



THE MUNICIPALITY OF THE COUNTY OF RICHMOND
LA MUNICIPALITÉ DU COMTÉ DE RICHMOND

Special Meeting

Tuesday, March 25, 2025

6:00 p.m.

Council Chambers

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call of Councillors
3. Presentation
 - a) Terry Smith, Chief Executive Officer, Re: Destination Cape Breton Briefing and Update
4. Adjournment

Cape Breton Island

your heart will never leave.

Lakeside Luxury Domes

Presentation to Richmond County Council

March 25, 2025



Mandate

Destination Cape Breton is the official Destination Marketing and Management Organization (DMO) for Cape Breton Island–Unama’ki. It is an incorporated non-profit society.

Destination Cape Breton’s mandate is to responsibly grow the Island’s tourism industry through effective destination marketing and strategic destination development.

An aerial photograph of a waterfall cascading over dark, mossy rocks. A concrete walkway with a metal grate surface runs alongside the waterfall, bordered by a concrete curb. The surrounding area is a dense forest of evergreen and deciduous trees. A blue, wavy graphic element is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Governance

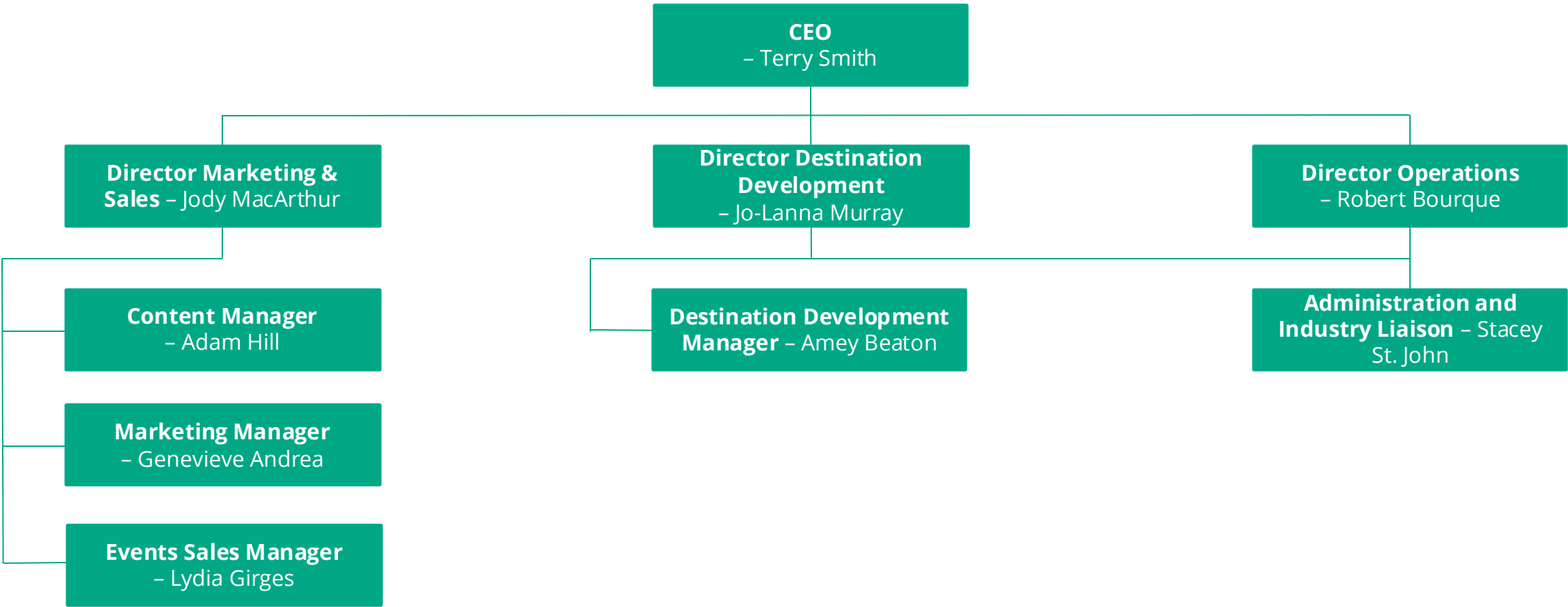
- **Board of Directors**
 - Representation from each municipality
 - Representation from each major culture
 - Industry members at large
- **Committees**
 - Executive (Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Secretary)
 - Finance and Audit
 - Nomination
 - Industry
- Meetings every second month, rotating around the Island
- Annual General Meeting in October



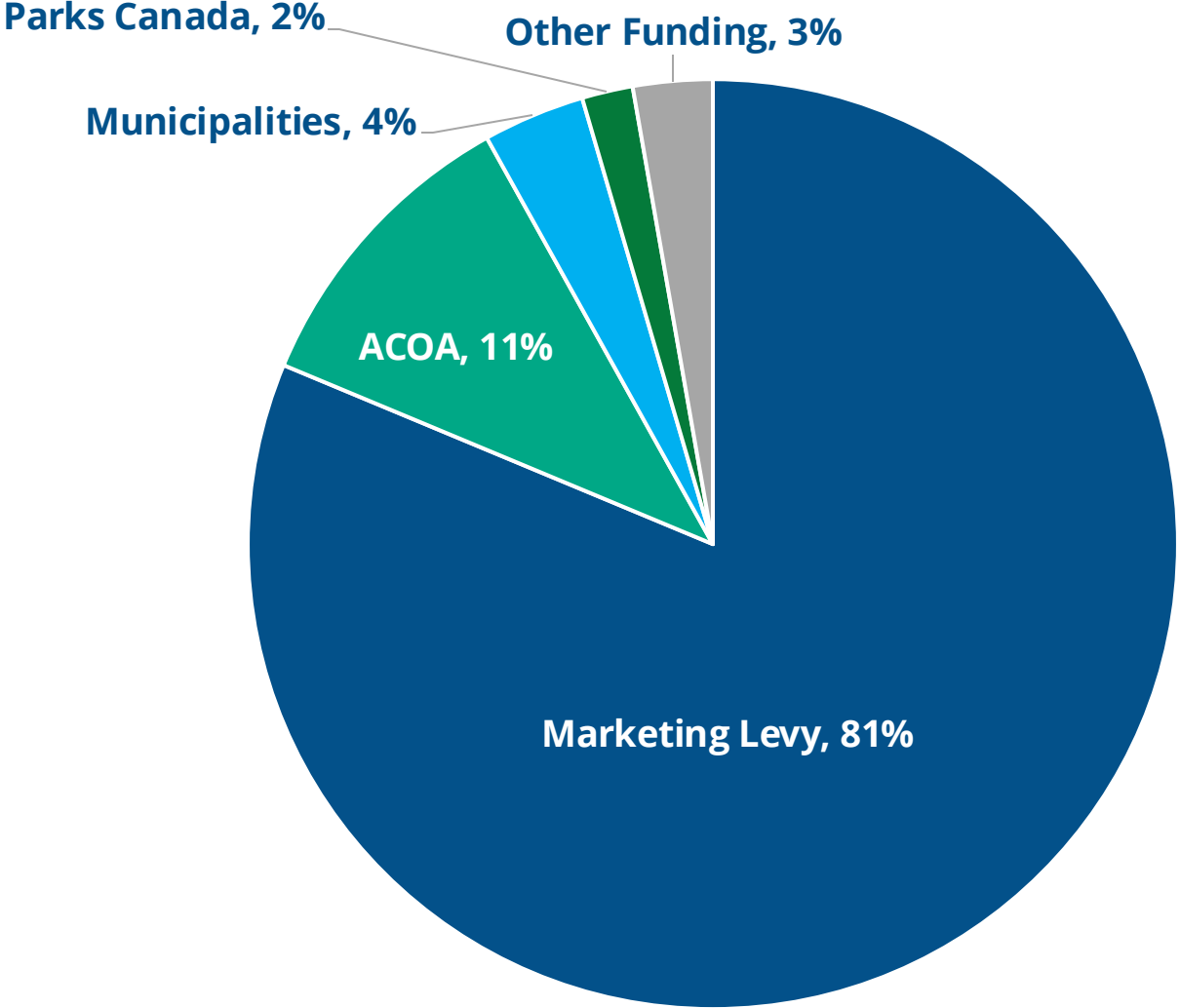
Current Board Members (14)

