COLUMBIA VALLEY

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

BC

DESTINATION BRITISH COLUMBIA®

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FRONT COVER PHOTO: KOOTENAY NATIONAL PARK, Kari Medig

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DISTINCTIVE DESTINATION FOR THE COLUMBIA VALLEY

The Columbia Valley lies between the Purcell Mountain Range to the west, and the Canadian Rockies to the east, and includes Columbia Lake, Lake Windermere, the internationally renowned Columbia Wetlands, the Columbia River, and Kootenay National Park. Geographically, the Columbia Valley extends some 102 kilometres from the community of Spillimacheen in the north, to Canal Flats in the south, and includes Areas F and G of the Regional District of East Kootenay.

Nestled within the Traditional Territory of both the Ktunaxa Nation (?akisq'nuk First Nation) and the Secwepemc (Shuswap Indian Band) peoples, the Columbia Valley's natural assets are stunning — beautiful mountain backdrops, crystal clear lakes, wetlands of international importance, and several mineral hot springs. This natural wealth is protected through national park designations (Kootenay National Park), provincial park designations (White Swan, Columbia Lake, Premier Lake, Windemere Lake, James Chabot, Bugaboo), the Wetlands Management Area (RAMSAR designation), and by the values of residents themselves who are passionate about their home.

Core demand generators that motivate travel today include:

- Golf courses and resorts — eight golf courses within a 35-minute drive of each other
- Kootenay National Park and Radium Hot Springs
- Lake Windemere and Invermere experiences — lake and wetland experiences
- Columbia River and Columbia Lake
- Fairmont Hot Springs Resort
- Panorama Mountain Resort
- Backcountry lodges including: CMH backcountry lodges (Bugaboos, Galena, and Bobbie Burns are the closest of 12 lodges), Talus Lodge, and Assiniboine Lodge
- Second homes

These core demand generators are enhanced by the growing depth and density of cultural experiences available in the Columbia Valley. Artists, artisans, culinary and agri-tourism offerings, history and heritage interpretation, and the development of signature festivals and events all contribute to the experiential quality of peak season stays. These cultural experiences also have the potential to grow and foster increased shoulder season visitation.

The unique selling proposition and key destination differentiators of the Columbia Valley include:

1. Water in all its forms — healing hot springs, warm lakes to swim in, rivers to float and raft upon, wetlands to view birds and wildlife, ice and snow for incredible winter experiences.

2. The warm side of the Canadian Rockies and the doorway to Kootenay National Park, offering access to nature and outdoor adventure that surrounds, inspires, and defines each moment spent here.

3. Deep powder snow accessible at ski resorts, and several world-renowned backcountry lodges.

4. Density and quality of championship golf courses.

5. Arts, culture, & heritage experiences, including:

   a. A depth of artists and artisans hand crafting and sharing their works.

   b. An intriguing history and heritage that embraces cultural diversity.

   c. Festivals and events celebrating a range of interests throughout the year.

6. A community sense of place that incorporates a commitment to healthy living; manifested in fresh organic produce, locally sourced restaurant menus, a propensity to find joy in physical activity, and in access to a wide range of wellness services and hot springs. Hot springs range from remote or undeveloped sites, to full service locations with spas and accommodation.

7. The ability to relax and unwind in whatever manner best suits the traveller.

Using the Columbia Valley Community Tourism Foundations plan, the current activities of the Columbia Valley Marketing Consortium and information shared during the planning area's destination development process the following key markets were identified:

- Alberta residents, particularly from Calgary and the surrounding area
- BC residents
- Other Canada (excluding Alberta and BC)
- Europe, particularly focused on the United Kingdom for its summer touring market that leverages the Canadian Rockies and national parks; and also, on the winter touring markets that takes advantage of the planning area's skiing and snowboarding
- Australian residents who take advantage of the planning area's plentiful winter skiing and snowboarding

These identified markets are drawn to the Columbia Valley for the abundant opportunities available to tour, relax, unwind, and enjoy numerous outdoor recreation activities. These markets are also drawn to the many arts, culture, and heritage experiences in the Columbia Valley.

VISION The Columbia Valley is known as a place to unwind and relax — a place of both quiet contemplation and rejuvenating discovery. Just as the waters of the Columbia emerge from the headwater to fill the region's lakes, rivers, and wetlands, so too do the passions of visitors emerge and begin to course through their veins. Travellers, thinking to discover adventure, discover themselves. The Columbia Valley is renowned as a place to fill your cup — to rejuvenate by soaking in the hot springs, paddling the lakes and wetlands, working on your golf handicap, hiking in the backcountry, skiing untracked powder, or immersing yourself in local stories, arts, and culture.

A deep sense of connection arises between visitors and this place, making the Columbia Valley a cherished destination — first time visitors are already planning to return; returning travellers feel so connected to this place that they see the Columbia Valley not only as a vacation spot but as an extension of their own home — a place they love and a place they may eventually choose to live. The Columbia Valley appeals and draws high yield visitors for long lengths of stay from domestic and international markets in all seasons.

Tourism is understood and valued in the Columbia Valley, but its impacts are also carefully measured and managed to be sure that the foundation of the region's success — its natural beauty and healthy ecosystems — are protected. The local business climate supports growth and expansion that is in keeping with community values. The area's reputation for experiential excellence and service quality supported by its affordable housing, public transit, and daycare have made the Columbia Valley the most highly sought-after place to seek tourism employment in British Columbia.

Destination development in the Columbia Valley respects community values and enhances resident lifestyles providing opportunities for residents and visitors to connect, to share, and learn together. The words real and authentic aren't just adjectives in advertising copy; in the Columbia Valley they permeate every visitor experience and every resident is both an ambassador and a steward, offering visitors a warm and friendly welcome. Collaboration in the Columbia Valley is a mantra; and, other destinations come to study this best practice model that continues to deliver exceptional returns against defined and agreed objectives by uniting individuals, private sector businesses, and local governments.

However, there are also untapped opportunities for expanding market appeal:

- The meetings and retreats sector, specifically during the off-season period, with a goal to attract small to medium corporate meetings and retreats, and to generate repeat leisure visitations from meeting participants.
- Sport tourism using the facilities located throughout the Columbia Valley for summer and winter tournaments and sporting events.

DISTINCTIVE DIRECTION FOR THE COLUMBIA VALLEY

VISION

This 10-year vision story was created based on existing community plans and other planning frameworks, as well as the aspirations of destination tourism partners regarding what type of destination they would like the Columbia Valley to be in 10 years. The goals, strategies, and objectives within this strategy were prioritized to achieve the elements identified within this vision.

GOALS

Four overarching destination development goals were identified to support the vision for the Columbia Valley. For each goal, priority focus areas were also identified:

1. Increase the number of shoulder season visitors — greater than 100% increase in October to April hotel revenues.

2. Increase average length of stay in the planning area in each season — annual occupancy numbers are within five percentage points of the BC average.

3. Increase number of year-round tourism job opportunities.

4. Achieve top Net Promoter Score in the province — Net Promoter Score increases by 20 percentage points vs. 2019 baseline.

In addition, the Destination BC Destination Development Program provides two common provincial goals that all 20 planning areas, including the Columbia Valley will support:

1. Lead Canada in growth of overnight visitor expenditures.

2. Secure the highest Net Promoter Score in North America.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

As the journey of destination development continues in the Columbia Valley, choices will have to be made and priorities set. Growth is not intended to be achieved at any cost. Guiding principles were developed by stakeholders to be used in decision-making.

Destination development in the Columbia Valley will:

- Enhance resident and visitor sense of connection to the Columbia Valley
- Protect the environment and maintain ecosystem health
- Appreciate and show respect for one another
- Keep it real and authentic
- Seek to innovate
- Seek to collaborate

Seven destination development themes, containing 45 development objectives, are described within this strategy, along with their priority, and the success networks needed to realize implementation.

These themes are:

1. **ACCESS** Secure reliable and timely access to and within the Columbia Valley

2. **BUSINESS CLIMATE** Create an attractive business climate for new and expanding tourism businesses including a pool of year-round skilled staff, adequate affordable housing, locally delivered service training programs, and supportive communities and local governments

3. **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY** Protect the natural environment and manage tourism impacts

4. **COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY** Maintain and enhance community character and vibrancy

5. **VISITOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND AMENITIES** Develop well-planned and well-located amenities and infrastructure to support quality travel experiences

6. **YEAR-ROUND EXPERIENTIAL QUALITY AND VARIETY** Maintain current experiential strengths and support the introduction of additional year-round, memorable experiences

7. **RELATIONSHIPS AND COLLABORATION** Work together collaboratively and effectively for mutual gain

II. ACRONYMS

AEST Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training

AGRI Ministry of Agriculture

ITBC Indigenous Tourism Association of British Columbia

CFD Ministry of Children and Family Development

DMO Destination Marketing Organization

DBC Destination British Columbia

DC Destination Canada

DDP Destination Development Plan

ENV Ministry of the Environment

FIN Ministry of Finance

FLNR Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development

go2HR The British Columbia Human Resource Organization for Tourism

ITAC Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada

IRR Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

JTT Ministry of Jobs, Trade and Technology

KRT Kootenay Rockies Tourism

LBR Ministry of Labour

MAH Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

MRDT Municipal Regional District Tax (commonly referred to as the Hotel Tax)

OCP Official Community Plan

RDMO Regional Destination Management Organization

RMI Resort Municipality Initiative

TAC Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture

TIABC Tourism Industry Association of British Columbia

TRAN Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

WD Western Diversification

WTA Wilderness Tourism Association

1 FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FOREWORD

This Destination Development Strategy is the final report resulting from a 14-month iterative process of gathering, synthesizing, and validating information with stakeholders about the current status and future direction of tourism in the Columbia Valley planning area.

As one of 20 destination development strategies that will be produced between 2016 and 2019, this strategy will contribute to the tapestry of long-term regional and provincial planning that supports the development of British Columbia as a world-class tourism destination, offering remarkable, authentic experiences that exceed expectations and align with the provincial brand. The participation of our partners throughout the process was invaluable, but it is important to note that no endorsement of this strategy or any action listed within was obtained.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Destination British Columbia (DBC), Kootenay Rockies Tourism (KRT), and the project facilitation team thank our partners and stakeholders who contributed throughout the process by:

- attending community meetings
- participating in surveys, interviews, and follow-up conversations
- forwarding relevant documents that provided the background information for the situation analysis

We thank the Ktunaxa and Secwepemc peoples on whose territory we gathered for our community meetings.

We acknowledge that many significant agreements have been realized in this planning area resulting from successful cooperation between the First Nations and non-Indigenous people, the private sector, government, non-for-profit organizations, and passionate volunteers.

The participation of all partners throughout the process was invaluable, but it is important to note that no endorsement of this strategy or any action listed within was obtained.

Special thanks are offered to members of the working group:

- Pat Bavin, Bavin Glass
- Wendy Booth, Director — Area F, Regional District of East Kootenay
- Kara Cassidy, Tourism Radium
- Susan Clovechok, Columbia Valley Visitor Centre and Chamber of Commerce
- Marie Delorme, Councillor, Village of Canal Flats
- Kaylene Earl, Lakeshore Resort and Campground
- Jenna Gyurkovits, EK Parks Ltd.
- Nancy Hetherington, Fairmont Hot Springs Resort
- Douglas McIntosh, Chattan Holdings Ltd.
- Jami Scheffer, Pynelogs Art Gallery and Cultural Centre, and Columbia Valley Arts
- Karin Smith, Parks Canada

Gerri Brightwell, Regional Manager, Kootenays with Regional Economic Operations Branch of the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development contributed as an advisor to the discussions of the working group.

Special thanks are offered to the facilitator of the Columbia Valley destination development process: Suzanne Denbak, Cadence Strategies.

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INTRODUCING THE STRATEGY

The Columbia Valley Destination Development Strategy is designed to enhance the competitiveness of the Columbia Valley over the next 10 years and beyond. The strategy was developed as part of Destination BC's Destination Development Program.

A. PROGRAM VISION AND GOALS

The program is a critical part of Destination BC's corporate strategy, and facilitates the collaboration of local, regional, and provincial agencies, First Nations, destination marketing organizations (DMOs), tourism operators, and other community interests to guide the long-term growth of tourism in the Columbia Valley.

The provincial vision for the Destination Development Program is as follows:

- BC is a world-class tourism destination that offers remarkable products and experiences that are authentic, driven by visitor demand, exceed expectations, and align with BC's brand.

- The provincial vision is supported by three goals:
- Make BC the most highly recommended destination in North America.
- Create strategic 10-year plans for tourism development and improve return-on-investment for government and private sector investments in tourism assets.
- Elevate BC's ability to compete as a premium destination while making the province more attractive for investment.

Destination development brings together planning, policy, and capacity building efforts to:

- Ensure that a destination is well positioned to make future strategic decisions.

- Address impediments to growth and capitalize on opportunities.

- Outline key assets of a destination including the main product themes and experiences available.

- Outline key priorities for new product, infrastructure, and amenity development.

- Identify impediments to development and tourism growth (e.g., potential policy or capacity issues, available funding, access to funding, etc.).

B. PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

The purpose of this strategy is to not only provide underlying support for the goals of the provincial Destination Development Program mentioned above but also to:

- Provide strategic direction for the region and guidance for local and regional planning.

- Enhance the Columbia Valley's ability to leverage its resources and programs.

- Foster joint action and inter-community dialogue.

DEMAND

MOTIVATING
INTEREST /
PREFERENCE

+

SUPPLY

CREATING
A COMPELLING
VISITOR
EXPERIENCE

=

RESULT

INCREASED
ECONOMIC
SOCIAL
+ CULTURAL
BENEFITS

The Columbia Valley Destination Development Strategy is intended to serve as a guide for tourism partners as they proceed with implementation. This document should be reviewed and updated as necessary to reflect changing tourism objectives, priorities, and market conditions. Results should be tracked regularly to ensure lessons learned improve the effectiveness of future implementation activities in increasing economic, social, and cultural benefits throughout the Columbia Valley.

C. A FOCUS ON THE SUPPLY AND EXPERIENCE

Destination development is the mechanism whereby the natural life cycle of tourism (e.g., development, stagnation, decline, and rejuvenation) is managed to ensure a destination evolves to remain desirable for the ever-changing consumer and hence, competitive in its target markets. Destination development happens when industry and government plan and work together to enhance the quality of the visitors' experiences by ensuring tourism products, services, amenities, and practices meet and exceed visitors' expectations over the long term.

Tourism has two primary revenue drivers — supply and demand. Creative marketing efforts strive to generate short-term demand for a destination and create immediate urgency for people to want to visit. Destination development focuses on the supply side of tourism by creating a compelling visitor experience to attract new visitors and entice repeat visitation.

Arguably, in this age of near instantaneous sharing of experiences via social networks (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) and third-party platforms allowing the traveller to review their experience (e.g., TripAdvisor), the quality of the destination and the experiences it offers is now an essential element of the marketing toolbox.

There are multiple dimensions to supply that are considered in destination development planning which enhance the visitor experience:

- the setting in which our experiences take place and how to access them
- policies that establish and maintain opportunities and growth barriers
- the investment enhancement framework
- products and experiences matched to consumer interests, including infrastructure and amenities (which are all often public in nature and used by residents as well as visitors)
- visitor servicing programs that meets and exceeds guest expectations
- capability, skills, and training our industry needs so that we all can excel at what we do

D. METHODOLOGY

The Columbia Valley Destination Development Strategy was developed based on extensive, collaborative effort during a 14-month process that culminated in the creation of a Situation Analysis report and this Destination Development Strategy.

The destination development planning approach was highly iterative, allowing multiple opportunities for stakeholder input and validation. The process followed a semi-structured strategic approach, created by Destination BC, which allowed for flexibility to ensure the unique considerations of each planning area are assessed and respected.

A volunteer working group contributed their expertise to reviewing and discussing the key findings from the Situation Analysis and helped develop the goals and supporting objectives contained in this strategy. See Appendix 1 for the full process outline.

FIGURE 2:
Five Dimensions of Supply — the Visitor Experience

1 SETTING, ACCESS + POLICIES >

2 INVESTMENT ENHANCEMENT >

3 EXPERIENCE + PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT >

4 VISITOR SERVICING >

5 CAPABILITIES, SKILLS + TRAINING >

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

ACTIVITY	DATES
Pre-project logistics and document review	MAR–JUN 2017
Interviews	JUN–AUG 2017
Community workshop #1 — Fairmont Hot Springs	APR 26, 2017
Follow up Survey and Tabulation of Responses	MAY–JUN 2017
Preparation of Situation Analysis	JUN–AUG, 2017
Community workshop #2 — Invermere	JUN 6, 2017
Follow up Survey and Tabulation of Responses	JUN–AUG, 2017
Review of Situation Analysis	SEP–NOV 2017
Formation of the Working Group	SEP 2017
Preparation of Working Group Workbook	SEP 2017
Working Group Meeting #1 — Invermere	SEP 18, 2017
Working Group Meeting #2 — Conference Call	SEP 28, 2017
Working Group Meeting #3 — Conference Call	OCT 16, 2017
Preparation of Draft Destination Development Strategy	OCT 2017–JUN 2018

E. KEY OUTPUTS

The three key outputs of this planning process are:

1. An asset inventory of accommodations, tourism businesses and attractions, tourism organizations, food and beverage establishments, parks and recreation sites, sports and arts facilities, meeting facilities, transportation, and visitor services.

2. A situation analysis report that provides foundational research related to the Columbia Valley, including access and infrastructure, key tourism assets, key markets, a destination assessment and priority Columbia Valley considerations, all of which were used to inform the development of the Destination Development Strategy.

3. This Destination Development Strategy.

3
ALIGNMENT

LAKE WINDERMERE
Photo: Zoya Lynch

The destination development strategy for the Columbia Valley is one of four that will be prepared for the Kootenay Rockies Tourism Region, and one of twenty for the province as a whole (Figure 4).

