

Huron East Wayfinding Strategy

April 2016

Prepared for



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to create a strategy to increase visitor satisfaction through improved wayfinding. Exploring the current state of wayfinding in Huron East is essential because improved wayfinding could lead to repeat visits, side trips to new destinations, or promotion through word of mouth. Ultimately, good wayfinding and positive visitor experiences can lead to an increase in the length and economic impact of a visitor's stay in the municipality.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 About Huron East

The largest of Huron County's nine municipalities, Huron East is a composite of productive farmland and industrial properties, innovative technology, a medical research centre, and a strong entrepreneurial spirit, positioning itself well within competitive markets.

Its natural and built heritage is unmistakable, gracefully cloaking the towns, hamlets and open countryside that complement Huron East. Vanastra, a small community built on the historic site of a WWII air force training base, offers a good mix of residential and commercial development, and is located on two major highway corridors, within close proximity to rail, air and harbour depots.

Seaforth, with its wide main street and well-preserved 19th century architecture, is a viable business district hosting an attractive blend of service and retail. Only minutes from its core is "The Bridges of Seaforth", an adult lifestyle community, showcasing the best of rural and urban living, including a well-appointed recreational facility equipped with tennis courts and indoor pool, both overlooking a championship golf course.



Located to the north of the municipality is the Village of Brussels, a vibrant agricultural and industrial hub, staged with magnificent old mansions and the idyllic Maitland River, which winds its way through well-kept residential neighbourhoods. Undeniably, Huron East offers investors and newcomers an attractive choice to relocate (Huron East Website, 2016)

2.2 About the Authors

The authors of this report - Amanda Herbert, Brianne Labute, and Meaghan Luis - are Masters of Science in Rural Planning and Development students at the University of Guelph. In 2015, Dr. Wayne Caldwell and Paul Kraehling issued a Request for Proposals to municipalities interested in working on a collaborative project with planning students. Economic Development Officer Jan Hawley submitted a proposal to create a wayfinding strategy for Huron East, which was chosen by the authors.

2.3 About this Project

The purpose of this project was to explore physical, online, printed materials, and people as channels of wayfinding to ensure visitors to the municipality are having a positive experience navigating to chosen destinations. Below are the specific goals and objectives of this wayfinding project.

2.3.1 Project Goal

- Increase in visitor satisfaction through improved wayfinding, leading to increased frequency and length of visits.

2.3.2 Objectives

1. To identify draws/specialty assets in Huron East and audit corresponding directional information (physical/online/print)
2. Review other existing rural wayfinding strategies and communicate best practices
3. Provide recommendations to the municipality for improved wayfinding through the development of a Wayfinding Strategy.

For the purpose of this document, locations in Huron East are classified as draws or assets. Draws are the reason why people are already within the Municipality of Huron East. Some examples are golf tournaments, motocross tournaments, or visiting relatives

in nursing homes. Specialty assets are attractions that are out of the ordinary or unique to the area. Some examples are a local winery, artisan crafts, local museums and collections, or architecture. Certain individual assets such as historical buildings on walking tours or businesses in downtowns were combined and looked at as a single asset, such as the Brussels Historic Walking Tour or Downtown Seaforth.

To identify assets and draws, a participatory mapping exercise was facilitated by the Authors on February 16th, 2016. The session accessed local knowledge of five community members to successfully map lesser-known attractions that were seen as special or unique. Through the process over 50 draws and specialty assets were identified and recorded on a printed map (See Appendix 2 for a list of draws/assets). To understand visitor wayfinding experiences, the Authors travelled to each destination by car to audit the signage. Additionally, the destinations were evaluated for online and printed materials presence.

This document will provide recommendations for wayfinding in Huron East while taking into consideration the context of Huron East such as limited financial resources, limited visitor draws and assets, and inherent rural challenges. Section 3 will further explain wayfinding and share best practices used by other jurisdictions. Section 4 will outline the results of the Wayfinding Audit. Section 5 will offer some guidance on signage and online mapping. Finally, Section 6 will provide some recommendations for Huron East to move forward in improving wayfinding.

2.4 Intended Audience

The intended audience of this document is the Economic Development Department, Municipal Council, and business owners in the Municipality of Huron East.

