

Back on the Map  
**Shuniah**  
Tourism Strategy



**Final Report**

January 25, 2019



Front cover photo by: Pierre Nantais

## Contents

List of Tables .....	iii
List of Figures.....	iii
Acknowledgements .....	1
Executive Summary .....	2
1. Background .....	7
1.1 Why Tourism Matters .....	8
1.2 What Motivates Northwestern Ontario Tourists? .....	9
1.3 The Importance of Wayfinding .....	11
2. Shuniah’s Tourism Context .....	12
2.1 Location .....	12
2.2 Current Tourism Assets .....	13
Sights & Activities: .....	13
Businesses & Organizations: .....	14
Events: .....	15
Outdoor Recreation: .....	15
2.3 SWOT Summary .....	17
3. Back On The Map – Tourism Strategy Framework .....	19
3.1 Guiding Principles .....	20
3.2 Tourism Focus Area #1: Community Pride and Promotion .....	21
Main Goals of Focus Area #1: .....	21
3.3 Tourism Focus Area #2: Lake Accessibility .....	22



Main Goals of Focus Area #2: .....	22
3.4    Tourism Focus Area #3: Outdoor Recreation and Trails.....	23
Main Goals of Focus Area #3: .....	23
3.5    Tourism Focus Area #4: Business Connections.....	24
Main Goals of Focus Area #4: .....	24
3.6    Tourism Focus Area #5: Regional Collaboration .....	25
Main Goals of Focus Area #5: .....	25
4.    Strategic Pilot Projects & Action Plan.....	26
4.1    Wild Goose Beach Development & Promotion Pilot Project .....	26
4.2    “Take the Scenic Route” Pilot Project .....	27
4.3    “Visiting Shuniah” Visitor Information Pilot Project .....	28
4.4    Tourism Data Measurement Pilot Project .....	30
5.    Final Considerations.....	31
5.1    Implementing and Adding Action Items .....	31
5.2    Other Key Performance Indicators .....	32
5.3    Effort vs. Impact .....	32
5.4    Growth and Community Benefits .....	32



## List of Tables

Table 1: Research Insights .....	2
Table 2: Stakeholder Activity Summary .....	4
Table 3: Shuniah Tourism Strategy Framework Summary .....	4
Table 4: Spending by Visitor Motivation in Northwestern Ontario.....	9
Table 5: Recreational Activities Comparison Summary .....	16
Table 6: SWOT Analysis Summary.....	17
Table 7: Wild Goose Beach Development Project Summary .....	26
Table 8: Lakeshore Scenic Route Development Project Outline .....	28
Table 9: Shuniah Visitors Webpage and Guide Project Outline .....	29
Table 10: Tourism Data Measurement Pilot Project Outline .....	30

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Northern Ontario Priority Consumer Segments.....	10
Figure 2: Key Elements of a Successful Tourism Area (Lake Superior Northern Tourism Strategy).....	11
Figure 3: Map of Shuniah Municipal Boundaries (Google).....	12
Figure 4: Shuniah Tourism Strategy Framework Diagram.....	19



## Acknowledgements

The Municipality of Shuniah and the project development team would like to thank the residents, business owners, community leaders, municipal representatives and regional tourism organizations that participated in this project and contributed to the development of this new Tourism Strategy.

The Municipality of Shuniah acknowledges that we are located in the Robinson-Superior Treaty Territory and the land on which we live is the traditional territory of the Anishnaabeg and the Metis. This project has been made possible by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

We gratefully acknowledge the input and insights provide by the respective representatives of over 20 businesses and organizations:

<b>Shuniah Council &amp; Administration</b>	<b>Businesses</b>	<b>Neighbouring Communities</b>	<b>Regional Organizations</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wendy Landry, Mayor</li> </ul> <p><b>Councillors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Duff Stewart</li> <li>Donna Blunt</li> <li>Don Smith</li> <li>Ron Giardetti</li> </ul> <p><b>Management:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paul Greenwood</li> <li>Nadene Hunley</li> <li>Jason Evans</li> <li>Craig Baumann</li> <li>Susan Moore</li> <li>Blair Arthur</li> </ul> <p><b>Recreation Coordinator</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kathie Manuala</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crystal Beach Variety</li> <li>Crystal Beach Restaurant</li> <li>Thunder Bay International Hostel</li> <li>Lakeshore Variety</li> <li>Bears, Bees &amp; Honey</li> <li>Thunder Bay KOA</li> <li>The Fish Shop</li> <li>Diamond Willow Amethyst Mine</li> <li>Eldorado Beach Bed &amp; Breakfast</li> <li>Mount Baldy Ski Area</li> <li>Seek Adventure Tours</li> <li>Such A Nice Day Adventures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City of Thunder Bay Tourism</li> <li>Township of Nipigon</li> <li>Red Rock Township</li> <li>Dorion Township</li> <li>Municipality of Neebing</li> <li>Municipality of Oliver Paipoonge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thunder Bay CEDC</li> <li>Canadian Lighthouses of Lake Superior</li> <li>Canada Parks National Marine Conservation Area</li> <li>Superior Country</li> <li>Destination Northern Ontario</li> </ul>





## Executive Summary

Shuniah's new Tourism Strategy is a comprehensive framework that identifies current high priority opportunities and provides guidance for evaluating future opportunities and projects in this sphere. *Back on the Map* is both a literal and figurative descriptor of what this strategy needs to accomplish. Shuniah's contributions to Tourism in the region are significant, but when the TransCanada Highway was rerouted away from many of the local businesses in 2013, it was literally left off of tourism maps and guides. Shuniah's place in local and regional tourism was also lost in regional marketing, where in some cases our best attractions and assets are featured but not connected to the community itself. *Back on the Map* is a call to action and proud statement of where Shuniah should be – recognized as a unique destination and home to some of the best visitor experiences in Northwestern Ontario. It also speaks to opportunities for Shuniah to participate in regional tourism efforts and partner with neighbouring communities to make a stronger case for our area as a destination.

Market research on national, provincial and regional tourism trends and strategies led to insights that were key to identifying and assessing the opportunities and challenges of tourism development that face Shuniah (Table 1).

Table 1: Research Insights

Research Insight	Considerations
1.7 M visitors to Northwestern (NW) Ontario annually, Ontario Residents are most common visitors (64%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on local/regional advertising.</li> <li>Thunder Bay as regional travel hub = best bet for advertising/promotion</li> </ul>
NW Ontario Visitors are mainly motivated by pleasure-seeking activities and visiting friends and relatives (83%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on activities that local residents enjoy, outdoor recreation (so their guests have lots to do)</li> <li>Develop/promote activities available in Shuniah</li> </ul>
42% of all NW Ontario visitors report participating in an outdoor activity and those that do tend to stay in the region longer (3-4 nights)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shuniah's natural outdoor spaces could be a major economic driver/tourism asset if made accessible for recreational use</li> <li>Visitors length of stay has significant impact on total spending</li> </ul>
Same-Day visitors account for 42% of visitors in the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extending length of stay key to economic growth</li> </ul>
Shuniah has excellent opportunity to leverage Nature-based tourist and pleasure-seeking same-day visitors from Thunder Bay (Pop. 108,000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shuniah should leverage proximity to the City of Thunder Bay and focus on outdoor assets/activities that will draw visitors from the City</li> </ul>



1M Nature-based tourists visit Northern Ontario annually, most stay with friends or in camping/RV accommodations and spend \$208 M on goods and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shuniah is well-positioned to accommodate these visitors with ample outdoor assets and many campgrounds</li><li>• More short-term rental or roofed accommodations could expand reach into this market</li></ul>
90% of Economic benefits generated by Nature-Based Tourists are retained within the region they visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Working with partners, neighbours on strengthening the regional appeal to nature-based tourists will capture significant amount of those tourism dollars locally</li></ul>



*Photo credit: Dean Michieli*



This strategy was developed using a community-led model of research and stakeholder engagement. Input was gathered from Shuniah residents, business owners, community leaders, neighbouring community representatives and regional tourism organizations through a combination of interviews, public surveys, focus groups and community information sessions (Table 2).

Table 2: Stakeholder Activity Summary

Stakeholder Groups	Activity	No. of Participants
Shuniah Residents	Survey	88
	Community Input session	26
Shuniah Businesses	Survey	10
	Interviews	13
Neighbouring Communities	Interviews	6
Regional Tourism Organizations and Businesses	Interviews	5
Shuniah Leadership	Focus Group	7
	Interviews	1

Input from Stakeholders was key to fully understanding the challenges tourism development faces regionally, how Shuniah's location and history impact tourism potential for the community, and what kind of tourism development fits with Shuniah's community culture.

*Back on the Map* organizes Shuniah's opportunities and tourism development goals into five Focus Areas: Community Pride and Promotion, Lake Accessibility, Outdoor Recreation and Trails, Business Connections and Regional Collaboration. Beneath each Focus Area are main goals that highlight what Shuniah is working towards over the next five years under this strategy (Table 3).

