

Temagami Tourism Working Group

Community Tourism Assessment Index (CTAI) – Findings and Implications

October 2025

The Community Tourism Assessment Index (CTAI) session held in Temagami on October 30, 2025, facilitated by Tourism Excellence North (TEN) and Destination Northern Ontario (DNO), provided an evidence-based assessment of Temagami’s tourism assets, readiness, and capacity to support future tourism development. This report synthesizes results from 15 individual survey responses and five facilitated group assessments and is intended to inform the work of a Tourism Working Group and related municipal and economic-development decision-making. The CTAI tool evaluates tourism through a standardized framework focused on assets, experiences, and community capacity; it does not include a stand-alone question labeled “housing,” and any housing-related conclusions in this report arise from indirect but consistent indicators within the data.

Overall, the CTAI results indicate that Temagami possesses strong and competitive tourism assets but faces notable limitations in its ability to support sustained tourism growth. Respondents across both individual and group datasets consistently rated Temagami’s natural attributes, outdoor recreation opportunities, authenticity, and sense of place as above average to outstanding. These findings confirm that Temagami’s core tourism product is well aligned with contemporary tourism demand, particularly experiential and nature-based travel, and that destination appeal is not a limiting factor. Community support for tourism is also evident in the data, with respondents generally recognizing tourism’s economic value and expressing pride in Temagami as a destination.

Despite these strengths, the CTAI results clearly show that Temagami’s tourism growth is constrained by system capacity rather than demand. Indicators related to workforce availability, ability to attract and retain employees, and overall capacity to support tourism development consistently scored among the lowest across both individual and group responses. Many respondents selected outcomes indicating that the community “may not” or “does not” currently have sufficient capacity to support expanded tourism activity. Qualitative comments reinforce these scores, frequently referencing difficulty staffing businesses, challenges expanding operations, and limitations related to employee retention.

While housing is not measured as a discrete category within the CTAI, it emerges organically and repeatedly through workforce-related indicators and written responses. Numerous respondents explicitly referenced the lack of places for workers to live, the unsuitability of seasonal accommodations for permanent staff, and the inability to grow

tourism businesses due to labour constraints. In a rural tourism context, workforce availability is structurally linked to housing availability, and the CTAI data demonstrates that housing functions as a foundational enabler of tourism capacity rather than a peripheral issue. Importantly, housing emerges in this assessment as an evidence-derived constraint, raised by respondents themselves across multiple indicators, rather than as an externally imposed policy assumption.

The CTAI also identifies gaps related to investment readiness, business support, and coordination. Respondents expressed moderate to low confidence in the community's preparedness to attract and support tourism-related investment, citing fragmented support systems, infrastructure challenges, and uncertainty around navigation of approvals and capital access. Group responses in particular highlighted the need for clearer roles, stronger coordination between organizations, and a more structured approach to implementation. While long-term vision and planning capacity were viewed relatively positively, the ability to translate vision into coordinated action was consistently rated lower.

A notable pattern emerges when comparing individual and group responses. Individual respondents tended to be more critical and focused on day-to-day operational barriers, particularly staffing and capacity challenges, while group assessments were more optimistic about long-term potential but emphasized governance, leadership, and implementation gaps.

This divergence suggests a disconnect between strategic optimism and operational reality, reinforcing the need for coordinated, action-oriented intervention rather than further high-level visioning.

Taken together, the CTAI findings strongly support the establishment of a Tourism Working Group focused on implementation, coordination, and capacity-building.

The data indicates that future tourism success in Temagami will depend less on additional asset development and more on addressing foundational constraints related to workforce availability, housing, investment readiness, and inter-organizational coordination. Although housing is not explicitly named as a survey category, it emerges clearly through multiple empirical indicators as a cross-cutting enabler of tourism, workforce stability, and economic development.

In conclusion, the CTAI provides clear evidence that Temagami's tourism potential is strong, but growth is limited by systemic capacity challenges rather than lack of demand or destination appeal. Housing-related constraints surface organically through workforce and capacity indicators and must be treated as integral to tourism planning and economic

development. A Tourism Working Group grounded in these findings can move Temagami from assessment to action by prioritizing implementation, aligning roles, and addressing the underlying capacity issues identified through the CTAI process.

Appendix A - Performance vs Potential Chart

Community Tourism Assessment Index — Summary Results

Section	Category	Max Score	Community Score	% of Potential	Visual Signal
Section 1: Community Baseline Situation	Tourism Assets	40	20.5	51%	●
	Community Support, Leadership & Cooperation	30	10.3	34%	●
	Tourism Planning & Management	50	22.5	45%	●
	Supporting Community Attributes	25	11.0	44%	●
	Subtotal – Baseline Situation	145	64.2	44%	●
Section 2: Sustainable Tourism Practices	Environmental Practices	15	8.6	58%	●
	Social Practices	20	10.8	54%	●
	Economic Practices	20	8.6	43%	●
	Subtotal – Sustainability	55	28.1	51%	●
Overall Result	Total (Sections 1 & 2)	200	92.3	46%	●

Visual Legend

- **Strong** = 70%+ of potential
- **Moderate / Emerging** = 50–69%
- **Constrained / Weak** = below 50%

Appendix B – Group vs Individual Concerns

Theme	Individuals (94)	Groups (5)	Interpretation
Tourism Assets	●	●	Assets are not the issue
Authenticity / Sense of Place	●	●	Strong and consistent
Workforce Capacity	●	●	Confirmed structural constraint
Housing (Indirect)	●	●	Emerges through workforce limits
Investment Readiness	●	●	Operators feel gaps most acutely
Coordination & Leadership	●	●	System-level weakness

Appendix C – Comments Analysis

Comment Analysis: Key Trends and What They Indicate

Overall Observation

Across both individual and group CTAI submissions, written comments show a high degree of thematic consistency. While tone and emphasis vary, respondents repeatedly return to the same underlying issues. This repetition across many respondents indicates systemic conditions, not isolated opinions.