3.0 WAYFINDING

Wayfinding can be explained as how an individual navigates through a community with the assistance of signage, environmental cues, and other supports. Simply put, it is direction for people in motion. Wayfinding is not tourism marketing, promotion, or advertising. However, the improved experience of visitors may lead to repeat visits and increased tourism (Tourism Northern Ontario [TNO], 2013; Stone & Vaugeois, 2007). Wayfinding is a problem solving process, and organizations involved in improving wayfinding should consider the barriers wayfinders are encountering (Mollerup, 2013).

There are nine strategies that wayfinders employ to figure out where they are going:

1. Aiming is the most basic kind of wayfinding, where the wayfinder can see where they want to go and they move towards it.
2. Track following is the second most basic wayfinding strategy, involving following directional signs or existing tracks.
3. Route following is when individuals follow a pre-determined plan.
4. Education seeking is when wayfinders use pre-existing knowledge to determine the way.
5. Inference is when they use information around them to determine where they are going (e.g. having passed 4th and 5th Streets, a wayfinder would infer that 3rd Street would be back the way they came from).
6. Screening involves systematic searching (trying one way, ruling out that direction, and then trying another).
7. Map reading involves using a variety of types of maps to find destination.
8. Directing by compass involves using a compass to find the way, especially in remote areas without other means of navigation.
9. Social navigation is when wayfinding information is given to the wayfinders by other people.

On any particular trip, a wayfinder may use many strategies, switching between them as information and new clues arise (Mollerup, 2013).

This document takes the nine wayfinding strategies into consideration, focusing on four channels of wayfinding: physical, online, printed materials, and people. These categories are defined as follows:

1. Physical wayfinding (visually wayfinding enroute), facilitated by environmental cues and signs;
2. Online wayfinding includes websites, social media, and maps;
3. Printed materials includes tourism guide books, community guides, and brochures; and,
4. People as a source of informal directional information to visitors.

Given the rural nature of Huron East, some best practices are offered specific to wayfinding in rural areas.

3.1 Physical Wayfinding

3.1.1 Environmental Cues

People often think of signs when they think of wayfinding, but many of the best wayfinding tools are embedded in the built and natural environment (Mollerup, 2013).

For example, the presence of a trail in the woods indicates that there is a trail to follow. Streets that are wider and have better lighting are recognizably more important than dim, narrow streets. Glass doors indicate public entrances. Some things do not need signs to be easily found. An analysis of each site should consider when a sign is needed. Remember, enhancing intuitive environmental cues can be more effective than adding more signs.

Place names are environmental clues that are often overlooked in wayfinding. Organized in a logical fashion, place names aid visitor navigability (Mollerup, 2013). For example, Water Street indicates the street is near the water. Main Street is where you find the shops and restaurants in many small towns. Airport Road has the airport. Names of streets, businesses, and features benefit from being descriptive as well as offering a label for a destination. Whatever the place is called, it is important to wayfinding that a single name is used consistently on both maps and signs. If the place is mislabelled in Google maps, for example, it is important to have the information edited (Google: “google maps corrections” and follow the directions).

How to create a community signage program

- Step 1: Create an inventory of your signage
- Step 2: Get the visitor's perspective
- Step 3: Determine what should stay and what needs to go
- Step 4: Determine responsibilities
- Step 5: Develop and set up signage
- Step 6: Monitor effectiveness and keep signage current

Source: Stone & Vargeois, 2007, p. 4

3.1.2 Signs

Signs are an important component of an overall strategy, but care should be taken to ensure they are not overused and misused. When signs are clear visitors find them useful. When signs are done poorly, they can damage the environment, create confusion, and negatively impact a visitor's experience (Mollerup, 2013).

There are various types of wayfinding signs, and the two main categories are identification and directional (Gibson, 2009; Passini, 1984). As their names suggest, identification signs identify that the visitor has arrived at their desired location. Identification signs can provide a first impression of the quality of a destination.

Examples of identification signs could include entrance information, parking area identification, or building mounted identification (Gibson, 2009). Directional signs direct visitors to or from their desired destination, but also guide them around the site they are visiting (Gibson, 2009). Directional signs can take various forms: road signs, distance markers and signs specific to the upcoming destination are all directional signs.