Table 3: Shuniah Tourism Strategy Framework Summary

## Strategic Focus Area

## Main Goals

Community Pride & Promotion	<p>A. <b>Be Distinct:</b> Ensure Shuniah is seen as a distinct and unique community in tourism materials, websites and visitor information centers</p> <p>B. <b>Get Found:</b> Make visitor-centered wayfinding tools so that Shuniah's tourism assets are easy to find and explore</p> <p>C. <b>Tell our Stories:</b> Research, develop and promote Shuniah's history, cultural influences, Indigenous context and stories that provide a "sense of place"</p> <p>D. <b>Say it Loud:</b> Create and promote information about Shuniah tourism assets that enhances community pride and visitor experiences</p>
-----------------------------	---





	E. <b>Walk the Walk:</b> Develop and/or encourage events that promote Shuniah's unique history, people, products or places
Lake Accessibility	<p>A. <b>Document It:</b> Create and maintain an inventory of all lake access points that are publicly accessible and update as needed</p> <p>B. <b>Protect and Respect It:</b> Create and promote expectations for use of lake access points that encourages stewardship, responsible use and respect for neighbours</p> <p>C. <b>Make it Better:</b> Investigate and pursue opportunities for infrastructure development/improvements that ensure lake access points are safe, clean, and clearly defined</p> <p>D. <b>Make it Ours:</b> Support and promote activities and events centered on enjoyment of Shuniah's lakeshore location</p>
Outdoor Recreation & Trails	<p>A. <b>Understand and Organize:</b> Create and maintain inventory of publicly accessible natural spaces and places</p> <p>B. <b>Recruit Home-grown Enthusiasts:</b> Community-led development of public trails and outdoor recreational spaces</p> <p>C. <b>Get Ready for Explorers:</b> Infrastructure development/improvements to ensure public outdoor spaces and trails are safe and easy to access</p> <p>D. <b>Make the Most of It:</b> Develop and/or encourage community-centered events and groups that make great use of Shuniah's trails and outdoor spaces</p>
Business Connections	<p>A. <b>Connect Often:</b> Improve communication with local businesses on opportunities and resources available related to tourism activities</p> <p>B. <b>Give Guidance:</b> Provide guidelines and implement policies that clearly outline how businesses can participate in tourism-related events and business activities</p> <p>C. <b>Invite Involvement:</b> Seek/create business participation in tourism-related events or projects wherever possible</p> <p>D. <b>Impact Consumer Awareness:</b> Increase visitor spending in local businesses through facilitation and promotion of special events, projects and products</p> <p>E. <b>Reduce Gaps &amp; Create Pathways:</b> Facilitate/encourage opportunities for small start-ups, pop-up shops and other services that are relevant to Tourism Focus Areas or enhance visitor experiences</p>
Regional Collaboration	<p>A. <b>Wider Promotion:</b> Leverage participation in regional organizations/projects to maximize promotion of Shuniah's best assets</p> <p>B. <b>Build on Tourism Network:</b> Develop and strengthen relationships with neighbouring communities and tourism organizations to achieve shared goals</p> <p>C. <b>Showcase our Best Bets:</b> Develop and promote regional tourism packages/routes/itineraries that link Shuniah's offerings with other high-impact tourism assets</p>

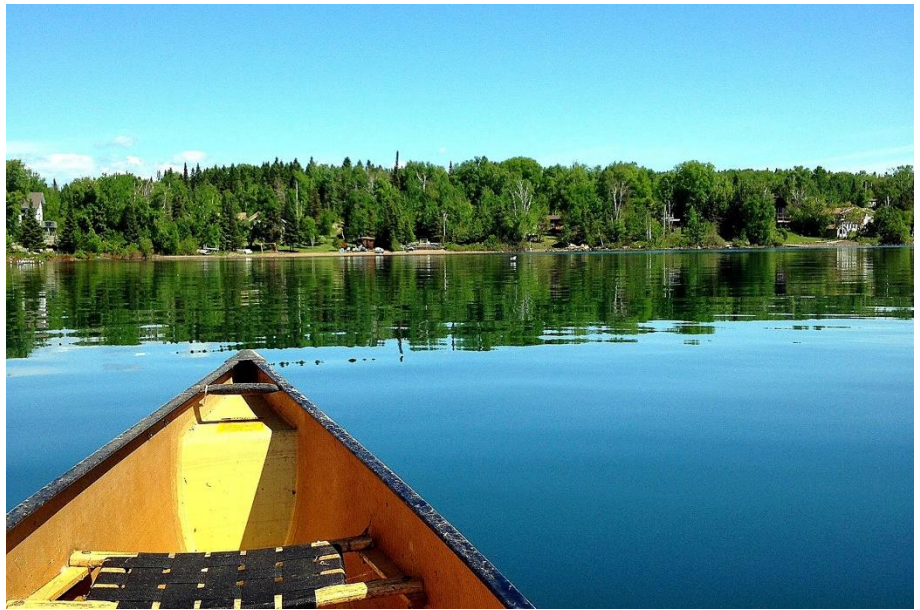


An Action Plan has been developed which further details how each objective can be pursued over the next three years. Research conducted throughout the project is provided in greater detail in two supplementary reports: Market Research and Stakeholder Input. The Shuniah Tourism Strategy is designed to bring together community interests, existing tourism assets, local businesses and regional partners to develop tourism products and promote Shuniah as a unique and memorable place to visit, whether for a day, a week or a whole season.



## 1. Background

As a small, quiet, residential community stretched along 40 km of the northern shore of Lake Superior and nestled next to the Sleeping Giant, the Municipality of Shuniah offers charm, unblemished natural beauty and an unhurried pace of life to residents and visitors alike. Shuniah is both a bedroom community to the City of Thunder Bay (Population 108,000) and a summer paradise to seasonal cottagers and campers. The community is home to a cluster of businesses who once thrived thanks to scores of travelers delivered conveniently to their doorsteps via their location on the TransCanada Highway 11/17, which ran directly through a portion of the community. However, in the late-2000's construction began on a new section of the TransCanada, twinning and rerouting Highway 11/17 to the northwest corner of the City of Thunder Bay and significantly altering the route that visitors would take through the Shuniah which forced local businesses to dramatically change their operations in order to survive.



*Photo Credit: Susan Tardif*

The highway rerouting, which was completed in 2013, was one of several significant economic shifts that impacted Shuniah during that time period. Regionally, the forest industry was recovering from a significant downturn and Thunder Bay's housing market was experiencing significant growth. The City of Thunder Bay began focusing its economic development efforts on developing its knowledge economy and supporting small start-ups. Shuniah itself also saw its demographics shifting slightly, with more young families moving into the community and seasonal properties being converted into permanent residences. Prior to this, Shuniah had traditionally been thought of as retirement community with a large contingent of seasonal residents.

In 2015, Shuniah developed a Strategic Plan to guide its decision making and set targets for growth in four key areas of municipal responsibility: Community Development, Infrastructure, Governance and Economic Development. This marked a shift for Shuniah; at the time, the community didn't have a designated department or staff focused directly on economic development, though several key personnel handled projects as needed. In a short time, an Economic Development Manager was hired and targets



set by the Strategic Plan were being tackled and completed. This Tourism Strategy is the next step in economic development for Shuniah and sets out an exciting action plan to turn the challenges of the past into the opportunities of Shuniah's future.

*Back On The Map* is a guide for making Shuniah a distinct and memorable place to visit, offering excellent tourism experiences and opportunities for visitors to connect with the lake, the landscape and our businesses.

### 1.1 Why Tourism Matters

Tourism is a recognized pillar of the National economy (est. \$97.4 Billion in 2017) as Canada has experienced steady growth as a tourism destination. In 2017, Canada welcomed a record 20.8 Million international visitors and it is predicted that the total visitors for 2018 will surpass that record, with a 1.5% increase in visitors in the first 8 months<sup>1</sup> compared to 2017. Northern Ontario alone welcomed 8.2 Million visitors in 2017, who spent \$1.6 Billion in the region and generating \$500 M in annual tax revenue. The Tourism Sector has significant implications for local economies. One in four Northern Ontario business are tourism-related and 40% of our workforce is connected to Tourism<sup>2</sup>. Tourism has wide-ranging impacts at the local and regional level, driving growth in many sectors including: transportation, accommodation, food and beverage, retail services, recreation, entertainment and, arts and culture.