- Robert Bernard, NSITEN, Mi'kmaq Rep – Chair
- Cathy Lamey, Cabot Trail Motel – Vice Chair
- Bonny MacIsaac, Inverness County – Secretary
- Lisette Bourgeois, La Société Saint-Pierre, Acadian Rep
- Margie Beaton, Colaisde na Gàidhlig, Gaelic Rep
- Shauna Austin, The Clairestone
- Richard MacKinnon, Cape Breton University
- Nicole MacAulay, Port of Sydney
- Basil Doucet, L'abri, Archie & Isadore Hotel, etc.
- Maria O'Hearn, Parks Canada
- Paula Davis, Town of Port Hawkesbury rep
- Perla MacLeod, Victoria County rep
- TBD, Richmond County rep
- TBD, CBRM rep

Organizational Chart

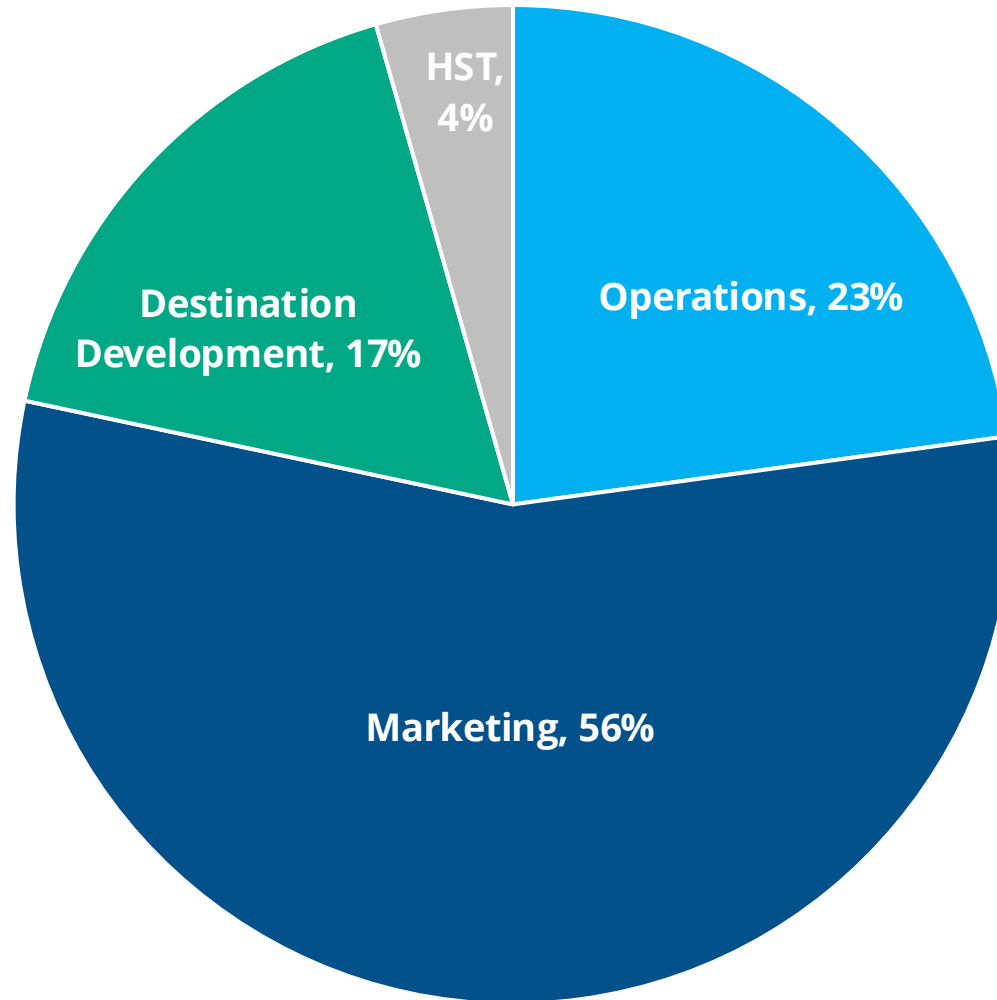


