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# Recreational Tourism Development Study and Strategic Plan for Chelsea, Wakefield and Gatineau Park

## Summary Presentation

Presented to:



By:



**Zins Beauchesne et associés**

MARKETING ■ DÉVELOPPEMENT ■ INNOVATION

In collaboration with:  
Groupe Rousseau Lefebvre

# 1. Background

- In its 2014-2020 strategic tourism marketing and development plan, **Outaouais Tourism** set three strategic directions for developing its tourism offer, including one that specifically concerns the **Collines-de-l'Outaouais RCM**:
  - “Increase the tourism offer of tourism centres: Chelsea/Wakefield and Montebello”
  - To do so, one of the key projects concerned by this strategic direction is to **increase the positioning of “culture and heritage” in the village centres of Chelsea, Wakefield and Gatineau Park**

# 1. Background...

- The Municipality of Chelsea, the Municipality of La Pêche, Outaouais Tourism, the SADC, the Collines de l'Outaouais CLD, Commerce Chelsea and the Wakefield – La Pêche Chamber and Gatineau Park (NCC)
- Enlisted the services of **Zins Beuchesne and Associates** to conduct a study on this subject and elaborate the planning for the recreational tourism development of the Chelsea, Wakefield and Gatineau Park tourism centre

## 2. Specific Objectives of the Project

- The objectives were the following:
  - Analyze the tourism centres concerned by the study: recreational tourism offer, tourism results and competition in Outaouais and tourist groups
  - Provide a strategic diagnosis
  - Determine the main issues and challenges in developing the tourism centres concerned by the study and identify development opportunities
  - Validate development potential through an online survey of client groups through citizen of Chelsea and La Pêche
  - Propose the future strategic positioning of the tourism centres
  - Identify key areas for development
  - Develop a strategic ten-year recreational tourism development plan: markets and target client groups, support strategies, implementation methods and actions

## 3. Project Phases and Activities

### Phase 1: Market analysis

- 1.1 : Start-up meeting
- 1.2 : Analysis of the local and regional tourism context
- 1.3 : Consultation of key observers in the field
- 1.4 : Profile of client groups of tourism centres concerned by the study
- 1.5 : Map of areas where tourist traffic is concentrated (submitted separately)
- 1.6 : Analysis of comparables
- 1.7 : Preliminary diagnosis and strategic issues
- 1.8 : Progress report, meeting and creativity workshop
- 1.9 : Validation of potential development opportunities

- 2.1 : Preliminary definition of the vision, positioning and development priorities
- 2.2 : Working document and meeting

### Phase 2: Future strategic positioning of the tourism centres

### Phase 3: Strategic Ten-Year Development Plan

- 3.1 : Target markets and client groups
- 3.2 : Measures and actions to be implemented
- 3.3 : Preliminary Strategic Ten-Year Recreational Tourism Plan and meeting
- 3.4 : Final Strategic Ten-Year Recreational Tourism Plan including monitoring and evaluation tools
- 3.5 : Public presentation of the Final Strategic Ten-Year Recreational Tourism Plan

## 4. Visitors to the Territory: Characteristics and Satisfaction

- Between September 28 and October 31, 2015, an online survey was conducted by **Zins Beauchesne and Associates** with clients who had visited the stores, businesses and attractions in the **municipalities of La Pêche and Chelsea** as well as in **Gatineau Park**. This survey of 152 visitors who completed the questionnaire provides greater insight into the context of visits to the territory

## 4. Visitors to the Territory: Characteristics and Satisfaction...

- 88.8% of visitors who participated in the survey had visited Gatineau Park in the last year:
  - 83.6% the Municipality of Chelsea/Old Chelsea Village
  - 72.4% the Municipality of La Pêche/Wakefield Village
  
- **Over half of the respondents (55.9%) had visited all 3 sites in the last year** while only 5.9% visited Gatineau Park only

## 4. Visitors to the Territory: Characteristics and Satisfaction...

- 69.3% of respondents who visited the Municipality of Chelsea/Old Chelsea Village went there both in the summer (including spring, summer and fall) and the winter:
  - This percentage was 62.2% for visitors to Gatineau Park
  - And 58.2% for the Municipality of La Pêche/Wakefield Village
  
- Gatineau Park turns out to be the most visited site of the three, both in the summer (including spring, summer and fall) and the winter.