A study for Tourism Northern Ontario (TNO) found that bad signage was consistently mentioned as the most frustrating aspect of a visitor's experience. Bad signage can be a result of overly strict regulations or lack of regulations around the erection and maintenance of signs. The jurisdiction of signage regulation changes depending on the owner of the road (provincial, county, lower-tier).

Good signage requires forethought. Firstly, signage should be organized and located in a way so that the information starts out broadly and becomes more detailed as the destination approaches. Secondly, focus on having fewer, better signs rather than more signs. Thirdly, signs that need to have high impact should be placed perpendicular to the road, so they can be easily read by oncoming traffic. Less important signs can be placed parallel to the road, if necessary. This approach complies with people's intuitive wayfinding as when they are looking for speciality information they are prepared to look to the side, but when it is an important site they expect the sign to be in front of them (Mollerup, 2013). Fourthly, on fast roads, signs should contain no more than three or four pieces of information (Passini, 1984). A final word of caution, suppliers and municipalities should not confuse the purpose of wayfinding signs with advertising. Unofficial or cluttered advertising signage can be a traffic hazard, causing confusion for visitors. Also, signs overloaded with information are unsafe, as drivers need to slow or stop to read the sign (TNO, 2014).

For information about the legislation and policy that governs signage in Huron East see Section 5.2: Understanding Signage By-laws and Section 5.3 Tourism Oriented Directional Signing program (TODS).

3.2 Online Wayfinding

In Ontario, people likely access tourism information through a variety of sources. OntarioTravel.net is the official tourism site for the Province. From the Explore menu, Huron is grouped with Perth, Waterloo & Wellington. On the next page, it is possible to find information about Huron itself. It requires multiple clicks and some searching to find the Huron tourism page, which is labelled Ontario's West Coast

(www.ontarioswestcoast.ca). This site is delivered by the County of Huron and the Huron Tourism Association.

In the Ontario's West Coast page, there is not an easy way to see all the things that can be done specifically in the Huron East area. Despite these limitations, tourism is most effective when approached systematically, and with neighbours. The Municipality of Huron East has its own website at www.huroneast.com. However, this website does not list tourism attractions in the municipality. A tourism tab should be added to the main page, where tourism listings are available.

In addition to the Ontario's West Coast tourism website, the County has a variety of tourist related websites organized by thematic area.

- Shop Huron- www.shophuron.ca
- Hike Huron- www.hikehuron.ca
- Creative Huron- www.creativehuron.ca

Some questions destinations should ask themselves to improve their online presence

- What comes up when you google search the destination?
- Is the destination listed clearly on Google Maps?
- Is the destination listed on the Ontario's West Coast Huron County Tourism Website or the Huron East Blog? Facebook? Wikipedia?
- Is there alignment between Google Maps, websites and reality?

3.3 Printed Materials

Printed materials are materials that contain information about destinations including maps, tour guides, and other interpretive materials. They are often used to supplement other approaches of wayfinding. Existing printed materials in Huron East should continue to be used as long as they are up to date. Careful consideration should be given to design and content of any printed materials. It is common to see bursts of impatience as visitors struggle through difficult maps and wayfinding documents (Passini, 1984).

3.4 People

The Tourism Northern Ontario (2014) strategy notes that one of the most effective instruments of wayfinding is people. Receiving local information from people is an

effective way for visitors to get around, especially in rural contexts. People in locations where visitors may stop can be expected to be asked about directions, restaurants, accommodations, gas stations, and activities. Or they might find that visitors are simply looking for reassurance that they are in the right place or headed in the right direction.

3.5 Rural Context

The majority of wayfinding literature is focused on navigating larger, more densely populated communities. However, it can be argued that a visitor's ability to find their way is even more important in rural areas. Huron East is a large geographical area, posing additional challenges for wayfinding. Signage is few and far between outside of the towns. If visitors cannot find a destination after driving for a long distance, it can be very frustrating for them. Enticing people to visit more than one destination can also be a challenge due to the proximity between attractions.

