

Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor

Realizing Our World-class Potential

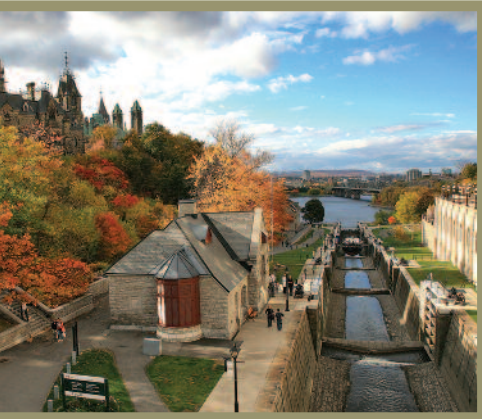


Table of Contents

<u>Executive Summary: VEOC Orientation and Highlights</u>	Page 2
<u>Stakeholder Expectations</u>	Page 9
Desired Outcomes	Page 9
Desired Tourism Image Adjustment	Page 13
Desired Paradigm Shifts	Page 15
<u>Understanding and Responding to Guests Differently</u>	Page 20
<u>Integrated Visitor Experience Opportunities Concept</u>	Page 27
Heritage Corridor and Its Reaches	Page 28
Hosting Priorities	Page 32
Overarching Exploration Themes and Connections	Page 34
Compelling Experience Opportunities Highlights	Page 43
Enhancement and Innovation of Experience Opportunities	Page 47
• Guest Information, Welcome and Sense of Arrival	Page 48
• Cultural Heritage Connection Opportunities	Page 52
• Natural Heritage Connection Opportunities	Page 57
• Augmented Appreciation / Passive Observation Opportunities	Page 64
• Recreation / Relaxation Opportunities	Page 67
• Accommodation Services and Related Experience Opportunities	Page 70
• Transportation Services	Page 72
Improving Communications with Guests	Page 74
Working Together Throughout the Corridor	Page 76
Highlights of Short and Medium Term “Doables”	Page 80
Tips for Moving Forward	Page 88
<u>Appendix</u>	
Locational Guide to Innovations or Enhancements in VEOC and Reach VEOC Discussion Highlights	
<u>Related Separate Documents - VEOC Discussion Highlights for Each Reach</u>	
Reach: Kingston to Lower Brewers Locks	
Reach: Lower Brewers to Newboro	
Reach: Newboro to Rideau Ferry	
Reach: Rideau Ferry to Merrickville	
Reach: Merrickville to Long Island Locks	
Reach: Long Island to Ottawa Locks	

Executive Summary

Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor Visitor Experience Opportunities Concept (VEOC) Orientation and Highlights

Realizing Our World-class Potential

The Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor has uncommon potential to be a world-class experiential travel destination. Its recognition by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site confirms its international significance. The challenge is now to host guests with innovative opportunities to connect with the diverse nature and culture of this special piece of Canadianna, and to do this in ways which grow the economic vibrancy of communities through sustainable tourism.

Partnership Group Initiative - This initiative has been the catalyst for an important partnership between a number of groups from a variety of interests including: the Rideau Roundtable, United Counties of Leeds and Grenville, Parks Canada, Valley Heartland Community Futures Development Corporation (representing support from Grenville CDFC, Frontenac CFDC and 1000 Islands CDC), the Rideau Heritage Route Tourism Association, Lanark County, Town of Smiths Falls, and the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport for the Province of Ontario.

Stakeholders Discussions - The Partnership Group brought together a wide range of stakeholders to collaboratively suggest direction to enhance and diversify experiential tourism opportunities throughout the length and breadth of the Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor – opportunities which respond to the values and interests of different types of explorers and leisure travellers identified in the Canadian Tourism Commission's Explorer Quotient.

Stakeholders let their imaginations soar and shared their ideas to help the Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor become a world-class destination hosting explorers and leisure travellers from near and far.

Why - The Partnership Group undertook this collaborative re-visioning of the Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor to enhance opportunities for travellers to connect with the Corridor, its natural and human heritage, and to ensure that the Rideau Canal and its adjacent communities live up to their potential on the world stage, with an eye for the future sustainability of the Corridor.

How - Building upon current guest opportunities, programs and services, new and enhanced ways and means were identified to respond to guest values and traits and thereby enhance their opportunities to pursue their goals of actual and virtual immersion in the nature and culture of this special place.

To What End - The goal was to build a framework of experience opportunities to guide Rideau travel hosts in strategically enhancing and innovating opportunities and support services for their guests to connect with the diverse heritage and living realities of the Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor – the unique personalities and resources of the Rideau which afford distinct travel experiences.

Through collaborative programming and services, enhanced through contemporary and futuristic technologies, guest explorers will be able to achieve different and complementary insights and immersions in these special places.

The Approach - Over seventy stakeholders from throughout the Rideau Corridor were invited to brainstorm exploration themes and experience opportunities for "Rideau guests" to better connect with the natural and cultural heritage of this special place, and how "Rideau hosts" can enhance and innovate their facilitation of their guests enjoyment and appreciation of this world heritage destination.

The Result – A Visitor Experience Opportunities Concept - An integrated "framework" of experience opportunities for the different types of explorers (EQ types). A VEOC is an outline of "what could be", to be followed, when appropriate, with "how to realize it". It is an opportunity resource base, an array of possibilities (not a strategic or tactical plan).

World-class Travel Experience Opportunities

Stakeholders sought to capitalize upon the growing recognition that the heritage of the Rideau Canal is of world significance - that this special place is a unique expression of Canada's nature and people.

Today's travellers are increasingly seeking opportunities to go beyond simply observing and recreating in their chosen destinations, they are seeking

- to immerse in the Rideau's distinctive natural and cultural environments and lifestyles,
- to taste, touch, smell, hear and see the distinctive characteristics of the Rideau,
- to explore the Rideau's landscapes and communities, and
- to meet people whose lives and heritage are much different than theirs

To this end, stakeholders identified a wide array of exploration themes through which they felt guests will be able to connect with the essence of the Rideau – some examples follow:

Stakeholders felt that guests would be drawn by opportunities to appreciate the:

- **ingenuity of canal builders**, who devised ways to float over landscape challenges using the European “slack water” approach to canal design,
- **challenges of canal operations and maintenance** throughout decades of evolving commercial and recreational use
- **political, economic and military history and significance** of the Rideau Canal and that of the world's canals.

Beyond Canal specific experiences, stakeholders felt that natural and cultural heritage explorers and leisure travellers would be drawn by opportunities to become a part of the Rideau's living cultural heritage and to connect actually and virtually with the Corridor's:

- **heritage mills** – catalysts for the development of many communities, the design, development and operations of mills harnessed the energy of the Rideau watershed – their owners and developers, the first industrialists shaped the economics and politics of the Rideau
- **marine transportation heritage** – since its opening, the designers and navigators of Rideau's distinctive commercial and recreational boats, continue to be icons of Corridor,
- **agricultural heritage** – the initial clearing and shaping of the Corridor's cultural landscapes and settlement patterns was driven by agriculturalists and this influence continues today in the farms, orchards, model forests and innovative landscapes,
- **mining heritage** – an initial driver of the canal economy, touring Rideau mines provides unique insights into the physical resources and economic heritage,
- **culinary heritage** – opportunities to taste the foods of past eras and of today's artisans and chefs reveal a great deal about the people who founded the Corridor and those who today have chosen to harvest the natural resources of the lands and waters.

Human heritage is an extension of natural heritage, and it was felt by stakeholders that guests will equally value opportunities to explore and appreciate the nature of the Corridor, its:

- **evolving physiography** - geologic beginnings and subsequent shaping by glaciers, the sea which inundated the lowlands following de-glaciation and the rivers which continue to carve the landscape, all are a part of the natural heritage of this unique landscape,
- **dynamic ecology** – at the hands of nature and subsequently human use, the ecology of the Corridor continues to evolve, providing opportunities and challenges to all living things,
- **flooded landscapes** – the creation of the Canal created unique aquatic, wetland and near water environments – exploration on land, water and below the water will reveal surprising discoveries.

Often it is the people they meet, who have the most impact on what guests perceive and appreciate. Stakeholders felt exploration themes and exploration opportunities which bring guests into contact with: **artisans, founding families, fishing guides, boat builders and navigators, heritage lodge owners, famous and infamous residents** will be highly valued and long remembered.

Highlights of Experience Opportunity Innovations and Enhancements

Reflecting the foregoing exploration themes, stakeholders suggested an array of Corridor-long and Reach-specific innovations and enhancements to support guests in exploring this world and nationally significant heritage travel experience destination.

Getting on the water - It was universally felt by discussion participants that facilitating guests in “getting out on to the water” was the most important opportunity which could be afforded to guests. As perhaps three-quarters of Corridor explorers and leisure travellers are land-based, it was felt that assisting these guests in experiencing the Rideau Canal and the Heritage Corridor from the water would be the most valued assistance a host could offer their guest.

To this end, it was suggested that:

- An expanded network of water access facilities, equipment and boat rentals and associated guiding and outfitting services would assist land based travellers to explore the aquatic environments.
- Enhanced guidance devices and information would be valued by self-guided explorers, while others would welcome guided experiences in small groups.

Everyone locks through - Participants also universally felt that the experience of “locking through” a set of locks would prove perhaps the most meaningful experience for this same group of land-based explorers and leisure travellers.

- Facilitation of this type of experience opportunity would call upon a collaborative effort involving Parks Canada and a network of boat experience operators.
- It could be complemented with animation of the lock operation and complementary opportunities for the same guests to engage in the manual operation of the lock; thereby acquiring a number of perspectives in one opportunity.

Virtual lock design and operation - To acquire insight into the challenges faced and overcome by lock designers and builders, it was suggested that perhaps a hi-tech industry representative could create a “simulation program and room” in the Rideau Canal Museum.

- Programming would provide guests with opportunities to assess the natural challenges posed by rapids and other river flow conditions in a specific reach of the Corridor.
- Guests would then have the opportunity to design a locking system and water control system to permit passage of a vessel through this particular set of river conditions.
- Similarly, the challenge could be to design the full canal system of locks; thereby acquiring an understanding of the full array of conditions and challenges experienced by Colonel By and his team of designers and lock builders.

Overnight in historic setting – To experience life as it was, it was suggested that facilitating guest opportunities to overnight in a canal related historic building or natural setting would reveal unique perspectives, for example:

- At a lock station location, perhaps using the lockmasters house or related structures or the surrounding park-like settings of some locks.
- Other built heritage settings and structures in communities and more remote locations, such as the network of historic mills.

Outdoor acoustical experiences - Relating to the positioning that the Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor is “living history”, it was often suggested in different ways that heritage stories and events could be brought to life for guests through outdoor performances at strategically selected heritage rich locations along the Corridor.

- Locations suggested included acoustically and heritage resource rich settings such as Jones Falls and the Ottawa Locks, and community waterfronts such as Merrickville and Perth.
- The concept envisioned the use of theatre-like techniques including lighting, sound and music, and performers to present a heritage moment or story.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES CONCEPT
RIDEAU HERITAGE CORRIDOR
Kim Whytock & Associates

- The facilitation of these theatrical experience opportunities could call upon local talent coordinated by private sector operators and non-profit groups.

Year-long network of festivals - As many communities within the Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor host long standing heritage and lifestyle festivals, it was suggested that the profile of these individual festivals might be heightened through association within a year-long series of festivals and events.

- Heritage festival series - It was envisioned that the list of natural and cultural heritage exploration themes might serve as a foundation for expanding the array of festivals in a framework which would celebrate the array of themes. The individual themed festivals could be located in the most appropriate communities, building upon the current festival model.
- Music festival and event series - In addition to annually recurring festivals and events, some communities such as Westport have monthly recurring festivals and events, such as the Cove “blues festivals”. This model has applicability to other communities and would expand the drawing power of communities throughout the year.
- On the water concerts - mobile barge stage - There has been some initial success with concerts on the Rideau lakes. Participants felt that this types of attraction might successfully draw both boaters and land based travellers – supported by boat rental and outfitted and group boating services. The Cow Island event may be a model to build upon.
- Symphony in the locks amphitheater - Some participants felt that the acoustical properties of some lock station areas might provide unique opportunities for small symphony experiences. These included the Ottawa Locks, the Jones Falls Locks, and perhaps some of the more sheltered smaller lock areas. These might host smaller musical performances, for example quartet presentations.

Celebrations of founding peoples - Recognizing that often it is the people you meet, who facilitate the most memorable experiences or immersing within the living heritage, participants suggested a number of ways to celebrate the founding people of the Corridor. Their thoughts focused upon connections to the heritage of:

- First Nation peoples and their use of the Corridor;
- Connecting guests with the challenges and realities of the canal builders;
- Linking guests with the lifestyles of mill operators and farming and forestry family lifestyles.

The concept saw performances of heritage events and lives; heritage festivals celebrating historic people and events, and opportunities to live in a style and circumstance of the founding people.

Rideau routes innovations for minds and bodies - There is a myriad of trails throughout the Corridor's landscapes; however, participants felt there was opportunity for enhancement and innovation for explorers. They saw expansion of trails into wetlands, rivers and lakes in the forms of

- floating trails,
- trails on stilts,
- canoe and kayak exploration routes.

The water's edge is a mecca for all guests. To assist guests, participants envisioned new and enhanced routes along lakes and rivers and community waterfronts.

QR post information on demand network - . In support of inquiring minds, the trail network was envisioned to have floating and land based “QR code” information buoys and posts, and guidance to a network of outstanding vantage points to see and connect with the Rideau's natural and cultural heritage and current lifestyles.

- Responding to current trends in personal communication devices and their ability to read data from QR codes, a Corridor-long network of QR posts would provide multiple levels of information respecting specific locations and resources of interest to explorers and leisure travellers.
- This network would be found on land and water, in communities, at lock stations and all attractions.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES CONCEPT
RIDEAU HERITAGE CORRIDOR
Kim Whytock & Associates

- Such an integrated network of exploration guidance devices will contribute to the unique and contemporary positioning of this world-class heritage experience destination.

Corridor-long network of shuttle services - Building upon the “Cinque Terra - Italy” shuttle concept, it was frequently suggested a network of shuttle services could support Corridor explorers:

- Hiking and biking the interconnected network of trails and backcountry roads,
- Canoeing and kayaking the network of water exploration routes,
- Cross-country skiing and snowshoeing,

The land and water based shuttles could provide guests with ready linkages between

- Nearby communities, expanding day trip explorations,
- The network of roofed and camping accommodations,
- The network of land and water based equipment rentals,

Network of outdoor gathering places - In a somewhat related enhancement, it was suggested that a network of “gathering places” be made know to guests exploring the length of the Corridor.

These would include:

- Selected lock stations and even perhaps selected locks or nearby places,
- Community waterfronts, park setting, historic places and public areas,
- Museums and heritage gathering places,
- Green spaces: parks, conservation areas, accessible natural areas.

Taking a lock station and lands for example, these places would be positioned as gathering places and exploration launch points, for both land and water based travellers. They might offer guest personal information distribution services and/or non-personal information signage.

They could be a location for scheduled performances and special events; and/or simply a place to meet other travellers and local people.

Network of vantage points and “Rideau chairs” - Participants recognized a wide array of special places from which guests will be able to experience both macro and micro perspectives of this natural and cultural heritage corridor. To add to the guest experience opportunity:

- A distinctive Rideau chair could be designed to support day and night sky viewing.
- Chairs would be positioned at select places to encourage guests to pause and contemplate what can be perceived from these special locations.
- The experience opportunities of some of these places might be augmented with traditional or contemporary communications to inform guests and explain the less visible aspects of the views.

Enhancement of guest welcome and orientation services - Adopting the role of hosts, discussion participants recognized the importance of communicating a clear sense of welcome and arrival to each and all types of guests; a welcome which would communicate the diverse array of natural and cultural heritage experiences opportunities afforded throughout the Corridor and one which would encourage guests to explore the many component reaches of the Corridor.

The information and welcome services and facilities would be a shared undertaking supported by the travel industry of the Corridor. It would be standardized to ensure quality service and consistent and up to date information distribution.

Collectively, the following array of services will contribute to the growing the Corridor's identity:

- A full service website for the Corridor,
- Two Gateway guest orientation facilities and a network of guest information services,
- Geo-fencing - virtual welcome and online information / orientation service,
- Concierge services and vested ambassadors.

Networking - The orientation to motivate corridor-long exploration and recreation experiences, in part, calls upon the tourism industry and associated hosts to devise means to offer a more seamless array of guest services and perhaps to align experience opportunities into packages or collaborative offerings of complementary programs and services.

Participants suggested that a movement be initiated to strengthen the networking between like service providers, such as:

- inns and B&Bs,
- private and public sector camping providers,
- day and multi-day experience opportunity outfitters,
- artisans and their boutiques and displays,
- marinas and boat associated rental services,
- bicycle and other associated land based exploration equipment rental services,
- natural and cultural heritage experience facilitators, such as Parks Canada, Ontario Provincial Parks, conservation area agencies, nature trusts, museums and other heritage sites,
- heritage mills and other heritage buildings and associated experience opportunities,
- festival organizations.

Further, these networks of like hosts would have a strengthened basis upon which to align between networks to create complete attraction, accommodation, transportation and culinary experience opportunities.

Adoption and growth of “Host / Guest” culture - The foregoing welcome and orientation services are extensions of a fundamental orientation to “hosting guests” which it was recommended for adoption by the Corridor’s travel industry, as a whole.

The adoption would require that all staff providing information and guidance to guests have a basic awareness and understanding of the experience opportunities and support programs and services available for guests. This knowledge would be most highly developed for the immediate area of its distribution, i.e. the community or the attraction and its surrounding area; and would also include a basic knowledge of these same attributes of the Corridor as a whole.

Hosts would have an awareness of the information distribution system and how to advise and support guests in benefiting from the system. To this end, they suggested the following investments in staff knowledge development:

- Provide opportunities to acquire first-hand knowledge of the experience opportunities
- Provide special training for staff to enhance hosting capacities of guests (EQ based)
- Equip staff with web-based terminals to support the dissemination of up to date information
- Develop a Rideau Quality Assurance program respecting experience opportunities and services.

Working Together - Throughout the stakeholder discussions, it was repeatedly expressed that to fully realize the tourism potential of the Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor significant change within the tourism industry ability and orientation to “work together” was required.

Participants noted that while guests may perceive the Corridor as a single experiential tourism destination – particularly in light of its recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage Site – the reality is that the Corridor is a loosely linked conglomeration of tourism entities.

In all stakeholder discussions it was repeatedly suggested that, perhaps based upon an assessment of the VEOC:

- A shared direction should be established,
- A single leadership body should be established,
- A single industry development plan for the Corridor should be developed,
- A single marketing strategy for the Corridor should be developed.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES CONCEPT
RIDEAU HERITAGE CORRIDOR
Kim Whytock & Associates

A VEOC contains an array of ideas and initiatives, some actions “doable” immediately (simple innovations and enhancements), some in the first few years and some when opportunity permits. It is future oriented and immediately relevant.

This integrated VEOC document outlines at the Corridor level:

- Stakeholder expectations for change
- Enhancements and innovations for experience opportunities
- Opportunities for working together
- Short and medium term “doable” actions

The integrated VEOC is followed by highlights of Reach specific discussions respecting these four items.

- Reach: Kingston to Lower Brewers Lock
- Reach: Lower Brewers to Newboro
- Reach: Newboro to Rideau Ferry
- Reach: Rideau Ferry to Merrickville
- Reach: Merrickville to Long Island Locks
- Reach: Long Island to Ottawa Locks

This VEOC is a resource tool - an interconnected series of Corridor and Reach-specific idea frameworks. Its components are designed to stand alone and as a collective reference. It is a basis for hosts to collaboratively advance in their realization the Rideau’s uncommon potential.

Stakeholder Expectations

Over seventy stakeholders from throughout the Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor contributed to a series of six discussions focused upon realizing the “uncommon potential” of this nationally and internationally significant heritage area.

In general, participants felt that the tourism value and drawing potential of the Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor is significantly under-realized. They felt that there is substantial potential for growth in numbers and diversification of guest perceptions and expectations; as well as growth in related tourism revenues and economic benefits for the tourism sector and communities of the Corridor.

Participants felt that significant change was essential to become a world-class travel experience destination and correspondingly world-class hosts of Canadian and international explorers and leisure travellers.

It was a shared desire that the scope of the historic significance of the Rideau Canal will be better appreciated; combined with the recognition that this set of historic resources are living heritage, unlike many other pieces and places of Canadian history, and thus afford exceptional opportunities for people to connect with and comprehend these special places. This uncommon set of historic resources permits engaging exploration and enjoyment, whereas many others demand passive observation.

To this end, programs and services to support engaging appreciation of this heritage Corridor as well as its recreational enjoyment will be an increasing priority.

Desired Outcomes

To realize this potential of the “Rideau” becoming a compelling experiential travel destination on both a Canada-wide and international scale, participants identified a number of important outcomes. The outcomes would be initiated through “brainstorming discussions” and a framework would be developed to assist in enhancing the experience opportunities for guests and to connect them with the nature and culture of this special component of Canada’s heritage.

Participants identified the following fundamental areas of desired change in what the Corridor is perceived to be and how its hosts are perceived to welcome and support guests:

Collaborative action - “working together”

To realize the Corridor’s potential to become a world-class travel destination, participants felt that much greater effort to work together towards collective rather than individual success was essential. Thinking destination-wide and acting locally is a key to collective success.

Investment in growth and diversification of experience opportunities and guests services should be complementary throughout the Corridor; reflecting strategic response to travel trends and guest expectations.

Become a collective destination - “succeed together”

Participants felt that the Corridor was not realizing its potential as a world or Canadian heritage travel destination because it had not yet coalesced into a cohesive destination; rather it was many independent attractions, travel service centres, tourism organizations and marketing groups. These entities did not tend to work together: and at times took independent actions which were not seen to be in the collective best interest of the destination as a whole.

The participants felt that the many current tourism organizations having responsibilities for tourism product development and marketing at the regional and municipal levels should come together under a single umbrella.

Strategically position the destination - brand and image management

Participants felt that the Corridor as a whole had “no profile or specific images”. The image of the Ottawa Reach – an urban canal for boaters in summer and skaters in winter – was the dominant image. The national and world significance of the Canal and the scope of heritage experiences within this special piece of Canada were unrecognized.

They expressed desire for an overarching marketing strategy, which could establish a brand with nation-wide resonance, a set of marketing messages and images to create a clear image of this emerging world heritage experience destination, and a strategy to achieve proper positioning of the diverse characteristics and compelling experience opportunities of the emerged destination.

Network experience facilitators and resources

Participants felt there was inadequate networking amongst tourism operators, host communities and organizations. They recognized that there were many related operators of attractions, accommodations, land and water based recreation and transportation, which they felt operated in isolation from one another and often in competition.

It was identified that the culture of “networking” should be strengthened amongst public sector attractions, NGO conservation organizations, corridor long series of accommodation providers and water-based and land-based traveller services, i.e. marinas and equipment renters and guides.

Greater call on “local talent and knowledge” - small and medium size enterprises

A growth and diversification of experiential tourism opportunities and services throughout the Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor was desired, and as a result, it was anticipated that there would be opportunities for local residents and operators to expand their service offer in support of explorers and leisure travellers.

Bringing the culture and nature of the Rideau Corridor to life for guests through storytelling, performances, guided services, equipment and rentals services will present opportunities for new and existing small and medium size entrepreneurs and draw upon the talents and skills of local peoples.

Adoption of “host / guest” culture - “service through friendship”

Participants felt that the success of this initiative is tied to a culture change amongst all involved in the Corridor’s tourism efforts, effectively all who reside in and host guests.

The call is for travel services and communities to move beyond the provision of programs and services, towards a culture of being hosts of guests, hosts whose function is to proactively facilitate meaningful experience opportunities responsive to guest desires and values.

Enhance awareness of our opportunities

It was recognized that few know the scope of current and potential experience opportunities for our guests. It was felt that all hosts needed a fuller and first-hand knowledge of Reach and related Reach resources and opportunities to properly advise and motivate guests. Sharing knowledge was seen to be essential.

As an extension of growing host knowledge, it was recognized that ways and means must be put in place to grow guest awareness and interests in our natural and cultural heritage and leisure recreation opportunities. New and enhanced techniques will be required to inform, influence and involve guests.

Understanding and responding to guest values, interests and travel traits was a key to building awareness and engagement.

In simplistic terms it was suggested, our messages need to motivate boaters to explore the surrounding landscapes and communities, and in turn motivate land based travellers to explore the lakes, rivers and wetlands of the Corridor.

Celebrate the full breadth of cultural heritage

Participants felt that much greater presentation and appreciation of the full scope of peoples who lived within and shaped the natural and cultural landscapes of the Corridor should be prominently celebrated.

Beginning with First Nations people, the first explorers, travellers and harvesters of the Corridor and subsequently the arrival of people from other continents, who shaped the cultural landscape with farms, mills, communities, industrial developments and social and economic ways of life – all of these sequential and significant chapters of the Corridor's human heritage should be effectively and coherently conveyed to interested explorers and leisure travellers.

An enhanced and collaborative approach heritage appreciation throughout the Corridor is the desire; building upon the current array of existing historic places and presentations.

Assurance and restoration of heritage resource integrity

Appreciation and enjoyment of this special heritage Corridor must be achieved in ways which simultaneously ensure the continuing integrity of the historic, cultural and natural resources. In some cases, it was recognized that this will demand investment in the restoration of aquatic habitats and historic places and infrastructure.

These investments are a shared responsibility of hosts and guests and the communities, businesses and residents who derive benefits from this outcome. All must be given opportunity to contribute.

Enhanced infrastructure and service capacities

With an orientation to growing the numbers and diversifying the types of explorers and leisure travellers who will be attracted to this destination, it was deemed essential to diversify and grow opportunities for guests to connect with the nature, history and culture of the Corridor.

Enhancement of existing experience opportunities, programs and services should reflect understanding and response to the values, traits and expectations of guests – a demand driven approach to evolution.

A strategic corridor-long perspective will provide a coherent foundation for local initiatives, and should result in a network of compelling experience opportunities motivating Corridor-long explorations and leisure travel patterns.

This action will require strategic investment and financial support for service and infrastructure capacities.

A cohesive and coherent approach by complementary funding programs and agencies was a desired outcome of having a shared concept for the growth of the tourism industry and associated businesses.

Innovative experience opportunities

Similar to the above approach to enhancement, it was also deemed critical that "innovation" be a cornerstone of the future direction and delivery of guest services and experience opportunities.

Cutting edge communications and presentation techniques should facilitate insight and understanding to guests, and similarly, innovative means to assist guests in exploring natural and cultural environments different from their norms.

