



SHORT TERM RENTALS

SUSTAINABLE TOOLKIT



2023



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Recap

Sources for this document:

- Sustainablehosting.ca
- BCorp Certification
- GreenStep Certification
- GSTC Tourism Council.
- Georgian Bay Biosphere
- Georgian Bay Biosphere Carbon Calculator

Staff identified, borrowed, copied, shared and have showcased very familiar and supporting ideas, themes and trends to put together this document. We stand on the shoulders of huge sustainable movements who have proven scientific and measurable action. Sustainability, especially in Georgian Bay have very unique themes. Staff hold very strong alliance with the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) regarding accreditation for sustainable tourism and as such show gratitude and thanks as it relates to how these resources can be used in the Township of Georgian Bay.



INTRODUCTION

The Township of Georgian Bay is committed to promoting environmentally responsible practices within our community. The Sustainable Toolkit for Short Term Rental Operators has been designed to encourage and reward operators for incorporating sustainable actions into their businesses. The six focus areas, operators can contribute to a healthier environment but will afford you a 10% discount on the registration fee with the Township of Georgian Bay. Once completion has been documented you will receive a marketing package to promote your efforts towards sustainability and being Georgian Bay Certified!

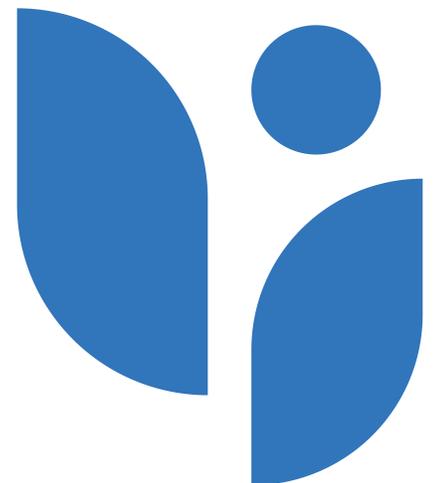
This Sustainable Toolkit aims to create a positive impact on both the local environment and our community, encouraging short-term rental operators to adopt practices that align with the principles of sustainability. Together, we can contribute to a more resilient and sustainable future for the Township of Georgian Bay, where the environment is a top priority.

This Toolkit is organized into six sustainability topics, each of them have a checklist of potential actions Hosts can take to improve not only the listing but also the community around it.

Items are listed from no to low cost followed by cost associated tasks. You can then use the order of actions at your own discretion, knowledge, experience or budget. Once you have set in place your plan, you will have one year to complete your items and then report back at the next Township registration opportunity.

Tips to make it easier:

1. Save this document to your google files or hard drive.
2. Create short, attainable goals that are easy for you to meet in each section. (We ask you to choose 10 actions for your plan)
3. Make it fun and involve friends, family and guests.
4. Remember, it is 'Quality over Quantity'.



The Six Sustainability Topics

1. Engaging With Guests in Sustainable Practices.

Make your guests a part of the quest to a better future in Georgian Bay.

2. Utilizing the Local Community & Culture

Georgian Bay is rich in culture and heritage. You can leverage your role as a host by supporting the Township and the neighbourhood.

3. Nature & Wildlife

Do your part to support a healthy ecosystem. Identify areas of concern.

4. Energy Saving

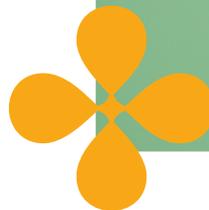
The more energy efficient we can be, the more we will save on green house gasses and money.

5. Water Conservation

Save water, every drop counts in the ecosystem and can cause a ripple effect throughout.

6. Waste Management

There are many actions we can take to reduce the amount of waste we generate on a daily basis. As a host you are the lead.



TAKE THE PLEDGE

The Township of Georgian Bay encourages Short-Term Rental Operators like yourself to be a part of the solution. Everyone is unique, and how you would like to implement each idea will be left up to you.

Once you have read through this handbook visit gbtownship.ca to take the pledge. There, you will fill out an online form that is a commitment to take action over the next 12 months. You will select your key focuses and create a plan to implement the actions.