3.5.1 Safety Considerations

As noted in Section 3.1.2, a safety consideration should be the time and attention it takes to read and understand signs at different driving speeds (TNO, 2014). This is particularly an issue if sites are located on a rural road, because local cars tend to move at high speeds. The layout of the sign should take driving speed into account. Another safety consideration is Canada's winter weather. Visitors may not have winter emergency kits, charged phones, or experience in extreme winter conditions. When visitors are being provided wayfinding information in the winter, organizers should consider including a warning to check weather before departing, and a take notice of any road closures.

3.5.2 Accessibility

In rural areas assets might not be open all the time. There may be a home based business with irregular hours, hours by appointment, or "by chance" operating hours. This represents a challenge for wayfinders as they may spend time travelling to the destination only to find out it is not open. For places with irregular hours, the suppliers may be encouraged to be thoughtful about when they open, provide contact information online and within paper materials, and perhaps consider opening at the same time as nearby special events.

4.0 WHAT WE FOUND

This section summarizes the general results of the wayfinding signage audit, online, and paper materials that was completed for the Municipality of Huron East. For more detailed results, see Appendix 1 – Wayfinding Audit Results.

4.1 The Signage Audit Matrix

To audit physical wayfinding, a signage matrix (Figure 1) was created to record and evaluate the current state of signage in Huron East using the following categories:

- **Clarity:** refers to how easily the sign can be read or if the purpose/message is clear. Clarity considers sign colours, font and size.
- **Location:** refers to the placement of the signs, and if their location effectively directs visitors or indicates they have arrived at their destination
- **Cohesiveness:** refers to the way that signs for the same destination or within the same area work together. Cohesiveness considers colouring, logos and branding.

Signage Audit Matrix					
Sign Identification					
Street Name/Cross Road					
Number on Map					
Photo Number					
Type of Sign					
Directional Sign			Identification Sign		
Overall Impression	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Description (Purpose of sign, improvements, colour, visibility at night?):					
Location:					
Clarity:					
Cohesiveness:					

Figure 1. Signage Audit Matrix for March 11 & 12, 2016 audit activities

All of these categories created the rating of each individual sign as excellent, good, average, fair, or poor.

4.2 Online Presence and Printed Materials

The quality of online wayfinding was determined by conducting a Google search to see what appeared. Special attention was paid to how easily the destination was found on Google Maps. The quality of print materials was determined by recording which speciality assets/draws were present in printed materials such as the Huron East Community Guide and Huron County Vacation Guide.

4.3 The Results: General Issues and Recommendations

This section will address each aspect of wayfinding that was audited, outlining the general issues and some general recommendations. More specific and detailed recommendations can be found in the Appendix 1 or in Section 6.0 (Recommendations) of this report.

4.3.1 Physical Signage

Generally speaking, Huron East has very clear and effective street signs. It was always clear what road we were travelling on, and when another road began. These signs were clear, and cohesive with other road signs. Signage directing visitors to attractions were less clear or non-existent. This issue is elaborated on below.

4.3.2 Lack of Directional Signage

The main issues with signage in Huron East were largely reoccurring. One overarching issue was the lack of signage within the municipality for the identified speciality assets. Many assets and draws are clearly marked by identification signs on the property or at the entrance of the location. However, many of the assets were missing directional signage that would direct visitors to the location.

The recommendation is that assets or draws increase directional signage to their locations, so that visitors are able to find their way more easily. Particularly effective were the Tourism Oriented Directional Signing (TODS) or Ontario's West Coast signs that acted as a distance marker for upcoming attractions.

4.3.3 Cohesiveness

Another general signage issue seen widely within the municipality was a lack of cohesiveness. The style and quality of signs differed widely across the municipality and even within the signs of a single attraction. Some signs are handmade; other signs were erected by the government. There is some use of the Huron East logo, to create stronger branding across the county. Unfortunately, the branding of Ontario's West Coast does not favour landlocked municipalities and is not cohesive with the current Huron East logo.

The recommendation is to increase the use of Huron East signs, or to stick with the Ontario's West Coast branding. As visitors, it was not clear if we were in Huron East or another municipality much of the time and having Huron East specific branding may only create confusion.

