

# **Hosting Regional Sport Events: Insights from Emerging Sport Tourism Destinations**

by

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## *Author's Declaration*

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

## *Abstract*

The aim of this exploratory study was to investigate and gain stakeholder insights into the nature of hosting sport tourism events and using them as a regional development strategy in two emerging sport tourism markets (i.e., regions that have recently begun to explore the potential of hosting small-scale sport events as a tourism development strategy). Specifically, the current research addressed five research questions in relation to tourism stakeholders' input from the Waterloo and Niagara Regions in Ontario, Canada: (i) Why do destinations engage in sport tourism development strategies? (ii) What are perceived constraints to engaging in sport tourism events as development strategies? (iii) How do stakeholders decide which sport events to pursue, bid for and host? (iv) What are the perceived regional impacts of hosting sport tourism events? (v) What extent is leveraging these impacts considered in sport tourism strategy development? A total of 10 semi-structured interviews were conducted with key sport and tourism decision making stakeholders in the two regions during February and March 2015. A thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006) was used, which included different phases of coding and analysis to derive key themes and concepts. Themes emerging from the data included, Embracing the current sport tourism situation; Deriving benefits from hosting sport tourism events (e.g. job creation, sport development, volunteerism, enhanced well-being, destination image development, increased community engagement and destination differentiation); Overcoming challenges of hosting sport tourism events (e.g. facility and infrastructure constraints, resident irritation and displacement; resource allocation and navigating the political environment); Understanding regional impacts of hosting sport tourism events and Effective leveraging of sport tourism events. Implications for research and practice are further discussed in relation to each theme.

**Key words:** *Sport Tourism Development, Regional Development, Canada, Destination Development*

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## *List of Abbreviations*

<i>DMO</i>	<i>Destination Marketing/Management Organization</i>
<i>FIFA</i>	<i>Fédération Internationale de Football Association</i>
<i>IRB</i>	<i>International Rugby Board</i>
<i>ATP</i>	<i>Association of Tennis Professionals</i>
<i>CTC</i>	<i>Canadian Tourism Commission</i>
<i>CSTA</i>	<i>Canadian Sport Tourism Alliance</i>
<i>ICC</i>	<i>International Cricket Council</i>
<i>NFL</i>	<i>National Football League</i>
<i>NBA</i>	<i>National Basketball Association</i>
<i>GDP</i>	<i>Gross Domestic Product</i>
<i>ICF</i>	<i>International Canoe Federation</i>
<i>IIHF</i>	<i>International Ice Hockey Federation</i>
<i>FINA</i>	<i>Fédération Internationale de Natation</i>
<i>LPGA</i>	<i>Ladies Professional Golf Association</i>
<i>RTO</i>	<i>Regional Tourism Organization</i>
<i>NASC</i>	<i>National Association of Sport Commissions (USA)</i>
<i>IOC</i>	<i>International Olympic Committee</i>
<i>TPN</i>	<i>Tourism Partnership of Niagara</i>
<i>WRTMC</i>	<i>Waterloo Region Tourism Marketing Corporation</i>
<i>NSC</i>	<i>Niagara Sport Commission</i>
<i>RSTO</i>	<i>Regional Sport Tourism Office</i>
<i>NOTL</i>	<i>Niagara on the Lake</i>
<i>GNCC</i>	<i>Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce</i>
<i>NPC</i>	<i>Niagara Parks Commission</i>

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Tourism consists of experiences that take place away from an individual's permanent residence (Zauhar, 2004). Tourists often have different motivations and experiences that can complement or conflict with their destination hosts; but in its ideal form, tourism can be a mutually beneficial experience that fulfills tourists' wants and needs whilst also providing benefits for the host community (Zauhar, 2004). As one of the largest and fastest-growing economic sectors in the world (UNWTO, 2011a), tourism as a business and service industry, is often utilized as a destination development strategy to induce employment and encourage higher standards of living by stimulating investment, generating currency exchange and other economic benefits (Telfer & Wall, 2000) but the concept can be defined beyond these two factors (Telfer, 2009). Initially concerned with economic growth, solely through modernisation, the notion of tourism development has widened to include social development and ecological preservation as a way to combat the impacts of mass tourism and progressively contribute to destination development in a post-industrial world economy (Telfer, 2009).

As an extension of fundamental tourism products, sport tourism is also viewed as a socio-economic force overlapping the fields of sport and tourism as a facet of the tourism industry that has made increasing economic contributions via different sporting products, events and services (Pigeassou, 2004). With sporting events become a widespread economic driver, some estimates illustrate that events and sport events are the most rapidly progressive element of the leisure travel market exceeding the demand for business and conference tourism (Shifflet & Bhatia, 1999). Creating a definition of the concept has also been complicated and speaks directly to the complexity of the field (Deery, Jago & Fredline, 2004). Diaz (2003) recognizes sport tourism from a tourism market perspective,

Sports; not only, promote healthy practices; but also, incorporate economic activities contributing to variant relationships found in sports tourism. Self-fulfilment seemingly is the underlying determinant for the common consumer of sports tourism. However, sports

as an activity, has an affinity to tourism, resultantly complementary in nature. Both sectors, although unique in their existence are shifting closer together to comply to the philosophy of sport tourism as a unified sector in spite of observable historical differences. (p. 95)

In recent history, sports of all types and skill levels have been conceptualized as a 'touristic activity' (Hinch & Higham, 2001). For long-term success of the sport tourism industry, there needs to be coherent and strategic planning that involves efficient collaboration amongst sport and tourism stakeholders (local governing bodies, affiliated businesses and destination management/marketing organisations (DMO) in the destination (Deery & Jago, 2005). The collaborative efforts and community interactions required will be discussed at length throughout this study.

### **1.1 Sport Events and Tourism**

As a niche within a vast tourism market, sport tourism events have been receiving increasing attention in recent years by tourism researchers, practitioners and policy makers (Swart & Bob, 2007; Lim & Patterson, 2008; Hinch & Higham, 2011). Hosting events are a direct and significant driver of tourism and have become a prominent part of tourism plans in a number of destinations (Getz, 2008). In terms of hosting sporting events, there is a similar motivation. These events are seen in both the developing and developed world as part of a broader tourism plan focused on enhancing the cities, regions and countries as a whole (Kotze & Visser, 2008). Local communities and organizations are continuing to align their interests in hosting sport events even though the event can pose challenges for organizers and hosts as they are very dynamic and temporary whilst being simultaneously produced and consumed (Chalip & Costa, 2005). Therefore, the success of sport tourism development strategies cannot just be compounded on the economic benefits. Some cities often use sport tourism events as attractions that are used in turn to advance the urban centre's destination image and also utilize it as a regeneration strategy (Gratton, Shibli & Coleman, 2005) whilst others hope to use the event an impetus for increasing

levels of well-being through sport participation and physical activity in the host community (Potwarka & McCarville, 2010).

De Villiers (2003, p. 94) asserts that sport tourism is about understanding, “how to transform the sport event participation into a tourism experience and to convert the tourism destination into a sport practice venue.” Moreover, international sporting competitions are growing as an important part of the sport tourism event industry, incorporating the complete spectrum of individual and multi-sport events. In the past three decades, there has been an integral role for sport tourism events in the process of globalization as well as the regeneration process of local, regional and national identities. These events have become commodities that are increasingly sought after for emerging destination markets and developed countries alike as their countries and economies grow (Swart, Bob & Arrey 2008). Hence, more destinations are using this aspect in their marketing communications and campaigns whether it is a new or established sport event that may already take place elsewhere (Hallmann & Breuer, 2010). All sport events, whether mega-events or small-scale events have impacts on their host community but organizers usually neglect social and ecological impacts in favour of economic gains (Swart et al., 2008).

Historically, tourism destinations are places that attract and provide experiences to cater to the needs and expectations of visiting tourists whilst accommodating the tourist travel flow. There are various reasons for travelling to a destination, but the phenomenon that has made the most recent progress is to visit a destination to consume sporting events. A positive relationship has been established between visitor experiences at sport events as they contribute to the profile and uniqueness of the destination (Higham, 2005). Harrison-Hill and Chalip (2005, p. 306) note, “Attending a sport event, participating in a sport activity, or visiting a sport museum or a famous stadium are each a form of experience.” Thus, modern destinations that use sport events as a major attraction provide the relevant attributes for the tourist’s benefit. The setting where the sport is experienced and the destination hosting the sport event both have pivotal roles in the sport tourist experience (Harrison-Hill & Chalip, 2005). Ultimately, tourism destinations are

taking full advantage of the opportunities to reap the perceived benefits associated with hosting sport events.

## **1.2 Using Sport Events as a Strategy for Tourism Development**

As part of a wider tourism destination development strategy, the planning and implementation of sport events must incorporate strategic management tools to encourage long-term stakeholder collaboration (Kirovska, 2011) and to keep in line with the market trends of the dynamic global tourism industry. In this light, sporting events are being recognized as some of the world's major tourist attractions. Both mega sporting events, for example the Olympic Games, Commonwealth Games, the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) Football World Cup and International Rugby Board (IRB) Rugby World Cup as well as small-scale events which include marathons (e.g., Boston, New York, London), cycling events (e.g., Giro d'Italia, Tour d'France) and domestic professional sporting leagues (e.g. English Premier League (England), National Football League (NFL) and National Basketball Association (NBA) (both USA), have a major role in attracting international tourists not only to the events but also to consume the other attractions within the destination (Oh, 2004). These events have the potential to bring in tourism revenue and have become a major part of destination marketing plans which benefit them through the economic advantages and the promotion of their tourism profiles within the global marketplace (Oh, 2004). In New Zealand for the 2011 IRB Rugby World Cup (Werner, Dickson & Hyde, 2015), the nation hosted a 6 week 48 match tournament with teams and spectators from across the world. The host nation estimates that it expanded the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by NZD \$573 million (approximately CDN \$504 million). The organisers also believe that the tournament left a positive social legacy on the host nation as they organized successful social media, business, community, volunteer and social cohesion programs for local consumption. These initiatives were executed alongside an international marketing program that saw an oversized rugby ball with the IRB and Rugby World Cup logos set up in



Paris, London, Tokyo, Sydney and Auckland to promote the country and mega-event before the tournament began (New Zealand Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, 2012). This demonstrates the lengths that some countries are willing to go to engage in sport events to drive development via tourism.

Both sport and tourism industries share similar realities as consumer industries that are responsible for satisfying an individual's needs with goods, services and experiences. In order to comprehend the consumption of sport tourism events, we must investigate the tourist trends, expectations and reasons for attending events and choosing destinations (Shipway & Stevenson, 2012). Sport events not only play a significant role in inducing tourism in a host destination (Chen & Funk, 2010) but also signify a major and modern economic stream of revenue for all stakeholders involved, including venues, associations, ancillary services and their respective cities, countries and regions (Hall, O'Mahony & Vieceli, 2010). Thus, in a competitive tourism marketplace, destinations need to create a niche that develops a powerful destination image and this can be made possible through the hosting of a sport event (Hallmann & Breuer, 2010). Global tourism destinations need to determine the role sporting events have in complementing the destination's other attractions to attract and satisfy a broader range of tourist and build a brand to satisfying tourist needs (Harrison-Hill & Chalip, 2005). Xing and Chalip (2006) conclude that to extend the socio-economic benefits, beyond the hosting of the event, the city as a tourism destination, there must be strategic planning to leverage the use of the sport event image to accentuate the destination's brand image.

### **1.3 Sport Tourism Events, Destination Regeneration and Regional Development**

Within recent history, a number of destinations have seen immense growth through sport tourism or are engaging sport tourism as a form of destination rejuvenation and development (Weed & Bull, 2009). These advancements allude to sport providing a wide range of development opportunities for national, regional and local tourism destinations (Higham, 2005).

The importance of sport tourism destinations is also magnified by the spatial utility of sport tourism in various levels of destination development, within the spheres of national-local; urban-rural or central-periphery development initiatives. The growth of these destinations that include sport tourism events has been due to the influences of sport promotion via different media outlets, global connectivity and communications and the reality of sport events being linked to recognized destinations (Higham, 2005). An example of this is the Roland Garros site in Paris, France; this site is home to one of the most famous locations on the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) World Tour Grand Slam tennis tournament of events. The location is known for its history in the sport and its unique clay court playing surface located in the urban region of Paris, France (BBC Sport, 2010).

There are specific ways that destinations can adapt sport tourism development for economic growth and prosperity (Hinch & Higham, 2011). However, Stokes (2008) iterates that for more efficiency, the destination needs to adopt a synonymous sport and event strategy as merely developing them autonomously will not reap the potential benefits for the destination. Whilst sport events can also be used as a strategy for economic development and urban regeneration purposes (Weed & Bull, 2009), they bring distinctive offerings to a destination with various types of participants into local/regional contexts where they are executed (Higham, 2005). In addition, it is usually a matter of administration, collaboration and relationship building between stakeholders, including the local organizing committee, event organizers, tourism organizations, business community and the DMO for smooth and effective planning and execution of the sport events to leverage the benefits for the destination (Kruger & Heath, 2013).

Customarily, the prominent drivers of sport tourism development have been urban developers, government agencies and policy makers, facility owners and operators and event organizers (Higham, 2005). However, Weidenfeld and Leask (2013) highlight that as a tourism system, the attractions and events have the most significant parts in the development and holistic success of a destination. The authors also discuss that there needs to be different management

strategies for attractions and events as the former has a physical identity where the latter are supplementary activities that augment the elements of the physical attractions (Weidenfeld & Leask, 2013). Francis and Murphy (2005) give an example of a thriving urban sport tourism destination in Melbourne, Australia. The authors discuss the benefits the urban destination has reaped from hosting international sporting events, including games in the 2003 IRB Rugby World Cup, International Cricket Test Matches and the Melbourne Cup. The media exposure of the city, the capability of its infrastructure and the presence of its ancillary services to appeal to and satisfy the needs of tourists boosted the destination image as a 'Sport City' (p.79). The authors also noted that these benefits were emergent of the city's collaborative efforts between government agencies, organisers and businesses to move forward as a sport tourism destination. This included their improvement and development of facilities and transportation infrastructure alongside a marketing strategy to appeal to international markets as an attractive destination for the sport tourist. Additionally, the city is now able to put together comprehensive bids for annual/recurring and major one-off future sporting events as their growth in facilities and infrastructure has allowed them to build a brand as a sport tourism destination (Francis & Murphy, 2005).

#### **1.4 Canadian Sport Tourism Events**

Sport events as tourist attractions are a unique blend of two thriving industries, which serve as an approach to connect tourists and visitors to places in distinct ways (Hinch & Higham, 2011). In 1967, the Canadian government implemented a federal policy with respect to solidifying efforts in bidding and securing future international sporting events (McCloy, 2009). Accordingly, the state of the sport tourism industry in Canada is currently in a good position. In 2010, sport tourism contributed \$3.6 billion in revenue to the Canadian economy, a rise of 8.8% since 2008 (Sport Canada, 2013). The sport system in Canada is funded by various levels of government which range from the municipal and provincial levels handling local and regional sport bodies and events, to the national level that foster high performance environments for

competing national teams (Pealo & Redmond, 2006). Sport tourism events in Canada have been growing and have been positioned by the Canadian Tourism Council (CTC) as a major economic development strategy from the local to national levels of planning (Hinch, 2006). The epitome of this approach was the creation of the Canadian Sport Tourism Alliance (CSTA) in 2000 in order to develop and increase the capacity of local and regional communities to host small-scale and mega sporting events. Moreover, the organization's mandate to market and develop Canada as an international sport tourism destination, moving the country's sport tourism profile forward, is situated amongst its strides in product development, communication, marketing and impact assessment (Canadian Sport Tourism Alliance, 2013b).

Upon the creation of the CSTA and the progression of sport tourism initiatives, Canada embodies a variety of successful active, participant and culture based sport tourism attractions (Hinch, 2006). Each province boasts its own section of Hall of Fames to showcase sport heritage and cultural aspects boosting nostalgia sport tourism. As well, there are different approaches taken by cities, regions and provinces to hosting scales of events that suit their capacity. Pealo & Redmond (2006) also named Canada the 'Games Country' as the nation has hosted numerous domestic and international multi-sport events to date. Table 1 shows some of the mega-events that have been hosted in Canada within the last 50 years.

Table 1 – *Mega-events hosted in Canada*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>
1967	<i>Pan American Games</i>	<i>Winnipeg, Manitoba</i> <i>(Pealo &amp; Redmond, 2006; Pan American Sports Organization, 2015)</i>
1976	<i>IOC Summer Olympics</i>	<i>Montreal, Quebec</i> <i>(Pealo &amp; Redmond, 2006)</i>
1978	<i>Commonwealth Games</i>	<i>Victoria, British Columbia</i> <i>(Pealo &amp; Redmond, 2006; Commonwealth Games Federation, 2014)</i>
1987	<i>FIFA Under-17 World Cup</i>	<i>Various Canadian Cities</i> <i>(Canada Soccer, 2014)</i>
1988	<i>IOC Winter Olympics</i>	<i>Calgary, Alberta</i> <i>(Pealo &amp; Redmond, 2006)</i>
1994	<i>Commonwealth Games</i>	<i>Edmonton, Alberta</i> <i>(Pealo &amp; Redmond, 2006; Commonwealth Games Federation, 2014)</i>
1999	<i>Pan American Games</i>	<i>Winnipeg, Manitoba</i> <i>(Parent, 2008; Pealo &amp; Redmond, 2006; Pan American Sports Organization, 2015)</i>
2002	<i>FIFA Women's Under-20 World Cup</i>	<i>Various Canadian Cities</i> <i>(Canada Soccer, 2014)</i>
2007	<i>FIFA Under-20 World Cup</i>	<i>Various Canadian Cities</i> <i>(Canada Soccer, 2014)</i>
2010	<i>IOC Winter Olympics</i>	<i>Vancouver, British Columbia</i> <i>(Williams &amp; Elkhatab, 2012; Potwarka, 2011)</i>
2014	<i>FIFA Women's Under-20 World Cup</i>	<i>Various Canadian Cities</i> <i>(Canada Soccer, 2014; The Canadian Press, 2014)</i>
2015	<i>IIHF World Junior Championship</i>	<i>Toronto, Ontario and Montreal, Quebec</i> <i>(Hockey Canada, 2015)</i>
2015	<i>FIFA Women's World Cup</i>	<i>Various Canadian Cities</i> <i>(Canada Soccer, 2014; Calnek, 2015; Hochman, 2015; The Canadian Press, 2014)</i>
2015	<i>Pan American Games</i>	<i>Toronto, Ontario</i> <i>(Sport Canada, 2013; Ontario News, 2013; Pan American Sports Organization, 2015)</i>

On a smaller and domestic scale, there is the regular hosting of provincial sport tournaments (Ontario Volleyball Association, Ontario Basketball Association and various levels of provincial hockey), inter-university sport and the Canada Summer and Winter Games in various cities across the country (Pealo & Redmond, 2006; Hinch & Highham, 2011). Canada also hosts other international annual sporting events that are not on the mega-event scale, but do receive

global recognition, including, the Rogers Cup Tennis Tournament (Rogers Cup, 2015); the Montreal Formula 1 Grand Prix (Formula1.com, 2015); the RBC Canadian Open (Thompson, 2015) and the Grand Slam of Curling (Grand Slam of Curling, 2015).

Additionally, there are municipal and regional, amateur and professional sport organizations that range in sport and demographic to provide active and spectator event options for all sport enthusiasts. Furthermore, these amateur and professional teams allow host cities the opportunity to leverage the socio-economic benefits for their host communities (Mason & Duquette, 2008). Considering, the various types of sport tourism events that Canada has hosted and will be hosting, in the forms of small-scale and local events as well as mega sporting events, there is a considerable gap in the academic literature as to the strategic planning processes and the means by which the country's tourism stakeholders approach this form of tourism development. This study addresses gaps in the current academic literature, especially with regard to the deficiency of research on small-scale sporting events, and the pursuit of hosting small-scale/regional events in a Canadian context.

#### ***1.4.1 Research on Sport Tourism Events in Canada***

Within the realm of the sport tourism industry, hosting sport events ranging in size can produce benefits to the host infrastructure, communication networks and via media exposure of the country and the event. Moreover, the event can also provide economic benefit and improved linkages between the host's sport and tourism industries (Kivla, 2003). In Canada, the sport tourism industry is no different. Considered the largest growing sector of the tourism industry in Canada, sport tourism contributes \$1.25 billion dollars to the country's GDP with sport and recreation organisations engaging 5.3 million people as participants, spectators and volunteers in Canada as well as employing approximately 2% of the country's workforce (Sport Canada, 2013a). Furthermore, in 2014 the country was voted the second best sporting nation in the world stemming from its recent history of hosting sporting events such as the Commonwealth Games in

1999 and Winter Olympic Games in 2010, also including the successful bid for the rights to host the Pan American Games in 2015 (Canadian Sport Tourism Alliance, 2013a). With each province taking ownership for local, regional and provincial sport tourism events, the provinces of Ontario, Quebec, Alberta and British Columbia are the top economic drivers of sport tourism in Canada, accounting for \$1.7 billion or 82% of sport tourism receipts subsequently driving the operation and growth of the country's respective food and beverage, accommodation and recreation and leisure sectors (Sport Canada, 2013b).

To date, there has been some research done by the country's federal and provincial governments and sport tourism bodies such as the CSTA and Sport Canada on the impacts of sport tourism events. However, there has been only limited academic research conducted on the sport tourism event phenomenon in Canada (e.g. Mason & Duquette, 2008; Parent & Séguin, 2008; Kaplanidou & Karadakis, 2010; Sant, Mason & Hinch, 2013). The majority of academic research on Canadian sport tourism has been related to sport heritage and the social and economic impact analysis of previous mega sporting events. Each province provides strategies for their own socio-economic growth and development through tourism and by extension sport tourism but there are not always linkages between academic and industry pursuits to move the dynamic sport tourism sector forward.

With respect to the research on sport tourism events in Canada, there has been some progress in the investigation of leveraging the legacy and social impacts of the Vancouver Olympic Games (Kaplanidou & Karadakis, 2010; Potwarka, 2011; Williams & Elkhatab, 2012; Sant et al., 2013) and the relationship between local hockey franchises and tourism development (Mason & Duquette, 2008). In terms of economic studies, there was a fiscal analysis done on the Montreal Olympic Games (Levine, 2003; Whitson & Horne, 2006) and an economic impact analysis of a medium sized sporting event, the 2005 Pan-American Junior Athletic Championships (Taks, Kesenne, Chalip, Green & Martyn, 2011). Additionally, in terms of economic research, the CSTA provides economic impact assessment reports for a number of

domestic and international events that have been hosted in the country since 2002, including the 2012 Grey Cup Festival, 2009 International Canoe Federation (ICF) World Canoe Championships, 2008 Arctic Winter Games, 2007 FIFA U-20 World Cup and several offerings of the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) World Junior Championships (Canadian Sport Tourism Alliance, 2013c). Another avenue of research on Canadian sport tourism comes in the form of culture, heritage and nostalgia in the form of investigating Canadian sport and culture including sport heritage museums in the tourism marketplace (Hinch, 2006; Hinch & Ramshaw, 2014; Ramshaw, 2010) and also place identity and sport (Ramshaw & Hinch, 2009). There is also some inquiry into the area of seasonality of sport tourism and the effect on the Canadian ski industry (Williams & Fidgeon, 2000; Hinch & Highham, 2011). Lastly, there has also been some research on brand creation with a case study of the 2005 Montreal Fédération Internationale de Natation (FINA) Swimming World Championships (Parent & Séguin, 2008) and case study stakeholder analysis of the 1999 Pan American Games in Winnipeg (Parent, 2008).

This study will be examining stakeholders' perspectives on hosting small-scale/regional sport events. Indeed, insights into the nature of pursuing small-scale sport events, and their use as regional tourism development strategies have not been widely investigated in the literature. Thus, this research will investigate stakeholders' perceptions of hosting regional sport events in two major regional municipalities in Ontario, Canada.

## **1.5 Rationale of the Study – Aim and Research Questions**

Despite growing desires to increase tourism in regions across Canada, there has been a scarcity of research with respect to tourism strategy development (Albrecht, 2010; Bornhorst, Ritchie & Sheehan, 2010; Getz, 2008; Shunnaq, Shwab & Reid, 2008; Stokes, 2008) and by extension sport tourism development strategy (Stokes, 2008). Upon an environmental scan of current sport tourism event initiatives in Canada, at least two urban or municipal regions within each province have endeavoured to host sport tourism events. Furthermore, a number of Canadian



cities have developed a bid/hosting package for sport events in attempt to attract all scales of sporting events. Some examples of these cities include London (Tourism London, 2014), Kingston (Tourism Kingston, 2014 - See Appendix A) and Hamilton (Tourism Hamilton, 2014) in the province of Ontario and also including Langley (Tourism Langley, 2008), Surrey (Sport Surrey, 2014) and Nanaimo (Nanaimo.ca, 2014 - See Appendix A) in the province of British Columbia. In addition, some cities have developed an informative presence on the internet providing stakeholder information on hosting events within the city; examples include Toronto, St Johns, Vancouver, Winnipeg (See Appendix A), Charlottetown and Kamloops (See Appendix A). The creation of the CSTA, which helps cities research, bid, implement and analyze sport tourism impacts (Canadian Sport Tourism Alliance, 2013b), is another indication that using sport tourism events as a development strategy in Canada is at the forefront of tourism planning and development in the country.

Although many Canadian cities and municipal regions have hosted small-scale and mega-events and continue to do so, there is limited research into the nature and impetus behind such tourism initiatives as experienced and perceived by key stakeholders. A further examination of different Canadian municipal sport tourism plans and perspective bid packages show the various individual stakeholders and stakeholder groups that are required to collaborate for successful bids and subsequent hosting of sport tourism events. There are a number of stakeholders involved in the hosting of these types of events and by extension advancement of a sport tourism development strategy. In addition, little academic research exists, with respect to sport tourism development on regional scales. Moreover, there is also a lack of research on stakeholder involvement in regions that are in the early stages of developing sport tourism initiatives. Ultimately, there is a paucity of research on “emerging” sport tourism destinations, particularly those seeking to bid on small-scale/regional sport tourism events.

Emerging tourism destination markets all have a number of unique qualities that set them apart from each other and the other more established tourism destinations (Esu & Ebitu, 2010).

Accordingly, “An emerging tourism destination is conceptualised as a geo-political area where tourism has just been accepted as a major socio-economic development tool and where the community has expressed willingness to leverage the tourism potentials to enhance their socio-economic well-being” (Esu & Ebitu, 2010, p. 21). As an extension of the concept of emerging tourism destination markets, this research endeavours to explore the ‘emerging sport tourism markets’, of Waterloo, Ontario and Niagara, Ontario. These regional municipalities each have their own distinct tourism products, including Niagara Falls and Wine Tourism in the Niagara Region (Visit Niagara Canada, 2014) as well as the Historic Village of St Jacobs in the Region of Waterloo (Explore Waterloo Region, 2014). However, they are both currently in the process of implementing sport tourism event strategies to host small-scale events in their destination regions.

As sport tourism events continue to thrive in many destinations, this research endeavours to understand what drives and constrains strategy development and strategic planning in these respective emerging sport tourism destinations. Thus, the aim of this study is to investigate and gain stakeholder insights (i.e. DMOs, governments and business community) into the nature of hosting sport tourism events and using them as a regional development strategy in two emerging sport tourism markets (i.e., regions that have recently begun to explore sport events as a tourism development strategy). Specifically, this investigation will address the following research questions:

- Why do destinations engage in sport tourism development strategies?
- What are perceived constraints to engaging in sport tourism events as development strategies?
- How do stakeholders decide which sport events to pursue, bid for and host?
- What are the perceived regional impacts of hosting sport tourism events?
- What extent is leveraging these impacts considered in sport tourism strategy development?

## **1.6 Methodological Approach to the Study**

This study will adopt an exploratory approach to reveal insight into the aforementioned research questions. In particular, a qualitative methodological approach was employed and involved conducting semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders in the tourism decision-making and strategy development process within the two respective regions of study; Niagara Region and Region of Waterloo. Applying an exploratory approach to the research, the analysis will take an inductive approach and carry out a thematic analysis to identify key themes in the data. As an inductive study not driven by one existing theoretical framework or approach, the research hopes to address the research questions with the aim of connecting emergent themes to the current body of sport tourism development literature.

## **1.7 Implications and Contributions of the Study**

This research aims to provide stakeholders' perspectives of hosting small-scale/regional sport events. The study will contribute to a better understanding of the bidding process, stakeholder decision-making, identifying benefits and constraints as well as leveraging the impacts of hosting these events. Thus, the insights gained will be able to benefit future planning and management organisations (DMO, governments and community businesses) in their sport tourism development endeavours in defining and understanding the rationale and collaborative relationships that are necessary for preparation and the successful hosting of sport tourism events.

## **1.8 Definition of Key Concepts**

This section provides an introduction and definitions of some of the key concepts that will be used throughout the study. It details the concept of sport tourism and the classification of the phenomenon's various events; the definition of an emerging sport tourism market and also the definition of stakeholders in the realm of sport tourism development and their role in hosting sport tourism events. Appendix B - gives definitions and descriptions of all the terms listed in Table 2.

Table 2 – *Definition of key concepts*

<b>Key Concepts</b>	
<i>Sport Tourism</i>	- <i>Definition</i>
<i>Classification of Sporting Events</i>	- <i>Mega-events/Mega Sporting Events</i> - <i>Hallmark and Major Events</i> - <i>Small-scale, Regional and Local Sporting Events</i>
<i>Emerging Sport Tourism Destinations</i>	- <i>Definition</i>
<i>Tourism Stakeholders</i>	- <i>Stakeholder Roles in Tourism Strategic Planning</i>

### **1.9 Organization of the Thesis**

Chapter 2 provides a review of the related literature to this study. Specifically, the literature review includes an examination of the academic literature to address each proposed research questions. Namely, in the areas of tourism strategy development; sport tourism development; sport tourism development strategies and bidding processes for hosting sport events. Additionally, there is a review of the academic research on the impacts of tourism, including sport tourism events and their utilization as a regional development tool; as an urban regeneration strategy and as a means for the local community to leverage the socio-economic impacts.

Chapter 3 gives an overview of the research methodology, profiles of the participating tourism regions and data collection process. With respect to the research methodology, qualitative methods will be used to investigate the sport tourism development phenomenon in Canada. The study will employ an inductive qualitative research methodology, data collection via semi-structured interviews and data analysis through a thematic analysis. These research methods allow for an inquiry into sport tourism strategy development practices whilst providing different means of representation that are evaluative, flexible and an accurate form of expression to address the proposed research questions.

Chapter 4 provides a description of the results from the stakeholder interviews that were conducted with stakeholders in the Niagara Region and Region of Waterloo. The interview data

was coded and themes were developed through thematic analysis. These themes are portrayed in an organic manner and clustered to illustrate how they emerged across the stakeholder interviews. The empirical evidence from the data is presented via theme and subtheme and further analyzed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5 presents the discussion on the themes that emerged from the data. It surmises and analyzes the interview data with regard to hosting sport tourism events, advancing sport tourism development and strategy development for sport tourism in the two regions in context. It provides insights to address the research questions posed for the study, in conjunction with existing academic literature, to analyze the value of hosting sport events and using them as development tool.

Chapter 6 concludes the study by providing a summary of the main findings and addressing the study rationale. It concludes the thesis by discussing the limitations of the study, recommendations for future research as well as highlighting implications for practice within the sport tourism industry.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews literature related to the development of tourism strategies and the advancement of sport tourism development research. It provides a scope of the realm of sport tourism development, its subsequent development strategies and the different impacts of this form of tourism on the host community. The chapter will review the literature and identify some of the facets of tourism strategy development and address the notion of tourism destinations hosting sport tourism events and examining why they have typically chosen to do so. The discussion of the current literature will address the aim of the study related to hosting small-scale sporting events as tool for development. There is limited academic research focusing on small-scale events. Thus, the literature review draws from broad academic focus of mega sporting events, and also where appropriate, discusses literature related to small-scale sporting events to better align with the aim and context of the current investigation. In addition, this chapter will uncover some of the associated impacts of hosting sport tourism events, from both mega-events and small-scale events, as well as the different influences that affect the sport event bidding process. Each section reviews literature related to each of the research questions outlined in this study.

### **2.1 Tourism Development Strategies**

As primary industries around the world make a shift, due largely in part to post-industrial progression, there are a number of global economies that are engaging in the restructuring process in pursuit of economic growth and diversity. Thus, in this pattern, the service industry has received a significant boost as there have been changes in mobility of capital, wealth distribution and consumer preferences (Binns & Nel, 2002). In this context, international tourism has flourished as an economic driver in the developing and developed world and is one of the strategies that destinations are using to mould their modern economy (Williams, 1998). International development agencies and governments throughout the world have been utilizing

tourism development as it is seen as a somewhat inexpensive strategy that can boost local culture and environments as well as promote economic prosperity (Binns & Nel, 2002). However, Sharpley (2002a) shows concern as some destinations believe that tourism can be a ‘development panacea’. While there can be economic gains, they may not be worth negative social and environmental impacts (Tao & Wall, 2009). Stakeholders must also question whether tourism will be a sustainable long-term development strategy benefiting and empowering host communities (Tao & Wall, 2009).

Currently, the development and implementation of tourism strategies have had some problematic implications. There are often concerns over the consistency of policy and strategy formation and its subsequent practical implementation issues in the dynamic tourism market (Albrecht, 2010). Thus, policies and strategies may need to be continuously revised and amended as tourism markets, environments and demands change as the tourism industry evolves (Albrecht, 2010). Mintzberg, Lampel, Quinn and Ghoshal (2003) acknowledge that within the tourism industry and at the core of strategy development, dealing with constant change becomes a challenge for strategy developers forcing them to adapt by making full use of their resources whilst being flexible within an industry that is highly competitive, unstable and accounts for various stakeholders. The authors further note that developing a tourism strategy for a destination cannot be approached in a singular way of thought as tourism strategies can be “both plans for the future and patterns from the past” (p. 142).

Given the paucity of research on strategy development for tourism (Albrecht, 2010; Bornhorst et al., 2010; Getz, 2008; Shunnaq, Shwab & Reid, 2008; Stokes, 2008) this review of the literature includes research that covers strategic planning for tourism development on the business side of the industry (the supply of the industry via tourism businesses and organisations) as well as the planning and strategic implementation to satisfy the consumer side (the tourist demand and evolving tastes) of the global industry. As an economic sector, the tourism industry is made up of multiple related facets and industry organisations, thus by necessity, there needs to

be levels of tourism strategy that are operational at several levels in a destination, such as local, regional and national (Stokes, 2008). For example, Anuar, Ahamd, Jusoh and Hussain (2013) provided some insight into local and national tourism strategy development specific to Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia. Binns and Nel (2002) similarly focused on tourism as a local development strategy in South Africa.

Furthermore, as a contemporary aspect of modern tourism research, a number of case studies have been done within the realm of sustainable tourism strategic planning, including Jordan (Shunnaq et al., 2008); Scotland (Macleod & Todnem, 2007); Nigeria (Akpan & Obang, 2012); Cyprus (Sharpley, 2002a); Costa Rica (Koens, Dieperink Miranda, 2009); New Zealand (Connell, Page & Bentley, 2009) and Tenerife (Ramon, Rodriguez, Parra-Lopez & Yanes-Estevez, 2008). These case studies illustrated the current research done on specific regional and national destinations and how they have planned, developed and implemented a development strategy for their tourism product. These studies included stakeholder analysis and investigations of the ways in which their tourism products have been implemented in terms of resort development, events and sustainable tourism development. However, despite some of this thorough case specific research, Stokes (2008) notes that there usually needs to be a distinction made as to the research done on strategic planning (long term destination planning and implementation goals) as opposed to strategy making or development (strategy development for certain aspects of the destination, e.g. sport or tourism strategies). In this light, this research will be examining the strategy development process for current tourism destinations and its relation to hosting sport events whilst ultimately contributing to the destination's progressive growth and development.

Additionally, there were also instances of analysis of current long term strategic plans that have been implemented for events in niche tourism segments such as sport tourism development strategies in Australia (Stokes & Jago, 2007) and South Africa (Swart & Bob, 2007). Some research was also done with respect to the development of tourism strategies that complement the



existing industry in a destination to ensure economic diversification in developing countries (Tao & Wall, 2009), the tourism impact issues in remote destinations (Singh, 2008), as well as the challenges of tourism strategy implementation in periphery tourism destinations (Albrecht, 2010). Complementary to this approach, Sharpley (2002b) researched Abu Dhabi in Dubai as a developed destination and its challenges in trying to diversify its economy as a sustainable tourism destination. Correspondingly, this study investigates the engagement of a tourism destination that has an established tourism attractions and destination image but is also in the process of instituting a sport tourism development strategy. The study examines the ways in which this strategy is associated with holistic development of that region.

## **2.2 Considering Sport Tourism Development**

Sport programs and events are usually envisioned as a strategy to foster communal communication and celebration (Brown, Brown, Jackson, Sellers & Manuel, 2003). Moreover, it has been suggested that sport events can allow individuals to alter their attitudes and behaviours, as well as break down barriers between groups for a common goal (Brown et al., 2003). Thus, the linkages between sport and tourism have progressed both in their respective industries and academic fields (Gammon & Robinson, 2003). Kivla (2003) notes that sport tourism on a global scale is headed in the right direction as illustrated by the reputation of such sporting events as the Olympic Games and the different World Cups/Championships of Soccer/Football, Rugby and Cricket. However, Weed (2007, p.1) contends that a holistic view of the sport tourism concept should also include “professional and amateur, competitive and non-competitive, social, recreational, and informal activities, as well as leisure, business, and day-trip tourism, to fall within its scope.” The sport tourism industry has progressed substantially and so have the expectations of sport tourists, developing their needs and wants for more complex incidences of sport tourism. Hence, as researchers advance knowledge in this area, they should consider sport tourism events as an overall experience (Shipway & Stevenson, 2012).

Sport is often considered a vehicle for development heavily leaned upon by the tourism industry (Delpy, 1998). Within the context of tourism development, sport tourism can be approached as a traditional development paradigm in terms of economic, social and ecological growth (Telfer, 2009). Although, it can also be seen as an evolutionary process that is a dynamic industry as a part of social, cultural, political, economic and environmental facets of a society that is constantly fluctuating (Hinch & Higham, 2011). Moreover, Hinch and Higham (2011) contend that development should not only be about growth but also about the positive impact it may have on a country, region or destination and should also be measured via the ideals of sustainability by including all stakeholders in the process of trying to achieve sustainable tourism development goals (social, economic, cultural, political and environmental). In a broader context, sustainable sport tourism events should be striving to achieve sustainable goals via the triple bottom line approach (Smith, 2009). However, there can be issues with this approach as sport tourism events attracts large numbers of tourists that can have negative long term effects on the environment and there is no guarantee that there will be positive social and economic benefits to the host community (Fairley, Tyler, Kellett & D'Elia, 2011). Pawlowski (2008) argues that there are even more sustainable dimensions to be considered in development via sport tourism such as moral, legal, technical and political aspects.

Sport tourism events need to be managed and planned accordingly as with any other tourism attraction. Thus, there needs to be proper management of change in order for decision making stakeholders and event planners to meet their objectives. Often times, development can spawn planning and development issues that affect the process; these can be internal and external factors that hinder development. As a tourism product, sport events can become commoditised by an intrusion of global market factors and processes which can affect its representation whilst also fostering homogenisation of sport culture through globalization (Hinch & Higham, 2011). These globalization forces push sport tourism destinations that host events to position themselves as a global destination that compresses international networks and can traverse national boundaries

(Mowforth & Munt, 1998). Conversely, due to sport's widespread outreach, organizational fragmentation and viable partnerships become more complex to seek out and maintain. It becomes quite difficult to maintain successful goal-oriented relationships and alliances with a range of stakeholder involvement (Hinch & Higham, 2011). Striving towards a sustainable sport tourism development strategy can become quite complicated at all levels.