Ontario's Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport estimates that for every dollar of direct tourism spending in the Thunder Bay area, an additional \$0.40 is also generated in indirect and induced local spending

#### Tourism in Canada

- \$97.4 B in revenues annually
- 20.8 M visitors to Canada in 2017
- Steady increase in tourism in recent years

#### Northern Ontario Tourism

- 8.2 M visitors to Northern Ontario Annually (\$1.6 B revenues)
- 1 in 4 Northern Ontario Business are tourism-related
- 40% of Northern Ontario Workforce related to Tourism Economy
- 1.6 M visitors to Northwestern Ontario (\$300M in revenues)

<sup>1</sup> Source: "Tourism – Canada's Economic Pillar" Fact Sheet 2018, The Tourism Industry Association of Canada.. [https://tiac-aitc.ca/\\_Library/TIAC\\_Publications](https://tiac-aitc.ca/_Library/TIAC_Publications)

<sup>2</sup> Source: "An Update for the Northern Ontario Tourism Industry", Destination Northern Ontario, Sept 14, 2018



and \$0.30 of direct and induced spending is generated in our provincial economy<sup>3</sup>. Investments and improvements in our local tourism economy generate revenue across many sectors, not just those directly related to tourism.

## 1.2 What Motivates Northwestern Ontario Tourists?

Every year, visitors to Northwestern Ontario contribute almost \$300M to the regional economy. Destination Northern Ontario (DNO) is the regional tourism organization that undertakes tourism marketing, product development and other tourism projects to grow and strengthen the Tourism Sector as an economic driver in the region. Their research has identified that “the outdoors is a salient if not core element in the lure of Northern Ontario for tourists”<sup>4</sup>. One way the market research quantifies visitors is through primary motivations for travel for the visitors taking part in them. In Northwestern Ontario, the most common motivators are pleasure-seeking activities (53%), followed by visiting their friends and relatives or ‘VFR’ (30%), business activities (9%), shopping (4%) and other personal activities (4%)<sup>5</sup>. These motivators drive 1,679,100 people to visit our region annually.

Table 4: Spending by Visitor Motivation in Northwestern Ontario

<b>Main Purpose of Trip (Visitor Spending)</b>	<b>\$ CDN</b>	<b># Persons</b>
<i>Pleasure</i>	\$ 108,504,000	894,500
<i>VFR</i>	\$ 78,028,000	506,200
<i>Shopping</i>	\$ 15,264,900	58,000
<i>Conventions (Personal)</i>	\$ 1,002,700	6,700
<i>Business</i>	\$ 76,130,000	150,600
<i>Other Personal</i>	\$ 14,374,000	63,100
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 293,303,600</b>	<b>1,679,100</b>

Based on market research, DNO divides visitor activities in Northern Ontario into six (6) sub-region market shares: Anglers, Attractions, Canadian Snowmobilers, Festivals & Events, Hunters, and Nature. Anglers and Hunters are kept separate from the general Nature category as they represent specific targeted markets mostly serviced by outfitters in the region and are unique from other types of general nature-based tourist activities.

<sup>3</sup> Source: “Ontario Tourism Regional Impact Model”, Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, <http://www.mtr-treim.com/submit.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> Source: “Overview of Tourism Opportunities for Northern Ontario”, Tourism Northern Ontario, page 3.

<sup>5</sup> Source: Regional Tourism Profiles 2016, Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport, <http://www.mtc.gov.on.ca/en/research/rtp/rtp.shtml>





Each of these shares represent significant revenues in the tourism economy of Northern Ontario. These visitors mostly fall into one of four *Priority Consumer Segments* as identified by the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership<sup>6</sup>:

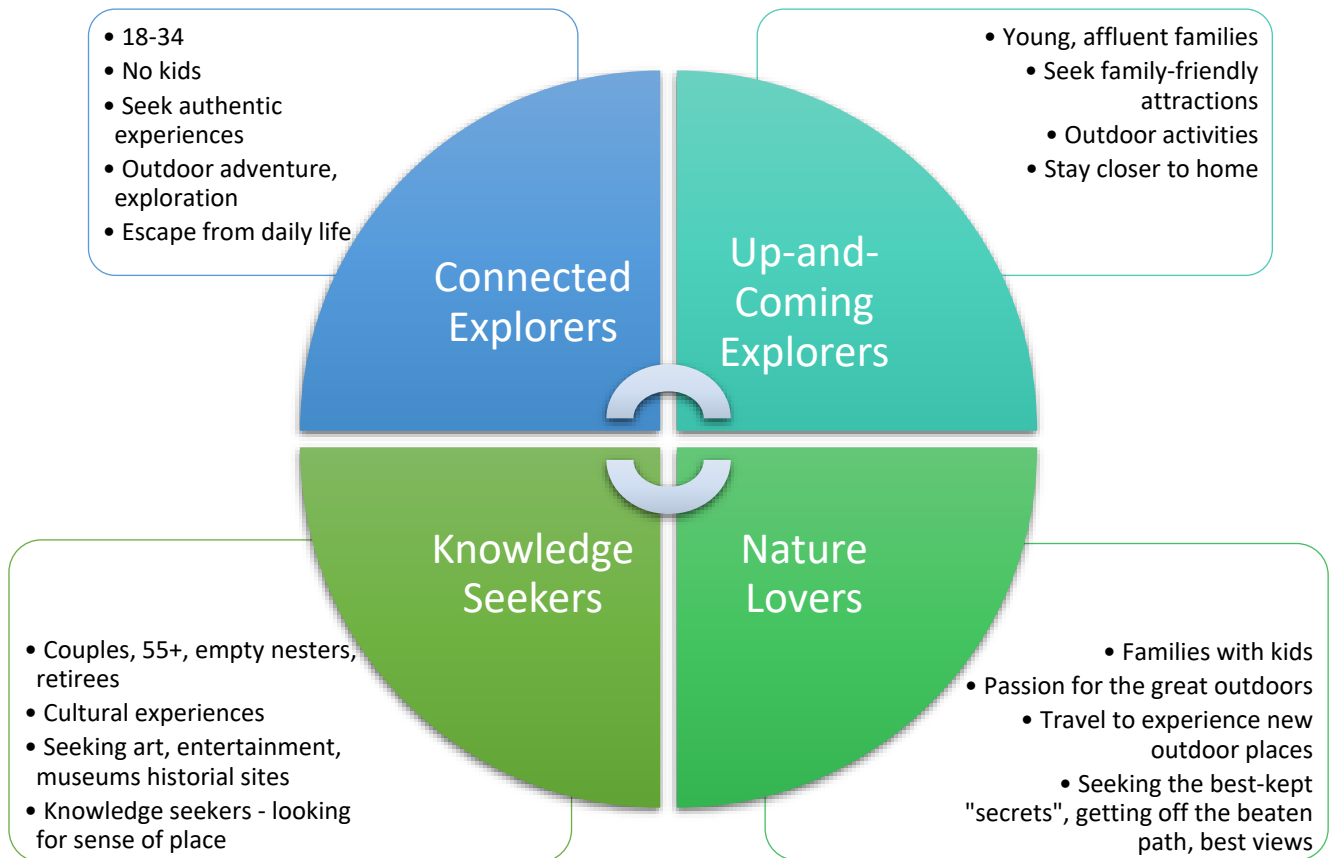


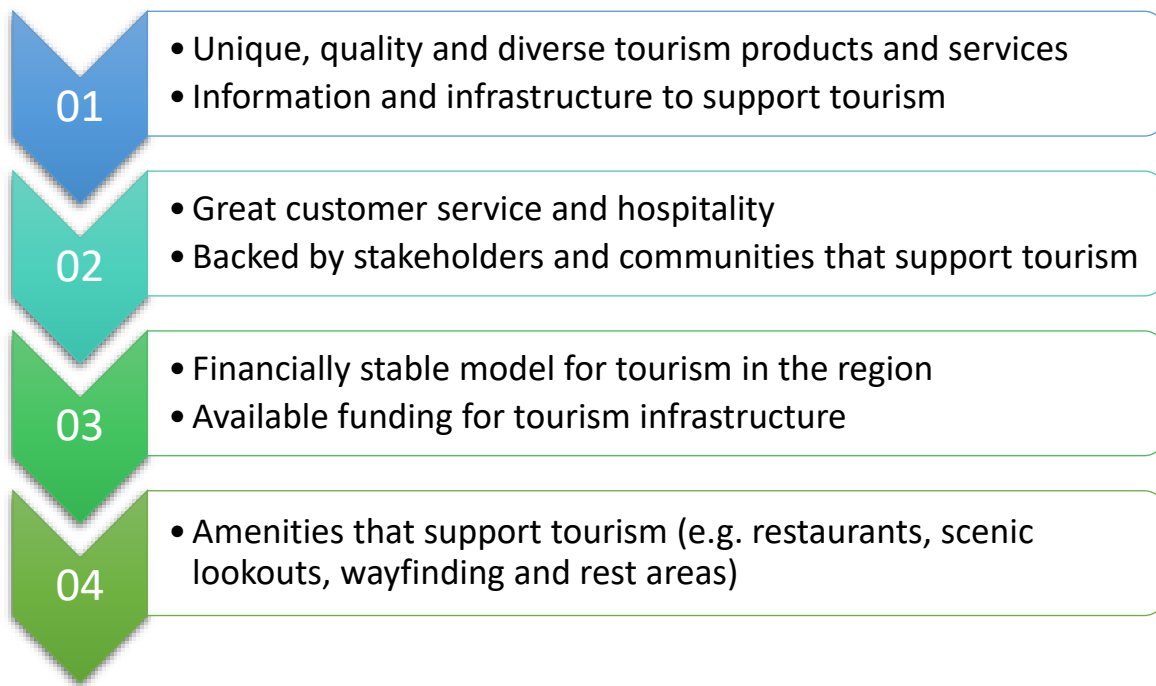
Figure 1: Northern Ontario Priority Consumer Segments

These Priority Consumer Segments are recognized as the “best bet” target markets for businesses and communities to focus on when developing products, events and marketing tools. These visitors are more likely to travel to the region because the natural assets of the area make it a destination for them. A major challenge for Northwestern Ontario in growing its volume of visitors, particularly as defined by the above segments, is in making its offerings unique. Many of the nature-based activities mentioned above are available throughout Ontario and Northern Minnesota, so the competitive challenge for the region is finding ways to offer a superior experience that will distinguish us from other areas offering similar products.