Through incorporating new ways to support guests, this destination will become more accessible and usable for regional residents and more distant guests who require greater support than do current guests.

These innovations should also be designed to attract residents of neighbouring urban centres who are not experienced or equipped to explore the Corridor at this time. Introducing these people through outfitted programs and services may grow regional resident use and enjoyment.

Economic vibrancy

One focus of the discussions was on enhancing the economic vibrancy of tourism throughout the Corridor and within the tourism communities which serve as hosts of guests from near and far. A concern was expressed that the perceived seasonality of tourism opportunities within the Corridor, was too strongly tied to the boating season and boaters.

The desire was that in future land based travellers and experience opportunities in all seasons would be complementary images and realities of the tourism district and in particular the host communities of the Corridor.

Diversity and growth in markets and responding service offers and experience opportunities was the desired outcome.

Capitalize upon WHS recognition

The world has anointed the Rideau Canal and by association the heritage Corridor as one of the special places in the world and participants felt that “we’re not using that for ourselves - we haven’t thought about how important this place is and we live here”.

The positioning of the Canal and Corridor as a welcoming and engaging world heritage site, where hosts facilitate guests in innovative ways to connect with this outstanding natural and cultural corridor will elevate this special place from its current “little known” status to a world-class experiential tourism destination.

With this focus, the direction for product development and marketing should be through innovation and enhancement of traditional practices.

Sustainable tourism a key to viable communities and operations

The identity of the Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor must be anchored in the sustainability of its natural and cultural heritage resources, the health of its aquatic and terrestrial environments and the economic viability and social well-being of its communities. The enhanced tourism sought by participants was hinged upon this destination being a model of sustainable tourism.

Specific references were made to enhancing support for sustainable tourism outcomes, through:

- provision of critical information for hosts and guests,
- support for the expansion of STEP program projects,
- actions to restore water quality and aquatic habitats, and
- positioning this World Heritage Site as a model of sustainable tourism.

Enhanced and cutting edge communications

Stakeholders recognized that the fastest trending element of current lifestyles of potential guests is their reliance upon contemporary communication devices and capacities.

To effectively and efficiently host guests and support their exploration and enjoyment, it is essential that the Corridor’s communication capacities grow and diversify in accordance with the other changes in the tourism service offer and expectations of guests.

Desired Tourism Image Adjustment

Current Image of Rideau Canal

Participants were asked what they perceived to be the tourism image of the Corridor in the minds of Canadians living near and far from the Corridor and that of international potential guests. The following highlights their perspectives:

Skating and “Winterlude”

Participants felt that nationally and perhaps internationally the Rideau Canal was recognized as a very long skating experience opportunity, and an Ottawa winter festival. Only the urban portion of the Canal had standing as a tourism destination, and the non-winter canal opportunities were passive pedestrian and touring opportunities.

Boats and Boating - Ottawa Locks to Dows Lake

Similarly, participants felt that the Canal and the Ottawa Locks portion in particular, were seen as primarily experience opportunities for boaters and to a lesser extent for people watching the boats.

Historic canal and green space in urban setting

Participants felt that the City of Ottawa’s image was bolstered by the Canal - an historic structure set amongst a parkland setting.

Current Image of Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor as a whole:

Unknown or little to no image

Participants felt that all other Reaches, save for the City of Kingston, had little or no image in the minds of Canadians not resident in the immediate area or having previously visited the Corridor. Individual villages or towns and a few attractions had local standing, but in specific terms none had national or international standing or image.

Historic and natural

Given the recent world heritage site recognition by UNESCO and the long standing national historic site status, participants felt that in general the Rideau Canal had some standing as a historic experience opportunity, and perhaps a natural or outdoor recreation positioning, albeit both were felt to be limited.

Small town Ontario and countryside

Local communities such as Perth, Smiths Falls and Merrickville were judged to have an image common to all Ontario small towns, whose role was perceived to be first a service centre to surrounding residents and cottagers.

Desired Image for the Corridor as a whole:

In light of the foregoing limited profile and diversity of the Corridor’s present image and positioning in the minds of potential Canadian and international guests, the participants identified the following image adjustments and related guest support changes:

Vibrant alive waterfronts - festival like environment

Six communities have indicated their intentions to enhance their waterfronts. This action was perhaps initially a response to the perceived desires of guest boaters, and during the discussions was recognized as essential requirements to respond to the desires of land based travellers, as well.

More than infrastructure improvements, participants felt that the personalities of villages, towns and other waterside gathering places need to be enhanced. The desire was to be festival-like; an image they felt would make potential natural and historic connection opportunities, even more compelling.

Welcoming and engaging communities

Participants felt that improvements were required to allow the Corridor's host communities and travel service facilities to be perceived as welcoming and engaging. The current perception of small town Ontario service centre was to be replaced with one of a community of people and operations ready to welcome and support guests in their chosen endeavours.

Sensory rich places - nature, history, culture

Participants desired that the opportunities for guests to connect with the historic resources of the Corridor, the nature of its lands and waters and the culture of its peoples and communities would be in the future far more sensory rich and engaging. At present, the opportunities were deemed more passive and static displays, not contemporary or engaging.

Living history within a natural corridor

Discussions revealed that unlike many historic places and perhaps world heritage sites, the Rideau Canal is and should be celebrated as being "living heritage". The Canal and life along its watersides is worthy of appreciation. It has a present and a future, as well as a past.

Outdoor recreation - safe accessible adventures

Participants felt that potential guests were unaware of the fact that the Canal and surrounding natural and cultural environments are "readily accessible". Also that there are "safe" adventures on water and land for all skill levels, and that there is and will increasingly be support for guests to explore and enjoy both environments.

Urban escape - outfitted exploration - comfortable

Participants felt that nearby markets were not adequately aware of the opportunities for weekend or short vacation escapes to the water-based and land-based recreational opportunities of the Corridor and its network of outdoor attractions and recreation facilities. In future, they felt the image should be adjusted to capitalize upon this potential.

Celebrations at the water's edge - theatre and dining

Participants felt that the interface between water and land was the most compelling gathering point for their guests. The current situation did not provide adequate opportunities for guests to gather at the edges and to enjoy them. In future, they foresaw theatre and dining opportunities at the waters-edge, an image they felt would be compelling to explorers and recreationalists

Connections with Rideau personalities and lifestyles

Participants drew on their own experiences to conclude that greater opportunities for guests to interact with and connect through the people of the Rideau Corridor would be a desired image. These connections would be with lifestyles, past and present, and with persons, who lived in the past, but currently live and work in the Corridor as part of the living heritage, such as lock keepers.

Desired Paradigm Shifts

With these outcomes in mind, participants were requested to share a significant idea, which they felt would shift the current paradigm of tourism experience opportunities, tourism programs or services or tourism operating practices. Some of their ideas are reflected in the enhancements and innovations for experience opportunities and programs and services outlined later in this report.

Some ideas, however, are more fundamental to how tourism occurs within the Corridor; and how guests are hosted and facilitated by the tourism industry.

Repositioning the Destination

“Rideau’s Nature, Culture, History Epitomizes Canada”

Participants felt that the natural and cultural resources and characteristics of the Corridor, and the unique roles and events which have occurred within it, allow this special district of Canada to be a “distinctive piece of Canadiana” - a must see for Canadians and their guests.

They felt the political and military significance of the Canal in relation to the capitals of Kingston and then Ottawa, together with the cultural landscapes, which had emerged upon the natural river basins, were uniquely Canadian.

They envisioned the images and positioning of the Corridor and its components would highlight:

- Vibrant alive waterfronts - festival like environments
- Welcoming and engaging communities
- Sensory rich places - nature, history, culture
- Living history within a natural corridor
- Outdoor recreation - safe adventures within reach
- Urban escape - outfitted exploration - comfortable
- Celebrations at the water edge - theatre, dining
- Connections with Rideau personalities and lifestyles

Responding to Guests Differently

Hosting – service through friendship

Participants spoke in support of an adjustment of the tourism industry, communities and heritage experience facilitators towards acting more like hosts than traditional travel suppliers, and correspondingly viewing travellers as guests warranting support and guidance, more than customers of travel services.

They envision hosts having a greater understanding of the travel values and traits of their guests and being more oriented towards finding ways to accommodate and support guests in their explorations and enjoyment – finding ways to say yes you can, and we can help.

Southwest Airlines: If it matters to you, it matters to us

Subsequent discussions focused upon enhancing the knowledge of hosts and supporting a hosting oriented culture change with training and recognition of outstanding hosts.

Paradigm Shift

Adoption of Host / Guest Culture

Reflecting the EQ based approach to understanding and responding to guest values and desires, and an orientation to developing customized opportunities reflecting the needs and expectations of priority EQ types, participants recommended that the Corridor's tourism industry and associated service providers adopt the "host / guest" culture as opposed to traditional customer services orientation to guest relations.

This shift would call upon all members of the service industry to understand their guests based upon the social values versus demographic segmentation model.

The "host culture" would have as its mantra "finding a way to say yes to guest's desires and requests – demand driven thinking, rather than responding with a more traditional supply-side designed service offer.

As hosts, more than service providers, all staff would require a more comprehensive knowledge of the Corridor's diverse array of experience opportunities. They would then be in a position to share what "locals know" to be the best ways to connect with the best aspects of the Corridor's natural and cultural heritage.

Host training programs could be developed to establish a standard of hosting capacities, and to motivate further excellence, an annual awards celebration of those members demonstrating particular initiative and excellence could be convened each year – a Corridor-long celebration of the hosting culture change.

Balanced focus on boaters and land travellers

To many participants, it appeared that the primary guest of the Corridor's tourism hosts arrived by or travelled the Corridor by boat or at very least was water and boat focused, as evidenced by the importance assigned to recent shifts in the number and activities of this segment of guests.

Discussions suggested that there seemed considerable opportunity to grow the number of land based explorers and leisure travellers and to diversify the experience opportunities and guests services which attract them – perhaps more so than the opportunity to have a similar effect upon boat based guests.

It was also recognized that the land based recreation and exploration season was year-round, and would bring guests into communities and countryside.

With this in mind, a great deal of the discussion focused upon exploration themes and connections with the Corridor's diverse heritage and natural resources, together with experience opportunity enhancements and innovations which respond to land based travellers, as well as boaters.

Proposals were shared to develop compelling opportunities for land based experiences throughout the four seasons.

Lock stations become primary gathering places for all types of guests

It was suggested that lock station lands should become key gathering places for both water and land based leisure travellers and explorers. These places would be central distribution points of information and guidance and opportunities for small and medium size entrepreneurs to provide support services and equipment for aquatic and terrestrial activities and performances.

These additional service offerings were seen as potential direct and indirect revenue sources, which might be used to aid in the cost of operating the locks and perhaps in reducing or stabilizing the lockage fees. The lock station lands would be, as appropriate, year-round gathering places; and locks staff would be increasingly Corridor hosts, as well as lockage facilitators.

Interconnected community and heritage gathering places

Locks would be only one cornerstone of a Corridor-long network of gathering places. It was suggested that all types of explorers and leisure travellers would be drawn to places where they could expect to meet people from the reach and other travellers, both serving as sources of guidance and support for their explorations and activities. Selected heritage attractions, communities and locks would be positioned as such gathering places, and their support services for guests, perhaps including: heritage presentations and entertainment, travel and community information, rental equipment and launching of water and land based explorations would be the key assets attracting guests to these locations.

Network of outdoor and indoor performance venues

To add to the vibrancy of communities and perhaps provide unusual and intriguing settings in more remote locales, it was suggested that local performers and guests would benefit from a network of performance places, indoor and outdoor in natural, historic and cultural settings. These might vary in size from intimate to medium size venues available to different event organizers. They would become a revenue source for the host land / place owner for example: lock station lands, heritage museums, historic mills, conservation areas and municipal waterfronts. It was envisioned the stages might be on land or water.

Integration of public green spaces

Guest services and communications relating to land trust, conservation areas and parks and lock station lands could be positioned as one umbrella offering of guest experience opportunities. Their programming and services could be integrated yielding efficiencies and heightened effectiveness without loss of individual identities; but communicating added identity of a family of similar things for guests. The collaborative approach could be a strategic investment basis for enhancing and innovating experience opportunities throughout the Rideau Corridor.

Getting land travellers onto the waters

Water is at the core of the Corridor's image and heritage and the opportunity to actively connect with aquatic environments and to experience the locks from the water perspective was seen to be a fundamental aspect of connecting with the essence of this special part of Canada's heritage. To these ends, a number of fundamental changes were envisioned, including: facilitating all who wish to in "locking through", making water's edge experience opportunities more diverse and readily accessible for land travellers, including a network of waterside and floating trails and means to access sensory rich wetlands and marshes, and by facilitating aquatic explorations through equipment rental and outfitting services a myriad of water based adventures and discoveries.

In turn, similar efforts will be made to assist boaters to be able to explore the Corridor, its communities and countryside, by foot, bicycles and vehicles through an enhanced system of multi-modal trails.

Introductory outdoor programs and services

Many new Canadians and urban dwellers do not feel adept or equipped to explore the natural beauty of the Corridor. It was envisioned that an array of introductory camping opportunities, programs, services and support facilities could be made available for people who have not camped before. In a similar vein, outfitted natural area explorations of both aquatic and terrestrial areas would be compelling introductions to the Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor.

Shuttle service throughout Corridor

Responding to the desire to be a collective destination, it was suggested that a “hop on, hop off” shuttle service be put in place to link the communities and points in between, making it more convenient for guests to exploring the Corridor by bicycle, foot, boat, etc. to get between points of interest, exploration facilitators and travel services.. The shuttle service could simultaneously be a traveler’s information source with informed drivers giving information and touring programs.

Reach specific shuttle services could be interconnected with similar Corridor-long shuttle services. Collectively, they could make explorations by pedestrians and other land based travellers, that much more compelling. These Corridor services could be linked to larger rail and bus services traversing eastern Ontario.

Setting and Realizing Direction Differently

Economic development model

It was suggested that consideration be given to the “Scottish canal economic development model” to enhance the ability to work together and build upon each other’s strengths in responding to the evolving expectations of potential guests. It was noted that the “Scottish” model for economic development is guided by a commission setting shared direction and coordinating collaborative investment and action.

It was also noted that a variation on the Canadian airports economic model may have some relevance.

Rideau heritage district tourism organization

It was suggested that a Corridor-long or “District” tourism leadership and management board be established to simplify and integrate the current diversity of similar tourism responsibilities into one entity. This Board was seen as helping the industry to look at itself as a collective not competitive or individual tourism bodies. The Board was seen to address direction for tourism experience opportunity enhancements and innovations; the assurance of quality service and experience opportunities, and the strategic promotion of the whole and its parts. It was envisioned as both a leadership (governance) and operational board.

Bringing efficiency and effectiveness through amalgamation of the current many parts, a single direction setting and funding seeking body comprised mostly of tourism industry operators from public and private sector with strong links to economic development organizations and municipal bodies was envisioned.

Rideau district marketing strategy

The desired was expressed that the Corridor be marketed under a single strategy; coordinated by a single tourism marketing organization drawing upon marketing resources from throughout the Corridor and benefiting operators and communities alike.

Harmonized voices

It was suggested that a single website be established to herald the Corridor’s array of natural and cultural heritage attractions and related service providers, This full capacity site and service would be able to inform, influence and support guests in their connections with all leisure travel and heritage experience opportunities within the Corridor.

Restore watersheds quality

Participants felt an important issue was to address the image and reality that Rideau is not a healthy aquatic ecosystem. They felt that if appropriate actions are taken in regards to water resource management that the Rideau Canal could become known as the best fresh water resource in the world of canal waterways. They envisioned drawing upon resources and expertise of Ottawa area universities and Museum of Nature to guide and be involved in the recovery of the aquatic habitats and bring these habitats to the first- hand experience by guests through a series of aquatic experience opportunities above and below the water and in the surrounding near water environments.

Vibrant communities and tourism economy

VISITOR EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES CONCEPT
RIDEAU HERITAGE CORRIDOR
Kim Whytock & Associates

A focus of discussions was on enhancing the economic vibrancy of tourism throughout the Corridor and within the tourism communities which serve as hosts of guests from near and far. A concern was expressed that the perceived seasonality of tourism opportunities within this Reach, in particular, and to other non-urban portions of the Corridor, was too strongly tied to the boating season and boaters.

The desire was that in future land based travellers and experience opportunities in all seasons would be complementary images and realities of the tourism district and in particular the host communities of the Corridor.

Participants felt that there should be a greater draw on “local talent and knowledge” to support and guide guests in their exploration and immersion in the landscapes and heritage of the Corridor. It was envisioned that there is considerable opportunity for growth in the realms of small and medium enterprises in support of tourism and its guests.

Understanding and Responding to Guests Differently

In experiential tourism, the role of attractions and communities is increasingly to create or provide experience opportunities – exploration bases / vantage points – which set the stage for and inspire travelers to connect with the nature, culture, history, community and people of their destination, and through these connections and insights, guests discover their own unique experiences.

Thinking Differently About Hosting Guests

Travellers are increasingly looking to all types of tourism communities and operators to facilitate their exploration and connection to the destination.

Experiential tourism destinations increasingly focus on meeting the needs of the traveller's mind – challenging intellects and launching imaginations, as well as meeting their physical travel requirements through quality services, which will be increasingly taken for granted.

It's all about connection

Explorers from near and far seek "personal experience opportunities" which

- connect them with the Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor's places of natural beauty, awe inspiring insights into the historic characteristics of the Canal and its surrounding landscapes and environments, opportunities to immerse in the rich cultural and history and become a part of our contemporary communities and lifestyles.
- connect them with people who live very different lives from them and provide insights to see things from different perspectives, connections which might challenge perceptions and understandings, and perhaps change and inspire our explorers.

The Canal and its communities provide unique vantage points for guests to connect with this special place. Experience opportunities revealing insights and understandings - facilitated by their "hosts"

Locals Know

Explorers often seek to immerse in the nature and culture of their destination, to live as locals do, while leisure travellers sometimes seek more passive observation and simply enjoy their destination with family and friends.

Both value the assistance of their "hosts" in bringing into focus the natural and historic resources which characterize the destination.

Great hosts make experience opportunities possible ... they find a way to say "Yes you can".

Experiences are the “Why” of travel

The Canadian Tourism Commission suggested that 95% of leisure travel decisions are emotional and 5% are rationale. Compelling experience opportunities are the reason to visit, supported by quality services.

Emotional travel decisions reflect a guest’s personal and travel values. The minds of experience seekers are first launched by perceived opportunities to connect with a destination on a personal level – a matching of their individual personal values with anticipated experience opportunities and support services.

It is the mind of travelers that connects with the destination, yet too often travel hosts focus upon caring for the body – transporting it, feeding it, keeping it safe and bedding it down. Quality service is essential, but compelling experience opportunities and sensory rich destinations are what motivate explorers and are recalled after the visit.

Network of experience opportunities

The Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor has the potential to afford a network of gathering places and viewpoints from which different types of guests will personally connect with community life and the nature and culture of the locks and waterway.

These special places and events are the tools with which community hosts welcome and orient their guests. They provide the infrastructure base to launch the minds and activities of guest explorers and leisure travellers.

EQ Types in Context of Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor Guests

The quiet demeanour of the Rideau Corridor’s natural and cultural landscapes has uncommon potential to provide distinctly different and compelling opportunities for guests to immerse in the realities of the Rideau.

The Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor has a network of host communities and special places, which have potential to serve as the exploration bases for its diverse set of natural and cultural landscapes – unique vantage points for launching the minds and bodies of those seeking to discover and connect with the people and places they have travelled to experience.

More than service centres, these communities and special places must be perceived as welcoming their guests to be a part of the lifestyle of the community, to benefit from resident perspectives and knowledge and to see and experience as locals do.

With the insight of “local hosts”, explorers and leisure travellers are better able to connect with people and places, and achieve their travel objectives of experiencing the authentic nature and culture.

Travellers are increasingly looking to all types of tourism communities and operators to facilitate their exploration and connection to the destination.

Experiential tourism destinations increasingly focus on meeting the needs of the traveller’s mind – challenging intellects and launching imaginations, as well as meeting their physical travel requirements through quality services.

Rideau residents and particularly those engaged in the “hospitality industry” strive to be the best of hosts.

Understanding and Responding Differently

In support of the Rideau Corridor's travel industry and the local economy, the Partnership Group and discussion participants sought to provide an evolved basis for motivating travellers to discover the Corridor's nature, culture, communities and lifestyles by:

- going beyond the well-established socio-demographic basis for strategic development and marketing of high quality travel opportunities and services,
- providing and promoting compelling experience opportunities which respond to the social values and travel traits of key travel segments – opportunities for explorers to personally experience the essence of the Rideau Corridor's nature, cultures, people and their communities,
- continuing to support the long standing leisure recreation pursuits of boaters and land based leisure travellers.

To this end, the Partnership Group and discussion participants used the Canadian Tourism Commission's "Explorer Quotient" (EQ) in planning to facilitate opportunities for guest explorers,

The premise of EQ is that the social values and lifestyles of travellers play the most significant role in influencing the desires and experiences pursued in travel. Travellers adapt their travel to enable them to benefit from experience opportunities in ways that are meaningful to them.

The use of the CTC's Explorer Quotient profile data respecting the nine types of travellers has the impact of "personalizing" the visitor experience opportunity development process.

It moves the identification of potential new or enhanced opportunities from "mass" thinking based upon traditional demographic information and empirical knowledge of guest services towards a mind-set of responding to the social values and travel traits of 'individuals'.

Steve Jobs perspective "Computer should be an extension of the person"
correspondingly
Experience opportunities should be extension of guest desires

Development of the Visitor Experience Opportunities Concept required participants to:

- **See Familiar Things Differently** - The development process emphasized the value of re-examining familiar places resources and experience opportunities through different eyes – those of people who have travelled to connect with the natural and cultural diversity of this world heritage place.
- **Understand Guests Differently** – The discussion participants were exposed to a social values segmentation tool (the Canadian Tourism Commission's Explorer Quotient) as an alternative way to understand guest values and travel traits and to be in a position to facilitate relevant and responsive experiences allowing guests to connect with the Rideau Canal WHS and its adjacent communities and landscapes.

Stakeholders participating in the "brainstorming" discussions identified:

- **Discovery and Connection Themes** – Keeping foremost in mind the values, interests and exploration traits of potential Rideau guests, participants suggested an array of Rideau Corridor focused cultural and natural heritage themes and complementary community history and contemporary lifestyle exploration themes. With customization, a single theme can motivate a number of types of explorers to discover the length and breadth of the Rideau Corridor differently.
- **Ways to Innovate and Enhance Opportunities** – Participating stakeholders suggested ways and means to improve support provided to guests in discovering the Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor and establish unique personal connections with this special place.
- **Shared Vision and Collaboration Opportunities** – the resulting VEOC is a resource for use and benefit to all participants, serving as a list of ideas for both public, non-profit and private sector to each benefit in cooperatively facilitating guest experiences.

Facilitating Meaningful Connections

The following provides an introductory perspective relating how the CTC's nine explorer types might wish to connect with and appreciate the natural and cultural heritage resources and enjoy leisure recreational opportunities of the Corridor.



Learners – Authentic Experiencers (AE) and Cultural Explorers (CE)

Authentic Experiencers and Cultural Explorers are lifelong learners, who seek to wander natural and cultural landscapes respectively in pursuit of experiences which contribute to their personal growth and sense of accomplishment. They link their natural and cultural experiences in gaining insight and understanding of their destinations, demonstrating concern for sustaining the ecological and cultural integrity of the places and people they encounter.

They prefer self-guided and independent exploration opportunities to connect with the authentic and the best examples of their destination's nature or culture - sensory rich opportunities through which these travellers gain understanding and insight into the people and places they visit.

They travel with purpose and intent to strategically selected destinations and welcome immersion in the natural and cultural environments they encounter. They research their travels in order to be prepared and self-reliant, yet welcome the expertise and added insights provided by hosts.

“Authenticity Experiencers” seek connection with the essence of the Rideau Corridor's aquatic and terrestrial environments and the culture of the waterway communities they visit, in ways which focus on

VISITOR EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES CONCEPT
RIDEAU HERITAGE CORRIDOR
Kim Whytock & Associates

authentic situations and resources. Personally connecting with the real thing – natural habitats, heritage resources, and cultural displays are essential to stimulate their meaningful experiences and learning.

They seek: understanding and appreciation of Canal's nature, history and communities, opportunities to observe the people and places they encounter, and opportunities for personal development through full immersion in their travel destinations and experience opportunities.

“Cultural Explorers” seek opportunities to embrace, discover, and immerse themselves in the entire experience of the Rideau Corridor's culture, people and settings they visit – personal connection. They desire to become one with the community, if only for a moment. They seek to encounter the sights, smells, sounds, tastes and textures that epitomize the locks, waterway and its people.

They seek: to participate in the modern-day culture and visit historic sites, to converse with locals, attend local cultural festivals, or to go off the beaten track to discover how people truly live.

Hosting Authentic Experiencers and Cultural Explorers requires:

- Offering unusual learning opportunities, access to: places, resources and expertise
- Being flexible in facilitating “their connection with nature, culture and communities”
- Time and places from which to observe and sense the cultural differences
- Challenging their intellects to broaden their past experiences
- Involving not showing them - giving them responsibility and at times the lead
- Means to connect and become one with their hosts

Socializers – Free Spirits (FS), No Hassle Travellers (NHT) and Gentle Explorers (GE)

These travellers, whose primary goal in travel is to enjoy time with other people - family and friends or people of similar interests - seek a social milieu to “enjoyably appreciate” the places and people they encounter in their travels.

The first is deemed **“Free Spirit”** as their focus is upon fun and enjoyment. They are attracted to places which promise a difference - places where they can meet people and be stimulated by others and the environment and activities of the destination.

Free Spirits desire to be constant travellers seeking exotic and unusual destinations and exploration opportunities – they often return needing a rest, particularly when their experiences are of physically challenging.

These leisure travellers will be drawn to the Rideau's iconic experiences and attractions – its most impressive locks, cruising the big lakes, its artisans and distinctive dining. Fun events on land and water, particularly with music and celebration will be meccas. So too will be individual challenges and recognitions, like “skate the lake” competitions and multi-modal trekking challenges.

No Hassle Travellers are more often simply seeking a change from their norm, an escape vacation providing time for relaxation, release from stress and opportunity to recharge with family and friends. They value organized and scheduled experience opportunities designed for small groups and families.

Perhaps less driven than “Learners” to connect with their destination, they still seek a sense of accomplishment with their travel partners – a sense of group achievement and shared memories and meaning. They choose well known and regarded travel destinations and experience opportunities. They do not arrive well-briefed and thus welcome information and orientation.