Revenues 2025-26



Total Budget of \$2,822,000

Expenses 2025-26





 The Groundswell

Visitor Overview

Target Audience

Visitor Segments

Outdoor Explorers
+
Culture Seekers
+
Simplicity Lovers

Demographic

Primary:
Empty nest couples
45+
Secondary:
Young adults

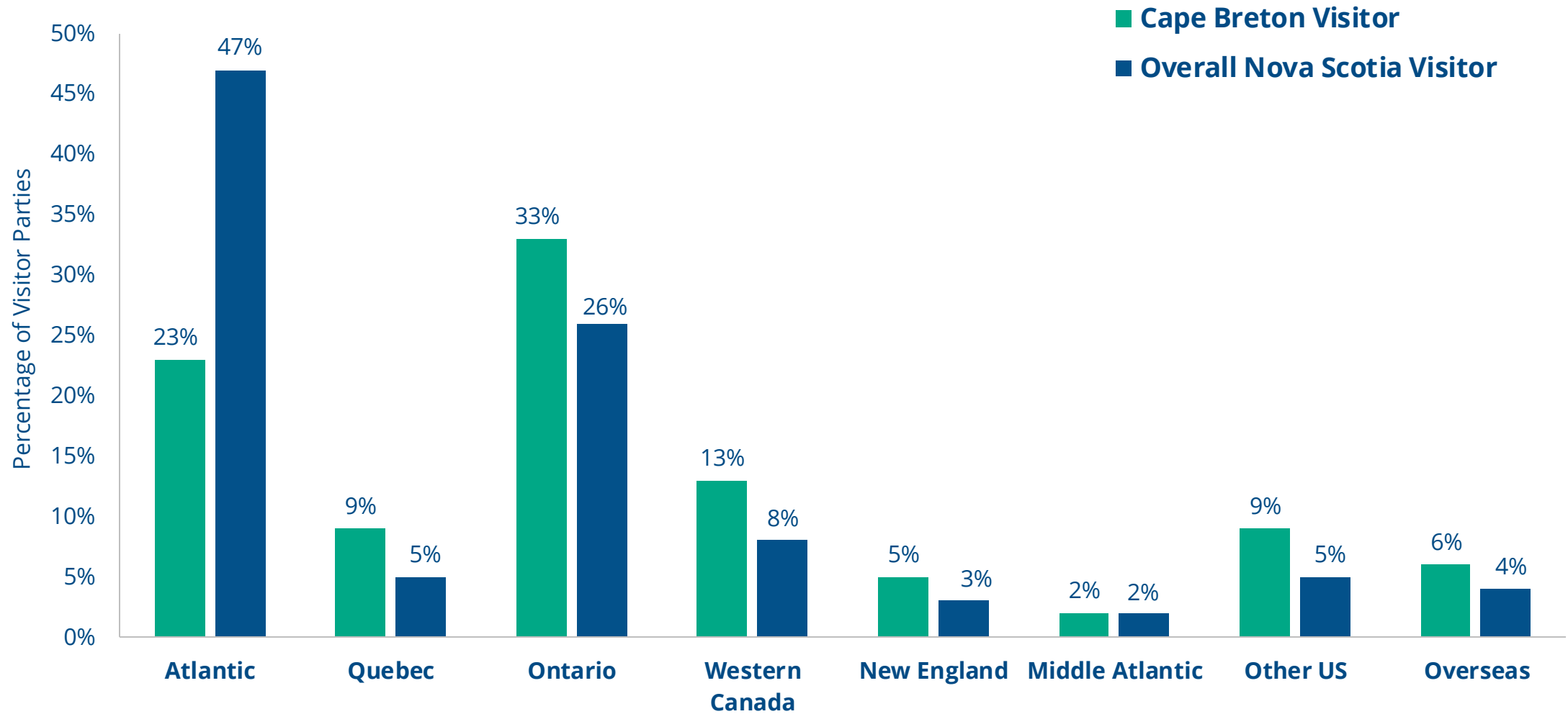
Geographic

Ontario
Maritimes
Quebec
Alberta

Tourism Nova Scotia also targets:

- Northeast US
- UK
- Germany

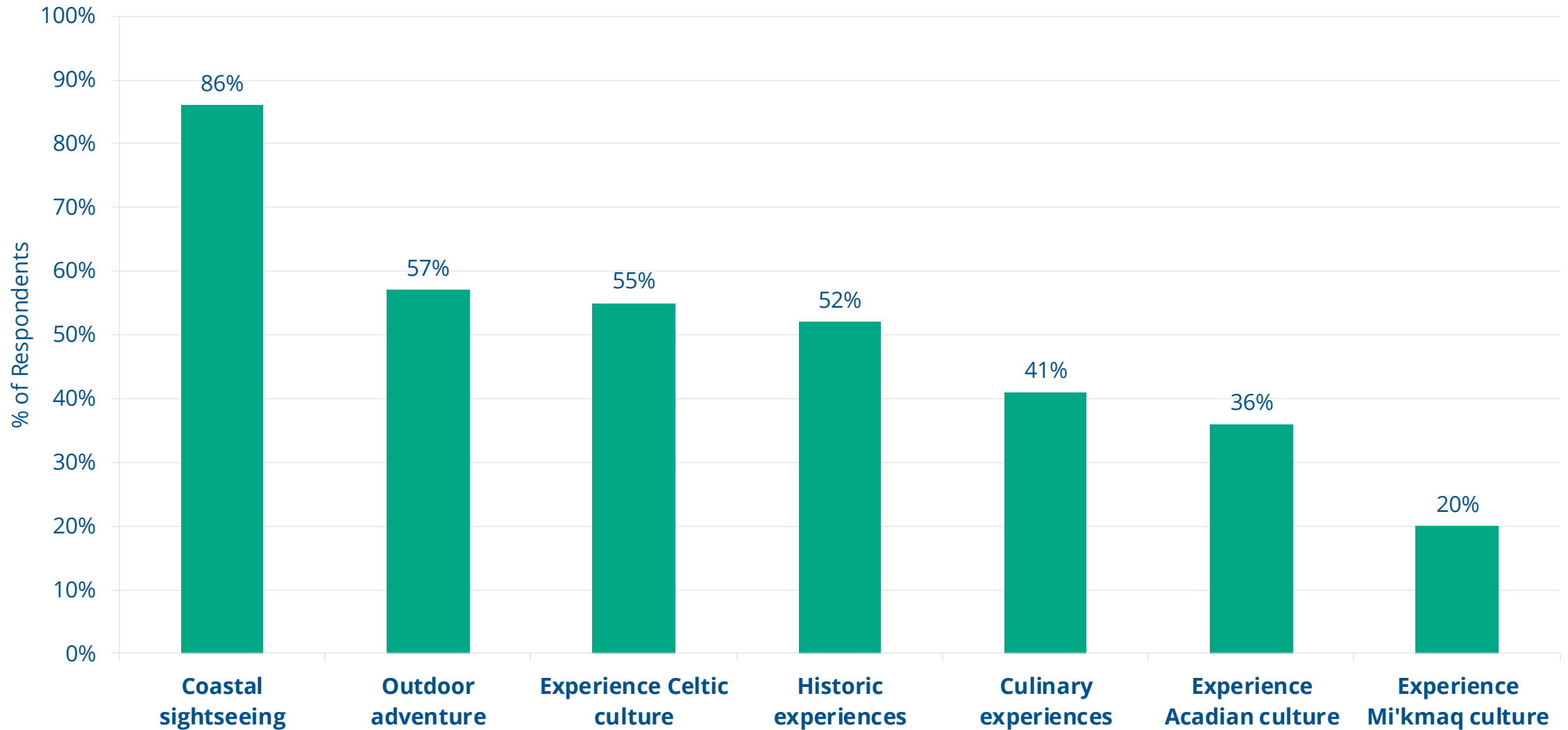
Visitor Origins in a Typical Year



Source: Nova Scotia Visitor Exit Survey

77% of our visitors are from outside Atlantic Canada in a typical year.
They stay longer and spend more.

