods:

- Tuesday, December 7, 2021, to December 18, 2021 at 4 p.m.
- Tuesday, January 4, 2022 to January 14, 2022 at 4 p.m.

4.0 Evaluation Criteria

Destination Antigonish group members will evaluate submissions based on approach, performance, timeline, and price. The final submissions proposals must include:

- A detailed budget that includes an estimate of all associated costs per line item outlined in the scope of work including travel that may be required, costs for leading community consultation, research, etc.
- A timeline and planned approach/methodology for the complete tourism strategy development process and how the vendor plans to meet indicated milestones.
- A portfolio of past similar projects from previous clients and CVs or resumes of those individuals assigned to complete the project.
- At least three (3) references including, portfolio from similar scope and type of projects completed. References should include at a minimum description of the related project, client name, contact person, email, phone number, address, and value of the project in terms of fees.

5.0 Terms and Conditions

This is an invitation for proposals and not a tender call. Its purpose is to initiate negotiations which, if satisfactory, will lead to the selection of a vendor, or vendors, to complete the scope of work.

This RFP neither expresses nor implies any obligations on the part of the Destination Antigonish group, which includes the Town of Antigonish, Municipality of the County of Antigonish, Paqtnkek Mi'kmaw Nation, StFX University, DEANS or the Antigonish Chamber of Commerce to enter a contract with any individual or firm submitting a response or responses. The award of any contract is subject to further negotiations.

The Destination Antigonish working group reserves the right to reject all or any proposal, and to not necessarily accept the lowest or any quote or proposal submitted. The Destination Antigonish group may accept any quote or any portion of any proposal that may be considered to be in the best interests of either partner. Destination Antigonish reserves the right to cancel with RFP process at any time. All proponents acknowledge that they are undertaking all expenses associated with the RFP at their own risk and shall have no claim against any involved partner for any matter related to this RFP.