“No Hassle Travellers”, focus much of their travel based around family events and simplicity - activities which do not raise their stress levels. Enjoyment and discovery are key goals. They seek opportunities to share meaningful experiences with their families, perhaps in a park or community setting, which serves as

a foundation or backdrop for their activities. Children's programs and relaxed activities to explore and discover are welcomed.

Yet, these same explorers seek to discover and rediscover the beauty and serenity found along waterside and inland trails, and the special vistas and communities of the Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor. They are "on vacation", escaping to the out of doors and community hospitality and special events.

Hosting No Hassle Travelers and Free Spirits requires:

- helping them have fun in exploring this place
- opening doors and minds to possibilities
- guiding and supporting their group discovery
- facilitating special entrée and unique individual opportunities
- being supportive and guiding in their chosen endeavours
- connecting them both socially and culturally with others

Relaxed Travellers – Gentle Explorers (GE) and Rejuvenators (R)

Creatures of habit, "**Gentle Explorers**" return time and again to preferred destinations or to similar types of travel destinations and opportunities that they enjoy. They return to discover perhaps something they hadn't observed or experienced earlier; or to encounter more of that with which they are familiar.

Perhaps these types of travellers are guests of resorts, such as the Hotel Kenny or a key component of the Kawartha Voyageurs guests, and other facilitated touring services.

Natural settings and cultural heritage places in close proximity to their homes are an attraction, as might be seasonally recurring celebrations.

Often bringing "home" along with them in the form of motor homes, these explorers are content to observe others enjoying the Canal and to also quietly appreciate the everyday life of adjacent communities. They may be a significant component of the boat touring guests from surrounding areas, such as Montreal and New York State.

They may also be a key component of the seasonal camping operators.

"**Rejuvenators**" travel to places which allow them to recharge – they do not come back needing a rest. They seek comfort and caring in relatively passive experiences which connect them most often with the culture of their destination and perhaps opportunities to observe nature. Strategic places from which to observe without getting involved will be appreciated.

It is said William Howard Taft, the 27th American President, was quite content to sit all day in an arm chair at the Hotel Kenny, cigar in one hand and fishing pole in the other.

The quiet, sensory rich backwaters of flooded valleys, the morning mists and evening sun sets at Hotel Kenny, the solitude of floating the Tay Canal, or exploring the Swale and other serene wetland environments - or simply a secluded Rideau chair, like Taft, to watch the waters and world flow by - these are the recharging opportunities which compel Rejuvenators.

Hosting Gentle Explorers and Rejuvenators requires:

- Welcoming them back
- Gently leading them astray
- Providing comfortable vantage
- Reading minds & answering their questions

Specific Questers – Buffs (CHB), Personal History (PHT), Virtual Travellers (VT)

It is difficult to identify, in advance, the resources, themes, and experience opportunities which will best respond to the values and traits of “Buffs” and Personal History Travellers”.

Experience to date suggests to us, that the CTC’s “**Cultural History Buffs**” may include many more types of experience seekers, for example, birders, rock hounds, plant and faunal enthusiasts, food, wine, art, etc. In each case, these explorers are specialists – equipped with a solid information base and personal perspectives on the subjects of their exploration.

Perhaps the Rideau Canal is a mecca for historic canal buffs, Rideau historic boat buffs, bass fishing buffs, military and Eastern Ontario history buffs.

“**Personal History Travellers**” likewise, are drawn to a place or event because of its personal meaning to them – a piece of their heritage – something they wish to share with other family members or simply rekindle their connection.

These travellers are very purposefully driven by their own special interests. The best a host can do is to customize experience and connection opportunities for these individuals on an “as needed basis”.

“**Virtual Travellers**” seek in depth connections with destinations of interest – exploring virtually through books, video and increasingly internet facilitated “virtual travel” programs. Connections with expertise, resources and events – albeit indirectly – are the priority desires of these types of travellers. Once in a while they arrive at places of interest in the accompaniment of family and friends. In these cases, information, orientation, presentation and library services are highly valued.

Hosting Buffs and Personal History Travelers requires:

- Providing connection to “expertise” and privileged access to historic resources and special places
- Opportunities to share what they know with others
- Involvement in community celebrations as many are returning to their roots or childhood experiences

Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor

Integrated Visitor Experience Opportunities Concept

The following integrated Visitor Experience Opportunities Concept for the Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor builds upon the ideas shared in a series of six Reach-specific discussions of how we can host our guests differently.

Each discussion first focused upon the resources and opportunities of a particular “Reach” of the Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor, and then turned its attention to the full length of the Corridor. The discussions were facilitated to identify “exploration themes” and proactive facilitation of enhanced and innovative experience opportunities for each type of explorer.

In these discussions, participants assumed the role of “hosts” and kept in mind the values and traits of “one type of guest at a time”. They identified:

- exploration themes which they felt as hosts would be desired by each type of guest

Then with guest explorer desires in mind,

- they examined existing programs, services and infrastructure to identify the types of enhancements which each explorer type might require in pursuing their explorations, and then
- they identified innovations which might be desired by guests to build individual and personalized connections with the essence and meaning of this special place, it's natural, cultural and community resources and the natural and social events which occur here.

They were asked to initially focus their attention on enhancing and innovating experience opportunities for one of the six “Reaches of the Rideau Canal”. Towards the closing of their discussions, they were asked to extend their thinking to the Corridor as a whole.

At the close of each discussion, they were asked to identify actions which were “doable” within one year and within three years. They were also asked how the Reach and the Corridor could work more closely together.

The integrated VEOC which follows addresses the following:

Heritage Corridor and Its Reaches

Hosting Priorities

Overarching Exploration Themes and Connections

Enhancement and Innovation of Existing Experience Opportunities

- Guest Information, Welcome and Sense of Arrival
- Cultural Heritage Connection Opportunities
- Natural Heritage Connection Opportunities
- Augmented Appreciation / Passive Observation Opportunities
- Recreation / Relaxation Opportunities
- Accommodation Services and Related Experience Opportunities
- Transportation Services

Improving Communications with Guests

Working Together Throughout the Corridor

Highlights of Short and Medium Term “Doables”

Heritage Corridor and Its Reaches

Envisioned at home, as a Canadian Heritage River and a National Historic Site, the value and potential of the Rideau Canal as a world heritage destination has recently been recognized by UNESCO:

- In 2007, UNESCO designated the Rideau Canal, Fort Henry and the Kingston Fortifications as a World Heritage Site;
- In 2002, UNESCO designated the Frontenac Arch portion of the waterway and international Biosphere Reserve – a place for conservation of biodiversity and sustainable use.

A long standing world-class recreational area, the lakes, rivers and canals of the Rideau and Cataraqui waterways and the surrounding natural and cultural landscapes will increasingly attract leisure travellers from near and far.

“Rideau’s Nature, Culture, History Epitomizes Canada”

Participants felt that the natural and cultural resources and characteristics of the Corridor, and the unique roles and events which have occurred within it, allow this special district of Canada to be a “distinctive piece of Canadiana” - a must see for Canadians and their guests.

They felt the political and military significance of the Canal in relation to capitals of Kingston and then Ottawa; together with the cultural landscapes, which had emerged upon the natural river basins, were uniquely Canadian.

They envisioned the Corridor and its component Reaches as having:

- Vibrant alive waterfronts - festival like environment
- Welcoming and engaging communities
- Sensory rich places - nature, history, culture
- Living history within a natural corridor
- Outdoor recreation - safe adventures within reach
- Urban escape, outfitted exploration, comfortable
- Celebrations at the water edge - theater, dining
- Connections with Rideau personalities and lifestyles

Based upon an assessment of the individual discussions, the series of six distinctive Reaches might be positioned as four rural natural heritage reaches and two urban gateway reaches. A brief explanation of the complementary array of distinguishing heritage characteristics follows:

Reach: Kingston to Lower Brewers Locks

Virtually immediately inland of the line of fortifications – Fort Henry and the fortified towers and their “line of fire” – the inner harbour area is a combination of safe and accessible open water, wetlands and marshes. Belle Island is a prominent landscape feature and significant First Nations archaeological site on the western side of the harbour.

Inland of the harbour the Cataraqui River descends over the eastern edge of the Arch down to the lowland plain topography of the harbour, the City and the shores of Lake Ontario. This descent, viewed from below seems as it would have been during the Canal era.

Above the descent is Kingston Mills lock station, a near full array of lock station related heritage buildings and infrastructure including: four locks, a turning basin – also used for steamship repairs, a swing bridge, a stone arch dam and spillway, a blockhouse – now outfitted as a soldier’s barracks,, a lockmasters house and related outbuildings. This one compact lock station set in a quite natural rural setting aside

Colonel By Lake is a valuable opportunity to experience much of the heritage resources and character of the Rideau Canal locks.

Fort Henry, a component of the fortifications protecting the mouth of the Rideau Canal is a well-known heritage experience destination within Ontario, and to a lesser extent within Canada and northeastern United States. So too is the City of Kingston with its array of stone heritage buildings and Lake Ontario waterfront.

Reach: Lower Brewers to Newboro

Perhaps more than any other segment of the Rideau Canal, this Reach vividly displays the diverse landscapes and consequent engineering challenges which were faced in developing the Rideau Canal. It is an awe inspiring landscape and waterscape with outstanding experience opportunities around each bend in the waterway, road and trail network.

The waterway is a beautiful combination of rivers, lakes and serene backwaters; the last a result of the flooding engineered by Colonel By in creating a series of nine locks cascading down the Frontenac Arch's Canadian Shield terrain from Chaffey's Lock to Lower Brewers Lock.

The engineering ingenuities include nine locks, perhaps the most challenging including the four locks and turning basin of Jones Falls Locks series designed to overcoming a series of rapids one mile long with a fall of 60 feet. The 350 foot Jones Dam, in the background of the locks clearly conveys the achievement, particularly when viewed from the Hotel Kenny, a leisure travel destination for the rich and famous throughout much of the past century.

Reach: Newboro to Rideau Ferry

Within this Reach are the headwaters of the Rideau and Cataraqui river systems – a division point for waters flowing either through the Rideau system to Ottawa or through the Cataraqui system to Kingston. These rivers have a combined watershed of over 5000 square miles.

This Reach perhaps best reveals the Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor's distinctive aquatic character set amongst a natural and cultural landscape which expresses the diversity of lifestyles and communities which contributed to the creation of the Canal and subsequently derive much of their history and current realities from the Canal's existence and use.

The recreational centre of the Corridor, the lake environments of this Reach are a mecca for boaters from near and far. The surrounding landscapes afford a complementary array of land based recreational opportunities within a Canadian Shield environment, including a fringe of the distinctive Frontenac Arch geologic formation. Three major centres for outdoor recreation opportunities are provided by Foley Mountain and Mill Pond conservation areas and Murphy's Point Provincial Park.

Reach: Rideau Ferry to Merrickville

Below the big lakes of the Rideau, the river and Canal wind northward through a limestone plain lowland topography. The slowed flow and subsequent flooding due to Canal and dam building induced the growth of spectacular marshes and wetlands, a mecca for avifauna.

The marshes of the Tay Canal, near Perth, the Swale wetlands above the Poonamalie Locks and three sets of locks of Smiths Falls, and the Rideau Migratory Bird Sanctuary upstream of Merrickville Dam afford some of the best river and shoreline experiences within the Corridor.

In the 1800's, the economic heartbeat of the Rideau Canal was strongest in the emerging towns and villages of this central portion of the Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor. Core to the growth and prosperity of these emerging communities was the water of the Rideau – a source of energy for mills, a ready means

for transport of goods and people, a driver of creativity in boat building and industrial ingenuity, a marketplace for goods produced and harvested from the surrounding natural resources and farm lands.

The positive energy and pride of Perth continues to be exemplified today in its vibrant restored historic waterfront along the Tay Canal; a critical economic tributary of the Rideau Canal. The stone architecture of the Town's heritage buildings are readily appreciated from parks and pathways winding through the Town following the Tay's waters to the "basin" around which today's guests taste the heritage of this place in its array of culinary opportunities and farmer's market.

Merrickville, at the opposite end of the Reach, exemplifies a similar investment in celebrating the heritage of the community and the Canal within its vibrant waterfront and town streetscapes and parklands. It too saw the emergence of its industrial heritage in the form of mills, foundries and brick factories, all tied to the power and transportation benefits drawn from the river and falls. These industrial roots have evolved into a thriving gathering of artisans, who work their artistry in many mediums; and whose storefronts and studios drawn explorers from near and far.

Smiths Falls, centrally situated between these two historic communities, has an equally diverse economic heritage. With roots dating back to settlement by United Empire Loyalists in the 1740s, the town was effectively born in the 1830s as a result of canal building required to address the navigation challenge posed by the "falls" - a 36-foot drop in less than a quarter of a mile.

Occupying an historic mill building at the edge of the river, the Rideau Canal Visitor Centre is the flagship interpretation centre for the historic Rideau Canal system - exhibits bring to life the history of the canal - its construction from 1826-1831, its role throughout history, as well as the distinct lifestyle associated with the Rideau Waterway. In close proximity to Smiths Falls' canal waterfront parklands and walkways, explorers can experience a full array of lock designs and related structures.

Reach: Merrickville to Long Island Locks

Below Merrickville, the Rideau is a narrow meandering river bordered by woodlands, farmlands with well-preserved farmhouses and sensory rich wetlands. The scenic Nicholson Locks were the engineer's solution to avoiding the Burritts Rapids. A vantage point near the manually operated King Post Bridge clearly conveys from a single vantage point the natural and modified flow of the River.

A second important vantage point occurs at Clowes Lock, where a clear view of a very scenic long stone arch spillway dam is visible. Below this dam, in a stretch locally known as "The Big Bend", the River is a widening meandering flow lined with extensive wetlands and farmlands. Three important accessible natural heritage areas: Rideau River Provincial Park, W.A. Taylor and Baxter conservation areas are popular accesses to the water's edge.

The 40 km stretch locally known as "The Long Reach" joins the historic communities of Kars and Manotick. There are numerous marinas and water access points along this popular water sports along the 'slackwater' area.

Watson's Mill is a unique 1860's grist and flour mill located in Manotick, on the shores of the Rideau River. A working industrial heritage site, its stories reveal local politics, the building of a country, and a tragic love story. It is a working historic grist and flour mill and a social, cultural and educational focal point for the community and guests.

Below the island of Manotick, the waters are slowed by an impressive large stone dam adjacent to Nicholson Island and extending to Long Island

Reach: Long Island to Ottawa Locks

The approximately six kilometer stretch of the Rideau Canal from Dows Lake to the eight Ottawa Locks descending to the Ottawa River is the best profiled portion of the two hundred and two kilometer length of the Canal. The remaining two and a half kilometers of this Reach of the Canal from approximately the

VISITOR EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES CONCEPT
RIDEAU HERITAGE CORRIDOR
Kim Whytock & Associates

Hogs Backs locks to Long Island Locks is lesser known and predominantly a recreational waterway for area residents.

The Ottawa Locks are perhaps the most iconic image and attraction within this Reach providing exceptional viewing opportunities for land based guests from the surrounding parks and heritage building lands, including the Parliament Buildings and the Chateau Laurier. The 6.4 kilometer long excavated channel connecting these locks with Dows Lake and the Hartwell Locks is the second most iconic image of the Canal; and perhaps given its association with the Winterlude festival and skaters use of the Rideau Canal Skateway, is to some potential guests the more profiled image.

Through the excavated channel length, the Canal passes through historic and modern portions of the City and is bounded by an extensive parkland corridor of pathways and scenic driveways. As it exits the City's business core, it passes through the green spaces of the Experimental Farm and Carleton University.

The Hogs Back Locks are located at the junction of the man-made canal and the natural Rideau River course. The current falls are man-made replacing the Three Rock Rapids which were flooded during the canal construction. Mooney's Bay to Black Rapids stretch is a well-used recreational waterway surrounded by park lands and residential development. Both the Black Rapids and Long Island lock lands are popular park land retreats for city residents.

Stakeholder Identified Places of Note within Corridor

- Ottawa Locks and urban setting
- Jones Falls Locks, dam and scenic beauty
- Kingston Mills Lock Station and heritage setting
- Davis Lock, Wild Land Lock Station
- Nicholson Locks, serenity and beauty
- Burritts Rapids Locks and village heritage
- Long Island Locks and parkland setting

- Rock Dunder
- Foley Mountain
- Hogs Back Falls
- Swale
- Merrickville wetlands
- Tay Marsh
- Ferguson model forest

- Fort Henry
- Fortified Lockmasters houses
- Winterlude - skating on the Rideau Canal in Ottawa
- Parliament and Ottawa museums

- Merrickville - historic community in natural canal setting
- Perth - historic waterfront, historic town and park settings
- Smiths Falls – locks and Canal Heritage Museum
- Westport - the community and quaint shops
- Colonel By Mansion
- Industrial Ruins Smiths Falls and Merrickville

Hosting Priorities

Current Guests

The participants were asked to speculate in EQ type terms, who were their current guests and who in the foreseeable future were their desired guests. This was intended to provide a part of the foundation for moving forward.

Overall they speculated that Gentle Explorers and No Hassle Travellers make up the bulk of guests in the Corridor travelling by both land and water. Authentic Experiencers and Cultural Explorers are the next most prevalent groups.

It was speculated, for example, that those most often visiting the following areas or types of attractions may be:

- Canal locks – Gentle Explorers, No Hassle Travellers, Cultural Heritage Buffs, Cultural Explorers
- Hotel Kenny and other heritage inns – Gentle Explorers, Rejuvenators, Cultural Explorers
- Marinas – Rejuvenators, Gentle Explorers and Authentic Experiencers and Free Spirits
- Westport and other recreational villages – No Hassle Travellers, Free Spirits, Gentle Explorers
- Merrickville and the Locks - No Hassle Travellers, Gentle Explorers and Cultural Explorers.
- Manotick and Kemptville – Buffs, Cultural Explorers and No Hassle Travellers
- Long Island locks and park lands – No Hassle Travellers, Gentle Explorers and Rejuvenators
- Voyageur canoeing – Authentic Experiencers, Cultural Explorers, Free Spirits
- Ottawa Locks – all explorer types, but primarily seeking passive observation opportunities

It might be speculated that a majority of current guests are regionally high repeat guests, who may, owing to their familiarity with specific Reaches and perhaps being nearby residents act as they are Gentle Explorers and Rejuvenators.

In sum, the current guests may be best hosted by responding to the values and traits of Gentle Explorers, No Hassle Travellers, Authentic Experiencers and Cultural Explorers.

Future Guests

The participants believe that the Corridor and each individual Reach have a rich array of natural and cultural heritage experience opportunities which is capable of attracting guests from afar and new guests from within Eastern Ontario. They also believe that the waters and landscape are capable of affording safe and accessible escapes for local urban dwellers and regional boaters.

With this in mind, the participants indicated an interest in growing the number of guests from both near and far, who are Authentic Experiencers (nature experience biased), Cultural Explorers (culture experience biased); and for those escaping to outdoor activities and serenity, No Hassle Travellers, Gentle Explorers and Free Spirits.

Bringing the communities to life through animation, festivals and events will meet the needs of Gentle Explorers and No Hassle Travellers. Enhancing the vibrancy of communities and in particular their waterfronts, will respond to the interests of all priority explorer types, with Gentle Explorers and Rejuvenators being very appreciative of enhancements.

The focus of enhancements and innovations relating to exploring and discovering the Canal's and waterway's cultural and natural heritage resources are prominently a response to Authentic Experiencer, Cultural Explorer, No Hassle Traveler and Free Spirit values and interests.

Environics' international research for the CTC reveals that, in general, the percentage breakdown of potential EQ explorer types in Canada and from the ten nations providing the most travelers to Canada are as follows:

- Authentic Experiencers 12%
- Cultural Explorers 13%
- No Hassle Travelers 11%
- Free Spirits 11%
- Gentle Explorers 17%
- Rejuvenators 10%
- Cultural History Buffs 9%
- Personal History Travelers 11%
- Virtual Explorers 6%

Overarching Exploration Themes and Connections



Increasingly, the goal of travel is “connection”. Travellers seek to explore places of natural beauty, landscapes and ecosystems much different from ones with which they are familiar. They seek to connect with people who live different lives from them, communities, cultures and histories which give them pause to wonder.

They seek to use each and all of their senses in exploring and discovering the unique and unusual personalities and resources of their chosen destinations.

The Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor offers a diversity of opportunities for learners and leisure travellers to encounter thought provoking situations, windows into this special piece of Canadiana. Perhaps, no other 200 kilometre length of Canada reveals so much of this Nation’s history, social roots and natural heritage.

Around each bend of the Canal, travellers come upon another perspective of what might be called the cradle of Canada.

Geologically, natural heritage explorers wander the edge of the Canadian Shield, where it meets with the Lowlands of the St. Lawrence Valley. This same edge is where following de-glaciation of the landscape thousands of years ago, the ocean rushed in to flood the lands, bringing marine life a thousand miles inland of its current reach. The remains of a whale were found in the Corridor’s marine lowland soils.

The Corridor contains an intersection of Canada’s two predominant forest regions – Boreal and Great Lakes – St. Lawrence forests – habitat for a rich diversity of wildlife.

The flooding of this forested environment to create the “slack water canal” created our Nation’s youngest river system. The flooded forest became a unique aquatic ecosystem, which has become a treasured sport fishing mecca and offers serene backwater and wetland habitats for nature seekers and those seeking quiet escapes.

First Nations people were the initial explorers of this unusual waterway, following the migration routes of a diversity of land mammals and avifauna. The first travellers of the natural waterway lead the way for subsequent migrations of settlers from Europe who began the cultural landscapes evident to today’s travellers of the waterway. Farmers shaped the landscape for agriculture and forestry; subsequently using the river system to transport goods to mills. Millers were the first to harvest the hydro power of the rivers, creating small dam and reservoirs – the forerunners to the “slack water canal”.

Upper Canada’s first capital city, Kingston, rose at the mouth of the Cataraqui River, where it emptied into Lake Ontario. Unfortunately, following the war of 1812, this Capital was deemed too close to the threat of the United States military forces; the capital was migrated along the Rideau Corridor to Ottawa - a more readily protected location.

Following this decision, a great venture was launched to create an easily navigable waterway between Ottawa and Kingston for both shipping of goods and military readiness. Perhaps Canada’s first great

engineering achievement, the Rideau Canal was created in a few short years – a first in North America using a technique of flooding the landscape to allow easy passage of vessels over the rolling Canadian Shield landscape – a “slack water canal system”.

Along the waterway, the economy and society flourished giving birth to a series of communities, some now about to celebrate their 200th anniversaries.

The natural resources of the landscape, quarries and forests yielded the materials for a distinctive array of buildings and structures, which now characterize the built heritage of the Corridor. The buildings and canal structures of Kingston, Perth, Merrickville and Ottawa celebrate the pride of workmanship and ingenuity of the Corridor’s founding people.

These and many other Corridor communities were home to the founding families of the Rideau Canal. Communities which also attracted the famous and infamous: presidents, royalty, gangsters and pleasure seekers from throughout North America and Europe, who sought to enjoy the beauty and serenity of this long standing outdoor recreation mecca.



Reflecting the interests and desires of today’s travellers to create personal “connections” with their destinations – exploration themes were identified by VEOC development participants, who integrated their knowledge of the core natural and cultural heritage resources of the Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor, its natural and cultural landscapes and its long standing communities with their knowledge of the values and desires of the nine explorer types identified by the Canadian Tourism Commission. The themes are driven by guest interests and reflect participants’ desires to honour and share the history and personality of this special place, in sustainable ways.

The theme identification process began with a review of the values and interests of each explorer type, which was followed by the initial identification of exploration themes / subject for discovery which were thought to be compelling for each type.

It was recognized that many of the themes are of interest to most explorer types however the degree of desired learning, immersion in the subject and level of detail sought varies with each type.

It is anticipated that the four “Learner” explorer types: Authentic Experiencers, Cultural Explorers, Buffs and Personal History Travellers will seek the most in depth exposures to these themes. The first two types come prepared to “immerse” in the natural and cultural landscapes and circumstances of these themes, while the Buff comes to confirm their previous knowledge and connect with the ‘real thing’ and the “roots seeker” looks to reconnection with their personal heritage through exposure to these themes.

Other explorer types are less demanding, seeking only an introductory experience or to passively observe theme related presentations.

Facilitating connection with these aspects of the Corridor’s natural and cultural resources and heritage should be customized in response to each explorer type’s desires and interests.

The following provides a brief introduction to exploration themes which motivate and guide explorers and leisure travellers in wandering the natural and cultural landscapes of the Corridor. It is simply an introduction to the basis for experience opportunities. It should not limit the creative thinking of Rideau hosts and guests – rather it is a milestone in the evolution of this experiential tourism destination.

Five categories of themes have been identified:

- Canal Design and Operational Heritage
- Community Heritage and Evolution
- People of the Rideau
- Natural Resource Heritage
- Human Heritage in Natural Environments

Canal Design & Operational Heritage Connections

- “Slack water” – its implications for navigation & watershed resources
- Canal design and development challenges - ingenuity of builders
- Up close and personal involvement in lock and canal operations
- Understanding “Rideau” within the “world of canals” context

UNESCO has recently recognized the Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor as a World Heritage Site, bringing further acclaim to the long standing recognition that this is a unique piece of Canadian history and waterway of Canadian significance.

So much more than a recreational waterway, this strategic engineering and military achievement ensured the birth of Canada, as an independent nation.

Slack water - The engineering ingenuity of Colonel By and his British, Scottish, Irish and French Canadian canal designers and builders, used the logic that raising water levels to permit navigation over rather than through the landscape would allow them to avoid canal trenching for much of the 200 kilometre challenge. Flooding forested hills and valleys made it possible for barges to float over the watershed divide at Newboro, radically modifying the natural courses of the Cataraqui and Rideau rivers, creating lakes and wetlands and swollen river beds. Both natural and cultural heritage explorers will be awed by this ingenuity and its implications.

The minds of Authentic Experiences will be challenged by the Canal design and development approach; and interested by the decision to flood vast forests and river valleys; with resulting positive and negative implications for the environment. Cultural Explorers will be correspondingly intrigued by the medical, physical and social challenges endured by the builders. Comprehending the macro and micro perspectives will bring understanding to learners and less demanding leisure travellers.

Design and development - Each series of locks is a unique demonstration of engineering ingenuity - offering today's explorers opportunities to see both the natural and altered courses of river and navigation. From the Ottawa series of locks raising water craft almost 80 feet (24.4M) from the Ottawa River, to the Narrows Lock raising boats only 4 feet (1.2 M) yet providing a key to creating a slack water environment for ease of navigation by creating a new Upper Rideau Lake, to the spectacular descent of the Cataraqui waters through the series of locks from Newboro, through Chaffeys, Davis and Jones Falls, and finally the intimate series of quiet rivers, lakes and wetlands which connect to Kingston Mills, the final challenge overcome to connect the Ottawa River with Lake Ontario.