Cape Breton Island Motivators



Coastal sightseeing includes the Cabot Trail, which is the top motivator of travel to Cape Breton Island



 Point Michaud

Results 2024

Tourism Forecast 2024

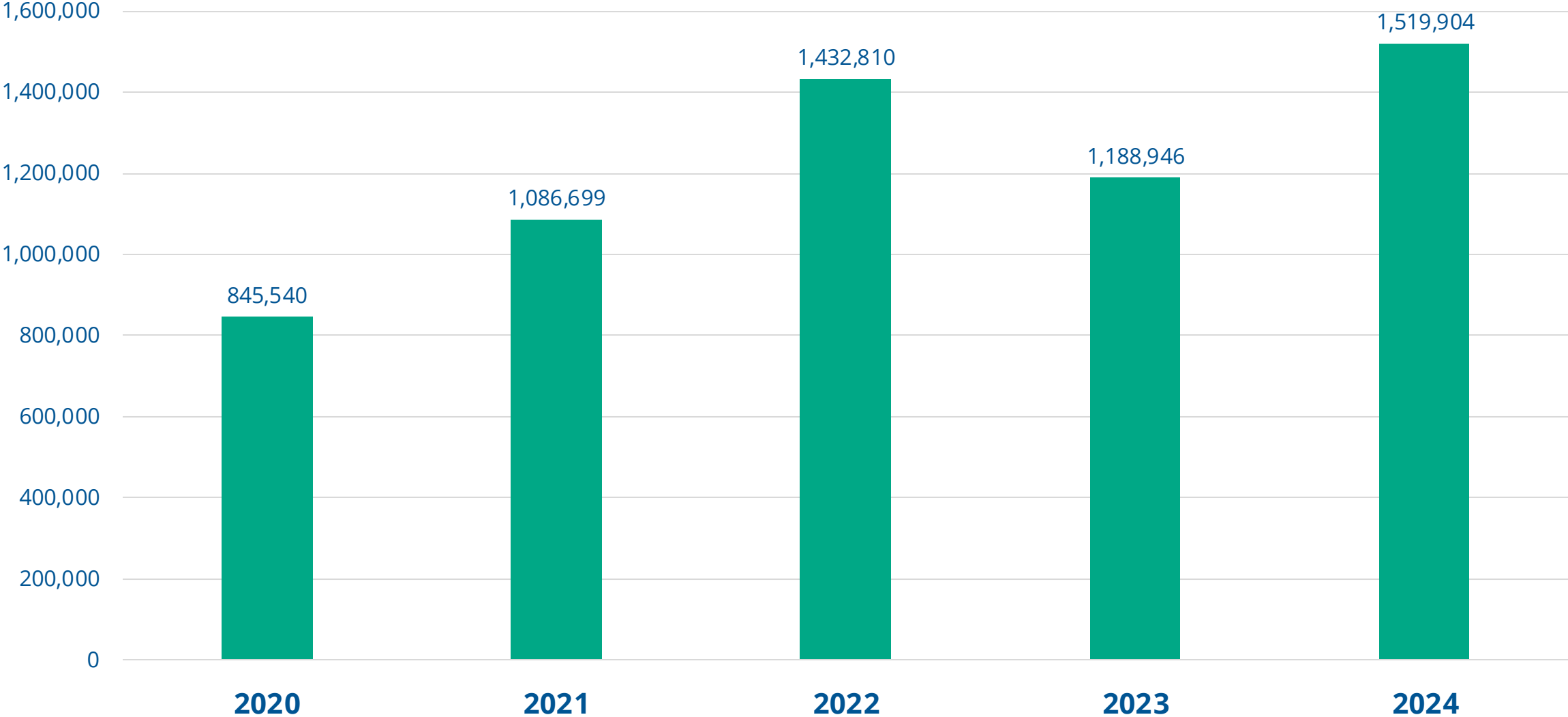
A woman and a man are kayaking on a large body of water under a clear blue sky with scattered clouds. The woman is in the foreground, wearing a blue life vest and sunglasses, smiling. The man is in the background, also wearing a blue life vest and sunglasses. Both are using yellow paddles. The kayakers are on dark-colored kayaks with 'Sundolphin' branding. The water is a deep blue with gentle ripples.

Strong economic headwinds from inflation and higher interest rates will continue to impact disposable incomes in 2024.