<sup>6</sup> “Strategic Direction for Marketing Tourism in Northern Ontario, 2017-2020”, Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Commission, page 8.



Lake Superior’s North Shore Tourism Strategy by DNO identifies four key elements of a successful tourism area as:



*Figure 2: Key Elements of a Successful Tourism Area (Lake Superior Northern Tourism Strategy)*

Tourism products can be categorized as either Destination Drivers or Trip Enhancers in order to better understand what strategies will work best in attracting or expanding the visitor market. Destination Drivers are experiences that are primary motivators and are named as the main reason by which a visitor has chosen a particular destination. They tend to be unique and can be capital-intensive to develop. Trip Enhancers on the other hand may not be the primary reason for the visit but they are key to tourists having a positive experience and often serve to extend the visitors length of stay. For example, Thunder Bay’s Blues Festival is a Destination Driver, with many out-of-town visitors travelling to the city for the weekend event. Thunder Bay’s local restaurants, art galleries, retail stores and parks may enhance the visitors experience, convincing them to stay longer and provide opportunities for visitors to spend more money during their stay.

### 1.3 The Importance of Wayfinding

Wayfinding is a key component of “Trip Enhancing” in Tourism and can be a critical part of extending and enhancing visitor experiences. Wayfinding encompasses all the ways in which people orient themselves within a plan and navigate from one place to another. The basic process of wayfinding involves four stages:

1. **Orientation** – establishing a current location within a larger context;
2. **Route Decision** – selecting a course of direction to the selected destination;



3. **Route Monitoring** – checking to make sure you are on the correct path or route as you travel, and;
4. **Destination Recognition** – acknowledgement/understanding that the destination has been reached.

Wayfinding tools include directional signs, route start and end recognition signs, maps, and more recently, phone apps. Wayfinding tools often use color coding and symbols to add in communicating simple and visually memorable directions. Wayfinding can function both as a trip enhancer, notifying visitors of nearby sights and attractions they might not otherwise have been aware of, and as a stress reducer, reassuring the visitor of their progress and making it easier for them to achieve their goals while travelling. Destination Northern Ontario emphasizes, “Studies have clearly shown that well-planned and well-executed wayfinding results in longer stays, more money being spent by travelers and higher visitor satisfaction, encouraging positive word of mouth and return visits.”<sup>7</sup> Wayfinding can encourage exploration and improve a visitor’s perception of a place when they visit, by presenting a visitor with places to go and a clear path to get there.

## 2. Shuniah’s Tourism Context

### 2.1 Location

The Municipality of Shuniah was founded in a fortunate geographic location. When the Municipality was first incorporated in 1873, its proximity to silver mining operations, the lakeshore and Fort William trading post drove much of the settlement and economic activity in the area. Today the Municipality has tourism opportunities to explore on all sides, with the City of Thunder Bay to the Southwest, Sleeping Giant Provincial Park to the East and the TransCanada Highway running just North of Lakeshore Drive. The

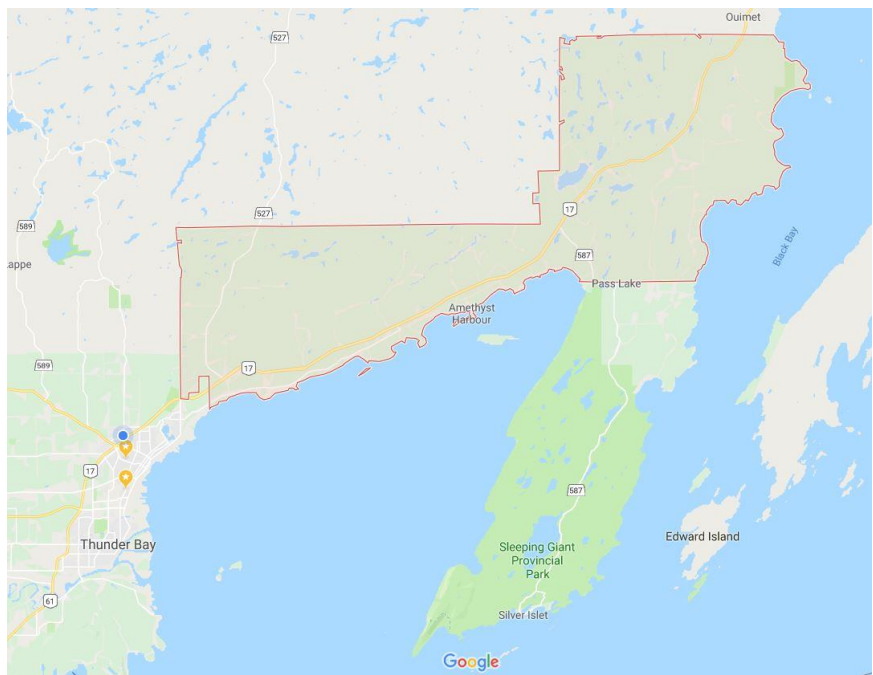


Figure 3: Map of Shuniah Municipal Boundaries (Google)



Ministry of Transportation of Ontario (MTO) estimates that between 5,000 and 10,000 vehicles travel between Thunder Bay and Nipigon every day<sup>8</sup>.

Shuniah's geographic location has led to the establishment of unique, high quality tourism attractions such as Mount Baldy Ski Area, The Fish Shop, Thunder Bay KOA and several Amethyst Mining operations. These are in addition to the lakeside charm and recreational opportunities within its borders that are enjoyed by the thousands of seasonal residents and visitors that come to Shuniah every summer.

Shuniah is located in close proximity to some of the area's best attractions including the Terry Fox Memorial, Ouimet Canyon Provincial Park, Eagle Canon Adventures, mountain biking trails and ice climbing locations. With the right approach, Shuniah can leverage its proximity to a busy highway, large population hub and other premier destination drivers to help its local businesses access new markets, support community pride and cultural development, and put the community back on the map as regional tourism hot spot.

## 2.2 Current Tourism Assets

Shuniah's current tourism assets are summarized below in the following categories: Sights & Activities, Businesses & Organizations, and Events. Assets whose names are listed in **bold** were identified by Shuniah Stakeholders as Destination Drivers. Shuniah currently has a strong base of tourism assets which it can build from and details including location and a short description are provided. Recreational Assets are also discussed from the perspective of their potential to be a tourism driver, as currently these assets aren't well documented/defined in Shuniah.

### Sights & Activities:

Name	Description	Location
<b>Amethyst Mine Panorama</b>	Home to the largest amethyst deposit in Canada, customers who visits here can go on guided or self-guided tours to hunt for gems or buy them from the gift shop	500 Bass Lake Road
Bayview Golf Course	Offering a 9-hole golf course and 18-hole disc golf course with a scenic view of Lake Superior near Pass Lake	370 Highway 587
Caribou Island Nature Conservancy of Canada Trail	Remote and pristine hiking for avid outdoor adventurers	Caribou Island, Boat Access only
<b>Diamond Willow Amethyst Mine</b>	Free admission to this charming amethyst hunting spot with an amethyst retail store on site	Number 5 Road North

---

<sup>8</sup> "Northern Highways Program" Ministry of Transportation of Ontario, Page 7. <http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/highway-bridges/pdfs/northern-highways-program-2012-2016.pdf>



<b>Kinghorn Trail &amp; Pass Lake Trestle</b>	The abandoned CN Railway is a popular, if unofficial, trail for hikers in the region though the land is still owned by CN	
Mackenzie Point Conservation Area	Rugged shoreline area and crashing waves greet visitors to this Lakehead Region Conservation Area in Shuniah	130 Conservation Road
<b>Mount Baldy Ski Area</b>	Offering Thunder Bay area families and individuals access to downhill and cross-country skiing routes as well tubing. Routes suitable for all ability levels and features 3 chair lifts	375 Mount Baldy Drive
Silver Harbour Conservation Area	Previously an ore hauling point for local silver mines, this Lakehead Region Conservation Area features a public boat launch, a tree-lined break wall, outhouses, picnic tables and a shelter.	End of Silver Harbour Drive
<b>Wild Goose Beach</b>	A popular summer time destination for swimmers and lake shore enthusiasts	Wild Goose Bay Road