FIGURE 4:
Twenty Destination Development Planning Areas

Northeastern BC
Northwestern BC
Haida Gwaii
Chilcotin Central Coast
Sea-to-Sky Corridor
Sunshine Coast
North Island
South Central Island
Greater Victoria
Metro Vancouver
Fraser Valley

Gold Rush Trail
North Thompson & Nicola Valleys
West Kootenays & Revelstoke
Highway 1 Corridor
Columbia Valley
Highway 3 Corridor
Shuswap North Okanagan
Okanagan Valley
Interlakes

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The three other planning areas in the Kootenay Rockies Region are: West Kootenays & Revelstoke, the Highway 3 Corridor, and the Highway 1 Corridor from the Alberta border to Kamloops. Over the course of Destination BC's Destination Development Planning Program, each of the province's six tourism regions will integrate their planning area plans into a Regional Destination Development Strategy which, in turn, will be used to inform a Provincial Destination Development Strategy, together with all 20 planning areas strategies.

It is important to recognize that visitors do not make travel decisions based on artificial boundaries created by governments and organizations. As a result, planning areas span multiple jurisdictions thus reinforcing the importance of an integrated approach with a shared vision and prioritized investments.

The destination development strategies themselves will be influenced by, and where appropriate reflect and complement, other planning initiatives.

FIGURE 5: Levels of Destination Development Planning
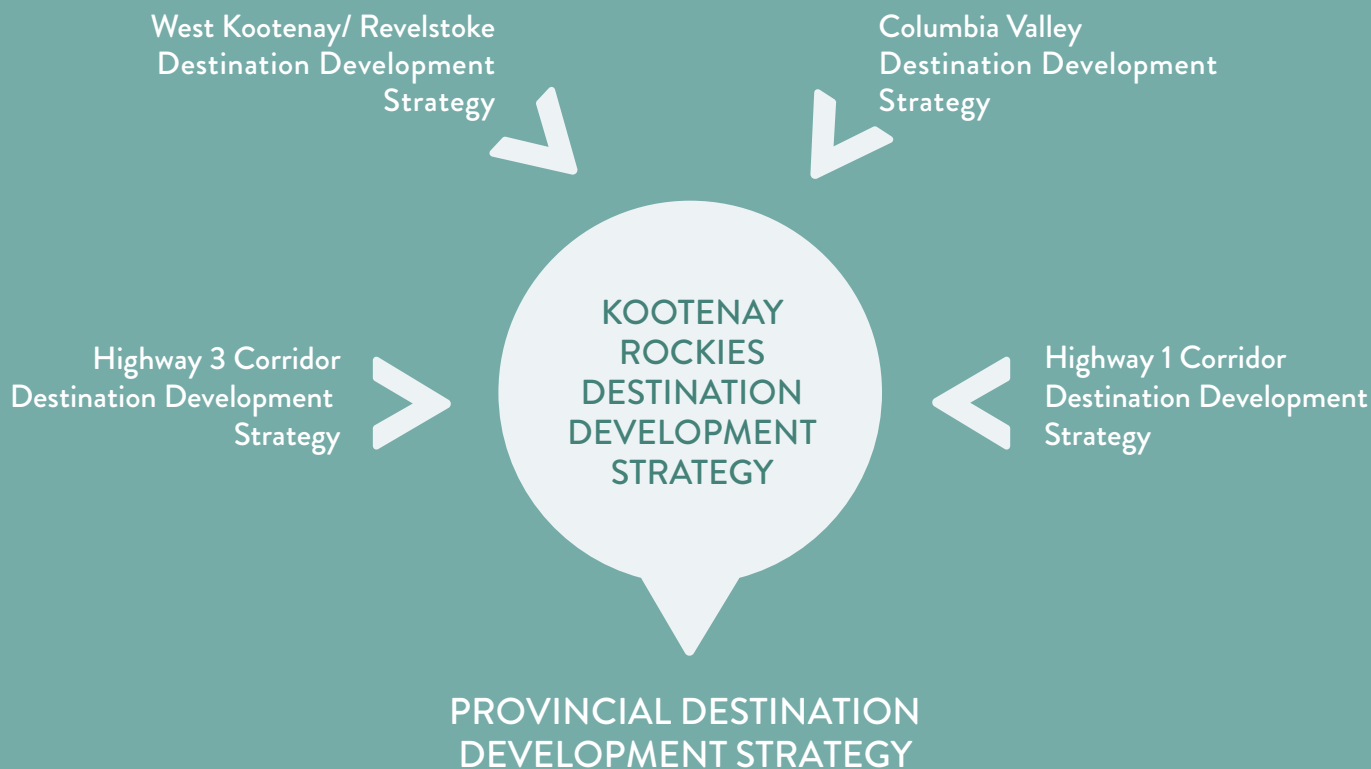
West Kootenay/ Revelstoke Destination Development Strategy

Columbia Valley Destination Development Strategy

Highway 3 Corridor Destination Development Strategy

KOOTENAY ROCKIES DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Highway 1 Corridor Destination Development Strategy

PROVINCIAL DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

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SUCCESS NETWORK

Success networks represent the clusters of businesses and organizations (private sector, government, and not-for-profit) who are encouraged to collaborate and work in harmony to bring the opportunity to fruition.

Successful destination development implementation recognizes that we all have a role to play. The recommendations contained within this strategy form the foundation for additional focused and aligned discussions regarding implementation locally, regionally, and provincially. Organizations identified within each tactical success network will be in a position to review, locally, regionally, and provincially, the potential for growing tourism by leading or supporting implementation and action. It does not imply the organizations have committed or endorsed the tactic. This strategy is intended to inform conversations that may lead to future investments and actions, or that will contribute to growing this planning area's and British Columbia's visitor economy.

It is important to note that the development opportunities are not mutually exclusive.

The complexity of the tourism opportunity is understood in the Columbia Valley. Stakeholders and tourism partners demonstrated a desire to work together throughout the community consultations, and a number of tourism partners have already articulated their desire to work cooperatively, as a unified Columbia Valley, on destination development initiatives. It is believed that only by working collaboratively that the true potential of the Columbia Valley can be realized.

Joint strategy ownership among all planning area tourism partners is a critical component of this program's success. The planning process identifies a suggested success network of tourism partners to champion and move actions within each objective forward. However, during implementation, leads and involved parties would need to be verified. In many instances, executing on an initiative may require sharing responsibilities and entities listed will be responsible to lead their own areas.

The following partners have been identified collectively through the strategy development process as likely playing a role in moving a potential objective or action forward.

FIGURE 6: Key Government and Management Organizations

FEDERAL	FIRST NATIONS	PROVINCIAL	REGIONAL	LOCAL
• Destination Canada	• Shuswap Indian Band	• Destination BC	• Kootenay Rockies Tourism	• Tourism Radium
• Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada	• ?akisq'nuk First Nation	• Indigenous Tourism BC	• Columbia Valley Economic Development	• Invermere/ Panorama DMO
• Western Economic Diversification		• Ministries and Agencies: -Tourism, Arts and Culture	• Imagine Kootenay	• District of Invermere
• Parks Canada		-Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation	• Columbia Basin Trust	• Village of Canal Flats
• Canadian Heritage		-Transportation and Infrastructure	• College of the Rockies	• Village of Radium Hot Springs
• Public Works and Government Services Canada		-Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, including Recreation Sites and Trails and Heritage	• Columbia Valley Chamber of Commerce	• Visitor Centres
		-Environment including BC Parks	• Columbia Valley Marketing Consortium	• Tourism Operators
		• Agriculture	• Columbia Valley Arts Council	• Arts Culture, and Heritage Organizations
			• Regional Trails Groups	• Clubs and Volunteer Groups
			• RD of East Kootenay — Areas F and G	• Residents
			• Canadian Rockies International Airport	
			• WildSight	

This strategy is intended to inform actions for the future, which over time may be embedded in the local, regional, and provincial decision making. This will result in an integrated system of priorities that will achieve better development decisions, drive greater tourism revenues, and realize benefits for businesses and communities in the Columbia Valley. All this will contribute to a thriving, vibrant, and growing economy.

The regional representatives in the Kootenay Rockies have important roles to play as regional destination development champions. As this planning process is not intended to duplicate ongoing efforts or create new organizational or administrative structures, the implementation of this strategy should first be executed through existing organizations, where possible.

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A DISTINCTIVE DESTINATION

FAIRMONT HOT SPRINGS RESORT
Photo: Zoya Lynch

A. OVERVIEW OF THE COLUMBIA VALLEY

GEOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA

The Columbia Valley lies between the Purcell Mountain Range to the west, and the Canadian Rockies to the east. It includes Columbia Lake, Lake Windermere, the Columbia Wetlands, the Columbia River, and Kootenay National Park. Geographically, the Columbia Valley extends some 102 kilometres from the community of Spillimacheen in the north, to Canal Flats in the south, and includes Areas F and G of the Regional District of East Kootenay.

The Columbia Valley is part of the Rocky Mountain Trench. Mountains rise steeply on either side of the Columbia Valley, restricting development to a relatively narrow ribbon along its length. The gradient of the Columbia River is gentle, resulting in the creation of extensive marshlands, intermingling channels, and shallow lakes. The wetlands provide important habitat for migratory waterfowl and are part of the Pacific Flyway. The Columbia Valley also provides wintering areas for big game species. The Upper Kootenay River Valley, draining the western Rocky Mountains to the east, is also located in this area. Important tributaries of the Kootenay River in this area are the Lussier and White Rivers.[1]

[1] Regional District of East Kootenay — Regional Profile www.rdek.ca Issue No. 7, November 2014

COLUMBIA VALLEY

- ● Towns and Indigenous Communities
- ─ Highways
- ▬ Lakes and Rivers
- ▬ Provincial Parks and Protected Areas

1. Mount Assiniboine Park
2. Bugaboo Park
3. Windemere Lake Park
4. Columbia Lake Park
5. Purcell Wilderness Conservancy Park
6. St. Mary's Alpine Park
7. Height Of The Rockies Park
8. Elk Lakes Park
9. Whiteswan Lake Park
10. Ram Creek Ecological Reserve
11. Premier Lake Park
12. Top Of The World Park

- ▬ National Parks

1. Kootenay National Park Of Canada

Spillimacheen

Radium Hot Springs
Invermere
Shuswap Band
Panorama Mountain Village
Windermere
Columbia Lake Indian Band (?Akisq'nuk First Nation)
Fairmont Hot Springs
Canal Flats

N

93
95

DESTINATION BRITISH COLUMBIA

0   25   50   Km

USA   YK   NW
                SK
        BC   AB
USA

The East Kootenay region has some of the richest diversity of wildlife in North America. Big game species include grizzly and black bear, elk, white-tailed and mule deer, caribou, cougar, moose, bighorn sheep, and mountain goat. The region contains key winter habitat and travel corridors for a number of species.

The abundance of streams and lakes in the East Kootenays support a vibrant sport fishery and serve as important spawning and rearing grounds for a range of species. The primary angling species are rainbow trout, bull trout, cutthroat trout, Rocky Mountain whitefish, and kokanee.

The planning area contains important grasslands that are unique ecosystems, provide winter range for ungulates, wildlife habitat, and contain endangered and distinct plant species. The grasslands provide habitat for a number of provincially red and blue listed animal and bird species.

The Columbia Wetlands were recognized under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in 2005 as a "Wetland of Significant Importance." The wetlands and Lake Windermere are part of the Pacific Flyway, which extends from Alaska to Mexico and South America, providing critical habitat for migratory birds. The wetlands and Lake Windermere also provide habitat for the great blue heron, staging areas for geese, ducks and other birds, and habitat for beavers and muskrats.

B. DESCRIPTION OF THE POPULATION BASE, COMMUNITIES AND FIRST NATIONS

The Columbia Valley is within the Ktunaxa Traditional Territory (ʔakisqʼnuk First Nation) and the Secwepemc (Shuswap) peoples. Federally designated Indian Reserve (IR) lands include Columbia Lake IR, and Shuswap IR.

The Columbia Valley includes the following municipalities and rural communities:

Area F: District of Invermere, Village of Canal Flats, Athalmer, Columbia Lake, Columere Park, Dutch Creek, Invermere Rural East Side Lake Windermere, Fairmont Hot Springs, Juniper Heights, Panorama, Rushmere, Toby Benches, Westside Road, Whiteswan, and Windermere

Area G: Village of Radium Hot Springs, Brisco, Dry Gulch, Edgewater, Horsethief Creek, Brownsville, Radium Hot Springs Rural areas, Spillimacheen, Spur Valley, and Wilmer

Beyond the planning area boundaries lies the community of Golden, 64 kilometres north of Spillimacheen along Highway 95. To the south, Cranbrook is located some 82 kilometres south of Canal Flats. Radium Hot Springs, between Spillimacheen and Canal Flats, is the gateway for travellers who have driven to the Columbia Valley through Kootenay

National Park via Banff, 134 kilometres to the north on Highway 93. The City of Calgary lies another 130 kilometres east of Banff.

There are several local and regional district governments with jurisdiction in the Columbia Valley including:

- Village of Radium Hot Springs (also a designated Resort Municipality receiving Resort Municipality Initiative funding)
- District of Invermere (also a designated Resort Municipality receiving Resort Municipality Initiative funding)
- Village of Canal Flats
- Regional District of East Kootenay — areas F and G including the communities noted above

In total, there are approximately 8,490 people residing in the Columbia Valley.[2] The Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute in its 2016 State of the Basin reports that the Basin-Boundary population has an aging demographic, which could result in an inability to maintain the current labour force with local replacement workers.

[2] www.cbrdi.ca/communities/columbia-valley

COMMUNITY	POPULATION 2016	POPULATION 2011	% CHANGE
Invermere	3,391	2,955	14.8
Radium Hot Springs	776	777	-0.1
Fairmont Hot Springs	460	476	-3.4
Canal Flats	668	715	-6.6
Regional District of East Kootenay (All areas)	60,439	56,685	6.6%

Source: www.e-know.ca/regions/east-kootenay/6-6-growth-rate-east-kootenay

A brief description of each larger community follows:[3]

CANAL FLATS

The Village of Canal Flats, incorporated in 2004, has a population of about 700. Until its recent closure, economic activity was led by the Tembec Inc. sawmill.

Canal Flats has a grocery store, campground and RV park, an inn, gas stations, pub, restaurants, an elementary school, and a community centre. It also boasts the Headwaters Trail leading to the headwaters of the mighty Columbia River.

There is a beach park with the only public access currently on Columbia Lake. The Kootenay River flows past Canal Flats and is readily accessible for recreational activities.

Canal Flats is a gateway to the backcountry, with several provincial and regional parks in the area. It has long been a stopping point for fishers, hunters, and campers. Recently, because of its location on the Columbia Lake, the community has seen increased real estate development. A condominium project is under way in the village, and land is being levelled on the east side of the lake for a new housing development.

[3]www.cvchamber.com

FAIRMONT HOT SPRINGS

Canada's largest outdoor mineral hot pool drew the first visitors to Fairmont Hot Springs more than 100 years ago, and they haven't stopped coming since. At the heart of the community is the 140-room Fairmont Hot Springs Lodge, offering a full range of services including fine dining and spa treatments. Since the lodge was founded in the early 1900s, other types of accommodation have sprung up in the low-lying valley just south of Lake Windermere. In recent years, the focus has shifted towards timeshare accommodation, with thousands of visitors spending part of their year here. There is also a choice of rental homes, mountain bungalows, motels, condominiums, camping or recreational vehicle parks.

Fairmont Hot Springs Resort offers several award-winning golf courses, including two 18-hole courses and two Par-3 courses. An all-season resort, it also offers a ski hill about four kilometres away with two lifts and a number of intermediate runs, guided horseback riding, mountain biking, white water rafting, all-terrain vehicle touring, snowmobiling, and fishing.

WINDERMERE

Windermere is a small community on the eastern shores of Lake Windermere and is primarily a community of second homes. There are also a number of local artisans selling their wares.

?AKISQ'NUK FIRST NATION

The ?akisq'nuk First Nation is a community of approximately 300, living on some of the most picturesque land in the Columbia Valley. Almost the entire distance between Windermere and Fairmont Hot Springs crosses the ?akisq'nuk First Nation reserve lands, which are only a small part of their traditional territory.

The ?akisq'nuk people are the single largest landholder in the Columbia Valley. Their spectacular land base stretches from the foot of the Rocky Mountains to the shores of Lake Windermere and the Columbia River. ?akisq'nuk First Nation is the site of many business and development opportunities, including water systems, commercial real estate development, residential subdivisions, billboard leasing, guide outfitter territory, a forest company, Columbia Lake Recreation Centre, and the Lakeshore Campground located on the shore of Lake Windermere.

INVERMERE

Invermere-on-the-Lake is a resort municipality of 3,400 permanent residents, situated on the northern shore of Lake Windermere, a short distance off Highway 95. This resort municipality has a charming, flower-lined main street with shops, pubs, and restaurants. Among many other businesses, there is a bakery and a delicatessen; two pharmacies, an artists' co-op, bicycle shops, a health food store, three banks, a furniture store, two antique stores, three large grocery chain outlets, a pioneer village museum, and a historic movie theatre.

There are two public beach areas — Kinsmen Beach near the downtown, and the James Chabot Provincial Park at the north end of the lake. The recently renovated Pynelogs Cultural Centre at Kinsmen Beach hosts arts events throughout the year by the Columbia Valley Arts Council. There are also many other festivals and events held throughout the year.

PANORAMA

Panorama is a 30-minute drive from Invermere on a scenic road that winds along the edge of the rugged Toby Creek Canyon. Panorama is first and foremost a ski resort, with 4,000 feet of vertical terrain offering a world-class resort experience with downhill skiing, snowboarding, and cross-country trails. Heli-skiing is also available. In an effort to build a four-season resort, the Greywolf Golf Course was added. This is an 18-hole championship course open from May to October. Mountain biking, hiking, jeep tours, white water rafting, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, tennis, and swimming are added attractions. Panorama also draws many second homeowners, owning a mix of condominiums, townhomes, and luxury homes.