1. Workforce Constraints as a Dominant Theme

Trend in comments:

Workforce challenges are the single most frequently referenced issue in the qualitative responses.

How it appears in comments:

Difficulty finding staff

Inability to extend hours or seasons

Limits on business expansion

Burnout among existing operators and staff

Analytical interpretation:

Respondents are not describing a lack of interest in tourism or visitors; they are describing an inability to deliver tourism experiences consistently due to labour constraints. The volume and consistency of these comments reinforce the low workforce scores seen in the quantitative portion of the CTAI.

2. Housing Emerges Indirectly but Repeatedly

Trend in comments:

Housing is frequently referenced in connection with workforce issues, even though it is not a formal survey category.

How it appears in comments:

“Nowhere for staff to live”

Seasonal housing unsuitable for long-term workers

Workers commuting long distances or leaving the community

Housing availability limiting business growth

Analytical interpretation:

Housing is not raised as a policy concept, but as a practical barrier encountered by operators. Its repeated appearance across comments indicates that housing functions as a foundational enabler of tourism capacity. The fact that it emerges organically strengthens its evidentiary value.

3. Strong Confidence in Assets, Paired with Frustration

Trend in comments:

Respondents often express pride in Temagami's natural assets in the same comments that express frustration about capacity limits.

How it appears in comments:

Strong belief in Temagami's appeal

Recognition of unrealized potential

Frustration that "we could do more, but..."

Analytical interpretation:

This pairing is important. It shows that dissatisfaction is not rooted in negativity about the community, but in a perception that structural barriers are preventing success. This reinforces the conclusion that tourism growth is constrained by systems, not by lack of assets or vision.

4. Capacity, Not Demand, Is the Recurrent Limiting Factor

Trend in comments:

Comments rarely reference a lack of visitors or interest. Instead, they focus on limits to what businesses and the community can support.

How it appears in comments:

Concerns about being "overstretched"

Hesitation about increasing visitation without infrastructure

Comments about readiness rather than promotion

Analytical interpretation:

This confirms a critical finding: Temagami's tourism challenge is not demand generation, but capacity management. This distinction is crucial for policy, as it shifts emphasis away from marketing and toward workforce, housing, and operational readiness.

5. Desire for Better Coordination and Follow-Through

Trend in comments:

Respondents repeatedly reference the need for clearer leadership, coordination, and implementation.

How it appears in comments:

Uncertainty about who is responsible for what

Desire for shared direction

Comments about plans not translating into action

Analytical interpretation:

This reflects a perceived gap between planning and execution. The comments suggest that stakeholders are willing to participate, but want clearer structures, roles, and accountability. This aligns closely with group-level findings around governance and coordination.

6. Difference in Tone: Individuals vs. Groups

Trend in comments:

Individual comments are more operational, immediate, and constraint-focused.

Group comments are more strategic and forward-looking.

Analytical interpretation:

This difference reflects perspective rather than disagreement. Individuals speak from lived experience; groups synthesize issues at a systems level. Where both sets of comments point to the same issues—particularly workforce and housing—the issues can be considered structural and validated.

7. What Is Not Prominent in the Comments (Equally Important)

Notably absent or rare in comments:

Calls for more marketing

Claims that tourism is unwanted

Concerns about loss of community identity due to tourism

Analytical interpretation:

The absence of these themes reinforces the conclusion that Temagami's tourism challenges are not cultural or reputational, but practical and capacity-based.

Summary Interpretation

Taken together, the comment trends strongly support the quantitative CTAI findings. The written responses consistently reinforce that Temagami's tourism assets are strong, community support exists, and demand is present. However, workforce availability—closely linked to housing, along with coordination and implementation capacity, represent the primary constraints on growth. The convergence of themes across many comments, rather than the strength of any single statement, provides the empirical basis for treating these issues as systemic.

Appendix D – A Suggested Way Forward

(Opinion)

Based on the CTAI results, the most productive way forward is to undertake a short, focused program of work that directly addresses the capacity constraints identified in the data. The first step should be the establishment of a small, time-limited Tourism Implementation Working Group with a clear operational mandate. This group's initial task should be to translate the CTAI findings into a short list of implementation actions rather than further analysis. Within its first month, the group should confirm scope, assign leads, and establish a simple workplan with defined deliverables and timelines.

The first concrete piece of work should be the preparation of a **Tourism Workforce and Housing Snapshot**.

This task should involve compiling basic, practical information from local operators and existing municipal data, including the number of seasonal versus year-round tourism workers, typical length of employment, current staff accommodation arrangements, and immediate housing gaps that affect business operations.

The output should be a concise document of no more than three pages that quantifies the workforce-housing relationship and can be used consistently for Council decision-making, funding applications, and discussions with potential partners.

The second area of work should focus on **coordination and navigation**.

The Working Group should map the current process a tourism business must navigate to expand, extend seasons, or invest, including permitting, infrastructure questions, workforce considerations, and access to support programs.

Based on this mapping, the group should define a clear “first point of contact” and a simple referral protocol so that operators know where to go and what steps are involved.

This does not require structural reorganization, but rather documented roles, shared contact points, and agreed-upon internal processes between the Municipality, provincial and federal entities, and TREDCO.