### **2.3 Formulating a Sport Tourism Development Strategy**

The acknowledgment of using sport events as a strategy for tourism development has initiated a range of organizations, societies and destinations involved in 'sport-for-development public-private partnerships' (Spaaij, 2009). As a niche subset of tourism, sport tourism contributes to socio-economic growth and has significant potential to continue to add to a destination's economic diversity. Similar to other facets of the tourism industry, sport events as tourism attractions need to be appropriately planned and managed for the subsequent benefits to materialise which may include a dedicated strategic plan similar to or aligned with a destination's overarching tourism development strategy (Deery & Jago, 2005).

Swart and Bob (2007) also note the importance of forming relationships and creating linkages to reap the mutual benefits by establishing alliances between the sport and tourism sectors. They further discuss the significance of "coordinating planning and the sharing of resources and information amongst all stakeholders, and identifying opportunities and mechanisms for maximising the tourism benefits of sport activities are critical" (p. 386). Deery and Jago (2005) highlight the common amalgamation of separate fields, sport and tourism, are usually managed by different government agencies which also incorporate other related businesses in sport tourism development strategies. Hinch and Higham (2011) support this notion further describing the most significant stakeholder in the sport tourism strategy development process as the government agency responsible for policy development, highlighting the need for a systematic strategy direction and not just informal planning. However, Stokes (2006) discusses

the need for greater investigation into the motivations of governments for investing in the strategy and policy making process for hosting events tourism. Thus, the planning process needs proper direction with a great significance placed on DMO's and tourism agencies collaborating with government's and sport organisations for the advancement of a sport tourism strategy. Similar to the lack of research on sport tourism strategy development, there is limited research highlighting the DMO's role in the strategy development or planning process for hosting sport tourism events.

Analogous to strategy development for tourism destinations, in planning and strategizing for sport tourism events there is a prevalence of stakeholder involvement and collaboration (Stokes, 2008). Getz (1997) describes stakeholders in sport and event tourism to include local residents and citizens; interest groups such as heritage, cultural, environmental and social groups; different levels of governments (local, municipal, regional, state); not for profit organizations; event managers and staff; venue managers and the wider business community with interests in the event. For the success of sport events, organizing committees and related stakeholders must strategically plan to leverage the current and future benefits from sport tourism events beyond the event in order for the host destination to maximize the positive impacts such as tourism business and socio-economic prosperity (O'Brien & Chalip, 2007). Similarly, Presenza and Sheehan (2013) support these notions in their sport tourism development research noting that tourism strategy development and planning needs to be "flexible and iterative for creating and implementing strategies" (p. 135). The authors further explain that these strategic processes should be continuously evolving to meet the needs of the dynamic tourism industry and "should involve ongoing, monitoring, evaluation, learning and adaptation" (p. 135).

## **2.4 Destination Motivations for Hosting Sport Tourism Events**

As an extension of the tourism industry, the planning and implementation of sport tourism events require collaboration amongst its various stakeholders to create event strategy and policy (Stokes, 2008; Devine, Boyle & Boyd, 2011). Sport events are gradually being viewed as a substantial part of a broader destination tourism strategy focused on augmenting the profile of the destination (Gratton et al., 2005). However, other than the CSTA, the National Association of Sport Commissions (NASC) in the United States and the Sports Tropical North Queensland Cluster Group in Australia (Higham, 2005; Getz, 2008), there are not many national collaborative alliances, in the sport tourism sector (Devine et al, 2011; Khodr, 2012; Kennelly & Toohey, 2014). Hosting these events are justified by the long term socio-economic benefits that they can attract as well as the other benefits associated with tourism related activity in the destination including the ways in which it can add to the destination's brand and marketability (Gratton et al., 2005). However, the academic research related to bidding for and hosting sport tourism events has mainly investigated mega-events and the associated tourism impacts on the host destination's economy (Persson, 2000).

Throughout the tourism related literature, there has been some specific case study research centred on tourism strategy development ranging in size and scale of the event hosted. There is research from Australia, focusing on public policy and strategy development for hosting events (Whitford, 2009; Stokes & Jago, 2007) which investigated the public-private policy and strategy creation process for tourism and events. Similarly, event research in the country also included the strategic management, planning and general means of implementation for destinations hoping to develop and implement sport tourism strategies using Australia as a case study (Deery & Jago, 2005). Additionally, there have been cases in the Middle East, including in Iran which investigated the ways the country is involving stakeholders and moving forward in developing a national sport tourism strategy (Shooshinasab, Taylor, Moeinfar, & Kazemnejad, 2013). As well, in Qatar, there is research centred on hosting a mega-event and the feasibility of

developing their sport tourism product in an oil dependent economy in order to develop the country's international tourism brand (Khodr, 2012). In Europe, some research is focused on analyzing sport tourism as an economic regeneration strategy in three cities in England (Gratton et al., 2005) including policy collaboration and development at different levels of government in the United Kingdom (Devine et al., 2011). This body of work from Europe also includes sport tourism impacts being measured as tool for regional development in Croatia (Skoric, 2008) and research on planning a tourism strategy through hosting of small-scale sport tourism events in different communities in Italy (Presenza & Sheehan, 2013). On the African continent, South Africa boasts the most recent progress in research of sport tourism strategy development as there is research investigating sport tourism strategy development at the national level (Swart & Bob, 2007) and their widespread strategy for nation building through sport, including the hosting mega-events such as the FIFA 2010 World Cup (Lepp & Gibson, 2011; Labuschagne, 2008). As well there are investigations into hosting sport tourism events in the country on a smaller scale, in urban (Giampiccoli, Lee & Nauright, 2013; Haferburg, 2011) and rural (Bob & Majola, 2011) areas.

#### ***2.4.1 Utilizing Small-scale Sporting Events in Sport Tourism Development***

Sporting events have progressively been noted as critical components for any region aspiring to gain significant worldwide recognition as a destination, to generate socio-cultural benefits and develop economically. These events are ultimately perceived as a significant means for tourism development within a destination as they facilitate the increase in tourist arrivals, the development of a favourable destination image in addition to the regional development of areas within the destination (Allen et al., 2002; Bowdin, et al., 2006; Fourie & Santana-Gallego, 2011). As tourism markets and communities in emerging destinations try to advance their status with respect to socio-cultural issues, they can utilize some of the benefits of sport tourism to aid development (Kobayashi, Nicholson & Hoye, 2011). Kobayashi et al. (2011, p. 39) indicate,

“Promoting sport is a cost-effective solution to help tackle issues of broader social development, which include the creation of national identity, social integration, enhancing health, and distracting young people from anti-social behaviour”. However, Higham (1999) notes that some of these emerging communities should use small-scale sport tourism events, also known in some forms as participant events (Getz, 2012), as opposed to mega-events such as the Olympics and World Cup, to advance tourism. These types of events allow for controlled environments on a modest scale whilst being more sustainable in the utilization of existing infrastructure and facilities, encouraging a consistent flow of tourists and can be managed by the community or region, thus not necessarily having to use public funding for the event (Getz, 2012). Moreover, Ziakas (2010) highlights that small-scale/regional sport and tourism events usually provide more benefits to stakeholders in the local community as it synergises interests amongst various ongoing events including the associated tourism, socio-economic, socio-cultural and leisure benefits.

## **2.5 Bidding for Sport Events**

The process of bidding for events has become a regular component of event-driven tourism landscape for governments, businesses and DMOs (Berridge, 2007) as a strategy to attract new business to destinations (Getz, 2004). Tourism interests have been of such significance in business, convention and exhibition events, that almost every major city is developing facilities and spaces for bidding and subsequent event usage in order to host a variety of events (Getz, 2008). Getz (2004) identifies in Table 3 the various criteria attributes that meeting planners and event executives desire in a destination.

Table 3 – *Destination attributes desired by associations and meeting planners (Getz, 2004)*

<b>Desired Amenity</b>	<b>Attributes</b>
<b><i>Accessibility of Location</i></b>	- <i>Central location</i> - <i>Air and road infrastructure</i>
<b><i>Supply of Venues</i></b>	- <i>Quality and range of different venues</i>
<b><i>Accommodations</i></b>	- <i>Quantity, quality, brand, location in relation to event venue</i>
<b><i>Entertainment Amenities</i></b>	- <i>Entertainment and Nightlife</i> - <i>Food and beverage services</i> - <i>Supplementary attractions</i>
<b><i>Destination Image</i></b>	- <i>Lots of attractions</i> - <i>Desirable destination</i> - <i>Safety considerations</i>
<b><i>Tourism Reputation</i></b>	- <i>Favourable destination for hosting events and tourism attractions</i>
<b><i>Safety and Stability</i></b>	- <i>Level of perceived risks for tourists</i>
<b><i>Organisational Support</i></b>	- <i>Range and type of business and organisations capable of supporting event</i>
<b><i>Cost</i></b>	- <i>Perceived value for money spent on event</i>

Primarily driven by the perceived economic benefits from hosting an event, there is often a lack of foresight as to the entire process that is accompanied in the bidding and hosting of an event. The outcomes and affects to the socio-cultural and environmental legacies of the event are often neglected (Getz, 2008). Getz (2008) highlights,

Event tourism should be viewed in an open-system perspective, identifying ‘inputs’ (what it takes to make events happen, including the costs of bidding, facility development and marketing), ‘transforming processes’ (events as agents of change), and ‘outcomes’ (desired and undesired impacts, including externalities). Depending on one’s perspective, outcomes and change processes might be interpreted as a positive or negative impact (p. 419).

Consequently, there has been a rise in events being bid on, produced and hosted for various strategic reasons, mainly economic; but in the realm of tourism development, the destination must consider how to leverage benefits from events and evaluate if the return on investment is worth the resources expensed in the bid (financially, socially, culturally and environmentally) and the associated risks (costs-benefits, potential losses, etc.) with hosting these events (Getz, 2008).



Given the high profile nature of some events, they have great influence via their global viewing audience and ability to augment the image of the host destination, especially if the event is a success. The perceived tourism benefits of hosting these events are associated with increased visitor numbers, for example sport tourists, whether they are inherently attracted to the destination due to the sporting event or have developed an interest from having attending said sport event (Lockstone & Baum, 2008).

Furthermore, with respect to the risks of hosting sport tourism events, they involve some accompanying unknowns as it is difficult to decipher increases in tourism as the event can alter long-term tourism flows. This can happen via an influx of tourists before and during the event by means of athletes, media, coaches, judges and volunteers, etc. Also, non-sport tourists may alter their travel plans to coincide or avoid the event altogether as well as the incidence of the crowding out effect which decreases the tourist numbers during the event as non-sport tourists do not want to be amongst a crowded destination and be subjected to increased prices due to the event (Agha, et al., 2012). In the current academic literature, there is a lack of research investigating the in depth facets and attributes that sport organisations expect and appreciate within host destinations as well as the various types of events that some host destinations prefer to bid on including any plans that have been put in place to continuously bolster their sport tourism destination.

### ***2.5.1 Perceived Benefits of Bidding and Hosting Sport Events***

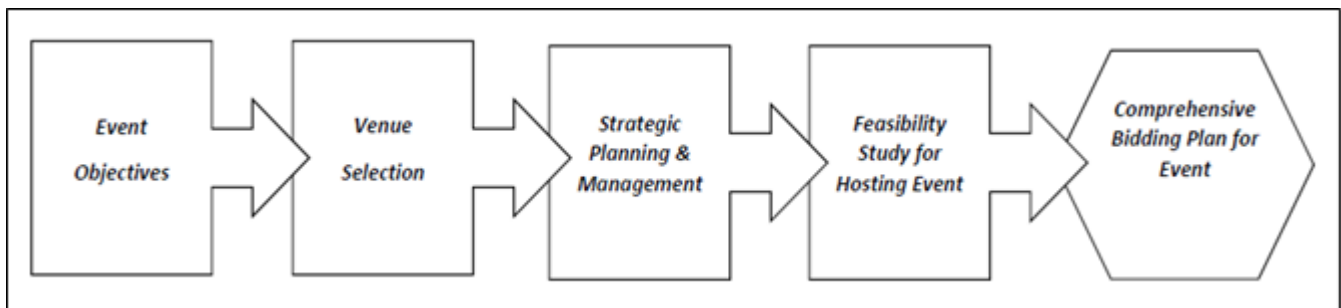
Event bidding has now become a significant factor on a larger scale, with respect to hosting global mega-events such as the Olympic Games and the FIFA Football World Cup (Berridge, 2010). The bidding process for the right to host such events has become an intensely competitive process amongst destinations (Westerbeek, Turner & Ingerson, 2002; Getz, 2008; Berridge, 2010; Swart, 2005; Carey, Mason & Misener, 2011). In North America, an abundance of cities have developed a sport tourism plan, with dedicated personnel, policies and agencies to

bid and host sporting events as a means to attract tourism (Getz, 2008). The bidding process is usually initiated by the owners and organizers of the event, calling on cities and countries for proposals to host, whilst also setting out specific criteria for hosting and meeting the needs of the event. The successful candidate destinations of the proposal stage submit bids and include a timeline and set processes that they need to achieve for hosting the event (Berridge, 2010). These procedures are usually tailored to a mega-event but are also often suited for bidding on small-scale sporting events. Bidding for such a major event is an extremely costly exercise (Swart & Bob, 2004; Berridge, 2010) and usually involves public/government funding as the rights to the event are held by international sport governing bodies, so there is a high risk involved with accountability to the public constituents, citizens and the sport (Berridge, 2010).

### ***2.5.2 Sport Event Bidding Process***

In addition, as there is often high use of resources accompanied with hosting sport events, there is the need for unified public opinion support in undertaking such a risk (Emery, 2002; Hiller, 2000b). Moreover, in order to host said events, consideration needs to be given to an in-depth analysis for the rationale for the bid; the associated requirements, strategies and policies required for formulating the bid; the perceived impacts of the successful bid and ensuing hosting of the event would all have on the destination's socio-economic, socio-cultural and political environment (Gratton & Henry, 2001). As well, the bid process should consider the holistic event legacy that will be left at the destination (Agha et al., 2012). Westerbeek et al. (2002) also highlight that as a competitive process, the strength of a host's bid can be illustrated by the amount of money spent by governments and local interests, which can also turn into a very political charged process (Cornelissen, 2004; Rowe, 2012). The authors explain that public support will be given to the bid process if it is clear that there are "justifiable and measurable benefits for all stakeholders generated by hosting the event" (p.306). Emery (2002) surmises that

the bidding process for hosting mega-events consists of five progressive stages; Figure 1 illustrates this process for bidding on a sport event.



*Figure 1* – Bidding process for hosting mega sporting events (Emery, 2002)

Some researchers have noted that there is little holistic research with respect to the bidding process for mega-events (Westerbeek et al., 2002; Cornelissen, 2004; Swart & Bob, 2004). However, there has been some progress in the literature on some specific cases of bidding for mega-events but a dearth of research on regional and small-scale sport events. Some studies that have been conducted on bidding processes for the Olympic Games in cities, have been in Australia (White, 2011), London (Mackay, 2012), Netherlands (de Nooij, 2014), Brazil (Carey et al., 2011), Budapest (Jaffee, 2002), South Africa (Swart & Bob, 2004; Hiller, 2000b), China (Haugen, 2005), Vancouver (McCallum, Spencer & Wyly, 2005) and Toronto (Oliver, 2011). These studies range from economic impact analyses, analysis of public opinion, spatial analyses and analyses of competing bids to an analysis of failed bids for the event. There has also been some specific research to the bidding process for hosting the FIFA World Cup in South Africa (Cornelissen, 2004); hosting the Winter Olympic Games in Peoples Republic of Korea (Merkel & Kim, 2011) and on hosting the Commonwealth Games in Australia (Lockstone & Baum, 2008). Moreover, there has been no specific research into bidding for small-scale sport events.

As a host of a mega sporting event, it means that there can be significant social, political, economic and symbolic meaning to the destination. It portrays to the world that the host destination is able and ready to handle an international event and it reflects the country's political and socio-economic stability and capacity (Swart & Bob, 2004). Historically, the hosting of

mega-events has been limited to cities and destinations in the developed world due to the high costs of bidding, hosting, building and renovating infrastructure as well as the need for the political stability in the host destination for smooth collaboration and organization with other government and businesses for a successful bid (Hiller, 2000b). However, within recent history, there has been a shift in the cities that have been bidding on these mega-events to developing countries and cities, for example, Buenos Aires, Cape Town, Istanbul and Rio de Janeiro. One of the apparent reasons for this is that for the cities that have been awarded the privilege to host such events, the positioning of international bodies such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and FIFA have instituted themselves as agents of global change with the ability to leave positive regenerative legacies which is often a significant benefit to the destination hosts (Carey et al., 2011). Conversely, Merkel and Kim (2011) contend that host destinations that are interested in hosting a mega sporting event are able to capably traverse international sport politics to satisfy decision-making organisations and are more likely to win than those that may have the best plan for hosting a successful event. Ultimately, the host process of planning and bidding for a mega sporting event is complex and prolonged and in international matter that involves an extensive process of lobbying, strategic planning and positioning by governments, individuals and businesses (Roche, 2000).

## **2.6 Tourism Impacts**

As a multidimensional phenomenon, tourism can have various impacts on a destination and its community (Ramkissoon & Nunkoo, 2011). Classifying the impacts associated with tourist activities are usually a means of comprehending some of the benefits and costs associated with the tourism industry and its development. Impacts induced by tourism are a major element of the industry and their subsequent effects on the host community are both diverse and complex (Page & Connell, 2006). Utilization of tourism as a tool for holistic development, through socio-economic modernisation and diversification (Shaprley, 1994), often embodies both positive and

negative economic, social and environmental consequences (Yoon, Gursoy & Chen, 2001) affecting the structure of a society or local community. Thus, for the effective planning and implementation of a contemporary sustainable tourism strategy, there must be an understanding of the social, economic and ecological impacts and implications of the industry. Proactively identifying these issues can help planners, managers and decision makers develop strategies and policies to mitigate these impacts (Tovar & Lockwood, 2008; Ramkissoon & Nunkoo, 2011). The proliferation of the economic, social and environmental impacts within tourism industry will be further discussed.

Page and Connell (2006) acknowledge that economic gain is often the influential factor for tourism development by destination governments, organizational bodies and businesses. The tourism industry has been known to stimulate economies by generating foreign exchange and investment; providing employment opportunities; bringing in tax revenues and promoting the prosperity of local businesses through local goods and services (Andereck, 1995; Telfer & Wall, 2000; Page & Connell, 2006; Simpson, 2009; Muganda, Sahli & Smith, 2010). However, even though the tourism industry promotes economic benefits, there are a number of negative effects that can hinder economic development via tourism, including, inflation, dependency, seasonality and leakages (Telfer & Wall, 2000; Page & Connell, 2006). The scope of economic impacts depends on the geographic region as well as the structure and relationships in the community (Page & Connell, 2006; Zhang, Madsen & Jensen-Butler, 2007).

With economic prosperity usually seen as the most prominent factor for tourism development, other impacts such as social and cultural impacts from tourism can be hard to perceive and measure. Socio-cultural impacts of tourism are often unheralded and can have longer term effects than economic impacts (Page & Connell, 2006). Impacts of this nature are related to changes in societal value systems and behaviours; social relationships and lifestyles (host-tourist and host-host) and are usually absorbed by the host community (Page & Connell, 2006). Simpson (2009) notes that it is often difficult to quantify these tourism impacts on the host

communities and local livelihoods as they can be tangible and intangible in nature. Positive socio-cultural impacts include employment, education and training opportunities for the hosts; local infrastructure development (Andereck, 1995; Page & Connell, 2006; Simpson, 2009); enhancement of community pride and well-being through promotion of local crafts and rituals as well as the promotion of local relationships, collaborations and communication in tourism planning and decision-making (Andereck, 1995; Simpson, 2009; Muganda et al., 2010). In contrast, the negative impacts can include, cultural assimilation; manipulation and weakening of social values and beliefs (Andereck, 1995; Telfer & Wall, 2000; Page & Connell, 2006; Simpson, 2009; Muganda et al., 2010) and can also influence higher crime rates, traffic, overcrowding and friction between residents and tourists (Andereck, Valentine, Knopf & Vogt, 2005).

Tourism development also has a major impact on the built and natural environment (Page & Connell, 2006). The rise of the industry has subsequently led to the mass deterioration of environmental quality as it is often developed in attractive yet delicate environments (Andereck et al., 2005) and there are not many ways to disentangle the effects of humans from those of the tourism industry (Page & Connell, 2006). The fragmented nature of the industry and the widespread global presence of pristine landscapes compound the issue (Page & Connell, 2006). Page and Connell (2006, p. 374) highlight, “A symbiotic relationship exists between tourism and the environment, each is dependent upon each other for maintaining a balance so that if the environment deteriorates it will directly impact upon tourism.” Some of the major environmental impacts through tourism include pollution via emissions, litter and waste water; wildlife destruction and disruption of natural habitats; deforestation and trampling of vegetation as well as development of built environments which destroy views and natural habitats including the inhibition of future infrastructure development (Andereck, 1995; Page & Connell, 2006). However, there are some positive impacts as a result of tourism development which include protection of parks and wildlife (Andereck, 1995); development of parks and green spaces in

urban environments and also the enhancement of local environments through preservation of historic buildings and mixed use infrastructure planning (Page & Connell, 2006).

Due to the vast range of tourism impacts, there have been mixed perceptions on the continuous and widespread nature of tourism development in different communities (Andereck et al., 2005). Some impacts can be quite intangible and inherently difficult to quantify or gain accurate measures of success. Within the realm of the hosting sport events, the subsequent impacts sometimes overlap as an extension of the impacts caused by any tourism development. Section 2.7 discusses the related socio-economic impacts generated by hosting a sport event.

## **2.7 Impacts of Sport Events**

As a global industry, tourism has garnered the recognition as an influential means of augmenting host and visitor well-being as well as actively contributing to the extensive development of societies, cultures and economies (Hinch & Higham, 2001). Moreover, this development approach has translated to greater benefits in all realms of tourism, including sport tourism. Due to the significant demand for a range of sport tourism products, it has become a relevant element of socio-economic development in almost every tourism destination region. In these instances of cooperation between stakeholders collaborating to produce sport events for regional development and socio-economic gains, sport tourism is more than just the intersection of two industries or a specific niche of the global tourism sector (Wasche & Woll, 2010); it can be a valuable tool for a destination's progressive growth and development. Research has suggested there are four broad types of sport tourism event impacts (economic, social, cultural and environmental). Table 4 summarizes the main impacts of sport events and Sections 2.7.1 through 2.7.5 will review the related components of these categories of impacts in this study.

Table 4 – *Impacts of sport events (Moscardo, 2007; Avgousti, 2012)*

<b>Scope of Event Impact</b>	<b>Positive Impacts</b>	<b>Negative Impacts</b>
<b><i>Tourism and Socio-economic</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased destination image</li> <li>- Increased tourist visits</li> <li>- Increased tax revenue</li> <li>- Employment opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local opposition to tourism</li> <li>- Loss of authenticity</li> <li>- Destination image may falter</li> <li>- Exploitation of locals</li> <li>- Inflated prices during event</li> <li>- Financial losses</li> <li>- Opportunity costs</li> </ul>
<b><i>Socio-cultural</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shared experiences</li> <li>- Revitalization of culture</li> <li>- Enhancing community pride</li> <li>- Rise of community participation</li> <li>- New investment and ideas</li> <li>- Expanding cultural perspectives</li> <li>- Manipulation of community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community marginalization</li> <li>- Societal acculturation</li> <li>- Social degradation (Crime, behaviours, etc.)</li> <li>- Loss of amenity</li> </ul>
<b><i>Physical and Environmental</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Showcasing landscape</li> <li>- Increasing sustainable awareness</li> <li>- Infrastructure legacy</li> <li>- Improved technological networks</li> <li>- Urban transformation and renewal</li> <li>- Improved transportation networks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Environmental damage</li> <li>- Species displacement</li> <li>- Traffic and congestion</li> <li>- Pollution (emissions, noise, aesthetics, etc)</li> <li>- Destruction of Heritage</li> </ul>
<b><i>Political</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved destination profile</li> <li>- International prestige and acclaim</li> <li>- Increased investment</li> <li>- Social cohesion</li> <li>- Development of planning skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Misallocation of funding</li> <li>- Risk of event failure</li> <li>- Lack of accountability</li> <li>- Loss of ownership and control (e.g. local host involvement)</li> <li>- Legitimation of ideology</li> <li>- Propagandizing</li> <li>- Lack of public support</li> </ul>



### ***2.7.1 Tourism/Economic Impacts of Sport Events***

Sport and tourism have been highlighted as considerable socio-economic growth activities in both rural and urban communities. Sport tourism events are categorised as a strategy for enhancing the quality of life for residents via the attraction of tourists which also helps the economic advancement of local communities (Swart & Bob, 2007). Furthermore, these planned events have been made into temporary visitor attractions as a means of driving awareness and to attract visitors to the host region/city/destination (Weidenfeld & Leask, 2013). Although there are external factors such as globalization of economies and societies and some individuals may be separated by socio-economic or demographic market segmentation, sport has proven that it is accessible to everyone, whether through tourism motivators for participation or spectatorship (Hinch & Higham, 2011). Given these developments, Saayman, Rossouw and Saayman (2008) note the ongoing interest in hosting sport tourism for its benefits by governments, residents and tourists recognizing that,

Sport events can generate media exposure, spread tourism geographically and seasonally, stimulate business and infrastructure development, create tax revenues, employment and [sic] investments, generate direct economic income and improve the quality of life in the community. In addition, these events also allow a region, a city or community to celebrate its uniqueness, promote itself, develop local pride and enhance its economic well-being. (p. 102)

The economic impacts of sporting events can be identified as the change in the economy from hosting a sport event. The changes are usually caused by the activity created by the use and operation of sport facilities and services (Lee, 2001). A variety of influences affect the spending habits and behaviour of tourists attending these events, including their level of income; cost of travel; exchange rates; types, frequency and scope of sporting event as well as the culture and attractiveness of the destination. Hence, the economic impact or estimated value of hosting a sport event is a dynamic set of variables that range and differ by sport, event and destination (Saayman et al., 2008). In the event bidding and hosting process there is often an investment of public funding for sporting events which is often criticized as these resources could be used for

existing social shortcomings in education, infrastructure and health care, that will have a wider influence in the host destination community (Fairly et al., 2011). As there is no guarantee that the long-term benefits of hosting the sport event outweighs the current value of the event to the host community, there is often uproar and scrutiny for hosting these events (Fairly et al., 2011).

Horne (2007) highlights that the perceived economic benefits that come from hosting mega sporting events are usually associated with television rights, corporate sponsorships and visiting tourists (media, participants, spectators, etc.) but hosting these events often have their own benefits and perils as a result of bidding for, planning and hosting the mega-event (Jones, 2005). Some cities often neglect to consider that hosting mega sporting events can generate substantial revenue on both a short and long-term basis even though the proliferation of these benefits may be a complex process. This process can entail the distribution of money that considers the host destination last, as a considerable portion may go to the international sport governing body and the expenditure on infrastructure and promotion may exceed the regional economic profits and the long term demand for the resultant infrastructure so there may not be an immediate benefit (Solberg & Preuss, 2007).

With respect to impacts that are created by small-scale sporting events, Gibson et al. (2012) discuss the impetus of research that show that small-scale sport tourism events usually generate economic benefits to a community with most of the tourist expenditure being acquired through accommodation and food services. A consistent factor amongst these events is in the benefits overshadowing the cost which is attributable to these events using existing facilities, bring visitors that are new and have no other motivation to visit the destination and provide expenditure during the event at the destinations ancillary services (gas stations, restaurants, retail stores, etc.). In order for the continued sustainability of the event, planners need to ensure that they happen on a regular basis (O'Brien & Chalip, 2008).

### **2.7.2 Social and Cultural Impacts of Sport Events**

Identifying and measuring economic impacts of hosting a sport event are not the only way of determining the tangible impacts or benefit these events (Wood, 2005). Hosting a sporting event often brings tangible benefits to the host community by way of increased social capital (Agha, Fairley & Gibson, 2012) in terms of community engagement, skill development, increased employment, well-being and participation, social inclusion and interaction and reinforcing collective identity (Minnaert, 2012). It aids in the development of social leveraging which refers to taking advantage of the euphoria and sense of pride in the host community after the event in order to ultimately develop a better quality of life in host community and country (Chalip, 2006). Within recent history, sport events have had synonymous growth in terms of both size and number. This growth and notoriety of small-scale and mega sporting events have convinced some countries that sport tourism is a means of utilizing the exposure to global audiences to promote their tourism products (Saayman et al., 2008). Getz (1994) mentions that sport events have importance as,

Planned occurrences of limited duration which have an extraordinary impact on the host area in terms of one or more of the following: tourist volumes; visitor expenditures; publicity leading to a heightened awareness and a more positive image; related infrastructural and organisational developments which substantially increase the destination's capacity and attractiveness. (p. 437)

Socio-cultural aspects of these events hinge on the notion of a better quality of life in the host destination; the way the event can augment the host's pride and image of their area and the facilitation to allow local residents to give back to their community by volunteering for the event (Gibson et al., 2012). These factors including the use of existing facilities maximise the social, physical and economic benefits of hosting a small-scale (Walo, Bull & Breen, 1996) and mega sporting events. These events can encapsulate both positive and negative impacts that affect resident attitudes and perceptions towards hosting them. In light of the prevalent use of sporting events as a means of urban/regional growth and development, there have been concerns to the ways in which the host community fits into the development strategy as these individuals feel the

brunt of the impacts and their relationship with the event will determine the nature and scale to which the impacts resonate (Walmsley, 2008). Furthermore, tourism strategies have also begun to cater to residents' concerns and well-being, as the attitudes of residents towards the inconveniences and struggles for tourism growth through sport events can impact the incoming tourist experience as well as contribute to the destination's appeal. (Zhou, 2010). A current contemporary issue relating to the social impacts of hosting events is the situation in Qatar as the country has been selected to host of 2022 FIFA Football World Cup. The issues lie within the realm of the human rights violations of migrant workers as there are already approximately 1000 deaths (Prenderville, 2014) in relation to the infrastructure being built for the future hosting of the tournament. The country is under scrutiny from international amnesty organizations for labour relations reform ahead of the tournament (Gibson, 2014). This illustrates some of the negative social issues related to sport events in terms of marginalization of the local and foreign workforce.

### ***2.7.3 Sport Events, Regional Development and Destination Regeneration***

In the modern sport tourism era, sporting events are not only being used to encourage local patronage, fanfare and economic regeneration but also for their exposure and facilities which are being used by cities as a tool to re-brand themselves (Smith, 2001). There has been great enthusiasm and a highly competitive nature to host sport events within urban environments within the last two decades as cities and urban regions continue to develop strategies into their wider strategic plans as a means of public, private and tourism investment into the urban area (Berridge, 2012). Harris (2008) notes the usefulness of sport as an avenue for regenerating a city's identity. Subsequently, Smith (2005) suggests that a number of municipal regions are now going through the process of using sport as a reimagining tool whereby governments and private sector partners collaborate to plan and implement sport events as the new central theme of the destination image in the urban region. The author further discusses the notion of this process

allows post-industrial cities to shift into a different more modern economic growth strategy as most urban regions no longer have a traditional industrial economic centre and are moving towards a tourism based development strategy. Although some areas accept it and embrace the shift, others do not. Hence, the spectacle of sporting events, the supporting infrastructure and tourism appeal of the events are seen as a viable means of stimulating the post-industrial adjustment to a more contemporary urban form. However, there is also skepticism around the potential tourism benefits to the reimagining of the urban environment, as these transition efforts do not guarantee increased tourist flows and other forms of economic development for the destination (Smith, 2005; Wallera, Trendafilova & Daniell, 2014).

Lesser known communities that are smaller in stature but have aspiring tourism aspirations will have different impacts by hosting smaller or larger international events that have the potential to attract sport tourists from local to international markets. Thus, it is necessary for these communities to develop their destination image in order to promote their brand as well as develop a visitor market by hosting sport events. (Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007). Dimanche (2003) supports this notion, noting,

Communities view the use of sport events as marketing tools that contribute to the future success of the destination by creating awareness, seeking image improvement, and attracting tourism business development to generate future inbound travel. Sport events can be part of a set of destination attractions for new and loyal sport consumer markets. (p. 2)

Aligning with this idea, Getz (2008) proposes the notion of destinations planning sport tourism strategies that allow the host community to develop a portfolio of events that happen at different times throughout the year and promote them to various market segments, thus, appealing to a number of different tourist profiles and segments that may see the destination for different events. Ultimately, when a destination decides to host these events it further enforces the host's desire for international recognition and exposure. Thus, small-scale/regional events that are not as costly to host and can have a positive effect on the local community whilst enhancing the destinations image, making a lot of sense to municipal and regional destinations (Moon, Jae Ko, Connaughton

& Lee, 2013). These insights highlight the direction and purpose of this study in examining the bidding and hosting of sport tourism events as a viable regional development strategy in Ontario, Canada.

#### ***2.7.4 Leveraging Impacts of Sport Events***

In modern times, as tourism is continuously being received as a vehicle to enhance visitor experiences and the quality of life of the host community, the phenomenon has been able to aid in the socio-economic and socio-cultural development throughout the globe (Hinch & Higham, 2011). In particular, it is not only able to secure employment and revenue for local host communities but also provides valuable social and cultural experiences for visiting tourists. As an extension of this concept, traveller's desires to take part in sport, either as a participant or spectator, impacts the economic and socio-cultural fabric, creating a sense of community building via the hosting of sport events which can ultimately be seen in a positive or negative light (Schulenkorf, 2009). Preuss (2007) notes that positive impacts are strengths and opportunities which can be predictors of successful event leveraging for a destination whereas negative impacts are weaknesses and threats and can be a guide to evaluation and mitigation to achieve successful event leveraging in the future. The author highlights that event leveraging of sport events can range in impacts associated with social, cultural, economic, political and environmental impacts (Preuss, 2007).

Moreover, hosting sport tourism events has become an essential marketing and tourism development component of some of the world's largest cities and regional communities, thus promoting rivalries to host major sporting events (O'Brien & Chalip, 2007). Chalip (2004) provides a framework for event leveraging of sports events, identifying four components of effective leveraging: (i) the presence of a leverageable resource in the host community; (ii) the opportunity for leverage through the event; (iii) the inclusion of strategic leveraging objective(s) and (iv) the means to achieve the objective(s). O'Brien and Chalip (2007) further indicate that

leveraging event impacts needs to be a forward thinking process in the strategic planning process in order for communities to benefit from hosting sport events, whether through augmented tourism revenue and business; social capacity development or other types of beneficial impacts. Chalip (2004, p. 245) denotes that, "...It is no longer suitable merely to host an event in the hope that desired outcomes will be achieved; it is necessary to form and implement strategies and tactics that capitalize fully on the opportunities each event affords."

One of the main objectives from hosting events continues to be short term impacts but stakeholders are recognising the value in strategic planning to leverage short and long term economic impacts through hosting sport events. Some of these include fostering trade, investment and employment; repeat tourist visitation to host cities and regions; re-imagining of the region through tourism and developing regional business relationships (Obrien & Chalip, 2007). Sparvero and Chalip (2007) illustrate some of these impacts, through a socio-economic and marketing lens in Table 5.

Table 5 – *Opportunities for leverage through (professional) sports teams and events*  
(Sparvero & Chalip, 2007)

<b>Economic</b>	<b>Place Marketing</b>	<b>Social Welfare</b>
<p><b>Workforce Stability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opportunities for employment (skilled and unskilled)</li> <li>- Use of locals and addition of jobs</li> </ul>	<p><b>Branding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Awareness and image enhancement</li> <li>- Host and visitor awareness</li> <li>- Associations</li> </ul>	<p><b>Build Communities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Socialisation at host venues</li> <li>- Informal gathering spaces</li> <li>- Visitors and fans</li> </ul>
<p><b>Tax Base Enhancement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sales and income tax</li> </ul>	<p><b>Business and Industry</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attract new business</li> <li>- Attract workforce</li> </ul>	<p><b>Address Social Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cause related marketing</li> <li>- Well-being and inspiration</li> </ul>
<p><b>Area Redevelopment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Features and usage of facilities (old and new)</li> <li>- Development of area near facilities</li> <li>- Transportation access</li> </ul>	<p><b>Tourists</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lengthen tourist stays and provide opportunities to increase spending</li> <li>- Facilitate easy movement and travel around country/destination</li> </ul>	<p><b>Residents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attract to facilities and surrounding area</li> <li>- Increase community awareness, cohesion, pride and esteem</li> </ul>

Traditionally, the hosting of mega-events is seen as an economic stimulator if the event is properly planned for leveraging. Thus, cities and urban regions depict interest in hosting events as these sport events are valued as magnifiers to hasten planned infrastructure whilst increasing destination image and awareness of the destination region (Karadakis, Kaplanidou & Karlis, 2010). Karadakis et al. (2010) discuss some of the widespread perception of positive impacts of hosting mega sporting event which can also be relatable to the hosting of sport events in general. They suggest that the event brings positive impact on employment, visitor spending in the host community; showcasing the host destination to the visitors, the exposure of the destination via the media and also the social development of the host community. These are all referred to as event leveraging goals (Chalip, 2004). Unfortunately, Karadakis et al. (2010) also discuss the negative impacts that these events also foster, which can consist of debt incurred by the host community through losses in under-utilized infrastructure and facilities; mismanagement of public funds that affect other aspects of the society as resources could have gone to other social programs and infrastructure. However, the authors note that the implementation and execution of proper strategic planning for pre and post event can mitigate such outcomes and assist with beneficial event leveraging.

The objective of social leveraging of a sport event is concerned with the development of the procedures and strategies implemented in the event to maximize its social impact (Chalip, 2006; O'Brien & Chalip, 2008). Leveraging social impacts as part of legacy of hosting a sporting event is not a phenomenon that just happens as a result of hosting the event. There needs to be proper planning and value attached to the perceived social outcomes from hosting the event to optimise event legacy outcomes (Chalip, 2006). Crompton (2004) suggests that social impacts of sport events are only benefits that focus internally on local residents which entail the perception of intangible benefits to the hosts such as enhancing the pride and sense of community in their destination. Pruess (2007) discusses the social impacts that hosts and organizers should be concerned about leveraging, such as community pride, involvement and cohesion as well as



enhanced community image and awareness. Gursoy and Kendall (2006) equate the community pride and international recognition with the importance of economic impacts. The authors further discuss the benefits of hosting sport events to include an increase in social interaction; enhancing cultural understanding, values and traditions; improving host identity, esteem and quality of life as well as augmenting the image of the destination as the hosts.

Social impacts can also have negative implications, including impacts to host community lifestyle of crime, congestion, crowding, disruption, alienation and marginalization of the hosts; pollution and destruction to the natural, cultural and historic property and also the rise of security and administrative issues and commodification and price gouging during the event (Gursoy & Kendall, 2006). Higham (1999) contends that hosting these sport events can also negatively impact the host community via constraints in capacity and the associated financial costs; the displacement and removal of the hosts and can usually be a platform for political activism due to the high profile nature of the event. O'Brien and Chalip (2007, p. 99) maintain that for the effective leveraging of social impacts, organisers need to include and implement strategies which are "enabling sociability, creating event-related social events, facilitating informal social opportunities, producing ancillary events and theming" to maintain and achieve short and long term leveraging goals for the benefit and prosperity of the host community (Karadakis et al., 2010).

### **2.7.5 *Sport Events and a Sustainable Legacy***

Another impact of hosting sporting events is that there is often a legacy that is left behind by the tournament or event which cannot always be simply defined or properly assessed (Agha et al., 2012; Leopkey & Parent, 2012; Gratton & Preuss, 2008; Reis, Rodrigues de Sousa-Mast, & Gurgel, 2014). These legacy risks include over budgeting and large national economic deficits; negative legacy components of unused and debilitating facilities; marginalization and displacement of host citizens and overcrowding. Despite the various risks associated with hosting sport events, a number of destination governing bodies continue to put forward bids in pursuit of hosting different mega sporting events for the perceived socio-economic and host destination benefits (Leopkey & Parent, 2012). Cashman (2002) argues that the usage of the term, event legacy, becomes problematic as it is mostly associated with positive event outcomes and usually ignores the shortcomings of hosting the events. This can be prevalent as positive legacy of a sporting event gives an essence of a successful bid and hosting process justifying the use of public resources and motivating the destination to pursue future events (Mangan, 2008). Within the last three decades, emerging as a concept for bid and organising committees of sporting events, legacy is often perceived as the ‘outcomes’ linked to hosting of the event (Hiller, 2000a).