RADIUM HOT SPRINGS

Radium Hot Springs is located just outside Kootenay National Park. The Village of Radium is a resort municipality driven by the visitor economy. A full range of services is offered here with hotels and motels, restaurants, shops, and world-class golf courses. A number of large real estate condominium projects are attracting second home owners. The area is famous for its hot springs, found within the boundaries of the Kootenay National Park, and for its population of mountain sheep, which can be found grazing on the steep hillsides.

EDGEWATER, BRISCO, AND SPILLIMACHEEN

The hamlet of Edgewater lies just nine kilometres north of Radium Hot Springs. The village offers Pip's Country Store, a gas station, post office, and the Royal Canadian Legion. There is also a thriving arts community that makes use of the Edgewater Community Hall.

North of Edgewater are Brisco and its neighbouring community Spillimacheen. Brisco and Spillimacheen run along a 25-kilometre stretch, nestled into the heart of the Columbia Valley, about half-way between Radium Hot Springs and Golden. Many residents consider this area to be the most beautiful part of the Columbia Valley, with snow-covered mountain peaks on both sides and sweeping green pastures below. The total population of the three communities is about 790. The economy is largely based on farming and ranching, but the area is also home to a number of artists and studios.

Spillimacheen is the base for the Columbia Wetlands Society. It's also home to the seasonal Spilli Bean Cafe, as well as some popular attractions including sport climbing on Spilli Rock and Beeland, an apiary located in the historic Spillimacheen Trading Post (est. 1912) specializing in alpine honey.

C. DESCRIPTION OF ECONOMY BASE — HISTORICAL AND CURRENT

The economy of the planning area is based primarily on the recreation and tourism industry. Forestry is the primary resource-based component of the economy. The planning area also supports a number of mining and agricultural operations.

Major employers in the Columbia Valley are government services (health, education, parks), forestry, and public utilities. The largest employer is Interior Health. The types of businesses operating in the Columbia Valley are:[4]

COMMUNITY	ECONOMIC ACTIVITY
Canal Flats	Mining (gypsum) — Tourism in development
Fairmont Hot Springs	Tourism — Tree Farming — Ranching
Panorama	Tourism
Windermere and Wilmer	Tourism — Recreation — Forestry — Mining (gypsum) — railroad
Edgewater	Farming — Sawmill (lumber and specialty wood products) — Tree Farming
Brisco	Forestry (poles and posts) — Ranching — Mining
Spillimacheen	Farming — Ranching
Radium Hot Springs	Tourism — Sawmill — Mining (magnesite)
Invermere	Tourism — Sawmill

- Mining provides employment to hundreds in the Columbia Valley.
- Timber-based labour industries continue to be a major source of employment income.
- Agriculture and ranching have declined considerably over the past decade, with remaining operations in the area trending toward the production of specialty items and niche markets.

- Tourism attracts recreational homeowners, seasonal residents, retirees, and recreation seekers. The growth in second homeowners has changed the traditional service industry, resulting in an increase in businesses such as property management, outdoor maintenance, and housekeeping, construction, and real estate companies.[5]

MONTH	RADIUM AND INVERMERE
July, 2016	$2,706,000
August, 2016	$2,749,000
September, 2016	$1,798,000
October, 2016	$566,000
November, 2016	$318,000
December, 2016	$1,171,000
January, 2017	$1,559,000
February, 2017	$1,462,000
March, 2017	$1,183,000
April, 2017	$872,000
May, 2017	$827,000
June, 2017	$1,334,000

D. OVERVIEW OF TOURISM PERFORMANCE

There are few indicators available to measure performance of the tourism industry in the planning area. The two Resort Municipality Initiative communities in the Columbia Valley report the following:

Invermere attracted tourism spending of $33 million in 2015 resulting in a gross domestic product (GDP) of almost $12 million directly in Invermere, $14 million in the region (including Invermere), and $25 million in the entire province. This spending supported 407 jobs and contributed more than $9 million in taxes to various levels of government.

Radium Hot Springs attracted tourism spending of over $38 million resulting in a GDP of over $13 million directly in

Radium Hot Springs, $15 million in the region, and $28 million in the entire province. This spending supported 452 jobs and contributed $10.7 million in taxes to various levels of government. Total tourism spending in Radium grew steadily from 2011–2015. Invermere's growth during this time period was moderated by the downturn of the Alberta economy.[6]

Room revenues by municipal jurisdiction reported by BC Stats[7] reveal summer and winter peaks in visitation, with significant opportunity to utilize capacity in both spring and fall. Stakeholders have identified the opportunity to grow both mid-week visitation and shoulder season visitation, as well as to encourage longer lengths of stay.

E. KEY VISITOR MARKETS

Using the Columbia Valley Community Tourism Foundations plan, the current activities of the Columbia Valley Marketing Consortium and information shared during the planning area's destination development process the following key markets were identified:

- Alberta residents, particularly from Calgary and the surrounding area
- BC residents
- Other Canada (excluding BC and Alberta)
- Europe/UK — summer touring market, and winter ski/snowboard
- Australian — winter ski/snowboard

In addition to the above markets that are drawn by the opportunity to tour, relax, unwind, and enjoy outdoor recreation as well as the many arts, culture, and heritage experiences in the Columbia Valley, there are also untapped opportunities to grow visitation through:

- The meetings and retreats sector, specifically during the off-season period, with a goal to attract small to medium corporate meetings and retreats and generate repeat leisure visitations from meeting participants.

- Sport tourism utilizing facilities located throughout the Columbia Valley for a range of summer and winter tournaments and sporting events

F. OVERVIEW OF TOURISM ASSETS, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITIONS

The Columbia Valley's natural assets are simply stunning — beautiful mountain backdrops, crystal clear lakes, wetlands of international importance, and several mineral hot springs.

This natural wealth is protected by national park designations (Kootenay National Park), provincial park designations (White Swan, Columbia Lake, Premier Lake, Windemere Lake, James Chabot, Bugaboo), and by the values of residents themselves who are passionate about their home.

While mining, forestry, and agriculture have long been important industries, the planning area also has a long history of tourism development. Radium Hot Springs became popular with travellers in the late 1800s, and in 1922 was included in the new Kootenay National Park. Over the years, the remarkable

natural assets of the Columbia Valley have been enhanced by private and public sector investments in the development of resorts, golf courses, ski hills, and other resident or visitor amenities. A planned network of trails supporting cycling and hiking activity is under construction. When completed, the trail network will link much of the Columbia Valley. Real estate development has often accompanied amenity development, and the area is a popular second home destination for affluent Albertans seeking the warmer and sunnier side of the Canadian Rockies.

Core demand generators that motivate travel today include:

- Golf courses and resorts — eight golf courses within a 35-minute drive of each other
- Kootenay National Park and Radium Hot Springs
- Lake Windermere and Invermere experiences — lake and wetland experiences
- Fairmont Hot Springs Resort
- Panorama Mountain Resort
- Backcountry lodges including CMH backcountry lodges (Bugaboos, Galena, and Bobbie Burns are the closest of 12 lodges), Talus Lodge, and Assiniboine Lodge
- Second homes

These core demand generators are enhanced by a growing depth and density of cultural experiences available in the Columbia Valley. Artists, artisans, culinary and agri-tourism offerings, history and heritage interpretation, and the development of signature festivals and events contribute to the experiential quality of peak season stays. These demand generators have the potential to grow in scope and scale to foster increased shoulder season visitation.

The unique selling proposition and key destination differentiators of Columbia Valley include:

1. Water in all its forms — warm lakes to swim in, rivers to float and raft upon, wetlands to view birds and wildlife, ice and snow for incredible winter experiences

2. The warm side of the Canadian Rockies and the doorway to Kootenay National Park offering access to nature and outdoor adventure

3. Deep powder snow accessible at ski resorts, and several world-renowned backcountry lodges

4. Density and quality of championship golf courses within 35 minute drive

5. Arts, culture, and heritage including festivals and events

6. A depth of artists and artisans hand crafting and sharing their works

7. An intriguing history and heritage that embraces cultural diversity

8. Festivals and events celebrating a range of interests all year long

9. A community sense of place that incorporates a commitment to healthy living manifested in fresh organic produce, locally sourced restaurant menus, a propensity to find joy in physical activity, and access to a diverse range of wellness services and hot springs

10. The ability to relax and unwind in whatever manner best suits the traveller

SPECIFIC PRODUCT EXPERIENCES

There are a number of specific product experiences that are, or have potential as, iconic products and experiences for growth:

- Radium Hot Springs, Fairmont Hot Springs, and Lussier Hot Springs
- Lake Windermere and lake based activities in all seasons
- Columbia Wetlands
- Panorama and Fairmont Resorts
- Hiking, Camping, and Backcountry Lodge experiences
- Mountain Biking
- Indigenous Cultural Tourism
- Art and Artisan Tours
- Agri-tourism and Field-to-table experiences
- Festivals and Events
- Sport Tourism
- Meetings and Conferences

ICONIC TODAY + POTENTIALLY ICONIC

WATER-BASED EXPERIENCES

Lake Activities

Hotsprings/Spas/Wellness

Paddling/Rafting

Wetlands/Bird Watching

Skating

Nordic

GOLF EXPERIENCES

Number and proximity
of Championship
Golf Courses

MOUNTAIN-BASED EXPERIENCES

Resort Skiing/Boarding

Cat/Heli-Skiing/Backcountry Lodges

Backcountry Touring

Mountaineering

Rock Climbing

ARTS/CULTURE/HERITAGE

Festivals/Events

Local Art, Artisans, Artists

Unique Shops/Restaurants

Farm-to-Table Culinary

Ktunaxa Cultural Experiences

Museums/Heritage Tours

TRAILS-BASED EXPERIENCES

Hiking

Mountain Biking

G. SUMMARY OF KEY STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

From a tourism destination perspective, the Columbia Valley benefits from a range of strengths. However, it is also facing a number of destination development challenges, some of which have the potential to impact the future growth and sustainability of the tourism sector. To build on these strengths and address these challenges, the planning area tourism stakeholders have identified a number of key opportunities. These opportunities are the foundation of that formed the foundation of the Columbia Valley Destination Development Strategy. These key strengths, challenges, and opportunities are summarized in Figure 7, in no particular order.

FIGURE 7: Key Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities

KEY STRENGTHS

- Stunning scenery
- Unique mountain, river, lake, and wetland ecosystems
- Proximity to Alberta
- Gateway to National and Provincial Parks
- High quality tourism infrastructure
- Growing depth of arts, culture, and heritage experiences
- Authentic mountain towns and passionate residents
- Sophisticated tourism stakeholders

KEY CHALLENGES

- Limited options for private vehicles to access the destination; limited transportation options for movement around the destination; traffic congestion in peak summer season
- Collaboration and communication across the planning area
- Recruitment and retention of sufficient numbers of skilled tourism staff; affordable staff housing and daycare
- Lack of cohesive wayfinding strategy (front, mid, and backcountry)
- Conflicts on the land and water base between tourism and other industries, and within tourism and public recreation vis-à-vis motorized and non-motorized areas of use
- Growth without compromising environmental health and integrity of the land and water
- Dependency on the summer season, with limited experiences and hours of operation outside of peak visitation times
- Local support for tourism, and residents and second homeowner attitudes towards each other, and visitors

KEY OPPORTUNITIES

- Encourage launch of additional visitor experiences that will motivate travel in non-peak seasons, and will support longer stays and higher yields throughout the year
- Improve quality and consistency of service delivery throughout the Columbia Valley
- Improve business climate and policy framework for tourism entrepreneurs
- Enhance access to, and within, the Columbia Valley so that the entire journey is remarkable (including enhanced air access through Cranbrook)
- Create year-round employment opportunities to retain staff and address the shortage of affordable housing and daycare
- Grow the tourism economy in a manner that enhances the communities of the Columbia Valley, preserving environmental integrity and health
- Continue to foster collaboration, education, and communication across the planning area
- Enhance tourism infrastructure in key locations (e.g., wi-fi, water access, interpretive signage, etc.)

H. EXPERIENCE POTENTIAL

Any destination, when considering its potential and future development, will consider the visitor perspective. Visitors engage in a variety of destination experiences, some of which are offered by the private sector, and some of which arise from the efforts of community groups, various levels of government, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). All of these experiences occur within the natural and cultural environment of the destination.

Encompassing this experience delivery and environmental context is the policy framework. There are numerous local, regional, provincial, and national policies and regulations which inform, support, limit, or otherwise impact the natural and cultural environment, and the ability of private sector and community groups to deliver experiences to the visitor.

Destination experience potential identifies the current, developing, and potential destination strengths for priority consideration in destination development, as well as the key

assets in the natural and cultural environment that offer points of leverage. As well, policy considerations critical to successful destination development in the planning area are identified.

In the Columbia Valley planning area, the experiences offered by private, government, NGO, and community sectors are categorized as follows:

	CURRENT STRENGTH Maintain Support Through Destination Development	DEVELOPING STRENGTH Initiate Support as Part of Destination Development	POTENTIAL STRENGTH Consider Support as Part of Destination Development
PRIVATE SECTOR DELIVERED	Hotsprings Resorts Ski Resorts Heli/Cat-Ski Operations Backcountry Lodges Golf Courses	Restaurants Retail Shops	Guided Tours Equipment Rental Farm/Agritourism Experiences Meetings/Conferences
GOVERNMENT/ NGO/ COMMUNITY DELIVERED	Lake/Wetland Access National Parks Provincial Parks	Trail Networks Festivals Museums Galleries Performances/Downtown Animation	Sport Tourism

The key assets offering significant leverage for destination development in the Columbia Valley are:

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT Assets to Leverage in Destination Development	CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT Assets to Leverage in Destination Development
Lakes/Rivers Hotsprings Mountains	Arts/Culture/Heritage Community Values

The key policy considerations for the planning area are:

Key LOCAL/REGIONAL Policy Considerations of Primary Relevance to the Columbia Valley Planning Area	Key PROVINCIAL AND FEDERAL Policy Considerations of Primary Relevance to the Columbia Valley Planning Area
Policies that support local/regional collaboration **Policies that address nightly rental/sharing economy and support affordable staff housing** **Policies that educate on the value of tourism and embed tourism values in local/regional planning**	**Ecosystem Integrity and Sustainability** **Land Use Planning** **Assessment/Access to Commercial Recreation Tenures** **Resource Road Maintenance/Access** **Labour Supply** **Highway Maintenance** **Highway Signage**

From a visitor's perspective there are a range of experiences offered today. These experiences are categorized by current strengths, potential strengths, and developing strengths. Developing strengths require significant support and investment. This categorization informs whether these experiences should be maintained, initiated, or considered over the 10-year timeframe of this strategy. Using this framework will allow the Columbia Valley to enhance its competitive advantage and destination distinctiveness.

Both the nature of experiences available to visitors, and the natural and cultural environment are influenced by policies at the local, regional, provincial, and federal levels. Policies identified by tourism stakeholders as having significant impact on destination success over the next 10 years have been indicated in bold.

FIGURE 8: Destination Assessment

LOCAL/REGIONAL   **POLICIES**   **PROVINCIAL/FEDERAL**

AFFORDABLE STAFF HOUSING

ZONING/BY-LAWS

NIGHTLY RENTAL

SIGNAGE

COLLABORATION

AIR ACCESS

HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

HIGHWAY SIGNAGE

CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Community Values
Community Aesthetics

Lakes
Wildlife/Birdlife
Rivers/Wetlands
Mountains

PRIVATE SECTOR EXPERIENCES

GOLF
CAT/HELI
SKI RESORTS
BACKCOUNTRY LODGES
HOTSPRINGS RESORTS

MEETINGS
RESTAURANTS
SHOPS

TOURS
EQUIPMENT RENTAL
GALLERIES
AGRI-TOURISM

VISITOR

KOOTENAY NATIONAL PARK
PROVINCIAL PARK

FESTIVALS
MUSEUMS
SPORT TOURISM
GALLERIES
PERFORMERS
TRAILS

INDIGENOUS CULTURE

GOVERNMENT/NGO EXPERIENCES

Community Infrastructure

Hot Springs
Backcountry
Scenic Vistas

UNDERSTAND VALUE TOURISM

BUSINESS APPROVALS/LICENSING

DOWNTOWN ANIMATION

LOCAL TAXATION

COMMERCIAL RECREATION TENURES

PROVINCIAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLANS

LAND USE PLANNING

FOREST STEWARDSHIP

AIR

RMI

LABOUR

ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT

RESOURCE ROADS

EXPERIENCES

CURRENT STRENGTH: Maintain Support as part of Destination development

POTENTIAL STRENGTH: Initiate Support as part of Destination development

DEVELOPING STRENGTH: Consider Support as part of Destination development

Leverage points in the Natural and Cultural Environment of the Columbia Valley

6

A DISTINCTIVE DIRECTION

STRATEGY DIRECTION

A. VISION

This 10-year vision story was created based on existing community plans and other planning frameworks, as well as the aspirations of destination tourism partners regarding what type of destination they would like the Columbia Valley to be in 10 years. The goals, strategies, and objectives within this strategy were prioritized to achieve the elements identified within this vision.

The Columbia Valley is known as a place to unwind and relax — a place of both quiet contemplation and rejuvenating discovery. Just as the waters of the Columbia emerge from the headwater to fill the region's lakes, rivers, and wetlands, so too do the passions of visitors emerge and begin to course through their veins. Travellers, thinking to discover adventure, discover themselves. The Columbia Valley is renowned as a place to fill your cup — to rejuvenate by soaking in the hot

springs, paddling the lakes and wetlands, working on your golf handicap, hiking in the backcountry, skiing untracked powder, or immersing yourself in local stories, arts, and culture.