4.3.4 Location and Placement

The location and placement of signs within Huron East was another widespread aspect of signage that had room for improvement. Many indication signs were placed parallel to the road, making it difficult to see when passing in a car (particularly if there is also a lack of directional signage). The recommendation is that indication signs be made perpendicular to the road whenever possible.

4.3.5 Online Wayfinding

Another important factor that was evaluated was the ability of visitors to find their way to their destination through online information. Some of the attractions and draws were easily found on Google Maps, but the majority were not. Similarly, some of the attractions/draws have extensive websites and are on the Ontario's West Coast Huron County website, while others did not. Recommendations in this category are the all assets/draws could be put into Google Maps, and be put on the Ontario's West Coast website with address, opening hours and contact information. Attractions with irregular hours or visits by appointment only should be made very clear online. In addition, the Huron East website should also create a tourism section, listing the attractions in the area, along with the address, contact information and opening hours.

4.3.6 Place Naming

Huron East has a number of examples of place naming that supports wayfinding. For example, Orchard Lane in Brussels, Main Street in Seaforth, and Beechwood Pottery on

Beechwood Road. Also, the logical order of numbered streets (4th, 5th, etc), used in Vanastra is easily understood by wayfinders. If possible, intuitive names should be given to streets or areas to associate them with the attractions available. Have the place name is a simple way to offer an environmental cue to wayfinders. Sports Road in Brussels is the same idea, but it is a little less intuitive. The challenge is that it interacts the main street far from the arena, pulling traffic away from the main street. Perhaps changing the name of Thomas Street to Arena Street might help. It is likely that people will take the turnoff off of the main street to get to the arena (not Sport Drive which is much further down and goes through a residential area). It benefits community business to have visitors travel on the main street.

4.3.7 Paper Materials

Huron East has attractions and draws within several paper documents. Brussels has a Historic Trail Brochure, and almost all assets are located in either the Huron East Community Guide or the Huron County Vacation Guide. The Huron County Vacation Guide in particular is easy to navigate, divided by type of attraction and area. Both guides have listed upcoming special events, which is useful for visitors in making connections with nearby attractions. However, these paper materials are not easily accessed by visitors, if possible provide them at more locations. The recommendation is that in addition to the Huron East Community Guide, a second tourism specific guide is created for Huron East with attractions divided by area of interest and location.

5.0 HOW-TO GUIDE

This section explains how interested destinations can get on online maps and erect new signage.

5.1 How to get on Google Maps

As noted in the wayfinding audit, many of Huron East's destinations were not found on Google Maps. Fortunately, in a few steps businesses can be listed free of charge on Google Maps.

Interested businesses should visit <https://www.google.com/business/>

The process to be added to Google Maps is:

1. Create a new listing on Google Maps

2. Complete a Google + Page providing as many details about your business as possible (e.g. operating hours, photographs)
3. Verify your business via phone or postcard

Businesses should also consider adding their business to Apple Maps. The Apple Maps App is automatically installed on every iPhone, so the app is increasing in popularity. The process to sign up is similar to Google Maps. Go to <https://mapsconnect.apple.com/>, and enter your Apple ID (if you do not have one, you have to create one), add details of your business, and confirm your business via telephone.

5.2 Understanding Signage By-laws

Regulations around signage are complicated because of multiple levels of jurisdictional responsibility. Depending on where the sign is located it may fall under provincial, county, or local municipal responsibility. This section provides an overview of the governing legislation and policies that control signage.

5.2.1 Provincial Roads

The provincial highways that run through Huron East are Highway #4 and Highway #8. Under the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act, (R.S.O. 1990, c. P.50) the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) controls signage on provincial highways. MTO imposes strict regulations on the kinds of signs that can be located on a provincial highway. For tourism signage, the Tourism Oriented Directional Signing program should be consulted if the tourism signage is desired on a provincial highway.

The two main policy documents governing signage on provincial roads are the Ontario Traffic Manual and Corridor Signage Policy. Both documents contain policies on the type, design, and placement of signs. Signs on private property also fall under the jurisdiction of the MTO if they are located within 400m of a provincial highway. Signs or advertising within the 400m range may require a permit from MTO. The application and permit fees can be found on the MTO website (<http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/engineering/management/corridor/signs.shtml>).