#### Businesses & Organizations:

Name	Description	Location
Crystal Beach Restaurant	Restaurant – open year round	2001 Lakeshore Drive
Crystal Beach Variety	Gas Station, Convenience Store, Grocery, LCBO, U-Haul, Laundromat	2005 Lakeshore Drive
Eldorado Beach Bed & Breakfast	Small lakeside bed & breakfast, international clientele	2845 Eldorado Beach Road
Flying J Travel Plaza	Highway rest station/truck stop	3200 Highway 11/17
KOA Thunder Bay Campground	RV and tent campground with playground and amenities	162 Spruce River Road
Lakeshore Variety	Convenience store, grocery, retail store	1235 Lakeshore Drive,
Lakeview Lodge	Restaurant, under new management	815 Lakeshore Drive
MacGregor Recreation Centre	Community recreation centre, outdoor skating rink, host to many classes and community events	800 Lakeshore Drive
McKenzie Inn & Riverside Pizzeria	Accommodation & Restaurant – closed at time of publication. Status Unknown.	1788 Lakeshore Drive
McTavish Recreation Centre	Community recreation centre and outdoor skating rink	117 Number 5 Road S
Mirror Lake Campground	Campground, convenience store, docks and beach area	3495 Highway 587





Paws Treasure Chest Second Hand Store	Retail, Thrift Store	1235 Lakeshore Drive
Thunder Bay International Hostel	“Longhouse style” hostel and RV Campground	1594 Lake Drive
White Cedar Pharmacy	Retail store, pharmaceutical services	2001 Lakeshore Drive

#### Events:

Name	Description	Location
<b>5 Aces ATV Fall Classic</b>	Organized by Mount Baldy Ski Area and Half-way Motors in support of Our Kids Count. Runs in early September, 2018 was the 2nd year of the event	Mount Baldy Ski Area
<b>Muds &amp; Suds Run</b>	In support of the Canadian Cancer Society, previously held at Fort William Historical Park	Mount Baldy Ski Area
<b>Silver Harbour Days</b>	Special event co-hosted by the Municipality and the Lakehead Regional Conservation Authority at Silver Harbour highlights outdoor recreational opportunities, outdoor and wilderness safety and other interactive displays and activities	Silver Harbour Conservation Area

#### Outdoor Recreation:



Some of Shuniah’s greatest tourism assets are found in natural landscape and shoreline of Lake Superior on which the community rests. However, most of these assets are not currently developed as tourism products which Shuniah can readily promote, Mount Baldy Ski Area and Bayview Golf Course being notable exceptions. Other assets such as Shuniah’s community ice rinks and the Lakehead Regional Conservation Areas in the municipality could be better utilized. Many recreational activities

are popular with local residents who have access to their own equipment and either have local knowledge about trails and recreational areas, or own private property which accommodates their activities. Nature-based tourists represent a significant portion of all visitors to Northwestern Ontario and most visitors to the region report partaking in at least one outdoor activity while they’re here, even if that is not their primary reason for visiting (Section 1.2). For Shuniah’s visitors, these types of activities are not likely to be accessed, unless they have a local friend or family member to guide them (and lend them equipment).



Recreational activities have significant economic impact which regional and local governments have recognized this in their tourism strategies and promotional materials. The following chart compares outdoor recreation activities promoted as tourism activities as listed by Tourism Thunder Bay on their website with their availability in Shuniah:

Table 5: Recreational Activities Comparison Summary

Promoted by Tourism Thunder Bay	Popular in Shuniah?	Currently Accessible/ Promoted in Shuniah?
<i>Camping</i>	Yes	Yes
<i>Climbing</i>	Unknown	Unknown
<i>Cycling and Mountain Biking</i>	Yes	Cycling on roadways; trail systems need definition
<i>Fishing</i>	Yes	No boat rentals advertised in community; accessible launches/docks not promoted
<i>Golfing</i>	Yes	Yes
<i>Hiking, Running and Walking</i>	Yes	Yes (but trails not clearly identified)
<i>Horseback Riding</i>	Unknown	Unknown
<i>Hunting</i>	Yes	Private property only
<i>Motorcycle and RV Touring</i>	Yes	Yes
<i>Parks and Conservation Areas</i>	Yes	Yes
<i>Power Sports (boating, snowmachining)</i>	Yes	Trails and launches not clearly identified/endorsed
<i>Water Activities (canoe, kayaking, swimming, paddle boarding, surfing, sailing)</i>	Yes	LRCA's are accessible & activities promoted there. Limited access to rentals; other places to launch not clearly identified/promoted
<i>Winter Activities (Curling, Dog Sledding, Ice Climbing, Ice Skating, Skiing, Snowshoeing etc.)</i>	Yes	Two skating rinks; cross country skiing and snow shoeing trails need identification

These recreational activities represent a significant opportunity for Shuniah in both economic development generally and tourism development specifically. These underutilized and/or promoted activities in Shuniah are important to recognize as a significant component of Shuniah's appeal to visitors.



## 2.3 SWOT Summary

A SWOT Analysis is a tool for categorizing internal and external factors that may affect an organization as it pursues its goals. This summary of Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats is not an exhaustive list but a presentation of the factors that are most relevant to Shuniah's Tourism Strategy. Many of the objectives and action items contained within the Tourism Strategy have been designed to help address or better utilize these factors.

The SWOT Analysis Summary presented here (Table 6) represents an overview of the repeated themes brought forward in talking with community members, businesses, regional organizations and community leaders. A detailed presentation of the findings of the Stakeholder consultations is available in the supplementary Stakeholder Consultations Summary Report.

Table 6: SWOT Analysis Summary

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proactive Economic Development Officer: many items from Strategic Plan have been implemented</li> <li>• Tourism-Supportive Leadership: recognition of economic value of tourism</li> <li>• Recreation Assets: LRCA's, MacGregor and McTavish Recreation Centres</li> <li>• Wild Goose Park/Beach</li> <li>• Campgrounds and RV Tourism Assets</li> <li>• Tourism-related business community: Mount Baldy Ski Area, Bayview Golf Course, The Fish Shop, Amethyst Mines, etc.</li> <li>• Supportive Business community: businesses cross-promote each other</li> <li>• Low industrial development: very different from other Northwestern Ontario communities, especially Thunder Bay</li> <li>• Clean, quiet, residential areas</li> <li>• Friendly, supportive community: local ambassadors and good word-of-mouth are the best advertisers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gaps in Tourism services: lack of room rental accommodations, limited food services, no public transportation options</li> <li>• Gaps in Tourist Information: lack of Shuniah-specific information, not shown on maps, limited info at TIC's</li> <li>• Social Media Platforms: Twitter and Facebook use could be improved</li> <li>• Website not visitor-directed: visitors can get lost/lose interest in municipal matters and have a hard time finding tourism information</li> <li>• Limited access to recreational assets: most trail systems are informal, not many public places to launch boats or access the lake</li> <li>• Limited cell-service in some spots: visitors needs offline wayfinding support in these zones</li> <li>• Seasonality of some tourism-related businesses/services impacts winter visitors</li> <li>• Lack of visitor data: unknown how many visitors are coming to Shuniah</li> </ul>



OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Proximity to Thunder Bay (draw same-day visitors)</li><li>• Proximity to Sleeping Giant Provincial Park (Scenic Route)</li><li>• Scenic Lakeshore Location</li><li>• Historical connection to Terry Fox</li><li>• Outdoor Recreation development</li><li>• Trails development</li><li>• Community Events to connect people with the lake and the land</li><li>• Partner with area communities to link best bet assets</li><li>• Entry-level entrepreneurs: encourage new businesses activity at community events, organize local markets</li><li>• Develop stronger relationship with regional tourism organizations: leverage capacity, advertising &amp; funding</li><li>• Collaborate with local businesses on new ideas, product development</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Aging tourism population: need to ensure accessibility</li><li>• Funding Stability: government elections can impact long-term planning</li><li>• Competition: large urban center close by makes drawing visitors away a challenge</li><li>• Harsh winters impact regional tourism trends</li><li>• Wider Economic Shifts: Shuniah’s tourism opportunities based on strong local area</li><li>• Liability: must ensure public recreation areas and events are insured/have suitable infrastructure to accommodate visitors</li><li>• Unregulated/Unregistered business activities: may be a liability risk if operators/service providers are not operating within acceptable parameters</li></ul>



### 3. Back On The Map – Tourism Strategy Framework

Discussions with Shuniah’s residents, businesses, and regional stakeholders yielded a very long list of potential opportunities and product development projects to consider. A review of regional and community tourism reports and strategies were considered before developing the framework of *Back on the Map*. As a small municipality, Shuniah will need to be careful about matching its capacity to the exciting, seemingly limitless opportunities that are on the horizon. To manage and organize these opportunities, five Areas of Focus have been designated to organize and prioritize the objectives and action items of the strategy.