Preuss (2007) formalized the concept as three dimensional suggesting that the legacy of the event cannot be planned, may have positive or negative impacts that may marginalize the environment but benefit the society. The author also notes that the event legacy may not necessarily be tangible or quantifiable as it may not be measurable or have a set duration for measurement of impacts. As well Preuss (2007) contends that in measurable terms, sport development legacy can refer to sport infrastructure, participation, sponsorship, domestic clubs and leagues as well as societal pride developed by the hosting of the event. In a more quantifiable construct, Chappelet and Junod (2006) describe the legacy associated with sport tourism events can mean built or renovated facilities for use during and after the event; increased tourism and

business opportunities; non-sport infrastructure development, transportation and communication networks, that are built or renovated serving the host community post event as well as legacies of economic expenditure and investment that creates jobs and social perceptions, attitudes, motivation and experiences of the host residents and tourists.

Hosting sport tourism events and the associated legacy is usually linked to numerous social benefits, including social cohesion (Avgoisti, 2012); building of social capital (Williams & Elkhashab, 2012); social participation through planning and implementation (Schulenkorf, 2012); social opportunities and networking (O'Brien & Chalip, 2007) and increasing social well-being through sport participation and physical activity (Potwarka & McCarville, 2010). In this light, Murphy & Bauman (2007) note that hosting of mega-events, such as the Olympic Games and the World Cup are often seen as drivers for increased physical activity and sport participation as part of the social legacy of the event. However, it has been seen that success levels can range from one event to another (Potwarka & Snelgrove, 2009) and it is a complex aspect that will not materialize if it is not planned for by event managers and organizing committees (Murphy & Bauman, 2007). Further contributions to the understanding of sport event legacies are illustrated in Table 6.

Table 6 – Examples of sport event legacy (Agha et al., 2012)

<b>Legacy Impact</b>	<b>Example</b>
<b><i>Culture</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Architecture and Monuments</i></li> <li>- <i>Museums and Cultural exchanges</i></li> <li>- <i>Souvenirs and Memories</i></li> <li>- <i>Cultural Events</i></li> </ul>
<b><i>Economic</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>National debts</i></li> <li>- <i>Increased Economic activity and employment</i></li> <li>- <i>Economic Investment &amp; Profits</i></li> <li>- <i>Foreign exchange Income</i></li> </ul>
<b><i>Environment and Sustainability</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Pollution: Increased or decreased</i></li> <li>- <i>Trampling and disruption of wildlife</i></li> <li>- <i>Planned increase in trees and plant life and for preservation of wildlife</i></li> <li>- <i>Traffic: pedestrian and vehicle</i></li> <li>- <i>Degraded air quality</i></li> </ul>
<b><i>Intangibles</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Euphoria and pride by hosts</i></li> <li>- <i>Disability awareness</i></li> <li>- <i>Active participation and collaboration between hosts</i></li> <li>- <i>Inconveniences for local residents</i></li> <li>- <i>Increased volunteer participation and awareness</i></li> <li>- <i>Community cohesiveness</i></li> <li>- <i>Displacement of residents</i></li> </ul>
<b><i>Infrastructure</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>New or upgrades to transportation: Airports, rail and roads</i></li> <li>- <i>New or upgrades to technological networks</i></li> <li>- <i>Renovation of existing and building of new sport venues and facilities</i></li> <li>- <i>Traffic planning and system implementation</i></li> <li>- <i>Development of new accommodation and service infrastructure</i></li> </ul>
<b><i>Sports</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Increase in recreational or competitive physical</i></li> <li>- <i>Facilities for adding new sports to the community</i></li> <li>- <i>New committees for organising sport and attracting more sport events</i></li> <li>- <i>Facilities to attract more events and high performance sport and athletes</i></li> </ul>
<b><i>Real Estate</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Short term increase in prices for real estate and rental properties</i></li> <li>- <i>Long term boost in housing prices</i></li> </ul>
<b><i>Publicity</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Positive and negative publicity</i></li> <li>- <i>Increased destination image capacity</i></li> <li>- <i>Scandals and controversies associated with public perception</i></li> </ul>
<b><i>Tourism and Event Industry</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Growth of destination marketing and development of brand</i></li> <li>- <i>Increased tourism due to boost in destination image</i></li> <li>- <i>Increase of conference, convention and event hosting</i></li> <li>- <i>Development of tourism amenities for hosting future events</i></li> </ul>
<b><i>Urban Regeneration</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Boost in planning and development activities</i></li> <li>- <i>Cleaning and upgrading urban region</i></li> <li>- <i>Renovation of existing buildings, monuments and architecture</i></li> <li>- <i>Venue diversity and diversification of use</i></li> </ul>

## 2.8 A Conceptual Map of the Literature

The conceptual map (Figure 2) depicts the research insights that have been discussed, examined and described in the related literature on sport tourism development, tourism strategy development and sport tourism event strategy as dictated by the research questions laid out for this study. The map illustrates a conceptual understanding of stakeholder involvement and collaboration in relation to the literature presented on sport tourism development, sport tourism strategy development, bidding for and hosting sport events and the associated impacts.

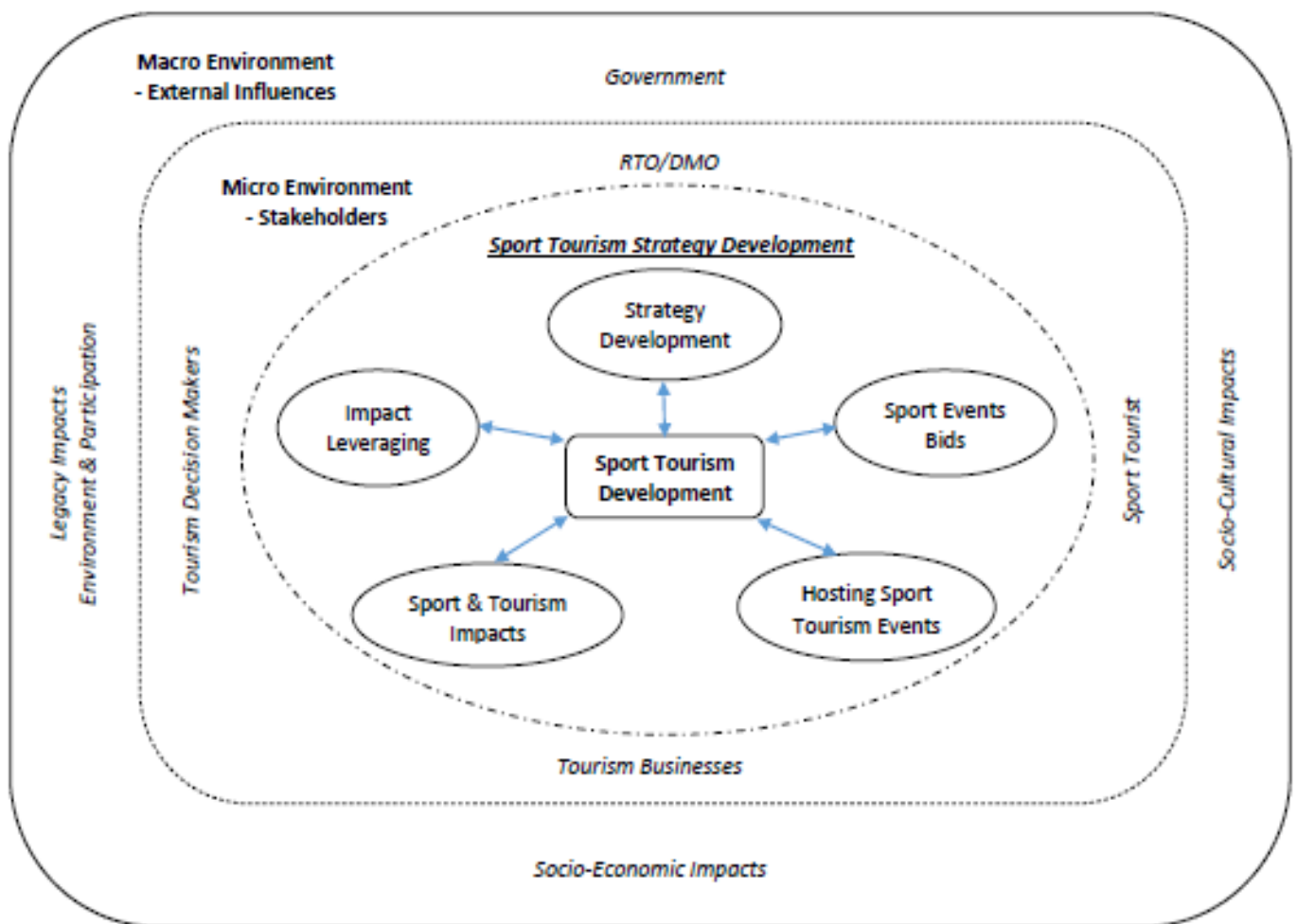


Figure 2 – Conceptual Map of the Study: Sport tourism strategy development

Essentially, it poses as a ‘conceptual map’ developed by the researcher as an understanding of the stakeholder involvement as outlined by previous academic literature, and the manner in which tourism systems may operate in terms of formulating a sport tourism

development strategy. This study will not attempt to explore or empirically demonstrate any processes related to this concept map. Rather, it was developed by the researcher as a means of visually organizing and making sense of existing literature and the associations to sport tourism development.

Additionally, this conceptual map also portrays the alliances, associations and connections between stakeholders that this study intends to explore in order to respond to the proposed research questions. It depicts the connections between stakeholders at the micro and macro environment levels and their influence on sport tourism strategy development as well as the different external influences, through stakeholders and their impacts that current literature has outlined as being utilized in sport tourism development, strategy development and sport tourism strategy development.

## **2.9 Chapter Summary**

This chapter discussed the related academic literature with regard to sport events and development on different scales and the role of these events in strategy development for a tourist destination. The chapter was able to identify the ways that sport and tourism have been used synergistically as a development platform and it also revealed some of the shortcomings alongside the positive and negative impacts (social, cultural, economic and sustainable legacies) of the sport tourism phenomenon. It provided a context for the study in the usage of sport tourism development as a means of destination development through hosting sport tourism events in Canada. Throughout the related research there was a noticeable gap in the literature related to the investigation of small-scale sporting events and sport tourism development strategies in Canadian destination regions. As such, this thesis will provide insights on stakeholders' perspectives on tourism development related to hosting small-scale/regional sport events. These insights may further our understanding of how utilizing sport events as a tool for development add value to regional growth and development in the two regions of Ontario being investigated.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

The following chapter outlines the methodology, data collection methods and analysis to respond to the research questions proposed in this study. The study takes an inductive approach to the research inquiry as this form of inquiry can be more fluid, flexible and iterative by way of a qualitative methodology (Coles, Duval & Shaw, 2013). Data was collected via semi-structured interviews with key sport and tourism stakeholders in the destination regions of Niagara and Waterloo, Ontario. These context areas and their respective stakeholders were investigated in an in-depth exploration through interpretive qualitative inquiry (Stake, 1995) in the context of sport tourism development. The data was reviewed and analysed through thematic analysis consistent with the approach outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), to fulfill the purpose of the investigation and examine the research questions previously outlined.

### **3.1 Methodology**

A qualitative methodological approach was employed to examine the perceptions of key stakeholders about sport tourism development in their respective destination regions. Qualitative research is often regarded as an exploratory inquiry which embodies “the investigation and anticipated discovery of events and processes that occur and affect decision-making of projects and programs as well as those individuals and groups making those decisions” (Jagoda, 2007, p. 92). This research methodology attempted to respond to research questions related to the interpretation and understanding of the meaning of certain phenomenon and occurrences in our dynamic society, which were explored in a sport tourism development context.

### **3.2 Theoretical Perspective of the Study: Realism**

For the purposes of this study, a thematic analysis was framed as a realist/experiential approach (Roulston, 2001). Hammond and Wellington (2013, p.173) describe realism as “the idea that there are objective descriptions of a reality.” Furthermore, through the use of a realist

approach, the researcher was able to theorize and attempt to make sense of the experiences, motivations and meanings of stakeholders' realities. Moreover, a realist approach allowed the stakeholders to reflect and articulate meaning and experiences throughout the interviews (Widdicombe & Wooffitt, 1995). However, in contrast to a grounded theory methodology, a realist approach does not require its analysis to be oriented toward theory development (Holloway & Todres, 2003). Thus, a realist approach was adapted to examine stakeholders' explicit assumptions and experiences with regard to their insights into the nature of hosting sport tourism events in their destinations, and using them as a development strategy in their respective regional markets. Aligning with the qualitative approach of the study, which is inductive and exploratory in nature, findings are not generalizable beyond the group of stakeholders being examined. The intentions of this study are to gain insight through decision-making stakeholders' experiences related to sport tourism as a development tool and sport tourism strategy development.

### **3.3 Method: Data Collection Procedures**

Participants were contacted by email to attain their interest in participating in the study (See Appendix C). All email correspondence was secured via the University of Waterloo email servers. Suitable dates and locations were arranged via email to conduct the interviews, by phone or in person, which lasted approximately 45-60 minutes each. The interview contained approximately 15 open ended questions with appropriate probes (See Appendix F). The interview questions were an extension in scope of the broader research questions and were posed as necessary throughout the participant interviews.

#### ***3.3.1 Study Participants – Tourism Stakeholders***

This study engaged in purposive sampling as the research required key informant (Coles, et al., 2013) stakeholders of the respective regions, for their expertise and involvement in the tourism development planning and management process. Specifically, the participants for this



study included the strategic planning and decision-making sport and tourism stakeholders from each region as well as key decision makers and business partners within each destination's tourism business community. These individuals had a widespread range of influence on the sport and tourism in the respective region. These positions included members of both regional DMO Board of Directors; members of regional sport and tourism organizations; local business community stakeholders from each region and were some of the main decision-makers with regard to developing tourism strategies and implementing them into the region.

Additionally, considering that both regions have sport tourism organizing bodies, community and business partners and sport event venues that are all stakeholders in the sport tourism arena, it was beneficial to interview individuals as respective stakeholders to add to the context of the research questions. The interviews also provided further insight into how these stakeholders aligned their organization with the respective Regional Tourism Organization's (RTO) and DMO's goals and objectives as well as with the tourism agenda in the region. These individuals were not only individual stakeholders in each region but also stakeholders that had an interest in the region's tourism industry. They were contacted and asked of their interest to participate in this study to get their perspectives on sport tourism development in their region.

### ***3.3.2 Qualitative Semi-Structured Interviews***

For this research, 10 stakeholders were interviewed, 5 in each region, as the study was primarily concerned with the input of the key decision-makers for sport, tourism and socio-economic development in their communities. These individuals were selected because they had an understanding of the functionality of sport tourism development in their region. From each region, stakeholders ranged from officials involved with the respective municipal DMO to community stakeholders with adequate knowledge of economic development, tourism and sport organisations, public and private businesses that were all related to sport tourism initiatives.

Interview candidates were primarily determined via their role in the Regional DMO and their respective Board of Directors, with key stakeholders being selected as per their role in the development of a sport tourism strategy in the respective region. Alternatively, stakeholders were also individually approached through a further scan of tourism and sport organisations, businesses and government agencies in each region. These stakeholder interviews were aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of the stakeholder involvement in their destination region and the respective sport tourism strategy development process. As the main source of primary data, the interviews were semi-structured, recorded and transcribed for the data analysis process. As a conversation between researcher and participant, the semi-structured interview included partially structured and open ended questions used to illicit views and opinions from participants (Creswell, 2014). As an exploratory study, the analysis process took an inductive approach to identify key themes from the transcribed interview data.

### **3.3 Study Context Areas - Regional Municipalities in Ontario, Canada**

The regional municipalities being used for analysis in this study were the Niagara Region and the Region of Waterloo in Ontario. These two municipal regions were chosen as they shared a number of similarities and differences that were suitable for the research. Historically, they both utilized economic drivers of farming, manufacturing and tertiary education. However, their tourism situations differ as Niagara Region boasts Niagara Falls, historical events (such as the numerous sites of the War of 1812), wineries and conservation areas (Niagara Canada, 2014). Whereas the Region of Waterloo is known mainly for its Oktoberfest celebration, Historic Village of St Jacobs, historical museums (e.g., the Seagram Museum and the Waterloo Region Museum) and their expansion via tertiary education and technology companies (Explore Waterloo Region, 2014).

In Ontario Canada, the province is broken up into four main regions, Central, East, North and West (AllOntario.ca, 2014; Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, 2014)

and there is a tier system for municipalities. In the province, there are single-tier and upper-tier municipalities (termed regional municipalities or counties) and districts. They differ in terms of population sizes, implementation of local government systems and the services provided to residents which determine if they are a standalone municipality, a regional municipality or a district (AllOntario.ca, 2014 – See Figure 3).

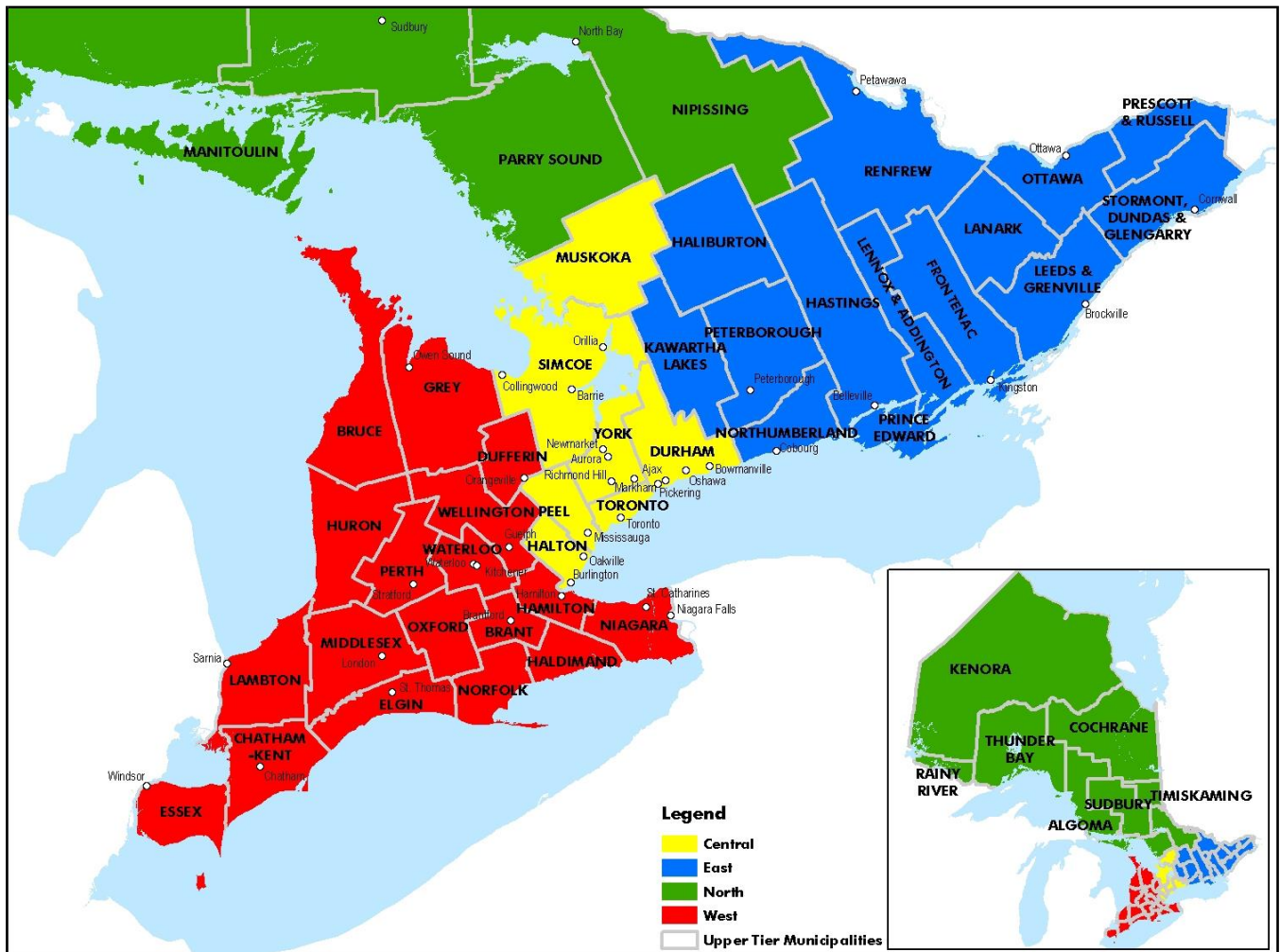


Figure 3 – Ontario regions (Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, 2014)

### 3.3.1 Profile of the Regional Municipalities of Niagara and Waterloo, Ontario

The regional municipalities of Niagara and Waterloo share the similarity that they are considered regional municipalities that are governed by one body. Figure 4 is a layout of the Niagara Region and Figure 5 is a layout of the Region of Waterloo. The traditional industries of

Niagara are embedded in manufacturing and wine production but are also complemented by two tertiary education institutions (Brock University and Niagara College) and a vibrant tourism industry (Niagara Economic Development, 2010). Similarly, as one of the fastest growing regions in Canada, the Region of Waterloo relied on traditional industries of farming, manufacturing and milling and is now a hub of three tertiary education institutions (University of Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier University and Conestoga College), boasting a skilled labour force (Region of Waterloo, 2010) that has beacons into the fields of technology and corporate business. Table 7 provides brief geographic profile of each region.



Figure 4 – Niagara Region Map (Business Education Council of Niagara, 2014)

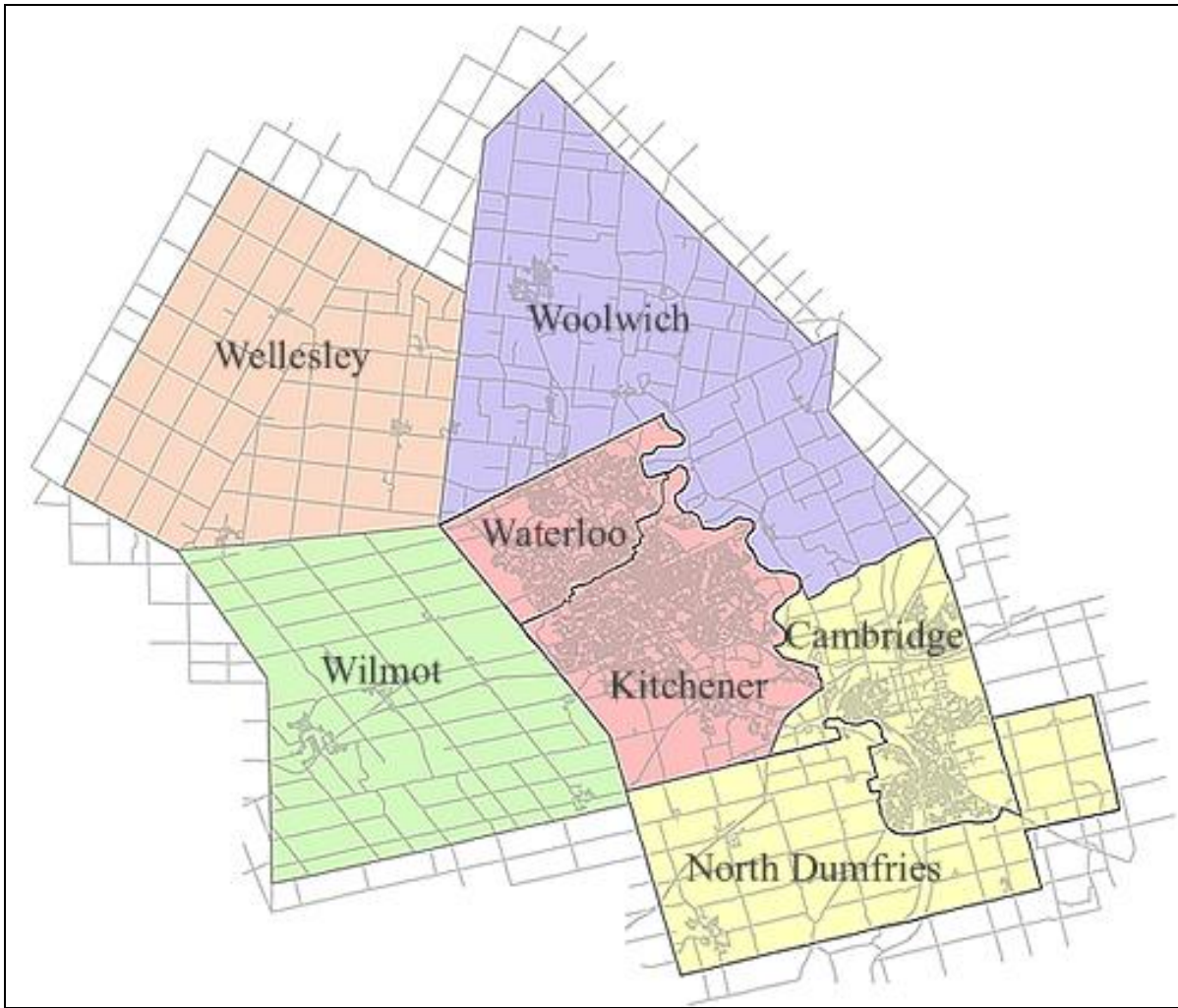


Figure 5 – Region of Waterloo Map (University of Waterloo, 2011)

Table 7 – Geographic Profile of Niagara Region and Region of Waterloo

Name	Date of Formation	Population	Total Area	List of Area Municipalities
<b>Niagara Region</b>	1970 <i>(Niagara Region, 2014)</i>	431,346 <i>(Statistics Canada, 2012a)</i>	1,852 km <sup>2</sup> <i>(Niagara Region, 2014)</i>	Fort Erie, Grimsby, Lincoln, Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Pelham, Port Colborne, St. Catharines, Thorold, Wainfleet, Welland, West Lincoln. <i>(Niagara Region, 2014)</i>
<b>Region of Waterloo</b>	1973 <i>(Region of Waterloo, 2010)</i>	507,096 <i>(Statistics Canada, 2012b)</i>	1,369 km <sup>2</sup> <i>(Region of Waterloo, 2010)</i>	Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo, North Dumfries, Wellesley, Wilmot, Woolwich. <i>(Region of Waterloo, 2010)</i>

### **3.3.2 Ontario, Canada Tourism Profile**

In terms of tourism governance in Ontario, both regional municipalities fall under the governing structure of the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Sport and Culture. Provincially, in 2012, the tourism industry attracted 141,680 tourists, created 359,401 jobs and earned approximately CDN \$29 billion in revenue (Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, 2014a). Hence, tourism is an integral part of the province's economy. Both regions in this study are a part of a provincially sanctioned RTO which comprises a cluster of cities, townships, villages and counties that fall under a regional tourism corporation (Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, 2014b). Figure 6 illustrates the RTO clusters where each context region falls, the Niagara Region as RTO2 and the Region of Waterloo within RTO4. Even though there may be similarities in size and scope as compared to the respective regional municipality, these regions are not set by governing county or municipal boundaries but have been developed, by governments and tourism stakeholder bodies, to service the tourism generating regions and can be made up of several municipal regions (Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, 2014b).



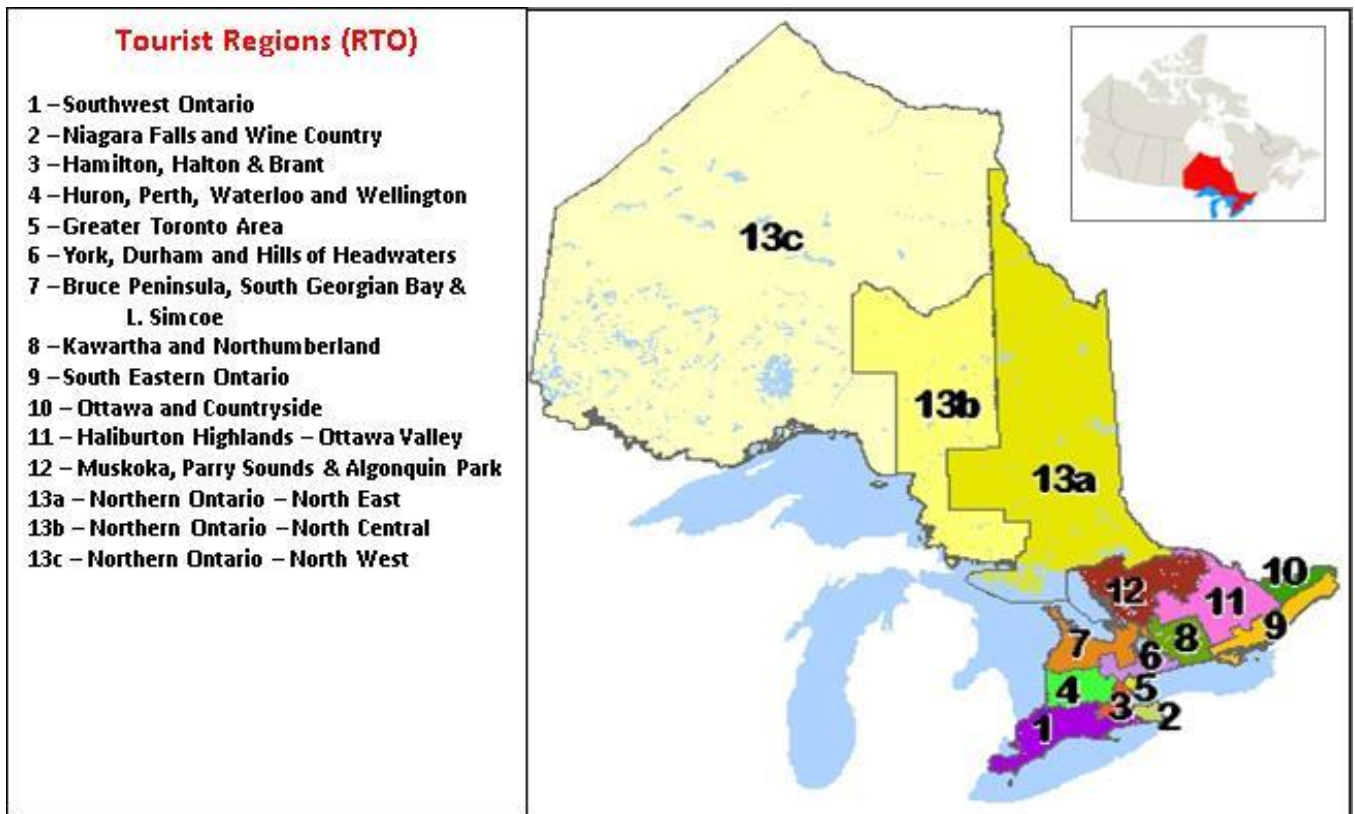


Figure 6 – Ontario tourism regions (Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, 2014b)

### 3.3.2.1 Niagara Regional Tourism Organisation Area

As Ontario’s most popular tourism region, spanning from West Lincoln to Fort Erie (Figures 4 & 7) with the regional municipality sharing the same boundaries as the RTO, the Niagara Region accounts for 40% of the Ontario tourism industry (Niagara Economic Development, 2010). In 2012, tourism related businesses provided 150,548 jobs to the residents of the region whilst attracting approximately 12.2 million individual tourist visits and generating approximately CDN \$1.8 billion (Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, 2014c). There is no doubt that the Niagara Region’s top economic driver is now tourism (Niagara Economic Development, 2010; Jayawardena, 2008).

The region boasts a variety of rural, suburban and urban landscapes filled with a range of tourism products including, Niagara Falls a natural wonder of the world (Brooker & Burgess, 2008); the Village of Jordan that provides experiences for sampling and touring the regions numerous wineries; classic entertainment such as the Shaw Festival in historic Niagara-on-the-

Lake; historical sites and re-enactments of the War of 1812 as well as modern entertainment and shopping in the Niagara Fallsview Casino Resort, Clifton Hill Entertainment District and Outlet Connection at Niagara outlet shopping mall (Tourism Niagara, 2014). The region also boasts outdoor attractions such as, fruit picking farms, wineries and markets; several municipal beach areas in the region including Crystal Beach, Long Beach, Port Dalhousie, etc.; parks and natural habitats including Niagara Parks, Montobello Park, Jordan Harbour Conservation Area, Chippawa Battlefield Park and Balls Falls Conservation Area. The region also includes heritage and historic sites such as the Historic Canal System, Thorold Kissing Rock and various Lighthouses in the region (Tourism Niagara, 2014). In terms of festivals the region boasts annual Grape and Wine Festivals, Winter Festival of Lights, Welland Rose Festival, Winona Peach Festival, the Fort Erie Friendship Festival and the historic Canal Days Festival (Tourism Niagara, 2014). Figure 7 gives a layout of the tourism region of Niagara (RTO 2).



Figure 7 – Niagara, Canada (RTO2) tourism region  
(Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, 2014d)

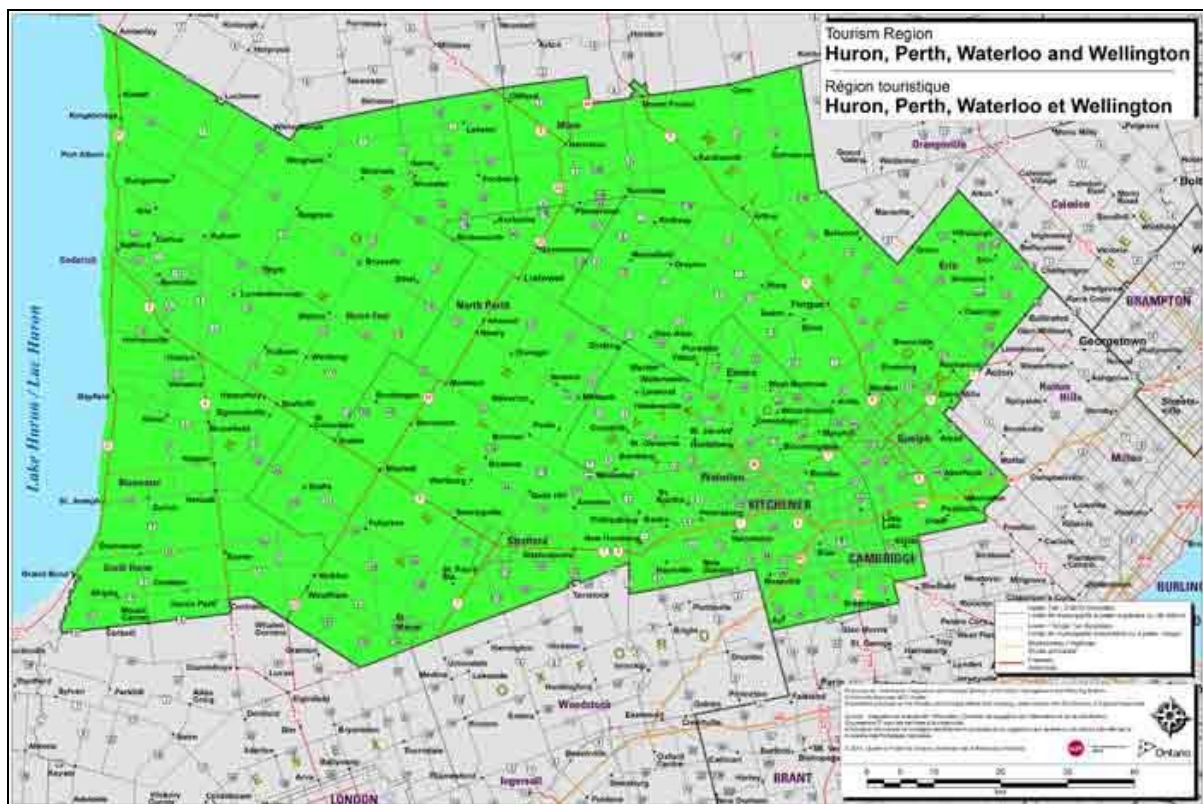


### 3.3.2.2 Waterloo Regional Tourism Organisation Area

The scope of the tourism region of Waterloo (RTO4 - Figure 8) is slightly different from Niagara, as the RTO of Waterloo spans from Huron County to the City of Cambridge (Figure 8). Thus, the Region of Waterloo falls within the boundaries of the RTO4 (Figures 5 & 8). For the purposes of this tourism profile and this study, the discussion will focus on the Region of Waterloo as a part of RTO4. In 2009, there were 790,000 visitors to the Region of Waterloo to visit friends and relatives, who accounted for the region's largest inbound tourism market (Region of Waterloo, 2011). As a part of RTO4 which garnered over CDN \$2 million in sales, the Region of Waterloo has a significant role in RTO4's tourism growth and development (Peacock, 2013).

The region boasts a rich history of heritage, culture and landmarks that drive tourism; these include, the Historic Village of St Jacobs; the West Montrose Covered Bridge, a provincial historic site and the last remaining covered bridge in province; the Waterloo Regional Museum; Cambridge Sculpture Garden; Castle Kilbride national historic site and the Cambridge Butterfly Conservatory (Explore Waterloo Region, 2014). In terms of festivals, the region boasts a multicultural society that allows for a wealth of cultural celebrations, including the Cambridge Highland Games; The Elmira Maple Syrup Festival; Doors Open Waterloo Region; Kitchener Blues Festival; KOI Music Festival; KW Multicultural Festival; the Waterloo Air Show (Explore Waterloo Region, 2014); the Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest (Hongge & Smith, 2004); and the Waterloo-Wellington Ale Trail (Plummer, Telfer, Hashimoto & Summers, 2005). The region also prides itself on its natural heritage and attractions in the forms of Historic Countryside tours of the Waterloo region; outdoor parks such as Waterloo Park; Kiwanis Park, Churchill Park and Victoria Park and including conservation areas of The Walter Bean Grand River Trail and Conestogo Lake Conservation Area (Explore Waterloo Region, 2014). Stemming from the unique 'unbranded' concept that RTO4 is known for (Peacock, 2013), the Region of Waterloo is a part of

the unbranded tourism region and shares their drive for developing itself into a premier tourism destination in Ontario.



*Figure 8 - Huron, Perth, Waterloo and Wellington (RTO4) tourism region*

(Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, 2014e)

### **3.3.3 Sport Tourism in the Niagara Region and Region of Waterloo**

With all of the success both municipal regions have achieved in their respective realms of tourism, neither Niagara nor Waterloo have fully established and implemented a regional sport tourism strategy mandated by their respective tourism DMO or otherwise which is why in this study, they are classified as emerging sport tourism destinations. However, they are host to current sport organizations and events. Each region hosts at least one professional ice hockey franchise in the Ontario Hockey League (Niagara Ice Dogs, Kitchener Rangers and Guelph Storm); tertiary education institutions that produce sport and tourism scholars as well as host university sport events and a wealth private, public and not-for-profit recreation and sports

facilities. In each region, there is also a not-for-profit sport tourism organization, Niagara Sport Commission in Niagara (NSC) (Niagara Sport Commission, 2014) and the Regional Sport Tourism Office (RSTO) (serving Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge and Guelph) (Regional Sport Tourism Office, 2014). Both regions have the opportunity to take advantage of the developmental aspects that can come with the adoption of sport tourism development. As emerging sport tourism destination markets, both Niagara and Waterloo regions fit some of the different characteristics of emerging markets in the forms of unique tourism products; currently developing infrastructure; stabilizing their economies from post-industrial backgrounds; are favouring tourism as their economic driver moving forward and continuously being developed to prioritize tourism growth. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, they are seen as suitable emerging sport tourism destinations to conduct research in order to address to the research questions with respect to sport tourism development initiatives.

### **3.4 Thematic Analysis of Data**

This section discusses the process of analyzing the data once it was collected, transcribed and coded. Qualitative data collection and analysis can be carried out by means of several approaches often representing a range of epistemological, theoretical and disciplinary perspectives (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012) and are extremely diverse, complex and nuanced (Holloway & Todres, 2003). The plan and design for any specific analysis will depend on the general research approach taken and the expected outcome, commonly known as the analytic purpose (Guest et al., 2012). For the purpose of this study, an inductive approach is used primarily due to its descriptive and exploratory orientation alongside the tenets of thematic analysis. Guest et al., (2012) define thematic analysis as,

Applied thematic analysis as we define it comprises a bit of everything—grounded theory, positivism, interpretivism, and phenomenology—synthesized into one methodological framework. The approach borrows what we feel are the more useful techniques from each theoretical and methodological camp and adapts them to an applied research context. In such a context, we assume that ensuring the credibility of findings to

an external audience is paramount and, based on our experience, achieving this goal is facilitated by systematicity and visibility of methods and procedures (p. 15).