A deep sense of connection arises between visitors and this place, making the Columbia Valley a cherished destination — first time visitors are already planning to return; returning travellers feel so connected to this place that they see the Columbia Valley not only as a vacation spot but as an extension of their own home — a place they love and a place they may eventually choose to live. The Columbia Valley appeals and draws high yield visitors for long lengths of stay from domestic and international markets in all seasons.

Tourism is understood and valued in the Columbia Valley, but its impacts are also carefully measured and managed to be sure that the foundation of the region's success — its natural beauty and healthy ecosystems — are protected. The local business climate supports growth and expansion that is in keeping with community values. The area's reputation for experiential excellence and service quality supported by its affordable housing, public transit, and daycare have made the Columbia Valley the most highly sought-after place to seek tourism employment in British Columbia.

Destination development in the Columbia Valley respects community values and enhances resident lifestyles providing opportunities for residents and visitors to connect, to share, and learn together. The words real and authentic aren't just adjectives in advertising copy; in the Columbia Valley they permeate every visitor experience and every resident is both an ambassador and a steward, offering visitors a warm and friendly welcome. Collaboration in the Columbia Valley is a mantra; and, other destinations come to study this best practice model that continues to deliver exceptional returns against defined and agreed objectives by uniting individuals, private sector businesses, and local governments.

B. GOALS

Four overarching destination development goals were identified to support the vision for the Columbia Valley:

1. Increase the number of shoulder season visitors — greater than 100% increase in October to April hotel revenues.

2. Increase average length of stay in the planning area in each season — annual occupancy numbers are within five percentage points of the BC average.

3. Increase the number of year-round tourism job opportunities.

4. Achieve top Net Promoter Score in the Province — Net Promoter Score increases by 20 percentage points vs. 2019 baseline.

In addition, the Destination BC Destination Development Program provides two common provincial goals that all 20 planning areas will support:

5. Lead Canada in growth of overnight visitor expenditures.

6. Secure the highest Net Promoter Score in North America.

C. GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

As the journey of destination development continues in the Columbia Valley, choices will have to be made and priorities set. The following guiding principles were developed by stakeholders to be used as touchstones for this decision-making:

Destination development in the Columbia Valley will be guided by the imperatives to:

· Enhance resident and visitor sense of connection to the Columbia Valley

· Protect the environment and maintain healthy ecosystem

· Appreciate and show respect for each other

· Keep it real and authentic

· Seek to innovate

· Seek to collaborate

DESTINATION BRITISH COLUMBIA®

D. MOTIVATING EXPERIENCES

What is the focus of attention for the next 10 years that will set the Columbia Valley apart as a competitive and sustainable destination? Differentiating a destination, and making it truly unique from other destinations, helps to improve its competitiveness.

Throughout the strategy development, discussions were guided by keeping Explorer Quotient Traveller Types in mind. The Columbia Valley is predominantly seeking Authentic Experiencers, Cultural Explorers, Free Spirits, Rejuvenators, No-Hassle Travellers, and Gentle Explorers from a range of markets led by Alberta and British Columbia, along with increased visitation from longer-haul international markets. These EQ travellers are interested in longer stays in which they can immerse themselves in the Columbia Valley and its experiences. A segment of these desired consumers for the Columbia Valley either travels without children, or has pre-school aged children, allowing them to travel at all times of year. All targeted travellers feel connected, or develop a connection, to the Columbia Valley and like full-time residents, are respectful and wish to retain the Columbia Valley's natural and cultural values.

Nine distinct motivating experiences were identified that elevate the core strengths of the destination and align to the demand generators deemed most relevant to desired visitors. A key focus of this strategy is to work together to ensure there is a critical mass of activities for each of the nine motivating experiences to motivate travel to Columbia Valley as a destination. The motivating experiences for the Columbia Valley are:

FIGURE 9: Motivating Experiences in the Columbia Valley

Golf
Arts/Culture/Heritage — Including Culinary
Meetings/Conferences

Lakes, Rivers, Wetlands
Hot Springs/ Spas/Wellness
Skiing/Boarding/Heli-ski/Cat-ski

Trails-based Experiences
Mountains/ Lodges/Parks
Sport Tourism

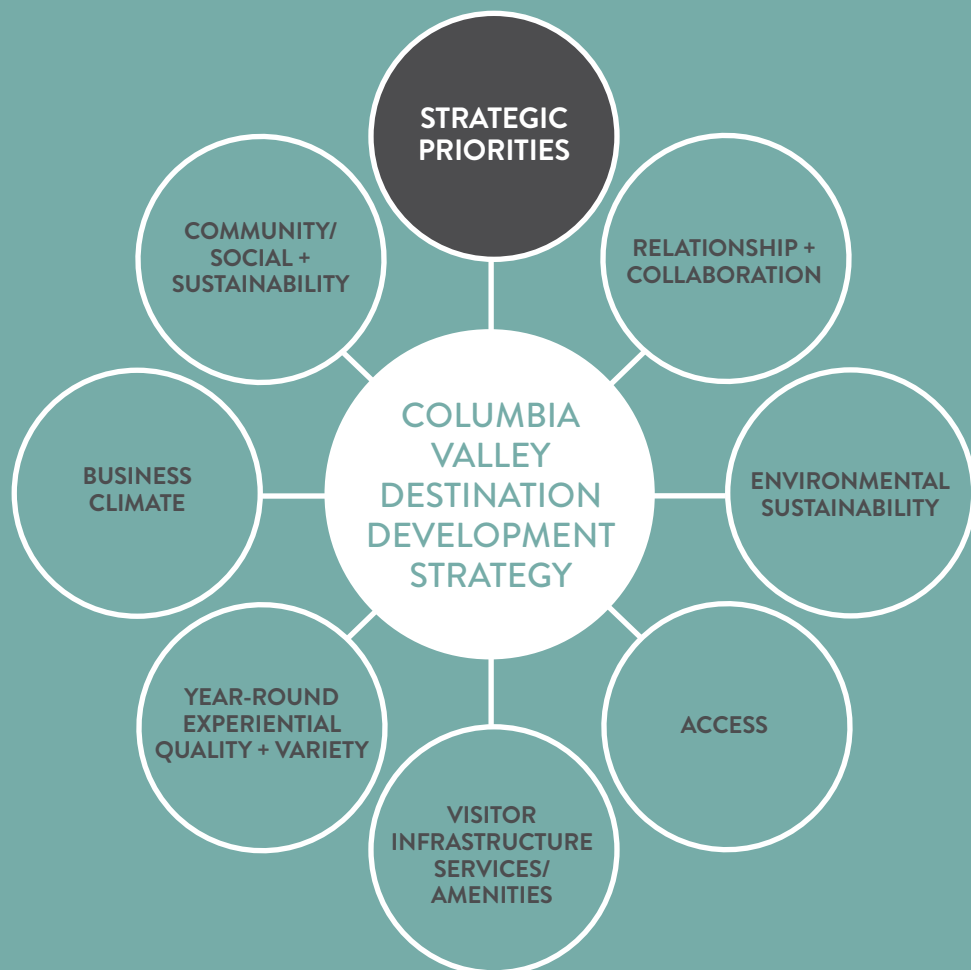## CONTEXT AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLUMBIA VALLEY'S MOTIVATING EXPERIENCES

Lakes, Rivers, and Wetlands based Experiences

Lake Windermere is well-known for its summer activities and is already a favourite destination for summer vacations; there is opportunity for further development of Columbia Lake based experiences. Rivers (Columbia and Kootenay as well as smaller tributaries) offer outstanding angling opportunities as well as rafting and float trips. The Columbia Wetlands are an internationally significant wetlands area with outstanding bird watching and wildlife viewing opportunities.

Snow based Experiences (Skiing, Boarding, and Heli-Skiing)

Resort skiing is offered at Panorama Mountain Resort, and at the smaller, family-friendly Fairmont Hot Springs ski hill. Backcountry lodge experiences are exceptional and offer access to backcountry powder as part of an all-inclusive multi-day package. Heli-ski day trips are also available.

Golf Experiences

The Columbia Valley offers an attractive density of championship golf courses within a 35-minute drive of each other that has long drawn passionate golf enthusiasts. There are also several more affordable, family friendly golf options.

Hot Springs, Spas, and Wellness

Radium Hot Springs, Fairmont Hot Springs Resort, and the rustic Lussier Hot Springs anchor a range of spa and wellness experiences throughout the Columbia Valley.

Mountains, Lodges, and Parks

With the Canadian Rockies to the east and the Purcells to the west, the Columbia Valley offers stunning mountain scenery, a warmer climate (the warm side of the Rockies), and access to protected wilderness in Kootenay National Park. Several provincial parks offer a wide range of camping, hiking, and mountaineering experiences. Several backcountry lodges also draw visitors in summer and winter for all-inclusive backcountry packages.

Trails-based Experiences

In addition to the trails offered in the national and provincial parks, there is a growing network of trails throughout the Columbia Valley for motorized and non-motorized use. There remain issues of conflicting use, and the legalization of trails crossing private land that must be addressed to achieve the full potential of these experiences.

Arts, Culture, and Heritage including Culinary, Festivals, and Events

The Columbia Valley offers visitors a range of existing and developing arts, culture, and heritage experiences, including culinary and agri-tourism, that, with strategic support, have the potential to anchor shoulder season visitation and create compelling reasons for longer lengths of stay.

Sport Tourism

Community infrastructure (e.g., arenas, fields, etc.) supports attraction of regional and provincial scale sporting events. With support these sporting events offer potential for additional shoulder season stays.

Meetings and Conferences

Several private and community facilities offer meeting and/or conference facilities with the potential to attract groups in the shoulder seasons.

E. DEVELOPMENT THEMES

As part of the planning area's destination development process, the development themes that will be the focus of attention for the next 10 years need to be identified. Destination development planning themes define the priorities that have surfaced from tourism partners through the planning process, to support the vision and goals as well as the motivating experiences. Seven destination development themes were identified to focus strategic efforts towards strengthening the Columbia Valley as a destination. Each theme has supporting objectives.

The seven themes are:

1. **ACCESS:** Secure reliable and timely access to and within the Columbia Valley

2. **BUSINESS CLIMATE:** Create an attractive business climate for new and expanding tourism businesses including a pool of year-round skilled staff, adequate affordable housing, locally delivered service training programs, and supportive communities and local governments

3. **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY:** Protect the natural environment and manage tourism impacts

4. **COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY:** Maintain and enhance community character and vibrancy

5. **VISITOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND AMENITIES:** Develop well-planned and well-located amenities and infrastructure to support quality travel experiences

6. **YEAR-ROUND EXPERIENTIAL QUALITY AND VARIETY:** Maintain current experiential strengths and support the introduction of additional year-round, memorable experiences

a. Lakes, rivers, and wetlands-based experiences

b. Snow based experiences (e.g., skiing, boarding, and heli-skiing)

c. Golf experiences

d. Hot Springs, Spa, and Wellness experiences

e. Mountains, Lodges, and Parks based experiences

f. Trails-based experiences (e.g., hiking, mountain biking, trail running, and mechanized in identified zones)

g. Arts, culture and heritage experiences (e.g., culinary and agritourism, festivals and events, and Indigenous cultural experiences)

h. Sport Tourism

i. Meetings and Conferences

7. **RELATIONSHIPS AND COLLABORATION:** Work together collaboratively and effectively for mutual gain

MOUNT ASSINIBOINE PROVINCIAL PARK
Photo: Kari Medig

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

COMMUNITY/ SOCIAL + SUSTAINABILITY

RELATIONSHIP + COLLABORATION

COLUMBIA VALLEY DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

BUSINESS CLIMATE

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

YEAR-ROUND EXPERIENTIAL QUALITY + VARIETY

ACCESS

VISITOR INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES/ AMENITIES

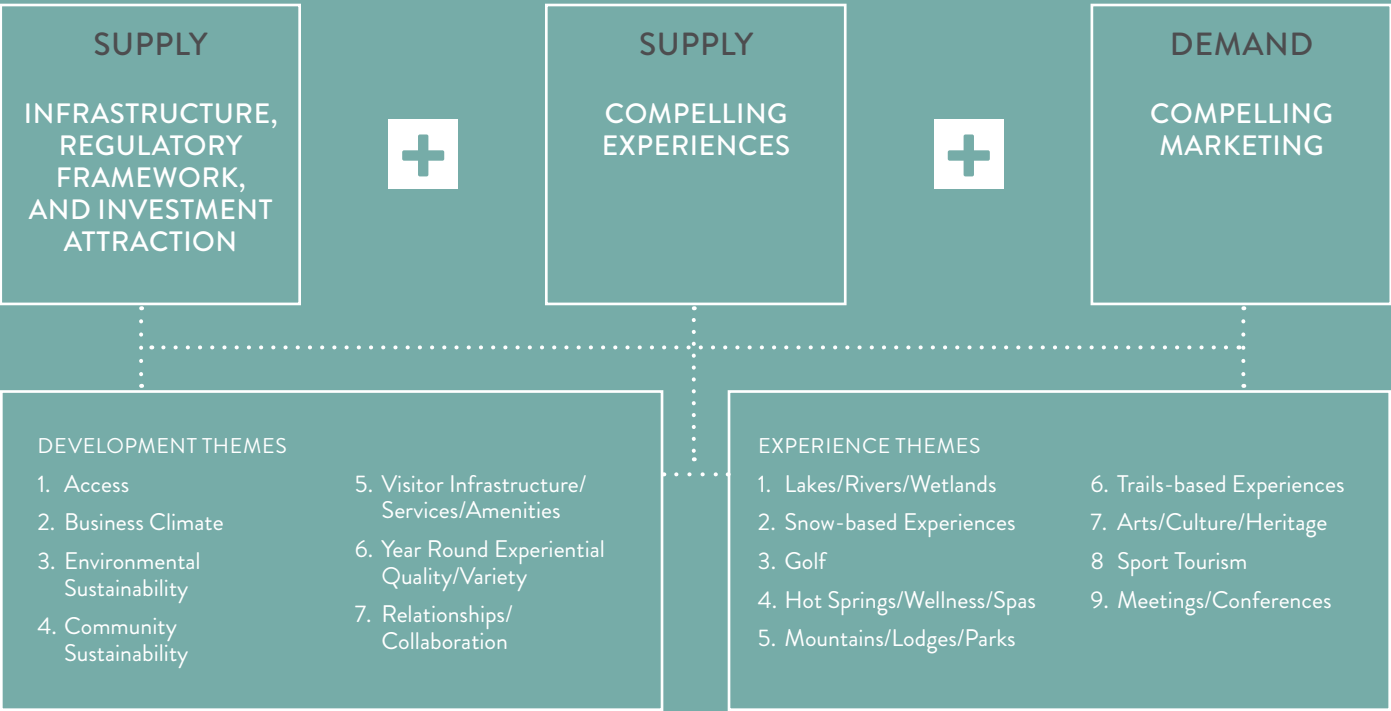|	
THEME 1: Access	Access to, and within, the Columbia Valley is primarily by private vehicle with limited options for those visitors that choose not to drive, or wish to leave their vehicle or RV parked. Some experiences are one-direction (e.g., river float), and would be enhanced with shuttles. Today, air access is primarily through Calgary, although there is potential for expanding service at the Canadian Rockies International Airport in Cranbrook. Traffic management strategies during peak summer travel also offer opportunities to improve destination quality.
THEME 2: Business Climate	To support an increase in the number and/or size of private enterprises offering motivating visitors experiences, opportunities to improve the Columbia Valley business climate have been identified including: • policy issues related to affordable staff housing • the ability to secure skilled labour • community understanding of the value of tourism and support for the industry A land and water management framework to provide clarity on appropriate types and levels of usage was also identified as essential.
THEME 3: Environmental Sustainability	The quality of the natural environment and its continued integrity is foundational to future destination success. Destination development must consider mitigating the impacts of tourism and the increasing use of the backcountry.
THEME 4: Community and Social Sustainability	Respect for community values, and the ability to develop the destination in a manner that also contributes to community health and vibrancy, are considered essential to destination success.
THEME 5: Visitor Infrastructure, Services, and Amenities	Additional visitor infrastructure, services, and amenities are needed both to improve the quality of the experience (e.g., connectivity, public washrooms, signage and wayfinding), and to ensure visitors are kept safe (e.g., search and rescue, emergency preparedness).
THEME 6: Year-Round Experiential Quality and Variety	Maintaining the Columbia Valley's current experiential strengths and supporting the development of emerging strengths, with a particular focus on shoulder seasons, offers an opportunity to attract both greater volumes of desired visitors (in off peak-times) and longer lengths of stay in all seasons.
THEME 7: Relationships and Collaboration	The visitor experience in the Columbia Valley transcends political and sector boundaries, and destination development will most effectively occur when there are strong relationships and active collaboration.

F. INTERACTION OF DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND MOTIVATING EXPERIENCES

For any destination development plan to achieve its goals, there must be coordinated interaction with the other components of the tourism development process. As mentioned in section 2.3, tourism has two primary revenue drivers – supply and demand. Destination development focuses on the supply side of tourism by providing the setting, access, policy framework, investment attraction, experiences and visitor service to attract new visitors and entice repeat visitation. Demand side marketing efforts strive to create urgency for people to want to visit. While this plan focuses on the supply side, it is important to connect the defined destination themes to the motivating experiences that lead to purchase decisions and result in visitation.

The interaction of supply, demand, development themes, and motivating experiences is cyclical. The process of developing supply drivers such as transportation, policy frameworks, and investment attraction supports the development of compelling experiences — the supply drivers of products and services. These experiences can then be marketed to potential visitors to generate demand. The marketing demand drivers lead to purchase decisions that result in visitation. Then, a new cycle of supply-side management and investment is set in motion to encourage competitiveness, sustainability, and tourism-driven benefits over the long term.

For the Columbia Valley, each of the seven development themes contributes to each of the motivating experiences determined for the Columbia Valley, although they will do so at different levels, based on the actual objectives recommended.