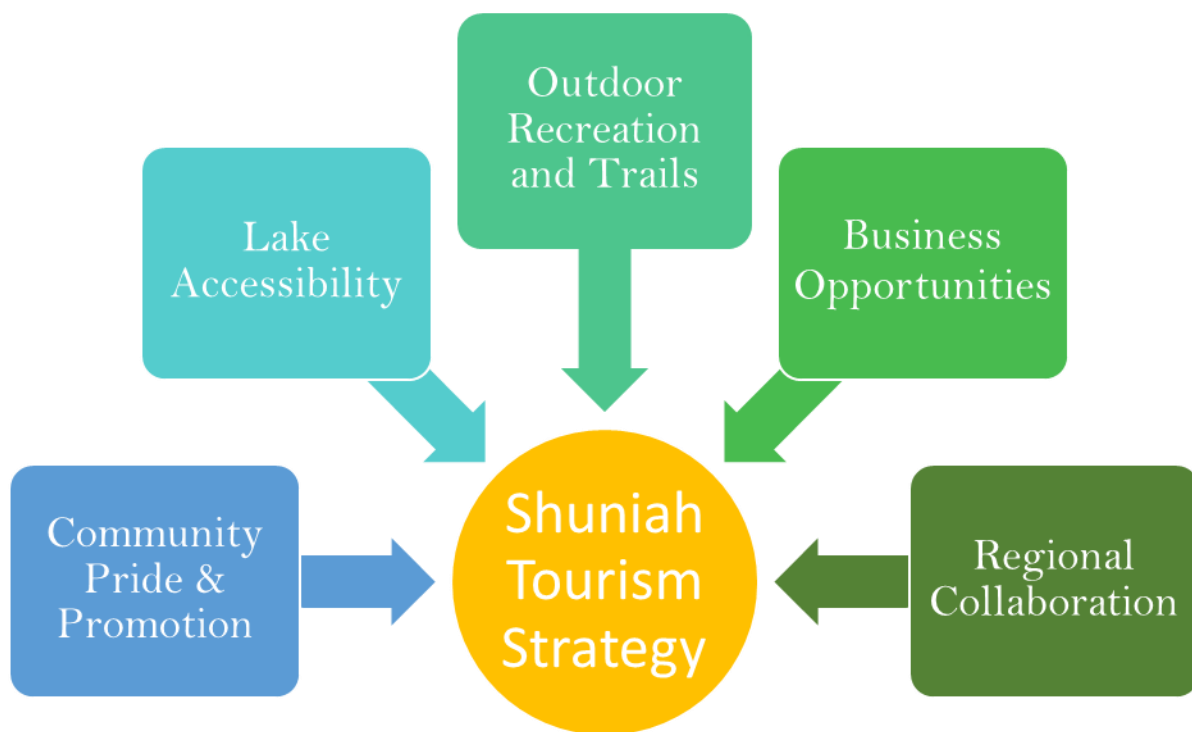


Figure 4: Shuniah Tourism Strategy Framework Diagram





### 3.1 Guiding Principles

The guiding principles of the *Back on the Map Strategy* act as goal posts for choosing which opportunities to pursue and how to achieve them. Alignment with these principles is key to gaining or maintaining community support and buy-in. Opportunities which are in opposition to these principles are probably not the right fit for either Shuniah’s community values, local market or current priorities.

- ❖ **Community-First Decision Making** – “Does this tourism development activity have a positive impact in our community? Does it benefit our businesses or residents? Does this opportunity/activity enhance and/or reflect Shuniah’s unique characteristics?”
- ❖ **Partnership Seeking** – “Is there an opportunity to collaborate with [relevant business/community] to gain a wider audience or improve the visitor experience? How will pursuing this activity/opportunity impact my neighbor?” (Taking a non-competitive approach with partners and neighbours; recognizing that working together creates more opportunities and economic benefits for all)
- ❖ **Realistic and Achievable Goal Setting** – “Is this opportunity/activity sustainable from fiscal, natural and human resources perspectives?”
- ❖ **Responsible Asset Development** – “Does this activity/opportunity promote appreciation for the natural asset? Does it encourage responsible use? What negative impacts will there be and how can we minimize them?” (Love of the lake and the landscape are central to Shuniah’s identity and our residents’ lifestyles)
- ❖ **Patience before Promotion** – “Is this asset ready for visitors? Do the expectations set by this promotion match the actual experience?” (Always putting our best foot forward, and taking the time to develop assets properly before promoting them)



### 3.2 Tourism Focus Area #1: Community Pride and Promotion

*“Proudly, clearly and consistently communicating who we are,  
where we are and why visitors should seek us out”*

Shuniah is a community that is well loved by its residents. New tourism activity can cause concerns that development efforts will lead to changes that will significantly impact community culture or atmosphere. This Area of Focus is about ensuring that all tourism materials, information and promotional efforts are aligned with community priorities. This Focus Area does not limit Shuniah’s tourism strategy; there are many tourism opportunities that fall within community priorities and that celebrate what Shuniah is and could be.

Main Goals of Focus Area #1:

- A. **Say it Loud:** Create and promote information about Shuniah tourism assets that both enhances community pride and visitor experiences
- B. **Be Distinct:** Take action to ensure Shuniah is seen as a distinct and unique community in tourism materials, websites and visitor information centers
- C. **Get Found:** Improve maps, signage and other wayfinding tools so that Shuniah is easy to find and explore
- D. **Tell our Stories:** Research, develop and promote Shuniah’s history, cultural influences, indigenous context and stories that provide a “sense of place”
- E. **Walk the Walk:** Develop and/or encourage community-centered events that promote Shuniah’s unique history, people, products or places

High priority action items for this Area of Focus include creating a Shuniah webpage that is targeted towards a visitor audience, defining where Shuniah’s “Dot” should be on future tourism maps, and working with the City of Thunder Bay to brand Lakeshore Drive as Thunder Bay’s “Scenic Route” to bring slower, tourism-specific traffic through the community.



### 3.3 Tourism Focus Area #2: Lake Accessibility

*“Declare our love for Lake Superior through investment, and community events”*

This Area of Focus is both a product development strategy and a community passion project. Shuniah’s shoreline stretches 40 kilometers along Lake Superior and access to the lake is something unique that Shuniah can offer visitors in the area. Unlike many northern municipalities, Shuniah’s access to the lake is not limited by industrial development or rail lines. The City of Thunder Bay has put considerable effort into developing a beautiful waterfront area, but it is still difficult for visitors and recreationalists to get into the water within the City boundaries. Shuniah has one of the best beaches in the area and it is already a draw for many same-day visitors. Additionally, Shuniah has Silver Harbour, a Lakehead Regional Conservation Area, and other public places where boats can be launched. Access to the lake represents considerable opportunity for targeted tourism growth in Shuniah and this Focus Area keeps promotion and development in line with stewardship and community-focused opportunities for enhanced use.

Main Goals of Focus Area #2:

- A. **Access It:** Create and maintain inventory of all lake access points that are publicly accessible
- B. **Protect and Respect it:** Create and promote expectations for use of lake access points that encourages stewardship, responsible use and respect for neighbours
- C. **Make it Better:** Investigate and pursue opportunities for infrastructure development/improvements that ensure lake access points are safe, clean, and clearly defined
- D. **Make it Ours:** Support and promote community-based groups and events centered on enjoyment of the Shuniah’s lakeshore location

The Lake Accessibility Focus Area combines several priority action items, such as capitalizing on visitors from Thunder Bay to Wild Goose Beach, with careful consideration of the potential impacts on the local environment and area residents. The action items created under each goal of this Focus Area will help Shuniah put itself back on the map and drive traffic towards Shuniah businesses who’ve seen traffic significantly decline since the re-routing of the highway.



### 3.4 Tourism Focus Area #3: Outdoor Recreation and Trails

*“Upgrade opportunities for outdoor adventures so that the natural beauty of Shuniah brings visitors back again and again”*

When Shuniah residents were asked about their favourite things to do and see in Shuniah, the “great outdoors” was a dominant theme across all input activities. People in Shuniah are generally active and love to walk, bike, hike, ski and canoe around their community. Taking in the scenery or hiking to a favourite lookout was also frequently mentioned as a highlight. This feedback is especially interesting as most of the trails, recreation areas and scenic places community members mentioned were not clearly defined or easily located. It would seem that outdoor recreation is one of Shuniah’s best kept secrets and, much like Focus Area #2, an enormous opportunity for bringing other outdoor enthusiasts to Shuniah, especially those who live right next door.