Similarly Braun and Clark (2006) note that thematic analysis is a method of inquiry that is essentially independent of theory that can be applied across a range of theoretical and epistemological approaches. Thus, this method of analysis is valuable to the study as it takes the multifaceted meanings and values of the stakeholders' opinions as each contribution is a part of the sport tourism event industry in the respective regions of study. Braun and Clark (2006, p.5) further note that, "Thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data." Table 8 further illustrates a number of advantages stemming from the use of this type of analysis. However, with thematic analysis, the analysis process tends to require more involvement and interpretation by the researcher as it moves away from explicit words and phrases and focuses on identifying and describing implicit and explicit ideas and themes within the data (Guest et al., 2012). Boyatzis (1998, p.6) highlights that this method of analysis is known for "identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes your data set in (rich) detail. However, it also often goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic."

Table 8 – *Advantages of thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006)*

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#### **Advantages of Thematic Analysis**

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- *Relatively easy and quick qualitative method to learn and implement.*
  - *Flexibility of data analysis and themes.*
  - *Accessible to novice researcher with little or no experience of qualitative research.*
  - *Results are simplified, generally accessible to educated general public.*
  - *Useful method for working within a participatory research, with participants as collaborators.*
  - *Useful for summarizing key features of a large body of data, offering descriptive richness in data set.*
  - *Ability to highlight similarities and differences across the data set.*
  - *Ability to generate unanticipated insights.*
  - *Allows for social and psychological interpretations of data.*
  - *Ability to be useful for producing qualitative analyses suited to informing policy development.*
-

Thematic analysis is functional as the main research analysis method for this study as it is an ‘essentialist or realist’ method, following the outlined tenets of this research, which describes and reports on experiences, meanings and reality of participants. Thus, thematic analysis is a method that is applicable to this study as it examines stakeholder perceptions across two destination regions for the purpose of investigating the purpose of sport tourism strategy development. It allows for the research to reflect the current realities in place and also unravel and unpick the surface of this reality (Braun & Clark, 2006) that is given by the stakeholders.

As a part of the thematic analysis process, fitting the inductive approach of this study, the research also utilized the inductive thematic analysis techniques outlined by Braun and Clark (2006). Hammond and Wellington (2013) describe induction as the process in which we draw a general conclusion from individual instances or observations and is characterised as a ‘bottom-up’ (Braun & Clark, 2006) approach that is concerned with identifying patterns within data. It supports flexibility in analysis and generation of new theory derived from the ‘real world’ (Coles et al., 2013) or through a realist approach. Data analysis and interpretation in this approach take place in the early stages of the research ‘sense-making’ process, thus requiring comparisons with existing literature and data endeavouring to form new constructs about the world (Coles et al., 2013). As an exploratory study in the realm of sport tourism development, this approach is fitting as it allows for the extraction of raw data from stakeholders across two destination regions whilst not being driven by an existing theory but still strongly linked to the data. The data will be collected through semi-structured interviews, specifically for the research, driven by stakeholder experiences and not a theoretical researcher interest. Guest et al., (2012, p.7-8) describe in this process that, “The researcher carefully reads and rereads the data, looking for key words, trends, themes, or ideas in the data that will help outline the analysis, *before* any analysis takes place.” Hence, the themes will be identified and analysed at the semantic level, where the surface meanings of the themes are extracted and the research will not be looking for any latent meanings

within the themes and data (Braun & Clark, 2006). The identified themes would reflect a descriptive representation of data that is collected through the stakeholder interviews.

### **3.4.1 *Thematic Analysis Process***

This study is exploratory in nature and is not guided by an overarching theory, so there are no predisposed assumptions about the data and thus the analytic process will not be applied to the data in a rigid form in an attempt to prove an existing theory. Table 9 gives a breakdown of the coding, analysis and report writing steps that were followed to conduct a thematic analysis of the interview data in this research process. The data was analyzed in the six steps of thematic analysis. The transcripts were firstly read and re-read by the researcher to generate initial ideas within the data. Through this step, initial codes were then derived across the entire data set. The next step involved organizing the codes into potential themes, clustering relevant data into potential main themes and sub themes. The themes generated were then checked for validity over the entire data set to ensure they were appropriately related to the coded data. Upon further review, the themes were then defined and named, refining the specific aspects of each theme to address the purpose of this study. The most appropriate examples of data were used to address the research questions, relating the final analyses to the study's purpose and relevant literature.

Table 9 – *Phases of thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006)*

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Step</b>	<b>Description of the process</b>
<i>1</i>	<i>Familiarising yourself with your data</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Transcribing data.</i></li> <li>- <i>Reading and re-reading data, making notes of initial ideas.</i></li> </ul>
<i>2</i>	<i>Generating initial codes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Coding interesting features of the data.</i></li> <li>- <i>Systematic coding across the data set.</i></li> <li>- <i>Organizing data relevant to each code.</i></li> </ul>
<i>3</i>	<i>Searching for and identifying themes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Collating codes into potential themes.</i></li> <li>- <i>Assembling all data relevant to each theme.</i></li> </ul>
<i>4</i>	<i>Reviewing themes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Checking on the relation of themes to coded extracts.</i></li> <li>- <i>Checking on the relation of themes across entire data set.</i></li> <li>- <i>Generating a thematic map of the analysis.</i></li> </ul>
<i>5</i>	<i>Defining and naming themes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme and overall story of the analysis.</i></li> <li>- <i>Generating clear definitions and names for each theme.</i></li> </ul>
<i>6</i>	<i>Producing the report</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Final opportunity for analysis.</i></li> <li>- <i>Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples.</i></li> <li>- <i>Final analysis of selected extracts.</i></li> <li>- <i>Relating extracts to the analysis of the research questions and current literature.</i></li> <li>- <i>Produce a scholarly report of the analysis.</i></li> </ul>

### **3.5 Ethical Considerations and Data Security**

Preliminary contact to seek stakeholder interest in participating in the study and all other correspondence was done via email to set up appropriate dates and times convenient to each stakeholder to conduct interviews. At the beginning of participant interviews, the stakeholder participant was provided with an opening statement regarding the study and the objectives. They were then given a letter explaining the data collection process, asking for their consent to participate and for permission to use the data in the study. They were also asked for their permission to be recorded and for notes to be taken during the interview (See Appendix D). Research ethics approval was sought and granted through the University of Waterloo's Office of Research Ethics to conduct this research. The subsequent recordings, transcriptions and hard copy data was either locked in a desk at the researcher's University of Waterloo office or locked inside

the researcher's residence. Upon completion of the interview, a thank you letter (See Appendix E) was sent to the participants to thank them for taking the time to be a part of this research.

### **3.6 Chapter Summary**

This chapter provided an overview of the qualitative methodology and research methods that were used in this study and their appropriateness for use in the investigation of regional sport tourism development in Ontario Canada. It also provided an overview of the study contexts and the relevant participants that were asked to partake in the study. The Chapter 4 will explore the results of the thematic analysis.



## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This chapter presents the results from the data collection process that was conducted with the sport and tourism stakeholders in the Niagara Region and the Region of Waterloo. As discussed in Section 3.2.1, the 10 stakeholders interviewed, which comprised of 6 males and 4 females, were key decision makers involved in sport tourism development and sport and tourism strategy development in their respective regions. This included individuals associated with the associated regional DMO bodies (WRTMC and TPN), municipal governments (region, city and townships) and government agencies (Chamber of Commerce); sport and tourism decision makers (members of regional sport and tourism organizations, NSC and RSTO), as well as individuals affiliated with local business organisations; property rights holders and associated business community members. For the purposes of the following examination of the resultant data, Niagara Region stakeholders are referred to as ‘NRS-a-e’ and the Region of Waterloo stakeholders are categorized as ‘RWS-1-5’.

A purposive sampling technique was used to identify key decision makers in each region and their inputs were sought with regard to the aim and research questions posed for the purpose of this study. Appendix F displays the full participant interview guide and the questions that were posed to the stakeholders. The interview data was analysed and coded through the steps of a thematic analysis (See Table 9 in Section 3.4.1). Semi-structured interview questions were designed in relation to the study’s research questions. Themes were derived and outlined in a gradual manner to illustrate the ways in which they emerged from the various stakeholders in both regions. In several instances, however, the discussion evolved and became more organic in nature. Thus, responses to some questions and emerging themes overlapped in what they addressed in terms of the research questions. As such, for the purposes of this chapter, the themes are presented in a more general manner and they will be reflected on and analyzed in relation to

specific research questions in Chapter 5. Table 10 presents the main themes and subthemes that emerged from the interview data.

Table 10 – *Themes and subthemes that emerged from the interview data*

<b>Main Themes</b>	<b>Sub Themes</b>
<b><i>Embracing the Current Sport Tourism Situation</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Building Relationships Amongst Stakeholders</i></li> <li>- <i>Prioritising Sport Tourism</i></li> <li>- <i>Formalizing Sport Tourism Development</i></li> <li>- <i>Strategic Planning and Strategy Development in the “Infancy” Stage</i></li> <li>- <i>Contextualized and Nuanced Sport Event Bidding Processes</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Niagara Region Bid Processes</i></li> <li>- <i>Region of Waterloo Bid Processes</i></li> <li>- <i>Recognizing Previous Sport Events in each Region</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b><i>Deriving Benefits from Hosting Sport Tourism Events</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Developing Community Through Sport</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Fostering Community Engagement</i></li> <li>- <i>Promoting Sport Development and Resident Well-Being</i></li> <li>- <i>Embracing Volunteerism</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>- <i>Job Creation and “Post-Industrial” Diversification</i></li> <li>- <i>Diversifying and Stimulating the Economy</i></li> <li>- <i>Facilitating Destination Enhancement</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Developing Destination Infrastructure and Capacity</i></li> <li>- <i>Augmenting Destination Image</i></li> <li>- <i>Destination Differentiation through a Diversity of Attractions</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>- <i>Counteracting Seasonality</i></li> </ul>
<b><i>Overcoming Challenges of Hosting Sport Tourism Events</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Facility and Infrastructure Constraints</i></li> <li>- <i>Dealing with Displacement</i></li> <li>- <i>Exhausting Destination Resources</i></li> <li>- <i>Battling for Dedicated Resources</i></li> <li>- <i>Navigating the Political Environment</i></li> </ul>
<b><i>Understanding Regional Impacts of Hosting Sport Tourism Events</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Perception of Regional Impacts: Garnering “Buy in”</i></li> <li>- <i>Building Regional Awareness of Impacts</i></li> </ul>
<b><i>Effective Leveraging of Sport Tourism Events</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Leveraging Sport Events for Destination Development</i></li> <li>- <i>Legacy Planning</i></li> </ul>

## **4.1 Embracing the Current Sport Tourism Situation**

The interviews with stakeholders from each region revealed a recognition of the value of hosting sport events, the need to build relationships with key community partners in order to develop strategy and prioritize sport tourism development and also illustrated the stakeholders' desire to bid for sport events that would fit in with the regional development history and capacity. Specifically, there are three subthemes related to embracing the current sport tourism situation in each region, including building relationships amongst stakeholders by means of prioritising sport tourism; formalizing the sport tourism development phenomenon in the region and considering the strategy development and the strategic planning necessary to move sport tourism development forward. As well, the process of bidding for sport events was also an emergent sub-theme spoken about by stakeholders from each region. This theme and subsequent subthemes were derived from interview questions that inquired about how the region is currently engaged in sport tourism, sport tourism strategy development and the processes they adhere to for bidding on sport events. As well, the question was directly asked about their engagement in a sport tourism development strategy and its status on the region's tourism development agenda.

### ***4.1.1 Building Relationships amongst Stakeholders***

A number of stakeholders from both regions mentioned that for hosting sport tourism events in their region to be a successful phenomenon, there needed to be a certain level of collaboration to build successful relationships amongst stakeholders. They spoke at length about this factor as a necessary part of their current sport tourism development endeavours. The level of collaboration depended on the type of event that was being hosted. RWS-1 noted that, "...we worked with RTO4 and Guelph and our partners that sit around that table, so that's Kitchener, Cambridge and Waterloo" highlighting the need for all the tier 1 municipalities to combine their resources for the progression of sport tourism development in the region. RWS-2 supported this, noting, "...it just makes sense for all the municipalities to pool their labour, their staffing and

financial resources to make these bids...we're stronger together..." Stakeholders within the Niagara Region further supported this notion describing the importance of "specifically building partnerships with the private sector" as well as addressing the need to develop collaborative efforts with "local sporting organisations" and also involving "a number of politicians" for the their advancement of sport tourism development. RWS-1 established that there needed to be a greater collaborative effort amongst their representative stakeholder bodies as there was "strength in numbers" in order to have a greater success rate at trying to attract some sporting events, noting that they "...work really well as far as that is concerned. I think everybody knows what each other are doing, there may have been some distrust of each other but [now]...everyone is working really well together..." RWS-3, reinforced this stating,

...we're pretty tactical in looking at the opportunities as they come and I think we're lucky as there's a certain amount of trust around the table around the stakeholders. I don't know if it would work if a new person was flown in say in RWS-1's role and they had a different idea... I think we've all worked really hard over the last 2 years to kind of establish that trust and understanding.

However, RWS-2 warned that sometimes the region needed to be cautious of the level of collaboration that they were getting into, as some events did not make sense on a municipal level, regional level or RTO level as they each represented a different body of stakeholders and would require more planning and coordination, which could hamper collaboration. He ultimately noted that, "We need to come together because I think we're missing out on some great events that we could host here if we find a way to better collaborate." As a business partner in the region, RWS-4 understood the value of sport tourism to the region and was willing to align her business interests with the "strength in numbers" approach to attracting sport events to their destination. She stated,

...no man's an island, I can take all these clichés, it takes a village to raise a family... But it's no different in our business community if we don't become involved with each other and help to push the success of the people around us... we're not likely going to move forward ourselves and that really is such an important message....

With respect to each region's RTO body there were contrasting situations and levels of involvement. In Niagara, the RTO boundaries are the same as their governing regional boundaries and the regional government acts as a supporting cast member for the RTO. NRS-c explained that the TPN as the DMO of his region only accounted for marketing of tourism in the region and were not heavily involved in sport tourism development. Whereas, the WRTMC acts as the regional DMO in the Region of Waterloo as a part of the greater RTO4 zone defined by the Ontario government. The WRTMC's role as well, is only supportive, so as to, "...try to attract visitation to Waterloo Region for our partners through marketing. So we're really the marketing agent for those organizations." RWS-1 mentions that the individual municipalities have more contact with local sport organizations and bidding but the WRTMC is mainly a facilitator of tourism in general. NRS-d summed up this "strength in numbers" notion for hosting sport events, highlighting,

For this to be successful, it's got to be tripartite, the governments have to be involved, not for profit which are the people like the Niagara Sport Commission [local sporting organization] and the various local sport associations and thirdly, [local]businesses have to be involved... It's got to be win, win, win...

#### **4.1.2 *Prioritising Sport Tourism***

As a part of each region's greater tourism structure, hosting sport events has varying levels of priority in each destination. These priorities vary according to the maturity level of each region as a tourism destination, what they wish to add to their destination brand or the availability of resources they have at their disposal to pursue sport events. Moreover, stakeholders understood that in order to successfully move forward with sport tourism development initiatives, it was necessary to appropriately manage and embrace their current situations. In this light, they spoke about the priority that sport tourism development had to become for regional stakeholders, citizens, business people and government officials alike, and the collaboration and interaction necessary to change the mind-set to get everyone on board to prioritize sport tourism for

development purposes. NRS-e detailed that, "...there is a lot of really good municipal cooperation when it comes to sport tourism," but NRS-c commented that as a region in Niagara,

...everyone's talking about it [sport tourism]... I'm not sure they all understand it but it's certainly up there [as a development priority], the regional economic development plan, it's listed in there. The DMOs, list it in their organizational plan...it's certainly there, it's on everyone's tongue but I'm not sure they know necessarily what it all encompasses or how to do it...

NRS-c indicated that there was progress to make sport tourism a top development priority in the region but it still was not the region's top tourism priority. Conversely, in the Region of Waterloo, there was an awakening to a need for tourism diversification in the region so there needed to be a shift in planning to make it a priority. RWS-5 discussed the current planning for sport tourism, something that did not formally exist until recently. He related that,

It's a top 2 or 3 driver for the WRTMC right now. It is the top driver, let's say of the top 2 drivers for the RTO4, it's a major focus for them. So from a tourism based focus, from the top down it's a major focus [...] The realization was that sport tourism was not only the low fruit on the tree but it had the greater potential to increase overnight stays so the RTO4 made it a huge priority and thus it turned the corner and I think we had some staffing changes when RWS-1 came on board and that started to take change as well.

NRS-b mentioned that in smaller cities and municipalities, the collaborative efforts really needed to be made a priority to enhance the full potential of sport tourism. He indicated that in some cases, municipalities and regions may not have been,

...perhaps mature enough at that point to understand the elements that needed to come together with the sport community, moving from an operational focus to somewhat higher level of strategic focus because many of the sport organizations are just so involved with their own survival and their own operations that they don't think wider [...] It takes an awareness, that generally large events have their beneficial elements in uniting as a vehicle toward that.

NRS-d also added that there needed to be a local leader, "an outspoken champion" to really push for sport tourism development to become a priority in the Niagara Region. Furthering this notion, as part of the Niagara Region business community, NRS-e called it a top priority, emphasizing,

...we're seeing councils, we're seeing governments being very supportive of it [...] If you look at the net total spend by governments in the Niagara Region, municipal governments specifically, and you look at how much is spent on sport tourism over any other tourism field, you will see that there is a big spend on sport tourism.

The stakeholders fully acknowledged that sport tourism was useful to their regions and were not shy about sharing their thoughts. However, strategy development for sport tourism was still a vague aspect amongst them.

#### **4.1.3 Formalizing Sport Tourism Development**

Within both regions under investigation, stakeholders portrayed an understanding of the value of hosting sport tourism events and using sport tourism to drive regional growth and development. However, in their attempts to advance their sport tourism development endeavours, there were some mixed descriptions on what kind of formal strategy existed and where each region was at in terms of developing a regional sport tourism strategy. RWS-1 described sport tourism and hosting events as,

...critical to how we move ahead to bring more people to the region. Not only to bring more people and events to the region for sport tourism but also in developing grass roots growth in community sport, in minor sport organizations. I think it really helps them when you bring a bigger event to the region, it gets people excited about it and it gets more people interested in that sport.

Later, she described that the region did not have a formal regional strategy but the WRTMC and partners from Guelph, Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge and RTO4 “put together a business plan” forming the Regional Sport Tourism Office (RSTO) to facilitate sport tourism and the planning and hosting of subsequent events. Multiple stakeholders within the Region of Waterloo acknowledged the lack of a formal sport tourism strategy. RWS-2, RWS-4 and RWS-5 recognized “a sport tourism strategy” that existed between Kitchener and Waterloo and it had a part to play in generating a business plan for the RSTO. RWS-2 highlighted, “We still need to develop a comprehensive strategy for how we're going to accomplish this in the region, I'm not aware of a strategy, a strategic plan exists [referring to the RSTO business plan]...there's willingness though.” RWS-3 surmised this notion suggesting,

I would say that we've jumped ahead, so we developed the RSTO as a result of a research project that said there's an opportunity for us to do better in sport potentially. We jumped over strategy into writing a business plan... So I think in a way it's going to pull us backwards, we have a business plan for the RSTO, I wouldn't say we have a strategy

other than a wish or an aim to grow receipts over the years so... I would hazard to say we don't actually have one... If there's one no one has shared it with me!

In the Niagara Region, there was a similar regard and awareness of no formal regional sport tourism strategy existing. NRS-e suggested that,

...it's difficult to make reference to a specific strategy because, there are many players in the Niagara Region, each with a significant tourism footprint so while those in the wine industry or regions, Niagara on the Lake (NOTL) and such might be very interested in having, sort of the ancillary part associated with sport tourism...they don't have sort of a direct connection point to that per se. So from a strategy coordination perspective, you do have a lot of the primary players that do need to be involved...

NRS-c bolstered this remark, noting that,

...the regional government itself is not engaged in a sport tourism strategy, because that's not what they perceive their role to be. However, they do support sport tourism initiatives and our hope is that they will continue to do that as we move forward and that allows stakeholders to work on the strategy with all the DMOs. So if we're able to have them as partners and the region [government body] as partners we can all come together and do that.

NRS-d noted that with this current situation and in his roles as a prominent stakeholder in the Niagara community, there was a need to formally put together a regional sporting body to oversee sport tourism ventures and this led to the formation of the Niagara Sport Commission (NSC) which he highlighted, "...It was about promoting sport tourism, it was also about making sport more accessible to young people in our community and last but not least, it was really trying to get some organizations to collaborate together." NRS-c complemented this notion by giving some more insight into the NSC's organizational role in the region and its mission, mentioning that he understood that there was an "organizational strategy" in place that aimed at attracting domestic and international sporting events.

Similar to the RSTO in Waterloo, the NSC was created to formalize the processes for attracting, planning, implementing, executing and evaluating sport events to be able to reap the benefits for the respective region. RWS-5 described the benefits of the RSTO as a dedicated regional sport tourism organization,

...the advantage now of having a RSTO, is that we contribute to and help drive the focus of that [entity] and it's assisting and providing support to a full time staff, that's their role.



And it has really driven sport tourism forward in our communities. Our councils are more aware of it and it's going to put a greater focus on myself reporting to council on a regular basis or annual basis on the involvement and how it's evolving sport tourism [in the region].

Ironically, NRS-c made a parallel reference to these benefits in his understanding of having the NSC as dedicated regional sporting body,

...the NSC allows us to differentiate ourselves because we have an organization that is put together and to do these sports related things... We're able to invest some of our resources and capital into making some events happen whether it be bidding on events or creating them. There are only 3 or 4 sport commissions in Canada... There are sport councils, but a lot of that is focused around, not even sport events, but local sporting organizations. The RTO in Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge and Guelph have formed the RSTO, they're sort of in that same game but a little bit different.

RWS-4 also indicated her pleasure of now having a regional body to handle sport tourism endeavours as it “has helped the WRTMC and has really helped to put that as a tourism strategy [in the region].” NRS-c heralded the role of the NSC as the entity was now the local stakeholder that was devoted to sport tourism and it allowed for greater collaboration and attention to attracting sport events. He mentioned,

So the NSC can be the one entity that brings the information back [from conferences] and then goes and disperses it. And it offers expertise in the industry that other destinations may not necessarily have [from] a sport technical standpoint and an event management standpoint. So they take it from the base level to the top...from the bidding, all the way to the actual managing of the event...

RWS-5 had similar praise for the RSTO, noting

...It's almost like a facilitation role based on the event rather than full coordination. There could be some events that are full coordination, it's them that's driving it, it's them that's working but they are the ones that are overseeing everything.

#### ***4.1.4 Strategic Planning and Strategy Development in the “Infancy” Stage***

Throughout the interviews, both sets of stakeholders had an inclination that as a result of a lack of a formal sport tourism strategy, their respective region was at an “infancy” stage in the planning and strategy development process. Although not an ideal situation, this is something they had to embrace and move forward acknowledging that a strategy needed to be eventually developed but at this time, strategic planning for their desired benefits from sport events was their

main driver in sport tourism planning and development. Several stakeholders referenced, and some further discussed, the strategic planning processes that they deemed necessary to boost sport tourism in their respective regions. RWS-1 explained that,

...now we're right in the beginning, even though Kitchener and Waterloo have been very active in hosting events and have done so for a long time. Now I think by pulling the whole group together, we're only going to see and move up from now on, working together and trying to become a higher profile destination for sport.

RWS-2 reinforced this idea noting,

I was really glad when we started talking about it even in its infancy a few years ago, because we have all these municipalities that have invested millions of dollars over the years in either upgrades to facilities, brand new facilities, brand new or improved sports fields and yet we didn't have this cohesive discussion around how we can better work together.

He also described the importance of a strategy as they now have a dedicated body for handling sport tourism in the region and it needed a formal direction. He stated,

...We don't have a strategy, we're still in the infancy of all of those types of discussions; we're still developing and understanding what exactly is going to be needed to be successful in sport tourism. So it's interesting because in some ways, you know here we've collaborated on hiring a dedicated sport tourism person [for the RSTO] with experience but if we don't have a plan then we're flying blind and that re-enforces why we need a strategy.

RWS-3 and RWS-4 both agreed and noted the region is in a distinctive “junior” role of strategy development but now had to get into strategic planning for a formal sport tourism development strategy to provide future direction for the RSTO organization. RWS-4 explained,

We've really just started focusing on sport tourism as a part of our DMO; RTO4, all of that is still fairly junior, so I think it's still fairly new to all of us and how are we going to combat this. I think that's a work in progress [...] Now to be able to become competitive in that market, you need to get the word out there, you need to have a strategy, you need to have somebody that's out there, looking at what those opportunities and how can we be a fit for it in this region.

RWS-5 also discussed his belief in strategic planning for the Region of Waterloo, he understood that the events and the benefits would not materialize overnight and he knew that the region was capable of hosting events as it had done so in the past. He mentioned,

There is a business plan or [RSTO] strategy [...] I think at its core, it's pretty sound; we've gone through kind of a revisit of what our intentions are. So there were good things that

started from that, [...] it also forced us to evaluate after one year, our direction or what our intent is...what we truly wanted out of that [managerial] role because it was very sales focused and there's only so much you can sell. There's only so much inventory, there's only so much you can do [in the region] and I think what we're also realizing, as we look at events and to attract events, there's a lot of levels, size and scope of events.

He highlighted that, planning for and hosting sport events was an gradual process but there was definitely a need for a regional strategy or strategic planning as they recognized the value of its impact to the region. Hence, he emphasized on having to now focus on growing the product and by extension the regional destination as well. He noted,

It's formalizing what we've done for many years; we've had the facilities, the events and the relationship with the volunteers. It just was never called it [sport tourism] and it was never analysed as such, we never looked at economic impact. We understood that it happened but it was never formalized or evaluated. It's kind of a convergence of something that we've done as a municipality for... It's not reinventing the wheel. We've been doing this for a long, long, long time.

Both regions used London, Ontario as a benchmark against which they gauged their progression as a sport tourism destination and were of the belief that they could overtake that municipality with the right approach, strategy and planning for sport tourism events. RWS-5 related to the uniqueness of his region is what can drive their sport tourism product forward, highlighting, "We have more hotels than London when you count the 4 municipalities and we have a greater number of venues available to us so that is unbelievably unique..." Similarly, NRS-c compared the Niagara Region to London and the need for a "regional master plan for sport and recreation" or for hosting sport tourism events. He clarified that,

The city of London, for example, they're world renowned for the hosting of major international sporting events. They're one municipality of 500,000 people and we're 12 municipalities of 450,000 people. We're comparable sizes but we don't have a recreation master plan across the region so we have those gaps...

He supplemented this idea highlighting the need for strategic planning in the region with a specific example of one change that can be evaluated to make the process simpler in terms of budgeting and decision-making. He noted,

...we are seeing things get better. We are seeing more cooperation between the DMOs, TPN, municipalities to a certain extent. The one thing I do wish is that they would have... Instead of each city having their recreation master plan, we would have a recreation

master plan across the region that each municipality could have their part in but it would take into account the entire population and that's how we could fill in some of those gaps...

Additionally, NRS-a and NRS-e alluded to a need for regional collaboration and strategic planning by partners and stakeholders which could help the progress of a sport tourism strategy in the region to benefit the destination. NRS-a indicated that,

I think operationally... they've [regional government] strategically had to add the fact that all of these sporting events are coming here into their master planning. So I think they're in the early stages but I do think they've very quickly come to realize, that we're going to be a leader if we take sports into the mandate.

NRS-e also highlighted the “infancy” stages of coordination for sport tourism in the region, noting,

...from a strategy coordination perspective, you do have a lot of the primary players that do need to be involved, the NSC, the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce (GNCC) had a significant connection. And then we also see the Niagara Parks Commission (NPC) also involved in sport tourism. So we're seeing sort of the pillars of a coordinated strategy emerging. Both the city of Niagara Falls and the city of Welland have sport tourism leads and I think we'll see that all enveloping into a coordinated strategy.

As well, NRS-d alluded to progress being made through strategic planning for sport tourism in the region. He noted,

I think we've organized ourselves, I always believe there's chaos...we're now managing the chaos with the NSC. I don't think the region has yet to get into the leadership vision of being a sport tourism destination, I think we're almost there...

NRS-a surmised the thoughts of her fellow stakeholders, comprehending the efforts and planning it takes to host sport events, especially with no regional sport tourism strategy, and the kind of strategic planning that was needed for the region's sport events to be beneficial to them. She mentioned that,

...we've seen it where, when the community comes together to go after the event organization, there's a will to see it succeed and we have unfortunately seen where the event was driving the opportunity to bring the unification together and it was not successful. And as much as the event was a fabulous event and it went off, the costs were too large for an event to bear. Events just don't have those kinds of resources so you have to have a real strategic agreement on how you're going to move forward with events. It's not a strong product, financially, to be able to carry tourism that way, so you need to have...that commitment of, strategic plan to bring the unification together to make it work.

#### ***4.1.5 Contextualized and Nuanced Sport Event Bidding Processes***

In response to questions about hosting sport events in their respective regions, stakeholders spoke about the bid process that they went through to bring the events to their region. The process was related to their current sport tourism development initiatives and how these bidding processes fit into the scope of their sport tourism development agenda. Stakeholders from both regions indicated that they now had a dedicated sport body that was created and involved as a regional entity, but there were subtle nuances mentioned of their respective bidding processes. Stakeholders indicated that there were some formal bid processes that would go through the regional body on a per event basis. However, for each event, there were differences in terms of who made the initial approach (local sport body or sport organizations) to host the event, the varying bid cycles of each sport, the different stakeholders that may be involved for each sport event as well as how the region collectively organized and executed the bidding process for an event.

##### **4.1.5.1 Niagara Region Sport Bid Process**

In the Niagara region, the consensus was that the formal bids happened through the NSC, all stakeholders understood that the body existed for this purpose and their culture for hosting sport tourism events had evolved to a point where they understood that the bids for major sporting events went through the NSC. However, in most cases, each stakeholder's organization had their own role in supporting the NSC for bidding on the rights to host different events. NRS-d mentioned, "We work very closely with the NSC as they are that umbrella organization and we all kind of work through them..." illustrating the support and understanding they had of the NSC. NRS-b also highlighted, "The great majority [of bids] would be through the NSC who would bid on events, I think rarely would a municipality do it separately." NRS-d also noted the regional process by which the NSC gained this position,

So basically the Niagara Region organization [regional government] said, and they also gave NSC funding as well, to say we think this [sport tourism] is a good thing and we

want you guys [NSC] to start organizing this. So I think it's a huge priority for the NSC and for all of us; we've all kind of implicitly agreed that they NSC will be the coordinators.

NRS-c explained the processes that the NSC has to go through for bidding on sport events, mentioning that it was a mix of both the NSC going for events and sometimes the local sport organizations sought after the event from the provincial or national body and the NSC helped support the bid. He indicated,

Sometimes it's a bit of both, the 2016 IIHF U18 World Women's Championship is one that NSC went forward with it, they brought the partners in. But an event like the Scotties Tournament of Hearts, the local curling club will probably be the one that does the bid on it and the NSC will support them in any way possible... Every event is a little different because to host national and international events, your local club has to, generally not always, but has to work with the provincial body to work with the national body to get the international. Some events are different, I mean the Welland International Flatwater Centre doesn't necessarily use the NSC but they'll go to Canoe Kayak Canada and say we have the venue, this event is up. Can we partner and then they bring in maybe the club and the provincial association afterwards.

He also gave a breakdown of how the typical process for bidding for events to come to Canada happens,

The proper course is that your local club talks to the provincial government, talks to the federal government and talks to the international organization body so that's the process the NSC quite often has to work through. Sometimes local clubs aren't what you would call organized or professional or necessarily have a desire to do this sort of thing. So sometimes there's some sports that the club, or there's no club here and so NSC can't progress. The NSC can't go any further with it... So they look to develop relationships with people that want to be able to do that. So people may say, the NSC only hosts 5-6 sports, but those are the people that have expressed that interest.

NRS-e also praised the role of the NSC and spoke about the way in which his organization would also support the NSC in collaboration for bidding on events to ensure the interests of the business community are served. He explained,

How do we engage the businesses community as a whole? How we plug them in in this experience? So that's why this organization is so involved in a lot the bid and planning stage so that you know we are able to say, well that's something the business community will be able to be a part of.

NRS-a concluded her understanding of the NSC's role in bidding for sport events and supported the process, explaining how it has come about and will continue to bid for events of behalf of the region in the future. She noted,

The NSC plays 2 key roles, firstly, it's really again around funding aspect, if an event that the region is going to be bidding for requires a culmination of financial resources, the NSC has been the one to really broker that between the municipalities. Then secondly, any event that crosses municipal border lines, so if there is an event that needs to go through multiple municipalities, that's where the NSC has really found their niche.

#### 4.1.5.2 Region of Waterloo Sport Bid Processes

In this region, the process is slightly different than in the Niagara Region as they are still formalizing a process and they acknowledged the role that the RSTO plays but the process has not been fully streamlined in that organization as yet. The bidding process seemed to be a bit disjointed for the region but there were signs pointed towards transferring it to a centralized coordination body in the RSTO. As a regional stakeholder organization, the WRTMC was the regional body that handled the event bids before the RSTO became an entity. RWS-1 highlighted the process from her standpoint and working with the WRTMC, explaining,

Generally what happens, for example if the WRTMC gets a request for a proposal, depending on where it's going to be, it will determine where it will be best served. That bid comes from the city and then the WRTMC will pull together the hotel and any other kind of transportation information that they need, then it goes into the bid and then the bid is pulled together and is sent off [to the sporting body]. [...] Depending on what's required, generally the WRTMC organization can cover pretty much anything that's needed for a bid. It's also really important to have the local sporting group involved as well because maybe they bring the volunteers to the table or they're going to handle, once the bid is won, then the WRTMC will just say ok here you go...

RWS-5 also spoke of the process in a similar tone, from the city and municipal facility standpoint. He described the process,

It depends on where the bid comes from and how it started, there are certain events that you will bid from the facility, the Kitchener Auditorium will take on the role, especially with larger events like Memorial Cup or the Scotties Tournament of Hearts, things like that. It'll be generated from the facility first versus a volunteer coming in and saying I have bid or I am in bidding. We have educated our community to a point where we do get people coming to us pre-bid rather than, 'oh yeah by the way'...

As a community business partner, RWS-4 noted her contribution to the bidding process as participating through “a dollar amount towards sport tourism under the WRTMC and through RTO4”. She highlighted that her business could only do or handle so much so she left bidding to the “pros” in that area. She indicated, “I contribute financially, sort of bigger scale where they can go after the bigger tournaments and I'm going to leave that to the pros that know what they're doing and how to attract those.”

RWS-5 indicated his desire for the region to get to a point similar to the Niagara Region where the regional body, RSTO, is the main driver and coordinator of bids. He indicated that,

The hope is that we'll create enough material and standardized pieces so that the RSTO will be consistently involved with all of these bids and they might even be, and should be, the driver of those bids. At least of the bid development of the coordination of all the other information so that we could produce the best bid possible to win these things on a consistent basis.

He also echoed the sentiment of RWS-1 and NRS-c by relating to the involvement of and collaboration with the local sporting organizations in the bidding process, as it is commonplace in Canada. He highlighted,

It's mostly is driven from the volunteer base whether the sport group or another host committee. Then sometimes it's driven by RSTO because they have been working the phones or networking enough to say you know what, these folks may be interested in coming to this area, what do you think of this? Then we'll do the reach out to the volunteers because will they support it. Do we have the venue availability and that network comes out and then you start the process...

RWS-5 also highlighted the benefits of using the RSTO as the coordinator of sports bids for the region. He explained,

....And then again it still has to come from a variety of locations and that's never going to change but that's how it is [in Canada]. I would like to centralize the coordination, but what it will also do is the more you do it, the better you get at it. And the more you'll know and how to read the rights holder to put the right information in the bid, to get that bid. And what that also allows the RSTO to do is get a better scope of regional impact, the types of things that are being bid for, time of year, the type of sports that are regularly being bid for. Also, in taking a group right from the pre-bid evaluation, the bid, event execution to post event evaluation, that's important.



#### 4.1.5.3 Recognizing Previous Sport Events in each Region

Throughout the interview process, stakeholders from each region described sport events that their region had previously bid on and hosted, including what the stakeholders considered prestigious events for their region as they were reoccurring or that they have proudly attracted to the region in the past and acknowledged it as an accomplishment for the region's sport tourism development endeavours. The list in Table 11 was derived from the interview data as what the stakeholders listed as part of a previous bid processes when asked about their previous bids and hosted events. It was also responses to the inquiry as to the type of events they believed that their region had the capacity to handle. They mentioned these events with regard to formalizing a sport tourism process for their region and making it a priority as they conceptualized the impacts and benefits that the events could bring to the region. However, it was also now about building the awareness of the regional stakeholders to understand the regional impact to develop a culture around embracing sport tourism events as a means of development and growth in the region. Considering that these events had been bid on and hosted without a regional tourism strategy, they knew the events were happening so they spoke about now progressing from the "infancy" stages and attracting future events that had a regional impact. Stakeholders also included some of the events that they previously hosted as well as future events that they have bid on and secured the rights to host but the event will occur in the near future.

Table 11 gives a breakdown of some of these events as mentioned by the stakeholders in their respective regions. Not all of the sport events hosted have been of national or international status but the stakeholders were satisfied with the collaborative efforts between their cities and regions to organize and put together a bid to host, and celebrated the hosting of these events in the growth and development of their emerging sport tourism destination region.

Table 11 – Previous sport events hosted in Niagara and Waterloo Regions

<b>Niagara Region</b>		<b>Region of Waterloo</b>	
<b>Sport Events</b>	<b>Prestigious Event</b>	<b>Sport Events</b>	<b>Prestigious Event</b>
<b>Canoeing/ Kayaking</b>	2015 Pan Am Para-pan Games- Rowing and Canoe/Kayak Events	<b>Curling</b>	- Scotties Tournament of Hearts - Tim Hortons Brier
<b>Hockey Tournaments</b>	2016 IIHF Ice Hockey U18 Women's World Championship	<b>Rugby</b>	Canadian University Women's National Championships
<b>Basketball</b>	Ontario Basketball Championships	<b>Volleyball</b>	Ontario Volleyball Association Championships
<b>Extreme Sports</b>	Red Bull Crashed Ice	<b>Golf Tournaments</b>	LPGA Classic
<b>Cycling</b>	GranFondo Niagara Falls	<b>Hockey</b>	Memorial Cup
<b>Marathons</b>	- Niagara Falls International Marathon - Niagara Falls Women's Half Marathon	<b>Football</b>	-Ontario Varsity Football Championship - Hamilton Tigercats
<b>Fencing</b>	Ontario University Athletics Championships	<b>Cycling</b>	Kitchener Twilight Grand Prix
<b>Rowing</b>	Henley Regatta	<b>Wrestling</b>	
<b>Volleyball</b>	Ontario Volleyball Association Championships	<b>Slo-pitch</b>	Canadian Fastball Championships
<b>Rugby</b>	Niagara 7s Tournament	<b>Fencing</b>	Canada Cup
<b>Triathlons</b>	Ironman Triathlon	<b>Ontario Games</b>	Summer and Winter
<b>Golf Tournaments</b>		<b>Ultimate Frisbee</b>	
<b>Angling/Fishing</b>		<b>Cross-country Events</b>	
<b>Dragon Boating</b>		<b>Soccer</b>	
<b>Wrestling</b>		<b>Basketball</b>	
<b>Ringette</b>		<b>Pickleball</b>	
<b>Swimming</b>		<b>Ringette</b>	
<b>Baseball Tournaments</b>		<b>Special Olympic Games</b>	
<b>Niagara Winter Games</b>		<b>Ontario Seniors Games</b>	
		<b>Lacrosse</b>	

## **4.2 Deriving Benefits from Hosting Sport Tourism Events**

Throughout the interviews, all stakeholders shared positive sentiments about the benefits that they saw from their region becoming a sport tourism destination. This theme was based on questions that related to the respective region's engagement in sport tourism development (i.e., why does the region engage in sport tourism events as a development strategy). They understood the value of hosting sport events with regards to "job creation, sport development and fostering the community" which they believed would all benefit the greater good of their progressive regional growth and development. Moreover, they also explained what they perceived to be some of the benefits from sport tourism in regards to destination image and counteracting tourism seasonality. The subthemes that emerged from the data were related to the main theme of the benefits of hosting sporting events and included the associated development of a community through sport, involving community engagement, sport development, resident well-being; volunteering in the community and job creation. Another subtheme that emerged as a benefit was the benefits to the destination through economic investment and diversification as post-industrial regions, which was complemented by the stakeholders' description of the ways sport tourism development could enhance their destination. The final subtheme that emerged from the interview data dealt with the benefits using planning for and hosting sport events as a means of mitigating the effects of seasonality patterns in tourism destinations.