FIGURE 8:
Interaction of Development Themes and Motivating Experiences

SUPPLY		SUPPLY		DEMAND
INFRASTRUCTURE, REGULATORY FRAMEWORK, AND INVESTMENT ATTRACTION	**+**	COMPELLING EXPERIENCES	**+**	COMPELLING MARKETING

DEVELOPMENT THEMES

1. Access
2. Business Climate
3. Environmental Sustainability
4. Community Sustainability
5. Visitor Infrastructure/ Services/Amenities
6. Year Round Experiential Quality/Variety
7. Relationships/ Collaboration

EXPERIENCE THEMES

1. Lakes/Rivers/Wetlands
2. Snow-based Experiences
3. Golf
4. Hot Springs/Wellness/Spas
5. Mountains/Lodges/Parks
6. Trails-based Experiences
7. Arts/Culture/Heritage
8 Sport Tourism
9. Meetings/Conferences

STRATEGY AT A GLANCE

PANORAMA MOUNTAIN RESORT
Photo: Kari Medig

COLUMBIA VALLEY PLAN AT A GLANCE

VISION	The Columbia Valley is reknowned as a place to relax, unwind, "fill your cup". Tourism is understood and valued as an important contributor to the economy but impacts on the environment and on communities are carefully managed and measured. This experiential mix and thoughtful approach to tourism development has made the Columbia Valley the most highly desired place to seek tourism employment in the province.
GOALS	1. Increase the number of shoulder season visitors 2. Increase average length of stay in the planning area in each season 3. Increase the number of year-round tourism job opportunities 4. Achieve the top Net Promoter Score in the Province
DEVELOPMENT THEMES	1. Access 2. Business Climate 3. Environmental Sustainability 4. Community/Social Sustainability 5. Visitor Infrastructure/Services/Amenities 6. Quality & Variety of Year-round Experiences 7. Relationships/Collaboration
MOTIVATING EXPERIENCES	1. Lakes/Rivers/Wetlands 2. Snow-based Experiences 3. Golf 4. Hotsprings/Wellness/Spas 5. Mountains/Lodges/Parks 6. Trails-based Experiences 7. Arts/Culture/Heritage 8. Sport Tourism 9. Meetings/Conferences

DESTINATION BRITISH COLUMBIA®

8

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

HOODOOS NEAR FAIRMONT HOT SPRINGS
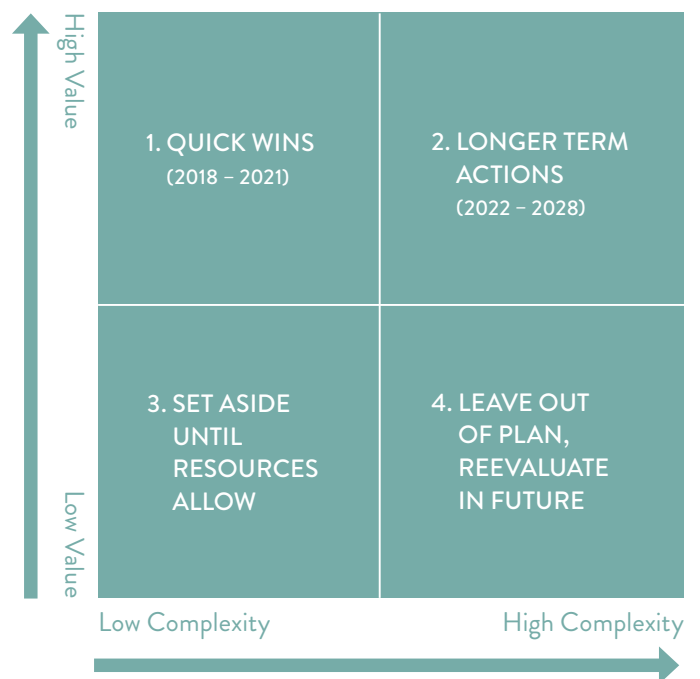Photo: Kari Medig

The Columbia Valley Destination Development working group utilized a framework to determine the prioritization of each objective and the relative timing for implementation:

1. QUICK WINS high value tactics with low complexity and can be achieved within 3 years (2018–2021).

2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS high value, high complexity that require 4 to 10 years to achieve the result (2022–2028) albeit activities can begin immediately to achieve the outcome.

3. SET ASIDE UNTIL RESOURCES ALLOW low complexity and low value, address when time and resources exist.

4. LEAVE OUT OF STRATEGY, RE-EVALUATE IN FUTURE high complexity and low value, not realistically achieved in the 10-year time frame of this strategy.

Presenting the destination development objectives within a consistent framework will allow the province to examine the various priorities across all planning areas and identify those which belong within a regional or provincial strategy. The success network is identified[8], and where the proposed objective has provincial or regional scope beyond this planning area, it is noted. This list does not represent all the opportunities that emerged during the planning process but rather those that emerged as a higher priority for tourism destination development. The full list of planning considerations that informed the prioritization can be found in Appendix 2.

[8]Organizations and partners listed under the success networks have been identified collectively through the strategy development process as likely playing a role in moving a potential objective or action forward. In no way is this meant to suggest any form of commitment or endorsement of the objective or action.

FIGURE 13: Priority Setting Framework

	Low Complexity	High Complexity
High Value	1. QUICK WINS (2018 – 2021)	2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS (2022 – 2028)
Low Value	3. SET ASIDE UNTIL RESOURCES ALLOW	4. LEAVE OUT OF PLAN, REEVALUATE IN FUTURE

THEME 1: ACCESS

Secure, Reliable, and Timely Access to and within the Columbia Valley

ACCESS GOAL STATEMENT

Access to the Columbia Valley is easy and enjoyable for all. There is reliable air access, appropriate seasonal road maintenance, a maintained network of resource roads, cycle friendly routes and an innovative network of transportation options connecting airports, communities, activities, attractions, and experiences.

ACCESS OBJECTIVES

- Increase domestic and international lift through Canadian Rockies International Airport (Cranbrook — YXC)
- Secure one or more viable shuttle operators connecting airports, communities and experiences and explore additional car rental options
- Ensure key resource roads that lead to exceptional and established recreation areas are open and maintained
- Ensure highway conditions are not a deterrent to visitation (by auto, RV, bicycle, motorcycle or other means of transport)

THEME 1: Objectives and Actions	Priority		
1. Increase lift through YXC.	**2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS**		
ACTIONS	**CATALYST**		
• Advocate for increased air access, affordable flights through YXC.			
SUCCESS NETWORK Panorama Mountain Resort, Fairmont Hot Springs Resort, Transport Canada, Airlines, City of Cranbrook, Tourism Stakeholders	**REGIONAL SCOPE**		
2. Secure shuttle operators/additional car rental options.	**2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS**		
ACTIONS			
• Review shuttle service viability and subsidy options for scheduled services, and/or improve public transit options for staff and visitor movement between gateway airports, communities, and experiences. Consider the capacity of existing tourism operators with shuttles and insurance in place, and the potential for a B-to-B platform for ride sharing. Review the pros and cons of ride sharing and of platforms such as Uber, and Kootenay RideShare.			
SUCCESS NETWORK Local government, Regional District, BC Transit, Tourism Stakeholders, Kootenay Ride Share, Economic Development — Columbia Valley			
ACTIONS			
• Share demand forecasts and other market research in order to attract additional car rental options.	**1. QUICK WINS**		
SUCCESS NETWORK Economic Development — Columbia Valley DMOs, Chambers of Commerce, Visitor Centres			

THEME 1: Objectives and Actions	Priority

3. Ensure key resource roads are open and maintained.

ACTIONS

- Work collaboratively as part of the ongoing Columbia Valley Recreation Access Management planning process to identify the network of resource roads considered essential for access to trail heads and recreation areas and negotiate long-term certainty and funding commitments to ensure they remain open and maintained.

SUCCESS NETWORK DMOs, Chambers of Commerce, Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNR), Ministry of Environment & Climate Change Strategy (ENV), Forest Tenure Holders Commercial Tenure Operators, Public Recreation Clubs, Trail Societies, Nature Conservancy Canada, Residents

2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS

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4. Ensure highway conditions are not a deterrent to visitation.

ACTIONS

- Introduce traffic management measures to manage the volume of traffic, delays, and speeding on highways and local roads.

SUCCESS NETWORK Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure (TRAN), Local Government, Regional District, Parks Canada, RCMP

1. QUICK WINS

ACTIONS

- Identify iconic road cycling routes, and present information on increasing road cycling usage and the associated tourism potential to TRAN, with the objective of securing safe shoulder widths and/or separate paved trails.

SUCCESS NETWORK Ministry of Tourism, Arts & Culture (TAC), TRAN, DMOs, Chambers of Commerce, Kootenay Rockies Tourism (KRT), Destination BC (DBC), Parks Canada, Tourism Operators

1. QUICK WINS

REGIONAL SCOPE

ACTIONS

- Work collaboratively with DriveBC to enhance content and highlight Mountain and Pacific time differences — if a road is closed offer a route that is open; ensure positive messaging.
- Work with Drive BC and Alberta to create central authority for communications and ensure positive and open for business facts are promoted through DriveBC and Alberta.

SUCCESS NETWORK TRAN, Visitor Centres, Parks Canada, DMOs, Chambers of Commerce, KRT, DBC

1. QUICK WINS

PROVINCIAL SCOPE

THEME 2: BUSINESS CLIMATE

Create an attractive business climate for new and expanding tourism businesses including a pool of year-round skilled staff, adequate affordable housing, locally delivered service training programs, and supportive communities and local governments

BUSINESS CLIMATE GOAL STATEMENT

The Columbia Valley offers an attractive business climate for private investors wishing to launch or expand tourism experiences that align with the planning area's vision and values and as a result, invested capital is growing and visitors have a wealth of year-round experiences to choose from.

BUSINESS CLIMATE OBJECTIVES

- Residents are supportive of the tourism industry and understand the value of tourism
- Tourism values are incorporated in local and regional planning processes; and, there are streamlined and clear local and provincial government processes and policies for approval of tourism business startups and expansions, and timely responses to inquiries throughout this process

- First Nations are respectfully and productively engaged in tourism development
- Staff and new entrepreneurs are housed locally and affordably
- Year round, a skilled pool of tourism labour (entry through to management positions) is seeking employment in the Columbia Valley
- Relevant and affordable staff training, and education programs are offered locally
- Business development support and the amount of capital available through organizations (Community Futures, Columbia Basin Trust, Canada Development Bank) to tourism entrepreneurs is growing

THEME 2: Objectives	Priority
5. Residents are supportive of tourism and understand value of the industry.	**1. QUICK WINS**
ACTIONS • Benchmark, communicate, and educate on the value of tourism in each community, and collectively in the Columbia Valley. **SUCCESS NETWORK** DMOs, Chambers of Commerce, Visitor Centres, Tourism Stakeholders, Local Government, KRT, DBC, BC Stats	
ACTIONS • Create opportunities for business owners and residents to experience local and regional visitor offerings (and become ambassadors themselves) including industry familiarization tours. **SUCCESS NETWORK** Chambers of Commerce, Tourism Operators	**1. QUICK WINS**

6. Tourism values are incorporated in local and regional planning processes.

ACTIONS

PROVINCIAL SCOPE

• Create a source of best policies and practices for consideration by local and regional governments wishing to create a supportive policy and regulatory framework for tourism.

SUCCESS NETWORK Local Government, TAC

ACTIONS

1. QUICK WINS

• Introduce Columbia Valley-wide business licenses.

SUCCESS NETWORK Economic Development — Columbia Valley, Local Government, Ministry of Jobs, Trade & Technology (JTT), Tourism Operators

ACTIONS

1. QUICK WINS

• Summarize various approaches being adopted around the province to the management and monitoring of nightly rentals being offered through platforms such as VRBO and Airbnb (possible UBCM presentation).

PROVINCIAL SCOPE

SUCCESS NETWORK Local Government, Tourism Industry Association of BC (TIABC), TAC, Ministry of Finance (FIN), Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing (MAH)

ACTIONS

1. QUICK WINS

• Advocate for local government policies and enforcement related to the sharing economy (e.g., Airbnb) to protect the inventory of longer-term rentals available for employees and new entrepreneurs, and to level the financial playing field with regard to MRDT collection.

SUCCESS NETWORK DMOs, Chambers of Commerce, Tourism Operators, Local Government

ACTIONS

1. QUICK WINS

• Support policy changes that create smaller, more affordable retail spaces for lessees (without increasing the property tax burden of landlords).

SUCCESS NETWORK Chambers of Commerce, DMOs, Local Government, Property Owners, Retail Lessees

7. First Nations are respectfully and productively engaged in tourism development.

1. QUICK WINS

ACTIONS

CATALYST

• Educate tourism operators (new and potential) on protocols for engaging with First Nations and operating on traditional territories.

SUCCESS NETWORK ʔakisqʼnuk Nation and Shuswap Indian Band, Indigenous Tourism Association of BC (ITBC), Local Government, Chambers of Commerce, Tourism Operators

8. Staff and new entrepreneurs are housed locally and affordably.

ACTIONS
- Develop a local/regional affordable housing strategy (learning from best practices and lessons learned of other communities) and secure resources to implement the initial phase of recommendations (including incentives for under-utilized housing to be directed into affordable staff housing).

SUCCESS NETWORK Local Governments, Tourism Operators, Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development — Columbia Valley

ACTIONS
- Work collaboratively to increase day-care and after school care capacity and affordability throughout the Columbia Valley, including flexible hours to match work schedules.

SUCCESS NETWORK Family Resource Centre, Ministry of Children & Family Development (CFD), Chambers of Commerce, Tourism Operators

9. Year-round skilled tourism labour pool seeking employment.

ACTIONS
- Create a cross-season/cross-business job pool to support year-round staff retention within communities.

SUCCESS NETWORK Chambers of Commerce, Tourism Operators, Economic Development — Columbia Valley, Work BC local office, go2HR, KRT, Educational Institutions and Colleges

ACTIONS
- Promote tourism career paths from entry-level to management, or entrepreneurship, featuring the lifestyle benefits.

SUCCESS NETWORK Economic Development, College of the Rockies and other educational institutions, Chambers of Commerce, Tourism Operators

ACTIONS
- Work closely with post-secondary institutions to ensure offered curriculums and industry needs align.

SUCCESS NETWORK Educational Institutions, Chambers of Commerce, Tourism Businesses, Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills & Training (AEST)

ACTIONS
- Work with provincial and federal governments to improve the Foreign Workers Program to supplement domestic tourism labour, and investigate other programs for labour attraction (e.g., Mobilité Francophone).

SUCCESS NETWORK go2HR, TIABC, Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development, Tourism Businesses, JTT, Federal Ministry of Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada, Department of Employment and Social Development Canada

Priority column labels:
- 2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS — PROVINCIAL SCOPE
- 2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS
- 1. QUICK WINS — CATALYST
- 1. QUICK WINS — REGIONAL SCOPE
- 1. QUICK WINS
- 2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS

THEME 2: Objectives and Actions	Priority

10. Relevant and affordable staff training programs offered locally.

1. QUICK WINS

ACTIONS

- Build awareness of training grants (e.g., Canada BC Job grant). Identify and communicate training opportunities that are relevant, affordable, and can be delivered on the business premises and promote them to owners and staff (e.g., three-hour modules), including a regional train the trainer program to support reach and affordability of training.

SUCCESS NETWORK Educational institutions, Chamber, Tourism Operators, DBC Remarkable Experiences, KRT, JTT

ACTIONS

- Cross-educate Visitor Centre and front-line staff (e.g., familiarization tours, experience showcase, etc.).

1. QUICK WINS

SUCCESS NETWORK Visitor Centres, Tourism Operators

ACTIONS

- Design and launch secret shopper programs to provide constructive feedback on service quality.

3. SET ASIDE UNTIL RESOURCES ALLOW

SUCCESS NETWORK DMO, Chambers of Commerce, Tourism Operators

11. Business development support and capital available is growing.

1. QUICK WINS

ACTIONS

- Improve communications regarding, and continue to promote, existing business support programs and capital available through Community Futures, and Imagine Kootenay for investment attraction, business mentoring, matching, and research to support business development and investment attraction.

SUCCESS NETWORK Economic Development — Columbia Valley, Community Futures, Imagine Kootenay, Chambers of Commerce, Small Business BC

ACTIONS

- Investigate possible pooled liability insurance programs for land-based and water-based activity operators and other tourism experience providers. Identify sector organizations who have, or are working on, pooled programs (e.g., Paddle Canada, Backcountry Lodges, Commercial Snowmobile, etc.).

2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS

PROVINCIAL SCOPE

SUCCESS NETWORK Tourism Operators, Provincial Sector Associations, TIABC

THEME 3: ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY:

Protect the natural environment and manage tourism impacts

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY GOAL STATEMENT

The Columbia Valley measures and manages the impacts of tourism to ensure long-term and the sustainable use of all ecosystems.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES

- A recreational land and water management plan is in place, recognizing thresholds, identifying zones of use, and protecting sensitive areas such as the Wetlands, fragile alpine environments, etc.

- Sufficient measurement, monitoring, and enforcement resources are in place

- Decreasing trend in user conflicts and in wildlife conflicts

- Invasive species are prevented, and mitigation strategies are in place

THEME 3: Objectives and Actions	Priority
12. Recreational land and water management plan is in place.	2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS
ACTIONS	CATALYST
• Work collaboratively with the province and ministries to develop a process, a land and water management framework (front, mid, and backcountry), and shared stewardship and enforcement model (including lakes and rivers) to provide reasonable certainty for tourism development, environmental protection, motorized and non-motorized use, public and commercial recreation uses, and viewscapes.	PROVINCIAL SCOPE
SUCCESS NETWORK First Nations, ENV, FLNR, TAC, Not-for-Profit Community Groups, Trail Societies, Tourism Operators, Chambers of Commerce, DMOs, Local Government, Public Recreationalists, Residents, RCMP, Columbia Basin Trust	
ACTIONS	1. QUICK WINS
• Participate in the Columbia Valley Recreation Access Management Planning (CVRAMP) process.	
SUCCESS NETWORK First Nations, ENV, FLNR, TAC, Not-for-Profit Community Groups, Trail Societies, Tourism Operators, Chambers of Commerce, DMOs, Local Government, Public Recreationalists, Residents	
ACTIONS	2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS
• Participate in the Columbia Wetlands Management Plan update.	
SUCCESS NETWORK Local Stewardship Groups, DMOs, Chambers of Commerce, First Nations, Local Government, Tourism Operators, Community Groups, Public Recreationalists, Residents	PROVINCIAL SCOPE

13. Measurement, monitoring, and enforcement resources are sufficient.

	2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS

ACTIONS

- Identify sustainable funding for resources dedicated to the enforcement of agreements under the shared stewardship model of land and water management framework.