## 4. Visitors to the Territory: Characteristics and Satisfaction...

- **In the summer**, the two main reasons for visiting the three sites were:
  - The opportunity to go hiking in Gatineau Park (72.4%)
  - And dining at restaurants (70.4%). But several other reasons were mentioned by visitors
  
- **In the winter**, the main reasons for visiting the three sites were:
  - Dining at restaurants (for 57.9% of respondents)
  - The opportunity to enjoy cross-country skiing or snowshoeing in Gatineau Park (55.3%)
  - Visiting a spa (46.1%)

## 4. Visitors to the Territory: Characteristics and Satisfaction...

- During their visit, more:
  - Than half of the visitors were accompanied by their spouse (54.6%)
  - Nearly one-third by friends (31.6%)
  - Nearly one-fourth of respondents came with family/relatives (24.3%)
  - With their children (23.7%).

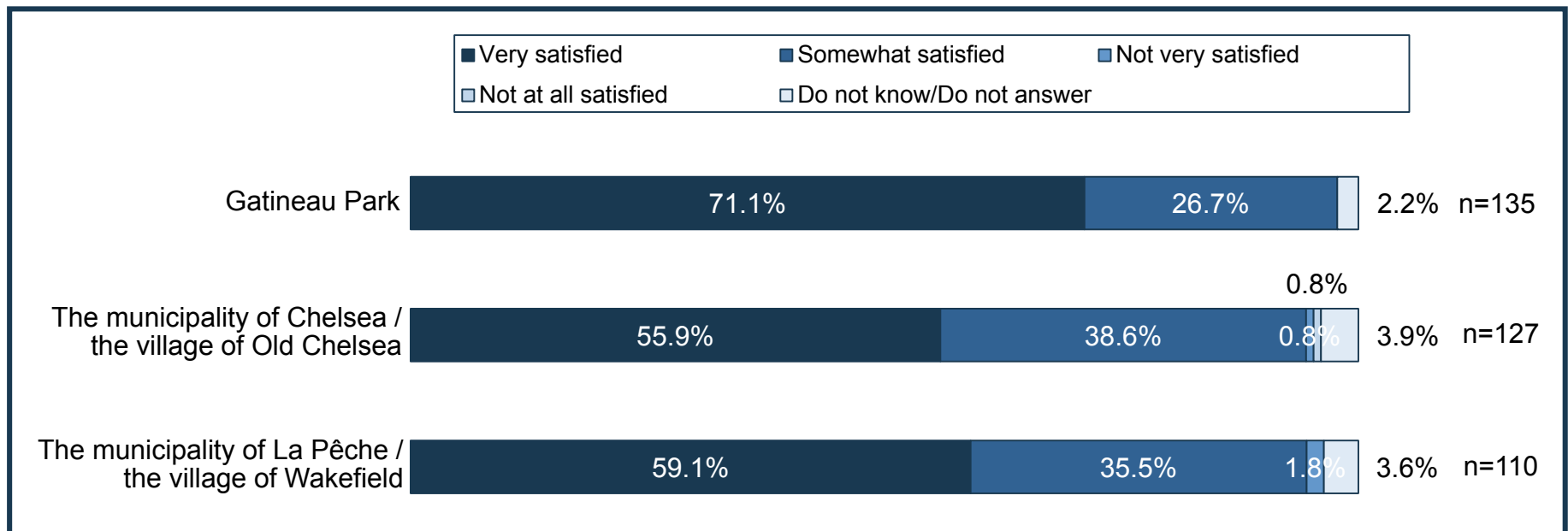
## 4. Visitors to the Territory: Characteristics and Satisfaction...