### ***4.2.1 Developing Community through Sport***

The stakeholders spoke about the ways in which sport events aided in developing the social aspects of their region and they believed this phenomenon to be a great benefit to their communities. They related these aspects of community interaction, collaboration and engagement in the wider local community as well as within the business community. One stakeholder simply summed up sport and sporting events as community and socio-cultural driver, noting

...Sport is a significant venue toward more activity in families, more diversity in how people relate to each other [...] and I would say also, sporting events, if they are

multifaceted, often bring arts, culture, and heritage into the mix as well by celebrating venues, talents and skills and aboriginal recognition as well [in Canada]...

This demonstrated some of the stakeholders' opinions on sport as a development tool, to encourage diversity and engagement in their communities. They spoke about these social aspects of sport and sporting events at length in the interviews. In the sub-themes of this section, stakeholders incorporated their understanding of the social benefits to the community by facilitating community engagement, initiating the community in extended sport development and well-being initiatives and also including how it can encourage volunteerism to embrace the skills and opportunities afforded by sport tourism events.

#### 4.2.1.1 Fostering Community Engagement

Several stakeholders from each region applauded the capability of sport tourism events to engage their community and develop that sense of pride that was "one of the quickest ways to change culture". NRS-d contends that, "sport is a great equalizer...it is a great gatherer of people." It illustrates the belief of sport as a means social development and engagement in their communities. NRS-b also noted of the Niagara Region comprising,

...12 local municipalities who haven't always been united within an outlook or a direction. Sometimes, events such as this in terms of sports strategy within a region, can serve to be a unification device that is not putting high degrees of risk, politically forward but allowing communities to rally into a more united front from then which other good things can come forth.

In addition, stakeholders in the Niagara Region commented on ways in which they witnessed sports being a cohesive force, bringing communities together and heightening levels of pride amongst the local community, ranging from businesses owners to local residents. As a representative to the business community, NRS-e commented about local business stakeholders and their input into sport tourism development, "...It is also kind of cultivating a sense of pride in what they do because they're small business owners and they don't necessarily think that they can serve an international crowd..." NRS-d also emphasized the way sport events could have an effect on all areas of a local community, he noted,

Sport to me is one of the quickest ways to change culture so let's pretend you have the national whatever tournament here and the home team wins, that takes over, it makes you very proud of your community and if you're proud of your community there's a momentum that it creates. You know you got some pride and things happen [...] There's a whole karma around it [...] Go to a Niagara Icedogs game, I mean you meet people that are professionals wearing paint on their face. So it's a great way of developing social culture...

Similarly, RWS-4 understood the social benefit to sports and the effects it can have in community and believed in the positive effect it had on social development in her region. She described,

It's how we all are engaged with it right. And you look at those big moments, like Team Canada winning the gold at the Olympic Games [ice hockey] or the Blue Jays winning the World Series, you know those are moments... I would never forget that moment when they won, it was 2am and you were kind of in your own world and walk outside and it was New Year's Eve, there were horns honking. I mean it speaks to that spirit of it. So that's always going to continue to evolve and grow, and it's sustainable because every new generation that comes up will be involved in sports...

In her understanding of the community benefits of hosting sport events, RWS-3 noted that having sport tourism in her city would not only have a greater positive impact on the city but also for the region. She noted that,

If we define ourselves as a sport friendly city whether you're an amateur, an elite or a recreational user, I think we can host these small, medium and large tournaments and it helps support our community base in a way.

She went on further to highlight how the effects of sport tourism can carry benefits for the entire region, encouraging more community engagement by all stakeholders in the region, stating, “I think our region is fairly open and positive about it [sport tourism] because our community organizations run by the volunteers right now are owners and operators who are very much involved in the community.” She acknowledged the presence of sport in the regional community and the way it positively affected their lives.

#### 4.2.1.2 Promoting Sport Development and Resident Well-Being

Many stakeholders were very adamant of sport tourism events being a development driver for their “grassroots sports” and as a “sport development tool” and also as a means of raising the

standards of well-being in their communities. NRS-d described the value of sport tourism not only as a catalyst for “economic and community development” but specifically it was a social driver in “getting kids off the couch” and “also [with] seniors and participation type based initiatives.” RWS-4 described her thoughts on sport as a facilitator of social development, noting,

I think sport is really important, right from a young age for children; it teaches them so much about team work and it teaches them about their community. Most sports become involved in their community in one way or another in giving back.

RWS-1 also gave a positive sentiment with respect to sport tourism endorsing sport development in the community. She mentioned,

...what happens when there is an event like the Ontario Volleyball Association Championships (OVA) and there is such high level of play for volleyball, you get the local teams in that may be only spectating or an older sister or brother is playing that they get to watch and kind of rub elbows with kids that are playing and I think it inspires them.

RWS-5 gave the example of how the community was developing basketball and continuously looking for the opportunities to enhance the sport in the region. He described the notion of developing the sport and hoping to inspire more youth development through sport tourism. He commented,

Basketball is at an all-time high in our country...how else can we leverage basketball in our community and create other types of events? How do we showcase and celebrate these high performance athletes and the sport? Now we're talking different types of sport are tourism opportunities. So it's creating those pieces, then you're creating a sport festival that has a sport tourism niche to it...

In a similar tone, RWS-4 talked about her involvement with a local minor football team and noted the benefits of hosting different events in her community simultaneously helped to develop the sport and the organization in the Region of Waterloo. She noted,

...next year when we're looking to recruit for our organization and not just ours but there's another one in the region [...] but even though we may be competing... It's going to bode well for both of our organizations because it creates new interest in our sport.

Moreover, she also complemented the ability of sport tourism to not only drive the notion of improving well-being in the community but also breach the realm of spurning high performance

athletes, noting, "...So some of it is just really about general well-being and health but [it is also good] from competition level to push our athletes to be more than what they are."

In addition, promoting positive well-being as a component of community development was a topic that several stakeholders had input into, as they envisioned it as a benefit of sport tourism and sport development and also a motivator for these phenomena in their region. NRS-a communicated that as her organization was mandated to "encourage people to live active healthy lifestyles" their stakeholder body encouraged people "to do things that were not only heavily sports oriented but also fun oriented." RWS-4 supplemented this notion in her discussion of the community benefits of sport, stating,

...if you got down the crux of it, the benefit would be highly beneficial for the community at large and this city has a well-being strategy that talks about a health and well-being as a community and I think sport and recreation play a huge part in that.

In the same stream of thinking, NRS-b highlighted,

...it helps make Ontario a nicer place to live when we have an opportunity to accept different cultures, different groups of society that normally might not be accepted. And sport...and I'll bet relating to that sport, allows greater acceptance and diversity of interest to come under a common umbrella.

Stakeholders from both regions also alluded to the diverse community benefits that come from hosting sport tourism events and this not only helps keep regions and communities progressive in modern trends of well-being and community diversification but also complement different community's and society's modern lifestyles. RWS-4 noted, "...If we looked at it in a framework of healthy cities and all that kind of stuff, like economically, physically, mentally, all that kind of thing, I think it would make sense." NRS-a also designated it as another good opportunity for community development, stating,

One of the ongoing trends of our collective lifestyles is to get out and to be more active. More people are cycling today than they were 20 years ago, so without paying attention to that, I think that as a region we would be remiss...so you have to follow some of the trends of the lifetsyle. Again, it's the low hanging fruit, there's capacity here for something and sporting events are a great opportunity to take advantage of that.

#### 4.2.1.3 Embracing Volunteerism

Another community benefit that stakeholders identified, relating to giving back and engaging community members, was the notion of volunteerism. It became a phenomenon that was not only highlighted as an important social driver but also embraced as something that was significant to progressive community development. It was encouraged for sports and events purposes and also for wider community building purposes. RWS-2 noted, "...You need to have the support of your volunteers. They need to want to make the commitment...if they see it as too much work or too onerous, it's not [the event] going to happen!" RWS-4 portrayed the volunteerism as a large part of community development,

Volunteering in a community is a huge piece, it creates...It brings a sense of belonging and connection to a city that nothing else can really provide so how we help foster that and develop those volunteers so that we have a consistent supply of volunteers.

NRS-d also noted that volunteering is another social skill that some local residents could use to advance themselves in the community. He commented on the value of community members volunteering in sport tourism events,

...they also develop some skills like a lot of people can volunteer for things, like Pan Am Games, some people would volunteer, that's great on a resume. It builds stuff and it also builds skills, a lot of people need skills. When I was at my previous job, we'd have people volunteer for stuff because then you could volunteer to learn how to do security and now they can put that on a resume so it helps out a lot socially.

However, in the Region of Waterloo, the stakeholders emphasized the importance of the volunteers for the success of the sport events that the region would host. RWS-1 explained that volunteers were crucial to an event noting, "It's not just during the event...leading up to the event, a year out, there's a volunteer organizing committee that's putting in a lot of hours, trying to pull everything together." RWS-5 stressed the need for a good volunteer base and support for sport events as they not only helped run local organizations but also assisted to drive the interest for some events. He reiterated,

[In] The health of a community, volunteerism is very important as a whole, but you're transient volunteers, are they wanting to do these one off events more than sit on a Board



of Directors for 2-3 years running a sport club. So this is where you can grow that and create that interest and fever for volunteerism, I think that's a huge impact.

RWS-1 supplemented this notion of needing local support from volunteers but also highlighted the need to cater to a variety of interests for different events that they wanted to bring to the region. She added,

We've got a really good reputation for having great volunteers and sometimes skating volunteers are different from curling volunteers and softball volunteers because it's generally the clubs that pull in the volunteers for a really big event... You have to be cognizant of that and you have to have volunteers in order to...you cannot bring in an event without volunteers.

RWS-3 also commented on the range of sporting events helping to build the volunteer base and also allowed the region to seek new opportunities with new events. Using a specific example she noted that sport events drove,

...an increase in volunteer support and capacity, so for example when we put the bid together for Canada 55+ Games I wasn't really sure about the capacity of our volunteer base because I hadn't specifically done an ask like this. So we have a great volunteer resource centre and I went to talk to them and I said, we're thinking about bringing this event here, there may be a requirement of up to about 500 volunteers... They were like, great! We love this kind of stuff because they even need to regenerate and re-position themselves every once in a while as to what is volunteerism; what can locals do to benefit the community and how to engage new volunteers.

#### **4.2.2 Job Creation and “Post Industrial” Diversification**

One of the other substantial socio-economic impacts that stakeholders established as a great asset from hosting sport events was creating jobs. Jobs in a post industrialized economy, as illustrated by these two regions, allowed them to bridge the gap between the perceived social and economic benefits from hosting sport events. NRS-c described the benefits of hosting sport events in the realm of the tourism and service industry as being “the fastest growing part of the tourism industry, it's certainly the fastest growing part of the sports industry.” It underlines the socio-economic value that sport tourism can bring to different destinations. He bolstered his belief in that sport tourism can create jobs and the ripple effects were seen in many ways. He stated that,

...if it's a 12 month a year full industry then the people that get laid off at the end of the summer, all of a sudden they're working [shifts] over the course of the Winter which puts money in their pocket and then that allows their kids to play sports, maybe they couldn't before. They have more money in their pockets so they're able to go out for dinner. That's just spinning that money back into the economy. An opportunity for more stable, secure employment if it was a 12 month a year industry...

RWS-4 added to this notion as she understood what it meant for her business when there were extra sport events and attractions to drive tourism in the region. She mentioned, "I knew in March I needed to hire people and have them trained and ready to go and ready in April [for the upcoming OVA tournaments] or we wouldn't be prepared to meet the demand..."

In this light, stakeholders from both regions acknowledged that their regions comprised a lot of "relatively old manufacturing cities" and since a lot of these manufacturing companies have vacated their regions, it was necessary to diversify their economy with other industries to sustain livelihoods within their cities. RWS-5 noted,

...we were a blue collar manufacturing town... when those started to dry up and move out we had to diversify to create a balanced economy that is sustainable which improved the downtown core, which improved all those things [...] A more rich environment so now you're seeing core development where you're downtown living is important because it attracts business, cultural pieces and sport. It's a full mix of activity and sport and sport tourism are a part of that...

NRS-d lauded sport tourism as a great tool for post industrial development and its ability "develop jobs" in his region due to the existing amenities in the region, admitting,

...as you know manufacturing has left Niagara Region, we've lost our manufacturing in St Catharines and Welland. Niagara [Region] has become an area of small and medium enterprises, a lot of entrepreneurial stuff, some companies have 10 employees, a really niche market, so a lot of niche things. Niagara Region is going to that, so it's [sport tourism] a great economic base, I mean we've got everything here, we've got all the natural amenities right now to attract people...

Stakeholders associated jobs as the social part of the socio-economic benefits and also further explained the economic aspects of these benefits thoroughly.

#### ***4.2.3 Diversifying and Stimulating the Economy***

The major benefit that was unanimously uncovered throughout the interviews was the economic benefits sport tourism events brought to stakeholder cities and regions. Stakeholders all

had a positive view on the kind of economic impact that sport tourism could have on their region, even if they were unsure of the specific quantified amounts that were put back into their economies. As much as “everyone wants to make money”, the stakeholders were cognizant of actively seeking the opportunities to diversify and stimulate the economy through “direct and indirect benefits.” RWS-4 simply highlighted the economic benefits noting, “...Obviously in the tourism benefits, increasing visitor’s time in the city which would result in them spending a bit more...” but RWS-1 went a step further describing the economic impact of sport events were,

Huge! And it doesn't matter, if it's a small event or an international one. But for example Ontario Volleyball Association is probably the easiest one. It's so big, it sends business from hotels and restaurants from the whole region into Guelph [...]

She further discussed the economic impact on stakeholders, locals and businesses seeing a “revenue bump” in the wider community through sport tourism events,

Most of the benefits are for the hotels and the community because those are our partners. Those are the people that are putting their money in so that we can invest [as an organization]. So for the health of the business community, restaurants and hotels, gas stations aren't members of ours but anyone that sees the trickle down, sees it from tourism.

NRS-d and RWS-2 shared the same sentiment that these events “stimulate the economy”. RWS-2 further highlighted the economic impact from local attendees,

...obviously there are natural benefits in terms of revenue, to our facilities and hotels are going to gain the revenue that comes from people staying at their locations. Depending on the type of event, everything from the grocery stores to the restaurants are going to benefit because people are either going to be eating out of their coolers in their hotel rooms or they're going to be picking up something to eat at some of the local restaurants. Even indirectly, maybe some of the other shops, you know, somebody forgot something at home or whatever need to a little bit of shopping.

Similarly, NRS-e commented on the importance of sport tourism as an economic stimulant in his region, following up on the impact through local patronage, he concluded,

There will always be that element of it as well [patronage of local businesses]. If people are coming from all over the world to see their family and friends compete in international tournaments, not only are they going to stay for the competition but they'll stay for the attractions so... It's a very smart tourism development strategy.

The other economic factor that stakeholders from both regions deemed important was the aspect of repeat business to their respective regions. They understood the value of investing in these events for future repeat business. NRS-e spoke about this in the tourism sense, noting, "...Ultimately everybody goes after repeat and unique visitors...there is no magic formula other than that in tourism." RWS-1 echoed the same feeling and understanding the planning that was necessary, she commented, "One of the things that we need to do is not only attract more different events to the region but how can the events that are here grow and hope that they keep coming back." NRS-c reinforced this highlighting, "...It's creating them [sport events] so they come back every single year. You want events to happen every single year so that the hoteliers and the restaurants can build that into their service schedule and their own economic models." RWS-3 highlighted the example of the OVA's as "...the biggest business that I've been looking at and concentrating on in the last 4-5 years." RWS-4, conferred about the group as a regional client that has regularly been here but is wary of what is needed to keep the group's repeat business,

....when you look at something like OVAs..., you start to get, maybe even that 3-4 [yrs of their event] then the other destinations start to notice that that's happening and they want that opportunity so they start to come knocking on the doors of the Ontario Volleyball Association. They're trying to do to lure them away. It's like any client, they're yours but you can't take them for granted so what can we do differently in order to keep those opportunities already here for the long term?

RWS-5 supplemented this stream of thinking and surmised the value of this repeat business to the entire region and how it could become a part of the regional economic driver through tourism and also a regional economic diversification strategy. He contended,

It's similar [sport tourism] in how arts and culture fit within economic development because that's we're it fits in our organization. Because arts and culture provide that well rounded community that makes it of interest for corporations to come here because their employees will have a satisfied, more well-rounded lifestyle. Recreation and then also sport tourism has that appeal as well, it has to be a part of that mix. Not only does it drive, obviously business as an economic driver to a community, whether it be heads in beds, secondary spending, tax driven, whatever that is... The hope is we'll bring repeat business off of that, so people like the region and they want to come back, might even come back to live...

#### ***4.2.4 Facilitating Destination Enhancement***

The topics of destination regeneration and enhancement were prevalent throughout all the interviews. As a major benefit of hosting sport events, the stakeholders envisioned sport tourism as a great opportunity to host the event as well as a means for promoting and enhancing their destination by augmenting its domestic and international destination image. They also spoke of the benefits from using these events to rejuvenate and develop certain infrastructure and facilities to further improve their capacities to attract and host future sport events. The stakeholders understood the benefits and value of developing their facility infrastructure to move sport tourism forward and to advance their regional development endeavours.

##### ***4.2.4.1 Developing Destination Infrastructure and Capacity***

For the Region of Waterloo, it was a matter of understanding their current capacity as one stakeholder noted, “We've got great sports complexes that we could collaborate on between all of us” and another highlighted that, “We had an influx of 4 hotels in 18 months in Guelph so attracting new business became really important”. Stakeholders in Waterloo Region, also spoke about their facility infrastructure that enhanced their destination, whether it was, “RIM Park, the Kitchener Auditorium, the Peter Hallman Ball Diamonds”, “free parking on weekends”, “new artificial turf fields” or a “track field”, they all added to their capacity for attracting and hosting sport events. RWS-1 highlighted the region’s capacity to host sport events, noting,

...what we're trying to do is let people know that we've got a huge wealth of facilities within a very short drive between the four communities and we've got over, it's probably 3500 hotel rooms within that area so you know we're here we're close and we've got the facilities.

She further understood this as a benefit to her region as the destination’s capacity was upgraded through the continuous hosting of these types of events. She explained,

It raises our profile in the sport community [...] So I think that's really good that we get on the radar of some groups that may not have considered us before. It's fantastic for us as we have way more sporting facilities than we do for conventions so that's probably one of the most important things and that we're so close to Toronto.

As an established tourism destination, stakeholders in the Niagara Region understood the added value that sport tourism provided for their destination and the ways it allowed them to develop new facilities to further enhance their destination capacity. NRS-b noted, "...In competition with other parts of the province, they're [regional officials] trying to re-energize awareness of Niagara Region as a place to do business and within that context [of sport tourism]."

NRS-d commented on sport tourism as a great destination development strategy, contending,

I think we have the infrastructure in the Niagara Region...we have all the hotels, we have 2 lakes for fishing tournaments or anything on water, we have the natural amenities here and it's just a matter of us collaborating and working... I think it's a brilliant strategy.

NRS-e also added that the region was incrementally developing their capacity, with their sport venues, to complement their existing tourism infrastructure so that it could become a complete and competitive sport tourism destination. He stated,

I think you see 2 municipalities have really invested in major sport assets, the Henley Regatta [in St. Catharines] is an international course and the Welland International Flatwater Centre is a world class course, they've really taken the time to invest in major sport tourism assets. Brock University has worked to transform its facilities into a place that can be utilized for sport tourism when the students aren't there.

Moreover, NRS-c highlighted the reality of "using existing infrastructure that's in the community" as a great driver for several regional stakeholders and cities to contribute to the capacity for sport tourism. NRS-e complemented this, describing the efforts that some of the regional players were making as they may not be able to fully invest in new structures but want to play their part in sport tourism. He noted,

Other municipalities that don't have the physical assets but have the space so they're able to bid on things that don't require a large physical facility. So everybody is getting involved in a meaningful way at a point that they can actually get involved. You would have Port Colborne jumping on board because they have very big arenas. Fishing competitions and things like that are happening out there [on their lake]. You have Fonthill where there are big open spaces for road biking and that sort of thing... So we're seeing municipalities that are saying where we can, we will participate...

NRS-c and NRS-d talked about the region's newest facility addition, the Meridian Centre in St Catharines, as a multi-use facility that increased their capacity for hosting more events in the region. NRS-d noted, "Now you have the Meridian Centre, if we want to host the CIS national

basketball or national hockey championships, we now have the amenities with that facility here.”

NRS-c supplemented this notion, stating,

...some of the events that we [would] want to host in the future are, say the Grand Slam of Curling, the Scotties Tournament of Hearts, a world curling event. Those events would all take place at the Meridian Centre because it has the venue and the capacity.

#### 4.2.4.2 Augmenting Destination Image

Another part of destination development that stakeholders from both regions heralded as significant piece to hosting sport tourism events was the bolstering of the destination’s image. In terms of doing this, Stakeholders agreed that sport events would have a key role in further developing their tourism image. RWS-2 praised sport tourism stating,

I think it really helps raise the profile and image and that's important because once you get a good profile, image and a good reputation...word of mouth is great and that might help us be successful... We still have to submit competitive bids but increasing our profile image and reputation is really important.

NRS-c reiterated this notion, describing the benefit of sport events as an exceptional complement to the existing Niagara tourism industry, noting,

So the industry of tourism, this is one thing [sport tourism] to support that industry. Again it's about employment and economic activity... It's also showcasing the region so whenever you have people coming into you region whether it be for basketball, you want to put your best foot forward, you want them to understand what are things they can do. [...]It's just another way of showcasing the region.

Stakeholders also discussed the benefit of hosting sport events in their region not only benefited their image but also acts an impetus for tourists to extend their stays and add further benefits to the region. Thus, they envisioned it as a way to further develop their tourism destination’s image. NRS-d envisioned it as a “sport-cation” and RWS-4 praised the added benefits, noting,

From a sport tourism perspective, we really have to look at the big picture here. Staying longer helps because then we have that opportunity to showcase a lot more things that are happening in here and make it a special and unique vacation.

NRS-c supplemented this, noting the complementary value of sport events to a destination and the way sport tourism can also become an amenity to enhance a destination for a range of visitors. He described,

People may come here for hockey events and then realize they see NOTL and see how beautiful the Shaw Festival is [...] I think it's a nice entree to things like the Shaw Festival, you're down here in Niagara Region, you may whip through NOTL, between games and check it out and discover it and decide to come back for a 2-3 day weekend sort of thing.

This alludes to the diversity of attractions necessary to attract and host sport events that both region's stakeholders described as a necessary tourism diversification strategy for their destinations.

#### 4.2.4.3 Destination Differentiation through a Diversity of Attractions

Several stakeholders commended the use of sport tourism as a means of destination diversification and it acted as a means of differentiating their emerging sport tourism destination in a very competitive Canadian sport tourism market. Sport tourism events were understood as “a manner of diversifying the tourism product offering” and the benefits that this phenomenon could bring. Stakeholders expressed satisfaction with regard to the complementary nature of sport tourism events to other tourism attractions. This included the variation that their region now possessed to differentiate them from others, whether it was “getting across from Guelph to parts of Waterloo to be quicker than in certain parts of Toronto” or the simple nuances of “...here [in Niagara] a traffic jam is no more than one stop light.” It allowed for a unique opportunity for each region to differentiate its destination profile to gain a competitive advantage in the sport tourism destination market. NRS-e spoke about the way that sport events allowed the Niagara region to diversify its tourism portfolio by “marrying the 2 things”, he noted,

We have great facilities but we're also a fantastic place to visit. We have that leg up on really any other potential sport tourism destination... In Niagara, we not only have fantastic facilities but also the tourism experience is plentiful as it's already here.



RWS-4 supplemented this sentiment in speaking about the range of attractions in the Region of Waterloo, noting

I need my attractions because they can create those moments that those travellers are looking for to go with their family and visit. Whether it is for the purpose of sport tourism, whether it's for leisure travel, family related travel, we've become a 'destination' particularly through those, May-September seasons.

NRS-b spoke about the way that Niagara differentiates itself as a destination and its ability to be a very "cosmopolitan" destination, stating,

I think as a venue that offers lots of non-sport time, things to do is also right up there in terms of sightseeing, wine country and culinary options. [...] I think in the Niagara Region to some extent, the small town feel and the lack of congestion is actually a benefit. Not everyone wants big city, urbanized environments in which a hosted event gets lost. So I think that the charm... and having events that match up with Niagara Region brand of friendliness of small town feel and yet have sophisticated hotel in culinary and wine capacity is interesting.

RWS-5 noted that sport tourism was a good venture to attract visitors to a region as it allowed for diversity of attractions and allowed tourists to experience several things while in the region. He emphasized,

It's also great to host events like our cycling race during Multicultural Festival weekend [in Kitchener]. It adds greater layers of flavour for people coming here. So it needs to be a mix, I think as the RTO4 recognized sport tourism is an easier sell, it's happening anyway. So how can you grow it, how can you have greater impacts on it to sustain that business and grow the business? I think that's why it probably has a bit more of greater importance on this region because we're not a massive convention town.

NRS-a furthered this notion, specifically explaining the ways that Niagara Falls could differentiate itself during a "sport vacation" as the city boasts "a good mix of infrastructure, great structure and affordability". She highlighted,

Niagara Falls has set itself up to have almost two tiers of tourism, you have a very high end tourism level which is the Fallsview area but there is a very family friendly, affordable, equally as great tourism area which is really Lundys Lane, where a lot of guests can bring their family and affordably stay and still have a great time in an affordable manner. So there is that dichotomy of product and vast allotment of product that brings different clientele here.

#### **4.2.5 Counteracting Seasonality**

Another benefit of sport tourism, addressed within both regions was the way sport events can be used to mitigate the effects of tourism seasonality. Sport tourism was praised for its ability to produce events at different times of the year in an attempt to counteract the tourism seasonality phenomenon. The stakeholders lauded the benefit from the flexibility of planning, bidding and hosting sport events at various times of the year to increase the seasonal length of their tourism destination and the sport tourism events also enhanced the depth of the destination's tourist attractions. Thus, in some cases extending tourism seasons as well as adding value to the current tourism offerings in the destination. NRS-c described that,

The other great thing with sport tourism, for a destination such as Niagara Region which has predominantly been a 6-7 month a year industry. As we develop and grow [as a sport tourism destination] it brings in the business in the shoulder seasons so that September, October, November and then again at April, May and the beginning of June... Now we can expand in the Winter and hopefully it helps the hotels so they're busy at all those times and not just the weekends.

However, NRS-a and NRS-b both see sport events in "shoulder seasons" as an issue as they highlight that it only leaves tourists with the typical shoulder seasons in Canada and some tourists still want these sport events in "peak season". NRS-e supplemented the seasonality discussion in his understanding of the perceived seasonal flows associated with the Niagara Region tourism products. He identified that a part of the benefits of sport tourism was the net economic gain from tourism receipts and this was also able to offset the perceived seasonal aspects of the destination. He mentioned,

The great thing is that everybody is realizing how valuable it [sport tourism] is as a tourism asset, and it's a net gain. One of the big questions is that, are we simply taking away room stays from people that would have visited anyway? The answer to that is no, it's been demonstrated...that it's a net gain in room stays and tourism receipts and I think ultimately that will be the motivator to coalesce the business community and the major actors.

NRS-c gave a specific example of this in the planning stages for hosting the 2016 IIHF U18 Women's World Championship, contending,

The 2016 IHFF U18 Women's World Championship is a great example, that's going to be midweek business... there's going to be business from Monday-Thursday for the hotels whereas traditionally in the Winter, those hotels pick up business on Friday-Saturday and maybe a Thursday and/or Sunday. In Niagara Falls where the hotels struggle...people come down on the weekends for events in the Winter, their finding themselves busier on weekends through sport tourism, through other stuff but it's the midweek business that they really struggle with.

In the Region of Waterloo context, their stakeholders added that it was a welcome complement to their existing tourism attractions as it “adds value” in a diverse tourism region that does not have many main attractions. RWS-5 noted that,

...we don't have a Niagara Falls, we don't have a natural feature that's going to draw people to this community outside of Mennonite Country. People coming through to see the uniqueness of St Jacobs and Mennonite Country, which is really a Spring-Summer thing and in the Fall you get Oktoberfest, but that's it. So it needs to be a good mix of those [tourism] pieces...

RWS-4 was comfortable with the mix of activity in different seasons that sport tourism events make available as it allowed her city in the region to benefit throughout the year. She mentioned,

...what would be a busy tourism season for some other true tourism destinations, the summer, is slow for us and for our hotels. Weekends, weekdays are busy for conferences but once you're in July/August, it's kind of dead because we're not seen as a place...no one wakes up in Ottawa and says lets come here for a long weekend right so the regular tourist season for us isn't July/Aug but we have a pretty strong shoulder and winter.

RWS-4, also as a member of the business community, shared a similar opinion as NRS-c on not only “shoulder seasons” but also “shoulder nights”, and thus was also in favour of sport tourism to supplement the conference and business tourism in the region. She acknowledged that, “Sports tend to happen, or tournaments or events, on those times when for accommodation providers, they are looking to put some ‘heads in beds’ on those shoulder nights Thursday-Sunday and your weekends.”

### **4.3 Overcoming Challenges of Hosting Sport Tourism Events**

Stakeholders in both regions spoke about some of the challenges they faced in terms of sport tourism development. This theme and the subthemes in this section emerged from stakeholder responses to questions related to the challenges of hosting sport events and its effect on their efforts geared towards the development of sports tourism in the region. Each region faced common challenges, represented in the subthemes, including a lack of facilities; infrastructure constraints; navigating the political environment in their region as well as handling displacement concerns and local resident irritation. In addition, other subthemes derived from the constraints and challenges inquiries in the interviews were the notions of exhausting the destination resources and a lack of dedicated resources towards hosting sport events and planning for sport tourism development.

#### ***4.3.1 Facility and Infrastructure Constraints***

Stakeholders in both regions highlighted that there were no relationships with the regional governments to develop a sport tourism strategy. This reality was noted as a major challenge that confined attempts to bid on and host certain sport events. The stakeholders did not always have the power or rights to utilize certain facilities in the region as they had no control over or own these facilities. RWS-5 stated, “Facilities are developed at a municipal level and are not regional in thought.” Both RWS-1 and NRS-c explained that there was no direct relationship between the regional government bodies and regional sport tourism entities as the recreation facilities are operated and maintained by the municipalities in the region. RWS-1 noted that,

...the Region of Waterloo as a regional municipality [government body] doesn't own any facilities, so they count on us [her organization] to direct the sport tourism stuff and because of their partnership with us so they don't really have any kind of a strategy around sport.

RWS-5 bolstered this for the Region of Waterloo, noting,

We're a 2 tiered government system, the region [government body] itself doesn't do recreation so they don't make those financial investments, it's just the municipalities that do and RSTO as a regional entity, they have a funding and support model but it doesn't

really invest into venues or at least that haven't been explored to date because it's so new...

NRS-1 echoed this fact for the Niagara Region as he described the lack of facilities in the region was partly due to alignment of facilities with governing entities are developed primarily for recreation purposes, making them difficult to fund and justify. He explained that, “The problem is that the facilities are funded by the municipalities but the benefits of things become regional so that's frustrating for local taxpayers that paid \$5-\$10 million to build the facility.” This precluded some of the discussions on facility constraints in both regions.

There was a similar inclination to the facility challenges that arose for hosting sport tourism events in both regions, as NRS-c simply put, “You’re challenged by the venues that you have [...] There’s gaps in our facility inventory that make hosting some things really difficult.” This described that regions will have a lack of facilities as no region could possibly have venues to hold all events. Explaining the situation in the Niagara Region, NRS-e commented, “Nobody wants to do the upfront infrastructure spending right now, I mean it's just not a favourable time to do that sort of thing and the payback period on something like that would be quite long” illustrating challenges that some regions and municipalities face with funding and justification of hosting sport events. RWS-3 shared the sentiment of NRS-e, noting the lack of funding on a regional level to host sport events as cities and regions needed to balance budgets and had to make a “business case” for funding as sport was not always a priority. She mentioned,

...that's our other challenge regionally, the age of some of our facilities, so the Kitchener Auditorium and I mean, RIM Park is new, but you've got some of those older, dated, not accessible [facilities] and there's just no capital money in [municipal] budgets.

RWS-4 noted that in the Region of Waterloo, facilities were a significant challenge as, “...Obviously there are the big [constraints] which are space. RIM Park is great, but it’s not a fit for all sports.” RWS-1 supplemented this notion, describing the competitive nature of hosting sport tourism events in the province and the lack of facilities was a reality, explaining,

For certain sports, there will be more competition, it depends on if they [other destinations] have the facilities. For example, with OVA Championships, there’s not that

many places that can host it all in one place so we're fortunate for that. But for other sports, there are lots of places that can host them [different sports].

NRS-a, commented on the vast nature of her region and the inability to entertain all sport events across the region, relating,

...there are a lot of sports under sport tourism, and a community can be really engaged in the sports activities, although there are certain ones they just feasibly can't hold. So we see a lot of cycling events but we have communities under our 12 municipalities that just cannot bare cycling so they're often criticized and yet they're quite sport supportive but just not a specific sport and so it becomes a bit of a difficult conversation about sport tourism because you have to understand that there are a lot of different elements underneath it.

Specific constraints were highlighted in terms of transportation, as both regions were undergoing changes to improve their infrastructure but not necessarily in the most efficient manner. In the Waterloo Region, RWS-1 and RWS-5 spoke of the challenges of construction for a new regional Light Rail System (Region of Waterloo-Rapid Transit Division, 2012) being built that was hampering planning for future events. NRS-a, echoed these impressions for the Niagara Region, as they were successful in hosting events because they have some facilities and natural amenities to attract events but due to a lack of planning and strategy, as they mentioned earlier, they faced difficulties. She highlighted,

...As the operational people [we know] the events are coming, whether our administrators understand it, we as the operational people have to make them [the facilities and venues] work and so I think we're right at the tipping point. The Pan Am Games are probably right at the tilt of that tipping point. Infrastructurally [sic], we're lacking and the resources are now at probably maximum capacity so if we don't start to address it administratively and strategically, [at] that tipping point...something's going to crash soon.

Additionally, as a host venue for the 2015 Pan Am Games, NRS-c and NRS-e mentioned the constraint the Niagara Region had in that they are an expansive region which does not have a “seamless” mode of regional public transit. NRS-e noted a major constraint as, “...Transportation and being able to have tourists have a seamless experience as they come to watch the [Pan Am] games.” NRS-c shared a related view on regional transit in Niagara, mentioning,

...if we had better regional transit, so if a person from Egypt that's competing at an event in Welland could get on a bus and go to Niagara Falls and come back on one pass in a

reasonable timeframe at a decent cost... It doesn't happen, we have 3 municipal transit systems, all of which don't really work that jointly together.

RWS-3 and NRS-d also brought forward an interesting concept of a geographic constraint within the province and inter-municipal relations with regard to hosting sport tourism events, noting that their respective cities and regions were too close to a major hub being the City of Toronto. RWS-3 mentioned, "We're almost too close to Toronto to warrant an overnight stay" even though RWS-5 thought it was a competitive advantage to be closer to Toronto. NRS-d also related the same feelings from an economic standpoint as tourist will not stay overnight if they are that close which limits the benefits of sport tourism. He stated,

You know everything is measured in bed nights, one of the biggest problems we have in the Niagara Region, the tourism people in Niagara Falls and you get people coming from Toronto to see the Falls [sic] don't spend the night right. So they come down and look at the falls, walk around Niagara Falls and then drive back to Toronto, it's only a couple hours away.

#### ***4.3.2 Dealing with Displacement***

Stakeholders from both regions indicated that "displacement of existing organizations" and groups was a major challenge or constraint they faced when hosting sport events. It impeded some planning and hosting aspects and the stakeholders acknowledged that they had to work around some non-sport events that were already established in their region. The general disposition was that hosting sport events could "displace" existing users such as local sporting groups and other residents and local businesses. However, NRS-e also raised the point, "There's always the question of recreation facilities being used for simple play and I don't know if there has been analysis done that indicates how much [recreational] play time is taken away by major events." The stakeholders in the Region of Waterloo spoke of the challenge of displacing their local user groups for sport tourism as they often used the same facilities. RWS-2 explained this in his example,

So now, we have moved the minor sports groups from our main facilities to this other facility because this group needs it for this time period. How's that always going to work,

so that you can pull off a top notch event but also not tick off your minor sports groups who outside of that event you rely on for revenue?

RWS-1 added to this argument, noting that the stakeholders were always,

...trying to make sure that the local sport organizations and local citizens are not being displaced too often from the facility that their tax dollars pay for. So making sure you can keep the locals happy. I think that we can do that... I think that we have to be cautious about that. We don't want the citizens screaming that they don't want to give up their rink space to have OVAs so that's something that the cities have to balance and make sure that they're 'keeping the peace'.

RWS-4 spoke about the associated displacement of always having big tournaments like the OVA Championships in their region as "we can't accommodate all of those visitors in a very close proximity to RIM Park, they will have to stay throughout the region" and thus creating effects like extra traffic congestion in the city. RWS-5 summed it up, stating, "You can only displace so many people." He gave a specific example to the Waterloo Region,

We got a lot of negative feedback last year out of our Peter Hallman Ball Diamonds because we hosted the 2014 International Softball Congress–World Fastball Tournament event there last summer but on the heels of running a few other tournaments, our regular users got bumped on the weekends or on the Thursday night because you're doing set up and it was probably just a little too much. So again, finding that balance of where we go in with that... How many do we do over the course of the year is going to be interesting.

Similarly, NRS-c gave an example of a cycling race that was held in the Niagara Region that displaced local businesses through hosting the event. He explained,

We run this race [...] and when we came through Thorold because we use the tunnel, [...] There's a pumpkin farm out there and that's their busiest weekend of the year. So to alleviate it... they ended up putting a parking lot about 1 km away and busing people back and forth or setting up a way that people can get there. But it's just...we try to always take everyone into account.

NRS-b surmised the displacement notion through sport tourism events as something that local users may ultimately not be able to handle as their interests are not always considered when hosting these events. He noted,

Now, that [sport tourism] has not been universally accepted, in some cases it has not been accepted at all because it bumps local user arena time, it inconveniences the local machinery of how things operate and so there are challenges. There will be some communities that welcome that diversity and others will not.



### **4.3.3 Exhausting Destination Resources**

In each region, some stakeholders were worried about event delivery standards and exhausting certain resources, such as staff, volunteers and facilities as a result of hosting too many events during different annual periods. That being said, although many stakeholders acknowledged these strains on internal resources, other stakeholders took a more proactive approach to dealing with these capacity issues. NRS-e indicated that, “One of the biggest concerns is always, are we able to deliver at that level. Are we are able to deliver at international expectation?” RWS-4 shared a similar sentiment when hosting a big tournament; it puts a strain on staff and her business. She noted,

From an operations perspective, we become inundated with all these travellers that are coming in when we're so overwhelmed and there's so much demand sometimes that customer service and all those things can get impacted and there's that potential for visitors to not have a good experience.

She also added the perspective on the drain that hosting sport events may have on her business as an accommodation provider. She gave an example of a provincial sport tournament that was hosted for children. She mentioned,

When you look at the nature of that business itself, if we've got 40 families that are staying for 2 nights, their children are 9-10 years old. Mom and dad are having a good time because this [travelling for sport events] becomes their social life; kids are running around, they're having a great time but the stress and the tax that it puts on my facilities. Sometimes you wonder if this is the right thing for us to do. Does it make good business sense for us to do this? It disrupts our other guests...