#### Main Goals of Focus Area #3:

- A. **Understand and Organize:** Create and maintain inventory of publicly accessible natural spaces and places
- B. **Recruit Home-grown Enthusiasts:** Community-led development of public trails and outdoor recreational spaces
- C. **Get Ready for Explorers:** Infrastructure development/improvements to ensure public outdoor spaces and trails are safer and easier to access
- D. **Make the Most of It:** Develop/support activities and events that make great use of Shuniah’s trails and outdoor spaces

Both market research and local evidence show that nature-based activities are a major driver of tourism in Northern Ontario. This type of product development is not easily monetized; most trails and outdoor recreation spaces are accessible for free and what fees are implementable can be difficult to enforce. The key to utilizing visitor interest in trails and outdoor recreation is in linking those activities to the other amenities and business in Shuniah once they have come to the community. They can drive up the number of visitors to the area, which is important, but strategy must be applied in order to capture economic benefits from this traffic increase. This Focus Area’s first high priority action items are focused on developing these assets so we can be sure they are safe and accessible to the public and then linking these experiences to local businesses.



### 3.5 Tourism Focus Area #4: Business Connections

*“Connect, create, and collaborate with businesses to maximize economic impacts of tourism”*

Local businesses are critical to tourism. Some are destination drivers that bring visitors to the community, others provide trip enhancing experiences and services that extend visits and help visitors feel they’ve had an authentic experience. This Focus Area seeks to maximize the number of opportunities businesses will have to participate in Tourism Development over the next three years. “Business connections” is about creating a strong network of relationships and connection points between Shuniah management and existing businesses, between businesses and visitors, and encouraging new businesses to find right-sized opportunities alongside Shuniah’s tourism development activities.

Main Goals of Focus Area #4:

- A. **Connect Often:** Improve communication with local business on opportunities and resources available related to tourism activities
- B. **Give Guidance:** Provide guidelines and implement policies that clearly outline how businesses can participate in tourism-related events and business activities
- C. **Invite Involvement:** Seek/create business participation in tourism-related events or projects wherever possible
- D. **Impact Consumer Awareness:** Increase visitor spending in local businesses through facilitation and promotion of special events, projects and products
- E. **Create Pathways:** Facilitate/encourage opportunities for small start-ups, pop-up shops/services that are relevant to other Tourism Areas of Focus or enhance visitor experiences

Under this Focus Area, Shuniah will support businesses in developing their products and/or services to meet visitor needs, stay in regular communication with businesses who wish to be actively engaged in tourism development projects and work to facilitate greater consumer awareness of Shuniah businesses, especially when they are visiting our natural sights.



### 3.6 Tourism Focus Area #5: Regional Collaboration

*“Actively contribute to regional tourism projects/initiatives and position Shuniah as a ‘must visit’ community in the area”*

Regional Collaboration is a distinct and important topic for any community Northern Ontario to consider when it comes to tourism development. Most communities in our region are small and have only one or two Destination Drivers to attract visitors. Limited business amenities can also make it difficult to convince visitors to stay long. But from a regional standpoint, especially for those visitors who fit the Priority Consumer Segments profiles in Section 1.2, Northwestern Ontario has much to offer and many places worth exploring. In marketing, the power of collaboration and bringing our strongest assets together could be significant. Shuniah can access wider audiences through greater participation in regional tourism associations like Superior Country, or by partnering with Thunder Bay Tourism. By working together, there are opportunities to develop very compelling self-guided tours, packages and itineraries that are truly unique in Ontario.

Main Goals of Focus Area #5:

- A. **Wider Promotion:** Leverage participation in regional organizations/projects to maximize promotion of Shuniah’s best assets
- B. **Build on Tourism Network:** Develop and strengthen relationships with neighbouring communities and tourism organizations
- C. **Connect and Conquer:** Develop and promote regional tourism packages/routes/itineraries that link Shuniah’s offerings with other high-impact tourism assets

Key action items for this Focus Area include leveraging existing memberships in regional tourism organizations to improve our visibility in the region, working with Destination Northern Ontario on upcoming regional strategies and working together with Thunder Bay Tourism to link Shuniah and Thunder Bay’s complimentary outdoor trails and recreation assets. Efforts to align Shuniah destinations and other businesses with regional assets will yield better results than promoting them independently.





## 4. Strategic Pilot Projects & Action Plan

The research that informed and inspired *Back On The Map*'s focus areas and main goals also generated a significant number of ideas and opportunities for specific projects, product development, events, marketing tasks and partnerships Shuniah could pursue as part of its Tourism Strategy. These ideas and opportunities have been reviewed, prioritized and organized into an Action Plan to guide progress over the next five years. Some opportunities are still in the conceptual stages; they will require more research and planning before they can be implemented while other opportunities are ready to be actioned this year. The action plan is organized by Focus Area and its purpose is to document progress and provide some guidance on how and when items should be completed. It is intended to be living document that is regularly revised and updated.

Particularly high priority action items are highlighted in this section as Strategic Pilot Projects. They are included here in detail as examples of how and why to implement action items and to emphasize their importance in achieving Shuniah's tourism goals.

### 4.1 Wild Goose Beach Development & Promotion Pilot Project

Wild Goose Beach is a key recreation asset in Shuniah, which residents and visitors enjoy every summer. This site was named as a favourite place to visit by stakeholders and emphasized as a unique offering, especially in consideration of the lack of beach areas within the City of Thunder Bay. Developing this asset aligns with several factors, which make it especially interesting:

- ❖ Potential to increase visitor traffic
- ❖ Potential to interest and attract Thunder Bay market
- ❖ Alignment with Shuniah's community values
- ❖ Municipal ownership/control of the asset

The project would see the site improved, signed, linked to local businesses and promoted more widely. This project encompasses several action items and aligns with several focus areas as summarized in Table 7.

Table 7: Wild Goose Beach Development Project Summary

#### Wild Goose Beach Development Project

<b>Action Items:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site Assessment</li> <li>• Site Improvement: clear brush, expand/improvement infrastructure</li> <li>• Link to Businesses: Install signage to promote local businesses/services and other sights/attractions in Shuniah</li> </ul>
----------------------	---



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote: Website feature, social media posts and working with local media to highlight the beach and emphasize its proximity to Thunder Bay</li> <li>• Utilize: Organize and promote community events at the site</li> <li>• Maximize economic impact potential: Encourage business services/amenities at site such a food vendor/concession, equipment rental services</li> </ul>
<b>Aligned with:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus Area #2: Lake Accessibility, Goal 2.C &amp; 2.D</li> <li>• Focus Area #1: Community Pride &amp; Promotion, Goal 1.A</li> </ul>
<b>Target Market:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thunder Bay</li> </ul>
<b>Priority Market Segment:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up-and-Coming Explorers</li> <li>• Nature Lovers</li> </ul>
<b>Intended outcomes:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased number of day visitors to Shuniah</li> <li>• Greater awareness of a prime asset in Shuniah</li> <li>• Increased local spending</li> </ul>
<b>Risk/Benefit:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low risk – asset is established, in good condition and already public, improvements made but aren't urgent.</li> <li>• High Benefit – Wild Goose offers an excellent and unique beach experience very close to the city (DTB promotes it), small investment of time to create content and promote it online</li> </ul>

## 4.2 “Take the Scenic Route” Pilot Project

This pilot project will combine a marketing, regional partnership and wayfinding action items to rebrand Shuniah's Lakeshore Drive as the “Scenic Route” between Thunder Bay and the Sleeping Giant. This opportunity was inspired in part by the effective use of “Scenic Drives” as tourism assets along the north shore route in Minnesota, just south of the border. The concept received strong support from local businesses, regional organizations and Tourism Thunder Bay as a simple way to encourage area travelers to drive through the community and increase their exposure to local businesses in Shuniah and the Northeast side of Thunder Bay.

Factors that have made this idea a priority project for Shuniah's Tourism strategy include:

- ❖ Potential to increase visitors to Lakeshore business
- ❖ Potential to interest and attract Thunder Bay market, Sleeping Giant tourists
- ❖ Alignment with interests Priority Market Segments visiting the area
- ❖ Alignment with lakeside community identity
- ❖ Low-capital investment required



The project includes working together with Thunder Bay Tourism on a marketing plan, developing and installing signage for the route and accessing funding for implementation (Table 8).

Table 8: Lakeshore Scenic Route Development Project Outline

### “Take the Scenic Route” Lakeshore Drive Project

<b>Action Items:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting with Thunder Bay Tourism to create MOU</li> <li>• Assessment of MTO signage rules and potential sign locations</li> <li>• Route designation and approval</li> <li>• Funding application</li> <li>• Sign Installation</li> <li>• Route Promotion online</li> </ul>
<b>Aligned with:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus Area #1: Community Pride &amp; Promotion, Goal 2.C &amp; 2.D</li> <li>• Also related to: Focus Area #4 – Business Connections</li> </ul>
<b>Target Market:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All – Regional area residents and visitors Driving along HWY 11/17 between Thunder Bay &amp; Pass Lake</li> </ul>
<b>Priority Market Segments:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge Seekers</li> <li>• Nature Lovers</li> </ul>
<b>Intended outcomes:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased number of travelers driving through Lakeshore area of Shuniah</li> <li>• Greater exposure to Shuniah businesses/ Indirect local spending</li> <li>• Closer working relationship with Destination Thunder Bay</li> </ul>
<b>Risk/Benefit:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low risk – “Scenic Route” will only attract drivers not in a hurry, visitors who may choose to stop at local businesses on their way through, infrastructure demonstrably capable of increased traffic flow</li> <li>• High Benefit – High Volume of slower, residential or tourist traffic along route, including some out-of-region travelers who may stop and explore</li> </ul>

### 4.3 “Visiting Shuniah” Visitor Information Pilot Project

Shuniah needs to organize and promote its visitor attractions and local businesses to visitors in a targeted way. The Municipality has made significant improvements to its general online presence in recent years, with a new website, Facebook page and reinvigorated Instagram page. However, regional tourism representatives were quick to note that visitor-specific information guides and online marketing are key



to reaching tourist and keeping their attention where you want it. Neighbouring communities such as Nipigon have done a very good job of directing visitors directly to their tourism attractions and services.