- 87.5% of respondents did not spend the night in commercial accommodations at one of the three most visited sites, while 12.5% spent at least one night. In this case, the length of the stay is on average 1.53 nights
- The majority of the respondents (90.8%) went to a restaurant, a café or a bar during one of their visits to one of the two municipalities
- And 55.9% made a purchase at a store during one of their visits

This survey of visitors reveals that the reasons for their visits involved, especially in the winter, a combination of outdoor activities and more relaxing, entertaining and comfort-oriented activities

## 4. Visitors to the Territory: Characteristics and Satisfaction...

### Visitor's satisfaction



## 4. Visitors to the Territory: Characteristics and Satisfaction...

- As concerns **the Municipality of Chelsea/Old Chelsea Village**, the items that received the highest satisfaction ratings were:
  - The welcome (94.7% of visitors were very or fairly satisfied)
  - The quality of the restaurants (90.8%)
  - The service level in restaurants (90.8%).
  
- As concerns the Municipality of **La Pêche/Wakefield Village**, the items that received the highest satisfaction ratings were:
  - The quality of the stores and businesses (85.1% of the visitors were very or fairly satisfied)
  - The quality of the restaurants (85.0%) and the welcome (83.6%)

## 4. Visitors to the Territory: Characteristics and Satisfaction...

- The profile of survey respondents reveals that:
  - More than 3 out of 4 respondents were women (77.6%);
  - The average age was 42.7 and 42.8% of respondents were between 35 and 54 years old, 34.2% between 18 and 34 years old, and 21.1% were 55 years old or older;
  - 65.8% of the respondents had a university degree and 26.3% a technical or college diploma;
  - 47.4% of the respondents lived in a household with a total annual income of \$80,000 or more, 22.4% between \$40,000 and \$79,999 and 8.6% with a total annual income of less than \$40,000.
  
- These respondents lived mainly in the Outaouais (67.1%) and in the Ottawa region in Ontario (22.4%).

## 5. Diagnosis

### Key Pillars

- Village centres: Old Chelsea and Wakefield
- Gatineau Park
- Gatineau River
- History: figures and events and spirit of place
- Rustic, natural and distinctive landscapes
- Nordik Spa-Nature
- Wakefield Mill: Inn and Spa
- Éco-Odyssée

### Key Experiences Offered

- Authentic village life offered by Old Chelsea and Wakefield
- Arts and culture
- Historical and heritage discovery
- Varied range of culinary delights and fine cuisine
- Well-being
- Cycling: mountain and road-biking
- Cross-country and downhill skiing
- Snowshoeing
- Water activities (river and lake)
- Hiking

## 5. Diagnosis...

### Diagnosis summary

#### Strengths/Assets

- The authentic village centres
- Powerful client-generating drivers
  - Gatineau Park
  - Nordik Spa-Nature
  - Wakefield Mill Inn and Spa
  - Éco-Odyssée
  - Ski centres
- Stores, businesses, restaurants and fine cuisine
- Landscapes
- Entrepreneurial community
- Reputation
- Accessibility

#### Weaknesses/Constraints

- Atmosphere and appearance of the villages
- Insufficient signage
- Parking in the villages
- Ambiguous brand image
- Insufficient promotional and development measures
- Lack of synergy
- Website/Tourist information section
- Visitor information centre
- The condition of the roads
- Limited public water access in Chelsea and Wakefield



## 5. Diagnosis...

### Diagnosis summary (cont'd)

#### Opportunities

- In terms of demand:
  - Markets in Ottawa and Montreal
  - Clients of the territory's main draws
  - Art and culture clients
  - History and heritage clients
  - Cross-country skiing clients
  - Cycling clients
  - Foodie clients
- In terms of development:
  - Water/non-motor boat
  - Additional events
  - Multi-use linear park