****Remember to keep records for your final report, whether it would be pictures of receipts, trees or upgrades.****



76% of travelers say they want to travel more sustainably over the coming 12 months, while the same amount say the global energy crisis and rising cost of living is impacting their spending plans

Source: <https://globalnews.booking.com/cost-vs-conscience-bookingcom-delves-into-the-dilemma-dividing-sustainable-travel-in-2023/>

Georgian Bay the Sustainable Way!



ENGAGING YOUR GUESTS



Your guests can help too!

Engaging your guests can be subtle or integrated into the experience based on your property. Inform your guests in advance of your efforts towards becoming a sustainable business.

This will create an opportunity to build a relationship on the foundation of mutual interest.

96%

In 2022, supplier emissions accounted for approximately 96 percent of our emissions.

Source:
https://airbnb2020ipo.q4web.com/files/doc_downloads/governance_doc_updated/2023/Airbnb-SustainabilityandCommunityUpdate-2023-111623.pdf

Eco-Friendly Guest Guidelines

Share what Georgian Bay and Surrounding area are doing to promote sustainable ways of living, doing business and recreation. There are brochures, pamphlets and websites available for you to use.

Subscribe to Local & Regional Alert Systems

Sign up today for the Georgian Bay Alert System and automatically get enrolled in the Muskoka Emergency System.

GEORGIAN BAY ALERT

Create a Guest Guide Book

Guidebooks are instrumental in informing your guests of the local by-laws, events, plans and so much more! You can create a hardcopy one or a downloadable PDF.

Guest Feedback

Find out what your guests are doing by asking for feedback and looking for ideas and initiatives in them. Survey Monkey is a great tool!

ENGAGING YOUR GUESTS

Checklist

-  Ask for feedback from guests about your sustainability efforts, and how you can do better. Suggest they comment in their review, and identify what they appreciated.
-  Subscribe to local and regional emergency management alert systems to share relevant information with guests, as needed (e.g. road closures, forest fires, water restrictions or boil water notices, etc.) and encourage guests to do the same before and during their stay.

Georgian Bay Alert!

-  Integrate fun activities to educate guests about local flora and fauna. Ideas could include Backyard Bingo, colouring pages, or fun scavenger hunts for kids.
-  Create a guest guide or welcome book. You should include information for fire & emergency services, exit plans, local businesses and more!
-  Provide educational materials or brochures on local sustainability initiatives, eco-friendly activities, and responsible tourism in the Georgian Bay Area.
-  Get Social, tell all your current clients and new about the efforts you are making and partnering with the Township of Georgian Bay, **#GeorgianBayTheSustainableWay**.

4 Ways to Engage your Guests Right Now!



Tell your guests what you have already done to promote sustainability.



Post your pledge in your listing.



Define what sustainability means to you.



Send out Guest Surveys to gather guests awareness and participation in sustainability.



Travelers are taking conscious habits from home when traveling, 67% now turn off the air conditioning in accommodations when they aren't there (up 29% from 2022), while 60% re-use the same towel multiple times (up 25% from 2022)

Source: <https://globalnews.booking.com/cost-vs-conscience-bookingcom-delves-into-the-dilemma-dividing-sustainable-travel-in-2023/>

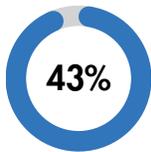
UTILIZING LOCAL COMMUNITY & CULTURE



They Don't know What they Don't Know

As a host you can support your local community, through the products and services you buy and provide, the art and decor you choose and the items you buy for your listing. Show them the best of the best that is local, making your guests want to return.

Help ensure your guests know how important their support is, by highlighting all the great things there are to taste, do and see in Georgian Bay.



When it comes to transportation, 43% now plan their sightseeing so that they can walk, bike or take public transport, while 43% travel outside of peak season in a bid to avoid overcrowding – both up 10% from 2022. There is also consensus amongst travelers on taking the 'buy local' mantra on vacation, with 43% favouring small, independent stores.