Additionally, Shuniah should be targeting visitors to Thunder Bay and the area by highlighting itself in the form of a physical guide booklet or brochure that can be distribute to local Tourism Information Centers. The pilot version of these materials can be launched in Year One of the action plan and updated as other marketing efforts and product development projects are completed. This project is identified as a key strategic pilot project because of:

- ❖ Potential to reach target audience: visitors to the region via Tourism Information Centers Potential to promote Shuniah as a unique and distinct community in close proximity to Thunder Bay
- ❖ Increase visibility of Shuniah assets online
- ❖ Potential to increase traffic to Shuniah, especially via visitors to Terry Fox Memorial
- ❖ Low-capital investment required

The project includes funding applications, verifying/confirming asset information, developing content and publishing the products (Table 9).

*Table 9: Shuniah Visitors Webpage and Guide Project Outline*

### **‘Visiting Shuniah’ Webpage & Visitor Guide**

<b>Action Items:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop project budget</li> <li>• Assess funding opportunities (NOHFC, Destination Northern Ontario)</li> <li>• Verify tourism assets to be included in 1st edition/version</li> <li>• Connect with local businesses on sponsorship/advertising opportunities</li> <li>• Develop and publish website and tourist guide for Shuniah</li> </ul>
<b>Aligned with:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus Area #1: Community Pride &amp; Promotion, Goals 1.A &amp; 1.D</li> <li>• Also related to Focus Areas 2,3 &amp; 4</li> </ul>
<b>Target Market:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Visitors, but useful to all</li> </ul>
<b>Priority Market Segments:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All, brochure especially needed for Knowledge Seekers</li> </ul>
<b>Intended outcomes:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase length of visitor stays in Shuniah</li> <li>• Greater exposure to Shuniah businesses, attractions and events</li> <li>• Increased direct local spending</li> </ul>



<b>Risk/Benefit:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderate risk – “Visitor Guide” development will require staff time and Graphic Design costs, however funding should be available to offset some costs</li> <li>• Moderate Benefit – Visitor guides &amp; webpages help boost community appeal to visitors, visitors plan their itinerary and promote all businesses fairly, online content especially important for families and younger travelers</li> </ul>
----------------------	---

#### 4.4 Tourism Data Measurement Pilot Project

Shuniah currently lacks baseline data for tracking local tourism activity levels and traffic volumes. This project will work to collect baseline data through the installation of data collection tools at popular sites and businesses in Shuniah. A visitor survey will be launched in partnership with business partners in the community to measure visitor experiences and satisfaction. The project will pursue installation of car counters and trail counters to measure vehicle traffic at Wild Goose Beach and foot traffic at trails behind MacGregor Rec Center when they are ready (see section 4.1). This project will help Shuniah establish visitor volume data, track traffic across seasons and support various development opportunities, particularly those requiring an investment of funding or private business interest. Additional actions to collect data may be added to this project as needed and as agreeable to area businesses (see section 5.2).

Table 10: Tourism Data Measurement Pilot Project Outline

##### Tourism Data Measurement Project

<b>Action Items:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop project budget</li> <li>• Assess funding opportunities (NOHFC, Destination Northern Ontario)</li> <li>• Draft Visitor Survey</li> <li>• Confirm local business partners to collect surveys</li> <li>• Purchase and install car counter at Wild Goose Beach</li> <li>• Purchase and install foot traffic counter at MacGregor Rec Trailhead</li> </ul>
<b>Aligned with:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus Area #2: Lake Accessibility, Goal 2.A</li> <li>• Focus Area #3: Outdoor Recreation &amp; Trails, Goal 3.A</li> <li>• Focus Area #4: Business Connections, Goal 4.A</li> </ul>
<b>Target Market:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal; Shuniah will utilize data to study effectiveness of various marketing and promotion projects</li> </ul>
<b>Priority Market</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All</li> </ul>
<b>Segments:</b>	



<b>Intended outcomes:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve quantitative data on tourism in Shuniah</li> <li>• Quantify tourism volume and estimate financial impact on local economy/businesses</li> <li>• Collect data useful for establishing market size and value to attract investors and new businesses</li> </ul>
<b>Risk/Benefit:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimal risk – Some staff time will be dedicate to installing the traffic counters and developing the survey, but once tools are in place they will efficiently collect data</li> <li>• High Benefit – Potential investors, private or public, will need quantitative data to evaluate a business opportunity or funding request for Shuniah. The data will open doors and provide evidence for the effectiveness of other pilot projects</li> </ul>

## 5. Final Considerations

Putting Shuniah *Back on the Map* is an exciting undertaking, not just because it represents so much opportunity for community development and business growth, but because Shuniah has so many supportive regional partners and community leaders willing to work to achieve its goals. Shuniah is in an excellent position to improve and expand tourism within the community and to become more involved in regional efforts. As this Strategy moves into implementation, the following considerations are included to assist in the next steps.

### 5.1 Implementing and Adding Action Items

The Action Plan, provided in a supplementary report, is an outline for achieving results and should be regularly updated to reflect action items that have been completed and new action items that have been added to the strategy. The Action Plan was created using what is known as the **SMART** approach, which recommends that in order make an objective or goal more achievable, action items should be:

- **S – Specific:** concise and clear on what the action is
- **M – Measurable:** results-oriented, defined criteria for completion and success
- **A – Attainable:** based on previous successes, best practices and/or current capacity
- **R – Realistic:** right-sized to the market and community resources
- **T – Timely:** includes a timeframe for completion

When adding to the action plan, be sure to first evaluate the overall objective using the guiding principles set out in Section 3.1. If the objective is in alignment with the guiding principles and can be categorized





by at least one Focus Area, clear and concise action items should be added to the action plan as needed to track all tourism-related efforts.

## 5.2 Other Key Performance Indicators

Shuniah will address areas where it is lacking baseline tourism data through the Tourism Data Measurement Pilot Project outlined in Section 4.4 through several targeted actions. Other Key Performance Indicators (KPI) already collected by local businesses could be very helpful to development and Shuniah should work with its business community to share their data with the Municipality confidentially so that Shuniah can track its tourism development and measure the effectiveness of its new strategies. Many Shuniah businesses do have transactional or visitor data but this information is considered highly confidential in most cases. Establishing trust with the business community and a protocol for sharing confidential information will be important to understanding which strategies are most effective in achieving Shuniah's tourism goals.

Key Performance Indicators (KPI) vary by business and product type. The following metrics are recommended to be tracked by Shuniah local businesses and event organizers:

1. Number of patrons (monthly and annually)
2. Percent of visitors vs local patrons
3. Visitor origins (NW Ontario, Ontario, Canada, USA, International)
4. Total tickets/passes sold
5. Customer satisfaction
6. Length of stay (accommodations)

KPI's can also be generated and tracked by Shuniah's online activities, once they've been implemented, such as monitoring website traffic, social media interactions, out-bound links and online ticket or package sales.

## 5.3 Effort vs. Impact

Another factor to be cognizant of as the plan moves ahead, is internal capacity and human resources. Support from across the administrative team will be key to achieving many of the action items. Identifying community champions and organizing volunteer groups is also highly recommend and cited in the action plan. Some high-impact opportunities can be implemented in the near future without much strain on resources, whereas other efforts will take time to build and develop. Priority levels should be adjusted based on the potential impact of the project versus the required resources needed to successfully complete it.

## 5.4 Growth and Community Benefits

The ultimate goal of any Tourism Strategy is to grow the value of the local tourism market, which in turn strengthens the local economy. However, there is one consumer that should have considerable weight when it comes to implementing new ideas or creating new events, and that is the residents of the



community. Shuniah's residents will be the primary audience of any new product, event or promotion that is developed through this project, so their perception of the project or opportunity is extremely valuable. Benefits of these new tourism efforts will flow through the community, so highlighting their importance is an important part of launching any new tourism effort. Today, there is an opportunity to attract visitor traffic that is a natural fit for the experiences, outdoor activities and services that Shuniah offers. As projects move from conception to implementation, be mindful of bringing it to the community with benefits clearly defined and utilize local champions to advocate for community development through tourism.