#### Threats

- Increasing competition
- Weakening quality and uniqueness of the visitor experience
- Deterioration of the brand image
- Seasonal peaks
- Growing urbanization

## 6. Challenges and Issues

1. The synergy between the tourism centres and the actors
2. Awareness and brand image
3. Exploitation of market opportunities
4. Development of the Gatineau River
5. Quaint Villages and the visitor experience offered
6. Maximization of the different seasons and periods of the year
7. Accommodation capacity
8. Infrastructure

## 7. Vision of Development and Positioning

### Vision

- The Old Chelsea – Wakefield – Gatineau Park tourism area will become a renowned, must-see destination in the heart of the Outaouais and National Capital tourism region
- It will offer a memorable year-round experience to visitors, regardless of the length of their stay, who love arts and culture, fine cuisine and local food products, cycling and outdoor activities, relaxation and well-being. It will become a winter tourism destination by capitalizing particularly on cross-country skiing in Gatineau Park

## 7. Vision of Development and Positioning...

- A festive spirit and authentic ambiance will reign in the quality environment of the villages. Its core values will include welcoming visitors in a courteous and friendly manner and showing concern for the quality of life of its citizens and sustainable development

## 7. Vision of Development and Positioning...

### Positioning

- Old Chelsea and Wakefield will be positioned as a destination on the basis of:
  - The heritage of the Old Chelsea and Wakefield village centres
  - The Gatineau River and its public access and water activity facilities
  - Gatineau Park, and particularly the outdoor nature experiences it provides
  - Relaxing activities in the forest, at a spa or in the surrounding rural countryside
  - Arts and culture
  - The culinary experience

## 7. Vision of Development and Positioning...

- The positioning could be summarized as follows:
  - *Nestled between Gatineau Park and the Gatineau River, Chelsea and Wakefield are two charming and authentic villages that have the advantage of being located at the doorstep of the National Capital. They offer visitors a unique experience that combines relaxation and outdoor activities with historical, artistic, cultural and culinary attractions*

## 8. Visitors' Interest in an Improved Tourism Offer

- Survey conducted in September 2015 with visitors
- The activities that raised the most interest were:
  - Developing the riverbanks of the Gatineau River (90.2% of respondents would be very or fairly interested); and
  - Holding culinary and agri-tourism activities (88.2%).
  - The existence of a tour boat on the Gatineau River came in last place, though 57.3% of visitors would be interested in this activity.

## 9. Residents' Opinions

- Between November 5 and 23, two online surveys were conducted by **Zins Beaughesne and Associates** with residents of the municipalities of Chelsea and La Pêche: 332 Chelsea residents and 167 La Pêche residents filled out these surveys



## 9. Residents' Opinions...

### ■ For Chelsea residents:

- **Protecting the environment** was the issue of greatest concern (98.8% of respondents thought it is very or fairly important in developing recreational tourism in their municipality)
- **Preserving heritage** was second in importance to them (94.6%)
- **Developing business and commerce in Chelsea** (64.2%)
- **Developing recreational tourism** (64.1%)
- **Increasing the number of visitors to stores and businesses in Chelsea** (55.7%)

## 9. Residents' Opinions...

### ■ For La Pêche residents:

- **Protecting the environment** was also the issue of most concern (98.2% of respondents thought it is very or fairly important)
- **Preserving heritage was second in importance** to them (94.6%)
- **Investments in infrastructure made** by the Municipality of La Pêche **to draw more visitors and make them feel more welcome** (84.4%)
- **Developing recreational tourism and increasing the number of visitors to stores and businesses in La Pêche and visitors coming to their municipality**, with the same percentage (81.4%)