Source: <https://globalnews.booking.com/cost-vs-conscience-bookingcom-delves-into-the-dilemma-dividing-sustainable-travel-in-2023/>

<h3>Local Product Promotion</h3> <p>Highlight and promote local products, artisans, and businesses in your rental property.</p>  	<h3>Cultural Experiences</h3> <p>Suggest local cultural events and experiences to guests, encouraging them to explore and support the community.</p>  
<h3>Develop Local Partnerships</h3> <p>Establish partnerships with local businesses, conservation groups, or cultural organizations to enhance the overall guest experience.</p>  	<h3>Volunteer</h3> <p>Volunteer your time or donate to a local community not-for-profit. It is a great opportunity to learn about the community.</p>  

UTILIZING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY & CULTURE

Checklist

-  Research the traditional land you are located on, and learn how to pronounce it. Share information about the Metis Community, Moose Deer Point First Nation and Wahta First Nation.
-  Establish partnerships with local businesses, promoting the local eateries, cafés, shops and hidden gems.
-  Donate unused materials or unopened food to a local charity or food bank, located in MacTier or Port Severn. Find the details [here](#).
-  Hire a local artist to design and create something unique at your property. Or purchase artwork from a local artist.
-  Provide educational materials or brochures on local sustainability initiatives, eco-friendly activities, and responsible tourism in the Georgian Bay Area.
-  Create a newsletter or share the [Georgian Bay Times Newsletter](#) to showcase what is happening locally.

Understanding Culture

We want to celebrate the culture of the Indigenous neighbours, but not unnecessarily take ownership. Be sure to support local artists, cultures and traditions, but be sure to give credit where it is due. Resource and share artists names.



Resources

<https://georgianbaymetiscouncil.com>
<https://www.wahta.ca>
<https://www.moosedeerpoint.ca>



Do you know the names of the Chiefs and Presidents of these communities?



75% seek authentic experiences that are representative of the local culture, yet in stark contrast 40% don't know how or where to find these tours and activities that will ensure they give back to the local community.

Source: <https://globalnews.booking.com/cost-vs-conscience-bookingcom-delves-into-the-dilemma-dividing-sustainable-travel-in-2023>

Checklist

-  Promote use of local walking and cycling trails, with information on where dogs are allowed.
-  Understand local fishing, hunting, trapping and fire regulations, and ensure that guests understand any restrictions or licensing requirements.
-  Understand where interactions with wildlife are likely to happen, and abide by and help guests to follow best practices - such as keeping dogs on-leash, keeping a safe distance, not feeding wildlife, etc.
-  Use only local firewood, and ensure that guests do the same to prevent the spread of pests or invasive species.
-  Prioritize native species of plants in landscaping.
-  Build a rock garden and plant with pollinators in mind.
-  Avoid the use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides on your property, and opt for natural options (such as vinegar)
-  Plant native trees.
-  Grow an edible landscape and garden boxes for guests to use.
-  Identify and support the removal of any invasive species on your property.

Invasive Species in Georgian Bay

- Invasive Phragmites Australis (European Common Reed)
- Japanese Knotweed (Fallopia Japonica)
- Giant Hogweed (Heracleum Mantegazzianum)



Resources

- Understanding Invasive Species in Georgian Bay
- Hunting Rules
- Fishing Rules





Energy has an impact no matter what the source is.

Working on reducing your energy in your listing, not only helps the environment, but also expenses. People feel very good about travelling with a Sustainable theme. Share with your guests, ideas on how they can conserve energy.



Did you know?

The Georgian Bay Biosphere has a [FREE Carbon Calculator?](#)

Calculate Your Carbon Footprint

Calculate the carbon footprint of hosting. You can use a free online calculator to get started.

Login to your Utility Provider.

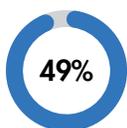
Review the last year of energy usage for your property. Look for trends as they relate to your guest stays & temperatures.

Energy Efficient Appliances

Install energy efficient appliances and lighting to minimize cost and usage. Consider getting off Gas and Propane.

Energy Conservation Guidelines

Provide guests with guidelines for energy conservation, including turning off lights and electronics when not in use.