– Destination Canada

visitcapebreton.com Sessions

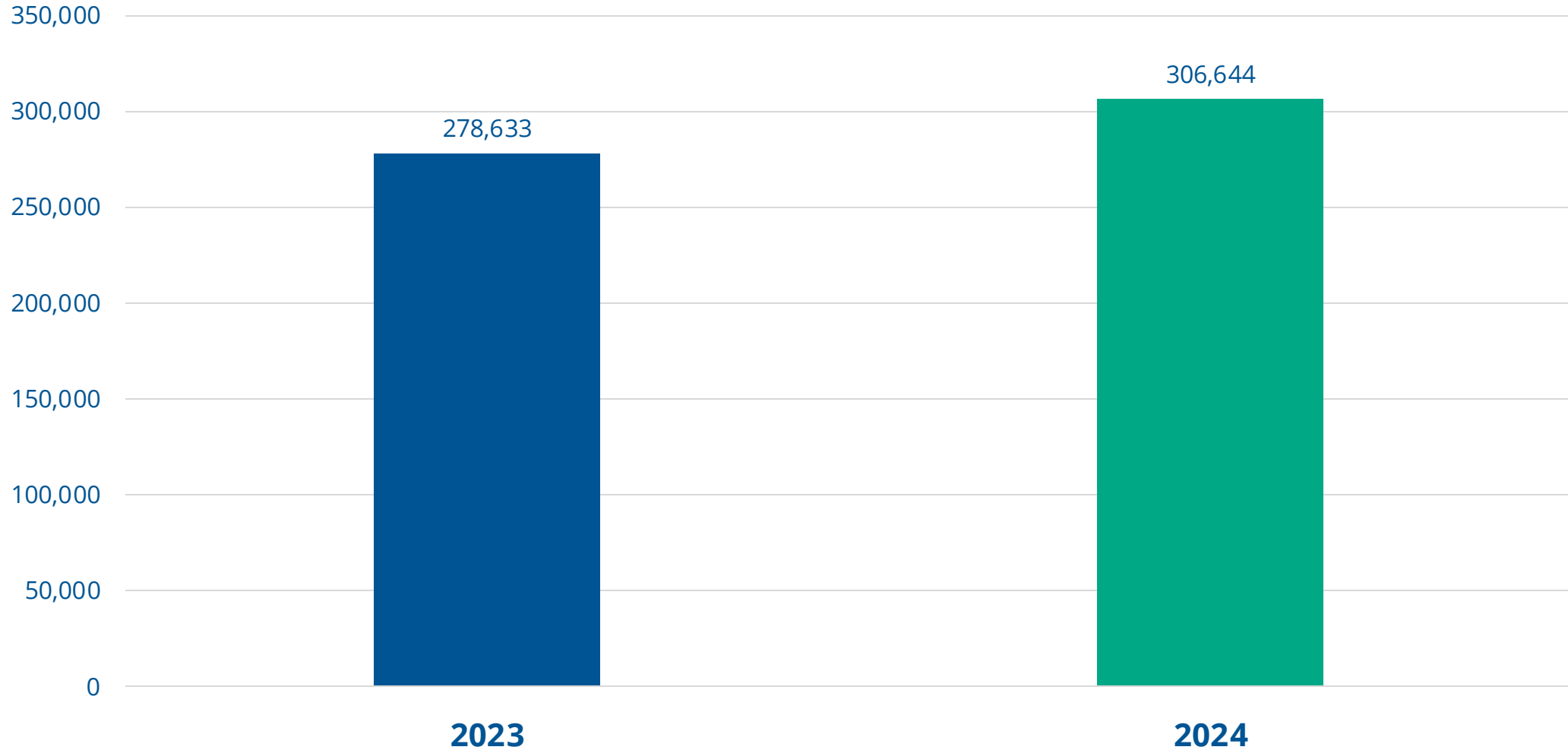
Five-year Trend, 2020-24



Sessions were up 28% and hit a new record

visitcapebreton.com Clicks to Operators

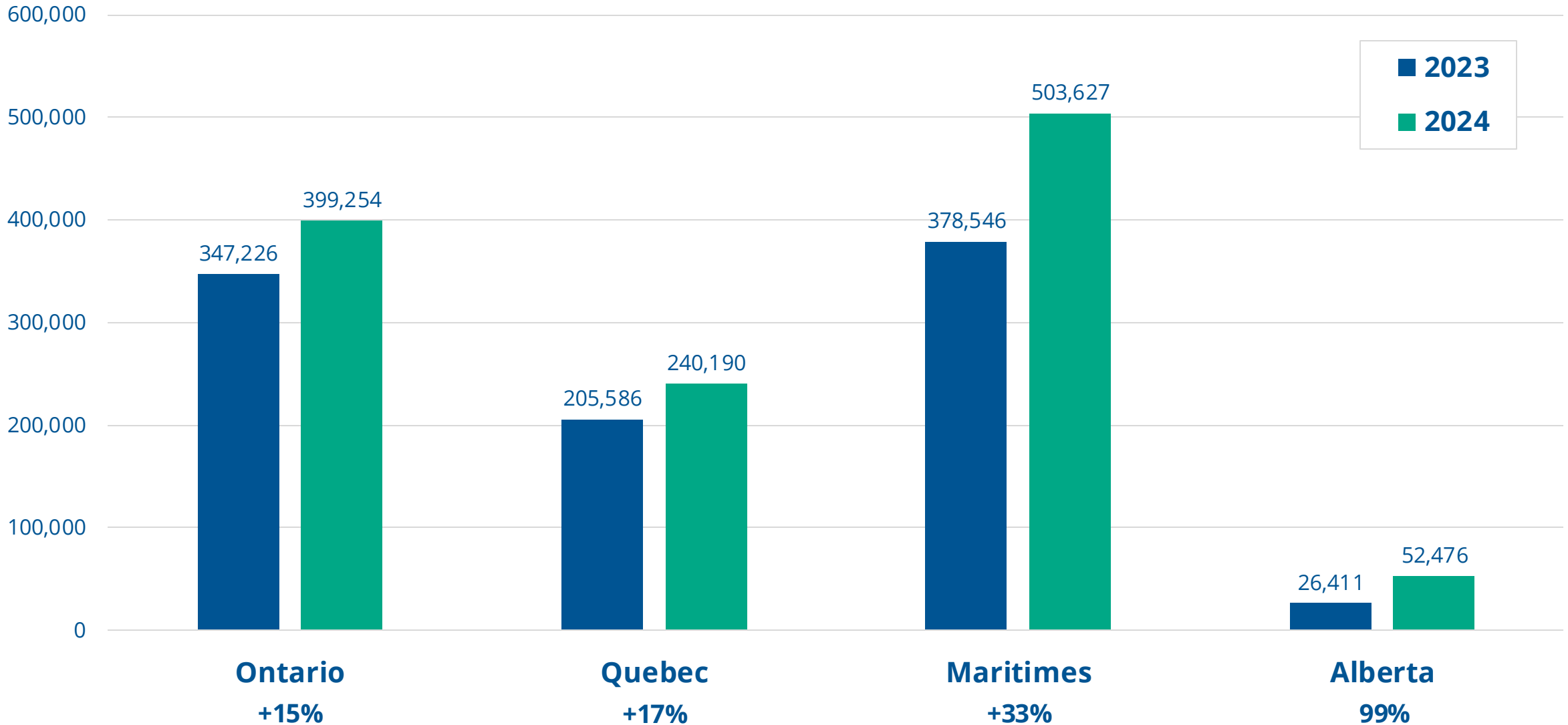
2023-24



Clicks to operators were up 10% and also hit a new record

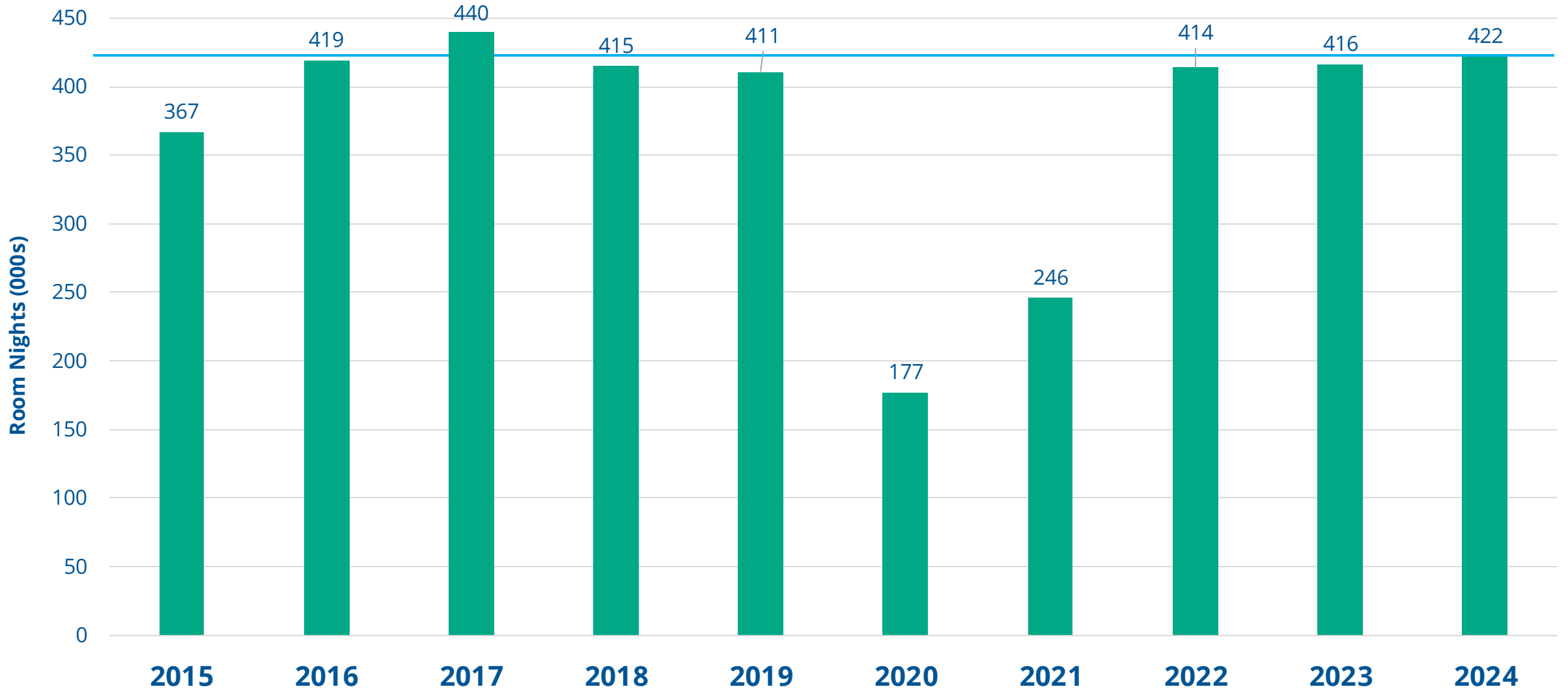
visitcapebreton.com Sessions by Market

2023-24



Registered Room Nights Sold

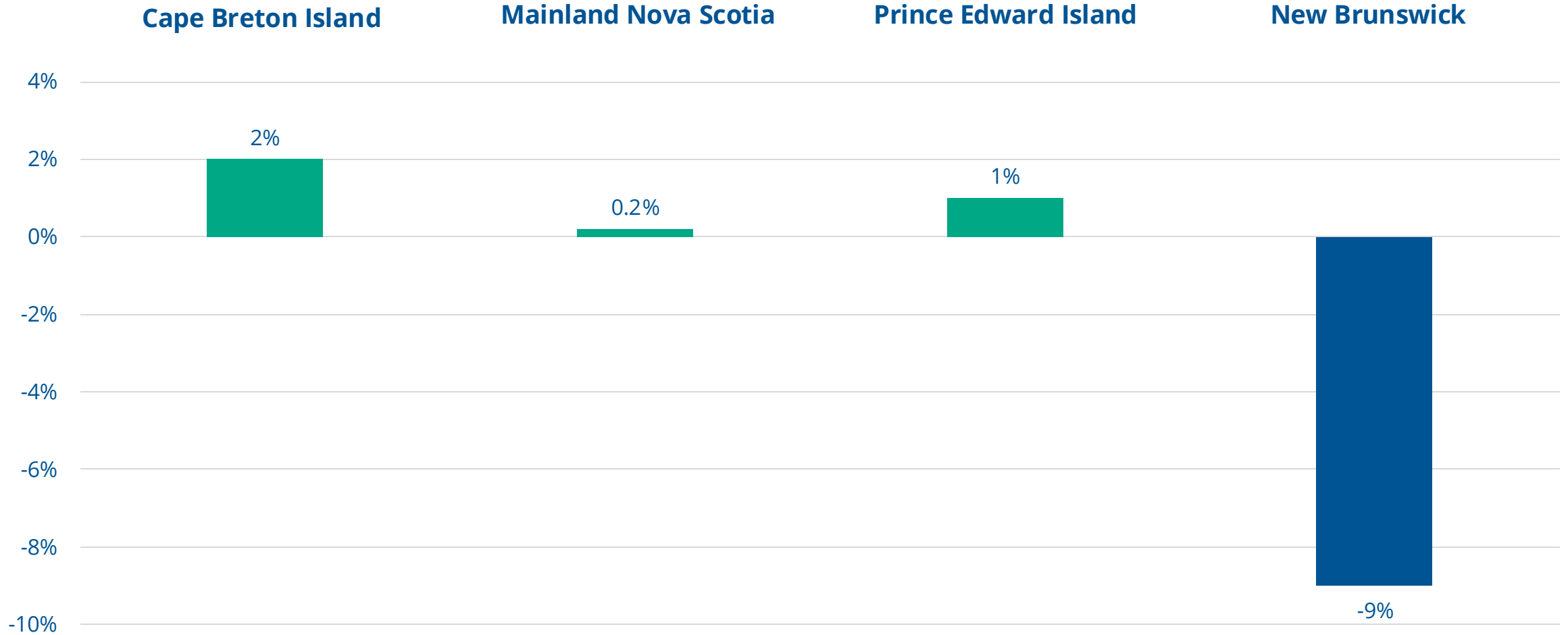
10-Year Trend, January-October