## 10. Residents' Interest to New Investments

- **For Chelsea residents**, the investments that raised the most interest were:
  - A cross-country ski path connecting the municipalities of La Pêche and Chelsea with Gatineau Park (85.2% of the respondents would be very or fairly in favour of it)
  - A multi-use path (for walking, cycling, inline skating) along the river that connects these two municipalities with Gatineau Park (85.0%)
  - Developing the banks of the Gatineau River for walking (74.0%)
  - Culinary and agri-tourism festivities at various times (71.4%)
  - Setting up water access infrastructures (68.1%)

## 10. Residents' Interest to New Investments...

- **For La Pêche residents**, the investments that raised the most interest were:
  - Facilities for walking along the banks of the Gatineau River (90.5%)
  - A multi-use path (for walking, cycling, inline skating) along the river that connects the municipalities of La Pêche and Chelsea with Gatineau Park (88.1%)
  - A cross-country ski and snowshoe trail connecting these two municipalities with Gatineau Park (84.4%)
  - A regional information centre for visitors (79.6%)
  - Water access infrastructures (78.4%)

# 11. Development Priorities

- To meet the challenges involved in making the Chelsea – Wakefield – Gatineau Park tourist destination a must-see in the National Capital and Outaouais region, the following development priorities and strategic orientations should be focused:
  - **Priority 1: Synergy between the tourism centres and the actors**
  - **Priority 2: Awareness, brand image and market opportunities**
  - **Priority 3: Experience in the Old Chelsea and Wakefield village centres, and in Gatineau Park**
  - **Priority 4: Development of the Gatineau River**
  - **Priority 5: A larger quantity and wider range of accommodations**

## 11. Development Priorities...

- A number of strategies and potential ways of implementing them are suggested:
  
- **Priority 1: Synergy between the tourism centres and the actors**
  - Strategic orientation 1.1: Set up strategic governance and operations committees
  
  - Strategic orientation 1.2: Develop common tools for organizing the offer, providing information to visitors and promoting the destination in markets
  
  - Strategic orientation 1.3: Organize an annual tourism forum (summer/fall or winter/spring) and offer continuous information

# 11. Development Priorities...

- **Priority 2: Awareness, brand image and market opportunities**
  - Strategic orientation 2.1: Create a unifying and motivating brand concept and use the brand in all points of contact
  - Strategic orientation 2.2: Conduct an annual awareness, brand image and promotional campaign in the National Capital:
    - Carry out targeted “co-op” actions aimed at priority client group segments by making specific offers
    - Carry out targeted “co-op” actions aimed at tourists already in Ottawa
    - Promote a strong winter season by capitalizing particularly on cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and hiking

# 11. Development Priorities...

- **Priority 2: Awareness, brand image and market opportunities (cont'd)**
  - Strategic orientation 2.3: Participate fully in Outaouais Tourism initiatives in national and international markets
  - Strategic orientation 2.4: Improve and simplify visitor information and welcome:
    - Develop a tourism website and effective, attractive information for visitors
    - Improve road signage: leading to the villages, at the entrances to villages, in the villages and in Gatineau Park
    - Set up shuttle service between Ottawa and Gatineau hotels, and the Chelsea – Wakefield – Gatineau Park destination, during peak periods
    - Improve management of tourism traffic in peak periods



# 11. Development Priorities...

## ■ Priority 3: Experience in the Old Chelsea and Wakefield village centres, and Gatineau Park

- Strategic orientation 3.1: Implement a quality urban design in the village centres and the various connections between them:
  - Enhance the village centres
  - Redevelop problematic intersections
  - Encourage and improve the pedestrian experience in the villages
  - Improve the entrances to Gatineau Park
  - Strengthen and increase the “Fleurons du Québec” recognition

# 11. Development Priorities...

## ■ Priority 3: Experience in the Old Chelsea and Wakefield village centres, and Gatineau Park (cont'd)

- Strategic orientation 3.2: Strengthen festive and cultural entertainment and schedule events throughout the year:
  - Large-scale festivals and events to celebrate each season
  - Culinary and agri-tourism festivities at various times