RWS-5 furthered this sentiment and highlighted that, “There is a certain level of fatigue with running events and that's the difficult balance. There are financial restraints in running events as well because everyone wants something for less, we can only do so much [with what we have].”

In terms of facilities, RWS-3 commented on events in Guelph showcasing the need for upgrades in some outdated and older facilities, as they may not be accessible for certain events and “can make some events harder for a certain clientele”. Additionally, in Niagara, the NSC is still “working on developing an inventory of what really is available for use in the region... and when it comes online; it is understanding how it can be used...” These minor capacity constraints

illustrate each region's willingness to seek and host sporting events, but also highlight the strain these events can have on facilities. Stakeholders in each region are still not fully aware of their limited capacities of hosting a range of events as they are still establishing and working through some of the growth challenges associated with sport tourism development in the region.

With regard to volunteers, in the Region of Waterloo, there was a concern that they have to balance their bidding and hosting of events as "volunteer burnout is a real thing." RWS-1 complemented this noting, "We're only limited by the number of volunteers that we have and the volunteer strength because if you host too much you can wear out your volunteers." RWS-2 also commented on this as he was under the understanding that there also needed to be volunteer support to recruit, retrain and retain volunteers. He stated, "I also think it is our role to support the volunteers that will be needed. These things [events] aren't pulled off with just municipal staff. Sure they support the volunteers but that's the relationship that you need to have." RWS-5 understood the benefits to volunteers of all ages but shared a similar sentiment mentioning,

It keeps seniors busy involved as well, there's a whole cycle of benefits so volunteerism is a huge component to me. Now the downside of that is again, this is where you need a balance because you can exhaust that market very quickly and you can turn people off the experience when you're utilizing them too much, so that's where, it is a fine balance.

Moreover, another aspect of destination burnout was illustrated by some resident irritation and discomfort due to the hosting of sport events. Stakeholders in the Niagara Region spoke more about this, in terms of hosting events, sometimes within their regular tourism season and it can have an effect on resident tolerance to want to support hosting future events. NRS-b contended,

We tend to request the same times and places so competition for space, time and energy and a limited capacity within a certain seasonal timeframes to accommodate is probably high on the list [of constraints]. And again, community patience and support, which may be limited... How many times would any home owner want to see running events preventing them from accessing the road or getting off their own property? That's a limited tolerance.

NRS-d gave a specific example as a volunteer for triathlons and the interactions he has had with some of the residents at the sport events. He explained,

Some of the things [challenges] may be local people, I can't tell you how many times I worked at races and local people give me an earful about why they've been held up for 5 minutes, you know they pay taxes and their going to phone the mayor and all that sort of stuff. My first thought is we have about 1000 athletes here and we're doing a race. We brought them into this town so we're helping lower your property taxes because the hotels are paying property taxes so that's one of the constraints in people understanding the benefits.

As well, NRS-e commented on the other aspect to the events that may not be taken into consideration by local residents, as hosting these events are necessary to have these facilities. He thinks this justified hosting sport events and highlighted,

...there's the other side of it, for the municipalities to afford these facilities, you know you need to be able to have [a balance]... So for the 11 months a year that you're [residents] are able to use that facility, you know maybe there's a time that it needs to be occupied for that other month in order to have those types of [sport tourism] events.

#### **4.3.4 *Battling for Dedicated Resources***

Stakeholders from both regions conferred that there was always going to be a drawback in the progression of sport tourism, as there was usually a lack of “allocated resources” to put into strategic planning and bidding for sport events. It emerged as a challenge that multiple stakeholders in both regions discussed with regard to the deficiency of dedicated resources that they have to use towards planning for sport tourism. Stakeholders specifically highlighted the aspects of dedicated staff time allocation, financial resources as well as experienced staff to do the necessary planning, implementation and evaluation of sport events. RWS-5 stated that, “When you look at my job description, sport tourism is about 10-20% of my job...and that's the difficulty with this is that unless you have a dedicated staff member to do it, it doesn't get done properly.” RWS-3 also noted that in her current role, sport tourism bid planning and marketing was an additional part of her job and there just was not enough time to dedicate to it. NRS-c complemented this sentiment noting that within a tourism realm,

Things have a tendency to drop off the table if you don't have dedicated people to take it all the way through. And then many of the tourism bodies, again they're all about bidding and they'll go out and sometimes find the local community group to do stuff but you still have to shepherd it and you may need to have some expertise as part of it as well...

RWS-2 took this notion a step further, citing that in his region, “It's interesting to find out that there's not a lot of necessarily senior recreational and facility staff that have the type of experience that you need...” He highlighted that with respect to staffing resources, in most tourism regions,

...sport tourism is one those things that just hasn't been given enough attention probably because of a lack of understanding and resources at times affect the ability to collaborate because you're too busy trying to get the day to day stuff done in your respective municipality.

Ultimately, there was also a sentiment as to the lack of dedicated financial resources put towards sport tourism. RWS-3 discussed that in her municipality, “I don't have a pot of money that is allocated every year for bid hosting or stuff like that”. RWS-1 added the region always needed to ensure that they had sufficient funds to afford the hosting of some events as the hosting fees were high for some sports and there were not necessarily large dedicated sums or money to put towards this. The resources usually has to come from tourism partners and they can only handle so much sponsorship and gratuity. NRS-a supported this notion, from a business and sponsorship standpoint, stating that,

...[In] the Niagara Region, there's a real misconception of the financial base that's here. It's a very small financial base, just because we host millions of people doesn't necessarily mean a million people reside here. So the economic base here is very small and a lot of these sporting events expect a sponsorship level from within the region and that is very difficult in a region like this...

This statement alludes to the issue that there are only so many sponsorship opportunities and external financial resources available to them. Stakeholders could not depend on that funding to cover any financial gaps that they may not be able to make up as a regional body trying to attract sporting events.

#### ***4.3.5 Navigating the Political Environment***

Throughout the interviews, various stakeholders touched on the political climate of their respective regions and the manner in which it affected their efforts to host sport events and advance sport tourism development. The political environment was perceived to be a challenge as

it hindered decision making with regards to bids and future strategic planning for hosting sport events. NRS-c explained some of the systematic processes noting, “Government has to support everything...because of the way the sport system in Canada is set up”. He gave a specific example about the process of having to bid on some events, mentioning,

The process is sometimes frustrating because you have to go club, region, province, federal governments. So for a national championship, the province has to be awarded it, then they look for bid and you have to get the club to support it.

NRS-a gave an example of how the infrastructure mandated by government systems can affect sporting events in the Niagara Region, not only due to the location but also to what it represented for the city or region economically and otherwise. She explained,

From a sports investment, this is where strategically the region is very much, probably handcuffed quite a bit by its own financial capabilities, moving railroad tracks or working through arrangements, not just with themselves but provincially and federally on things like seaways and bridges and those sorts of things.

In terms of the more local political situations, some stakeholders were wary of the actuality that the governing political systems and politicians had a part to play in the success of their sport tourism pursuits. RWS-3 simply stated, “And then it depends of politically, who your MP is...” highlighting the influence that politicians can have on sport events. NRS-b mentioned the situation in his region that was affecting not only sport tourism but the region at large, “...because the region in its newly constituted fashion with new elected officials, a new administration, virtually over the past year, there has been a huge amount of change for the region itself.” He also highlighted the political affiliation of the region could also impact their developmental priorities, noting, “I would say also [a challenge that we face], political unrest because we've got... I would say a small seat conservative council at the regional level, which has priority on controlling spending, economic growth...and jobs!”

In addition, some stakeholders were also aware of the ways in which their municipal and regional political systems function and they had to be flexible in dealing with these factors to move sport tourism development forward. RWS-3 noted, “You have to be sometimes reactionary,

you can't always move at the speed of municipal government.” RWS-5 spoke about the way that he envisioned the RSTO in the Region of Waterloo working and how it may be influenced by four different municipal political entities in the region, although he was hopeful of progress. He mentioned,

I think it's going to be difficult to execute, because there are so many political pieces at play but it has the most opportunity associated with it as well. We have the buy in from people...at my level we have the complete buy in.

This demonstrated their understanding of the political systems and acknowledging some of the bureaucratic processes that can be involved. RWS-1 explained it from an economic standpoint and how the political process affected sport tourism. She contended,

...Up until now, each city has had its own economic development department and they have different needs depending on the city because in some cases they don't have any land that's available for development but they have buildings like in downtown that they want to develop. It's been interesting seeing that kind of coming together, it will be interesting to see how it moves forward because each Councillor that the political side are wanting to make sure that their tax dollars are being covered.

RWS-4 also gave a bit of background on the progress or lack thereof that sport tourism in the region was affected by due to political and bureaucratic processes. She explained,

...We are all pulled together because the province kind of dictated that and it goes beyond here but I think the rest of it becomes... because it's just whose paying their tax dollars where. And then, those, 'you live on that side of the highway so your tax dollars are going over here and my tax dollars are going here' and as much as I want to help you we got to look after our own. So I can see a little bit of that until [proper planning is done]. And even as the Tri-Cities, Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo still have some of their own internal struggles...

Similarly, Niagara Region stakeholders shared the sentiment of “playing nice with each other” as they saw how the political systems and structures affected progress in sport and tourism endeavours. NRS-c spoke about some constraints “because we have 12 municipalities” and commended the creation of the NSC as he projected it as, “...An organization that can help bring things that will cross across municipal boundaries so you don't run into the parochialism and the silos that have happened over the many years with other things.” NRS-d conferred that part of the

problem was to do with previous history and trying to get these municipalities working together again for sport tourism. He stated,

I think it's huge to the Niagara Region and our biggest challenge has been that many communities haven't worked together; they're afraid to come together [sic] to do this. If the tournament has been Niagara Falls, we can utilize Port Colborne or we can utilize other areas too. [...] It's getting the local municipalities to buy into the same [sport tourism] strategy. I'm sure Niagara Falls would have the same strategy for sport tourism but it may not be as high a priority as just tourism in general.

NRS-c and NRS-d also commented on a specific example of hosting a triathlon in the region and some of the bureaucratic influences that affect the event. NRS-c noted,

...Because we're 12 municipalities, every time you cross a municipal boundary, you have to deal with different things. We ran a triathlon that started in Welland and ending in Niagara Falls, we had to deal with 17 different organizations in the Niagara Region to make that event happen which is a lot of work. [...] So having to deal with all these different agencies, we're criss-crossed between the operating bodies for provincial roads, regional roads, also when you throw in the canal. When you're doing those events it gets harder, the approval process takes longer. Everyone has the same process; it's just typical bureaucratic stuff.

He also highlighted that the processes get tougher when there are political officials that do not understand or agree with the value that sport tourism can bring to the region as there was an international negative stigma to contend with. He explained,

A negative impact is always if you're hosting, sometimes national and international events, when I say national I'm talking Scotties Tournament of Hearts or the Tim Hortons Brier, some of the really big impact events... There is the need for, municipal government support and that can be through facilities, or it could be an investment or it could be acting as a back-stop [investor]. So some government officials are very leery of doing that so they think in short timeframes as opposed to long ones and some are just negative people.

He concluded that some political influences did not always see the bigger picture in terms of hosting these types of events as they may not comprehend the value compared to some more established tourism industry endeavours. NRS-c argued,

There's some people that you'll never change their minds, they don't believe the economic impacts, they think that it's just sport. [...] That's where people don't understand it, people are very narrow-minded or you know, there are some people that just don't want us to spend money on anything. I've heard some politicians say, 'well they're coming anyways, why do we need to invest in it...?' My response to that is they're not coming for the 2016 IIHF U18 World Women's Championship if you don't bid on it and then have it. Similar to the Henley Regatta, 'why should we support them if they're coming anyways?' but if it

doesn't have support going forward, who's to say it's going to continue for another hundred years.

#### **4.4 Understanding Regional Impacts of Sport Tourism Events**

The following theme and sub themes materialized in relation to the questions posed with regard to the stakeholders' perception of the potential impacts of sport tourism events. Their opinions on the impacts were closely related to the positive benefits that were associated with hosting sport events. The stakeholders' also alluded to the negative impacts as perceived challenges connected to the hosting of these events. The notion of sport tourism development was more aligned to the regional impact of sport events on the cities and communities within each region. The stakeholders related the impacts of the events to their region through different viewpoints. While some associated impacts with the positive and negative effects that the events had on their cities, others saw the impact entirely from a regional perspective. The subthemes are related to the main theme as they present the stakeholders understanding of the impacts to the region, as well as their acknowledgement of the necessity for a greater awareness amongst all regional stakeholders to garner "buy in" for sport tourism development in their region.

##### ***4.4.1 Perceptions of Regional Impacts: Garnering "Buy In"***

The stakeholders described the impacts of sport tourism events on their region through their experiences and viewpoints portraying the different angles of thought on the positive and negative impacts of sport events on their regions. They understood the impacts of sport tourism in terms of socio-economic drivers but described some of the setbacks in terms of communication and a lack of awareness and regional vision. RWS-5 explained the role of his city in the region, noting that, "...We contribute to the greater region in regards to marketing our area as a whole and also selling our venues...being a part of a greater economic driver for the region." NRS-e also alluded to the part his organization played in a past Niagara Region sport tourism event that had a direct regional impact. He noted, "We played a role during the opening ceremony; we



pushed it out to the business community and we embraced it as a Niagara Region event and that's ultimately, the way in which you really make a difference." In terms of hosting sporting events for regional growth and development, RWS-5 contended, "It's about bringing something [sport events] that will affect the whole region." Ultimately, NRS-c surmised the value that sport tourism can not only have for the Niagara Region but any developing region. He highlighted,

I think it's an excellent tourism development strategy for many reasons and many regions. We're a destination so people come, people know Niagara [Region] so people come to the Niagara Region for the wine, the ice-wine, now the craft beer, the Falls all that kind of stuff. But, if you're a smaller region, you don't have something like it, a catch, a hook...sport tourism can be that thing that gives you a tourism industry or helps your tourism industry. For us, it's using sport tourism to fill in the holes, fill in the gaps or to create a further base level of tourism.

Stakeholders spoke at length on the value of sport tourism to the region's development that came directly from hosting sport events. They also described the complexities of having these events and what some stakeholders needed to understand in terms of the regional impact of some of these events. NRS-c believed that it was a great means of regional tourism development but there needed to be more "buy in" from the regional tourism partners and stakeholders. He noted,

I think the region and the partners within the region should pursue sport tourism because it acts as that baseline factor... It's going to happen and so if you own it or if you have it, you're always going to have that baseline and because of the way that our tourism season works [in Niagara] being 6-8 months, it's important that in those other 4-6 months that you have something and this [sport tourism] can be that something. It's just getting everyone to [buy in], it's just having the right facilities to do it and I believe people will support it.

RWS-1 shared this sentiment and took it a step further in understanding that they also do not have to compete with each other as cities in a region as events can happen that have regional impact.

She explained,

I mean, I think that you have to look at it for the greater good first and then how it shakes down after that and you have to think, if Guelph gets that piece of business, we'll get something else. It's not, 'let's be counting every shackle', trying to make sure that you're trying to get your money's worth.

RWS-4 also emphasized the need for developing awareness around the region for everyone to understand the impact that sport tourism can have for the region. She related that,

...When those things start to grow and get bigger, then maybe we need to focus...and I don't think we're there yet. I think that's sort of the big picture where everybody is starting to put all those pieces of the puzzle together and what we need to do in order to see this big picture that we can all benefit and everybody can be involved. [...] So how do we educate the whole region, whether you're someone that just lives here and may have a car parked in front of your house that you're not used to because they [the event] need the extra parking or right up to the folks that are financially benefiting because tourists are staying, eating, playing in their facilities or not.

In terms of the socio-economic impacts, stakeholders gave specific examples of how they interpreted the effects of sport tourism events region wide. NRS-d spoke of the “buy in” needed to understand the effect that sport tourism has on the Niagara Region, noting,

...There has to be a belief, when people hear it, it doesn't resonate; if you start a hockey team, the Niagara Icedogs started and created 20 jobs for their [front] office so nobody really takes that really as an industry, nobody has really identified it, they're stuck in 'sport...is that really an industry?' A lot of people haven't figured that out yet and so sport has really matured. So that's the problem, you're communicating something that people's synapses haven't even figured that out yet.

RWS-5 spoke of some of the displacement that was associated with sport events in a positive manner as he sees that it can also benefit the region at large. He gave the specific example of the OVA Championships being in the Waterloo Region, noting,

We also benefited from that event because it takes up every dry pad every ice pad that they have [at RIM Park] so we have now received more rentals because of displacement. Those user groups are our user groups too, so we have created a customer convenience so that they don't lose potential play in any given year. So we're able to support each other's municipalities in regards to these events and it can balance out a lot easier [in the region].

NRS-c also gave a specific example with regard to the regional impact of sport tourism in the Niagara Region. He spoke about a rowing event that they previously held and also noted the “buy in” that was necessary from all stakeholders, highlighting,

Welland hosted an event with 4000 athletes for a week, that's awesome but this is not only a benefit to Welland, this is a regional benefit. Our hotels were filled for a week, the restaurants were packed, Brock University hosted this many people, Niagara Falls and St. Catharines each had this many people staying there. So the regional will benefit but I think we need to talk more about the regional benefit.

NRS-d also provided another example of the regional “buy in” necessary for hosting these sport events and the reasons why the region should still pursue this form of tourism as it can continue to build tourism and have “trickle down” impacts. He contended,

I think the only reason people say no [to sport tourism], is because it doesn't always attract high paying jobs but don't realize it lowers the people on employment insurance and lowers the people on social assistance... So as the tide goes up, all the boats rise, so that economy starts growing and people start getting jobs and other people are getting jobs out of things. Other jobs, creates other jobs... So when you start getting in tournaments, you're going to have to hire a sports staff. Meridian Centre is going to have to hire more people and their going to have to hire a manager for the staff. So those things can come out, it's just really now trying to brand the Niagara Region for that.

#### **4.4.2 *Building Regional Awareness of Impacts***

A theme that evolved amongst many of the stakeholders was the need for them to develop regional awareness for their respective regions to understand the kind of positive impact sport tourism had on the region. With most sport events, there is usually an assortment of both positive and negative impacts. Furthermore, when hosting an event, one major goal should be to find a way to enhance or amplify the positive impacts and alleviate the negative impacts. With this in mind, some of the stakeholders spoke about ways in which they wanted everyone on board in order to understand the positives and in the same mind set, to collaborate and interact to try to mitigate the negative impacts of sport events. With the aspects of bidding on and hosting sport events for the regional growth and development through sport tourism, NRS-d noted, “Everybody has to be on board.” There was also the aspect of the dedicated regional body, the RSTO and NSC, acting as regional partners to ensure continuity and streamlining of the procedures to ultimately benefit the respective regions. However, there were also mentions of some of the minor bureaucratic situations in play that existed amongst regional stakeholders. This was described in the interviews as one of the ways that hampered the progress of sport tourism development in the respective regions. RWS-4 commented on the benefits of dedicated bodies for tourism and sport tourism for the region noting, “I think that's what's great about having our region being so committed to this... Under the RSTO, WRTMC and the cities, we can help

educate and bring that long term value”. RWS-5 commented on the difficulty of getting everyone to understand the reality of the benefits to the region, stating,

...Something that everyone needs to understand, just from an economic stance. When a corporation comes into town, they don't see borders. We as local residents know there are borders...but companies like sports fans, provincial or national sporting bodies or rights holders, they don't see borders, they don't care about borders. When they talk about Kitchener, they're talking about Waterloo and they don't care about you know, they want a facility and an event that's going to run and it's going to satisfy their participants, their sponsors and all their stakeholders... How can we deliver that?

RWS-4 added to this as she commented on the some of the regional bureaucracy that existed, noting, “I think this whole region operated very segregated like that for so many years” but still stressed the need for greater awareness amongst stakeholders to move sport tourism development forward. She highlighted,

While we're very community connected here, I think there still is that sort of Tri-Cities (Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo), ‘We're this versus that, versus this...’ So we have to get rid of those...they're not even physical barriers [...] I think that folks need to remove those barriers and understand the benefit as a whole. I think that...if we could accomplish that [...] and realise that we all have to work together, and that the more we work together, the more successful we'll be.

RWS-2 surmised this sentiment noting,

...it would be great if we could share information between the municipalities and our tourism attractions and accommodations so people know what sport tourism events are coming up and then we're all working together to try and make sure they [these events] come here.

Conversely, in light of this, NRS-c spoke about the delayed value that some stakeholders perceived from hosting sport events so there was hesitation to bid on and host these events. He noted, “It’s really hard for some municipalities to grasp because it doesn't immediately jump out and benefit them.” RWS-4 also commented, “I think all of us believe in sport but not all of us as residents in the area look at sport tourism as a revenue generator or an impact to the economic development” highlighting the need for complete “buy in” for the advancement of sport tourism development. NRS-c reinforced this notion of delayed value from sport events in his example of bidding on event and not being able to see quantifiable benefits in the near future. He explained,

...It is hard to plan around if you're a DMO and you're building your 5 year plan, you don't know that you're getting it [the tournament] until 2 years later. So it can be tough that way and that's why some people don't view it as valuable because they only see the consumer trade, the people coming to the Falls in the summer; you want them to continue coming because you see that immediately where this is a 3 year process. You know from the time I initially told the hotels that we were bidding on it to the time we got it, was a year later and then it's still another year before it happens so it's a 3 year thing. You have to plan, I had to pay stay to make the bid and we're not going to see any income from it for quite a while... So it can be difficult that way.

From this standpoint, some stakeholders echoed the feelings that there needed to be some changes in the approach to sport tourism and how things were done to positively impact the region. NRS-c mentioned that, "Again people have to step outside of their municipal, just their municipal mind-set; politicians are afraid that it means amalgamation [into one city] so that's part of it." NRS-d also spoke about his organization seeking and hosting more local and provincial tournaments, mentioning that, "We're going to have to change some things and how we run things [...] we need to change the culture." NRS-c also saw it as a means to garner greater acceptance from the region but they needed to be aware of the benefits and also have a shift in mind-set. He highlighted,

...Because we have 12 municipalities that all have different goals, objectives and industries, trying to get consensus when you want to host major events, like the Canada Summer Games or the Ontario Summer Games. Trying to get that support across the region, because you need all 12 mayors to say yes to and we think this is important. But if it doesn't affect them, you know they may not be interested.

RWS-3 related this feeling as she understood the impact on the region but they needed to continue to involve and communicate with stakeholders in the region as bidding and hosting events is a dynamic long term process. She mentioned,

...In terms of the accommodation sector and the food and beverage sector, I think, they are hungry for the business so I think if we can show them a direct impact on their business and set some of our rules. We have a business plan for our organization but we don't have a strategy for the region... That's economic development so that will be an overall success and [it's now] just kind of knowing where our place is in the game.

Within the conversations, stakeholders seemed aware of the regional impact that hosting sport events could have for their development and growth and this alluded to the notion of

leveraging these sport events for the greater development of the region but there was not always a common vision for the legacy of these events.

#### **4.5 Leveraging the Impacts of Sport Tourism**

The topic of leveraging sport events was spoken about by the various stakeholders and they described their processes to ensure that they were able to leverage the positive impacts, which took various forms of socio-economic impacts to the community, including, job creation, sport development, volunteerism and enhanced well-being, destination image development, increasing community engagement, differentiating their tourism attraction offerings and diversifying the economy through tourism and repeat business. These responses were related to questions that were posed about leveraging the impacts of hosting sport events in their respective communities. They described leveraging the benefits of these sport events as a means to further the development of their region through hosting sport tourism events. Neither region had a separate formula or strategy for how they would benefit from the impact of these events as they recognized the different distinctions and influences that each event possessed so it was difficult to strategize to leverage the potential impacts of any specific event. Stakeholders spoke about leveraging the events for socio-economic impacts on their region through sport development and engaging their local sporting organizations, as well as in some cases the way in which they could also leverage their natural amenities to attract certain events for destination development. The other subtheme that related to leveraging the impacts of sport events was the legacy planning that each region had implemented for hosting sporting events. Similar to leveraging the impacts, stakeholders did not have formal or long-term plans as part of their bid processes developed for the legacy planning process from each event. They discussed the planning for leveraging the legacy of sport events on a per event basis.

#### ***4.5.1 Leveraging Sporting Events for Destination Development***

In conversations about leveraging impacts to benefit the destination, it became apparent that some stakeholders either had the idea to leverage their natural amenities for hosting the events and some had the idea to host sport events to drive sport and socio-economic development in their respective region. RWS-2 noted that, “Leveraging [the events] is not just about the sports elements but the hosting facilities, accommodations and that sort of thing...” NRS-d further reiterated several times that, “When you come for a tournament, you also want to do other things and we have all those other things!” In the tone of bringing business to the locale, RWS-1 noted that hosting these events would provide widespread benefits towards local organizations. She stated that it would benefit,

...the sport, local sport organizations, it's a huge benefit to community pride and the volunteers as they are organised by local community organizations with the city. And having the facilities busy too, keeping the lights on at places like the Waterloo Memorial Recreation Centre and the Kitchener Auditorium and you know, in between events when they aren't being used for the local community... Get them rockin!

RWS-3 also highlighted that these events would drive new tourism opportunities in the region as, “Sport crosses every race, religion, creed, age so I think it can bring value to the businesses that would be invested in sport” as she understood the overall value that having these events brought to the region. She further articulated,

I think sport really touches everybody in some way shape or form so it doesn't matter how old or young you are, what your background is at all. Whereas some of our other attractions that are phenomenal are very much speaking to a certain market. So if it's a seniors games, maybe that's a great time then for when they come in, we can start showing the things we think that may be a great fit for other interests that they would have aside from just the sport.

NRS-a, NRS-c and NRS-e also spoke to this in the Niagara Region's planning for major events such as the 2015 Pan Am Games (Rowing and Kayaking Events) and the 2016 IIHF U18 World Women's Championship. From a local business standpoint for leveraging benefits, NRS-a described the value “to leverage the games economically” and NRS-e also highlighted,

In the lead up to the Pan Am Games, we also hosted the CEO of the organization because we thought that while sport tourism was great from a visitation and a place building

perspective, there's also real opportunity for small businesses to access the bid opportunities.

NRS-c further complemented this notion of leveraging major events for local business gains in terms of the 2016 IIHF U18 World Women's Championship noting,

We're going to tie economic development over and above tourism; we're working to bring down all the ambassadors and their economic development business connectors from their embassies to the Niagara Region to connect with our economic development people. So it'll be tourism, it will be hosting an event and it'll have economic development. So once the entire benefit understood, both Niagara Falls and St Catharines are going to benefit. Once people see that it's delivered at a high level, It will change the mind-set [about hosting sport events]...

Additionally, RWS-5 spoke about the dual ways that these events were able to drive tourism business and sport development for sport organizations and different values the events held for each organization. He gave an example of a local curling club that negotiated to host an event for a "net split", mentioning that, "...They were guaranteed a certain amount of money which goes into their junior curling programs" and due to the success of the event, the club was happy to host the event again. He also noted that through these kinds of strategic arrangements,

Your local provincial sport group that's running an event, they're happy to have executed it. You know maybe they got some new bats out of it, maybe they got some umpire training and \$1000 back into their budget. They're so excited and pumped up, they want to do more!

Conversely, with regard to leveraging the region's amenities to attract sport tourism, the stakeholders spoke of it as a good strategy to attract sport events to their region. NRS-d pointed to the Niagara Region going in the direction of niche products to complement Niagara Falls and sport tourism is a great "economic base" to serve that purpose. He mentioned,

I mean we've got everything here... We've got all the natural amenities right now to attract people so whether it's the beauty of NOTL and the theatres or the tourist amenities in Niagara Falls or the natural amenities in Port Colborne, Fort Erie or Grimsby and it's now to get the all the pieces in place.

NRS-a spoke to her strategic planning objectives to not only provide the participants a great destination for their event but also to leverage sport events to benefit the region. She stated,

I'm always looking for opportunities for us where I can seek a mutually beneficial relationship with an event that gives us, perhaps, the infrastructure dollars that allows us



to transform maybe an unused piece of property. Through an event last year we were able to actually transform a piece of property that needed to be rehabilitated. So if we can find a piece of property that could have better use and longer term use, this is one of the longer term ways that we can use an event to leverage that.

Additionally, NRS-b and NRS-d commented on the natural amenities from the lakes in the region. NRS-b mentioned the abundance of “shore line” and NRS-d added, “Obviously, water is one of our amenities” indicating the diverse range of terrain that could be leveraged in the region. NRS-a described the fact of a number of Niagara Region municipalities were classed as “cycling friendly facilities” that could be used to leverage future events. As well, NRS-c supplemented these thoughts in the way that the region should be thinking about sport events with an example of cycling as perfect fit to leverage sport tourism in the Niagara Region,

...it's finding what you're good at, finding those niches...You know cycling, depending on whether it's competition or recreational. But cycling is something that the region [can use]...we have in the summer, beautiful cycling routes. We have a great destination that fits with cycling; tie that in with the wineries, the craft breweries, and the agro-business that's around. Cycling is absolutely something that we should pursue here. It's a part sport tourism that we should pursue here because it has the ability to make the difference in the time periods that we need...again because cycling doesn't happen in January and February.

A different aspect to leveraging amenities that emerged from the interviews was that of using the region's tertiary education facilities as sport tourism hubs. In the Niagara region, stakeholders mentioned the use of Brock University residences for housing athletes as a part of sport tourism planning. NRS-d mentioned partnering with Niagara College for the use of their new “national level volleyball gym” being built as well as leveraging a “new artificial turf field” that was being installed at Brock University to host future events. Moreover, in the Region of Waterloo, there was not as much support from the University of Waterloo as they are “a true three term university” and Laurier had constraints with their “facility capacity and access” for use as a smaller university. However, RWS-5 noted that, “We have the support from the University of Guelph, from a Guelph perspective, because they provide most of the sport tourism facilities [in that municipality]”. He also acknowledged the new facility being developed by Conestoga College, stating,

Now they've created this relationship with the city of Cambridge, so that perspective is interesting to see where they go with how they can support other tournaments through the summer months. Conestoga College is not 3 term College, it's purely 2 terms so what are they looking to do to drive those and how can they be an affordable partner in the community...

RWS-3 also mentioned the priority that the University of Guelph has put into supporting the regional sport tourism movement, noting, "They definitely have a high priority for sport. They have a very aggressive and sport focused Director of Athletics and his legacy project at work right now is making them a premier sport centre in Southern Ontario."

#### **4.5.2 Legacy Planning**

With respect to legacy planning for sport events, there was not a widespread depth of information provided by the stakeholders. They did understand the need to leverage the impacts of the sport events for tourism, regional growth and development, but it was outlined that there was no overarching regional strategy for this process. Moreover, some of the stakeholders mainly from the Waterloo Region addressed the topic in different forms, including the legacy left by the event, seeking new opportunities and targeted strategic planning to find their niche within the competitive Canadian sport tourism market. RWS-5 described that the legacy of an event could take different forms as there are "different sizes and scopes of events" and different capabilities of event right holders so that things will be done differently for each event. Although, he did emphasize that with each event he envisioned the legacy as "...a sport development tool", he did elaborate explaining, "I think in the early days of sport tourism, that component was left out and is now seen as a key pillar of sport tourism and when you talk about legacies and all those pieces." He noted in his organization's requirements to host sport events, there was a "legacy" stipulation, mentioning,

...We will hear about different types of legacy, It could be you need a new scoreboard and the event is going to kick in part of that cost [...] that is going to be felt by the community for recreational play and future events. That's a great legacy piece, things of that nature, plus there are sponsorship opportunities which you're going to give long term to each local boys and girls clubs... So there's different ways you can look at return.

RWS-4 also gave an example, as an accommodation provider and a business partner in the region, of the ways her organization contributes to the legacy of the sports in her community through specific arrangements. She noted that,

...Through a lot of tournaments, like through a lot of sport organizations, I contribute back to the organisation based on the room nights that they've given me. So baseball is an example, so somebody staying with the local baseball [team for a tournament], for every room night that there is, I give money back to their club for them to help grow their tournaments.

Another aspect of the legacy of sport events that stakeholders talked about was seeking new opportunities through targeted bidding and strategic planning for certain events. RWS-3 indicated,

We are as a region were talking about what would make sense if even from a regional perspective to court an association in terms of having their headquarters in the region. Rugby Canada was a great example, they were able to do their building and their site in [British Columbia or Richmond Hill] ...it's amazing so we're knocking that idea around.

In the aspect of “leveraging those unique visitors”, RWS-4 spoke about strategic planning for infrastructure and attracting new and unique events but also targeting some of the existing events that can grow and have greater benefit to the region. She articulated,

You want something that's unique or something that not everybody else is doing and then you put that infrastructure in there. I think that's some sports that are highly specialized and require a certain income to be able to participate in them; and those things are they sustainable year round? You really have to look at all of those things. And also build on the things that you've already got, that you can accommodate, that you know we've been successful at. Grow those things into whether it's bigger or they stay longer.

RWS-5 acknowledges this notion and also noted that there was the need for planning as some of the current events may be worth more to the region than bidding for and planning to bring new events into the region. Thus, the legacy comes from the accurate measurement and planning. He mentioned,

We really don't aid the local hockey tournaments bringing in 80-90 teams, meanwhile they're probably having as large or larger direct economic impact on hotel rooms and what not in the community. So your provincial events which are bringing in 20-30 teams but it brings in a different level of status. So that is I think an area of focus, how we service that local event to make that experience so that they maintain the size that they are, or grow if that is their goal...that is, that's a big piece.

RWS-1 and RWS-3 also commented on the “competitiveness” in the province that will become a legacy piece from the 2015 Pan Am Games that will have an effect on the region’s future sport tourism planning and bidding endeavours. They highlighted again, the need for proper strategic planning to be able to stay competitive in the provincial sport tourism market. RWS-3 contended that,

These cities that have gotten facilities for the Pan Am Games, major new renovations, new facilities and stuff like that, like they're all coming online so ours are tired and some need work you know, so even money for maintenance and capital increase and stuff like that [to stay competitive in the future].

The final aspect of the legacy planning that stakeholders spoke of was the ways they could better attempt to quantify the economic benefits of sport events in the future. As STEAM (a CSTA product) was still progressing as a tool in Canada, they hoped that they can utilize it to demonstrate to regional stakeholders the worth of sport tourism events to their respective municipalities and regions as a form of evaluation for future strategic planning. NRS-c contended,

How do we [as event hosts] track how far the money permeates into the economy? [...]So that's why the NSC are members of the CSTA and that's why they do STEAM economic assessment model, surveys and evaluations so that, they can show them [regional stakeholders].

RWS-5 supplemented this feeling around the attitude of his sport groups and stakeholders, noting,

So how do we measure that, how do we gauge that? [Currently the attitude of stakeholders] It's informally and 'I'm not going to measure that' or 'it has little impact on us, on our returns'... What we can do a better job of is utilizing STEAM to measure overall returns over the course of the year, 2-5 years to the entire community and not just that stakeholder sport group.

NRS-a also commented on this aspect of quantifying impacts as she expected it to be a big facet of sport tourism in the province as it was quite informal at the moment. She indicated,

We're seeing it on even on the festival and events side, the metrics are out of line with what's really on site and what the stakeholders locally are saying and what the models are saying the return on investments are. So I think we may see, and that may be provincially driven, here in our province where the models may start to be changed or the studies may require a more in depth look at sport tourism events.

Even with the lack of formal sport tourism development strategies and legacy planning for sport tourism events, stakeholders were aware of the benefits and challenges and saw their region making progressing in the sport tourism arena. Stakeholders anticipated a bright future ahead for their region utilizing sport tourism for regional growth, development and economic diversification. For the Region of Waterloo, RWS-3 stated,

Pursuing [sport tourism] would be favourable in terms of the assets we already have invested in the region and the capacity of staff, I think the capacity is there to increase and expand in some way. When you're looking to get buy in from your community, ie tax payers, I think, everyone really connects to sport and recreation in some way shape or form, whether they are the recreational bicycle to work person or you know when it comes to the quality of life, this can be kind of wrapped up into that.

RWS-4 also commented on the region's current pursuit of sport events,

We've already seen a few new things come in and we're retaining some of the things that are already here and just going to continue to get better at it. We've got no place to go but up when you're starting here right. I never see us going backwards and the more wins we have, the more people will become involved...seeing the benefits of it and understanding why it's so important.

NRS-e highlighted the future for growth through sport tourism in the Niagara Region,

I think there will be a much more robust involvement in sport tourism and I believe that the NSC will continue to play a role in the major bids, coordination, the long term coordination and all that. There are a lot of players [in the region] that are beginning to come; you know, emerge into a real maturation when it comes to the role that they play in this whole sport tourism rubric so to speak.

NRS-d complemented this for the region indicating that,

Everyday we're going to get better! So we got to keep doing it and keep moving along, you can't rest on your laurels because guess what, a Guelph or a London or a Waterloo or somebody is going to try to do the same thing, so you go to keep yourself ahead of the game. Because they're going to be applying for the sports as well and so we need to figure out [the process] and use our natural amenities to our advantage.

#### **4.6 Chapter Summary**

This chapter outlined themes that emerged from each region's stakeholder responses to the interview questions (See Appendix F). The themes that emerged from the data included the current sport tourism situation in each region; the benefits and challenges of sport tourism development; the subsequent impacts from hosting sport events and the ways the regions understood the aspects of leveraging impacts and legacy planning for sport tourism. Stakeholders were posed the same questions and probed accordingly for further responses. The information they provided was outlined by common themes and sub-themes amongst stakeholder responses in an attempt to summarize the related data in a format that was relevant to the research aim and questions. The data was synthesized, coded and analysed and will be further discussed and summarized in relation to the research questions and existing sport tourism development literature in Chapter 5.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The aim of this exploratory study was to investigate and gain stakeholder insights (i.e. DMOs, governments and business community) into the nature of hosting sport tourism events and using them as a regional development strategy in two emerging sport tourism markets. The study addresses the following research questions:

- Why do destinations engage in sport tourism development strategies?
- What are perceived constraints to using sport tourism events as a development tool?
- How do stakeholders decide which sport events to pursue, bid for and host?
- What are the perceived regional impacts of hosting sport tourism events?
- What extent is leveraging these impacts considered in sport tourism strategy development?

The chapter outlines the results and findings from the interview data to address each research question individually. It provides an analysis of the interview data in comparison to the existing academic literature on the topic of sport tourism development and strategy development for sport tourism destinations. Furthermore, it summarizes some of the empirical evidence highlighted by the stakeholders, giving a breakdown of the current situation with regard to sport tourism development in each region, in an attempt to acquire a greater understanding of the use of sport tourism as strategy for regional growth and development.

### **5.1 Research Question 1**

#### **Why do destinations engage in sport tourism development strategies?**

In summary, interviews with stakeholders from the Niagara and Waterloo regions revealed a general consensus that hosting sport events would have a positive impact and become a valuable asset to tourism development in their regions. The stakeholders did not see their respective regions on the mega-event stage, but alluded to seeking the sport events on a smaller scale that could be hosted in their current sport and recreation facilities. Higham (1999)

highlighted that small-scale events could be more useful for regional emerging destinations and as much as these facilities were developed mainly for recreational use, they can also be used to host small-scale sporting events supporting existing infrastructure and facilities allowing the events to be more manageable by the community or region. Supporting the view of Kobayashi et al. (2011), the stakeholders were aware of the positive impacts of hosting sport tourism events and how it assisted development in the region. These impacts ranged from social development in their region through community engagement, sport development and volunteerism and also included economic growth via job creation and the economic trickle-down effects of tourism. These impacts have been well established in the literature (e.g., Hinch & Higham, 2011; Agha et al., 2012; Minnaert, 2012; Gibson et al., 2012 and Avgousti, 2012).

Community engagement was discussed in a similar tone to research done by Kobayashi et al. (2011) in the forms of community pride, euphoria and well-being indices. The phenomenon was demonstrated again by the levels of volunteerism in the community as a means for social integration and also by the collaborative efforts amongst regional organizations and within the business community. The collaborative efforts as discussed by stakeholders and echoed by Swart and Bob (2007) between sport organizations, cities, governments, sport and tourism business partners were in an effort to drive sport tourism development in each region. Pursuing sport events allowed for a collaborative approach by stakeholders, outlined by Swart and Bob (2007), as a way to share resources and information to maximize the tourism benefits in bidding for and hosting these events. Stakeholders were aware that any single municipality in their region could not handle some small-scale or larger events as a standalone entity and in order for sport tourism events to be beneficial to the region, larger tournaments with regional impact needed to be planned for, hosted and supported.