2024 was the second-best year in past 10 years from January-October

Changes to Room Nights Sold – Maritimes

YTD 2024 vs 2023

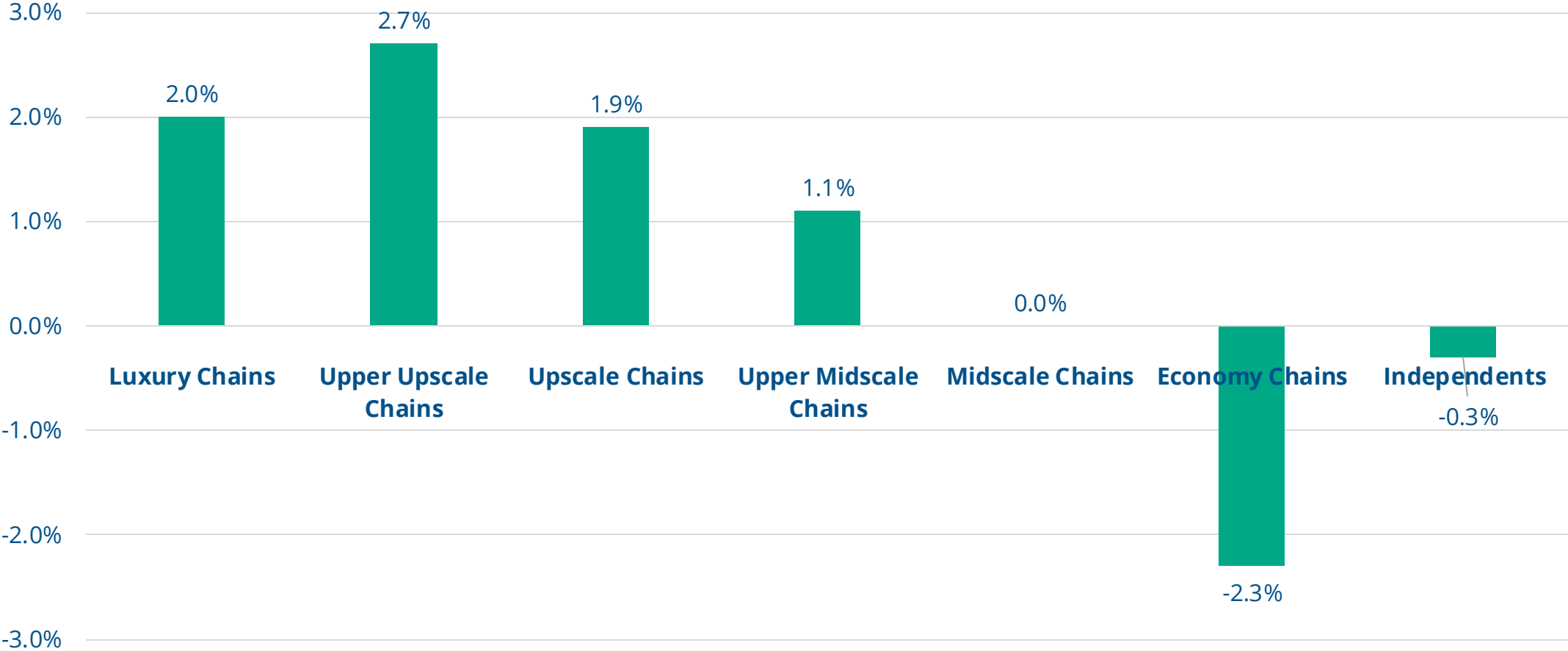


Source: Tourism Nova Scotia, Tourism PEI, Tourism NB

Cape Breton Island led the region in growth to the end of October

Revenue per Average Room Growth – US

January-November 2024



Source: CoStar, Tourism Economics

We heard similar feedback in our industry – the upper end had a good year; the lower struggled