# 11. Development Priorities...

## ■ Priority 4: Development of the Gatineau River

- Strategic orientation 4.1: Develop the banks of the Gatineau River for walking as well as water access infrastructures:
  - Public docks
  - Beaches and water access for swimming
- Strategic orientation 4.2: Create a multi-use path (e.g. hiking, cycling, inline skating) along the river that connects the municipalities of La Pêche and Chelsea and with Gatineau Park
- Strategic orientation 4.3: Create a cross-country ski and snowshoe trail connecting the municipalities of La Pêche and Chelsea with Gatineau Park

# 11. Development Priorities...

## ■ Priority 4: Development of the Gatineau River (cont'd)

- Strategic orientation 4.4: Encourage and facilitate water activities in the river:
  - Canoeing, kayaking;
  - Non-motor boat launch ramp;
- Strategic orientation 4.5: Design and create a prestigious and festive interpretive river cruise
- Strategic orientation 4.6: Continue exploring the relevance of a tourist train in Wakefield, the tourist village of La Pêche

# 11. Development Priorities...

- **Priority 5: A larger quantity and wider range of accommodations**
  - Strategic orientation 5.1: Encourage growth in the accommodation capacity to create a sufficient critical mass
  - Strategic orientation 5.2: Encourage diversification in the offer of accommodations, while preserving the charm of the villages
  - Strategic orientation 5.3: Renovate the Lac Philippe Campground (ready-to-camp units, cottage-style, year-round)
  - Strategic orientation 5.4: Increase the glamping supply in the park and the Municipality of La Pêche

## 12. Development Strategy Objectives

- Increased visits in the villages
- Longer visits and stays
- Greater spending by visitors
- Better exploitation of all seasons
- Greater visitor satisfaction with their experience
- Increased awareness of the destination
- A clearly established brand image
- Greater investments in commerce and tourism

## 13. Target Markets

- Five large markets will be given priority:
  - The population of the National Capital Region and eastern Ontario
  - The population of the Greater Montreal Region (Highway 50)
  - Tourists already in Ottawa and Gatineau
  - Canadian tourists
  - International tourists

## 14. Client Targets

- Therefore, the main target will be client groups drawn by:
  - Quaint villages
  - Culture, arts and crafts
  - Cycling (road and mountain biking), cross-country skiing, hiking and snowshoeing
  - Fine cuisine (gourmet products, local products, restaurants)
  - Waterfront and water activities
  - Relaxation and well-being



## 14. Client Targets...

- From a demographic point of view, the targets will be:
  - Young couples and groups of friends without children
  - Families
  - Couples whose children have left home (empty nesters)

## 15. Brand Image for Chelsea – Wakefield – Gatineau Park

The chosen positioning explained above must be implemented through a systematically conveyed brand image.

### ■ Pillars of the brand

- The two charming and welcoming heritage village centres of Chelsea and Wakefield
- Gateway to Gatineau Park, which is renowned for its beauty and the experience of nature it provides
- The Gatineau River
- Arts and culture (history and heritage)
- Food and friendliness
- Well-being and relaxation
- Accessibility/proximity

## 15. Brand Image for Chelsea – Wakefield – Gatineau Park...

### ■ Essence of the brand

- Comfortable outdoors (“Plein Air Douillet”) combining outdoor and non-motorized water activities with relaxation, a cultural experience and fine cuisine

### ■ Promises of the brand

- The Chelsea – Wakefield – Gatineau Park brand will invite visitors to :
  - Discover
  - Enjoy outdoor activities
  - Unwind and enjoy
  - Taste local products and regional dishes

## 15. Brand Image for Chelsea – Wakefield – Gatineau Park...

### Discover

- Two villages, a park and a river
- Their beauty, history and heritage
- Local artists
- Their residents and merchants