History buffs, engineers and architects, military enthusiasts and navigators, all stand in amazement of this waterway, while leisure travellers enjoy the freedom it permits them to float through a spectacular cultural landscape and visit its canal communities and peoples.

Lock operations - Discussions with lock masters reveal the initial challenges and those faced today in maintaining this living heritage and facilitating its use and appreciation by water and land based travellers. Canal workers since the beginning of construction in 1826 have faced the continuous challenges of managing the interaction of natural forces and human navigation.

Workers today must solve the challenges of conserving the Canal and its locks as a special piece of Canadiana, while ensuring its navigability and water levels are in harmony with social values and current resident desires. Leisure travellers and life-long learners both seek to have a first-hand experience in the operation of the locks and waterway. They seek to understand the engineering and sense the force of the river and the strengths of the dams and lock doors. Watching or even better yet “locking through” a boat is a spellbinding endeavour for all who arrive at a lock.

World canals – River explorations by leisure travellers are one of the fastest growing aspects of global tourism. Humans have always relied upon natural and man-made water courses to pass through natural and cultural landscapes. The Rideau Canal like its contemporaries throughout Great Britain, Europe, North America and now most other parts of the world are meccas for both leisure and more aggressive explorers of these human migration routes. The design and construction challenges of each are at one time the same and yet in detail quite different. Their continued use for industry and for tourism makes them a special aspect of the national heritages of the countries they traverse.

The minds of canal buffs and river leisure travellers alike are challenged by the engineering achievements and inspired by the views of human heritage through which they pass. No other Canadian canal has the diversity of living history; nor are they so connected to the canals of northeastern North America. The multi-cultural heritage of the Rideau’s designers and builders, together with its international significance makes this a world heritage resource of uncommon value.

Military history – Born out of the need to protect the birthing of a nation, the Rideau Canal’s fortified lock master’s houses, military structures and the Kingston Fortifications defending the Canal’s proximity to enemy forces acclaim the strategic significance of this piece of Canadian heritage.

Investment sponsored from nation building resources, used by the Royal Engineers in designing and building the military’s strategic link to the border of Upper Canada heralded the independence movement. Military history, political and national heritage enthusiasts are drawn to this unique cradle of the Nation. Re-enactment of its military heritage and the community legacies which flow from these beginnings celebrate the significance of this Corridor.

Community Heritage & Evolution Connections

- Founders of the Corridor - settlers, canal builders, industrialists
- Realities of “canal communities” - social & economic
- Evolving economies - agriculture, water and rail transportation, resource harvesting, boat building, mining, quarries and milling

Community heritage is the enduring expression of the founding people of the Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor. Communities begun out of military, engineering and economic necessities celebrate those who have gone before and the present hosts of travellers to this unique destination.

In 2016, the community of Perth will celebrate 200 years of serving as an economic and social root of the Rideau Corridor. Its beginning as a military settlement and subsequently as a social gathering place, an economic catalyst, a boat building and transportation launch point, and many other roles in the cultural history of the Corridor, attests to the importance of communities as expressions of the Rideau’s heritage.

Founding people – Algonquin and then other First Nation peoples are celebrated in the names associated with natural landscape and water bodies. Subsequently canal builders and people of British, Scottish, Irish and French Canadian descent settled these lands and launched the development of communities.

The array of names associated with rivers and lakes, locks, buildings, industrial facilities, communities and transportation routes and mechanisms echo the individuals and families who founded the living heritage of the Corridor. Personal history seekers are drawn to historic societies to renew their connections with these families, while cultural heritage enthusiasts seek understanding of the evolution of families and their communities. People and their communities are touch points for today's explorers.

Community realities – The many small and medium size communities which grew up along the course of the Rideau Canal are each a “window onto the history of the founding people”. Some have flourished, others remain little changed and some have passed. All communities tell a portion of the living heritage and past glories of the Corridor.

What began as trading and service centres for the agricultural industry and then transshipment points for trade, are now contemporary communities, which still honour their built and human heritage. They are meccas and gathering points for travellers and epi-centers of the emerging leisure travel industry. Here are the opportunities for learners to “immerse” in past and current lifestyles and community realities; places where celebration of home share insights with strangers. These communities and the Canal are the foundation blocks of the Rideau's “living heritage” experience opportunities.

Evolving economies – The engine of settlement and growth is most often economic. Insight into and understanding of human heritage is frequently best achieved through exposure to the resource harvesting, agriculture and transportation history and evidence of human activity in the natural landscape.

For those seeking to explore the Rideau's heritage, a starting point can be found in the farmlands of the Corridor. Here the natural landscape was transformed into a cultural landscape out of necessity. The instruments and results of this settlement reveal the founding people's harvesting of natural resources and subsequently domestic resources.

The remaining “mills” celebrate the forestry and farming heritage and the beginning of trade. The Canal brings to light the industrial “transportation” history - the movement of agricultural products and materials harvested from quarries, mines and forests, which were used as building blocks for surrounding communities and transportation structures. Ships and barges built locally conveyed people and goods to markets within and beyond the Corridor.

Each of these members of the founding peoples and their economies is a story conveyor of the Rideau Canal's human and economic heritage. These stories and their retelling are the grist for contemporary explorers and guests, people seeking to connect with people who live and lived different lives from them, people who are their roots and connection.

People of the Rideau Connections

- Artisans - arts, food, music, fishing guides, carvers
- Boat builders and navigators heritage boats
- Rideau cottages & boat houses
- Famous and infamous residents and guests of the Rideau
- Heritage of Rideau tourism and leisure recreation

Community heritage celebration is a window into the past, meeting the people of the present is a means to connecting with current realities of the Rideau Corridor.

The number one way in which travellers connect with a destination is through meeting people who live very different lives from them. They perceive and learn through the perceptions and values expressed by people they meet.

Water is a core of life in the Rideau Corridor. Not surprisingly it is a component of many of the Corridor's lifestyles and notable people.

Artisans –The artistic community of the Rideau Corridor is broad and each member has a unique perspective on the heritage and lifestyles of the Corridor.

The community includes sport **fishing guides**, whose artistry with a rod and line are spellbinding, and fishing guides who see the invisible on the water's surface and reveal the mysteries and resources of the depths. **Wood carvers**, whose world renowned works of art began as decoys for harvesting migrating waterfowl and are now treasured pieces of the art world, as are their creators.

For taste buds as well as eyes, the tastes of the Rideau are brought to its guests through the efforts and products of many artisans. **Chefs and other culinary artists** are the creators of tastes revealing for example that maple syrup has a "terroir" characteristic as does wine, that garlic is an icon of the Corridor, that there are many ways and places to enjoy the fishes of the Rideau and that the farmer's markets are a window onto the cultural landscape.

Artisan studio touring and festivals and exhibitions are key ways for guests to come in contact with and begin to see through the eyes of artisans. Travellers are drawn both to observe and to learn through direct involvement.

Community events, both every day and special, will be meccas for travellers seeking to connect with people living different lives from them and to immerse in the local realities.

Boat builders and navigators – Seeing things through local eyes also includes those of boat builders of small craft identified with Rideau waters and boating, such as Wilkes boats. Also included are the highly prized larger vessels which are proudly displayed at regattas and in heritage boat festivals, and finally, the unique vessels which conveyed travellers along the Rideau over the past century, such as the Rideau King, and unique vessels of today, such as the Kawartha Voyageur.

Captains of today's boats are able to relay their navigational challenges and those of the historic navigators and crews who are their predecessors.

Cottages and boat houses – Beyond human storytellers, the built heritage of the Rideau Corridor conveys many insights into who lives here, why and how. The communities have proud heritage buildings made of stone and wood – edifices to past and present economies and industrial leaders. However, equally artistic and interesting are smaller buildings along the water's edge. Rideau boat houses are works of art, made even more so in their varying states of repair. A rainbow of colours and a potpourri of

styles, these structures are collectible images. So too, are the cottages that are seasonal and permanent homes for people who chose to make a life in this special natural and cultural environment.

The **famous and infamous** have called the Corridor at least their home away from home. Presidents and royalty have resided at some of the Rideau's long standing heritage inns – structures in themselves of heritage significance such as Hotel Kenny and the Opinicon. These are places of grand stories of leisure lifestyles which are at the root of the Rideau's heritage in tourism. More secluded, infamous people such as Al Capone and American entertainers and sports personalities have been drawn to the more remote components of the Corridor. Re-enacting the lifestyles of the thirties and forties would prove a compelling draw for many leisure travellers.

Tourism roots – It is interesting to note that Rideau hospitality and experience opportunities have for most of the 20th century been drawing guests to the Corridor. Heritage hotels and hoteliers were magnets for the rich and famous. The sport fishing continues to be a compelling draw for travellers, as does the opportunity to simply escape urban realities and stress. The quality of life possible in the Corridor has long been its most compelling asset.

Natural Resource Heritage Connections

- Geology of Corridor - Canadian Shield and Lowlands
- Glacial and subsequent marine heritage
- Waters of Corridor - rivers, large and small lakes,
- Flooded forests and resultant aquatic ecology
- Aquatic, wetland, backwater environments
- Corridor forests, plants - land and water ecosystems
- Corridor wildlife - resident and migratory

The people and lifestyles of the Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor and the economic and social heritage of the communities are a reflection of the Corridor's natural resources, landscapes and environment.

As will be apparent to water based and land based travellers alike, **geologically**, the Rideau Corridor is the intersection of four geological structures:

- Most noticeable, the Frontenac Axis, which is an extension of the Canadian Shield – most clearly expressed in the Corridor between Rideau Ferry and Kingston. This rugged rolling landscape presented the greatest challenge to canal builders. The “slackwater” canal development concept

VISITOR EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES CONCEPT
RIDEAU HERITAGE CORRIDOR
Kim Whytock & Associates

raises water levels sufficiently to permit vessels to pass over the worn down geological structures at their lowest points.

- A glacial till plain extending between Merrickville and Ottawa, whose profile and composition permits the Rideau to have developed the less challenging characteristics for navigation found in this portion of the Canal. These conditions allow for more ready erosion of the clay soils and a meandering characteristic of the river. Aquatic habitats along this portion reflect the geologic origin and base
- A limestone plain structure characterized by shallow soil and exposed limestone lies between Rideau Ferry and Smiths Falls. It too gives character to the aquatic and terrestrial character of this portion of the Corridor
- Finally the Corridor opens out onto the Nappanee Plain below Kingston Mills. Shallow soils and exposed limestone characterize the landscape and influence the aquatic environments of the wetlands at the mouth of the Corridor.

Glacial and marine heritage of the Corridor can be surprising to many guests. Over eons, the Corridor has been affected by four periods of glaciation, the most recent ending over 14,000 years ago. The weight of the ice mass on the landscape caused it to subside and upon retreat of the ice, first freshwater and then ocean waters occupied the depressed landscape of the northern portion as far inland as the Frontenac Axis – a natural dam. The existence of the ice dammed lake and subsequently sea water brought new geomorphic characteristics to the Corridor now characterizing the lowlands. As a result of the ocean's penetration bones of a humpback whale have been found near Smiths Falls.

Rivers and lakes - The Rideau Canal is actually two separate river systems: the Rideau River originating in Big Rideau Lake and flowing north-easterly to Ottawa, and the Cataraqui River starting at Newboro Lake and flowing south-westerly to Kingston.

The lift from Kingston to Upper Rideau Lake (the highest point on the system) is 50 m (164 ft.) in 14 locks. The lift from Ottawa to Upper Rideau Lake is 83.2 m (273 ft.) in 31 locks. The watershed of the Rideau is much the larger of the two rivers, 4,000 square km, compared to the 910 square km drained by the Cataraqui.

Forests - The Corridor contains an intersection of Canada's two predominant forest regions – Boreal and Great Lakes – St. Lawrence forests – habitat for a rich diversity of wild life. Virtually all of the forests have been harvested over time, leaving few mature forest stands. Deciduous forests dominate such as maple, oak, birch, basswood, poplar and ash. Towards the Kingston end of the Corridor within the Shield topography pine, spruce, hemlock and cedar are abundant.

Drowned forest ecology - The flooding of this forested environment to create the "slackwater canal" created our Nation's youngest river system. The flooded forest became a unique aquatic ecosystem home to one of the most diverse fish communities in Canada; which has become a treasured sport fishing mecca

The flooding also created extensive wetland areas which have become a rich environment for a wide variety of plants and animals. The canal's wetlands are home to 42 rare plant species and rare animals like the small-footed bat and offers serene backwater and wetland habitats for nature seekers and those seeking quiet escapes.

While appreciation of natural landscapes is a core value of most travellers and a source of serenity to many others, wondering about human life within the natural environment is a compelling interest of many leisure travellers.

Navigational challenges – one can only imagine the shock experienced by some observers as the Kawartha Voyageur cruise ship changes shape and length to fit into the locks. The history and stories of ship and barge captains about the navigational challenges they faced, and the ways in which they adapted their boats and navigational skills to the Corridor's challenges will inspire the imagination of many travellers. Submerged wrecks of ships and other heritage structures, perhaps viewed by web cams, will also intrigue guests.

Backwater solitudes – The flooding of the natural river and lake waterways created new backwaters, wetland and marsh aquatic environments – whose rich plant, fish and wild life populations thrive on quiet serenity – like many explorers, leisure travellers and rejuvenators. For nature observers and those simply getting away, the serenity of backwater environments is a mecca.

Sport fishing – Whether with purpose or simply enjoying the artistry and serenity, fishing the rivers, lakes and backwaters of the Corridor is rewarding. Perhaps with a naturalist or fishing guide, learning of the visible and invisible aquatic habitats, how they have changed and where they are headed will be meaningful to authentic experiencers and nature buffs.

Wandering – The corridors myriad of land and aquatic trails through diverse ecosystems and along shorelines brings travellers close to the natural heritage of this special place and its dynamic evolution in the hands of canal builders and natural forces. Trails through conservation and trust lands, through natural and cultural landscapes and along the canal's edge all provide special vantage points into the heritage of the Corridor.

Biodiversity – The Corridor's ten conservation areas and other related ecological conservation initiatives provide a network of opportunities for nature based explorers, special interest buffs and leisure travellers to observe and appreciate the biodiversity of the Corridor. Guided or self-guided explorations of terrestrial and aquatic habitats will reveal the natural heritage of the Rideau and Cataraqui rivers and perhaps some of the 42 rare plant species and rare animals.

Human Heritage in Natural Environments

- Navigating the Rideau - challenges and ingenuities
- Experiencing the solitude of remote lakes and streams
- Sport fishing heritage of Rideau and Cataraqui watersheds
- Wandering the trails and waterways through a diversity of natural environments
- Biodiversity of plants and explore species at risk

Compelling Experience Opportunity Highlights

The following experience opportunities were frequently identified during the series of six stakeholder discussions. They were felt to be the ways and means by which the largest percentage of current and priority future explorer types would best achieve their desired connections with the nature and culture of the Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor.

Getting on the water

It was universally felt by discussion participants that facilitating guests in “getting out on to the water” was the most important opportunity which could be afforded to guests. It was suggested that perhaps three-quarters of Corridor explorers and leisure travellers are land-based. It was felt that assisting these guests in experiencing the Rideau Canal and the Heritage Corridor from the water would be the most valued assistance a host could offer their guest.

To this end, it was suggested that an enhanced network of equipment and boat rentals and associated guiding and outfitting services would assist land based travellers to explore the aquatic environments. Enhanced guidance devices and information would be valued by self-guided explorers, while others would welcome guided experiences in small groups.

It was noted that for Rejuvenators, Gentle Explorers and perhaps No Hassle Travellers, a series of shoreline attached float observation platforms would bring these guests into contact with the aquatic environment.

Facilitation of this type of experience would call upon the collaboration of a number of private sector or not-for-profit experience facilitators.

Locking through

Participants also universally felt that the experience of “locking through” a set of locks would prove perhaps the most meaningful experience for this same group of land-based explorers and leisure travellers. The thought was that this experience opportunity could be afforded at a strategic selection of locks throughout the Corridor. Suggested locations included: Kingston Mills, Chaffeys - Jones locks, Ottawa locks and Smiths Falls in conjunction with Rideau Canal Museum experience opportunity.

Facilitation of this type of experience opportunity would call upon a collaborative effort involving Parks Canada and a network of boat experience operators. It could be complemented with animation of the lock operation and complementary opportunities for the same guests to engage in the manual operation of the lock; thereby acquiring a number of perspectives in one opportunity.

It was noted that augmented appreciation of the lock operations through the use of contemporary interpretation facilitation devices such as tablets would add to guest experiences.

Finally, it was suggested that the use of heritage design boats would also add to the guest opportunity.

Overnight in historic setting

Initially the suggestion of facilitating guest opportunities to overnight in a canal related historic building or natural setting was focused upon a lock station location, perhaps using the lockmasters house or related structures or the surrounding park-like settings of some locks. The idea then expanded to the use of other built heritage settings and structures in communities and more remote locations, such as the network of historic mills.

All guests, water or land based travellers, were the focus of this type of experience opportunity. The concept suggested including culinary and accommodation opportunities, and some mentioned linking this with performance opportunities.

Realization of this type of guest experience opportunity would likely entail a collaborative effort amongst the owners of the historic buildings or natural settings and facilitators of the accommodation and dining experience opportunities.

Virtual lock design and operation

At the Rideau Canal Museum, the programming of a virtual lock design and operations facility would provide guests with opportunities to assess the natural challenges posed by rapids and other river flow conditions in a specific reach of the Corridor. The guests would then have the opportunity to design a locking system and water control system to permit passage of a vessel through this particular set of river conditions.

Similarly, the challenge could be to design the full canal system of locks; thereby acquiring an understanding of the full array of conditions and challenges experienced by Colonel By and his team of designers and lock builders.

A satellite feed could connect a portion of this experience opportunity to remote locations at selected lock stations, and perhaps to the gateway guest information and orientation facilities at Ottawa and Kingston.

Animation of locks

A greater sense of theatre might add to the experiences achieved by both land based and boating guests at lock stations. In this regard, it was suggested that lock staff might be costumed in the period dress. It was also suggested that scheduled performances be added to the normal operations. These might be provided by local performers. These performances would be revenue generating opportunities.

Where appropriate, the performers might lead guided explorations of the locks and related structures. These walks might be linked to other guided walks throughout the neighbouring communities and cultural landscapes, including stops at heritage museums and industrial ruins.

Outdoor acoustical experiences

Relating to the positioning of the Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor as “living history”, it was often suggested in different ways that heritage stories and events could be brought to life for guests through outdoor performances at strategically selected heritage rich locations along the Corridor.

The concept advanced by participants envisioned the use of theater-like techniques including: lighting, sound and music, and performers to present a heritage moment or story. Locations noted included: selected lock stations with the desired ambiance, i.e. Jones Falls, and community waterfront gathering places.

The facilitation of these theatrical experience opportunities could call upon local talent coordinated by private sector operators and non-profit groups.

Shuttle supported explorations

It was frequently suggested that land and water based guests exploring the trails, roads and waterways of the Corridor would appreciate a service which dropped them off or picked them up at where their feet, bicycles, kayaks, cross country skis, etc. take them.

It was further suggested that perhaps such a service might carry their luggage and gear between a network of overnight experience opportunities.

This concept was seen as an opportunity for private sector transportation facilitators, perhaps in conjunction with rental equipment operators, to make it feasible for enhanced explorations of existing trail and water routes.

Rideau after dark

Given the dark skies of the Corridor, together with the recognition that guests are on vacation all day and “night”, it was suggested by many participants that there is a demand for evening entertainment and experience opportunities for both land and water based travellers.

Concepts advanced included “dark sky” presentations and events and opportunities at lock stations, community waterfronts, on the water events, and night walks dark sky presentations in cultural and natural heritage settings.

These were each and all seen as opportunities for local talent and entrepreneurs to host travellers and provide unique and unusual opportunities “after dark” for guests to connect with sensory rich environments and the heritage of the Corridor.

Founding Peoples

Recognizing that often it is the people you meet, who facilitate the most memorable experiences or immersing within the living heritage, participants suggested a number of ways to celebrate the “founding people” of the Corridor. Their thoughts focused upon connections to the heritage of: First Nation peoples and their use of the Corridor, connecting guests with the challenges and realities of the canal builders, linking guests with the lifestyles of mill operators and farming and forestry family lifestyles.

The concept saw performances of heritage events and lives; heritage festivals celebrating historic people and events, and opportunities to live in a style and circumstance of the founding people.

Contemporary resort experiences

A limitation for tourism growth in the Corridor was identified as being the limited capacity of current resort services. It was suggested that in future the development of a centrally situated major resort facility providing year-round services would assist in attracting and serving medium and large size groups.

It was envisioned that this new or enhanced existing facility would be an opportunity to experience many of aspects of the Corridor, its foods, music, art, and performers. It would also be an exploration base for guests seeking to explore many parts of the Corridor from one base. The resort services might include outfitting and transportation services for wandering guests.

Gathering places for hosts and guests

Initially it was noted that lock stations and their surrounding lands would be natural places for guests to gather, guests arriving by both land and water. It was seen that these places would be both places to gather at for information, guidance, engaging activities and performances, and simultaneously, epicentres for exploration of the surrounding communities and natural/cultural landscapes.

Once conceived of, the concept expanded to include other gathering places such as community waterfronts, parks, museums and the network of parks and natural areas which exist along the length of the Corridor.

In effect, these places were seen as attractions and launch points for explorers.

Network of vantage points and “Rideau chairs”

Participants identified a wide array of special places from which guests will be able to experience both macro and micro perspectives of this natural and cultural heritage corridor. These places were sometimes well known to travellers and sometimes known only to local residents – yet they were all the best places to experience a special aspect or attribute of the Corridor.

It was thus suggested that a strategic network of these special “vantage points” be established and made known to hosts and guests alike – as recommend experience opportunities.

To add to the guest experience opportunity, as appropriate, distinctive “Rideau chairs” would be positioned at select places to encourage guests to pause and contemplate what can be perceived from these special locations. To sit, perhaps in solitude or serenity, and take in with all of their senses the characteristics of these heritage places.

Some suggested that the experience opportunities of some of these places might be augmented with traditional or contemporary communications to inform guests and explain the less visible aspects of the views.

Voyageur canoe building and canoeing

The existing “voyageur canoe” paddling experience opportunity might be enhanced and expanded to incorporate hands on canoe building experiences and longer duration paddles and skill development experiences.

It was suggested that a canoe building program could be offered annually, with the product becoming a component of the Rideau Fleet of voyageur canoes.

The Canadiana aspect of this particular vessel makes this boating experience even more compelling for international guests and perhaps for families who have recently acquired Canadian citizenship.

Guided touring of natural aquatic and shoreline habitats may also prove a compelling experience for guests.

Enhancement and Innovation of Experience Opportunities

Improving Experience Opportunities

Having identified the potential exploration themes and subjects of interest for the explorers and having assessed the desired exploration opportunities and their current quality and availability, the VEOC development participants

- first turned their attention to enhancing existing opportunities, programs, services and infrastructure provided by host communities and tourism attractions and services; and then
- focused their attention on identifying innovative experience opportunities and related support programs and services.

Each of the nine explorer types was considered separately, although it was recognized and noted that many of the suggested improvements would be valued by a number of the explorer types. Tweaking an idea or improvement had the potential to make it of value to more than the explorer types it was identified to facilitate.

It is anticipated that the following “enhancements and innovations” will be approached in a collaborative manner involving complementary action and investment by all sectors of the tourism industry.

An Integrated Set of Enhancements and Innovations

A review of the enhancements and innovations identified for each of the six Reaches of the Corridor (see following chapters) reveals the following over-arching framework of ideas for improving guest experience opportunities and the service offer of their hosts.

These enhancements and innovations are gathered under a framework of improvements respecting:

- **Guest Information, Welcome and Sense of Arrival**
- **Cultural Heritage Connection Opportunities**
- **Natural Heritage Connection Opportunities**
- **Augmented Appreciation / Passive Observation Opportunities**
- **Recreation / Relaxation Opportunities**
- **Accommodation Services and Related Experience Opportunities**
- **Transportation Services**

Guest Information, Welcome and Sense of Arrival

Adopting the role of hosts, discussion participants recognized the importance of communicating a clear sense of welcome and arrival to each and all types of guests; a welcome which would communicate the diverse array of natural and cultural heritage experiences opportunities afforded throughout the Corridor and one which would encourage guests to explore the many component reaches of the Corridor.

Their focus included guests arriving from afar, both Canadian and international, on perhaps their first visit to the area, and guests who are residents of the surrounding region including large urban areas such as Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa and Kingston, who may be visiting for the first time, or expanding their exploration of the Corridor. In both cases, consideration was given to both land and water based travel.

The information and welcome services and facilities are seen as a shared undertaking supported by the travel industry of the Corridor. It would be standardized to ensure quality service and consistent and up to date information distribution.

Collectively, the following array of services will contribute to the growing the Corridor's identity.

Please note – Following the title of an enhancement or innovation, there is a forecasted indication of which explorer types may be attracted to this type of opportunity or service. The EQ types in bold are likely most attracted, and others are identified as having some interest.

- **A full service website for the corridor (AE, CE, B, PHT, NHT,GE,FS)**

For Authentic Experiencers (AE) and Cultural Explorers (CE) having access to a wide array of information to support the pre-trip planning of their explorations of chosen destinations is extremely important. These two explorer types seek to arrive well informed and with purpose. They value web-based access to information, maps, images and resource information. They also value the ability to communicate with trip planning expertise.

For leisure travellers such as No Hassle Travellers (NHT), Gentle Explorers (GE) and Free Spirits (FS) the needs for trip planning are much less detailed; however having guidance to the highlights of the Corridor's natural and cultural attractions and guest services are basic necessities.

Bufs (B) and Personal History Travellers (PHT) will make special demands on the website data base and links to expertise, in addition to the more general information function.

With these anticipated demands in mind, the website should be populated with information to meet the more demanding needs of the "learners" Authentic Experiencers, Cultural Explorers, Bufs, and Personal History Travellers and be versatile enough to be easily used by other less demanding travel planners.

The information framework should support Corridor long exploration planning and community and site specific activity planning.

This same system should be accessible to guests during their time in the Corridor, either through terminals at the network of information / orientation facilities; or from their personal connections.