 Dundee Resort & Golf Club

2025-26 Strategic Priorities



Economic Forecast

- Canada GDP forecasted to grow 1.8% in 2025 and 2026
- US GDP forecasted to grow 2.6% in 2025 and 2.3% in 2026
- Inflation forecasted to remain close to 2%

– *Bank of Canada*

NOTE: Forecasts are pre-tariff threat



Travel Trends

High-value(s) Guests

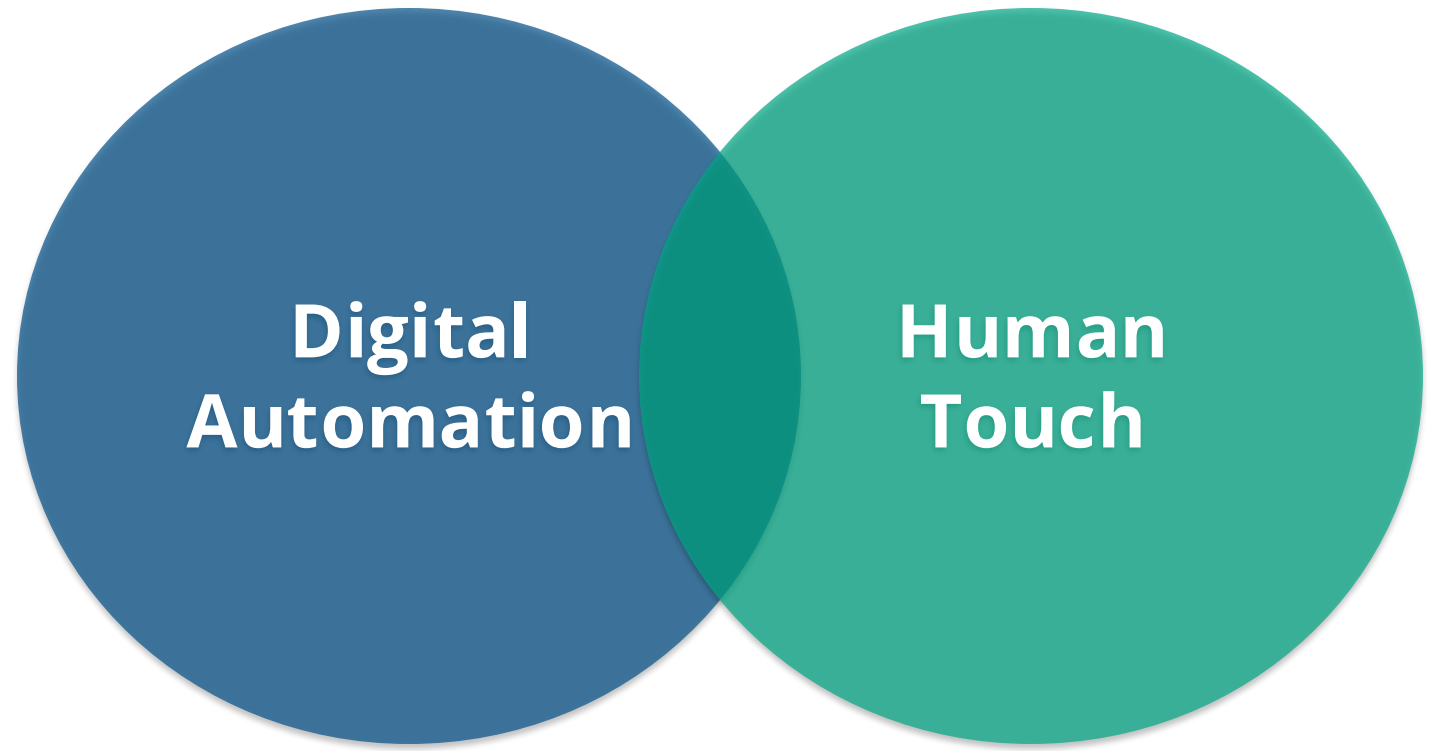
- Desire for self-enrichment
- Increasing consciousness around responsible travel
- Not driven by price
- Stay longer and immerse themselves into the local culture
- Respect and celebrate the place and people

Tourism's Big Shift: Key Trends Shaping the Future of Canada's Tourism Industry

- Responsible travel
- Indigenous cultural connection
- Wild for wilderness
- Health and wellbeing



The Travel Context



Digital
Automation

Human
Touch



Visitor Economy Future Growth

Extend Length of Stay

Extending the average length of stay from 4.4 days to 5.4 days = \$125 M

Growing Year-round Tourism

Increasing tourism between November and April by 12% = \$70 M

Attracting High-value Visitors

Increasing the average visitor spend by 10% = \$58 M

– *Unama'ki-Cape Breton Island Economic Impact Assessment for the Tourism Industry: KPMG*



Goals

- Enhance the brand as a bucket-list destination and one of the top islands in the world
- Responsibly grow visitation levels, with emphasis on shoulder and winter seasons
- Increase average length of stay by one day
- Increase average visitor spend by 10%
- Elevate the quality of the visitor experience to meet the needs of high-value(s) guests
- Become recognized as a truly sustainable and inclusive destination