Nearly half (49%) of travelers believe more sustainable travel options are too expensive, in contrast to 43% willing to pay extra for travel options with a sustainable certification

Source: <https://globalnews.booking.com/cost-vs-conscience-bookingcom-delves-into-the-dilemma-dividing-sustainable-travel-in-2023/>

ENERGY SAVING

Checklist

-  Review the last year of energy usage for your property. Look for trends in consumption as they relate to your guest stays and average temperatures.
-  Calculate the carbon footprint of hosting. You can use a free [online calculator](#) to get started. Remember to save your report and compare every 6-12 months to see how it has improved.
-  Cover your pool or hot tub when not in use to reduce heat loss and evaporation. Put the tub on Eco Mode
-  Draw blinds/drapes in unused rooms and areas to provide extra insulation. Check and replace filters regularly (like every month)
-  Unplug equipment that has a standby setting that is not being used in order to reduce phantom power. (Examples include microwaves, toasters, coffee makers, stereos, television screens)
-  Turn off or unplug power strips when electronics are not in use.
-  Replace lights to LED, ensuring you choose a lower wattage bulb to save on energy. Purchase a home automation system for thermostat and lighting controls, to save on energy costs and reduce need to set temperature for guest arrival

- **67%** turn the air conditioning off at accommodations when they aren't there,  **29%** from 2022
- **60%** re-use the same towel multiple times,  **25%** from 2022
- **55%** use their own reusable water bottle,  **19%** from 2022

Source: <https://globalnews.booking.com/cost-vs-conscience-bookingcom-delves-into-the-dilemma-dividing-sustainable-travel-in-2023/>

ENERGY SAVING

Checklist

-  If you are painting the exterior of your property, consider a light-coloured paint, as it will reflect the sun's heat.
-  Retrofit your home to find efficiencies, including windows, doors, space and water heating, insulation, and seals. Review the Canada Greener Homes Grant for potential cost savings.
-  Install and/or use fans to help circulate the air to help keep your accommodation cool during warmer months.
-  Reduce the set point temperature of your water heater to reduce standby losses (heat lost from the water heater into the surrounding area); 120°F is the recommended set point. Many manufacturers default the set point to 140°F.
-  Purchase renewable energy, such as renewable natural gas, from your utility provider - it can be as simple as clicking a box in your account! (Or, if that's not an option, you can purchase renewable energy from providers such as BullFrog Power)
-  Install renewable energy technology at your property (e.g. solar, wind, geothermal).
-  Install Electric Vehicle charging components for guest use.

78000

More than 78,000 listings have this amenity available, helping facilitate the use of EVs for transportation.

Source:
https://airbnb2020ipo.q4web.com/files/doc_download/s/governance_doc_updated/2023/Airbnb-SustainabilityandCommunityUpdate-2023-111623.pdf



Follow the Link to save money!



Opportunities to Save More \$

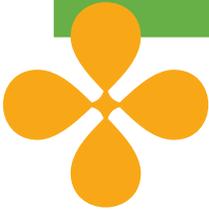
[Save On Energy](#)
[Enbridge Clean Energy Future](#)
[Ontario Energy Rebates](#)



5

The center of all life, water!

The use of water has an impact on the health of our water systems, through extraction and disposal of water. Every drop counts when it comes to water and the ripple effect on the ecosystem.



58%

of travelers carry their own reusable water bottle – and there’s been a significant uptake in travelers adopting everyday habits on vacation in the past year.

Source: <https://globalnews.booking.com/cost-vs-conscience-bookingcom-delves-into-the-dilemma-dividing-sustainable-travel-in-2023/>

Install Water Efficient Fixtures

Such as low flow toilets, shower heads and washing machines.



Educate on Water Conservation

Review the last year of energy usage for your property. Look for trends as they relate to your guest stays & temperatures.



Calculate Your Annual Water Usage

Calculate your Annual Water Usage.



Rainwater Harvesting

Explore the possibility of rainwater harvesting systems to reduce the reliance on municipal water sources.