- **Rideau "App"**

An extension of the Website would be an "app" which guests could use throughout their travels to connect with the Corridor website or to connect with a specific Reach attraction, service provider or experience

opportunity. These are desired by Authentic Experiencers and Cultural Explorers and by No Hassle Travellers and Free Sprits.

- **Two gateway guest orientation facilities (NHT, GE, FS, AE, CE, B)**

Given the linear nature of the Corridor, there are many points of entry. However, it was felt Ottawa and Kingston areas would be perceived by most guests from afar and regional residents as the primary gateways to exploring the Corridor. With this in mind, it was suggested that a primary guest orientation and information facility be established in each community, in a major gathering place related to the Canal. In the case of Ottawa, an orientation facility in relation to the Ottawa Locks was considered most efficient. In Kingston, the facility might be located at Kingston Mills or on the Kingston waterfront in a location related to the Cataraqui River mouth.

It was envisioned that these two orientation facilities would provide a full array of guest orientation and information services, including:

- Video overviews of the Corridor and its key experience opportunities
- Exhibits and displays relating to the array of exploration themes
- Personal and non-personal information distribution services
- Web-based connections with services throughout the Corridor, including a web-cam network
- Connection to the Corridor's concierge services.

It was suggested that displays and guidance could be positioned at the Ottawa and Kingston airports, train terminals and other transportation services. These non-personal services would link travellers to the personal services of the two primary guest orientation facilities.

- **Network of contemporary guest information services (NHT, GE, FS, AE, CE, B)**

Complementing the two gateway orientation facilities, a network of "web-linked" guest information services was recommended throughout the Corridor, at each attraction and community, i.e. lock stations, museums, recreation areas, and community welcome facilities. These information outlets should provide personal and / or non-personal information distribution and trip guidance services; in the latter case, this might take the form of a 24/7 'smart-board' information service.

As feasible and appropriate, the non-personal information distribution service should be capable of printing out or downloading maps, menus of opportunities for each EQ type, and other trip guidance information.

This network of information services will also be linked to the "front-desk" information services of travel suppliers, such as accommodation, food services, guide services and equipment rental services.

- **Geo-fencing - virtual welcome and online information / orientation (AE, CE, NHT, GE)**

It was suggested that the geo-fencing information service currently in place in some communities, such as Westport, might have growing applicability throughout the Corridor as personal communication and automobile information gathering capacities are quickly evolving.

- **Concierge services (AE, CE, NHT, GE, FS, R, B, PHT)**

The mantra of the "Clefs d'Or" the order of concierge is "service through friendship" a phrase which epitomizes the adoption of a culture of hosting guests, rather than serving clients.

Participants suggested that the Corridor should have as a portion of its welcome and support for guests, a concierge service operating both in actuality at the primary exploration launch facilities and online through the Corridor website.

The concierges will be a full source of guidance and support for guests planning their exploration and enjoyment of the Corridor's many experience opportunities and support services. They will have the knowledge and capacity to make guests' desires feasible. In essence they are the personification of the adoption of the hosting culture.

The concierge is not a selling or packaging agent, but a person who can connect guests with the packages and services offered by all Corridor operators. The concierge service knowledge and hosting skills will serve as a model for guest information and orientation personnel and vested ambassadors.

- **Vested ambassadors (NHT, GE, FS, AE, CE, B, PHT)**

An extension of the concierge will be qualified "vested ambassadors" to be found throughout the Corridor at guest information / orientation centres and popular gathering places, such as lock stations and community waterfront gathering spots.

These volunteers will be well trained and informed roaming hosts; personal connections through whom guests will better plan and arrange their daily explorations and enjoyment of Corridor attractions and natural and cultural heritage resources and places.

Perhaps a modified "super host" training program specific to the Rideau realities can be developed to build the capacity of this guest service.

- **Networking of hosts (All)**

The orientation to motivate corridor-long exploration and recreation experiences, in part, calls upon the tourism industry and associated hosts to devise means to offer a more seamless array of guest services and perhaps to align experience opportunities into packages or collaborative offerings of complementary programs and services.

Participants suggested that a movement be initiated to strengthen the networking between like service providers, such as:

- inns and B&Bs;
- private and public sector camping providers;
- day and multi-day experience opportunity outfitters
- artisans and their boutiques and displays
- marinas and boat associated rental services
- bicycle and other associated land based exploration equipment rental services
- natural and cultural heritage experience facilitators, such as Parks Canada, Ontario Provincial Parks, conservation area agencies, nature trusts, museums and other heritage sites
- heritage mills and other heritage buildings and associated experience opportunities
- festival organizations

Further, these networks of like hosts would have a strengthened basis upon which to align between networks to create complete attraction, accommodation, transportation and culinary experience opportunities.

- **Adoption and growth of "Host / Guest" culture**

The foregoing welcome and orientation services are extensions of a fundamental orientation to "hosting guests" which it was recommended for adoption by the Corridor's travel industry, as a whole.

The adoption would require that all staff providing information and guidance to guests have a basic awareness and understanding of the experience opportunities and support programs and services available for guests. This knowledge would be most highly developed for the immediate area of its distribution, i.e. the community or the attraction and its surrounding area; and would also include a basic knowledge of these same attributes of the Corridor as a whole.

Hosts would have an awareness of the information distribution system and how to advise and support guests in benefiting from the system.

- **Investment in staff awareness**

The participants recommended that collaborative efforts be undertaken to support front line staff in having first-hand knowledge and perspectives in regards to as many of the most compelling experience opportunities as feasible.

It was suggested that “familiarization tours and outings to major attractions” could be organized to meet the needs of a group of related operators in one staff development program. Correspondingly, representatives from major attractions, such as parks, conservation areas, locks, museums, and festivals could be gathered to make orientation presentations to staff in communities.

These staff development programs could be scheduled at the beginning of each operating season, and might also occur periodically throughout the season.

- **Recognition of “great hosts”**

Beyond training and exposure to information and experience opportunities, it was recommended that outstanding individual staff achievements in “hosting guests and facilitating compelling experience opportunities” be recognized Corridor-long at an annual gathering if the Industry.

- **A Rideau-specific “super host” training program**

Sharing the skills and techniques of the best of the Corridor’s hosts and guests support programs and services could form a part of a staff development training program

- **Rideau quality assurance - RQA**

Discussions also revealed an interest in establishing a program / service recognition to motivate the enhancement and innovation of compelling experience opportunities and support services, and to assist guest in trip planning and service selection.

The concept envisions the creation of a set of criteria recognizing the type and quality of opportunities and services, by which the Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor wishes to be identified.

It was envisioned that this might lead to a RQA certification of the leading experience opportunities and experience facilitators.

Cultural Heritage Connection Opportunities

Engaging Canal Lock Experience Opportunities

Perhaps the most popular experience opportunity destinations throughout the Corridor are the “Lock Stations”. These special places are natural gathering places for all types of Corridor explorers and leisure travellers. Yet at present, they are most meaningful experience opportunities primarily for boaters.

Participants suggested that there is considerable opportunity for enhancement and innovation relating to land based travellers experiencing the Locks in more than an observer capacity.

Opportunities to “lock through” (All)

While not possible at present, it was suggested that a majority of Corridor guests would relish the opportunity to experience “passing through a lock or series of locks” in a boat.

This could be made possible, particularly at lighter used lock stations and in non-peak times, by an entrepreneur facilitating group and individual boating experience opportunities. This opportunity might also be facilitated in the shoulder seasons of boating, for example after Thanksgiving.

Group tour crafts could be employed for groups and would be welcomed by No Hassle Travellers and Gentle Explorers leisure travellers. Perhaps the opportunity to manage your own passage through the locks in a small motorized boat or self-powered craft would be even more compelling for Authentic Experiencers, Cultural Explorers, Free Spirits and Buffs.

During the “locking through” procedure, guidance and explanation could be provided by animators and experience facilitators.

Animation of locks (GE, NHT, CE, AE,)

It was suggested that a greater sense of theatre might add to the experiences achieved by both land based and boating guests at lock stations. In this regard, it was suggested that lock staff might be costumed in the period dress.

It was also suggested that scheduled performances be added to the normal operations. These might be provided by local performers. These performances would be revenue generating opportunities.

Where appropriate, the performers might lead guided explorations of the locks and related structures. These walks might be linked to other guided walks throughout the neighbouring communities and cultural landscapes, including stops at heritage museums and industrial ruins.

Overnight in a lock masters house (CE, AE, PHT, B NHT, GE, R)

On a limited basis, it was suggested that guests be given an opportunity to overnight in a lock masters house or related structures. The living and dining experiences could be derived from the authentic life styles of lock masters, and perhaps the evening experience could be augmented with opportunities to meet lock masters and their staff.

This opportunity would prove attractive to both land and water based travellers, and perhaps might be attractive for special occasions for regional and Corridor residents.

Lockmaster or staff for a day

A limited number of opportunities could be afforded for canal and lock enthusiasts to spend a day managing and operating a lock as a member of the lock staff team. This would prove a desirable experience opportunity for “Buffs” and perhaps for Authentic Experiencers and Cultural Explorers.

It would be a hands-on learning experience that could prove of interest as well to residents of the Corridor and the cities and Ottawa and Kingston.

“Doors Open” experience opportunities and door replacement operations (B, GE, NHT, CE,)

Periodically, the operation which builds the doors for the locks opens its facilities to guests seeking to gain insight and understanding into the design and development of these massive doors.

It was suggested that this experience opportunity could be afforded more regularly and perhaps on a registered experience opportunity system.

In a similar vein, periodically, the doors are replaced in a lock. Opportunity to observe this action would be compelling to Buffs and Cultural Explorers.

As many of these events occur in the shoulder season of the operating year, it was also suggested that these events be captured for presentation at the locks themselves and at the Rideau Canal Museum.

Locks a key component of the network of gathering places for Corridor explorers (All)

The series of twenty-eight lock stations are a natural network for first-time and repeat explorers and leisure travellers passing through the Corridor.

As such, they can serve as exploration launch points for both land-based and boating explorers, seeking to connect with surrounding natural and cultural landscapes. (AE, CE, NHT)

To support these explorations and recreational pursuits, there could be equipment rental services in support of land based travel i.e. bicycles and boat or canoe/kayak rentals. (AE, NHT, CE, GE)

Information and orientation services at these stations could be a part of the larger Corridor network of guidance. (NHT, GE)

These same locations could provide opportunities for both daylight and evening programming delivered by private and public sector and non-profit experience facilitators. (NHT, GE, AE, CE)

Celebrating Founding Peoples

Recognizing that often it is the people you meet, who facilitate the most memorable experiences or immersing within the living heritage, participants suggested a number of ways to celebrate the “founding people” of the Corridor.

First Nations people (CE, AE, B, NHT, GE,)

It was suggested that exploration guides revealing how First Nation peoples lived and travelled throughout the Corridor and how they harvested its natural resources would be a compelling experience opportunity for cultural heritage explorers.

A network of places for guided and self-guided explorations could be identified in conjunction with representatives of First Nation representatives. These same people might wish to be the primary facilitators of this type of experience for Corridor guests.

Canal builders (PHT, CE, B, NHT GE)

Similarly, actually and virtually connecting guests with the work and living realities of the canal builders as they encountered different natural, health and social challenges would prove revealing opportunities for some guests.

Millers and Farmers (PHT, CE, B, NHT GE)

Evidence in the cultural landscape and heritage structures, such as dams, mills, houses and industrial ruins depict the architecture and engineering ingenuities of millers and farmers. Guided explorations or self-guiding support information reveals the challenges overcome by these early settlers.

Early industrialist (CE, PHT, AE, NHT, GE,)

Industrial ruins, such as those in the communities of Merrickville, Perth and Smiths Falls are intriguing evidence of the reasons for community building and the early economies of these communities. Self-guiding brochures or QR post information will add to the meaning of the exploration.

Fishing guides (AE, CE, PHT, B, NHT, GE, R,)

The opportunity to speak with a fishing guide and/or having a guided fishing experience with a shore dinner would be an outstanding opportunity to connect with this aspect of the Reach's leisure heritage. A festival centered on sport fishing and guiding heritage could be considered for a number of communities including: Chaffeys, Delta, and Seeley's Bay.

Harnessing hydro power (AE, CE, PHT, NHT, GE,)

Demonstrations of how first settlers, then millers and subsequently canal builders and electric power generators used similar and related approaches to harness water power could be achieved at a number of locations throughout the Reach. This could be linked to similar demonstrations at other locations along the Corridor.

Rideau's Heritage Boats

The Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor has a proud history relating to the building and navigating of boats designed and crafted to meet the boating requirements of the Canal. Observing the Canal and boats are synonymous and perhaps the primary draw of both land and water based explorers.

There are many existing experience opportunities, which can be expanded and enhanced, and perhaps afforded as well, at other locations.

- **Boat building and builders (AE, CE, B PHT, NHT, FS, GE)**

They are a number of well recognized boat designers and builders who could offer enhanced opportunities for "boat buffs", "cultural explorers and authentic experiencers" to engage in hands on learning experience opportunities. These same experiences could afford insights into heritage boat restoration and maintenance techniques.

Opportunities for guests to participate in such learning opportunities could be provided on a schedule basis, and require guests to register in advance for the training or hands on experiences. These would be revenue opportunities for the instructors.

- **Heritage boat festivals and regattas (All)**

Building upon the success of such existing regattas as the Rideau Ferry Regatta, and upon recent festivals and parades of heritage boats, a season-long series of special events could offer boating enthusiasts and observers from near and far the opportunities to appreciate the boating heritage of the Canal.

Opportunities might be afforded to some guests to take on the challenges of navigating heritage and modern boats in relation to regattas, sailing and navigation challenges, or simply in relation to touring a portion of the lakes and rivers.

These opportunities might include: training, outfitted boating experiences and equipment rentals. They might be associated with the network of marinas and communities known for boating experiences and services.

Opportunities for guests to learn through presentations and tours of boat and marina operations could also be a source of interest to land based travellers.

- **Boat house architecture (NHT, GE, AE, CE)**

A distinctive aspect of the Canal experiences for both boaters and land based travellers is insight and exposure to the array of boat houses in varying states of repair, which are an artistic aspect of the Canal.

A guided tour of selected reaches of the Canal for NHT and GE or a guide book or online guidance for AE and CE would be appreciated support for some guests and a revenue opportunity for guidance providers and experience facilitators.

- **Voyageur canoe building and canoeing (FS, B, AE, CE, NHT)**

The existing “voyageur canoe” paddling experience opportunity might be enhanced and expanded to incorporate hands on canoe building experiences and longer duration paddles and skill development experiences.

It was suggested that a canoe building program could be offered annually, with the product becoming a component of the Rideau Fleet of voyageur canoes.

The Canadiana aspect of this particular vessel makes this boating experience even more compelling for international guests and perhaps for families who have recently acquired Canadian citizenship.

Guided touring of natural aquatic and shoreline habitats may also prove a compelling experience for guests.

Rideau carvers – natural artisans (CE, AE, B, NHT, GE)

In a similar vein to the Boater Builders, the Rideau is well known for its wood carvers of decoys, wildlife and other pieces of art using wood as the medium.

Hands on learning opportunities under the tutelage of expert carvers, or simply presentations and insights for groups of Gentle Explorers would offer compelling reasons to explore the Corridor’s artisans.

This network could be closely aligned with the broader network of Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor artisans, who work in other mediums.

Heritage museums - celebrate Life (CE, AE, B, NHT, GE)

Throughout the Corridor, in communities and in isolated locations there are an array of cultural heritage museums exhibiting the heritage of life in the Corridor and its economic roots.

Learners, such as AE, CE and Buffs will be drawn by access to expertise and authentic resources, while NHT and GE will be drawn by group presentations and hands on experience opportunities.

Establishing a set of “themed” networks of heritage experience opportunities might expand the draw of existing individual museums and their programs, and draw guests into less visited portions of the Corridor.

It has been suggested that:

- a collective approach to experience opportunity planning and delivery could enhance the draw of guests, reducing redundancies and unintended competition;
- a packaging of selected museum experiences could augment the compelling nature of the individual offerings;
- operating efficiencies could be achieved through a supportive network of museum managers and staff in regards to training, staffing and material purchases.

Culinary experiences of heritage (CE, AE, PHT, FS, NHT, GE, R,)

It was suggested that the best way to connect with a destination is to taste it. The farmer’s market experiences of some communities, such as Perth, are models to build upon. These venues bring guests in contact with the producers; and restaurants can then extend this initial contact by presenting and explaining heritage dining experiences.

This same connect of “field to plate” was suggested in supporting heritage picnics in community parks, at lock stations and heritage museums.

Culinary guide books and access to expertise in food production, processing and fine cuisine would add to the real of experience opportunities.

Shore Dinners and Dining on the Water (All)

These outfitted opportunities would offer Free Spirits, Authentic Experiencers and Cultural Explorers unique opportunities to connect with the natural and cultural heritage of the Reach, its guides and fishermen.

Waterside dining (R, FS, CE, AE, PHT, GE, NHT,)

It was suggested that offering opportunities to dine aboard boats or floating restaurants on the basin in Perth, the canal waters off Smiths Falls and Merrickville, or more simply at shoreline restaurants in town or more remote Canal side locations would be privileged experiences for many types of guests.

Artisans encounters (CE, B, AE, NHT, GE, B,)

An array of artisans working in a wide array of mediums, live and operate throughout the Corridor. In some cases, these artisans have restored heritage buildings, such as the mill at Lower Brewers. They are knowledgeable storytellers of the heritage of their buildings and their restoration.

In many cases their studios are also their storefronts. In some cases they have boutique storefronts in communities, or operate booths in markets or at cultural festivals and trade shows.

It was recommended that, building upon the success of past studio touring events, the network of artisans could form a heritage experience opportunity network.

That this network in addition to providing craft person demonstrations and observation opportunities, could also offer hands-on learning opportunities.

In effect it could become a "Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor" version of the Economusee network of artisanal businesses which began in Quebec's St. Lawrence Valley, and has subsequently expanded to include the Atlantic Provinces and most recently expanded into Northern Europe.

The artisans might use popular gathering places such as the lock stations and museum grounds to display their craftsmanship, on a regularly schedule basis.

Engaging in archaeological digs (CE, B, GE NHT)

Cultural Explorers and Cultural History Buffs would highly prize an opportunity to participate in an archaeological dig.

Initially, as was the case in Fortress of Louisbourg NHS, the experience opportunities could be of a passive observation nature. A member of the "dig team" would be available at specified times to explain the project, its procedures and findings to date.

If demand warranted, this experience opportunity might evolved into a learning opportunity for a limited number of guests. They might have a multi-day opportunity to participate in the dig, having first proven their skill and knowledge, or having participated in a qualifying skill development program at the site of the dig.

Natural Heritage Connection Opportunities

Getting on the water (AE, CE, NHT, FS, PHT, B, GE, R)

It was universally felt by discussion participants that facilitating guests in “getting out on to the water” was the most important opportunity which could be afforded to guests. It was suggested that perhaps three-quarters of Corridor explorers and leisure travellers are land-based. It was felt that assisting these guests in experiencing the Rideau Canal and the Heritage Corridor from the water would be the most valued assistance a host could offer their guest.

- **Grow and diversify boating and equipment rentals**

To support land based travellers in experiencing aquatic environments, it was suggested that an enhanced network of equipment and boat rentals be encouraged. It is expected that a full range of types of boats: canoes, kayaks, paddle boats, sailing and power craft would be of interest to those seeking to explore the lakes and rivers of the Corridor.

Perhaps this rental service could be an offspring of the existing marina network. Or perhaps the rental services could be in association with popular gathering places, such as locks, community waterfronts and accommodation facilities.

- **Pick up and drop off service for boat renters**

Given the linear character of many of the water bodies, it was suggested that arrangement might be made to assist boaters in launching their crafts at one location and be able to be picked up at another location – the same day or after multiple days.

This service might be linked with a Corridor-long land based shuttle service noted later in the “transportation” innovations.

- **Expanded network of water access points for boats**

Open water and wetland aquatic environments and the diversity of lakes and rivers composing the Corridor offer a wide variety of exploration and experience opportunities. Similarly, their recreational use options are equally compelling for land based travellers.

It was also suggested that an expanded network of water access facilities for boaters, canoeists and kayakers could be created, with associated parking and launch facilities.

Perhaps, each of the launch points could be associated with a set of aquatic environment exploration themes and guidance.

- **Expanded guidance and outfitting services**

For those not self-reliant to venture onto the water alone, it was suggested that an expanded network of outfitting services be supported.

These outfitters and guides could aid guests in exploring the backwaters and less populated stretches of the lakes and rivers. Their knowledge of the waters and shore environments could assist guests in experiencing the less readily visible; and acquiring an accurate understanding of what they have discovered.

The guides and outfitters might also support activities such as shore dinners and exploration of nearby shoreline environments.

- **Enhanced aquatic environment guidance**

For those not requiring guides and outfitters, a GPS based guidance system providing information on the surrounding terrestrial and aquatic habitats would be valued by self-guided explorers.

The series of guides developed by local authorities, such as Ken Watson, provide exceptional support and guidance to first time explorers and those seeking specific natural and cultural heritage experiences.

In future, perhaps it will be feasible to offer a cutting edge service connecting explorers with expertise to answer questions, confirm what is being seen and provide additional understanding.

Backwater experiences - Access and support to explore remote places

While the majority of boating experiences will likely occur on the readily accessible lakes and rivers; some compelling natural and cultural heritage experiences were identified as being achievable in the more remote backwater sections of the Cataraqui and Rideau river systems.

Participants suggested that these lesser known and visited open water and wetland environments, reveal drowned forest ecosystems and the ruins of past communities and river related industries and transportation facilities.

Their serenity and solitude can be a mecca for Rejuvenators seeking to escape the crowds and for artist seeking to capture the natural beauty and wilderness characteristics on canvas or film.

In support of these explorations, it was suggested that:

- A limited number of water's edge camping opportunities might be afforded. These might cater to the independent explorer and those using outfitted services
- Similarly, a limited number of floating platforms might be available as observation points for artists and nature study
- As some heritage resources of interest are submerged, consideration could be given to developing remote observation capacities and devices for these explorers

Network of Rideau Exploration Routes - Enhanced Trail Network

Complementing a growth in water based recreation and exploration it was recommended that a compelling "Network of Rideau Exploration Routes" be an enhancement of the current trail and backcountry road system. This diverse network of exploration routes is envisioned to bring guests into all natural and cultural landscapes and waterscapes comprising the Corridor.

The network will include:

- Floating trails by and across water
- Trails on stilts or perhaps water routes into marshes and wetlands
- Routes for canoes and kayaks throughout the waterway
- Routes linking spectacular vistas
- Routes for the minds, bring guests into sensory rich environments
- Self-guide and guided routes
- GPS / geocaching routes

It was anticipated that as the profile of the WHS Corridor grows, there will be increasing land based exploration by foot and bicycle. And further, that as the Corridor becomes more compelling to regional

residents from Ottawa, Kingston and other cities, there will be continually growing interest in non-auto explorations.

The anticipated growth in bike touring may require enhancement of roadside bicycle lanes along the higher trafficked segments of the road network.

It was recommended that the trails and pathways linking communities to attractions, such as locks and waterside gathering places need to be of higher quality and an improved network.

If demand warrants, consideration might also be given to winter use trail networks encouraging greater exploration of the Corridor - winter routes for skiers, snowshoeing and dog-sledding.

A shuttle service could be closely linked to the trail network to assist explorers in returning to their starting points, or moving gear to meet them at the end of their daily progress along the Corridor.

Waterside routes

It was suggested that outside of Ottawa, the development of trails along river and lake edges would provide valued opportunities for land based guests to explore the shoreline habitats and have close up experiences with the aquatic characteristics of the Canal and its water system. Too often pedestrians cannot get close to the water for long reaches of the Canal.

Right of free passage

In a related proposal, participants recommended that developing a “right of free passage” might be appropriate for large blocks of lands used for agriculture, or held in private ownership but not used for residences close to the water. In these cases, a formal trail tread base would not be appropriate.

It was suggested that tax incentives might be considered to encourage land owners to permit explorers to pass across their lands.

QR post network to support inquiring minds – water and land routes

Being in a position to provide “information on demand” is a key to encouraging and supporting more widespread and in depth connection with the natural and cultural heritage of the Corridor.

Responding to current trends in personal communication devices and their ability to read data from QR codes; there was wide spread support for the establishment of a Corridor-long network of QR Posts, as a means to provide multiple levels of information respecting specific locations and resources of interest to explorers and leisure travellers.

Given the multi-jurisdictional nature of heritage attractions and experience opportunities throughout the Corridor, it was recommended that a universal network of QR Posts be used in all heritage attraction and places throughout the Corridor. The responsibility for populating the posts with information and keeping this information current would lie with the hosts of the individual attractions. For example, Parks Canada would be responsible for posts located on lock station lands, and individual museums for posts on their lands and within the museum.

Guests would be alerted to the universal network, simplifying their access to desired information. The network would also be linked to the recommended overarching Corridor website, which in turn will be the foundation of information distributed at personal and non-personal guest information service outlets, and the front desks of participating attractions, accommodations and other guest services.

- **Along land trails**

It was envisioned that the posts would be located at points of interest located along all of the Corridor's primary land based trails system. These posts would provide both natural and cultural resource and heritage information, as well as information / orientation guidance to travellers.

- **On the water**

As feasible, a complementary network of "floating QR Posts" could be moored throughout the Canal waters; thereby providing information on demand to boaters, kayaker and canoeists. Their information capacities would be similar to the above noted land based posts.

- **At lock stations and all attractions**

The network of posts and QR information distribution points would become denser in areas of heritage attraction such as lock stations, museums, provincial parks and other natural and cultural heritage conservation and appreciation places.

- **Within communities**

In a similar vein, a denser network of QR posts could be established within popular leisure travel communities to share insights into town and village history and heritage lifestyles. These posts might also be associated with popular gathering places for residents and guests, and with such places as farmer and artisan markets and performance sites. The waterfront elements of communities will be a primary opportunity for establishment of posts.

- **Linked to expertise**

The QR posts may in the future provide a means for connecting guests to expertise via the web.

Rideau ramble guides (NHT, GE, PHT, AE, CE, B,)

It was suggested that "qualified" residents and operators could afford different expertise and guidance services. They could serve, for hire, as occasional guides and expertise; facilitating guest connections with aquatic environments, the natural and cultural landscapes, community and canal history, heritage and lifestyles. Their services could be promoted on a website and through host referrals. This network could be linked to similar networks for fishing guides and other outfitting services.

Network of "Rideau Chairs and Vantage Points" (All)

To assist guests in connecting with and appreciating the diversity of the Corridor's natural environments, cultural landscapes and special places, it was suggested that an inventory of the "best vantage points" be developed.