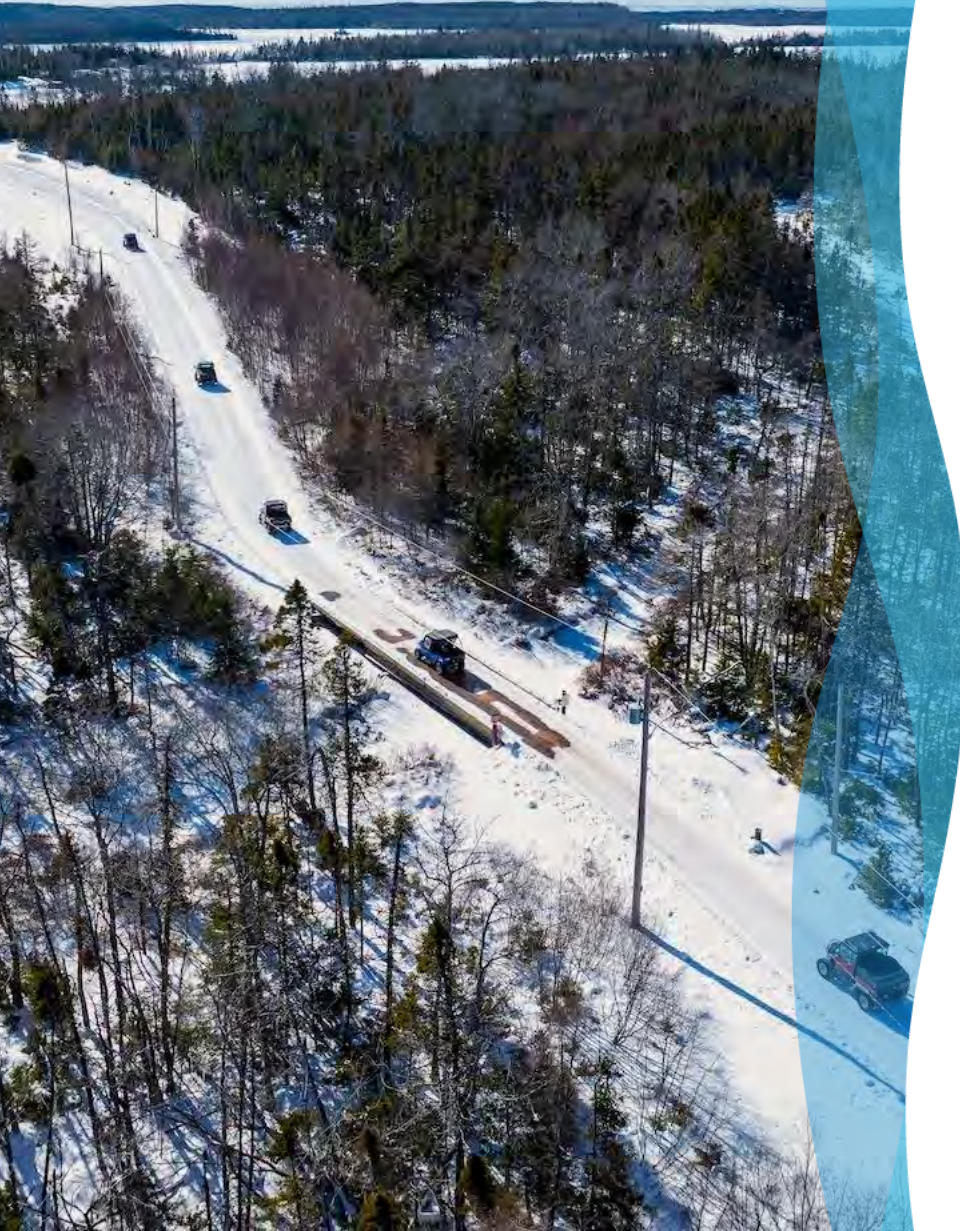
Enhancing the Brand

- 1. Facilitate authentic human connection with the Island, its culture and its people**
 - Extend campaign focused on human connection
 - Curate and share content that illustrates connections that visitors make with the destination
 - Develop plan for a Concierge Network
- 2. Employ Two-eyed Seeing approach to brand building**
 - Develop an Elders Advisory Committee (Mi'kmaq L'Nu, Acadian, Gaelic, African Nova Scotian)
- 3. Ensure alignment with communities and industry**
 - Based on feedback from engagement sessions, implement new content creation opportunities that reinforce the brand while meeting the needs of communities
- 4. Explore opportunities for brand reinforcement**
 - Streamline URLs to visitcapebreton.com



Growing Year-round Visitation

- 1. Expand digital marketing program in Ontario, Quebec, Maritimes, Western Canada and Northeast US**
 - Enhance marketing program in ON, QC and Maritimes
 - Increase investment in Calgary to support the Westjet direct flight to Sydney
- 2. Expand content marketing program to increase reach and engagement**
 - Significantly increase the creation of content, particularly video
 - Host more content creators/influencers with strong followings in key markets
 - Launch new website
- 3. Continue to develop Events Cape Breton 2.0**
 - Dedicate more resources to the attraction of provincial and regional events
 - Launch events incubator program



- 4. Explore potential for marketing to Francophone audiences within the key markets**
 - Build the framework and begin piloting French language marketing
- 5. Work with Cape Breton Island-Unama'ki's performing artists**
 - Continue collaborations with touring artists
 - Explore the potential for new collaborations (Morgan Toney, Always, etc.)
- 6. Work with partners to develop winter tourism**
 - Explore the potential for ATV visitation
- 7. Explore further development of spring and fall**
 - Build on the steadily growing interest in Waterfall Season with new experiences and events
- 8. Work with partners to increase air access**
 - Conduct feasibility study on seasonal commercial route to Allan J. MacEachen Port Hawkesbury Airport



Increasing Length of Stay

- 1. Significantly increase content to educate visitors on the vast array of activities and regions that will appeal to them**
 - Continue building week-long stay messaging with potential visitors
 - Create compelling new content around 7-day, Island-wide itineraries
- 2. Work with tour operators to develop Cape Breton Island-Unama'ki specific itineraries and increase share of wider itineraries**
 - Educate tour operators on experiences and regions of the Island they are missing
- 3. Launch the Travel Companion mobile app**
 - Launch the app in May
 - Develop an on-Island campaign to promote the app



Increase the Average Spend

1. Target more high-value guests in marketing campaigns

- Dedicate resources and messaging to targeting high-value guests
- Dedicate resources to niche markets that skew to high-value such as golf, boating, sport fishing, etc.

2. Explore the potential for a booking engine

- Through the Concierge Network program, explore the potential for a booking engine that would help sustain the network and VIC operations (subject to operator approval)
- Conduct a pilot with Golf Cape Breton

Elevating the Visitor Experience

- 1. Work with Mi'kmaw L'Nu partners to support their continued development**
 - Establish an MOU between NSITEN and DCB
 - Establish Mi'kmaw L'Nu cultural tourism development officer position
- 2. Work with industry and partners to develop and promote new experiences and offerings**
 - Work with partners to support the ongoing development of new experiences in cultural, culinary and adventure tourism
- 3. Elevate the overall experience to meet the expectations of the target audience**
 - Educate industry on what the target audience is seeking
 - Work with TIANS to implement HR Advisory Program
- 4. Enhance the position of Cape Breton Island-Unama'ki as a marine tourism destination**
 - Collaborate with other regions to launch Boating Nova Scotia initiative



Being Sustainable and Inclusive

- 1. Finalize and implement a Sustainable Tourism Plan for the destination**
 - Guide the completion of the plan and develop a sustainability task force to steer its implementation
 - Continue participation in The Collective – a global network of 30 destinations that will collaborate on implementing sustainable tourism initiatives
- 2. Work with key partners to roll out equity, diversity and inclusion training and certification initiatives**
 - Work with NSITEN to provide Mi'kmaw cross cultural training to the industry
 - Work with the Canadian Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce to provide Rainbow Registered training to the industry



Questions?