PROVINCIAL SCOPE

SUCCESS NETWORK First Nations, ENV, FLNR, Not-for-Profit Community Groups, Trail Societies, Tourism Operators, Chambers of Commerce, DMOs, Local Governments, Public Recreationalists, Columbia Basin Trust, RCMP, Natural Resource Officer, Community Groups

ACTIONS

- Enforce boating regulations currently in place for the Columbia Wetlands.

1. QUICK WINS

SUCCESS NETWORK Local Stewardship Groups, RCMP, Tourism Operators, Community Groups, Public Recreationalists, Residents

ACTIONS

- Work with Parks Canada, ENV, and local stewardship groups to agree on measures and collect data on the impacts of tourism on ecosystem health. With this leading to recommendations for mitigation and management that are included in formal plans (e.g., mitigation of tourism impacts on Wetlands included in update to Wetlands Management Plan).

1. QUICK WINS

CATALYST

SUCCESS NETWORK First Nations, Parks Canada, ENV, Stewardship Groups, Tourism Operators, Chambers of Commerce, Local Government

PROVINCIAL SCOPE

14. Reduced user and wildlife conflicts.

1. QUICK WINS

ACTIONS

- Create and communicate a code of respectful conduct and shared story (including invasive species education) for front, mid, and backcountry to educate both residents and visitors (public recreationalists and distributed to guests via operators).

PROVINCIAL SCOPE

SUCCESS NETWORK Tourism Operators, Local Stewardship Groups, BC Parks, Parks Canada, Local Governments, Recreation Sites and Trails, First Nations, Visitor Centres, Local Schools

ACTIONS

- Conduct legal trail building, where appropriate, and associated trail maintenance to the highest standards and best practices relative to environmental impacts; support local trail societies, and secure enforcement resources to prevent rogue trail building.

1. QUICK WINS

PROVINCIAL SCOPE

SUCCESS NETWORK Trail Societies, Local Government, FLNR, ENV, Recreation Sites and Trails, Parks Canada

15. Have invasive species prevention and mitigation strategies in place.

1. QUICK WINS

ACTIONS

- Continue invasive species education; BC check stations for invasive species (mussels) in key locations; work collaboratively with ENV to provide check stop verification documents.

PROVINCIAL SCOPE

SUCCESS NETWORK Lake Windermere Ambassadors, Columbia Lake Stewardship Society Local Government, BC InterMinistry Invasive Species Working Group

THEME 4: COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Maintain and enhance community character and vibrancy

COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY GOAL STATEMENT

The Columbia Valley offers vibrant gathering spaces where community character and values are maintained and celebrated

COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES

- Animation and beautification programs are supported throughout the Columbia Valley
- Low commercial vacancy rates and low turnover in core retail areas
- Community values with respect to tourism have been documented in community and marketing plans
- Strong volunteer base to support experience delivery

THEME 4: Objectives and Actions	Priority
16. Animation and beautification programs are supported.	**1. QUICK WINS**
ACTIONS	
• Continue to beautify and invest in the vibrancy and animation of public corridors and gathering spaces, including the route from Highway 93 intersection into Invermere (Athalmer).	
SUCCESS NETWORK Local government, First Nations, TOTA, TRAN, BC Transit, Cycle outfitters, Business community	
ACTIONS	**1. QUICK WINS**
• Create shared-cost plan with landlords to enhance building spaces and facades; support revitalization tax incentives or consider creating BIAs; eliminate $150 permit fee charged to paint the outside of buildings.	
SUCCESS NETWORK Local Government, Business and Property Owners, TRAN, Economic Development	
ACTIONS	**1. QUICK WINS**
• Continue to invest in the animation of communities to encourage longer lengths of stay, and to enhance the overall visitor experience.	
SUCCESS NETWORK Local Government, Chambers of Commerce, Business and Property Owners, Artists	**CATALYST**
ACTIONS	**1. QUICK WINS**
• Expand the role of coordinator to be the Columbia Valley-wide events and animation coordinator.	
SUCCESS NETWORK Local Government, Chambers of Commerce, Business and Property Owners, Artists	

THEME 4: Objectives and Actions	Priority

ACTIONS

- Work collaboratively with the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture to continue RMI funding, and review the funding formula to support resort communities (i.e., Radium, Invermere) ability to deliver visitor services and amenities despite their small resident and property tax base.

SUCCESS NETWORK Local Government, Chambers of Commerce, DMOs, TAC, FIN

1. QUICK WINS

ACTIONS

- Investigate other funding tools for local governments to help pay for visitor-induced strain on infrastructure (e.g., Gas Tax, continue Rural Dividend).

SUCCESS NETWORK Local Government, Chambers of Commerce, DMOs, Tourism Stakeholders

3. SET ASIDE UNTIL RESOURCES ALLOW

17. Low commercial vacancy rates and low turnover in core retail areas.

1. QUICK WINS

ACTIONS

- Support policy revisions that would relieve the onerous burden of insurance placed on artists and buskers.

SUCCESS NETWORK Local Government, Chambers of Commerce, Business and Property Owners, Artists

ACTIONS

- Support the creation of smaller retail spaces and encourage taxation policy revisions to ensure such spaces do not attract undue property tax increases.

SUCCESS NETWORK Local Government, Chambers of Commerce, Business and Property Owners, Artists

1. QUICK WINS

18. Strong volunteer base to support experience delivery.

1. QUICK WINS

ACTIONS

- Support and promote the new volunteer website currently under development, which aims to match interested parties with volunteer opportunities.

SUCCESS NETWORK Columbia Valley Community Foundation, Chambers of Commerce, DMOs, Local government, Event Organizers, Tourism Stakeholders

ACTIONS

- Investigate and improve volunteer recognition and incentive programs (e.g., Alberta government funds based upon reported volunteer hours logged); expand tangible experiential benefits to volunteers (e.g., lift tickets, event tickets, free coffee, etc.).

SUCCESS NETWORK Columbia Valley Community Foundation, Chambers of Commerce, DMOs, Local government, Event Organizers, Tourism Stakeholders

1. QUICK WINS

THEME 5: VISITOR INFRASTRUCTURE, SERVICES, AND AMENITIES

Develop well planned and well-located amenities and infrastructure to support quality travel experiences

VISITOR INFRASTRUCTURE, SERVICES, AND AMENITIES GOAL STATEMENT

The Columbia Valley is a destination that offers visitors well-planned and well-located amenities and infrastructure to support the quality of their travel experience while managing impacts on local residents (financially and experientially)

INFRASTRUCTURE OBJECTIVES

- Investments made by public and private sector are coordinated and optimized including but not limited to:

  i. River and lake access points; boat launches

  ii. Public washrooms, boat pump-outs, RV sani-dumps

  iii. Parking — downtown cores and high use recreational trails and/or areas

  iv. Information, interpretive signage, and kiosks

  v. Campgrounds and campsites

  vi. Sports facilities

  vii. Meetings and/or conference facilities

  viii. Weather protected outdoor performance venues

- Search and rescue and emergency preparedness services are appropriately funded to meet demand

- Core visitor attractions are well-maintained and accessible

- Highway signage is located where it is needed, all directional signage is consistently designed and aesthetically pleasing, and there is consistency and accuracy throughout various media (Apps, Maps, and Signage)

- High speed internet and/or wi-fi is available or not available strategically throughout the area

THEME 5: Objectives and Actions	Priority
18. Investments made by public and private sector are coordinated and optimized.	**1. QUICK WINS**
ACTIONS • Engage with provincial ministries (FLNR, ENV, and TRAN) as well as national parks to create a master planning area map of high use areas and high sensitivity areas (land and water) to be used to inform plans for infrastructure in these areas (e.g., rest stops, lookouts, washrooms, parking, signage, boat launches, marinas, shelters, wi-fi, etc.). **SUCCESS NETWORK** Local Government, Chambers of Commerce, DMOs, Tourism Stakeholders Stewardship Groups, Trail Groups, Residents	**CATALYST**
ACTIONS • Communicate existing and target visitor markets and their needs and/or expectations to all those planning infrastructure investments. **SUCCESS NETWORK** DMOs, Chambers of Commerce, Local Government, Parks Canada, TRAN, FLNR, BC Parks	**1. QUICK WINS**
ACTIONS • Work collaboratively with private and public stakeholders (FLNR, ENV, TRAN, national parks, local and regional governments) to secure and direct resources toward implementation of high priority infrastructure as per agreed map. **SUCCESS NETWORK** Local and Regional Governments, Chambers of Commerce, DMOs, Tourism Stakeholders, Stewardship Groups, Trail Groups, Residents, FLNR, ENV, TRAN	**2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS**

	Priority
ACTIONS • Work collaboratively with private and public stakeholders (such as RCMP, ENV Conservation Officers, FLNR Natural Resource Officers) to educate and ensure adequate law enforcement on lakes, rivers, and in the backcountry (e.g., liquor, speeding, fire bans, etc.). **SUCCESS NETWORK** Local Government, RCMP, Community Groups, Chambers of Commerce, DMOs, Residents and Neighbourhood Watch Groups, Conservation Officers, FLNR Natural Resource Officers	**1. QUICK WINS**
ACTIONS • Continue to expand high season camping capacity in strategic locations (Parks Canada, Rec Sites, potential new municipally-owned campgrounds). Review seasonal opening and closing and include consideration of suitable infrastructure for first time campers and/or those without own equipment (e.g., O'Tentik concept). Review reserve and drop-in ratios and policies at park sites to ensure sites are being utilized. **SUCCESS NETWORK** Parks Canada, BC Parks, Rec Sites and Trails, Private Sector, Local Government	**1. QUICK WINS**
ACTIONS • Review the inventory of sport tourism infrastructure against desired events to identify gaps and conduct feasibility assessment for further investment in facilities. **SUCCESS NETWORK** Local Government, Local Sport Clubs, Panorama Mountain Resort, Fairmont Hot Springs Resort, Chambers of Commerce, DMOs, TAC	**3. SET ASIDE UNTIL RESOURCES ALLOW**
ACTIONS • Review the inventory of meetings, conference, exhibition, and banquet space against market potential, and conduct feasibility assessments for further investment in facilities. **SUCCESS NETWORK** Hotel Properties, Panorama Mountain Resort, Fairmont Hot Springs Resort, Chambers of Commerce, DMOs	**3. SET ASIDE UNTIL RESOURCES ALLOW**
ACTIONS • Assess the need for, and conduct feasibility assessments of, a weather-protected performance venue. **SUCCESS NETWORK** Local Government, Local NGOs, DMOs, Chambers of Commerce, Panorama Mountain Resort/ Tourism Stakeholders, FLNR, Economic Development	**2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS**
19. Search and rescue and emergency preparedness services are appropriately funded to meet demand.	**1. QUICK WINS**
ACTIONS • Review the adequacy of search and rescue (SAR) and emergency preparedness services and equipment, as well as the appropriateness of emergency response services, and communicate emergency plans effectively. **SUCCESS NETWORK** Local Government, SAR Groups, Emergency Response (Fire, RCMP, Paramedics)	
ACTIONS • Explore sustainable funding models (user fees, etc.) to support search and rescue and improve relationships between the tourism industry and search and rescue organizations. **SUCCESS NETWORK** Local Government, SAR Groups, DMOs, Chambers of Commerce	**2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS** **PROVINCIAL SCOPE**
ACTIONS • Educate and communicate to visitors re: backcountry safety and respect for the environment — include in backcountry code of conduct (e.g., Adventure SMART). **SUCCESS NETWORK** SAR Groups, Stewardship Groups, DMOs, Tourism Stakeholders (Activity Operators)	**1. QUICK WINS** **PROVINCIAL SCOPE**

THEME 5: Objectives and Actions	Priority

20. Core visitor attractions are well-maintained and accessible.

2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS

ACTIONS

- Conduct feasibility studies of, and continue to make investments in, heritage building maintenance and refurbishment.

SUCCESS NETWORK Local NGOs, Local Government, Heritage BC, Federal Heritage, Parks Canada

21. Signage and Information design, consistency, and accuracy.

2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS

PROVINCIAL SCOPE

ACTIONS

- Inventory current wayfinding and interpretive signage with a view to improving accuracy, consistency, and integration of media (Apps, Maps, and Signage) in front, mid, and backcountry; include use of Parks Canada expertise ratings, on and off the water.

SUCCESS NETWORK DMOs, Chambers of Commerce, KRT, Local government, First Nations, ITBC, TRAN, FLNR, BC Parks, Parks Canada, Tourism Stakeholders

22. High speed internet and/or wi-fi is available and not available strategically throughout the planning area.

2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS

ACTIONS

- Work collaboratively to define core areas where connectivity is essential supplemented by select hotspots and pursue necessary public and private investments to activate.

SUCCESS NETWORK Local Government, DMOs, Chambers of Commerce, Tourism Stakeholders, Trail Societies and Community Groups

THEME 6: QUALITY AND VARIETY OF YEAR-ROUND EXPERIENCES

Maintain current experiential strengths and support the introduction of additional year-round, memorable experiences

VISITOR EXPERIENCE GOAL STATEMENT

The Columbia Valley is a preferred travel destination that offers visitors remarkable experiences and opportunities to relax and unwind in whatever manner best suits them.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE OBJECTIVES

- Golf, snow sports, and mountains, lodges, and parks remain key travel motivators
- There is improved water-based access and a growing inventory of experiences offering a range of day, multi-day, guided, and self-guided excursions
- There is strong market awareness of, and intention to travel for, health and wellness in its most comprehensive form, including hot springs, spa, backcountry immersion, and full disconnection to reconnect
- There is a network of inter-connected, legalized trails throughout the Columbia Valley

- Art, culture, and heritage experiences are travel motivators in the shoulder seasons
- Four to six signature multi-weekend festivals and events (three of which are Columbia Valley-wide) that motivate travel, and are coordinated and scheduled throughout the year
- There is a growing number of memorable culinary experiences and successful agriculture and agri-tourism operators
- There is a growing number of market-ready authentic Indigenous experiences
- Sport tourism visitation is growing in shoulder seasons
- Meetings and conference travel is growing in shoulder seasons
- There is a strong value perception by target markets
- There is a growing number of tourism businesses open and viable year round

THEME 6: Objectives and Actions	Priority
23. Golf, snow sports, and mountains, lodges, and parks remain key travel motivators.	**1. QUICK WINS**
ACTIONS • Identify the inventory of current snow-based experiences (ski, snowboard, snowshoe, fat tire, Nordic) and promote business for additional value-added experiences. **SUCCESS NETWORK** Economic Development, DMOs, Chamber, Panorama Mountain Resort, Tourism Stakeholders	
ACTIONS • Facilitate and advocate for the introduction of additional value-based offerings into the mix of golf experiences; and offer experiences that appeal to Millennials. **SUCCESS NETWORK** Columbia Valley Golf Trail Association, DMOs, Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development, Tourism Stakeholders	**1. QUICK WINS**
ACTIONS • Identify the inventory of current offerings of mountain, lodge, and park-based experiences; map and promote opportunities for additional experiences. **SUCCESS NETWORK** Economic Development, DMOs, Chambers of Commerce	**1. QUICK WINS**

THEME 6: Objectives and Actions	Priority

24. There is improved water-based access and growing inventory experiences offering a range of day, multi-day, guided, and self-guided excursions.

1. QUICK WINS

ACTIONS

- Identify the inventory of current offerings of lakes, rivers, and wetlands experiences; map and promote business opportunities for gear rental, guided tours, and links to other commercial anchors, particularly during shoulder seasons.

SUCCESS NETWORK Economic Development, DMOs, Chambers of Commerce, Local Government

25. There is strong market awareness and intention to travel for health and wellness in its most comprehensive form including hot springs, spa, backcountry immersion and full disconnection in order to reconnect.

1. QUICK WINS

ACTIONS

- Identify the inventory of current offerings of hot springs, spa, and wellness experiences; map and promote business opportunities including hot springs, spas, backcountry immersion, and zen sports, etc.

SUCCESS NETWORK Economic Development, DMOs, Chambers of Commerce

26. There is a network of inter-connected, legalized trails throughout the Columbia Valley.

2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS

ACTIONS

- Within the framework of an approved land and water resource management plan, develop trail networks and implement trail legalization in accordance to the recommendations of the Columbia Valley Recreation Access Management planning process.

SUCCESS NETWORK Economic Development, Local Recreation Clubs, Local Government, Property Owners, NGOs, Tourism Stakeholders, Commercial Recreation Tenure Holders, FLNR, ENV, BC Parks, Parks Canada

ACTIONS

2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS

- Within the framework of an approved land and water resource management plan, collaborate to develop a wide range of trails-based experiences (possibly including high alpine, family-friendly, dog-friendly, motorized, etc.).

SUCCESS NETWORK Economic Development, Local Recreation Clubs, Local Government, Property Owners, NGOs, Tourism Stakeholders, Commercial Recreation Tenure Holders, FLNR, ENV, BC Parks, Parks Canada

ACTIONS

2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS

- Collaborate to achieve sustainable funding to support volunteer efforts around trail building and maintenance (including training), and for greater allocation of funds to support those trails deemed iconic (trail maintenance and associated visitor infrastructure).