These vantage points might reveal, what some might term "Kodak moments":

- Unique views of the landscape or aquatic areas
- Wildlife observation opportunities
- Spectacular sunrise and sunset opportunities
- Rare or peculiar natural resources
- Lock and boating activities
- Community lifestyles and distinctive events

The secluded character and situation of some special places might provide opportunities for:

- Serenity
- Solitude
- Contemplation

- Rest and relaxation

These viewpoints might be found in readily accessible and remote areas:

- At lock stations and community waterfronts
- At lake, river and wetland edges
- Within parks, conservation areas and other natural areas
- Along trails and pathways, and road ways and water routes

Some suggested that innovative vantage points might be created by using:

- Floating platforms – some accessible from shore and others only by watercraft
- Platforms on stilts – in wetlands and marshes
- Aerial towers – fire towers
- Moorings – to allow boaters to simply relax and observe

In each case, it was suggested that one or two distinctive “Rideau Chairs” might be positioned to support guests in their enjoyment and appreciation of these special places.

To support guests in finding some of these special locations – those in unexpected and less used locations – a guide book or guidance device might be developed. In other cases, the chairs and locales would be surprise experience opportunities for land and water explorers.

Perhaps, if demand warranted, information to assist guests in appreciating the views and the resources within the view planes could be developed.

Network of outdoor gathering places – green places (AE, CE, NHT, GE, PHT, R,)

In a somewhat related enhancement, it was suggested that a network of “gathering places” be made know to guests exploring the length of the Corridor.

These would include:

- Selected lock stations and even perhaps selected locks or nearby places
- Community waterfronts, park setting, historic places and public areas
- Museums and heritage gathering places
- Green spaces - parks, conservation areas, accessible natural areas

Taking a lock station and lands for example, these places would be positioned as gathering places and exploration launch points, for both land and water based travellers.

They might offer guest personal information distribution services and/or non-personal information signage.

They could be a location for scheduled performances and special events; and/or simply a place to meet other travellers and local people.

Integrated parks and heritage site programming (NHT, GE, PHT, AE, CE, R,)

It was suggested that a closer working relationship could be developed between the provincial parks, conservation agencies and Parks Canada organizations with an eye to integrating their interpretive programming.

From a guest perspective, this approach could be used to assist guests in experiencing a number of related programs and guided experience opportunities and presentations offered in different locations by different hosts.

This same approach was suggested in respect to programming and experiences afforded by museums and historic sites.

From a hosting perspective, this approach could bring greater efficiencies and service capacity enhancements. Scheduling of guest experience opportunities could be coordinated along the Corridor.

It was envisioned that this series effect would encourage greater and more in-depth experiences throughout the Corridor.

Dark sky and evening experiences (All)

The character and personality of the Corridor's natural and cultural environments can change dramatically throughout the day. While most experience the lakes and rivers and surrounding habitats during the day, sunrise and sunset are awe-inspiring conditions, which like spring and summer season bring a diversity of colours and lighting which enhances perceptions and experiences.

However, the darkness of evening and star filled dark skies overhead transform the Corridor into a significantly different set of experience opportunities. The senses are heightened with the reduction of light. The sounds and smells of the Corridors natural environments are heightened in the evening.

Participants suggested that hosts should focus more attention on facilitating guest experience opportunities during this part of the day.

It was anticipated that a growth in evening experience opportunities might provide new and additional opportunities for guides and outfitters, naturalists and cultural heritage expertise, heritage museums and natural area recreation programming. It may also present opportunities for performers and storytellers to lead guided experiences and provide evening performances at public gathering places, municipal waterfronts, campgrounds and resorts.

- **Inventory of special places**

It was suggested that an inventory of the most sensory rich and rewarding evening experience opportunities in the natural landscape and aquatic environments be developed.

Initially, this might be built upon an information base derived from such natural attraction operators as: the provincial parks, conservation areas and land trust organizations, Parks Canada and those who outfit and guide explorations and recreational use of aquatic and terrestrial environments.

Based upon this inventory, a framework of evening experience programs might be developed for facilitators and a self-guidance information package developed for guests.

- **Evening walks and presentations – night sounds and sensory rich places**

Initially suggested opportunities focused upon exploring natural environments and habitats in the evening. Building on the models of some provincial park programs, it was suggested that guided programs could take guests into terrestrial, shoreline and perhaps even aquatic environments.

This concept broadened to exploring the aquatic and wetland environments in the evening – both in guided group programs and self-guided explorations.

Finally, the concept grew to include cultural landscapes such as ruins of built heritage and cemeteries.

- **Sky chairs and circles**

In some locations, special reclining chairs have been developed to assist guests in star gazing and observing night skies and environments.

For group guided programs, the chairs are arranged in a circle; and a knowledgeable speaker assists guests in exploring the night skies and appreciating the less readily apparent.

It was suggested that this type of programming or simply the provision of night observation support could be provided at a network of locations throughout the Corridor; for example at selected lock stations, museum lands, municipal and provincial parks and day use areas.

A Corridor-long series of scheduled events could be offered to guests seeking guided night sky viewing programs.

Introductory camping and outdoor recreation support services (NHT, GE, PHT, AE, CE, R,)

Participants felt that there was a significant population of Canadians living in surrounding communities, such as Ottawa, Kingston, Montreal and Toronto, whose previous leisure experiences in natural settings did not prepare them for Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor outdoor experiences. Further, it was suggested that many of these potential guests did not have the equipment to undertake recreational pursuits in the Corridor.

In some ways, these limitations echo some of the challenges that international travellers face in exploring the Corridor, without the equipment these international guests were unable to bring along with them.

To begin to address both situations, the following types of actions were recommended:

- **Outfitted camping**

Both public sector and private sector camping services should look to developing outfitted camping opportunities. These would entail the provision of camping equipment and guest services to guide and support camping related activities.

- **Outfitted boating**

Similarly, many guests do not have the equipment or skills to “get out on the water” and explore the Corridor’s lakes, rivers and wetland environments. Here again, the provision of introductory training respecting perhaps, canoeing, kayaking, sailing and power boating would be appreciated.

Guided group explorations will provide a security factor and add to the guest’s ability to appreciate and understand the aquatic habitat.

- **Outfitted winter explorations**

In a similar vein, many potential winter guests do not have the experience or equipment to explore the Corridor. Support services and packages could assist.

Floating platform network (All)

It was suggested that a network of platforms be established along the lake shores and in more remote locations to be used in a number of ways: as night observation points for star gazing; as wildlife and wetland observation points; as swimming platforms for day users.

A network of “shorefast” platforms (All)

It was also suggested that land based travellers, particularly Gentle Explorers, Rejuvenators and Authentic Experiencers would value special vantage points from which to observe the lakes and aquatic environments. These two might be equipped with QR coded information posts.

Augmented Appreciation / Passive Observation Opportunities

Virtual lock design and operation (AE, CE, B, FS, NHT, GE, PHT)

To acquire insight into the challenges faced and overcome by lock designers and builders, it was suggested that perhaps a hi-tech industry representative could create a “simulation program and room” in the Rideau Canal Museum.

Programming would provide guests with opportunities to assess the natural challenges posed by rapids and other river flow conditions in a specific reach of the Corridor. The guests would then have the opportunity to design a locking system and water control system to permit passage of a vessel through this particular set of river conditions.

Similarly, the challenge could be to design the full canal system of locks; thereby acquiring an understanding of the full array of conditions and challenges experienced by Colonel By and his team of designers and lock builders.

A satellite feed could connect a portion of this experience opportunity to remote locations at selected lock stations, and perhaps to the gateway guest information and orientation facilities at Ottawa and Kingston.

This virtual experience opportunity could become a teaching program for use in schools and/or as a portion of school field trips to the Corridor.

The virtual experience might be connected online to other museums in the Corridor and perhaps to other canals around the world. This would prove a compelling marketing device as well as a learning opportunity benefitting the international canal community.

This would be a year-round opportunity for guests to experience the Canal operations, even though the actual operations had ceased for the winter period.

Rideau theatre network (CE, NHT, GE – R, AE, PHT, FS,)

For some leisure travellers, performances are a valued way for bringing life to historic places and events. Gentle Explorers, No Hassle Travellers, Personal History Travellers and Cultural Explorers would be drawn to such portrayals.

- **Classic Theatre productions**

It was suggested that the success of Classic Theatre in Perth could be a gene pool for performers and performances design to convey the cultural heritage and historic events of the Rideau Corridor. This and similar theatre groups and product companies could develop stage plays conveying the history of the Corridor.

Additional performers could train under the guidance of long-standing theatre companies.

- **Network of outdoor theatres**

A number of venues were identified as having potential to serve a meaningful setting for outdoor theatre presentations. Perhaps most often suggested was the Jones Falls lock area; however, other lock stations were also noted as having the physical characteristics for both evening and daytime performances.

The natural and cultural heritage revealed in these presentations could be specific to the location or indicative of stories unfolded at many similar locations.

The presentations might incorporate sound and light presentation techniques or be more traditional stage performances and concerts.

- **A season-long series of presentations**

It was envisioned that the presentation of such performances could occur throughout the warmer months, with perhaps the same performance being rotated throughout the Corridor in some cases. Performances could be related to anniversaries of special events or heritage festivals.

- **Mobile barge stage**

In relation to 1812-14 war commemorations, it was identified that a barge was recently converted to a performance stage with necessary technical capacities.

If this barge stage could be acquired for use along the Corridor, it could serve as the season long stage for a mobile performance of the heritage of the Corridor.

It would on a schedule basis arrive at various community and related attraction locations for a portion of the Canal operating season.

Year Long Network of Festivals (CE, NHT, GE – R, AE, PHT, FS,)

Many of the communities within the Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor host long standing heritage and lifestyle festivals throughout the year. It was suggested that the profile of these individual festivals might be heightened through association with a year-long series of Festivals and Events.

- **Heritage festival series**

It was envisioned that the list of natural and cultural heritage exploration themes might serve as a foundation for expanding the array of festivals in a framework which would celebrate the array of themes. The individual themed festivals could be located in the most appropriate communities; building upon the current festival model.

There may also be opportunity to consider a mobile festival concept, in which a festival might migrate through the Corridor.

- **Music festival and event series**

In addition to annually recurring festivals and events, some communities such as Westport have monthly recurring festivals and events, such as the Cove “blues festivals”. This model has applicability to other communities and would expand the drawing power of communities throughout the year.

Linking these smaller community musical and performance events to larger festivals in Ottawa and Kingston, and perhaps to festivals in Montreal and Toronto may enhance the profile and draw of the more intimate and smaller gatherings of Corridor communities.

- **On the water concerts**

There has been some initial success with concerts on the Rideau lakes. Participants felt that this types of attraction might successfully draw both boaters and land based travellers – supported by boat rental and outfitted and group boating services. The Cow Island event may be a model to build upon.

- **Symphony in the locks amphitheater**

Some participants felt that the acoustical properties of some lock station areas might provide unique opportunities for small symphony experiences. These included the Ottawa Locks, the Jones Falls Locks, and perhaps some of the more sheltered smaller lock areas. These might host smaller musical performances, for example quartet presentations.

Sound and Light Recreations of Canal Building (CE, NHT, GE, PHT – AE, B, R, FS)

With virtual animation technologies in sensory rich environments and natural outdoor amphitheatres, it was suggested that performances could recreate the sounds and stories associated with the building and subsequent operation of the Canal and individual locks.

- **Ottawa Locks**

The surrounding walls below the Chateau Laurier Hotels and parklands to the east and west could be used to screen a depiction of the lock building and subsequent passage of commercial vessels.

- **Jones Falls Locks and Dam**

Similarly, the amphitheater of the Jones Falls locks could be the setting for a theater experience in which guests migrate along the locks from the Dam through the upper locks and the turning basin and finally through the lower locks – all the while hearing the sounds and stories associated with the building and operation of these locks.

In both cases, the voices of the builders would reveal personal stories and perspectives of the construction and the subsequent navigation of the locks and the Corridor as a whole.

Meet the People of the Rideau – Rideau Storytellers

A network of speakers and opportunities could be developed to bring guests into personal contact with those who personify the Rideau: fishing guides, lock masters, boat builders, historians, artisans, food producers, hoteliers, musicians, naturalists, famous families and the founding peoples of the Rideau.

These people who live very different lives from our guests will intrigue minds and launch imaginations with their insights and stories about their work and life within the Corridor's natural and cultural situations.

The following were suggested to facilitate guest contact with the Rideau's expertise:

- **Human library of expertise for expertise reference (AE, CE, B, PHT,)**

A library of people willing to meet with guests and share their insights during one on one guided explorations or simply conversations about the natural and cultural heritage of the Corridor.

- **Speakers bureau**

Similarly, a roster of potential speakers and topics could be put together to be called upon in regards to special events at attractions, or in connection with conferences and special gatherings. These speakers might also be called upon in regards to family reunions or to meet with special interest groups.

Web Cam Network (All)

It was suggested that a network of web cams could be developed throughout the Corridor to provide remote experience opportunities for guests; who might view the results in guest information centres, on close circuit transmissions to resorts and other accommodation bases or popular gather places.

The web cam network would be designed to facilitate

- exposure to remote locations, not accessible to most guests
- exposure to sensitive habitats not available for direct experiences
- experience underwater environments and submerged heritage resources
- motion triggered viewing of wildlife activity

These cameras could also be used as a means for trip planning, revealing weather and river conditions, and to advise both land and water based travellers of the challenges and conditions they must be prepared to accept.

The cameras might also be used in natural heritage presentations. In this case, reference was also given to drone remote cameras as a means to bring audiences closer to remote locations and resources.

Other Explorer / Leisure Traveller Guidance (All)

In a more traditional sense, participants recommended that a Corridor-long approach to providing exploration guidance be put in place. The information materials would be specific to exploration themes and intents, rather than the more traditional general information packages and guide books.

- **Themed maps**

Specific information and guidance in map and text format (provided in both print and electronic formats) could be developed for each of the major exploration themes identified earlier. These maps will provide guidance within both terrestrial and aquatic environments.

- **GPS exploration routes and leisure guidance**

In a similar vein, land and water based exploration routes should be supported by GPS guidance programs.

It is anticipated that automobiles will begin to have Wi-Fi capacities built in beginning in 2014. It will follow that boats and perhaps small crafts will follow soon with similar capacities

- **Booklets**

Traditional Corridor-long guidance booklets and complementary community specific and attraction specific guide books in print format will remain a requirement for No Hassle Travellers and Gentle Explorers; however increasingly there will be demand for these guides to be available for download to personal communication devices and Wi-Fi connected devices.

The Corridor-long Website and community / attraction specific websites should be well populated and up to date, as demand for information by travellers will continue to grow in relation to experiences sought.

- **Apps**

It was suggested that perhaps a Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor “app” might be developed as a link to the web for repeat users and residents.

Recreation / Relaxation Opportunities

Water Based Touring

Water is at the core of the Canal’s history and the heritage lifestyles of its peoples and communities and it is the anchor attractions for the largest percentage of Corridor guests. With this in mind, participants suggested a number of enhancements and innovations designed to “get guests onto the water”.

- **Reach specific water tours (NHT, GE, PHT, R, AE, CE, FS,)**

Within the urban reaches of the Canal in Kingston and Ottawa, water based tours are in great demand. So too are water taxi services, which afford mini-tours.

Within the Corridor this should also be the case, as attention is increasingly focused upon meeting land based traveller desires and interests.

As evidenced by the growing success of such aquatic experience tours as the Tay Canal and marsh tours of the Blue Goose, guests without boats are prepared to hire tours to take them to remote aquatic places and experience opportunities.

It may be anticipated that within most reaches of the Corridor, a compelling water tour could be designed to take land based travellers to water only accessible experience opportunities. This is especially likely in the case of big water areas such as the Rideau Lakes.

- **River tours (NHT, GE, PHT, R, AE, CE, FS,)**

On a world scale, river touring such as that afforded by the Kawartha Voyageur is a fast growing segment of the cruise industry. The intimacy of river and canal environments keeps travellers continually insight of land and shore discoveries.

At present, the Rideau cruising opportunities appear to cater primarily to Gentle Explorers and No Hassle Travellers, who seek opportunities to passively observe and be informed about the waterways in which they are travelling.

However, mother ship based explorations of more remote natural areas such as the Queen Charlotte Islands may suggest that Authentic Experiencers, Cultural explorers , Free Spirits and No Hassle Travellers might welcome a floating exploration base for a multi-day discovery of the backwaters and aquatic areas of the Canal.

There is likely room for growing capacity and diversifying the offer.

- **Outfitted charters and day adventures (NHT, GE, PHT, R, AE, CE, FS,)**

Free Spirits and No Hassle escapists may revel in the opportunity to explore the larger reaches of the Rideau Canal with the support of captain and crew to navigate them to the most attractive components of the reach and facilitate their exploration and dining experiences.

These are likely weekend escapes and day outing, yet without the support of boat owners and knowledgeable guides they cannot be achieved by land based guests.

Associating these with water based events and celebrations, such as music and fireworks displays on Rideau Lake can create a compelling package for Free Spirits.

- **Guided outings (NHT, GE, PHT, R, AE, CE, FS,)**

The growth in use of small paddle crafts will have the potential to bring a growing market of experience seekers to the Rideau Canal. Amongst these No Hassle Travellers and to a lesser extent Authentic Experiencers and Cultural Explorers will look to guided tours of river and lake reaches and ventures into wetland environments.

The guidance is more for understanding the habitats being traversed rather than for security, yet some will rely upon the leader for orientation and direction.

- **Self-guided explorers require information (AE, CE, FS, NHT, R,)**

Authentic Experiencers, Cultural Explorers and Free Spirits, as well as special interest Buffs are more likely to rely upon their own exploration and discovery skills. However, they will value maps, information and advice to plan and guide their trips

Land based adventures and recreational pursuits (AE, CE, FS,)

It was suggested that in addition to having opportunities to learn about and enjoy natural and cultural heritage resources and special areas, guests will also appreciate an array of outdoor recreation opportunities and support services. To these ends, the following were suggested:

- “Inventory climbing opportunities” - along cliff walls, waterfalls and ice climbing – training and skill enhancements

- “Geo-caching” – trail and free roaming based geo-cache programs could be developed with support guidance and facilities. These activities could be linked to resource and Corridor exploration and discovery programs
- “Iron man Challenge” – engaging in multi-modal traverses of portions of the canal

Linking Winterlude and “Skate the Lake” festivals (FS, NHT, GE, PHT, AE, CE,)

Growth in visitation during the winter months is a shared desire throughout the Corridor. To this end, it was suggested that perhaps winter festivals could be linked into a series of either simultaneous events or a chain of opportunities throughout the season.

The extremely popular Winterlude events might have a series of satellite events and opportunities such as at Portland, with the Skate the Lake event.

It was also imagined that perhaps a challenge might be designed requiring participants to employ a multi-modal approach to travel the waterway in winter, recognizing the variance in ice and snow conditions. This might involve skis, snowshoes, skates, and kayaks or canoes.

Amazing race with heritage experience challenges (FS, NHT, AE, CE, PHT,)

The concept was advanced that families or special interest groups and individuals might be interested in the learning experience opportunities of taking on Reach-long or Corridor-long challenges to discover the life skills and lifestyles and achievements of the people of the Rideau Corridor.

“Red bull crush” challenge through the locks (FS, NHT, GE, AE, CE, B,)

Perhaps in winter or prior to the boating season, it might be feasible to host a high profile skills challenge using a series of locks, for example the Ottawa Locks, the Jones Falls Locks or another smaller set of locks.

Rejuvenation of Colonel By Island (CE, AE, B, FS, NHT, PHT)

Perhaps one of the most infamous places within the Corridor, it was suggested that guests and hosts could initially combine their efforts to rejuvenate the heritage resources on the Island.

The restoration might be oriented to making this special place an opportunity for special “social” events celebrating its previous colourful residents and their social gatherings.

An annual series of social events could be hosted by private sector facilitators. These might include costumed parties and events, celebrations of specific residents, such as Al Capone, seasonal celebration dances in Spring, Summer and Fall.

The Island could also be established as a special opportunity for “overnight experiences”. Guests could arrive by their own boats or be conveyed to the Island as a part of an outfitted experience.

Accommodation Services and Related Experience Opportunities

It was suggested on a number of occasions that within the Corridor between the cities of Ottawa and Kingston accommodation services are limited, which in turn may limit the growth of multi-day visits by guests.

Further many of the larger establishments, while having valued heritage attributes, require significant investment in upgrades to support the delivery of quality service and guest experiences.

Finally, the capacity of the current array of attractive inns and bed and breakfasts does not support attraction of large groups and conferences.

Participants felt this situation must be addressed in order for the Rideau Canal heritage Corridor to be perceived as a world-class experiential tourism destination.

Rideau canal resort and conference centre (GE, NHT, R, FS – AE, CE, B, PHT,)

Participants believe that the development of a contemporary resort and conference centre in a central location of the corridor would significantly address the current limitations

They envisioned that this establishment should be of a capacity of perhaps 250 rooms. The facilities should include quality dining and conference / meeting facilities. The conference theatre would also provide a stage for Corridor performers and heritage performances.

The resort should perhaps be an attraction in itself, with an array of recreational and entertainment offerings.

The resort should have close linkages to a network of Canal and Corridor experience opportunities facilitated by other members of the tourism industry.

It was suggested that the rejuvenation of the Gallipeau Centre may prove an opportunity for the development of the desired resort and conference centre.

Network of heritage inns and B&B lodging (CE, AE, PHT, R - GE, NHT, B)

In recent years there has been growth in the number of bed and breakfast lodgings in historic homes and buildings. These special places offer unique living environments and an opportunity for guests to connect with local people and gain insight into the community. They are a heritage experience in themselves.

It was suggested that a network of heritage Inns and B&Bs could provide a basis for multi-day accommodation packages and a short term cross-selling referral network, both of which would assist guests by simplifying an aspect of their Corridor travels.

A network relationship would be of potential benefit to Corridor-long explorers requiring a series of overnight accommodations. In some case, the accommodations might link with a “goods shuttle” service in supporting guest travelling by foot, bicycle, or small boats and similarly winter travellers by ski and snowshoes.

Working in close cooperation, the Network might be able to realize operating cost efficiencies and savings in marketing costs.

Additionally, this network could work in collaboration with the network of water and land based outfitters, guides and experience facilitators towards packaging guest explorations opportunities.

Network of hostels, huts and campsites (AE, CE, FS, NHT, R,)

References were frequently drawn to ‘trekking routes’ in other parts of the world, which offered explorers and leisure travellers an array of basic overnight accommodations in character with the natural and cultural landscapes in which the guest was passing through.

It was suggested that a network of basic accommodation facilities might be formed along the general route of the Canal.

- **Campground network**

Building on currently existing camping services operated by both the private and public sector, the suggestion was to create a packaging arrangement which would support water and land based travellers by foot, bike, and small boats.

This package might be linked with a shuttle support service for the transport of gear and people.

- **Camping innovations**

Augmenting the existing traditional service model, it was suggested that consideration be given to a number of innovations, including:

- Floating platforms tethered to shore or moored in protected waters
- Floating yurts or huts, similarly tethered or moored
- Approved shore line wilderness campsites on public and private lands

- **Accommodations in restored heritage buildings (Spanish Barador)**

In a number of European countries, historic buildings such as abandon houses and out buildings have been converted into basic accommodations. The larger buildings might serve as a higher standard “hostel-like” accommodation offer.

- **Lock master houses and out buildings**

It was suggested that opportunities for both boating and land-based travellers to overnight in historic buildings associated with canal operations would be a highly valued experience opportunity.

Hub and spoke experience opportunities (All)

The current situation somewhat favours the accommodation bases of Ottawa and Kingston, which can serve as “hub and spoke” exploration bases for Corridor explorers. This situation limits the depth and diversity experiences achieved by these guests, as they will most likely travel no more than half way up the Corridor from either point.

Packages linking these two gateway city accommodations with one or more Corridor overnight opportunities would support multi-day exploration of the Corridor.

Additionally, linking the exploration packages promoted by the urban based accommodations with the outfitted experience opportunities of the Corridor would promote greater use of the Corridor. Such packages might give distinction to some heritage and canal oriented accommodation establishments in both cities.

Transportation Services

A final area for improvement and innovation, participants suggested ways and means to enhance land and water based experiences and transportation of and by guests throughout destination-wide. The following suggested changes were provided:

Shuttle service (All)

Reference was made to the Cinque Terra area of Italy, where like in the Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor, guests travel throughout a liner destination in many travel modes: by water, by trail, by foot, bicycle, and boat exploring many different types of landscapes and travel conditions.

- **Hop on Hop Off Shuttle**

The participants suggested that some guests would benefit from a shuttle service or network of shuttles operating the length of the Corridor.

This service would be of assistance to day hikers, bikers and kayakers seeking to avoid round trips, as they could return to their starting point via the shuttle – especially if it was equipped to transport bicycles and kayaks.

- **Goods Shuttle**

In the Cinque Terra model, guests can have their luggage and equipment transported between a series of overnight destinations, where hikers and boaters and mass transit riders are reunited with their goods.

In the Corridor case, it was suggested that a similar “shuttle service” for transporting goods would be of possible benefit to boaters, in particular kayakers, and canoeists, and to hikers, bikers, cross-country skiers and snowshoers. The “goods” shuttle would move materials between overnight locations for multi-day trips by these guests.

- **Shuttle / accommodation and equipment rental packages**

Some suggested that international guests seeking to traverse the length of the canal would welcome a package of services to support their explorations, including the rental of their mode of travel, camping and related equipment. The package could also involve roofed and / or outdoor accommodation and transportation between selected points. Finally a shuttle service would return them to their launch point.

Water-based Shuttles and Tours

While the foregoing is focused upon meeting the needs of land based travellers with land shuttles, there was also a suggestion that there would be complementary interest in water based shuttle services.

In particular where the reaches of water are substantial, such as the three Rideau Lakes and below Jones Falls, the offer of water based transportation in lieu of land based would be attractive to Authentic Experiencers and No Hassle Travellers.

This service offer could be combined with or an off shoot of water based tour services.

- **Rideau experiential touring support network (All)**

It was suggested that an integrated network of water and land based shuttles to connect visitors to different stops and experiences would support more in depth and convenient exploration of the Reach (and the Corridor) by all types of guests. The network would be operated by well-informed drivers who would cross-promote communities, attractions and services, by serving as ambassadors and story tellers.

OZ Bus concept – fun experience for affiliated and unaffiliated groups (FS, NHT, AE, CE,)

Building upon a model first experienced in Australia and also experienced in Ontario based out of Toronto, this transportation concept was designed to meet the travel experience desires of Free Spirits and young adults of Ottawa and Kingston. It would appeal quite well to university and youth groups on weekend get-aways into the Rideau Corridor.