For support with MTO signage applications, contact the local Corridor Management Regional Office in London. General inquiries can be made to 1-800-265-6072 ext. 4203.

5.2.2 County Roads

The County has authority under the Municipal Act (Section 59) to prohibit or regulate signage within 400 metres of a county road. Two main by-laws cover most signage scenarios on county roads: 1) Signage By-law No. 53 1989, 2) Set Back By-law No. 49 1990. The set back by-law only covers signs large enough to be considered structures. Additionally, the Huron County Road Sign Policy, (not a by-law), provides guidelines for signage within 400m of a county road in those cases where the proposed sign does not fall under the other two signage bylaws noted above.

To encourage community branding and consistency, a County wide tourism signage program was developed. Creation of the Ontario's West Coast Tourism Sign Program was a collaborative effort between the County Public Works Department and the Economic Development Department in partnership with the Huron Tourism Association. Tourism businesses and attractions requiring directional signs on county roads should contact the Huron Economic Development Office for more information regarding the signage program. The Ontario's West Coast Tourism Sign Program is for tourism related businesses only. Other businesses should contact the County Public Works Department for assistance interpreting the county signage by-laws. Huron County Economic Development and the County's public works department can be reached at 519-524-8394.

5.2.3 Local Municipal Roads

The Municipal Act (S.O 2001, c. 25) gives municipalities specific powers to regulate structures including signs subject to the rules set out in Section 99. The Municipality of Huron East Signage By-Law No, 6 -2012 governs the erection and maintenance of sign and other advertising devices. In most instances, a permit must be granted by the Municipality of Huron East to erect a sign. The by-law covers several different types of signage that may appear on municipal roadways or private property.

5.3 Tourism Oriented Directional Signing Program (TODS)

The TODS program is an initiative of The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport and the Ministry of Transportation to create cohesive tourism signage on provincial highways. TODS signs are directional, designed to be highly visible, and provide a consistent system for wayfinders to quickly understand. They are installed and built to withstand stressors such as highway snowplows. The signs are reflective so they are visible at

night. To participate in the signage program, businesses need to meet various qualification criteria. Some example criteria are:

- The operation must be open at least five days a week during its operating season (unless specified otherwise in the Specific Criteria), on advertised set days and times
- The operation must have a reception structure – a controlled gate, staffed reception and orientation point, or permanent interpretation panels or displays

The fee for signs ranges from \$60 - \$4500 per annum, depending on the type of sign. Businesses interested in signs can see the full list of qualification criteria and apply for a sign on the Ontario TODS website (<http://www.mtc.gov.on.ca/en/tourism/tods.shtml>).

5.4 Resources for more information

Two manuals and strategies were used to inform this document and are available online for further reference.

1. Tourism Research Innovation Project: Welcome! A Manual to Enhance Community Signage and Visitor experience.

- This manual is a comprehensive guide on how to improve community signage in rural areas
- Authors: Crystal Stone and Nicole L. Vaugeois
- Available at: <http://sustainablelertourism.ca/2013/03/welcome-a-how-to-manual-to-enhance-community-signage-and-visitor-experience/>

2. Tourism Northern Ontario Wayfinding Strategy Document

- This wayfinding strategy was developed to improve tourism signage in Northern Ontario. Many of the suggestive actions are applicable in other parts of rural Ontario
- Developed by: Corbin Design
- Available at: [http://tourismnorthernontario.com/documents/assets/uploads/files/en/2014_wayfinding_strategy_\(final\).pdf](http://tourismnorthernontario.com/documents/assets/uploads/files/en/2014_wayfinding_strategy_(final).pdf)

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the individual recommendations provided for each draw/asset (See Appendix 1), this list provides some overall recommendations for wayfinding in Huron East.