PROVINCIAL SCOPE

SUCCESS NETWORK Economic Development, Local Recreation Clubs, Local Government, Property Owners, NGOs, Tourism Stakeholders, Commercial Recreation Tenure Holders, FLNR, ENV, BC Parks, Parks Canada

ACTIONS

1. QUICK WINS

- Identify the inventory of current trails-based offerings that will likely comply with an approved land and water resource management plan and promote business opportunities including gear rental (bikes, etc.), shuttling services, guiding, and links to other commercial anchors.

SUCCESS NETWORK Economic Development, Local Recreation Clubs, Local Government, DMOs, Chambers of Commerce

27. There is a growing number of memorable culinary experiences and successful agriculture and agri-tourism operators.

ACTIONS

- Identify the inventory of current offerings of agri-tourism and culinary experiences and promote business opportunities for the development of additional value-added experiences (e.g., those that feature local products, farm-to-plate, restaurants featuring local products, craft breweries, etc.).

SUCCESS NETWORK DMOs, Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development, Farmers, Agri-tourism Operators, Artisans

	1. QUICK WINS

ACTIONS

- Create a platform to connect local growers to local buyers (e.g., restaurants and chefs) and encourage greater use of local products in dining experiences.

SUCCESS NETWORK DMOs, Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development, Farmers, Agri-tourism Operators, Artisans

	2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS

ACTIONS

- Consider a Columbia Valley-wide culinary festival or event including a possible Circle Farm Tour; or a Slow Food cycle event for shoulder seasons.

SUCCESS NETWORK DMOs, Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development, Farmers, Agri-tourism Operators, Artisans, Tourism Stakeholders

	2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS

ACTIONS

- Investigate the made in Columbia Valley brand consortium of locally made products.

SUCCESS NETWORK Economic Development, Chambers of Commerce, Artisans and Farmers

	1. QUICK WINS

ACTIONS

- Support efforts towards establishing a food business incubator program to support new product development and start-up businesses.

SUCCESS NETWORK Economic Development, Chambers of Commerce, Local government, Ministry of Agriculture (AGRI)

	2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS

ACTIONS

- Work with Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) and AGRI to better understand tourism business opportunities that are consistent with ALC Act and ALR Use, Subdivision, and Procedure Regulation.

SUCCESS NETWORK ALC, AGRI, TAC, Farmers, Tourism Operators, Local Government

	1. QUICK WINS
	PROVINCIAL SCOPE

28. There is a growing number of market-ready authentic Indigenous experiences.

ACTIONS

- Provide market intelligence and guidance to local Indigenous entrepreneurs to start their own tourism businesses — facilitate connections to ITBC for capacity building and business planning support.

SUCCESS NETWORK ITBC, KRT, DMOs, Chambers of Commerce, Museum, ?akisq'nuk and Shuswap communities, ?akisq'nuk Economic Development

	1. QUICK WINS

ACTIONS

- Secure a regional resource within KRT (similar to TOTA) to work with First Nations communities and support Indigenous tourism development.

SUCCESS NETWORK ITBC, KRT

	1. QUICK WINS
	REGIONAL SCOPE

ACTIONS

- Convene a strategic forum to review the nature and timing of existing festivals and events (categorize as signature today; potential to become signature; community focus) that would advance collective tourism objectives (including desire for growth in shoulder season visitation, etc.).

SUCCESS NETWORK DMOs, DMOs, Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development, Local Event Organizers and NGOs, Tourism Stakeholders, KRT

	1. QUICK WINS

ACTIONS

- Utilize a common community calendar for festivals and events.

SUCCESS NETWORK Economic Development, Chambers of Commerce, DMOs, Local Event Organizers

	1. QUICK WINS
	CATALYST

ACTIONS

- Create a coordinated regional plan for festivals and events that allocates resources, attracts partnerships and creates a structure for effective festival and event development.

SUCCESS NETWORK Economic Development, Local Government, DMOs, Chambers of Commerce, Local Event Organizers and NGOs

	2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS

ACTIONS

- Investigate suitable third-party produced events that could be invited to the Columbia Valley.

SUCCESS NETWORK Economic Development, DMOs, Chambers of Commerce

	1. QUICK WINS

ACTIONS

- Coordinate various heritage stories being told like chapters in a book and develop a heritage tour throughout the entire Columbia Valley. Use Invermere Museum as the anchor and hub for the Columbia Valley's heritage stories, and coordinate with various digital storytelling applications like 468 communications app.

SUCCESS NETWORK Invermere Museum, Economic Development, DMOs, Chambers of Commerce, Parks Canada, Local Arts, Culture, and Heritage Organizations, Local government, ?akisq'nuk and Shuswap communities

	2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS

ACTIONS

- Update the inventory of current offerings in Cultural Tourism Strategy.

SUCCESS NETWORK Columbia Valley Cultural Tourism Association, DMOs, Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development

	1. QUICK WINS

ACTIONS

- Review the timing and format of the Columbia Basin art and culture tour with a possible move to autumn. Enhance the tour to include more artists and harvest and culinary experiences to create a motivating event for travel in the fall.

SUCCESS NETWORK Columbia Basin Trust Tour Organizers, Artists, Economic Development, DMOs, Chambers of Commerce, ?akisq'nuk and Shuswap communities

	1. QUICK WINS

29. Sport tourism visitation is growing in shoulder seasons.

1. QUICK WINS

ACTIONS

- Communicate upcoming sport tourism events and create business awareness (be open, have special offers for participants, and accompanying family, etc.).

SUCCESS NETWORK DMOs, Chambers of Commerce, Local Government, Economic Development

ACTIONS

1. QUICK WINS

- Review the feasibility of a Columbia Valley-wide sport tourism coordinator to work with local sports clubs to pursue tournaments and to organize attendee offers and follow up to attendee database to maximize yield during tournament, and to encourage return visitation.

SUCCESS NETWORK Local Government, Regional District of East Kootenay, Sports clubs

30. Meetings and conference travel is growing in shoulder seasons.

1. QUICK WINS

ACTIONS

- Communicate larger upcoming conferences, and share information with event organizers about "What's On" in the Columbia Valley during their event; provide special offers, spousal programs.

SUCCESS NETWORK DMOs, Chambers of Commerce, Local Government, Economic Development

31. Meetings and conference travel is growing in shoulder seasons.

2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS

ACTIONS

- Review value perceptions and support mix of experiences at various price points that, when combined, create a strong value proposition for travellers.

SUCCESS NETWORK DMOs, Chambers of Commerce, Tourism Stakeholders

32. There is a growing number of tourism businesses open and viable year-round.

2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS

ACTIONS

- Review the overall experiential mix relative to visitor skill level and identify gaps along the continuum of entry level to expert; support investments by public and private sector to address these gaps.

SUCCESS NETWORK Economic Development, DMOs, Chambers of Commerce, Tourism Stakeholders

ACTIONS

2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS

- Support the establishment of a community investment fund cooperative to improve access to capital for small business ventures including those that will enhance the diversity and quality of the dining and retail experience in the Columbia Valley.

SUCCESS NETWORK Economic Development, DMOs, Chambers of Commerce, Local government

ACTIONS

1. QUICK WINS

- Communicate and encourage local businesses to adjust hours of operation to meet visitor demand.

SUCCESS NETWORK Economic Development, DMOs, Chambers of Commerce

ACTIONS

1. QUICK WINS

- Encourage the opening of additional evening experiences (after 5:00 p.m.).

SUCCESS NETWORK Economic Development, Local Government, DMOs, Chambers of Commerce

ACTIONS

1. QUICK WINS

- Promote the recent film success of 'Mountains Between Us.' Update film assets and locations for promotion to scouts/producers, and reduce the red tape associated with film production in the Columbia Valley.

SUCCESS NETWORK Economic Development, Local Government, Kootenay Columbia Film Commission, BC Film Commission

THEME 7: RELATIONSHIPS AND COLLABORATION
Work together effectively for mutual gain.

COLLABORATION GOAL STATEMENT

The Columbia Valley is a model of destination collaboration among residents, business operators, and community representatives from government (staff and elected officials) and the not-for-profit sector (staff and volunteers).

COLLABORATION OBJECTIVES

- Increase in number of Columbia Valley-wide collaborative projects and in the dollar value of partnered resources working collaboratively

- Grow the number of multi-night packages that combine several Columbia Valley experiences together

THEME 7: Objectives and Actions	Priority
33. Increase in number of Columbia Valley-wide collaborative projects and in the dollar value of partnered resources working collaboratively.	1. QUICK WINS
ACTIONS • Continue to promote the attitude of "together we are stronger" and encourage everyone to deploy Columbia Valley-wide branding and messaging. **SUCCESS NETWORK** Local Government, DMOs, Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development, Tourism Stakeholders, Residents	
ACTIONS • Implement the three-year Community Economic Development strategy and continue to investigate the opportunity for a Columbia Valley-wide marketing collaboration. **SUCCESS NETWORK** Local Government, DMOs, Chambers of Commerce	1. QUICK WINS
ACTIONS • Invest in programs and online tools to effectively become a hosting community that easily welcomes events and groups, and coordinates bookings for a range of experiences. **SUCCESS NETWORK** Economic Development, DMOs, Chambers of Commerce	1. QUICK WINS
ACTIONS • Support the work of existing Columbia Valley-wide organizations (arts and culture, trails, food and culinary) and facilitate greater collaboration amongst other cohorts like health and wellness sector experiences, or amongst snow and ice based experiences. **SUCCESS NETWORK** Local Governments, DMOs, Chambers of Commerce, Tourism Stakeholders	1. QUICK WINS
ACTIONS • Support continued Columbia Valley-wide approach to visitor information services (four locations are currently managed together). **SUCCESS NETWORK** Local Government, DMOs, Chambers of Commerce, Tourism Stakeholders	1. QUICK WINS
ACTIONS • Participate regularly as invited guests in cross-ministry regional staff meetings to share tourism priorities and perspectives on land and resource use, visual quality, etc. **SUCCESS NETWORK** Local Government, DMOs, Chambers of Commerce, KRT	1. QUICK WINS

THEME 7: Objectives and Actions	Priority

ACTIONS

- Conduct First Nations cultural awareness training and continue to build relationships between ʔakisqʼnuk and Shuswap communities, local communities, and tourism operators.

1. QUICK WINS

REGIONAL SCOPE

SUCCESS NETWORK First Nations communities, ITBC, Local Government, Tourism Stakeholders, Community NGOs, Economic Development, KRT

ACTIONS

- Build relationships with local environmental stewardship groups, search and rescue groups, trail societies, and others supporting or being impacted by visitation, to educate and create an understanding of both the benefits and challenges of the tourism economy.

SUCCESS NETWORK DMOs, Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development

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34. Grow the number of multi-night packages that combine several Columbia Valley experiences together.

1. QUICK WINS

ACTIONS

- Support efforts of Columbia Valley DMOs to create suggested itineraries and multi-night packages to showcase reasons to stay longer and visit in shoulder seasons.

SUCCESS NETWORK DMOs, Tourism Stakeholders

9

IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

A. CATALYST PROJECTS

In general, continued support for the implementation efforts of the Columbia Valley DMO five-year tourism strategy and the three-year Community Economic Development Strategy will advance destination development in the planning area. With respect to the Destination Development Strategy for the Columbia Valley, there are nine objectives identified by the working group as catalyst projects for implementation.

PRIORITY CATALYST PROJECTS

- Work with Parks Canada, ENV, and local stewardship groups to agree on measures and collect data on the impacts of tourism on ecosystem health. With this leading to recommendations for mitigation and management that are included in formal plans (e.g., mitigation of tourism impacts on Wetlands included in update to Wetlands Management Plan).

- Work collaboratively with the province and ministries to develop a process, a land and water management framework (front, mid, and backcountry), and shared stewardship and enforcement model (including lakes and rivers) to provide reasonable certainty for tourism development, environmental protection, motorized and non-motorized use, public and commercial recreation uses, and viewscapes.

- Engage with provincial ministries (FLNR, ENV, and TRAN) as well as national parks to create a master planning area map of high use areas and high sensitivity areas (land and water) to be used to inform plans for infrastructure in these areas (e.g., rest stops, lookouts, washrooms, parking, signage, boat launches, marinas, shelters, wi-fi, etc.).

- Create a cross-season/cross-business job pool to support year-round staff retention within communities.

- Develop a local/regional affordable housing strategy (learning from best practices and lessons learned of other communities) and secure resources to implement the initial phase of recommendations (including incentives for under-utilized housing to be directed into affordable staff housing).

- Advocate for increased air access, affordable flights through YXC.

- Educate tourism operators (new and potential) on protocols for engaging with First Nations and operating on traditional territories.

- Continue to invest in the animation of communities to encourage longer lengths of stay, and to enhance the overall visitor experience.

- Utilize a common community calendar for festivals and events.

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B. PROVINCIAL AND REGIONAL PRIORITIES

A key deliverable of the Destination BC Destination Development Program is the creation of regional and provincial strategies. Objectives shared commonly across the Kootenay Rockies tourism region may become regional priorities but at the very least will inform the creation of a Regional Destination Development Strategy.

This Columbia Valley Destination Development Strategy, together with the other 19 strategies from around the province, will also inform the creation of a single Provincial Destination Development Strategy.

Objectives identified as provincial in scope may involve multiple provincial organizations, including Destination BC, ITBC, go2HR, MTAC, and TIABC.

It is recommended the following Columbia Valley objectives become provincial initiatives within the Provincial Destination Development strategy:

OBJECTIVES	PRIORITY
THEME 1: Access	
Work collaboratively with DriveBC to enhance content and highlight Mountain and Pacific time differences — if a road is closed offer a route that is open; ensure positive messaging.	1
THEME 2: Business Climate	
Create a source of best policies and practices for consideration by local and regional governments wishing to create a supportive policy and regulatory framework for tourism.	2
Summarize various approaches being adopted around the province to the management and monitoring of nightly rentals being offered through platforms such as VRBO and Airbnb (possible UBCM presentation).	1
Develop a local/regional affordable housing strategy (learning from best practices and lessons learned of other communities) and secure resources to implement the initial phase of recommendations (including incentives for under-utilized housing to be directed into affordable staff housing).	2
Investigate possible pooled liability insurance programs for land-based and water-based activity operators and other tourism experience providers. Identify sector organizations who have, or are working on, pooled programs (e.g., Paddle Canada, Backcountry Lodges, Commercial Snowmobile, etc.).	2

OBJECTIVES	PRIORITY
THEME 3: Environmental Sustainability	
Work collaboratively with the province and ministries to develop a process, a land and water management framework (front, mid, and backcountry), and shared stewardship and enforcement model (including lakes and rivers) to provide reasonable certainty for tourism development, environmental protection, motorized and non-motorized use, public and commercial recreation uses, and viewscapes.	2
Identify sustainable funding for resources dedicated to the enforcement of agreements under the shared stewardship model of land and water management framework.	2
Work with Parks Canada, ENV, and local stewardship groups to agree on measures and collect data on the impacts of tourism on ecosystem health. With this leading to recommendations for mitigation and management that are included in formal plans (e.g., mitigation of tourism impacts on Wetlands included in update to Wetlands Management Plan).	1
Create and communicate a code of respectful conduct and shared story (including invasive species education) for front, mid, and backcountry to educate both residents and visitors (public recreationalists and distributed to guests via operators).	1
Conduct legal trail building, where appropriate, and associated trail maintenance to the highest standards and best practices relative to environmental impacts; support local trail societies, and secure enforcement resources to prevent rogue trail building.	1
Continue invasive species education; BC check stations for invasive species (mussels) in key locations — work collaboratively with ENV to provide check stop verification documents.	1
THEME 5: Infrastructure, Services, and Amenities	
Explore sustainable funding models (user fees, etc.) to support search and rescue and improve relationships between the tourism industry and search and rescue organizations.	2
THEME 6: Experience Development	
Collaborate to achieve sustainable funding to support volunteer efforts around trail building and maintenance (including training), and for greater allocation of funds to support those trails deemed iconic (trail maintenance and associated visitor infrastructure).	2

It is recommended the following Columbia Valley objectives become regional initiatives within the Regional Destination Development Strategy:

OBJECTIVES	PRIORITY
THEME 1: Access	
Identify iconic road cycling routes, and present information on increasing road cycle usage and the associated tourism potential to TRAN, with the objective of securing safe shoulder widths and/or separate paved trails.	1
Advocate for increased air access, affordable flights through YXC.	2
THEME 2: Business Climate	
Promote tourism career paths from entry-level to management, or entrepreneurship, featuring the lifestyle benefits.	1
THEME 6: Experience Development	
Secure a regional resource within KRT (similar to TOTA) to work with First Nations communities and support tourism development.	1
THEME 7: Collaboration	
Participate regularly as invited guests in cross-ministry regional staff meetings to share tourism priorities and perspectives on land and resource use, visual quality, etc.	1
Conduct First Nations cultural awareness training and continue to build relationships between First Nations, local communities, and tourism operators.	1

FUNDING PROGRAMS

To assist planning areas such as the Columbia Valley in their implementation efforts, Destination BC has compiled a list of funding programs as part of the Provincial Situation Analysis.

The different funding options highlighted include: Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT), Destination BC Programs, Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD), Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure Programs, Community Gaming Grants, BC Parks Foundation, Community Trusts, Resort Municipality Initiative (RMI), Municipal Funding, and Business Levies.

Contact Destination BC for a copy of this information sheet.

The government of BC also has an online tool on their website to find economic development funding and grants.

Funding options also include:
- Columbia Basin Trust
- Rural Dividend

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MEASURING AND MONITORING SUCCESS

Ultimately, the overall objective of this Destination Development Strategy is to help guide the growth of Columbia Valley's tourism sector in an economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable manner over the next 10 years. The following recommended measurements can be used to monitor the success of the tourism industry in the Columbia Valley, and the implementation of this strategy.