Secure mooring points (All)

Begin to establish a network of mooring points in more secluded portions of the Reach become a part of a Corridor-long network of remote and isolated moorings.

.Aerial tours (AE, CE, FS - NHT, PHT)

It was suggested that in order to “get the big picture” some guest would appreciate the opportunity to fly over the Corridor and along the Canal. This same service could provide a much greater understanding of the landscape and river challenges overcome in building the canal

Selective view plane improvements (ALL)

The Canal is often hidden from highway based Corridor explorers due to vegetation. This could be addressed through selective cutting of view planes at selected locations along the road system.

Similarly and often overlooked, the trail system should receive view plane enhancement as well. Trails should be designed for minds as well as bodies and feet. Trail siting should be driven by experience sought rather than the engineering parameters of a pathway.

Improving Communications with Guests

Perhaps the fastest changing aspect of life today is how we communicate.

In only the last few years, the iPhone and the iPad have heralded a change in how guests communicate and accordingly how their hosts must be ready and able to respond to their need and expectations for information “wherever, whenever, and whatever.”

To enhance self-guided and group explorations destination-wide, it was suggested by many contributors that a collective effort should be made to improve communication capacities throughout the Corridor.

The capacity to respond to and support use of contemporary communication devices and technologies providing information and demonstrations remotely to guests, who may desire this support to fully understand the resources and events they are observing is seen as a priority

It was envisioned that in future guest devices will call for two way communications between guests and operators - facilitating customized experience facilitation, or the use of pre-programmed facilitation.

Delivery of this guest support will likely rely upon a “Wi-Fi” based communication system connecting guests via their own personal telecommunication devices or ones supplied by attraction operators. This approach may involve the development of iPhone type applications and memory cards for use in cell phones and other personal exploration devices of visitors.

The approach of using an “app” or “memory card” inserted into the traveller’s personal phone or communications devices may have organization wide application.

The following suggestions were made to enhance the current communications capacities.

- Network of guest information and orientation facilities (lock stations, communities, parks and conservation places, museums with destination-wide and local capacities).
- Continually updated, Corridor-long calendar of programming and events will provide guest guidance.
- Link the primary network to individual operators, as feasible, to sustain a quality of guest information from all sources.
- Establish an array of “apps” applicable Corridor-long and for individual places, themes and explorer types
- Equip experience facilitators and guides with cutting edge tools (iPad) to enhance programs and advice giving.
- There are a number of larger and smaller destination marketing organizations, whose inter-related data bases need to be updated and integrated to provide a coherent basis for guest advisors to support guest trip and exploration planning. Once updated or established these same data bases need to be continuously kept current, and response to guest inquiries must be done in a timely way - These will form the basis for “app” and USB Key distribution techniques
- While at present, it is necessary to have guidance information in both print and electronic formats, it can be anticipated that societal trends and guest capacities will move demand for information and guidance ever more increasingly to web based communications
- An array of “themed” map and guidance information was identified during the discussions – it being recognized that different types of explorers seeking different connections will need specific information.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES CONCEPT
RIDEAU HERITAGE CORRIDOR
Kim Whytock & Associates

- Perhaps “print on demand” technology will be appropriate to allow operators in various locations throughout the Corridor to provide their guests with requested information to meet their individual needs.
- A web cam network connecting to a series of viewing stations and perhaps as appropriate to some operators will provide a contemporary means to launch explorers and respond to their requests for trip planning advice or confirmation of their discoveries.
- A “series of hotspots”, in community and attractions where guests will be encouraged to gather and inter-relate with residents, expertise and other guests, was recommended for establishment. These Wi-Fi capacity rich locations, will be highly valued by our current and future guests
- It was recognized that the capacity and knowledge of Area “hosts” needs to be improved across the board in regards to providing demand driven information “whatever, whenever and wherever”. Information should become more readily available along with training and familiarization tours.
- Guest should be able to acquire desired information on a 24/7 basis, which will require on-site terminals throughout the Destination and mechanisms and programs to respond to mobile communication technologies.

Working Together Throughout the Corridor

Relationship Building

The stakeholder consultations respecting each of the Six Reaches convened over the few weeks each ended on a very positive note. There was a clear sense of shared responsibilities for realizing the innovations and enhancements identified during the discussions.

Contributors were expressing interest in getting together soon to understand the “corridor-long” opportunities and further discussion their Reach specific opportunities.

All attraction operators and external contributors expressed the desire that there be “improved relations” between all parties. “Working together” seems to be considered by all essential ingredients to future success.

The VEOC will serve two purposes: a framework of ideas and opportunities to change the identity and attractiveness the Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor; and in the short term, a launch pad for improved relations amongst the diverse membership of the Corridor’s tourism community.

It is expected that the distribution of the VEOC will be enthusiastically received and reviewed by participants and that upon seeing their ideas and suggestions in print will prompt an immediate call to action by all contributors.

Opportunity

Throughout the stakeholder discussions, it was repeatedly expressed that to fully realize the tourism potential of the Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor significant change within the tourism industry ability and orientation to “work together” was required.

Participants noted that while guests may perceive the Corridor as a single experiential tourism destination – particularly in light of its recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage Site – the reality is that the Corridor is a loosely linked conglomeration of tourism entities.

Current Situation

At the present time, tourism direction is set and actions taken:

- At the county level by - counties with independent plans of action
- At the municipal level by two major cities and many towns and villages
- By Parks Canada and Ontario Provincial Parks
- By a number of conservation area agencies
- By three Regional Tourism Organizations
- By Community Futures Development organizations

Desired Situation

In all stakeholder discussions it was repeatedly suggested that, perhaps based upon an assessment of the VEOC

- A shared direction be established,
- A single leadership body be established
- A single industry development plan for the Corridor be developed
- A single marketing strategy for the Corridor be developed

It was noted a number of times, that with minor boundary adjustments a Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor regional tourism organization could emerge.

As outlined earlier, Stakeholders repeatedly suggested

Collaborative action - “working together”

To realize the Corridor’s potential to become a world-class travel destination, participants felt that much greater effort to work together towards collective rather than individual success was essential. Thinking destination-wide and acting locally is a key to collective success.

Investment in growth and diversification of experience opportunities and guest services should be complementary throughout the Corridor, reflecting strategic response to travel trends and guest expectations.

Participants commonly voiced their desire that the marketing of component areas and operations should be complemented by equivalent focus at the Corridor-long level. Growth in networking and packaging of guest experience opportunities and support services was seen as a hallmark of a collaborative hospitality industry.

Participants expressed concern that, at times, tourism industry members did not adequately consider the actual and perceived implications of their operational and marketing decisions. Hours of operation, quality of service, service costs and orientation to hosting guests of one operator can unintentionally have implications on other service providers and the perceptions of the travelling public.

Communities, attractions and guest services must be available to respond to travellers expectations.

Guests and residents must increasingly gain the impression that locally and Corridor-long tourism operators and organizations are ready to welcome and serve guests. Participants perceived that a successful hospitality industry is demand as well as supply driven.

Become a collective destination - “succeed together”

Participants felt that the Corridor was not realizing its potential as a world or Canadian heritage travel destination because it had not yet coalesced into a cohesive destination - rather it was many independent attractions, travel service centres, tourism organizations and marketing groups. These entities did not tend to work together: and at times took independent actions which were not seemed to be in the collective best interest of the destination as a whole.

The participants felt that the many current tourism organizations having responsibilities for tourism product development and marketing at the regional and municipal levels should come together under a single umbrella.

An integrated body would then be able to establish a cohesive and coherent direction for the Corridor’s tourism industry and an action plan to realize the potential.

Participants suggested that such a district-wide direction setting body should be comprised of: private and public sector tourism operators, not for profit heritage resource conservation and appreciation interests, and representatives of Corridor users – both resident and transient.

Strategically position the destination - brand and image management

Participants felt that the Corridor as a whole had “no profile or specific images”. The image of the Ottawa reach – an urban canal for boaters in summer and skaters in winter – was the dominant image. The national and world significance of the Canal and the scope of heritage experiences within this special piece of Canada were unrecognized.

They felt this situation had to be significantly changed in order to realize the potential of the Corridor as a whole and that of the individual Reaches.

They felt that the facts that the Rideau area is a safe and readily accessible set of experience opportunities for both aquatic and land based explorers and leisure travellers was unknown. The breadth and depth of experiences was also not known.

Finally, they felt that current marketing and strategic product development efforts were too often “one off” initiatives not being pursued in a coherent manner by the many current responsibility centres for tourism initiatives.

They expressed desire for an overarching marketing strategy, which could establish a brand with nation-wide resonance, a set of marketing messages and images to create a clear image of this emerging world heritage experience destination, and a strategy to achieve proper positioning of the diverse characteristics and compelling experience opportunities of the emerged destination.

Network experience facilitators and resources

Participants felt there was inadequate networking amongst tourism operators, host communities and organizations. They recognized that there were many related operators of attractions, accommodations, land and water based recreation and transportation, which they felt operated in isolation from one another and often in competition.

The participants felt that guests would be better supported by a more cohesive set of services and operators.

It was felt that strength in numbers and enhanced opportunities for guests through cohesive decision-making by networks of like operators was a key to future success.

It was identified that the culture of “networking” should be strengthened amongst public sector attractions, NGO conservation organizations, corridor long series of accommodation providers, and of water based and land –based traveller services, i.e. marinas and equipment renters and guides.

Enhance awareness of our opportunities

It was recognized that few know the scope of current and potential experience opportunities for our guests. It was felt that all hosts needed a fuller and first-hand knowledge of Reach and related Reach resources and opportunities to properly advise and motivate guests. Sharing knowledge was seen to be essential.

As an extension of growing host knowledge, it was recognized that ways and means must be put in place to grow guest awareness and interests in our natural and cultural heritage and leisure recreation opportunities. New and enhanced techniques will be required to inform, influence and involve guests.

Understanding and responding to guest values, interests and travel traits was a key to building awareness and engagement.

In simplistic terms it was suggested, our messages need to motivate boaters to explore the surrounding landscapes and communities, and in turn motivate land based travellers to explore the lakes, rivers and wetlands of the Corridor.

Rideau heritage district

A piece of Canadiana - The Rideau Canal and surroundings are a cornerstone of this nation (capitals / international relations) AND a root of Canada's leisure travel industry. This District will become an entity like Niagara, Cape Breton and others. A destination for many types of explorers seeking to connect with an array of natural, historic and cultural resources, places, people and events, it will become a new destination building upon its previous county and municipal roots

Tourism levy

As many of the resources for tourism are operated by not for profit bodies, the tourism and municipal benefactors will contribute to these operations from a tourism levy to be gathered from travellers and residents using the corridor for leisure pursuits

Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor “Tourism” strategic direction board

It was suggested that a “board” comprised of tourism operators from private, public and not for profit organizations and businesses develop plans and coordinate subsequent decisions for tourism throughout the Corridor with an eye to collaborative investment and actions. The “board” would be oriented to Corridor wide and long versus municipal and county focused. The outcomes desired from the establishment of the “board” would be leadership and facilitation of strategic partnerships and networking of service delivery, experience opportunity enhancement and innovation and strategic marketing of Corridor and its reaches.

It was suggested that consideration be given to the “Scottish canal economic development model” providing overall guidance would enhance the ability to work together and build upon each other’s strengths in responding to the evolving expectations of potential guests. It was noted that the “Scottish” model for economic development is guided by a commission setting shared direction and coordinating collaborative investment and action

Paradigm Shift

Rideau Corridor Tourism Body

A single group of leaders will guide the design and implementation of a tourism experience opportunity growth and opportunity marketing program for the full length and breadth of the Corridor, working in conjunction with the existing marketing and economic growth bodies

- District Marketing body overarching existing DMOs
- Facilitates Corridor long event planning and delivery
- Longer term planning of experience opportunities
- Links to provincial and national tourism bodies

Highlights of Short and Medium Term “Doables”

Participants suggested a number of short and medium term “doables” during their Reach specific discussions. The following are suggestions which were identified for the Corridor as a whole, or ideas which have Corridor-long application.

Readers are encouraged to also review the “doables” identified in the discussion highlights for each Reach.

“Doables” within one year:

- **Repositioning** - Begin to heighten the positioning of the Canal and Corridor as a diverse set of experience opportunities for land based travellers, to complement its current water recreation positioning.
 - Focus attention on the Corridor-long array of inter-related opportunities afforded at primary gathering points for land based travellers: communities, locks, heritage places and events.
 - Heighten awareness of October through April experience opportunities, in particular winter activities.
 - Communicate that the Corridor’s experience opportunities and traveler services are available year-long and not simply tied to the boating season.
- **Menus of experience opportunities** – Begin to create menus for priority EQ types at the Reach specific and Corridor-long levels.
 - Begin an inventory of currently available experience opportunities, building upon the ideas identified in this report.
 - Link these opportunities to the EQ types which will be most attracted to them.
 - Select the top five to ten ideas and develop menus for priority EQ types at both levels.
- **Adjust websites and communications** – Begin to reflect the concept of hosting different types of guests in the messaging and images communicated, and seek to harmonize these throughout the Corridor.
 - As noted later in marketing tips, begin to adjust messaging to motivate priority guests with compelling images and messages regarding experience opportunities and support services.
 - Express the evolving orientation to hosting guests in pursuing their interests, more than servicing their needs, and readiness to customize experience opportunities and support.
 - Link the web communications to the Canadian Tourism Commission’s EQ Quiz and encourage guests to discover their exploration type and then how Corridor host are ready to respond.
 - Begin to move in the direction of a contemporary, full-service, Corridor-long website and online hosting capacity.

- **Improve guest welcoming and orientation services** – Continue the online changes in messaging and images by informing and influencing on-site hosts at information centres and front line staff of the evolved direction.
 - Provide staff with opportunities to acquire first-hand knowledge of the experience opportunities and knowledge of the tourism services afforded throughout the Reach
 - Provide special training for staff to enhance hosting capacities and to enhance their awareness and understanding of how to support various types of guests (EQ based)
 - Begin to establish a web-based network of information with front-line terminals throughout the Corridor to support the dissemination of accurate and up to date travel and experience opportunity information
 - Begin to equip front-line staff with the information and capacities to create travel experience packages and to cross-sell, refer guests to other experience opportunities and service providers.
- **Network of vantage points and Rideau Chairs**– Inventory and communicate the Corridor-long best vantage points to observe and connect with the natural and cultural heritage of the Corridor and its Reaches.
 - Inventory those places which “residents” consider to be the best places to see and sense the natural environment of the aquatic and terrestrial components of individual Reaches and the Corridor, as a whole; including as well places considered the best for activities such as, water based exploring, fishing, birding, nature observation, serenity and solitude. This will be a basis for ‘locals know” advice.
 - Correspondingly, inventory those places which residents and guests consider to be the best places to connect with current lifestyles and the heritage of communities, including observation points within communities, along community waterfronts, on the lands of heritage places, at special events and festivals.
 - Add to this inventory, a listing of the most popular viewpoints currently visited by guests travelling by both land and water.
 - With this listing develop and communicate on line and in print, an overall suggested list of must experience vantage points and as appropriate a sub-listing of those vantage points most appropriate for selected exploration themes and EQ types.
 - As appropriate, develop a seasonal listing of spectacular vantage points for: fall colours, spring and fall migrations of avifauna, winter scenes and activities, special events such as ‘lock door’ replacements.
- **Network of exploration routes** – Inventory and communicate a theme based description of existing land and water based exploration routes.
 - Inventory the existing routes used by residents and guests to connect with, enjoy and appreciate the natural heritage of the Corridor and its component Reaches and special places. Develop a description of the notable experience opportunities along these routes and link these to the exploration themes.
 - Similarly inventory and assess routes linked to cultural heritage experiences.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES CONCEPT
RIDEAU HERITAGE CORRIDOR
Kim Whytock & Associates

- Begin to develop a series of 'themed' maps and route descriptions for guests, likely beginning with routes which would be most compelling for Authentic Experiencers and Cultural Explorers.
- These initial descriptions can be adjusted to the needs of No Hassle Travellers, who will require less detail.
- On the basis of this assessment begin to identify a Corridor-long network of exploration routes' which interconnect the existing routes, and use this to identify opportunities for new or enhanced routes and exploration opportunities.
- **Secure mooring points** – Begin to establish a network of mooring points in more secluded portions of the Reach become a part of a Corridor-long network of remote and isolated moorings.
- **Locks as primary gathering locations** – Begin to position selected lock stations as primary opportunities for land and water based guests to connect with the natural and cultural heritage of the Corridor. Parks Canada in collaboration with other tourism hosts can begin to:
 - Identify the types of experience opportunities and support services which might be appropriately made available at selected lock stations.
 - Assess usability of existing structures and lands for guest experience opportunities, i.e. overnighting in historic buildings.
 - Identify and begin to enhance the current offering of experience opportunities provided by Parks Canada staff and others. In some cases this may be a re-instatement of previous opportunities or new programming profiling the life of these stations through animation or storytelling.
 - Enhance the linkage of lock and nearby community heritage experience opportunities through collaborative programming and communications.
- **Enhanced performance venues** – Inventory and assess the existing array of performance venues throughout the Corridor, both outdoor and indoor, as a basis for a network of heritage presentation and contemporary performances.
 - As appropriate, identify new or enhanced venues for outdoor presentations and performances in conjunction with popular and potential new guest gathering places: community waterfronts, lock stations, heritage places, festival and event locales.
 - Assess the feasibility of acquiring a floating (barge) stage for future events.
 - Identify and assess community and special interest intentions to develop performance venues, i.e. Burritts Rapids.
 - Assess the current and forecasted heritage events and the potential for these experience opportunities to use the inventory of performance venues.
 - Link the thinking regarding a series of Corridor-long festivals and events to this inventory of performance venues.
- **Network of festivals** – Inventory and assess the existing array of Reach specific and independent special events and heritage presentations to identify a year-long, Corridor-long series of events and presentations linked to the array of identified exploration themes. Begin

VISITOR EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES CONCEPT
RIDEAU HERITAGE CORRIDOR
Kim Whytock & Associates

thinking towards a recurring set of distinguishing experience opportunities of national and international status.

- Inventory current events as to their themes, current array of guests, experience opportunities and potential linkages to other similar events.
- **Innovative or enhanced overnight in historic settings** – Inventory and assess available and potential history buildings and situations which might lend themselves to future use as overnight experience opportunities.
 - Initially examine the potential use of existing heritage attractions and historic buildings for potential use as overnight experience opportunities, i.e. lock station buildings, historic places, museums.
 - Examine the potential of currently unused or abandoned historic structures for rejuvenation as basic accommodations in the fashion of Barador concept.
- Begin to **confirm the types of explorers**, through EQ testing and surveys, who are currently guests in the Corridor.
 - A focus on boaters “locking through” might be an excellent opportunity; as would guests of prominent inns. Finally, inquiring as to the guests exploring the lock stations might be quite revealing, perhaps suggesting that remote locks versus community locks attract different explorer types.

At the Corridor and project leadership level, participants identified the following opportunities for collaborative and / or complementary action destination-wide:

- Establish a Corridor-long project leadership team to guide and support advancement of VEOC thinking and the maturation and application of current ideas
 - This team should be comprised of representatives of organizations which intend to play an active and responsible role in Corridor-long activities and a leader from each of the Reaches – a person who will be perceived within the Reach as the “champion” of this direction. The team should include organizations able to identify specific funds to support actions in 2014 through 2017
 - Leadership team should play a coordinating role in sponsoring collaborative action and in seeking external support for improvements which will benefit corridor-long
 - Establish a destination-wide set of priorities for external support
 - Universal use of contemporary communications should also be a priority
 - Joint approaches to staff development,
 - Leadership body will serve as a central information source respecting Corridor and Reach specific activities to advance the VEOC

“Doables” within three years:

Undertake a limited and strategic set of collaborative Corridor-long or complementary projects to diversify and enhance experience opportunities and the quality of service support. These might include:

- **Strategically establish desired tourism image** – Collaboratively develop a strategy to brand and market the collective experience opportunities of the Corridor; and establish how existing and emerging marketing entities and their activities will complement one another in pursuing the shared direction.
 - Strategically position the lock stations, communities and heritage places as diverse opportunities through which to connect with the natural and cultural heritage of the Corridor.
 - Develop a strategic set of compelling images and messages for each priority EQ type; and integrate these into a comprehensive communication plan to aid guests in trip planning and on-site enjoyment and appreciate of this special piece of Canadiana.
 - Provide specific trip planning information and on-site guidance responsive to the values and traits of individual priority explorer types.
 - Collaborative design and development of a Corridor-long web based and in print “visitor guide” designed to respond to values and exploration traits of EQ types, favouring as required priority types. This will be one tool in the cohesive Corridor marketing plan
- **Undertake collaborative projects to improve quality and consistency of guest services** – Participants felt that collective enhancement and innovation of hosting guests is a key to future success.
 - Improve use of contemporary technologies in serving guests at guest orientation and welcome centres and at heritage places.
 - Interconnect Corridor-long guest advisory services including information centres, front desk information services of heritage attractions and accommodation services.
 - Establish preliminary criteria respecting a “floor” of quality service and quality of RQA experience opportunities and support services.
 - Clarify and diversify the scope and position of Corridor natural and cultural heritage experience opportunities.
 - Investigate means for Corridor-long entrance fees, passes and packages.
 - Package services throughout the Corridor and within Reaches and communities.
 - Develop a coherent look amongst Corridor-long attractions in their communications and on-site presence.
- **Gateway roles for Ottawa and Kingston** – In conjunction with heightening and adjusting the image and positioning of the Corridor and its component Reaches, the potential contribution which the well-established tourism destinations of Ottawa and Kingston can make should be assessed and priority opportunities for collaborative action identified.
 - Assess current communications by the tourism organizations of Ottawa and Kingston to identify opportunities for enhancing their positioning of the Corridor and specific experience opportunities.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES CONCEPT
RIDEAU HERITAGE CORRIDOR
Kim Whytock & Associates

- Identify opportunities for these two major travel influencers to work in collaboration with the communities, attractions and Reaches of the Corridor.
- Identify themes which link Ottawa and Kingston events, festivals and celebrations with those of the Corridor.
- Begin assessment of an “exploration launch complex” respecting the Corridor as a whole located within each of these two gateways, perhaps in conjunction with existing guest services or attraction facilities.
- **Get Guests onto the water** – Recognizing that water experiences are at the core of connecting with Corridor life and history, the participants felt new and enhanced means had to be put in place to support water based explorations by land travellers.
 - Rental equipment - A strategy should be implemented to make rental equipment services more available from marinas, community waterfronts and lock stations.
 - Pick up and drop off support – A network of rental services and a support shuttle service could be initially established within selected segments of the Corridor, with the expectation that it will grow to a Corridor-long network.
 - Water access network – In a complementary vein, it was suggested that an expanded network of water access points could be initiated at strategic points along the Corridor to support independent water based explorations by guests bringing their own equipment or renting it from the network.
- **Floating and “shorefast” platform network** - Begin to develop a network of platforms be established along the lake shores and in more remote locations to be used in a number of ways: as night observation points for star gazing; as wildlife and wetland observation points; as swimming platforms for day users.
- **QR coded posts on water and land** – Begin to put in place a network of QR posts be established at key vantage points and along exploration routes to assist explorers with on-site information to aid viewing, discovery and understanding.
 - Building on the inventory of vantage points, establish a network of QR coded information posts at vantage points and subsequently along land and water exploration routes.
 - The information available could be of more than one level of detail to respond to guest interest levels.
 - The posts, like the EQ themed maps of exploration routes, could be designed with selected explorer types in mind.
 - The network of posts could be a basis for online information respecting different places and resources throughout the Corridor.
- **Pilot experience facilitation improvements** – a number of Corridor-long innovations and enhancements were suggested, for which a pilot case could be launched to assess the future for expanded opportunities of this nature.
 - **Floating bridges and trails** to facilitate wetland and shoreline exploration
 - **Waterside trails** to again facilitate access to currently inaccessible shoreline locales

- **Wetland trails on stilts**
- **Marsh viewpoints on stilts**
- **Floating yurts and view points**
- **Paddle up wilderness campsites**
- **Paddle up shoreline hut system** – basic accommodation
- **Introductory camping and outdoor activity programs and services** - An array of introductory camping opportunities, programs, services and support facilities could be made available for people who have not camped before. This might begin with provincial parks and interested private sector campgrounds.
 - In a similar vein, outfitted natural area explorations of both aquatic and terrestrial areas would be compelling introductions to the Rideau Canal Heritage Corridor.
- **Locking through experience opportunities** – To enhance land based lock experiences, it was suggested that provisions be made to allow non-boaters to experience locking through.
 - The concept could be investigated at selected locks, perhaps one near either end of the canal and a central location.
 - A collaborative approach between Parks Canada and a private sector boat operator or tour guiding service might be investigated.
 - The assessments might focus upon early and late season opportunities, and prime season opportunities in the evenings or at low use locks.
- **Virtual lock design and operation** - A virtual experience opportunity was envisioned to assist guests in comprehending the challenges addressed by canal builders and the operating requirements of lock staff.
 - Investigate the development of programming by university and/or technology companies to support this type of experience opportunity.
 - Test the programming on a small scale model.
 - Enhance the experience opportunity within the Rideau Canal Museum and in remote application at Corridor Gateway exploration launch complexes and other web connected venues.
- **Network of artisans** – To assist in connecting with the historic and living heritage and culture of the Corridor, it was suggested that a network of experience opportunities be developed to connect guests with artisans.
 - Inventory and assess current artisan experience opportunities, including studio tours, boutique shop and marketplace connections and special events.
 - Identify a framework of artisanal experience opportunities as a basis for exploration routes and themed connection opportunities.
 - Identify and communicate to guests a network of artisanal experience opportunities within particular communities, Reaches and Corridor-long.