1. Ensure identified assets are “Visitor Ready”
 - Encourage businesses/attractions to have welcoming signage, indicating whether they are open for visitors
 - Ensure operating hours and contact information are online and in printed materials, especially if the hours are by chance or appointment. Take the Old Shoppe for example. The owner is willing to share his private museum, which is wonderful, but how will visitors know when he is available? Consider having an A-frame sign outside that indicates the attraction is open to the public
2. Wayfinding efforts should be coordinated between all stakeholders (Huron East, Huron County, and private businesses)
 - Think of the implications of creating a separate community brand. It is not obvious to visitors what part of Huron County they are in, the boundaries arbitrary. Consider maintaining some consistency with the County branding if a community brand is created
 - For an example of a good community branding initiative see: www.timminsbrand.ca
3. Improve the Municipality of Huron East website
 - Consider clearly organizing the major sections of the website. Visitors should have the opportunity to click on three major categories: Economic Development, Municipal Services or Tourism
 - Compile assets and visitor attractions in their own 'Tourism' section of the website, and organise by category (places to stay, places to eat, what to do). This will easily allow website users to locate destinations according to interests and itinerary
4. Include Huron East Attractions on all Huron affiliated websites
 - Huron County has a number of different websites, (shophuron, hikehuron, creativehuron etc). All Huron East attractions should be listed on these websites (if applicable), as well as on the Huron County Tourism website

(ontarioswestcoast.ca) and the Huron East website (recommendation above). This will improve Huron East's presence within Huron County as a municipality with interesting attractions that should be visited

- The cross pollination of asset information on existing websites will improve search engine optimization (SEO). If a visitor types an attraction into Google, every Huron affiliated website with information on the attraction will come to the top of the search page (as well as any Facebook and social media accounts)
- If all search results list the correct address, contact information and opening hours, the asset will then be viewed as more established and welcoming. Then visitors are more likely to plan a visit

5. Improve Social Media Presence of Huron East Businesses and Attractions

- Encourage all business owners to have Facebook pages and websites
- Huron East attractions could be profiled on the Huron County Instagram page
- The municipality could host a social media workshop to explain the importance of using social media and aid business owners in creating Facebook pages and websites

6. Encourage utilization of County tourism signs

- Reach out to the more prominent local private businesses, and explain the benefits of the program to them
- Consider offering a subsidy to businesses on signs to encourage participation (if possible)
- Ensure county tourism signs be utilized in a way that they follow best practices by locating in places where they are needed, and where they provide meaningful direction to the asset
- Explore whether or not it is possible for a vendor to put a closed magnet over a portion of sign to indicate when an attraction is closed (especially seasonal operations)

7. Consider using a 15 minute radius from significant clusters of draws to encourage visitors to explore

- At this time, there are not sufficient numbers or densities of similarly themed assets in the municipality to create trails (e.g. a Food and Wine trail)
- There are clusters of draws in Vanastra, Seaforth, Brussels, and Walton

- As opposed to developing “trails” consider all the things that can be done in 15 minutes of those places (Vanastra, Seaforth, Brussels, and Walton), and encourage free exploration from there
- Visitors can take in those municipal assets that interest them (in whatever combination)

8. Involve community members and community businesses in wayfinding

- Informed local people are some of the best sources of current information
- In small communities, it is not uncommon for businesses or other assets to be emerging, unstructured, or loosely established
- The shifting availability and accessibility of local assets makes it difficult for print materials to stay current
- Offer local draws (arenas, golf course, motocross, gas stations, B&Bs, etc.) blank pads of maps when they are likely to be hosting visitors
- Pads of blank paper maps allow local people the ability to easily draw onto the maps and direct people to the assets they are comfortable recommending and know are prepared to receive them
- Give local draws one copy of a map with all potential assets filled out and properly located so they can use it as a reference tool when providing directions (update it every few years)
- Ensure that people at local draws prepared to answer basic questions from visitors including: “How far is it to our final destination?” “Where can we stay in the local area?” “What should we do while we’re here?” “Can you recommend a place to eat?” “Where is the nearest gas station?”

7.0 CONCLUSION

Exploring the current state of wayfinding in Huron East unveiled there are some strong aspects of wayfinding. Huron East has many exciting specialty assets with large amounts of potential for the municipality. However, there is also room for improvement in the physical, online, and printed material channels of wayfinding. A coordinated approach to improving the various channels of wayfinding will create welcoming assets that are easily found by visitors in whatever way is chosen. Improved wayfinding could lead to increased visitation and a positive economic impact for the communities of Huron East. The recommendations provided are meant to serve as a starting point to consider when improving wayfinding in all of its forms. If implemented, these changes will have exciting effects for the municipality of Huron East.