### Unwind and enjoy

- Terraces
- Village centres
- Stores and businesses
- Riverbank
- A spa

## 15. Brand Image for Chelsea – Wakefield – Gatineau Park...

### Enjoy outdoor activities

- By cycling or walking
- By cross-country skiing or snowshoeing
- At Gatineau Park
- Through water activities on the Gatineau River

### Taste local products and regional dishes

- Restaurants
- Stores and businesses
- Markets
- Producers

## 16. Improvements in Product and Experience Offered

### The village experience

- Design and layout: streets, public spaces, pedestrian use
- Beautification
- Welcome
- Entertainment
- Events

### The cultural experience

- Cultural programming
- Events
- Entertainment

## 16. Improvements in Product and Experience Offered...

### The park experience

- The outdoors and recreation
- Cycling and walking
- Snowshoeing and cross-country skiing
- Fat-biking

### The active experience

- Linear park
- Network of trails for walking and cycling
- Water activities
- Network of trails for cross-country skiing
- Downhill skiing

## 16. Improvements in Product and Experience Offered...

### The river experience

- Public river access
- Docks
- Trail along the riverbank
- Water activities
- Paddleboat for excursions
- Potentially a beach

### The culinary experience

- Events
- Circuits
- Markets



## 17. Improved Accessibility and Welcome

- Signage to Chelsea and Wakefield, the tourist village of La Pêche, on Highway 5 and Route 105, even on Highway 50
- Improved and easier to follow signage in the villages and Gatineau Park, especially for tourist attractions and recreational facilities
- A sufficient number of well-planned parking facilities and adequate signage
- More effective tourist information, website and tourist information office
- Welcome strategy and policy involving attractions, merchants and employees

## 18. Promotion

- Investments and efforts will need to be made to:
  - Increase awareness of the destination
  - Develop a high-quality brand image and convert it into a visual brand identity
  - Ensure that the brand image is communicated systematically
  - Acquire quality, striking promotional tools: website, posters, videos, brochures
  - Invest annually in advertising and promotional actions that highlight the destination and certain experiences or specific products, either grouped together or on a "co-op" basis

## 19. Major Areas for Action 2016-2020

- **Brand image, awareness and promotion:**
  - This area for action is essential because it is the key to higher numbers of visitors to the villages and the park, especially for stores and businesses that offer tourism services or products
  - It requires resource pooling and coordination to ensure a strong impact and a high return on investment;
- **Web and promotional material:**
  - Web and promotional material for the destination as a whole are a very concrete application of its positioning and brand image
  - They also make it easier to welcome visitors and share information with them
  - These tools are severely lacking at this time and must be created immediately

## 19. Major Areas for Action 2016-2020...

- **Signage, welcome and visitor experience:**
  - Signage, welcome and visitor experience are the keys to visitor satisfaction and will result in positive word-of-mouth publicity and repeated visits
  - These various factors must be implemented in a joint and coordinated manner so that promotional efforts lead to a "rediscovery" of the transformed and enhanced "Chelsea, Wakefield, Gatineau" experience.
- **Events and entertainment in the village centres:**
  - Events and entertainment in the villages will be an opportunity to create year-round feature events
  - Where visitors can enjoy a new "Chelsea, Wakefield, Gatineau Park" experience
  - Create a buzz and draw new clients

## 19. Major Areas for Action 2016-2020...

- **Winter tourism:**

- Although, with the exception of some spots, winter is still a low season to some extent and eats away at the profits of businesses
- It would be in the interest of the destination to capitalize on cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, spas and the specific winter charm of the village centres, as well as the surrounding countryside, to fill this void

- **River and multi-use path:**

- The Gatineau River, its banks and a multi-use path that would run along it are a developmental and distinctive part of the tourism opportunities and experience that could be offered in the territory and connect Wakefield, the tourist village of La Pêche, to Chelsea in a charming setting
- However, this development requires long-term, well-planned efforts that create synergy between its various components for the benefit of the day-trippers, tourists and residents who use it