- **Series of festivals and events** – Based upon the earlier noted inventory and assessment of existing and emerging festivals and events in conjunction with the network of existing and new performance venues develop a year-long series of events and festivals.
 - Develop a framework of festivals and events linked to the heritage themes identified for the Corridor and build upon the subjects of existing festivals and events.
 - Consider a set of heritage celebration themes which could be the annual basis for and positioning of festivals in each subsequent year.
 - Identify a number of linked festivals and events for Corridor-long positioning i.e. jazz festival, regattas, boating heritage, fall harvest culinary festivals.
 - Strategically communicate these sets of festivals as motivations for multiple trips to the Corridor and / or Corridor long explorations on a single trip.
- **Network of heritage museum experiences** – Similar to festivals and events, a strategic approach to motivating guest exploration of museums and thereby connection of the history and living heritage of the Corridor was suggested.
 - The approach could be similar to that outlined above for festivals and events, with three levels of focus, museums within a community or Reach, linked heritage subject matter, a Corridor long set of viewpoints on the same theme, for example agricultural heritage or canal building and use.
- **Rejuvenation of Colonel By Island** - Begin the process with guests and hosts combining their efforts to rejuvenate the heritage resources on the Island.
 - An annual series of social events could be hosted by private sector facilitators.
 - The Island could also be established as a special opportunity for “overnight experiences”.
- **Parade of heritage boats – Investigate** rejuvenating the “parade of boats” events at a series of vantage points along the Corridor and recommending special vantage points with presentation programs would be a season long opportunities to celebrate this aspect of the Rideau’s heritage.
- **Rejuvenation of “regattas”** – Venues such as Newboro, Chaffeys, Merrickville and Smiths Falls might be excellent stages for these heritage boat celebrations and a season-long series of regattas.
- **Voyageur canoe building and canoeing** - The existing voyageur canoe paddling experience opportunity might be enhanced and expanded to incorporate hands on canoe building experiences and longer duration paddles and skill development experiences.
- **Community as theatre stages** - It was suggested that professional and local theatre buffs with scripted performances could use the streets of communities, heritage buildings, museums, cemeteries, locks and waterfronts as stages to bring to life the history and famous and infamous personalities of community histories. Classic Theatre Perth could be a mentor of this initiative.
- **Integrated community heritage tours** - Building upon the desire to link the heritage experiences of communities such as Perth, Smiths Falls and Merrickville, it was suggested that the town walking tours – both guided and self-guided – could be interconnected.

Tips for Moving Forward

Experience Opportunity Enhancements and Innovations

The following EQ Type-specific considerations are provided to support Rideau Hosts and experience facilitators in implementing the foregoing outline of potential enhancements and innovations.

Authentic Experiencers (12%) ... wandering nature first, then cultural landscapes

- Ensure your experience opportunities most importantly facilitate connection with “nature”
- Opportunities which combine natural experience opportunities, with connections with local peoples, and sensory rich activities: tasting, smelling, hearing nature and culture are compelling
- Opportunities to keep active in mind, body and spirit are valued
- Authentic natural, cultural, historic and social settings are mandatory and prized
- Living out of doors or in connection with natural settings is highly valued - windows are key
- Link natural opportunities with local foods, cuisine, ways of life, local economies and norms
- Integrate your exploration opportunities with those of other facilitators - seamless services for your guests - subtle packaging focused upon what and why rather than how much
- Physical excursion and some discomfort are acceptable for meaningful rewards
- Comfort and indulgence opportunities after exploration and discovery is enjoyed
- Customizing opportunities and allowing individual freedoms – when, where, how – will give you a competitive edge
- These explorers are here to enjoy the adventure and create their own experiences and memories
- Quality leisure services are assumed and appreciated, but they are not here to just eat and sleep

Cultural Explorers (13%) ... immersion in culture first then understanding nature

- Opposite to above, ensure your experience opportunities most importantly facilitate “cultural connections” with people, lifestyles and events
- These explorers understand nature through the lens of culture - local perspectives are prized
- Authentic cultural, social and natural environments and milieu are what is desired and valued
- Not passive observers, these guests want to engage in different lifestyles and immerse in everyday realities of modern and historic life
- Again, sensory rich opportunities and stimuli are what motivates exploration and understanding
- Privileged access to cultural resources , special places and events are compelling
- Effort will be readily expended to discover and become a part of the community or lifestyle ... comfort is discretionary - recreation for recreation sake is not a priority
- Quality leisure services are assumed and appreciated - but they are not here just to eat and sleep
- Menus with historical or community side notes and opportunities for hands on culinary and other artisan experiences ignite imaginations and learning
- Favouring B&B or boutique accommodations, providing insights into architecture and engineering and complementary heritage roots explanations add to the value and attractiveness
- Associated places for solitude and reflection at end of day complete explorations
- Community gathering places and opportunities to become one with the community provide individual opportunities to immerse in the culture and social life.

Free Spirits (11%) ... “I’ll sleep when I am dead”

- Their motto is an indicator of their expectations and desires - social life rules - so a fun atmosphere, with lots to do with other people of like minds is a mecca
- And the fun seldom stops, so evening opportunities are as important as ones during the day
- The more exotic or distinctive your venue is for fun, the more compelling it is
- Being associated with the “must see” attractions and with the “iconic activities” through packaging makes you’re an all-inclusive one stop location for weekend get-aways or longer
- The capacity to host groups of friends for celebrations of a personal kind, or gatherings associated with special events and entertainment makes you party-central
- Drawn to personal recreational challenges and sporting events, your ability to host individuals and groups in association with events in four seasons, especially winter will give you advantage
- Associated skill development programs for non-urban sports such as dog-sledding, white water kayaking - backcountry orienteering make some challenges more feasible
- Re-occurring individual competitions “with associated bragging-rights” such as golf, triathlons, water sports and winter races will bring challengers back
- Of course, after the challenge, care and nurturing of body and spirit in luxury spa and wellness facilities - associated with fine wine and dining - is what Free Spirits relish
- Unusual or iconic community festivals and entertainment are magnets for these socialites
- Staying connected is mandatory, so internet access and social connections are essential
- At leisure, Free Spirits often live at the top of their means - luxury, first class accommodations, dining, and recreation facilities and services attract them

No Hassle Travellers (11%) ... “I am on vacation, at last”

- Escape from the norm drives families and groups lead by these types of leisure seekers - fun and relaxation are their goals with less intensity than the above extreme fun seekers
- Many are only seeking weekend and short get-aways, so proximity to home is a consideration; as is reasonable expense - family and friends packaging is strategic - as is all-inclusive pricing
- A single location with a diversity of outdoor recreational experience opportunities will fill the bill
- Amusement parks, water sports - things for kids - in both daylight and evening are fulfilling
- Organized recreational and adventure pursuits for families, multi-generational groups and for children will relieve the leaders of stress and provide individual time to relax and rejuvenate
- Equipment for occasional recreation is rented more often than owned - so hosts supplying this type of support either directly or in association with other operators makes vacations easy
- Desired accommodations will range from camping opportunities and outfitted camping services ... yurt-like camping opportunities - through lower to middle priced roofed accommodations
- Primarily summer travellers for vacations, weekend retreats in all other seasons are desired
- Detailed planning of travel is a luxury for the time-stressed, so having advice and guidance on hand and menus of opportunities provides ideas and incentives for good times
- A concierge-like service for families and children, providing guidance and booking is helpful.

Bufs (9%) ... “I am in search of the real thing”

- Bufs are here for a wide variety of reasons - they are birders, rock hounds, fishers, canal historians, military specialists, boat aficionados, and the list continues - they crave expertise
- They expect access and guidance to the authentic and rare - if you can make unique opportunities possible and custom support these explorers, you are their mecca
- Having expertise on site or readily available is a compelling asset
- Hosting special interest gatherings, such as for birders or boaters will set you apart
- Opportunities for behind the scenes tours or better yet for hands on experiences - perhaps opportunities to share their expertise or contribute to a conservation or celebration of heritage
- Scheduled events with pre-arranged participation for history buffs to, for example, build a boat, paddle a canoe, restore a structure – yield a sense of accomplishment and contribution
- Simple support services - accommodation, food, travel support - meet their needs; expertise and access is the focus of their attention and expenditures - as is take away materials

Personal History Travellers (11%) ... “My family roots are here”

- Understanding themselves and their heritage is their goal, and perhaps bringing their children and other family members and friends into contact with their roots is why they are here
- Again simple support services are what they need - “connectors” who aid their exploration and discovery are what they value and pay for
- Local historical societies, historians, or “locals who know” are the resources they seek ... arranging connections is how hosts can help
- Genealogical services, public and private libraries and information sources, pictures and stories are their gold
- Images of community heritage should abound the walls of gatherings places - restaurants, coffee shops, parks and streets - contemporary devices can be used to “augment appreciation” through virtual re-creations and enactments
- Re-enactments of past cultural and social events, practices and lifestyles are great to observe, yet opportunities for ‘home stays’ in modern or historic settings are even better
- Opportunities to learn heritage skills and to live life as their families and ancestors did, is exceptional value for these explorers.
- Access to authentic heritage resources and places - to people who can retell their lives and experiences - to new perspectives confirming held assumptions - these storytellers and interpretive services – personnel or non-personnel – are compelling attractions and opportunities.

Virtual Travellers (6%) ... “I can see from home”

- Sometimes travelling with others - family gatherings - these explorers value quiet “perches” with guide books and support materials to observe from a far
- If engaged, they appreciate organized, schedule delivery of opportunities and services ... not much different from their home atmosphere
- At home, contemporary communications make “virtual travel experiences” readily achievable through the internet, video, web cams, books, etc.
- These same remote viewing devices are the tools other use to plan their travels.
- The knowledge and perspectives of Virtual travellers, surprisingly, are motivators for other types of explorers and leisure travellers - advice from a trusted friend.

Gentle Explorers (17%) ... “We’re back”

- Brand loyal and comfortable with proven types of experience opportunities and leisure travel services - these travellers seek places and circumstances “like home”
- Repeat visits to destinations and repeat bookings at accommodations and dining facilities meet their desire for “no surprises”
- Whether for a weekend or short trip, often in their home region, these gentle explorers welcome friendly community atmospheres - streetscapes and storefronts welcoming browsing
- Passive observers, benches and gathering spots from which to blend into the activities of others are their perches
- Guided explorations and presentations - and large group entertainment - are valued venues
- Packaged travel with well recognized providers assures this type of leisure explorer - group touring by land or water with interpretive services is heavily favoured
- All-inclusive resorts and outfitted cottage services are repeatedly used.
- Packaging accommodations with leisure recreation (golfing, touring and events) and associating these with dining makes the destination worry-free - they haven’t planned in detail, either

Rejuvenators (10%) ... “I am here to recharge”

- Care for me please - I am seeking spa-like and comfortable escape from my normal life
- Solitude is golden - a place to sit and watch - to read and think - to drink in quiet beauty and social serenity
- I seek to be pampered - sensual surroundings, great foods and dining, music, spectacular views all achieved with little effort - when and where and how I please
- Not a fan of guided groups - perhaps simply getting away on their own - to paddle a remote lake or stream - to wander a park or cultural landscape - to never be at risk, yet on my own.
- Sometimes travelling with their own support, i.e. recreational vehicles - quiet seclusion in a group setting is valued - similarly outfitted cottages and camping (glamping)
- I seek security and comfort - I won’t need a vacation, when I get back

Motivating Travellers

Experience Opportunity – Marketing Tips

In general, the words and images you convey and the sense of welcome, orientation and support you extend must be strategic responses to the travel and social values of the explorer types and leisure travellers which you are seeking to motivate.

The experience opportunities you facilitate have been strategically crafted to individually respond to the desires of these guests. It follows then that informing, influencing and involving your guests should be equally personalized.

Authentic Explorers (12%) ... freedom to explore on one's own

- These explorers travel with and on purpose - they are drawn to authentic and as pristine as possible natural settings - they wander natural and cultural landscapes seeking to discover on their own - to connect with environments, people and places quite different from their norms
- They seek to be on their own or with family - not in crowded places - not sharing the nature
- They seek to immerse in community and culture - to taste, smell, hear, touch - see it all
- The images you use should suggest these pursuits are readily available, to this type of traveller
- The words you use should emphasize freedom, the road less travelled, exploration more than leisure, discovery and self-discovery
- More pictures and descriptions as to “why to come” - emotion drives rationale
- Your messages should be personal invitations to explorer - sharing your perspectives and encouraging your future guests to create their own experiences and perceptions
- These travellers prepare themselves well for their travels and explorations - having a good amount of information available for your guests before arrival is essential - identifying links for their further investigation is helpful
- Your information base should also be linked to that of your community or region - you are offering an “exploration base” to your guests - who will spend as much or more time away, as with you
- In proportion, little emphasis should be given to details of your operation - quality service and amenities are assumed - price while a factor is not the compelling influence on why to visit
- Comfort is discretionary to these guests - albeit, after a challenge a reward is welcomed

Cultural Explorers (13%) ... want to be a part of their destination

- Opposite to above, Cultural Explorers are first drawn to authentic cultural setting and landscapes - places quite different from where they live - opportunities to meet people and for a moment live different lives from their norm - they don't want to be alone, but with people they came to connect with - not with any travellers other than their own group
- They seek as well, “the road less travelled” - to immerse in authenticity - to sense the flavours, sounds, smells, textures and sights of their - to experience the best of their destinations
- The messages conveyed should extend promise of these opportunities - and the services delivered ensure they are feasible - the invitation should be personal - almost postcard like in conveying the experiences of the host and wishing the guest were here
- The images should be of the community, the heritage resources, the people and their daily lives, special events and celebrations - they should for the most part not include images of other guests - especially not crowds of other travellers.

- Like the above, these explorers prepare in detail for their adventures - they require a lot of information from their hosts and from their destination, during the trip planning phase - they will not require this information on arrival - simply to be hosted and guided with friendly suggestions
- “Connection” with different people and realities is your guests’ goal and your focus for facilitating experiences - this should be conveyed in your promotions.

Free Spirits (11%) ... “Go big or go home”

- Opportunities for “Fun” and celebrations with people of like orientation is the cornerstone of your message
- Convey the competitive “whys” of choosing your destination - its superlatives - its popularity
- Emphasize the upscale qualities of your establishment and community ...
- Your guests are seeking a “bragging right – a story to tell” - emphasize the opportunities to be outstanding, to achieve a personal best, to achieve notoriety
- Free Spirits don’t celebrate alone - invite them to bring their friends - express your ability to host groups of like-minded individuals - seeking “good times”
- Associate your destination and facilities with major events in entertainment and sports or recreation - associate yourself with branded competitions
- Be available for customized events, celebrations
- The details will follow - unlike foregoing explorers only the general concept of the fun adventure to be had is required in your promotions
- Price and packaging is becoming more of an item with these leisure seekers - yet it is not a significant limiting factor - all-inclusive packaging is motivational - customizing is extra
- The images and messages should convey this will be “fun - not to be missed”

No Hassle Travellers (11%) ... on vacation with family or friends

- Perhaps less willing to spend and celebrate as the above, these leisure travellers feel they have earned the right to a “little time off” - a reward for bearing the stress and responsibilities of life
- They believe the outdoors will rejuvenate their urban lives - natural serenity and beauty is its own elixir - time with family is a bonding opportunity - an opportunity for group accomplishment
- They are seeking fun opportunities with family and friends - they are relying upon their hosts to organize and support their experience opportunities - they know “why and where” they are going - they will discover on arrival “how and when” they will enjoy
- Your messages and images should convey people, families and friends having fun together ... that everything is arranged and ready for your guests - rely upon us, your hosts
- Packaging, all-inclusive – reasonably priced – accommodations, food services and recreation awaits them
- While away, they are still connected with home - through contemporary communication services
- Similarly, for the children and young adults - contemporary communications and devices are a part of the natural and cultural escape

Gentle Explorers (17%) ... “You’re welcomed back”

- Personalize, if possible, your invitation to come back to what they have enjoyed before
- Assure them the quality of service and people facilitating their experiences remains of high standard
- This is their home away from home - your place is a part of their heritage - you share common values and dreams
- The community they will wander is their community - places to sit and observe, things to gently explore - it is all here
- Your images should confirm your iconic places and events - the welcoming nature of your community and residents - this is home for hosts and guests
- Your words should convey : tradition, respect, security, quiet enjoyment and people
- As appropriate, convey brand names, including those of attractions “national historic sites” and “world heritage sites”
- Packaging for efficiency and savings is a selling point

Bufs (9%) and Personal History Travellers (11%) ... we are here on a mission

- There is such individualized purpose in these two types of travellers choosing your destination and services that messaging and imaging is almost too diverse
- Focus upon why “bufs” would come - iconic natural and cultural events or resources
- Focus upon the types of people who have perhaps “moved away” or the “families who have spread across the country from your community
- Your simple message “we can be of help in your search” - we have connections that can help
- We have access to expertise and the ability to provide you guidance and access to meet your goals

Rejuvenators (10%) ... “Silence is Golden”

- Solitude is what is sought and its availability should be conveyed in images and words
- Opportunity to pursue personal passions on my own - sensory rich environments
- Escape from life responsibilities to a place where I am the centre of the world
- Solitude is golden - a place to sit and watch - to read and think - to drink in quiet beauty and social serenity
- sensual surroundings, great foods and dining, music, spectacular views achieved with little effort
- Getting away on their own - paddle remote waters - wander a park - never at risk
- You won’t need a vacation, when you go back

Appendix

Location Guide to Innovations or Enhancements in VEOC and Reach VEOC Discussion Highlights

The following tables provide an indication as to where reference is specifically made to stakeholder suggested experience opportunity “innovations and enhancements” within these sections of the VEOC and the six Reach specific VEOC discussion highlights documents.

Please note that other ideas for change are also found within the listing of “Doables” in each of these documents and within the “Stakeholder Expectations” section.

The following is a key to the table columns:

VEOC	(Integrated VEOC – main document)
R#1	(Kingston to Lower Brewers - discussion highlights)
R#2	(Lower Brewers to Newboro – discussion highlights)
R#3	(Newboro to Rideau Ferry - discussion highlights)
R#4	(Rideau Ferry to Merrickville - discussion highlights)
R#5	(Merrickville to Long Island Locks - discussion highlights)
R#6	(Long Island to Ottawa Locks - discussion highlights)

VISITOR EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES CONCEPT
RIDEAU HERITAGE CORRIDOR
Kim Whytock & Associates

Locational Guide to Innovations or Enhancements in VEOC and Reach VEOC Discussion Highlights

Guest Information, Welcome and Sense of Arrival

Innovation or Enhancement	VEOC	R#1	R#2	R#3	R#4	R#5	R#6
Full Service Website for Corridor	48	10	8	10	10	10	11
Two Gateway Guest orientation Facilities	49	9					9/10
Discovery Centre - Kingston		9					
Network of Guest Information Services	49		8/9	11	10	10	10
On Demand Information Terminals Network	49		8	11	10	9	10
Rideau App	48	11	8	11	10	11	11
Menus of Opportunities	49	10		10	10	10	14
Geo-fencing – virtual welcome and online inform.	49	11		9			
Enhanced traditional signage		10	9	11		11	11
Concierge Services	49					21	
Vested Ambassadors	50		9	11		10	11
Networking of Hosts	50			11		10	11
Adoption and Growth of “Host/Guest” Culture	50			10			
Investment in Staff Awareness	51		8	10	10	9	10
Recognition of Great Hosts	51			10			
Rideau-specific “super host” Training Program	51		8	10	10		
Rideau Quality Assurance	51			11			11
Web Cam Network	48	16		11	16		

VISITOR EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES CONCEPT
 RIDEAU HERITAGE CORRIDOR
Kim Whytock & Associates

Locational Guide to Innovations or Enhancements in VEOC and Reach VEOC Discussion Highlights

Cultural Heritage Connection Opportunities

Innovation or Enhancement	VEOC	R#1	R#2	R#3	R#4	R#5	R#6
Opportunities to “lock through”	52	11	9	13	11	13	12
Animation of locks	52	12/16	14	16	12	11	13/16
Overnight in lockmaster’s house	52	18	15		18		19
Lockmaster or staff for a day	52		10		12	13	13
“Doors Open” and “door replacement” experience	53				11		
Locks as Gathering Places	53	12		13	12/18	11	13
Uniquely Position Individual Locks				13			
Narrows Locks – Children Programming				13			
Exploring Locks without water		12			18		
Celebrating Founding Peoples							
First Nations People	53	13/16				13	14/16
Canal Builders	53	16				13	14/16
Millers and Farmers	53	16	10		13	13	
Early Industrialists	54	16			13	13	
Mining – Silver Queen				13	15		
Fishing Guides	54		10	13			
Harnessing Hydro Power	54		10			13	
Founding Families			10	14/17		13	
Railway Heritage	54				13/16		
Rideau Heritage Boats							
Boat Building and Builders	54	16	10	12		13	
Heritage Boat Festivals and Regattas	54	16	10	12	16		
Collectable Pennants				12			
Boat House Architecture	54		10				
Voyageur Canoe Building/ Canoeing	55	22/23			13/17	17/22	
Rideau Carvers	55				13	13	
Heritage Museums – Celebrate Life	55				13		14/16
Fort Frontenac / Frederick animation		13					
Culinary Experiences of Heritage	55	13	10	14	13	11	14
Shore Dinners and Dining on the Water	55			18		11	18
Waterside Dining	56			13	13		18
Artisan Encounters	56		10	13		11	
Engaging in Archaeological Digs	56					13	
Town Walking Tours	61				12	11	13

VISITOR EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES CONCEPT
RIDEAU HERITAGE CORRIDOR
Kim Whytock & Associates

Location Guide to Innovations or Enhancements in VEOC and Reach VEOC Discussion Highlights

Natural Heritage Connection Opportunities

Innovation or Enhancement	VE OC	R#1	R#2	R#3	R#4	R#5	R#6
Getting on the Water	57		12	15	13		
Grow and Diversify Boating and Equipment Rentals	57			15	13		
Pick Up and Drop Off Service for Boaters	57		12	15	13		
Expand Network of Water Access Points	57		12	15	13	14	
Expand Guidance and Outfitting Services	57		12	15	13		
Enhanced Aquatic Environment Guided	58			14			
Underwater viewing Devices		16		16			
Backwater Experiences: Access/Support	58		12				
Network of Rideau Exploration Routes: Trails	58						
Waterside Routes	59	14		14	13	14	15
Floating Bridges and Trails	59				13	14	
QR Post Network	59			10			
Along Land Trails	60	12			13		
On the Water	60	14	12/13	14	13	14	16
At Lock Stations and All Attractions	60	12					16
Within Communities	60	12			12/17	11	
Rideau Ramble Guides	60		13			17	
Network of Rideau Chairs / Vantage Points	60	12	13	16	13	14	14/15
Inventory of Special Places	60	14		14		14	14
Network of Outdoor Gathering Places	61	12	6	13	12/18	7/11	13
Integrated Parks/Heritage Site Programming	61					7	
Dark Sky and Evening Experiences	62			16			
Inventory of Special Places	62			16			
Evening Walks and Presentations	62			16			
Sky Chairs and Circles	62			16			
Introductory Camping / Outdoor Recreation	63					7	
Outfitted Camping	63					7	
Outfitted Boating	63			15			
Outfitted Winter Explorations	63			18		7	
Floating Platform Network	63			14		14	
Network of "Shorefast" Platforms	63	14		14	13	14	
Wolfe island to Frontenac Park Transact		14					

Augmented Appreciation / Passive Observation Opportunities

Innovation or Enhancement	VEOC	R#1	R#2	R#3	R#4	R#5	R#6
Virtual Lock Design and Operation	64	11			15		12
Rideau Theater Network	64				15		
Classic Theater Productions	64				15		
Network of Outdoor Theaters	64				7	7/16	
Season Long Series of Presentations	64					16	
Mobile Barge Stage	65			7	7		
Year Long Network of Festivals							
Heritage Festival Series	65	16	14	17		16	16
Musical Festivals and Events Series	65	16	14	17		16	16
On the Water Concerts	65			17	7		
Symphony in the Locks Amphitheater	65	17					17
Re-enact Colonel By Canal Opening Voyage		13					
Sound and Light Recreations of Canal Building	65					16	17
Ottawa Locks	65						17
Jones Falls Locks and Dam	66		14				
Meet the People of the Rideau – Storytellers	66			17			
Human Library	66	16	14			13	16
Speakers Bureau	66	16	14			13	16
Web Cam Network	66		8 /14	17	16	17	
GPS Exploration Routes and Leisure Guidance	67		12				
Apps	67		8	11	10	9	10
Rainforest Centre					16		
Heritage House Drive Shed					16		
Advanced Battery Fort Henry/ augmented app		15					

VISITOR EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES CONCEPT
RIDEAU HERITAGE CORRIDOR
Kim Whytock & Associates

Location Guide to Innovations or Enhancements in VEOC and Reach VEOC Discussion Highlights

Recreation / Relaxation Opportunities

Innovation or Enhancement	VEOC	R#1	R#2	R#3	R#4	R#5	R#6
Water Based Touring	67	17	15		14	17	
Reach Specific Water Tours	67	17	15	15/18	14	17	18
River Tours	68	17	15	15	14		
Outfitted Charters and Day Adventures	68	17	15	15/18	14		18
Guided Outings	68	17	15	18		17	18
Self-Guided Explorers Information	68						
Inventory of Climbing Opportunities			15	18			
Geo-caching		18	15	18		17	18
Land based Adventures and Recreation	68				17		
Equipment Rentals					17		
Linking Winterlude and Skate the Lake festivals	69						18
Amazing Race: Heritage Experience Challenge	69				17		18
Red Bull Crush Challenge Through Locks	69						18
Rejuvenation of Colonel By Island	69			12			

Locational Guide to Innovations or Enhancements in VEOC and Reach VEOC Discussion Highlights

Accommodation Services and Related Experience Opportunities

Innovation or Enhancement	VEOC	R#1	R#2	R#3	R#4	R#5	R#6
Rideau Canal Resort and Conference Centre	70			7/18	18		
Network of Heritage Inns and BB Lodging	70	18	15	18	18	18	19
Network of Hostels, Huts and Campsites	71						
Campground Network	71						
Camping Innovation	71	18	15	18		18	
Accommodations in Restored Buildings	71	18	15		18		19
Lock Masters Houses and Out Buildings	71	18	15		18		19
Floating Yurts and on Stilts		18		14	18		
Network of basic waterside accommodation		18			18	18	
Hub and Spoke Experience Opportunities	71	10					10

Locational Guide to Innovations or Enhancements in VEOC and Reach VEOC Discussion Highlights

Transportation Services

Innovation or Enhancement	VEOC	R#1	R#2	R#3	R#4	R#5	R#6
Shuttle Services	72	18	15	18	18	18	19
Hop On Hop Off Shuttle	72	18	15		18	18	19
Goods Shuttle	72	18	15		18	18	
Shuttle/Accom and Equipment Rental Pkgs	72	18	15				19
Water Based Shuttles and Tours	72			15			
Rideau Experiential Touring Support Network	72		15	18		18	
Water Taxi		19					
OZ Bus Concept – Fun Experiences with affiliated and unaffiliated groups	73			8			*
Secure Mooring Points	73		15	15/18	18	18	
Aerial Tours	73	15		17	16		
Selective View Plane Improvements	73		10				
Attaching Kayaks to Pontoon Rentals				15			

Rideau Corridor