### ***5.1.1 Developing Community through Sport***

Consistent with the ideals of Hinch & Higham (2011), stakeholders discussed the value that sport tourism could bring in terms of developing community. Thus, each region in context needed to work towards a sport tourism development strategy through strategic planning and in conjunction with a dedicated regional sport tourism organization to sustain community development. Brown et al. (2003) highlighted that sport events can foster communal collaboration, celebration and communication and in this light, it was apparent that stakeholders had a similar view of the impact of sport tourism events and the ways these events benefitted their communities. In terms of socio-economic development, some stakeholder discussions aligned with the social capital gains of sport events outlined by Minnaert (2012) and revolved around job creation, community engagement and volunteerism. Job creation was heralded as an important benefit from hosting sport events as it allowed more people in the economy to attain skills and employment whilst allowing money to continue cycling throughout the local economy.

In an attempt to use sport tourism to diversify post-industrial economies (Binns & Nel, 2002), stakeholders were aware that hosting sport events would benefit local companies in the region and provide various levels of employment catering to a range of skillsets and employees in each region. Additionally, Agha et al. (2012) noted volunteering as one of the ‘Intangibles of sport tourism’, that emerged as a prominent theme amongst stakeholders as they praised the relationship between the community and adopting volunteerism in a context of helping people gain transferable skills. They also spoke of this phenomenon similar to Gibson et al. (2012) as a means to further engage community pride and culture and augment the image of their destination by bringing people together in the regional communities. An extension of this was the sport development and well-being aspects that sport had on the community in some cases inspiring new participation in the local residents (Avgousti, 2012; Agha et al., 2012; Potwarka & McCarville, 2010), as well as high performance athletes to strive for greater achievements in their sports. In some discussions, it seemed that the community engagement was a complementary influence on

job creation and economic stimulation in the regions, and at times striking a difficult balance to which would take precedent in the respective community.

### ***5.1.2 Economic Diversification***

As noted by O'Brien and Chalip (2008), the economic benefits of hosting sport events were seen by the stakeholders from a trickle-down perspective rather than a direct investment relationship. They identified the economic stimulation that would align with the ideals of Gibson et al. (2012) that indicated that economic benefits resonated in their regions through sport events in terms of economic stimulation of the ancillary services (tourism attractions, retail, food and beverage, accommodations, etc); the job creation that this could bring to keep money circulating through the local economy and the repeat business of attracting tourist visitation after hosting the sport event. However, lacking a formal strategy, they were still in the junior stages of utilizing economic models for measuring the direct impact on their economies. As some stakeholders were actual businesses partners and also business community facilitators, they understood the collaborative efforts necessary and the planning needed to attract these sporting events in order to have an impact on the regional economy. Stakeholder responses to interview questions were also aligned with O'Brien and Chalip's (2008) notion that bringing in new tourists, lengthening stays and developing repeat visitor business through sport tourism events were also strategic planning considerations. These considerations would help to showcase their region for attendees at the sport event and also try to encourage them to stay longer during their visit or return to the region for further tourism business.

### ***5.1.3 Destination Enhancement***

Stakeholders in both regions shared a similar tone to that of Smith (2005), who suggested that sport tourism events could be used as a more modern and diverse socio-economic growth strategy evolving in the post-industrial era. With the natural amenity of Niagara Falls, stakeholders in that region leaned towards leveraging that amenity to draw in sport tourism

events. As a region emerging from a historical industrial development era and as a developed tourism destination, stakeholders highlighted that sport tourism would not be their main tourism product but it would supplement, diversify and aid in the rejuvenation of their tourism profile. Similarly, as a former industrial region emerging into the modern urban region form, the Region of Waterloo, discussed that they have tourism attractions such as, Oktoberfest and St Jacobs which were attractions as a part of post-industrial tourism development. Subsequently, as outlined by Dimanche (2003), they could now use sport tourism as an attraction to supplement current festivals and attractions in their region to enhance their destination image and tourism profile (Getz, 2008). Both sets of stakeholders endeavoured to marry the current offerings of the destination with sport events in order to develop the destination and also augment its image as a complete destination (Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007). In support of Getz's (2008) sentiments, the enhancement of the destination's image would also add to the efforts of both regions to regenerate the destination through tourism. It allowed the regions to utilize their natural amenities and attractions, existing infrastructure (roads, facilities, accommodation providers, etc.) to attract sport events and tourism business whilst augmenting their destination capacity and differentiating their tourism profile as an emerging sport tourism destination.

#### ***5.1.4 Alleviating Seasonality***

Tourism seasonality was an important discussion topic for the stakeholders, as they understood the seasonal perspective that can affect sport and tourism (Hinch & Higham, 2002). Undeniably, notions of tourism seasonality are well established in previous academic literature (Saayman, 2008). As stakeholders in Canadian tourism destinations, that boast four distinct seasons, participants described sport tourism as way to balance their seasonal tourism flows. Furthermore, following the ideals of Saayman et al. (2008) in which sport tourism can 'spread tourism geographically and seasonally', the stakeholders in the Niagara Region tried to extend their tourism season to more than a summer destination and use sport tourism as a 'peak season'

and ‘shoulder season’ attraction to bolster their destination’s attraction profile. Similarly, the Region of Waterloo stakeholders viewed their destination development as an ongoing process so they were open to filling in some seasonal gaps where they did not currently have prominent tourism attractions. However, it was somewhat difficult to always be able to do this in both regions due to the infancy of their sport tourism strategy development process, there was no established regional plan or distinct means to counteract the seasonal flows of tourism that were identified. As well, considering that these regions are emerging sport tourism destination markets, they are still in the process of evaluating their seasonal needs and also working within their respective regions to fill the voids that tourism can help sustain as a socio-economic driver. Because of their established tourism products, many stakeholders were still figuring out the right balance of strategic planning for bidding and hosting sport events to complement the scope of their current tourism attractions in different seasonal cycles.

## **5.2 Research Question 2**

### **What are perceived constraints to using sport tourism events as a development tool?**

With respect to the constraints of hosting sport tourism events and pursuing sport tourism development, there were common challenges that the stakeholders of each region discussed and must overcome. Destinations seeking further advancement and growth try to mitigate these negative effects in order to maintain developmental progress as a tourism destination and advance their growth as a community. Although, neither region has a regional sport tourism development strategy, Albrecht (2002) argued that this may not be a holistically negative impact as strategy development for tourism and by extension sport tourism is an ongoing process as destinations are dynamic and undergo constant changes. Thus, in order to make full use of resources and collaborative efforts, stakeholders need to be flexible and proactive in an often competitive, fragmented and unstable sport and tourism industry. In this light, the stakeholders spoke to the challenges that not only affected sport events, which included displacement and irritation of local

residents as well as the lack of infrastructure for their region, but also their growth and development as a region. Similar to Hinch and Higham's (2011) notion of planning and development process issues, stakeholders discussed the internal and external influences on the shortcomings of resource allocation, the aspects of burnout in the destination in various capacities and also the political and bureaucratic influences that affected the approval process for bidding on and hosting sport events. Each of the stakeholders related these shortcomings in their destinations to host sport events and how they affected destination growth and development.

### ***5.2.1 Infrastructure and Facility Constraints***

Infrastructure challenges in terms of transportation and sport facilities were a main challenge of hosting sport events in the emerging sport tourism destination regions in this study. In contrast to the positive impacts of sport events described by Avgousti (2012), stakeholders from each region noted the lack of facilities to host events as a major concern as the facilities are at the core of the event. If they are lacking facilities or terrain needed for certain sports, it limited the sports they could bid on and host and by extension limit how they attempted to leverage the impacts of the respective events. However, it was apparent that due to the infancy of sport tourism development in both regions, there was still room for proactive strategic planning for future facility and infrastructure development. Stakeholders from each region discussed the approach by Toronto, Ontario and Richmond, British Columbia upon being hosts of the 2015 Pan Am Games and 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics respectively for facility development. They noted that these cities provided case study examples for using sport tourism events as a plan to develop new facilities that would leave a legacy for use by the community and for future domestic and international events. Thus, it gave them an opportunity to strive towards that level of facility development in their sport tourism development initiatives.

The issue of transportation infrastructure in each region was also a topic of contention as the stakeholders recognized that the transportation outlets in their regions were not the most

efficient for supporting regional events. In Niagara, there was a concern that they did not have a seamless means of regional transit and it was a issue for hosting events and the greater connectivity and economic activity in the region. Likewise in Waterloo, even as the situation is improving, there is a regional public bus transit system that services Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge but there is no seamless regional transit to Guelph. Currently, there is a regional light rail transit line that is being constructed so they are also at a disadvantage, for short-term planning due to its construction, until the resource is developed to try to mitigate some of these challenges. The stakeholders cited these things as challenges for hosting sport events as well as for the future developmental progress as a regional entity.

Another common challenge that both regions faced was partly out of their control, with respect to the facilities that they were able to use to host sport events. Similar to the findings of Higham (1999), stakeholders highlighted that most of these facilities were built by the respective cities that they belonged to and the funding for these were mainly from the city and its taxpayers, built primarily for recreation purposes. It is a reality that stakeholder organizations have to deal with as it is the way the sport facility structure is set up by the Canadian regional and provincial governments. Even as a perceived constraint for these regions, in planning for hosting sport events, it was a benefit of using small-scale sporting events as discussed by Higham (1999) of less public funding for facility development and more manageable growth through this model of hosting sport events. Consequently, as mentioned earlier, these notions lead to similar concerns amongst stakeholders and residents regarding the displacement of their local community members for sport tourism events.

### ***5.2.2 Balancing Community Interests***

Stakeholders spoke of the displacement of their community members as a concern for hosting sport tourism events and they wanted to maintain a balance of using the facilities to drive sport tourism development whilst also allowing their local community members access for local

sport and recreation purposes. Walmsley (2008) noted this as a universal concern as it was not always an amicable balance of interests as residents are not always involved in the development strategy or sport event bids and planning. Comparably, the stakeholders agreed that it was often hard to completely satisfy all user groups as the local users felt the brunt of the sport event impacts. If a great part of the event legacy was to promote sport development and overall well-being in a community, displacement was seen as a definite hindrance of these aspects. In addition, resident irritation became a challenge that would have widespread effects in both communities. Zhou (2010) contended that the attitude of the residents toward sport tourism events would have an impact on the tourist experience and subsequent destination appeal. Stakeholders identified that developing residents' awareness and preparing them for the incoming events was a difficult task as they were never able to satisfy all community user groups. Trying to balance these interests with local sport organizations, residents, businesses and incoming event organizations for facility usage at specific times throughout the year proved challenging to maintain.

Collaborative differences also emerged as a topic of dispute as both regions had their discrepancies with cities and municipal stakeholders getting along with one another. In the Region of Waterloo, stakeholders explained that there was sometimes backlash from citizens as they wanted to understand where their tax dollars were spent and they often did not see the transparent value to their city of hosting regional sporting events. Similarly, in the Niagara Region, even though there was progress in relations, the stakeholders were aware of the historical relationships between their 12 cities in their region and each city did not always have sport tourism as a top developmental priority. Fairly et al. (2011) validated these concerns, noting that resources that go into sport tourism events can be used to mitigate 'existing social shortcomings' in education and healthcare for example. Ultimately, these relationship challenges hindered the progress of bidding on and attracting sport events. As well, it delayed sport tourism development through hosting of events and garnering the related benefits. The relationship issues and political

differences amongst regional and municipal stakeholders were not apparently new and did not seem to be a reality to be totally eradicated from the past. This could also be another impact of not having a formal sport tourism strategy, but as highlighted by Stokes (2006), strategic planning and strategy development is an ongoing and dynamic process and there also needs to be greater examination of political motives for engaging in sport tourism development.

### **5.2.3 *Destination Exhaustion***

As a socio-economic driver for jobs and tourism expenditure, sport events were lauded by stakeholders as a development tool and one of the main reasons that they were sought after as a development strategy. However, challenges arose from the hosting of these events as the stakeholders discussed the effects of hosting too many events becoming a burden at times for staff within their region's service industry and also as a means of exhausting the regional volunteer base. As a social impact also conferred by Avgousti (2012), the stakeholders mentioned not always being able to deliver events at the required standard if they are too common because it can be an exhausting process. Some further worried about the effects on the facilities (hotels, venues, roads, etc.), local residents and volunteers as the sport events affected all of these community stakeholders included in event delivery. There was a widespread disposition amongst stakeholders that a balance was needed to be struck but some also had the opinion that in order to gain these benefits from the events, communities had to deal with the constraints that the events bring. Hinch and Higham (2011) argued that as a fragmented industry, sport and tourism partnerships are often difficult to pursue and maintain due to a range of different stakeholders involved in sport tourism development. There was a similar sentiment within the stakeholder group that there needed to be more communication of the process about what the stakeholders were trying to achieve from hosting these events so that it would garner more acceptance from a wider population in the region. Another inclination that compounded the issue of resource



exhaustion was in the form of a lack of dedicated resources put forward by stakeholders groups in each region, in terms of dedicated personnel and financial resources for bids to attract new events.

#### **5.2.4 Political Challenges**

Hinch and Higham (2011) argued that sport tourism strategy development, policy development and the associated processes are often carried out by a destination's governing bodies and agencies. Moreover, they highlighted the need for a 'systematic strategic direction' and not just informal planning. Thus, political challenges were also sometimes seen, by stakeholders, as constraints to hosting events. Stakeholders spoke to some of the challenges that they were faced with respect to needing to have government agencies and officials involved as a lot of their resources came from local governing bodies, in terms of facilities, infrastructure and financial backing. Due to the regions needing to have government officials involved in the bidding, funding and hosting process, this sometimes slowed progress for the event bidding and hosting plans. Discussions centred on the speed at which local government councils would move to approve funding and their influence and standing as a political entity, as governments and public officials did not always see sport tourism as viable socio-economic driver. At times, there would be challenges to get approval for funding for certain events, or to get the municipality to act as a liability provider for hosting events. These challenges became a contentious topic amongst municipal government stakeholders as some events were going to be hosted regionally, but there was no strategic planning or formal agreements in terms of funding, insurance or liability by the regional government or as a collective region. Without a regional sport tourism plan, the process was delayed as some government officials and agencies needed assurances and had to consider their stakeholders, i.e., taxpayers, before they could justify the expenditures on sport events and tourism endeavours.

In summary, there have been some efforts to mitigate the highlighted constraints. However, stakeholders from both regions admitted to being in the infancy stages of strategy

development for sport tourism and in more of an informal planning on a per event basis for regional events. The effects continue to be seen on local communities as they progressively develop as sport tourism destinations and continue to grow their tourism profiles. Each region handles the impacts in their own unique manner as the constraints affect each of them differently. However, they continue to evolve with the guise of socio-economic benefits coming from sport tourism, which are perceived to be beneficial by some stakeholders but the same sentiment may not be shared throughout their regions.

### **5.3 Research Question 3**

#### **How do stakeholders decide which sport events to pursue, bid on and host?**

The respective regional bidding practices were a subjective topic. Although stakeholders were able to articulate how their region bids on events, there was still a bit of confusion about how events were selected to be pursued and bid on. However, stakeholders' responses to questions did reinforce Getz's (2008) notion that bidding for and hosting sport events had become an extremely competitive process in Canada. Each region satisfied some of the criteria outlined by Getz (2004) for desirable destinations wanting to host events, including central locations, a range of venues, diverse range of other destination attractions, accommodation and food and beverage amenities and a favourable destination image. Both regions were well ahead of the development curve for hosting sport events to drive tourism, growth and development as they possessed the various amenities to host the events. Additionally, due to the development of dedicated sporting entities in each region, they did develop bids for hosting sport events in the region, but some bidding and hosting opportunities were still brought forward by local sporting organizations or a sporting organization tendering the respective region for a certain event. This finding is aligned with Berridge's (2010) perspective that for some events, the rights holder or sporting organization would call for proposals, but for hosting smaller events, there are not as

complicated bidding process and less risk involved in hosting them. Each region stakeholders' shared the different nuances of their bidding process for sport events.

### ***5.3.1 Nuanced Bidding Processes***

In the Region of Waterloo, stakeholders were still in the process of streamlining their approach to sport event bidding, mentioning that some cities in the region still bid on events individually but they are moving towards utilizing the RSTO for attracting and hosting more regional events. Some stakeholders' previous experiences have been with local sport groups that come to them with ideas and an interest to bid on the major championship for their sport, and then they went through the process and sought the support for the bid. Whereas there were instances of some of the larger facilities in the region, Kitchener Auditorium, RIM Park, University of Guelph, seeking events on their own to host. As the region had recently formed the RSTO, the stakeholders were still going through the on-boarding process with the organization, figuring out how it would handle bids at both the municipal and the regional level and how it would best be suited to support current ongoing events whilst trying to attract and bid on new regional events.

Berridge (2010) noted that sport event bids usually are influenced by public/government collaboration and funding. For example, the WRTMC handled most of the bids for the region until the RSTO was created. Through the WRTMC Board of Directors, which included tourism specific and community stakeholders, they would also look at new opportunities to bring sport events to the region to utilize their current facilities as best as they can. The formation of the RSTO was heralded as the region's new direction to have a dedicated entity to handle sport events bids, planning, implementation, execution and evaluation of the sport events so there was continuity amongst bids. It also alleviated the workload of the individual sport, tourism and business community stakeholders. There were not much bureaucratic complications associated with these bids as there did not seem to be much need for local municipal or regional funding as the provincial RTO handled a lot of financial backing as they were fully invested in sport tourism

for the Region of Waterloo. It was apparent that the formation of this organization was the innovation of the regional stakeholders to advance sport tourism development. However, they also mentioned that with it being recently formed, a regional strategy and strategic planning were still inherently necessary so that the organization could continue to progress and meet the needs of sport tourism in the region.

The Niagara Region was in a similar mould of bidding for sports events as they had the NSC and had the process streamlined, so that the great majority of events would be bid on through this entity. They also shared a similar situation as the Region of Waterloo where some facilities would bid on events on their own, such as the Welland International Flatwater Centre, Meridian Centre and the Royal Canadian Henley Regatta site. The latter has been in operation for over 100 years so as a highly specialized venue they had some of their own procedures that were supported by the NSC. Each stakeholder discussed their role in supporting the NSC for bidding and hosting events, through facilities, providing accommodations, giving access to properties, etc. and they were comfortable in some cases allowing the NSC to coordinate, bid, plan, execute and evaluate events so it was a centralized process. In contrast to Berridge's (2010) notion of public/government collaboration, it was apparent that there was not always buy in from the entire region as it was not everyone's top priority for tourism and the task of getting 12 municipal leaders and decision makers aligned for the same sport event proved to be a difficult process at times. Although the NSC had a major role in the bidding, hosting and supporting events in the region, the organization was created with a specific mandate, so the entity also did bidding for events on its own, and would then seek the support of the regional stakeholders for the event. Similar to Waterloo Region, stakeholders in the Niagara Region saw the benefits of a dedicated entity handling the coordination and implementation processes for attracting and bidding on sport events. However, there was still the existing relationship between the local sporting organizations and the NSC to try to collaborate on a bid to bring sporting tournaments to the region. Ultimately, there was still strategic planning and streamlining necessary to the process as it was mentioned

that there still were no venues for some events; the local clubs for certain sports were not always a formal entity and there was still the stigma of sport tourism not being a regional priority, so there was still work to be done for the future of sport tourism as a regional endeavour.

### **5.3.2 *Bidding as a Region***

As mentioned earlier, there was the impression that the lack of a sport tourism strategy for each region was a hindrance in moving sport tourism development forward for regional growth. Even with the benefits of dedicated resources, staff and streamlined processes represented by a dedicated sport tourism body in each region, there was still a need for proactive strategic planning as the scope of hosting sport tourism events was still growing and quite dynamic in these emerging sport tourism destinations. Similar to the notion of hosting mega-events as outlined by Swart and Bob (2004), where destinations would bid on events to portray their ‘stability and socio-economic capacity’, stakeholders were aware of the benefits that hosting sport events can have for their destination. Thus, on a smaller scale they were able to be a bit more flexible in their bid plans to assess and determine which events would have the most positive impact for their emerging sport tourism destination. When trying to attract new events to both regions, the process usually entailed an assessment of their facilities to determine which sport events were right for their respective region and then transferred to stakeholders to make a decision as to whether a bid for the event would make sense for the region. Once they determined that the event was a fit for the region and it fit with the organizing body, the bidding process move forward.

Furthermore, as discussed by stakeholders, even with the smaller scale events that they wanted to attract, there still may not be united and proactive thinking in each region to move forward with sport tourism development. Several stakeholders explained that events have been taking place and will continue to happen in the regions as they have set themselves up for repeat business and are capable of handling it but both regions still have their setbacks. For Waterloo, as they are still streamlining the regional organizational planning and bidding processes for the

RSTO, it is an ongoing process. The events and evolution will continue but it is also about balancing strategic planning for municipal and regional interests as they progress. For Niagara, even though they are a bit further ahead, as sport tourism is not always a priority, they often suffered from a lack of regional acceptance and support for bidding for certain events that can have regional impact. Consequently, it was apparent that the sport event bidding processes will continue to be about balancing strategic planning for a greater number of municipalities, further developing the collaborative relationships amongst regional stakeholders and also fitting sport events into the profile of an established tourism destination.

#### **5.4 Research Question 4**

##### **What are the perceived regional impacts of hosting sport tourism events?**

The positive impacts of sporting events were discussed, in Section 4.2, by the stakeholders in terms of the socio-economic benefits of job creation, community engagement, diversification of the economy and destination enhancement (image, seasonality, infrastructure and regeneration). These were the beneficial impacts that they outlined as the basis that they chose to engage their respective regions in sport tourism development even with the known aforementioned constraints (facility constraints, resident displacement and irritation, destination exhaustion and political influences) as discussed in Section 4.3. When asked about their reasoning to engage in sport tourism as a means of development and the subsequent strategy development for sport tourism, stakeholders mainly outlined the positive impacts as their reasoning. There was considerable overlap with their responses to benefits provided by sport events and the relation to the impacts of events, but the stakeholders focused mainly on the positive impacts as reasons to pursue sport tourism development. Although, neither region has a formal strategy developed for sport tourism but had strategic plans or business strategies that created a dedicated organization for sport tourism, there was still a lack of widespread regional awareness of the impacts of sport events and how they affected each region. The stakeholders

were congruent in noting not only the need for a regional sport tourism development strategy but also the need to foster more communication and awareness as to how it will help the entire region's future growth and development.

#### **5.4.1 Positive Impacts**

Stakeholders from both regions had experienced sport events that impacted their individual cities in a positive manner and wanted these benefits to also be translated on a regional basis. They lauded the impacts discussed by Avgousti (2012), including job creation, skills development and community interaction and engagement through volunteerism and collaboration, adding that the economic impacts were facets of sport events they wanted to see make a difference region wide. Stakeholders praised sport tourism as a good development strategy for the regions as it was an excellent complement to the Niagara Region tourism profile and it would bring more jobs, exposure and visitation to the region. Hosting sport tourism events also allowed the region to balance their seasonal tourism product by filling in their shoulder periods as well as adding to their attraction profile in the peak season. Sport tourism events impacted the Region of Waterloo in a similar way as it allowed them to supplement their base of attractions and give them a way to attract new visitors and utilize their existing infrastructure and facilities throughout the region as their partnership between Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge and Guelph provided more accommodations and facilities in an easily accessible geographic space.

#### **5.4.2 Impact Adversities**

Moon et al. (2013) contended that small-scale sporting events were most suitable for regional development as they were not as costly as mega-events to host and usually had a positive effect on the community whilst augmenting the destination's image. However, there was not always a complete positive perception of the impact of sport tourism on a region as stakeholders warned of the concept of delayed value as an aspect that puts them at a disadvantage when trying to garner support for hosting events. They spoke of a lack of interest in moving away from

traditional industries in their respective region to put more resources into sport tourism as it was a risk everyone was not willing to accept. In the Niagara Region, this sentiment was due to stakeholders not being always able to show enough immediate benefits from hosting a sport event, through tourism expenditure and investment, to secure the ‘buy in’ from 12 municipal leaders. Similarly in the Region of Waterloo, there was not always the belief that the positive impacts of sport events would come to fruition as timely or as easily as they have from more traditional industries (eg. agriculture, corporate investment and manufacturing). Additionally, an interesting topic that was not really discussed was whether the local community was included in the strategic planning for sports events. It was not a widespread topic of discussion as some stakeholders mentioned that the local sporting organizations would bring in volunteers and they would help plan and execute the events but there were not many accounts of the local community members included in the planning process. However, in saying this, the stakeholders are each also members of a local community so their strategic planning and implementation should always primarily consider the local community stakeholder group.

#### ***5.4.3 Understanding the Regional Impact of Sport Tourism***

Some stakeholders spoke to the lack of awareness in their regions for sport tourism and the belief in it as a socio-economic driver that could assist in the region’s long term growth and development. They commented on still having to mitigate the impacts on the local community to lessen displacement and resident irritation. Some stakeholders also highlighted the need to not only make local citizens more aware of the sport events but to also educate them on the different benefits and constraints. With a balance of interests to attract and host these events, they could benefit all stakeholders. A regional impact that needed to be showcased was some of the jobs, volunteer opportunities and economic stimulation that these events brought to the region that may not have happened through any other endeavours. As well, it was also educating and communicating to the regional stakeholders that sport tourism events can drive business through



displacement in certain regions. This happened as there was also a direct impact on businesses throughout the region as not every municipality can handle the influx of visitors and competitors for the events, so there is a trickle-down effect for other regional partners. Stakeholders in Waterloo, regarded sport events as a complement to their region in terms of the socio-economic boost and enhanced community engagement that it would provide by attracting future investment. These are facets of a community that corporations and businesses would evaluate for the well-being of their employees if they chose to invest in the region. Niagara Region stakeholders shared a similar perspective as sport tourism events were also lauded as a means of showcasing the social and cultural aspects of the region and it served as regional growth regeneration tool for post-industrial job creation and augmenting the Niagara brand of tourism with another type of attraction. Ultimately, stakeholders in both regions also acknowledged the long term value of the benefits that hosting sport events can bring to their region in terms of tourism, socio-economic growth and development.

## **5.5 Research Question 5**

### **What extent is leveraging these impacts considered in sport tourism strategy development?**

Considering that neither region had a formal sport tourism strategy, stakeholders indicated that there was no aligned formal plan for leveraging the positive impacts of the sport events outlined in the previous sections. They were aware of the risks associated with hosting events similar to those discussed by Leopkey and Parent (2012) including displacement, resident irritation; debilitation of facilities and infrastructure, lack of funding and negative legacy components of the events. However, they were still able to simultaneously account and plan for leveraging the positive impacts and include legacy planning as a part of the bidding and planning for the individual sport events that were hosted by the respective regions. Stakeholders mentioned the associated ways for the regions to leverage the sports events for future business and sport development as well as the ways that they could leverage their natural amenities to attract and

host a range of sport events. In terms of legacy planning, it was also articulated that this happened on a per event basis in both regions as they saw that they would need to increase their strategic planning efforts to fully reap the future benefits. Stakeholders spoke of various ways, as discussed by Schulenkorf (2009), that they approached leveraging the legacy of hosting sport events, ranging from equipment and investment in sport programs of local sport organizations in Waterloo Region, to using events to leverage future business investments and repeat tourism business in the Niagara Region. The legacy from some businesses would be added funding and sponsorship from hosting the events and as well as strategic planning for repeat business to continue to bring certain groups into their regions.

Stakeholders from both regions spoke about the respective ways that their local organizations benefited from leveraging the impacts of sporting events. They were cognizant that there needed to be a balance struck in leveraging the positive impacts of the events as well as leveraging their natural amenities to host events. It materialized that this was not an easy process, but they were making use of the positive impacts of their current sport event endeavours to move sport tourism development forward. Hence, it became another advantage of using small-scale events as a development driver for growth and development as a destination region. Stakeholders discussed the business and economic stimulation that would come from hosting the events in their facilities and also the direct economic impact onto the local community service providers. Stakeholders from the Region of Waterloo highlighted the approach of allowing the local sport organizations to showcase their talent, allowing their local volunteers to develop transferable skills and gradually develop the organization and by extension the social fabric of their community. Furthermore, hosting the events also allowed for the local business community to get into the planning for the subsequent short and long term economic investment and employment. In most cases the events were also a means of showcasing the region to attract repeat and future tourist business. However, with no formal regional plans in place, it was not a simple measurement of transference of these skills into jobs, economic stimulation into direct investment

and the development of sport organization's athletes into high performance athletes for further sport development. The stakeholders admitted to the infancy of strategy development for sport tourism and by extension lacked plans for fully being able to leverage the full potential of sport event impacts.

Conversely, the regions were also able to leverage their local amenities to their benefit. Stakeholders in the Niagara Region acknowledged that as an established tourism destination, it was fully capable of leveraging the other attractions that were desired by sport organizing bodies considering using the region to host an event (Getz, 2004). The region not only possessed other attractions but they were complementary tourist attractions in a developed destination region (e.g. Niagara Falls, Beaches, Wineries, Historic NOTL, accommodations and retail amenities, etc.) and it allowed them to develop their tourism destination by re-imagining the region through tourism development and maintaining regional business relationships (O'Brien & Chalip, 2007). These leveraging strategies, effectively aligned with what O'Brien and Chalip (2007) described as a forward thinking strategic planning process for communities to leverage sport events to generate tourism revenue, develop social capacities and aid in destination regeneration. Unanimously, both regions also praised the ability to get support from and the ability to leverage the facilities of the respective tertiary education institutions in their region. They commended the college's and university's willingness to collaborate as a regional partner to help raise the sport tourism profile of each region. This illustrated that the wider community stakeholders were buying into and committing themselves to sport tourism development in the regions.

### ***5.5.1 Prompting Sustainable Legacies***

In both study contexts, stakeholders acknowledged the legacy that hosting sport events could leave and the ways in which they would ideally facilitate this notion in their strategic planning to place bids and attract sport events to their region. Similar to Preuss' (2007) argument that legacies of events cannot always be formally planned as sport events in these regions took

different sizes and scopes. The event was sometimes only capable of investing in certain capacities, which were acknowledged by some stakeholders and they were flexible in what form the legacy of an event took. The Region of Waterloo gave the example of building into their bid agreement, that the legacy that some events left would be sport program funding and investment in equipment for the local sport organization after the event was hosted. It was mentioned, that the local organizations were comfortable with this agreement and were happy to help host the event in the region. It relates to Preuss' (2007) description of the legacies of sport events taking different tangible and intangible forms. This also demonstrated the organizations in the region's desire to become a part of sport tourism development and also indicated to the decision-making stakeholders that they could plan legacy components into their event bids that suit the community stakeholders (sport organizations, local community and business partners) as well as the event organizers.

Moreover, consistent with examples of sport event legacies offered by Agha et al. (2012), the stakeholders discussed other aspects of leveraging the event impacts and the legacy of hosting sport events such as the future strategic planning as a region. The stakeholders saw the changing dynamics of hosting events in Ontario and having become a very competitive atmosphere, it stressed the need for regional strategic planning to incorporate all stakeholders and include a streamlined plan for the legacy of the sport events. Throughout the discussions, stakeholders acknowledged the typical legacy components, also classified as impacts that Chaplet and Junod (2006) described. These legacy components were often in form of job creation, increased tourism and investment, new and renovated facilities; non-sport infrastructure development and also the social interaction, motivation and shifting attitudes of residents from the associated community pride and engagement from hosting the events. These actions depicted that stakeholders were aware of the legacies that sport events can leave and, as decision makers, they were ready to make the most of them and plan to utilize this legacy long after the sport event has taken place. Given that there was no pre-existing formal sport tourism strategy for the regions other than for

their dedicated sport tourism bodies, the legacy planning and implementation was present but only on a per event basis. Some stakeholders indicated that this is how they needed to go about planning, until they streamlined their processes and created a regional strategy for sport tourism development in their respective region.

Stakeholders from each region also discussed the need to be able to better quantify the economic impacts to be able to demonstrate the benefits to the wider regional stakeholders. They recognized that these aspects needed to be formalized and refined in order to leverage sport events, in the form of future community investments and hosting future business, and to stay competitive in the Canadian sport tourism market. As well, the stakeholders provided further typical examples, explained by Agha et al. (2012) in Table 6, of sport event legacy in both regions stemming from the new facilities that were a legacy of the 2015 Pan Am Games. The cities and regions of Ontario that were not a part of the games would now have to actively plan to stay competitive with those host cities that were featured as a part of the games, to be able to keep their region relevant as a sport tourism destination in Canada. In the Region of Waterloo, stakeholders recognized that a part of the legacy of hosting some events was to use the current events to leverage new events so as to be continuously developing their capacity and infrastructure for hosting sport events. This was with the inclination to attract bigger and more specialized events that could be unique to the region, to compete with the destinations that hosted the 2015 Pan Am Games. In a similar fashion, it was also envisioned in the form of a Canadian sport high performance headquarters to make it easier to host multiple high performance events of that sport in the region. In the long run, these endeavours were in an effort to maintain the advancement of their regional capacity through sport tourism development.

In summary, both regions placed a high importance on the benefits of leveraging the impacts of sport events and the significance of legacy planning. However, they admitted that leveraging these impacts was not a simple task without a holistic sport tourism development strategy. Moreover, stakeholders from both regions admitted that there needed to be a change in

culture and mind-set for sport tourism to fully leverage positive impacts from sport events for the their entire region.

## **5.6 Chapter Summary**

This chapter analyzed the resultant data and addressed the outlined research questions of the study. It related the data that was collected from stakeholders in each region to the current literature in an attempt to discuss the situation in the two emerging sport tourism markets and how they are utilizing sport tourism for development purposes. This discussion addressed the guiding research questions, providing insights into each regions sport tourism development situation and identified some of the matters that related to the current academic literature in the context of these regions. Moreover, it was able to portray the ways that these emerging sport tourism destinations implement their sport tourism development plans and provided further insight into the regional development context in Canada.

## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This chapter summarizes the study and draws conclusions from the discussion in Chapter 5. Moreover, it will discuss the limitations of the study, the recommendations for future research and the study's implications for practice. It concludes by discussing the some of the nuances of sport tourism development that were mentioned in the data and the relation to the current research on the topic.

### **6.1 Summary of Thesis**

The aim of this exploratory study was to investigate and gain stakeholder insights into the nature of hosting sport tourism events and using them as a regional development strategy in two emerging sport tourism markets. The study explored the sport tourism development process through stakeholder insights in two emerging sport tourism destination regions in Ontario Canada, namely the Niagara Region and the Region of Waterloo. Interviews were conducted with key decision making stakeholders from each region under investigation and stakeholder insights were analyzed via a thematic analysis. The thematic analysis produced themes from the data linked to the collaboration efforts and current sport tourism development initiatives in each region related to strategic planning for sport tourism development; the stakeholders' insights into the benefits and challenges of hosting sport events; the regional impacts of hosting sport events and the ways in which the leveraging of the impacts of these sport events is carried out in each region. The findings were discussed in relation to current academic literature related to sport tourism development, bidding processes for sport events, impacts of sport tourism events and leveraging legacies of sport events. Discussions were related to the emergent themes on utilizing small-scale regional sport tourism events as destination development strategy. The conclusion of the study discusses the implications for each region in their sport tourism development endeavours with implications for practice and recommendations for future research being discussed.

## **6.2 Limitations of the Study**

There were limitations to the implementation and analysis of this research. First, the access to the research participants that were needed to conduct this research was limited and there was some difficulty in trying to identify and recruit the appropriate participants. Secondly, as an inductive study with no governing theory, it was imperative to stay flexible in the research process in order to tease out the appropriate information and garner the necessary data to respond to the guiding research questions. Thirdly, in terms of comparative context areas, there was a fine line in the research process to keep the study as a comparative analysis that was crossed at times and it became two separate research studies; it was an ongoing requirement that the researcher monitored as the research process was carried out. Fourthly, when speaking to some stakeholders, there were instances where they may not have been as forthcoming with the information presented, fearing a breach of confidentiality or not wanting to allude to their prospective future plans for their region. This could have affected some of the resultant interview data. Lastly, as an exploratory study into two separate regional contexts, there was not a way to conduct the research so that the result would be generalizable to be applied to other case study contexts. Similar research using case study methodology would be beneficial in future contexts.

## **6.3 Recommendations for Future Research**

Within this research, a number of topics were investigated with regard to hosting sport events. It uncovered some of the benefits and organizational challenges of hosting sport events for regional development, whilst discussing the ways in which regional communities can leverage their existing infrastructure and tourism amenities through sport tourism development. This exploratory qualitative study examined perceptions of stakeholders' experiences about hosting sport events and their influence on sport tourism development. The current research has the potential to pave the way for examination, via case study research, of each region to aid in the sport tourism development process which can be also be replicated in other emerging sport



tourism contexts. A case study approach can be used to seek the answers to the ‘how and why’ questions of the phenomenon. This technique can be useful with cases such as this in which the researcher cannot control the outcome of events and the context of the phenomena is not clearly evident or defined (Patton, 2002).

As these are emerging sport tourism destinations, a case study analysis can be beneficial to them to further their destination growth and to boost the research discourse on sport tourism development. Additionally, case study analysis is appropriate for future research of this nature as it will investigate different places and locations and the nature of the approach would be generalized to cover a range of theoretical and practical issues (Yin, 2014). Using a triangulation approach, case study research can provide ways to use many sources of data to meet the objectives of a study and answer the research questions. This allows for the inclusion of various sources of information such as interviews, documents, maps and diagrams in the research design (Creswell, 2014). As separate case studies, the individual developmental aspects can be investigated and also be applied to other emerging sport tourism destinations. Through case study analysis, there can be a greater depth of investigation and focus on the economic impacts and methods of quantification for measuring impacts in sport tourism destinations. Although there have been previous economic impact assessments done on sport tourism events and destinations, this study allows for future research to examine the economic assessment on a small-scale event and regional basis.

In this light, future research can also address relationships between local residents as stakeholders in the sport tourism development process. As this study illustrates, there is not always a harmonized relationship between stakeholders when hosting sport tourism events. Future research can also investigate these relationships and how they affect the local pride in the community. Decision making stakeholders in this study perceived hosting regional sport events as beneficial to the local community, but there could be insights gleaned from investigating the local citizens as another main body of stakeholders in sport tourism development. Moreover, as an

extension of the local community, volunteerism and volunteer activity within sport tourism development can be further researched as this study provided some context for the volunteer aspects of hosting sport tourism events. The study gave some insights into what volunteerism can mean to a community and the way in which it can influence sporting events. Further research can also be done on the recruitment, selection and retention of volunteers in a sport tourism setting, in the pre-event planning stages, during events or in post event evaluations.

This study also contributes to research endeavours that seek to investigate the components that are required for sport tourism development strategies on regional, provincial and national levels. However, future research can also be conducted on developing holistic sport tourism development strategies, given that there are not many examples of sport tourism strategies amongst international sport tourism destinations. This study also adds to the discourse on hosting small-scale sport tourism events. Indeed, the sport tourism literature seems dominated by mega sporting event research and lacks a focus on small-scale/regional events. Specifically for emerging sport tourism destinations, investigations into these types of events can be further advanced to investigate the impacts of sport tourism on smaller regional communities.

#### **6.4 Implications for Practice**

It was interesting to observe that neither destination had a formal regional sport tourism development strategy. Thus, the current study illustrates some of the planning and capacity building that is necessary for sport tourism strategy development. Moreover, the current investigation provides an in-depth analysis from sport and tourism stakeholders as to the processes, collaboration planning needed for sport tourism development on a regional scale. The stakeholder discussions and data collected in this study can be utilized in an industry setting to illuminate the facets of planning needed for hosting sport events and advancing sport tourism development in a destination, including bidding processes, facility inventory calculation, infrastructure and transportation plans, as well as plans for mitigating the impacts on the local

community and the impact of the legacy of the event on the host community. Furthermore, the current study suggests that collaboration is essential to execute these events, and the political processes that are necessary to navigate the dynamic strategy development process. This research demonstrates that there must be a number of capacities that are adequate for planning, bidding on and executing regional sport events. These include physical amenities, collaborative interactions and cooperative efforts as well as community engagement and interactions.

