



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Gander and Area Chamber of Commerce and the Town of Gander Partner to Develop a Sense of Arrival in Gander and Area

(Gander, NL – September 26, 2018)

The Gander and Area Chamber of Commerce and the Town of Gander are partnering to develop a uniform and professional approach to a Sense of Arrival/Come From Away Strategy and a Visitor Passport program.

Tourism stakeholders in the Town of Gander realize that due to the success of the Broadway musical, **“Come From Away”**, an influx of tourists is expected. In anticipation, they have initiated a Project Steering Committee composed of representatives from the Gander and Area Chamber of Commerce, Town of Gander, Department of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation (TCII), Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) and Adventure Central Newfoundland.

The Committee intends to engage a consultant to:

1. Develop an in-depth Sense of Arrival Strategy that will focus on, but is not limited to, main areas such as the Gander International Airport, the Trans-Canada Highway, and the Gander Tourist Information Centre.
2. Design and develop a Visitor Passport program whereby visitors to the Gander Tourist Information Centre will obtain a copy of the Passport, which will highlight key **“Come From Away”** related sites, as well as feature other tourism attractions along the Kittiwake Coast.

The strategy is intended to make tourists feel welcome as they enter Gander and travel the Kittiwake Coast. It will enable tourists to visit the sites and locations depicted in **“Come From Away”**, while allowing them to meet with local people and immerse in the Newfoundland culture as did the plane-people of 9/11.

The project total cost is approximately \$110,000, with ACOA contributing \$71,500 through its Business Development Program, a \$49,247 contribution from TCII’s Regional Development Fund and \$13,500 in funding from the Town of Gander and Gander and Area Chamber of Commerce. This joint project will commence in the fall of 2018 and the final product will be implemented in advance of the 2019 tourism season.

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Quotes:

“The Government of Canada recognizes the importance of tourism to our economy and is committed to investing in strategic initiatives like this one with the Gander Area Chamber of Commerce. Gander’s tourism sector has grown significantly since the community’s response to 9/11 and the success of the “Come From Away” Broadway musical – people from all over the world want to experience first-hand how amazing and beautiful our people and province are. That is why we are delighted to support this initiative, which will enhance the tourist experience, attract new visitors and strengthen the Gander region’s tourism industry.”

Scott Simms

Member of Parliament for Coast of Bays–Central–Notre Dame on behalf of the Honourable Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development and Minister responsible for ACOA.

“With increased tourism interest in Gander, largely as a result of international exposure of the Gander 9-11 story as told through the “*Come From Away*” musical, related books, and major network television broadcasts, it is incumbent upon the community to prepare to provide visitors with a professionally conceived and developed sense of arrival and a coordinated approach to tourism product delivery. We are pleased to work with the Gander and Area Chamber of Commerce, as well as other community partners, in the advancement of this objective,”

Mayor Percy Farwell

Town of Gander

“We are very pleased to partner with the Town of Gander and the Project Steering Committee on this all important “Sense of Arrival/Come From Away Strategy and Visitor Passport” project. With a 19% increase of visitors to the Chamber’s Visitor Information Centre this summer, visitors inquiring about the experiences of the plane-people and wanting to listen to the stories of those involved during that time, the timing of this project will be perfect for a launch into the 2019 tourism season.”

Rod French

Chair of Gander and Area Chamber of Commerce

“Through multi-level partnerships like these, we are working to make Gander and area not just a doorway, but a destination. The development of this sense of arrival strategy and visitor passport project will strengthen the feeling of welcome and sense of place that will encourage travelers to visit, stay, and see all this region has to offer.”

Honourable John Haggie

Minister of Health and Community Services and MHA for the District of Gander

“Come From Away spotlights the compassion shown by Newfoundlanders and Labradorians as well as the enduring friendships that developed as a result. It proves that kindness, generosity, understanding, inclusion and acceptance never go astray in any circumstance – and visitors from around the world are travelling to Gander to experience this warmth and hospitality for themselves. The development of this sense of arrival strategy and visitor passport project will only serve to strengthen the feeling of welcome tourists to the region are so familiar with. Government has supported improving the visitor experience at Gander’s Tourism Information Centre, and enhancing the sense of arrival to the community.”

Honourable Christopher Mitchelmore

Minister of Tourism, Culture, Industry and Innovation

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Backgrounder:

- The Town of Gander is a focal point of the Broadway musical “**Come From Away**”, which details the many stories of stranded passengers in Gander and area, during the events of 9/11.
- The Gander and Area Chamber of Commerce operates the Gander Tourist Information Centre which is opened and staffed year-round to provide tourist information.
- In 2017, the area received an unexpected number of tourists who had seen or heard about the musical and wanted to visit the town of Gander for themselves.
- Visitations to the Tourist Information Centre have increased annually, reaching a record (18,000) number of visitors in 2017.
- As of the end of August 2018 visitor numbers have increased 19%, and this trend is expected to continue with “CFA tourists” expected to visit the area for some years to come.