8.0 APPENDICES

[Appendix 1: Wayfinding Audit Results](#)

[Appendix 2: List of assets and draws, organized by geographical area](#)

[Appendix 3: Sample Blank Map](#)

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Appendix 1 – Wayfinding Audit Results

* included as a separate document

Appendix 2 –Assets & draws listed by cluster

This appendix provides a list of identified draws and assets, categorized by geographical location. In the future, this list may be useful for creating cluster marketing materials for draws to hand out to visitors already in the areas.

Brussels (inside)

- Huron-Lea Home for Aged
- Brussels Morris Grey Community Centre
- Gray's Bed and Breakfast
- Mait-Side Apple Orchard
- Optimist Club (Old Train Station)
- Don McNeil – Old Shop (Private Museum)
- Armstrong Aerodrome
- Cowboy Loft
- Brussels Stockyard
- Victoria Ballpark
- Brussels' Conservation (Canoe Launch)
- Jam Jar Restaurant
- Rack and Roost
- Brussels' Walking Tour and Murals
- Cinnamon Jim's Cafe
- JR's Family Restaurant & Gas Bar
- Brussels' Farmers' Market
- Solace on Turnberry Spa & Gift Shop

Brussels (outside of)

- DJ's Handcrafted Solid Wood Furniture
- Old 86 Farmers' Market
- Maple Keys Conservation Area
- Ethel Conservation Area
- Windmill Museum (Private Property) Bryan Morton' s Farm Property
- N.S. Martin Processing (Mennonite Sausage Maker)
- Pam's Country Quilting
- Cranbrook Acres Alpaca Farm
- Drudge's Maple Syrup
- Blake's Apple Orchard

Seaforth (Inside)

- Seaforth Golf and Country Club
- Van Egmond House
- Seaforth Ballpark/Lions Park and Pool
- Seaforth Farmer's Market
- Seaforth Historic Walking Tour
- Victoria Park Seaforth (Summer music events – Twilight Tunes) & Cenotaph
- Cotton Harvest Quilt Shop
- Timber's Outfitters
- Forever Memories (Scrapbooking, B & B)
- Seaforth Curling Club
- Seaforth Agri-Plex and Racetrack (Fairgrounds) /Seaforth and District Community Centres
- JL Retirement Living Community
- Pemberly House Bed & Breakfast
- Half Hours on Earth Brewery

Seaforth (outside of)

- Family Paradise Campground
- Storey's Maple Syrup, Honey & Pork Products
- Beachwood Pottery
- Dublin Retail – Goettler's Of Dublin Fine Furniture, Dublin Mercantile, Merv's Patio
- Front Road Stone Houses
- Maelstron Winery & Cidery
- Hullett Marsh (Shooting Pheasants)
- The Garlic Box
- Kippen Gun Club
- Kippen Creek Mennonite Furniture

Vanastra (inside)

- Huron View Home for the Aged
- Vanastra Recreation Centre Indoor Heated Pool
- Vanastra Recreation Centre RCAF Historic Display
- Plant Paradise
- Vanastra Curling Club

- Good Choice Scratch & Dent Appliances

Vanastra (outside of)

- Maelstrom Winery
- Front Road Stone Houses
- The Garlic Box
- Kippen Gun Club
- Kippen Creek Mennonite Furniture
- Hullet Marsh

Walton (inside)

- Edge of Walton Challenge Course
- Walton Motocross Raceway
- G2G Trail

Walton (outside of)

- 2017 IPM Plowing Match Site
- Storey's Maple Syrup, Honey & Pork Products
- Windmill Museum (Private Property) Bryan Morton' s Farm Property
- Beachwood Pottery
- Family Paradise Campground

Appendix 3 – Sample blank map

Could print a map like this on 11 x 14" as a pad of paper so that it can be written on, ripped off, and given away to visitors.

BRUSSELS

BRUSSELS & AREA