WATER CONSERVATION

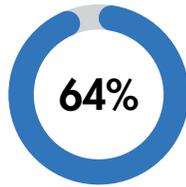
Checklist

-  Calculate your annual water usage.
-  Water your landscape between 10pm and 6am to reduce water loss due to evaporation, and use mulch at the base of plants.
-  If hand-washing dishes, fill the sink with only the amount of water you need, rather than letting the water run down the drain or filling the sink full.
-  Use a toilet tank bank for your toilet cistern. If you don't want to use plastic bags, fill a small bottle with water or use a brick, and immerse into the cistern.
-  Check for leaks. Examine your equipment (i.e. shower heads, faucets, toilets, irrigation systems, etc.) to identify leaks. A leaky toilet can waste up to as much as 20,000L of water in just a 24-hour period.
-  Upgrade equipment to low-flow fixtures, looking for models with the Watersense label. This includes faucet aerators, shower heads, toilets, etc. Check for available rebates through your municipality!
-  Landscape your garden with native drought-resistant plants to reduce irrigation needs. Opt for environmentally conscious cleaning products to reduce contamination of wastewater (and to try and reduce waste from excessive packaging).
-  Install a water meter if you don't already have one.
-  Install rainwater capture equipment such as barrels or chains to use for outdoor irrigation.
-  Install drip or low flow irrigation for exterior landscape watering. Look for models that can detect moisture content and automatically turn on or off.
-  Upgrade dishwashers and washing machines to ENERGY STAR options, which can use between 40 - 45% less water per load (and a bonus of saving electricity too). Only run dishwashers when full.



Creating waste is fact, everyone does it. But we can do better!

There are many actions that can be taken to reduce the amount of waste we generate on a daily basis, through some simple household swaps, planning ahead and purchasing decisions.



64% recycle waste

Source: <https://globalnews.booking.com/cost-vs-conscience-bookingcom-delves-into-the-dilemma-dividing-sustainable-travel-in-2023/>

Recycling Program

Create and implement a comprehensive recycling program with clear guidelines for guests.



Compost

Provide composting guidelines and easy to access materials.



Reuse or Repurpose

When replacing linens, furniture, or equipment, donate or upcycle the item, and look to replace it with a used alternative before purchasing something new - online marketplaces, auction houses, thrift stores, and community garage sales are a great place to start looking.



Don't Provide Single Use Plastics

Do not purchase single use plastics like straws, utensils and look for reusable ones such as metal or bamboo



Checklist

-  Keep glass jars, mugs, or reusable containers on hand for guests to take out to dinner and bring home their coffee or leftovers, or to use at a local bulk-buying shop.
-  Offer pour over coffee options or a refillable pod for coffee machines such as this one from Keurig.
-  Provide zero-waste gifts (such as beeswax wraps, soaps, etc.). If you want to wrap a gift, consider using old newspapers, magazine pages, or flyers. You can also leave these as fire starters for guests where permitted. Or, upcycle fabrics from the thrift store.
-  Install refillable dispensers for toiletries, such as soap, shampoo, and conditioners, instead of buying individual bottles. Many companies offer dissolvable cleaning products (e.g. The Unscented Company, The Bare Home, Blueland, Etee) so you can reuse your cleaning bottles and refill dispensers over and over again. Do your research, or visit your local refillary to support a local business.
-  Do not purchase single-use plastic straws or utensils, rather look for reusable options instead such as metal or bamboo.
-  Install a water dispenser or filter instead of offering bottled water, or encourage guests to drink tap water if it's potable.
-  Buy toilet paper that is made from recycled material or bamboo fibres.
-  Provide clearly labelled waste receptacles for general waste, recyclables and organic waste. Make it fun and easy for guests to use with pictures. Download the [Muskoka Recycles App](#).
-  Cut back on your food waste and take part in the Georgian Bay [FoodCycler Pilot Project](#).
-  When replacing linens, furniture, or equipment, donate or upcycle the item, and look to replace it with a used alternative before purchasing something new - online marketplaces, auction houses, thrift stores, and community garage sales are a great place to start looking.



Step 1: Choose What You Can Do in 2024

- Choose at least 10 actions in the 6 categories



Step 2: Take the Pledge

- Sustainability Pledge



Step 3: Work Through Your Actions

- Remember to maintain proof of your actions. Quality over Quantity.
- You have one calendar year to complete or implement your actions to qualify for the 2025 discount.



Step 4: Finalize Your Efforts and File Your Final Report

- Final Report Due December 2024



Step 5: Approval

- When approved, you will be connected with the branding expert and will be shown how and where to use your branding kit.



Step 6: Share Your Success

- Utilize the branding kit on your socials
- Tell Your Guests on your rental listing



Step 7: Continue Striving for Green Excellence

- Utilize the branding kit on your socials
- Tell Your Guests on your rental listing

Do You Need Help? Contact our Sustainability Department



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