Discussions with the stakeholders provided some insight as to what is required for a sport tourism development strategy even though neither region had one. The emergent data can provide the impetus to move the regions from the strategic planning mode to developing a regional strategy for hosting sport events. As illustrated in this study, some small-scale sporting events are bid on whilst event organizers also choose certain regions because of existing infrastructure, amenities and facilities that are desirable and suit the needs of the organizing body's event. Hence, this study can be a further motivation for strategy development to reflect the needs of certain events, as well as to identify the sports that are suited for each region. A formal strategy can heighten the awareness of the strengths of each region and move away from planning for events on a per event basis. A formal sport tourism strategy may also improve resident, event planner and tourism stakeholder relations in the regions. A regional strategy for hosting sport events can provide citizens with an understanding of what sport tourism events mean to the community, and identify ways in which communities can maximize benefits and minimize costs associated with hosting such events.

A SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis might be one way to begin a regional sport tourism strategy development process. The results of this research can inform such an analysis. A SWOT analysis can provide guidance for strategy development for emerging sport tourism destinations as it will evaluate all facets (strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) of a destination and have a fundamental role, acting as a baseline factor for a regional sport tourism development strategy in each of the context regions of this study.

With the wider range of external influences that have been identified that have affected the strategic planning and implementation of a sport tourism development strategy, a SWOT analysis can be helpful as it investigates the strengths and weaknesses of each region and also considers the external opportunities and threats that can have an influence on the regional stakeholders' strategic planning initiatives (Karadakis et. al, 2010). Utilizing a SWOT analysis assists destinations (cities, regions and countries) and relevant stakeholders such as, event organizers and tourism services providers to examine how their strengths can complement the opportunities in their destination setting (Shank, 2009). The aforementioned weaknesses of each regional setting including lack of dedicated resource and facilities, resident irritation through displacement and political influences can also provide useful insights to the aspects of the destination that need to be improved (Shank, 2009) to move forward in the strategy development, strategic planning and implementation processes for future bidding, hosting of small-scale sport events in these regional contexts. Ultimately, this research also underscores the need for a strategy for further evaluation and growth, so that emerging sport tourism destinations can effectively establish themselves within a competitive tourism market.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

The aim of this exploratory study was to investigate and gain stakeholder insights (i.e. DMOs, governments and business community) into the nature of hosting sport tourism events and using them as a regional development strategy in two emerging sport tourism markets. Stakeholders in the current study presented their views and opinions through their experiences with hosting sport events and the resultant impacts that were experienced in their respective regions. They shared the rationale for pursuing sport tourism events in their regions, and the benefits and constraints they perceived to be associated with hosting small-scale/regional events. Indeed, several of the insights gleaned from stakeholders were consistent with previous research (e.g. Hinch & Higham, 2011; Gibson et al., 2012; Getz & Page, 2015) which have discussed the

potential for small-scale sport events to bolster growth and development in tourism destinations. The stakeholders spoke about the ways in which sport tourism can often differentiate their destination and augment their attraction profile but there was no clear indication as to how they chose to develop sport tourism over other forms of tourism in their regions. However, they understood the value that it brought to their destination through tourism product differentiation and destination enhancement of their current tourism profile and attractions. Stakeholders in both regions recalled that these events were already taking place in their destination regions and it was one of the simpler forms of tourism that they could develop as they already possessed some the complementary facility, accommodation and destination attraction inventories, that are desired by event organizers, to attract sport tourism events to their regions.

From the stakeholders' perspectives, their regions benefited from hosting sport events and they were conscious of the impacts, challenges and constraints that accompany these events. Additionally, there were indications that proper strategy development, planning, implementation, execution and evaluation were all necessary functions for these emerging sport tourism destinations to progress. Without a regional strategy to align future plans, the stakeholders were mindful that consistent, continuous efficient regional strategic planning was necessary to continue to drive sport tourism development in their destinations. For each region to continue to pursue sport events and keep the initiatives a priority they need to develop a regional strategy for sport tourism. Moreover, each destination would need to identify a means of defining stakeholder involvement in the various planning processes that go into sport tourism development. Stakeholders identified these initiatives as a priority by instituting dedicated sport tourism bodies in each region in the forms of the NSC and the RSTO. However, they also expressed the sentiment of continuous calculated developmental progress that is required to continue progressing in order to garner regional support and acceptance to promote sport tourism as a development strategy for each region.

Moreover, after completing this study, it became apparent that legacy planning and leveraging of positive sport event impacts should be involved in the initial stages of the planning and bidding processes. There are often criticisms towards sport events that leave a negative legacy in tourism destinations, as the economic gains may not be worth the associated social and economic impacts (Tao & Wall, 2009) often associated with and left by mega-events (Getz, 2012). However, these impacts can be mitigated by hosting small-scale events in emerging sport tourism markets as they become more manageable by the city or region and it does not usually entail high associated overhead cost (Getz, 2012). This idea was explored in the regional contexts under investigation, stakeholders in both the Niagara and Waterloo Regions described positive impacts that can be imparted on a destination, as well as the ways in which the challenges of negative impacts can be mitigated through strategic and proactive planning. Even though these destinations are in their relative infancy in sport tourism development, stakeholders have engaged in collaborative planning for the sustainable prosperity of their regions. Both destinations justified the socio-economic benefits that sport events are perceived to attract and the associated tourism related activity which include the added marketability and increased image profile of the destination (Gratton et al., 2005).

In addition, in order for emerging sport tourism destinations such as these to continue to grow and develop, there cannot be just a focus and drive on hosting mega-events; there must also be continuous planning and collaborative efforts to attract smaller sporting events that can be hosted in second tier cities and regions so that they can also reap the benefits of sport tourism. In Canada, this is being established as an avenue for growth and development. For instance, there has been the formation of the CSTA, which was established as a national entity to help plan, promote, implement and evaluate sport events in cities and regions across the country (Canadian Sport Tourism Alliance, 2013b). As sport tourism continues to gain notoriety amongst destinations that are attempting to diversify economies, moving away from traditional industries,

there needs to be greater influence by the institutions such as the CSTA and requisite stakeholders to host sport events in ways that deliver positive benefits to regions.

## **6.6 Moving Forward with Sport Tourism Development**

Within both regional destinations, stakeholders related their perceptions of their region engaging in sport tourism development and the strategy development that is needed to address the concerns. However, with no current regional sport tourism strategy, but moving forward with a dedicated organization for sport tourism, it is apparent that they will continue to bid for and host sport events with continuous strategic planning for the region until they can no longer achieve their goals without a formal strategy. Both regions are progressing as sport tourism destinations as they are aligned with what Moscardo (2005) describes as the conditions for regional tourism development by establishing sport tourism as a destination development initiative they wish to pursue; identifying the prerequisites for regional sport tourism development by garnering community understanding and collaboration between tourism stakeholders and decision makers; as well as developing the tools to support sport tourism development including formalizing plans for sport tourism development, infrastructure development and marketing.

One of the wider social matters that was not thoroughly discussed by stakeholders was the cultural opportunities that hosting these sport events bring for the destination. Some events are seen as an opportunity to add socio-cultural activities to complement the events to attract a wider range of tourist (Kim & Morrison, 2005). This notion was briefly discussed by a stakeholder of each region as another component to sport tourism development that they have seen in their experiences but the topic did not further resonate amongst the rest of the stakeholders. This could be due to the stakeholders' focus on bidding for and hosting smaller events in their regions as these are the events that they are mainly able to accommodate. These socio-cultural activities are usually associated with mega-events and hallmark or major events (Getz, 2005). Given the emerging nature of these regional sport tourism destinations and the infancy and focus of sport

tourism development, it is a facet of hosting sport tourism events that these destinations should strive for in the future as they mature as sport tourism destinations.

Another topic that was not widely discussed by stakeholders in both regions was the way they see themselves moving forward in developing a regional sport tourism strategy. However, Stokes (2008) highlighted that sport tourism strategy development was not a prominent academic research endeavour and it seems to also be equally lacking on the side of sport tourism industry. This was not a great part of the discussions and it was something that seems to be lacking in the planning, even though some stakeholders were aware of the need for a regional sport tourism strategy to advance their destination. Nevertheless, the stakeholders are carrying out what Stokes (2008) describes as the distinction between strategy development for certain aspects of a destination and strategic planning for implementing destination management and growth. As a somewhat normal process in the dynamic tourism industry, strategies take time to develop and evolve but there usually needs to be dedicated resources to do so. The stakeholders spoke of their strategies or business plans for the regional sport tourism bodies (NSC and RSTO) but at the same time they also admitted the need for the development of a regional sport tourism strategy.

The Federal Government of Canada declared 2015 as 'The Year of Sport' (Government of Canada, 2015) which demonstrates the steps that the country is making to move forward prioritising sport tourism as a development tool. The nation has already hosted three mega sporting events, including the 2015 IIHF World Junior Championship, 2015 FIFA Women's World Cup and the 2015 Pan American Games (Government of Canada, 2015), moving towards a greater emphasis on sport tourism and the associated socio-economic and socio-cultural benefits. In this light, the associated negative impacts of these events cannot be overlooked and with this in mind there still needs to be planning and implementation of regional strategies that can benefit smaller regions throughout the country when bidding and planning the legacy of these events. The segmented approach that the organizers of the 2015 Pan American Games took in utilizing existing infrastructure and legacy planning provided new and renovated facilities to



municipalities engaged in the event. The games took the form of a smaller scale sport event in a mega-event setting providing a balance to development and cost for stakeholders which is something that can be adapted to help promote and aid the development of emerging sport tourism destinations throughout the country. Moreover, this was not met without some disdain from some local community stakeholders opposing the event. Hence, there now needed to be proper strategic planning from the preparation to bid, to the execution and evaluation aspects of these events to include consideration not only for the cities and regions that hosted events but also the emerging destination regions that will be affected by these events.

Although the Regions of Niagara and Waterloo will have to compete with destinations within the province and the rest of the country to find their niche in the competitive sport tourism market, they are on the right path as emerging sport tourism destinations. Each region has established a dedicated sport tourism body to assist in the collaboration and community interaction necessary to advance their abilities to bid on and host sport tourism events. As well, they have identified the facilities, amenities and infrastructure that they possess and lack for hosting these events so that they are able to proactively strategize knowing their strengths and weaknesses as a sport tourism destination. Moreover, the emerging sport tourism regions in this study have identified what they want to achieve for their communities as a sport tourism destination in the form of socio-economic benefits, destination enhancement, sport development and improved community well-being. However, Niagara, as an established tourism destination, will need to identify where sport tourism fits in the scope of its destination profile. In a similar fashion, the Region of Waterloo will need to set their limits of progress and adaptation of sport tourism as a developing tourist destination. Thus, proactive strategic planning is imperative on all levels if these emerging sport tourism destinations are to progressively mature in their socio-economic, socio-cultural, political and tourism development.

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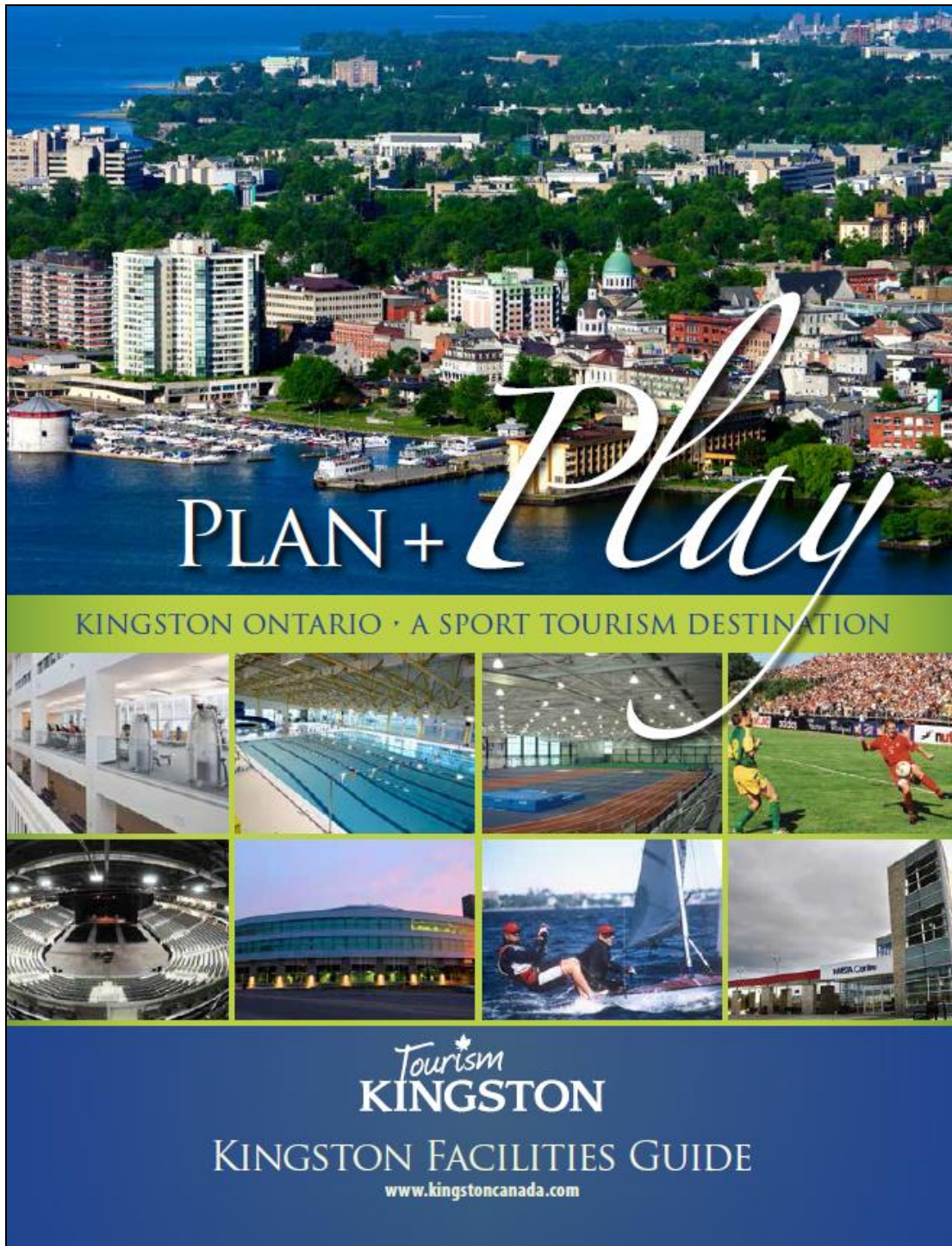
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# APPENDIX

## Appendix A - Sport Tourism Promotional Materials of Canadian Cities

### Kingston, ON & Nanaimo, BC Sport Tourism Brochure Covers







# TOP 10 REASONS

to host your sport event in Kingston, Ontario



1. Location, Location, Location
2. State-of-the-art Sport Facilities
3. 4,000+ Accommodation Rooms
4. Lots to See and Do
5. Great Dining
6. Strong Volunteer Base
7. Excellent Support Services
8. Minutes from the U.S. Border
9. History of Hosting Successful Events
10. Readily Accessible by Car, Rail, Air, Coach or Boat





# NANAIMO SPORT TOURISM GUIDE

LEARN. TRAIN. PLAY.





## Winnipeg, MB and Kamloops, BC Sport Tourism Websites

**Sport & Event Tourism**

- Why Winnipeg
- What's New
- Contact Us
- Our Services
- Facilities & Venues
- Accommodations
- Upcoming Events
- Track Record
- Resources

**HOT DEALS AND PACKAGES**

Download the VISITOR GUIDE

**E-NewsLETTER**

**liveconcierge**

**101 Things to do**

**upcoming events**

**BOOK a ROOM**

Check-In Date: 12/05/2014

Check-Out Date: 12/06/2014

Select Lodging: All Lodging

> search

**Sport & Event Tourism**

Winnipeggers love their sports and the city has a rich tradition of hosting successful sporting and other major events. Winnipeg has hosted high-profile events like the Canadian Country Music Awards, JUNO Awards, Grey Cup and Tim Hortons Brier. In 2015, the city will play host to the FIFA Women's World Cup. With our expertise and wide variety of venues, Winnipeg is an ideal choice for your next sports or special event.

**WHY WINNIPEG**

**WHAT'S NEW**

**CONTACT US**

**OUR SERVICES**

**FACILITIES & VENUES**

**Sports Attractions in Kamloops**

HOME | KAMLOOPS | ACCOMMODATIONS | THINGS TO DO | EVENTS | SPORT | DIRECTORY | BLOG | FOLLOW US

**THINGS TO DO**

- TRANSLATE
- KAMLOOPS MAPS
- WEBCAMS
- 107 THINGS TO DO IN KAMLOOPS
- FALL & WINTER ATTRACTIONS
- FALL & WINTER ACTIVITIES
- SPRING & SUMMER OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES
- SPRING & SUMMER ATTRACTIONS
- ARTS, CULTURE & HERITAGE
- GOLF
- SPORTS ATTRACTIONS
- INDOOR ACTIVITIES & ENTERTAINMENT
- PARKS
- URBAN ATTRACTIONS
- RESTAURANTS

**Sports Attractions & Events in Kamloops, British Columbia**

**REAL PEOPLE REAL EXPERIENCES**

"The hockey is great, the atmosphere is electric and there's nothing like cheering for a goal with over 5,000 other fans" - Mark Recchi

Real People Page

**Kamloops, British Columbia is Canada's Tournament Capital**

Kamloops is Canada's Tournament Capital, so it's not hard to find a sporting event or attraction on in the city at anytime of year. Whether visitors want to take in an exciting hockey game, enjoy outdoor football games or many of the exciting sports played by the Thompson Rivers University (TRU) Wolf Pack, Kamloops won't disappoint.

The City of Kamloops has long recognized **Sport Tourism** as an economic generator for the City and to that end has made Canada's Tournament Capital one of its top goals in City Council's Strategic Plan. Sport tourism is now the fastest growing segment of the tourism industry in Canada.

With close to \$50 million invested in new and renovated facilities to launch our Canada's Tournament Capital initiative, Kamloops is the premier host centre for tournaments, cultural events, high performance training camps, and national and international competitions. Click here for more information on the [Tournament Capital Centre](#).

**2014 Four Nations Cup**

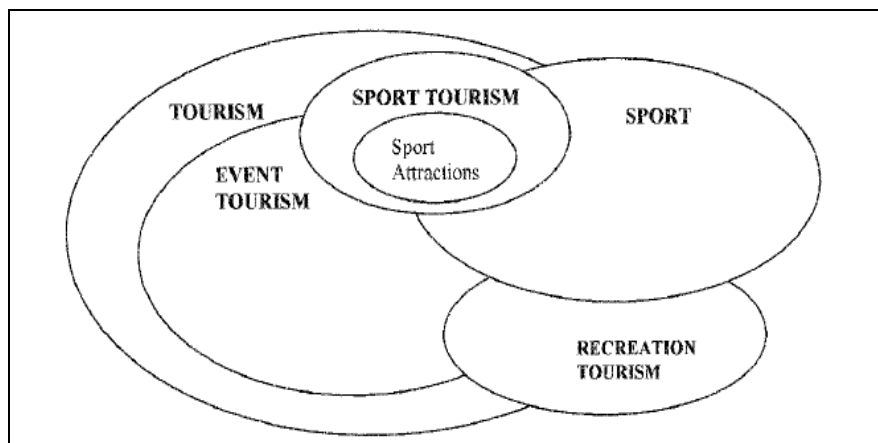
**Kamloops, British Columbia will host the 2014 4 Nations Cup!**

Kamloops will welcome the world's best women's hockey players at Interior Savings Centre from November 4th - November 8th, 2014! The 4 Nations Cup is an annual tournament welcoming the

## Appendix B - Definition of Key Concepts

### Sport Tourism

At the lowest conceptual manner, sport tourism is viewed as tourists travelling to a destination to consume, participate or as a spectator, of sport (Toohey, Taylor & Lee, 2003). Kurtzman (2005, p.49) describes sport tourism as, “the use of sports as a vehicle for tourism endeavours”. These general definitions allude to the different categories within sport tourism thus creating different levels of academic recognition and industry classification. Some researchers describe developing the theoretical concept of sport tourism as both an active and passive contribution to sport activities through commercial or non-commercial participation (Daniels, Norman & Henry, 2004). Whereas others note that sport tourism has its roots in individualistic participation in leisure, taking one out of their home environment to take part in physical activities and by extension, these activities generate themselves as attractions in their own right (Gibson, 1998). Subsequently, other researchers have taken an industry approach to descriptions of sport tourism, envisioning it as a process of motivations to choose a destination as a tourist, making the distinction of tourists participating in sport activities while on vacation as opposed to tourists choosing to go to a destination to experience or be part of a sporting culture (Pigeassou, 2004). Deery, Jago and Fredline (2004) illustrate in their depiction which highlights the relationship between tourism events and sport events. A great overlap in the industry and bodies of research that further advances the definition of the subject area and industry (see Figure 1).



*Figure 1* – Interrelationships between sport and tourism events (Deery et al., 2004).

Gibson (2003) builds on this, conceptualizing a definition of sport tourism via tourist participation from three different angles. Firstly by describing active sport tourism in which participants engage in sporting activities (skiing, cycling, fishing, etc.). Secondly, sport tourism events in which tourists’ main motivations are to travel to watch a sporting event (FIFA World Cup, IRB Rugby World Cup, Olympic Games, etc.). Thirdly in the form of nostalgia sport



tourism where the main objective of tourists is to visit and partake in sport attractions (stadia, hall of fames, etc.). Gammon and Robinson (2003) further develop these concepts as they divide sport tourism into hard and soft definitions where the main difference is that hard sport tourists specifically travel for active or passive involvement in competitive sport and soft sport tourists who travel and engage in sport for leisure or as a secondary activity of their vacation.

#### *Mega-events/Mega Sporting Events*

Several factors influence the augmentation of the sport tourism product but there is a significant contribution to its modern development in the form of global events or mega-events (Fourie & Santana-Gallego, 2011). Getz (1997, p.6) asserts that due to the size and duration of mega-events, they can, "...yield extraordinarily high levels of tourism, media coverage, prestige, or economic impact for the host community or destination." Roche (2000, p.1) also contends that mega-events can be best seen as, "large-scale cultural (including commercial and sporting) events, which have a dramatic character, mass popular appeal and international significance." The demand and drive for mega sporting events has experienced substantial growth in recent history (Fourie & Santana-Gallego, 2011). Furthermore, there has been a progression in the worldwide development of professional sports, greater expendable income amongst consumers and enhancements of media communication technology that have aided in making mega-events an international spectacle for all involved (Horne & Manzenreiter, 2006; Getz, 2012). Events such as the Olympic Games and FIFA Football World Cup have continued to garner international appeal (Horne & Manzenreiter, 2004) whilst encouraging destination host countries to bid for these events as they provide numerous opportunities and benefits. These include the creation of new destinations and tourist travel patterns that have substantial short and long term benefits to the host (Fourie & Santana-Gallego, 2011). The abovementioned events also tend to become a fixture in host destination development plans and in doing so their event now competes within the local scope of tourism and leisure activities for tourist expenditure (Nauright, 2004).

Lamberti, Noci, Guo and Zhu (2011) describe mega-events as having a synergistic relationship between the host and the event and substantially provide the host with international exposure and recognition for the event which are beneficial in multiple ways. Accordingly, mega sporting events provide the international promotion of the host destination to an audience that spans the globe (Getz, 2012) and affords the host to create and plan a number of socio-cultural activities that supplement the events viewership which can engage a myriad of potential tourists (Kim & Morrison, 2005). Nauright (2004) further contends that these major sporting events also need to be managed and marketed appropriately as they will have a significant impact on the destination's brand image. As well, due to the exposure via the international media, local

organising committees want to ensure that mega-events run smoothly as it is potential for new tourism capital and investment. One approach to adding to the sport event and destination image is the addition of cultural shows and artistic exhibitions to create a holistic brand image as a complete destination (Nauright, 2004).

#### *Hallmark and Major Events*

Hallmark events and Major events are quite similar as they are big events that usually happen in one occurrence or are recurring but still limited in duration, their purpose lie in the industry reality of promoting the short and long term demand, appeal and prosperity of a tourist destination (Ritchie, 1984). Furthermore, they can be categorised via the duration of the event, the length of the tourist visit during the event and the corresponding visitor numbers all aiding in the development of the destination product (Jafari, 1988). Getz (2005) notes that hallmark events are defined by their ability to create a competitive advantage for the host community as they have authentic and distinctive features and garner a certain image and publicity, possesses tradition and are attractive to potential visitors. Examples of these types of events include Carnival in Rio de Janeiro and Trinidad and Tobago; Mardi Gras in New Orleans and the Calgary Stampede as they are all 'permanent institutions' of their respective cities and closely associated to their host community and destination's identity and brand (Getz, 2012). In this light, Major events can be seen as an extension of hallmark events (Allen, O'Toole, McDonnell & Harris, 2002), but are usually in the realm of sport by attracting a substantial amount of visitors and/or spectators whilst garnering widespread international media attention in an attempt to reap the event's economic benefits (Bowdin, Allen, O'Toole, McDonnell & Harris, 2006).

#### *Small-scale, Regional and Local Sporting Events*

Sporting events have been heralded as major components for any region aspiring to gain significant international recognition as a destination, to generate socio-cultural benefits and develop economically. Sport is often an efficient means to help rejuvenate and develop the social capacity of a community through national identity, social integration and enhancing well-being (Kobayashi et al., 2011). Higham (1999) notes that some of these emerging societies should use regional or small-scale sport tourism events, also known in some forms as participant events (Getz, 2012), as opposed to mega-events to advance tourism. Wilson (2006) highlights smaller sporting events which include minor events (eg. marathons, surfing events, local cycling races, etc.) that are often held annually and may have more competitors than spectators drawing less media interest and monopolizing less resources compared to mega-events. Gratton, Dobson, and Shibli (2000) discuss a classification for sport tourism events that allows for a better

comprehension of small-scale sport events. Table 1 describes these classifications and gives examples of each type of event.

Table 1 – *Classifications of sporting events (Gratton et al., 2000)*

<b>Class</b>	<b>Event Specification</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<i>A</i>	<i>Mega-events</i>	<i>Olympic Games and FIFA Football World Cup</i>
<i>B</i>	<i>Major Annual Spectator Events</i>	<i>Wimbledon Tennis Championship or the American NFL Football Super Bowl</i>
<i>C</i>	<i>Irregular Major Sporting Competitions</i>	<i>International level swimming events</i>
<i>D</i>	<i>Major Annual Competitor Events</i>	<i>National Collegiate Athletic Association championships in the United States</i>
<i>E</i>	<i>Minor Annual Events (Wilson, 2006)</i>	<i>Marathons and Cycling Events</i>

In Table 1, Class A to D of events highlights a progressive scale of sporting event that vary in size, impact and attendance. However, for smaller scaled sport tourism events, Wilson (2006) highlights Class E which include minor events that are often held annually, that may have more competitors than spectators and with little media interest and limited economic activity compared to mega-events. These types of smaller to medium sized events, such as the hosting of the Women Cup Mediterranean Swimming Championship and European Bowling Tournament by Cyprus, an emerging destination for hosting sport tourism events (Avgousti, 2012), can provide more economic prosperity to smaller communities than if they were held in a more urban setting (Veltri, Miller, & Harris, 2009). There are multiple examples of international small-scale sport tourism events that include sports that do not have a global appeal such as football/soccer or basketball and may be a niche market in emerging destination markets trying to reap the benefits of tourism. As well, these events attract more active sport tourists to participate rather than spectators who are drawn to mega-events. However, these types of events are still in the interest of attracting domestic and international tourists for the social and economic gains and destination exposure (Ahmed, Moodley & Sookraih, 2008).

### **Emerging Sport Tourism Destinations**

As an international economic force that contributes to investment, creation of capital, employment and social growth, tourism has a substantial role in the creation of a destination's identity and by extension how it wants to be perceived by the rest of the world (Hampton, 2005). In this light, governments are extremely receptive to sport events as both a tourism driver and wider socio-economic development strategy (Getz, 2008) with a number of these destinations willing to adopt tourism as a strategy for development coming from emerging destination

markets. Globaledege (2013) notes that international emerging markets make up more than half of the world's population and account for a large share of its output whilst having high growth rates. Thus, these emerging destination markets recognise that it is in their best interests to advance their tourism products in order to reap the benefits of a rapidly growing flow of international tourists to boost their economic and social development (UNWTO, 2011b).

Within the tourism vernacular, destinations can be on a scale of town, city, region or country all of which can be considered as tourist attractions whether they are constructed, natural and cultural or encompass all three features. These attractions are ultimately beneficial to both domestic citizens and foreign visitors and can be the sole reason for planning to visit a destination (Esu & Ebitu, 2010). Although there are several definitions of emerging markets, they usually tend to incorporate three distinct characteristics, they usually have a high level of economic growth; they ensure practical implementation of market-based frameworks (to suit their needs and expectations) and are in an evolutionary phase between a developing and developed destination (Styles & Voola, 2010). Subsequently, this research will be investigating the tourism regions of Niagara and Waterloo in Ontario, Canada that are extensions of the emerging destination market, both in the form of an emerging sport tourism destination.

### **Tourism Stakeholders**

A stakeholder can be defined as “a group or individual who has an interest in the actions of an organization and the ability to influence it” (Freeman, 1984, p. 94). In the current tourism literature, stakeholders' roles in tourism planning and development are derived from a base in business management and public administration and have been streamlined to four main perspectives, tourists, residents, entrepreneurs, and local governmental officials (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2003). Increasingly, tourism destinations need to consider the roles of all stakeholders', as they can impact the destination's tourism strategy for planning, management and development (Dodds, Graci & Holmes, 2010). Baud-Bovy (1982) developed a core set of tourism actors that are usually involved in the strategic planning process, including tourism government agencies (municipal, regional and national); hotel and restaurant owners; travel service companies (tour companies operators, travel agents and transportation companies) as well as local businesses including bank and real estate companies that are involved in tourism or indirectly benefit from the tourism economic activity. Timur and Getz (2008) conclude that stakeholder involvement and participation necessitates listening to various opinions which is rarely an easy or consensual process whilst also managing the difficult task of integrating and balancing complex, different and competing interests.

### *Stakeholder Roles in Tourism Strategic Planning*

As the tourism industry and the body of research has progressed within the last two decades, there has been increasing research with respect to tourism strategy development that refer to entrepreneurship, stakeholder collaboration, sharing of intangible resources (power structures, knowledge and training/learning) and the political process within strategy development for tourism destinations (Stokes, 2008). Consequently, given the various facets of the tourism industry, tourism strategy development is often analyzed from a stakeholder perspective which can include government roles, infrastructure development, destination management (government and corporate). However, present in some of the research, DMOs and government (local, regional and national) tourism practitioners usually discuss tourism strategy in a marketing context (Stokes, 2008; Bornhorst et al., 2010). In this aspect, Moscardo (2007) supports this management process, highlighting that in order for the tourism planning and strategy development process to be successful there must be community collaboration and understanding; coordination of stakeholders and effective leadership in tourism endeavours, business and development.

Beritelli (2011) contends that tourism stakeholders have usually been classified in specific plans and strategies as collaborative actors via different tourism business and organisations. However, there are some that recognize stakeholders as individuals who represent stakeholder groups whose role in strategy development and planning becomes a process of collaboration, decision-making and communication between individuals and organisations or vice versa (Ruhanen, 2004). Alternatively, Bornhorst et al. (2010) discuss the importance of the tourism service providers and local residents as the most important stakeholder groups, as the tourism product can be very good but if the destination's inhabitants are divided as to the tourism development strategy, visitors may feel their disdain via interactions which tarnishes its destination image. Bertelli (2011) deduced a perception of the stakeholder role in the strategy development process in tourism, noting that in community-based tourism planning, effective stakeholder cooperation proves to be quite efficient in the planning, formulating and implementation of destination development strategies, even if the stakeholders are direct competitors. Conversely, the author also notes that decision-making and implementation of strategy can be monopolized by a small group of community elite that may not hold the best interests for the entire community.

## Appendix C - Participant Introductory Email/Letter



Date, 2014

Dear *(participant's name)*:

This letter is an invitation to participate in a study I am conducting for Master's Thesis Dissertation in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo. The course instructor is Dr. Luke Potwarka. I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you decide to take part.

Sport Tourism and the hosting of sport events have become major parts of a destinations marketing and development plans. A number of destinations are bidding for and hosting sport events as a major part of their development, diversifications and overall growth as a region, province or country. This study will focus on stakeholder organizational values and their roles as part of their respective tourism region in Ontario, Canada and the perceptive value of using sport tourism as a regional development tool. The project will help me learn more about the topic area and develop skills in research design, collection and analysis of information, and writing a Master's Thesis Dissertation.

Participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve an interview of approximately 60-75 minutes in length to take place in a mutually agreed upon location and time. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time by advising the student researcher. With your permission, the interview will be tape-recorded to facilitate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis. All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name or any other personal identifying information will not appear in the course project paper resulting from this study; however, with your permission anonymous quotations may be used. Notes and/or tapes collected during this study will be retained for 8 months in a secure location and then destroyed. Even though I may present the study findings to the class, only the course instructor and I will have access to the data. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study.

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me by email at [peter.mccomie@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:peter.mccomie@uwaterloo.ca). You can also contact my supervisor, Dr. Luke Potwarka at 519-888-4567 ext. 32748 or email [luke.potwarka@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:luke.potwarka@uwaterloo.ca).

I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee. However, the final decision about participation is yours. If you have any comments or concerns resulting from your participation in this study, please Dr. Maureen Nummelin, the Director, Office of Research Ethics, at 1-519-888-4567, Ext. 36005 or [maureen.nummelin@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:maureen.nummelin@uwaterloo.ca).

I very much look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project.

Yours Sincerely,

---

Student Investigator



## Appendix D - Participant Information Letter & Consent Form



Date, 2014

Dear (*participant's name*):

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study I am conducting as part of my Master's degree in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo under the supervision of Dr. Luke Potwarka. I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you decide to take part.

In recent history, Sport Tourism and the hosting of sport events have become major parts of a destinations marketing and development plans. A number of destinations are bidding for and hosting sport events as a major part of their development, diversifications and overall growth as a region, province or country. Even though there has been a range of academic work done on hosting sporting events and using sport event tourism in development planning, a gap still exists when it comes to this form of research in Canada. Thus, the aim of this study, is to uncover stakeholders (i.e. DMOs, governments and business community) perceptions of sport event tourism strategy development initiatives in using sport event tourism as tool for developmental change.

This study will focus on stakeholder organizational values and their roles as part of their respective tourism region in Ontario, Canada and the perceptive value of using sport tourism as a regional development tool. When faced with developing tourism in your region, your organization is at the forefront of strategic planning and policy development with regard to moving the destination forward and it is an important step to understand the role that tourism stakeholders have in the strategy development process for tourism in any destination. Therefore, I would like to include your organization as one of several tourism organizations in the region to be involved in my study. I believe that because you are actively involved in the policy and strategy development for the region, you are best suited to speak to the various topics and issues, such as the challenges and constraints of engaging in sport tourism development as well as the impacts associated with hosting sport tourism events.

Participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve an interview of approximately 60-75 minutes in length to take place in a mutually agreed upon location. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences by advising the researcher. With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded to facilitate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the interview has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points that you wish. All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study, however, with your permission anonymous quotations may be used. Data collected during this study will be retained for 8 months in a locked office in my supervisor's lab. Only researchers associated with this project will have access. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study.

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at 905-687-4774 or by email at [peter.mccomie@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:peter.mccomie@uwaterloo.ca). You can also contact my supervisor, Dr. Luke Potwarka at 519-888-4567 ext. 32748 or email [luke.potwarka@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:luke.potwarka@uwaterloo.ca).



I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee. However, the final decision about participation is yours. If you have any comments or concerns resulting from your participation in this study, please contact Dr. Maureen Nummelin in the Office of Research Ethics at 1-519-888-4567, Ext. 36005 or [maureen.nummelin@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:maureen.nummelin@uwaterloo.ca).

I hope that the results of my study will be of benefit to those organizations directly involved in the study, other sport and tourism organizations not directly involved in the study, as well as to the broader research community.

I very much look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project.

Yours Sincerely,

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Student Investigator

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### CONSENT FORM

By signing this consent form, you are not waiving your legal rights or releasing the investigator(s) or involved institution(s) from their legal and professional responsibilities.

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I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Peter McComie of the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted.

I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses.

I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in the thesis and/or publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous.

I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher.

This project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee. I was informed that if I have any comments or concerns resulting from my participation in this study, I may contact the Director, Office of Research Ethics at 519-888-4567 ext. 36005.

With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

YES  NO

I agree to have my interview audio recorded.

YES  NO

I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in any thesis or publication that comes of this research.

YES  NO

Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (Please print)

Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (Please print)

Witness Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix E - Participant Thank you Letter



Date, 2014

Name  
Address  
City, Province

*(This letter will be sent to participants after the interview process and completion of the study)*

Dear **(participant's name)**

Thank you for participating in the study *Exploring Sport Events as Tourism Development Strategies in Emerging Regions of Ontario, Canada*. I really appreciate you taking the time to share your expertise in your role for the process of tourism planning and strategy development and implementation in your region. I hope this work can make a contribution to your destination's prosperity!

I hope you will get in touch with me if further thoughts occur to you about the subject of our conversation. Should you have any comments or concerns you could also contact **(contact information for University of Waterloo – Research Ethics Board)**. This project was reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo.

If you have any further questions regarding the study, or would like additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at 1-905-687-4774 or by email at [peter.mccomie@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:peter.mccomie@uwaterloo.ca). You may also contact my supervisor, Dr. Luke Potwarka, at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 32748 or by email at [luke.potwarka@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:luke.potwarka@uwaterloo.ca).

I hope you enjoy these small tokens of appreciation for your time. Thanks again!

Yours sincerely,

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**Peter McComie**  
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Recreation & Leisure Studies – TPP  
1-905-687-4774  
[peter.mccomie@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:peter.mccomie@uwaterloo.ca)

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**Dr. Luke Potwarka**  
Associate Professor  
Recreation & Leisure Studies  
1-519-888-4567 ext 32748  
[luke.potwaraka@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:luke.potwaraka@uwaterloo.ca)



## Appendix F - Participant Interview Guide

Guiding Question	Probe
<b>Why do destinations engage in sport tourism development strategies?</b>	
1. What is the role of your organization as a tourism stakeholder in the region?	How do you have a specific role in this organization?
2. How do you feel about a sport tourism development strategy?	How would it benefit the region? What are the constraints if any?
3. How is your region currently developing or engaged in a sport tourism strategy of any kind?	Is there a model that the region bases this on?
4. Where does sport tourism event fall as a part of the region's tourism and development agenda?	Is it a priority? Why or Why not?
<b>What are perceived constraints to using sport tourism events as a development tool?</b>	
5. What are the potential benefits of hosting these events?	Can the community benefit from hosting these events?
6. What are the potential constraints of hosting these events?	Can these be mitigated?
<b>How do stakeholders decide which sport events to pursue to bid on and host?</b>	
7. Could you tell me about (successful) sport events that the region has hosted in the past?	Were they a success? Why or Why not?
8. What sports or tournaments has do you think the region is capable of hosting or should pursue to host (on a regular basis)?	Why would these sports be beneficial to the region?
9. How is your organization involved in the bidding process for sport tourism events?	Is it involved? Why or Why not?
<b>What are the perceived impacts of hosting sport tourism events?</b>	
10. What, in your opinion, are the potential Impacts (Positive & Negative) of hosting sport events?	Economic, Social, Environmental?
11. How is your region differentiating itself as sport tourism destination?	In Ontario or in Canada?
<b>What extent is leveraging these impacts considered in the strategy development processes?</b>	
12. Are there reasons why your region should pursue this form of tourism over other forms?	Why do you think so?
13. How does the region ensure that impacts reach the host community?	Are there strategies in place?
14. Has the region invested in any infrastructure or facilities related to sport events?	Yes – Why and Examples? No- Any plans for the future?