GOAL	PERFORMANCE MEASURES	SOURCES
1. Increase the number of shoulder season visitors.	• 100% Growth in MRDT revenues in Oct to April timeframe • Increase in overnight stays in shoulder months	• Ministry of Finance • Accommodation Tracking
2. Increase average length of stay in the planning area in each season	• Average length of stay	• Visitor survey
3. Increase the number of year-round tourism job opportunities	• Employment Survey	• Tourism partners survey • Chamber walkabouts — tourism businesses and/or State of the Basin reports produced by Columbia Basin Trust
4. Achieve top Net Promoter Score or similar measure in the province	• Net Promoter Score or similar	• Visitor survey

APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1: OVERVIEW OF PLANNING PROCESS

The following planning process ensured this strategy was developed in a thoughtful manner which included participation from a diverse group of industry partners that impact tourism either directly or indirectly. Using a semi-structured approach designed by Destination BC, the planning process was customized specifically for the Columbia Valley.

PROCESS TIMELINES

Pre-project logistics and document review	MAR–JUN 2017
Interviews	JUN–AUG 2017
Community workshop #1 — Fairmont Hot Springs	APR 26, 2017
Follow up Survey and Tabulation of Responses	MAY–JUN 2017
Preparation of Situation Analysis	JUN–AUG, 2017
Community workshop #2 — Invermere	JUN 6, 2017
Follow up Survey and Tabulation of Responses	JUN–AUG, 2017
Review of Situation Analysis	SEP–NOV 2017
Formation of the Working Group	SEP 2017
Preparation of Working Group Workbook	SEP 2017
Working Group Meeting #1 — Invermere	SEP 18, 2017
Working Group Meeting #2 — Conference Call	SEP 28, 2017
Working Group Meeting #3 — Conference Call	OCT 16, 2017
Preparation of Draft Destination Development Strategy	OCT 2017–JUN 2018

APPENDIX 2: PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

This section summarizes the planning context and provides the key directions the Columbia Valley Destination Development strategy should address.

- Visitors are motivated to come to the Columbia Valley to unwind and rejuvenate — the hot springs are a particular draw, alongside golf and hiking. Strengths in health and wellness, and outdoor recreation can be further leveraged.

- Trail networks are a significant asset and travel motivator — continued investment in trails, trail maintenance, trailheads, signage and trail connectivity should be considered in destination development.

- Columbia Valley has significant depth in visual arts (commercial galleries, artists studios) but infrastructure is limiting growth, particularly for performing arts (performance hall; outdoor amphitheatre). Priority objectives have been identified with "A Tapestry of Place" — A Place Based Cultural Tourism Strategy. This depth of artistic and artisanal offerings is found in a spectacular natural setting — a stunning combination to be leveraged.

- Remarkable natural beauty is accompanied by a level of natural history and heritage interpretation seldom found in other scenic settings in BC. This is due in part to Parks Canada investments, although more interpretation would be beneficial, as would improved wayfinding and signage.

- There are anchor destinations offering a level of experiential sophistication and service standards beyond the "norm" for communities of a similar size (e.g., Invermere), however service levels are not consistently exceptional throughout the Columbia Valley.

- The Columbia Valley offers an intriguing mix of artists and artisanal products including culinary (foodie) and agri-tourism experiences that can be further developed; they are not yet travel motivators.

- Festivals and events can be developed or enhanced to build shoulder season visitation.

- Market demand, and local desire, exists to support and enhance market-ready Indigenous cultural experiences.

- Need to consider aesthetic improvements (e.g., Cross Roads) and enhance animation (e.g., street performers) to enhance destination quality.

- Must deliver reliable and timely transportation, ensure ease of movement within the corridor and create intriguing journeys in what is essentially a linear route.

- Improved pull-outs and/or viewpoints and interpretation would improve the quality of the "journey".

- Along the way, must balance "small-town" character and environmental health with growth/development — pursue sustainability in all its facets.

- Need to address human resource challenges — staffing, training, affordable housing, year-round jobs and employee sharing across seasons.

- Policy challenges exist — recreation management plans are absent, many unsanctioned land uses, conflicts amongst users (e.g., motorized and non-motorized trail users); ALR restrictions; labour; sharing economy.

- Increase "lift" from key and emerging markets — leverage and enhance Open Skies policy and use the airport in Cranbrook to its fullest potential.

- Build an attractive investment climate, and offer sufficient business support and resources for entrepreneurs.

- Attract visitation and business between October and May, and increase mid-week stays, and longer lengths of stay.

- Continue Columbia Valley-wide collaboration and work together to tell a unified story of the planning area.

APPENDIX 3: OBJECTIVES BY PRIORITY AND IMPLEMENTATION TIMING

OBJECTIVES	PRIORITY
Access	
Share demand forecasts and other market research in order to attract additional car rental options.	1
Introduce traffic management measures to manage the volume of traffic, delays, and speeding on highways and local roads.	1
Identify iconic road cycling routes, and present information on increasing road cycle usage and the associated tourism potential to TRAN, with the objective of securing safe shoulder widths and/or separate paved trails.	1
• Work collaboratively with DriveBC to enhance content and highlight Mountain and Pacific time differences — if a road is closed offer a route that is open; ensure positive messaging. • Work with Drive BC and Alberta to create central authority for communications and ensure positive and open for business facts are promoted through DriveBC and Alberta.	1
Business Climate	
Benchmark, communicate, and educate on the value of tourism in each community, and collectively in the Columbia Valley.	1
Create opportunities for business owners and residents to experience local and regional visitor offerings (and become ambassadors themselves) including industry familiarization tours.	1
Introduce Columbia Valley-wide business licenses.	1
Summarize various approaches being adopted around the province to the management and monitoring of nightly rentals being offered through platforms such as VRBO and Airbnb (possible UBCM presentation).	1
Advocate for local government policies and enforcement related to the sharing economy (e.g., Airbnb) to protect the inventory of longer-term rentals available for employees and new entrepreneurs, and to level the financial playing field with regard to MRDT collection.	1
Support policy changes that create smaller, more affordable retail spaces for lessees (without increasing the property tax burden of landlords).	1
Educate tourism operators (new and potential) on protocols for engaging with ?akisq'nuk and Shuswap communities and operating on traditional territories.	1
Create a cross-season/cross-business job pool to support year-round staff retention within communities.	1
Promote tourism career paths from entry-level to management, or entrepreneurship, featuring the lifestyle benefits.	1
Work closely with post-secondary institutions to ensure offered curriculums and industry needs align.	1

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OBJECTIVES	PRIORITY
Business Climate continued	
Build awareness of training grants (e.g., Canada BC Job grant). Identify and communicate training opportunities that are relevant, affordable, and can be delivered on the business premises and promote them to owners and staff (e.g., three-hour modules), including a regional train the trainer program to support reach and affordability of training.	1
Cross-educate Visitor Centre and front-line staff (e.g., familiarization tours, experience showcase, etc.).	1
Improve communications regarding, and continue to promote, existing business support programs and capital available through Community Futures, and Imagine Kootenay for investment attraction, business mentoring, matching, and research to support business development and investment attraction.	1
Environmental Sustainability	
Participate in the Columbia Valley Recreation Access Management Planning (CVRAMP) process.	1
Participate in the Columbia Wetlands Management Plan update.	1
Enforce boating regulations currently in place for the Columbia Wetlands.	1
Work with Parks Canada, ENV, and local stewardship groups to agree on measures and collect data on the impacts of tourism on ecosystem health. With this leading to recommendations for mitigation and management that are included in formal plans (e.g., mitigation of tourism impacts on Wetlands included in update to Wetlands Management Plan).	1
Create and communicate a code of respectful conduct and shared story (including invasive species education) for front, mid, and backcountry to educate both residents and visitors (public recreationalists and distributed to guests via operators).	1
Conduct legal trail building, where appropriate, and associated trail maintenance to the highest standards and best practices relative to environmental impacts; support local trail societies, and secure enforcement resources to prevent rogue trail building.	1
Continue invasive species education; BC check stations for invasive species (mussels) in key locations — work collaboratively with ENV to provide check stop verification documents.	1
Community Sustainability	
Continue to beautify and invest in the vibrancy and animation of public corridors and gathering spaces, including the route from Highway 93 intersection into Invermere (Athalmer).	1
Create shared-cost plan with landlords to enhance building spaces and facades; support revitalization tax incentives or consider creating BIAs; eliminate $150 permit fee charged to paint the outside of buildings.	1
Continue to invest in the animation of communities to encourage longer lengths of stay, and to enhance the overall visitor experience.	1
Expand the role of coordinator to be the Columbia Valley-wide events and animation coordinator.	1

OBJECTIVES	PRIORITY
Community Sustainability continued	
Work collaboratively with the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture to continue RMI funding, and review the funding formula to support resort communities (i.e., Radium, Invermere) ability to deliver visitor services and amenities despite their small resident and property tax base.	1
Support policy revisions that would relieve the onerous burden of insurance placed on artists and buskers.	1
Support the creation of smaller retail spaces and encourage taxation policy revisions to ensure such spaces do not attract undue property tax increases.	1
Consciously align target markets with community values.	1
Embed community values, aspirations, and limits on the extent and nature of tourism in policy documents such as Community Official Community Plans, and RDEK Sustainability Plan; ensure timely review of OCPs where changes are occurring.	1
Support and promote the new volunteer website currently under development, which aims to match interested parties with volunteer opportunities.	1
Investigate and improve volunteer recognition and incentive programs (e.g., Alberta government funds based upon reported volunteer hours logged); expand tangible experiential benefits to volunteers (e.g., lift tickets, event tickets, free coffee, etc.).	1
Infrastructure, Services, and Amenities	
Engage with provincial ministries (FLNR, ENV, and TRAN) as well as national parks to create a master planning area map of high use areas and high sensitivity areas (land and water) to be used to inform plans for infrastructure in these areas (e.g., rest stops, lookouts, washrooms, parking, signage, boat launches, marinas, shelters, wi-fi, etc.).	1
Communicate existing and target visitor markets and their needs and/or expectations to all those planning infrastructure investments.	1
Work collaboratively with private and public stakeholders (such as RCMP, ENV Conservation Officers, FLNR Natural Resource Officers) to educate and ensure adequate law enforcement on lakes, rivers, and in the backcountry (e.g., liquor, speeding, fire bans, etc.).	1
Continue to expand high season camping capacity in strategic locations (Parks Canada, Rec Sites, potential new municipally-owned campgrounds). Review seasonal opening and closing and include consideration of suitable infrastructure for first time campers and/or those without own equipment (e.g., O'Tentik concept). Review reserve and drop-in ratios and policies at park sites to ensure sites are being utilized.	1
Review the adequacy of search and rescue (SAR) and emergency preparedness services and equipment, as well as the appropriateness of emergency response services, and communicate emergency plans effectively.	1
Educate and communicate to visitors re: backcountry safety and respect for the environment — include in backcountry code of conduct (e.g., Adventure SMART).	1

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OBJECTIVES	PRIORITY
Experiential Mix and Quality	
Identify the inventory of current offerings of lakes, rivers, and wetlands experiences; map and promote business opportunities for gear rental, guided tours, and links to other commercial anchors, particularly during shoulder seasons.	1
Identify the inventory of current snow-based experiences (ski, snowboard, snowshoe, fat tire, Nordic) and promote business for additional value-added experiences.	1
Facilitate and advocate for the introduction of additional value-based offerings into the mix of golf experiences; and offer experiences that appeal to Millennials.	1
Identify the inventory of current offerings of hot springs, spa, and wellness experiences; map and promote business opportunities including hot springs, spas, backcountry immersion, and zen sports, etc.	1
Identify the inventory of current offerings of mountain, lodge, and park-based experiences; map and promote opportunities for additional experiences.	1
Identify the inventory of current trails-based offerings that will likely comply with an approved land and water resource management plan and promote business opportunities including gear rental (bikes, etc.), shuttling services, guiding, and links to other commercial anchors.	1
Agri-tourism and Culinary, Indigenous Cultural Tourism, and Festivals and Events	
Identify the inventory of current offerings of agri-tourism and culinary experiences and promote business opportunities for the development of additional value-added experiences (e.g., those that feature local products, farm-to-plate, restaurants featuring local products, craft breweries, etc.).	1
Investigate the made in Columbia Valley brand consortium of locally made products.	1
Work with Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) and AGRI to better understand tourism business opportunities that are consistent with ALC Act and ALR Use, Subdivision, and Procedure Regulation.	1
Provide market intelligence and guidance to local Indigenous entrepreneurs to start their own tourism businesses — facilitate connections to ITBC for capacity building and business planning support.	1
Secure a regional resource within KRT (similar to TOTA) to work with First Nations communities and support tourism development.	1
Convene a strategic forum to review the nature and timing of existing festivals and events (categorize as signature today; potential to become signature; community focus) that would advance collective tourism objectives (including desire for growth in shoulder season visitation, etc.).	1
Utilize a common calendar to document all existing and planned community festivals and events.	1
Investigate suitable third-party produced events that could be invited to the Columbia Valley.	1
Update the inventory of current offerings in Cultural Tourism Strategy.	1

OBJECTIVES	PRIORITY
Agri-tourism and Culinary, Indigenous Cultural Tourism, and Festivals and Events continued	
Review the timing and format of the Columbia Basin art and culture tour with a possible move to autumn. Enhance the tour to include more artists and harvest and culinary experiences to create a motivating event for travel in the fall.	1
Communicate upcoming sport tourism events and create business awareness (be open, have special offers for participants, and accompanying family, etc.).	1
Review the feasibility of a Columbia Valley-wide sport tourism coordinator to work with local sports clubs to pursue tournaments and to organize attendee offers and follow up to attendee database to maximize yield during tournament, and to encourage return visitation.	1
Communicate larger upcoming conferences, and share information with event organizers about "What's On" in the Columbia Valley during their event; provide special offers, spousal programs	1
Communicate and encourage local businesses to adjust hours of operation to meet visitor demand.	1
Encourage the opening of additional evening experiences (after 5:00 p.m.).	1
Promote the recent film success of "Mountains Between Us." Update film assets and locations for promotion to scouts/producers, and reduce the red tape associated with film production in the Columbia Valley.	1
Collaboration	
Continue to promote the attitude of "together we are stronger" and encourage everyone to deploy Columbia Valley-wide branding and messaging.	1
Implement the three-year Community Economic Development strategy and continue to investigate the opportunity for a Columbia Valley-wide marketing collaboration.	1
Invest in programs and on-line tools to effectively become a hosting community that easily welcomes events and groups, and coordinates bookings for a range of experiences.	1
Support the work of existing Columbia Valley-wide organizations (arts and culture, trails, food and culinary) and facilitate greater collaboration amongst other cohorts like health and wellness sector experiences, or amongst snow and ice based experiences.	1
Support continued Columbia Valley-wide approach to visitor information services (four locations are currently managed together).	1
Participate regularly as invited guests in cross-ministry regional staff meetings to share tourism priorities and perspectives on land and resource use, visual quality, etc.	1
Conduct First Nations cultural awareness training and continue to build relationships between First Nations, local communities, and tourism operators.	1
Build relationships with local environmental stewardship groups, search and rescue groups, trail societies, and others supporting or being impacted by visitation, to educate and create an understanding of both the benefits and challenges of the tourism economy.	1
Support efforts of Columbia Valley DMOs to create suggested itineraries and multi-night packages to showcase reasons to stay longer and visit in shoulder seasons.	1

OBJECTIVES – PRIORITY 2	PRIORITY
Access	
Advocate for increased air access, affordable flights through YXC.	2
Review shuttle service viability and subsidy options for scheduled services, and/or improve public transit options for staff and visitor movement between gateway airports, communities, and experiences. Consider the capacity of existing tourism operators with shuttles and insurance in place, and the potential for a B-to-B platform for ride sharing. Review the pros and cons of ride sharing and of platforms such as Uber, and Kootenay RideShare.	2
Work collaboratively as part of the ongoing Columbia Valley Recreation Access Management planning process to identify the network of resource roads considered essential for access to trail heads and recreation areas and negotiate long-term certainty and funding commitments to ensure they remain open and maintained.	1
Business Climate	
Investigate possible pooled liability insurance programs for land-based and water-based activity operators and other tourism experience providers. Identify sector organizations who have, or are working on, pooled programs (e.g., Paddle Canada, Backcountry Lodges, Commercial Snowmobile, etc.).	2
Create a source of best policies and practices for consideration by local and regional governments wishing to create a supportive policy and regulatory framework for tourism.	2
Develop a local/regional affordable housing strategy (learning from best practices and lessons learned of other communities) and secure resources to implement the initial phase of recommendations (including incentives for under-utilized housing to be directed into affordable staff housing).	2
Work collaboratively to increase day-care and after school care capacity and affordability throughout the Columbia Valley, including flexible hours to match work schedules.	2
Work with provincial and federal governments to improve the Foreign Workers Program to supplement domestic tourism labour, and investigate other programs for labour attraction (e.g., Mobilité Francophone).	2
Environmental Sustainability	
Work collaboratively with the province and ministries to develop a process, a land and water management framework (front, mid, and backcountry), and shared stewardship and enforcement model (including lakes and rivers) to provide reasonable certainty for tourism development, environmental protection, motorized and non-motorized use, public and commercial recreation uses, and viewscapes.	2
Identify sustainable funding for resources dedicated to the enforcement of agreements under the shared stewardship model of land and water management framework.	2

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OBJECTIVES — PRIORITY 2	PRIORITY
Visitor Infrastructure, Services, and Amenities	
Educate and communicate to visitors re: backcountry safety and respect for the environment – include in backcountry code of conduct (e.g., Adventure SMART).	2
Work collaboratively with private and public stakeholders (FLNR, ENV, TRAN, national parks, local and regional governments) to secure and direct resources toward implementation of high priority infrastructure as per agreed map.	2
Assess the need for, and conduct feasibility assessments of, a weather-protected performance venue.	2
Conduct feasibility studies of, and continue to make investments in, heritage building maintenance and refurbishment.	2
Inventory current wayfinding and interpretive signage with a view to improving accuracy, consistency, and integration of media (Apps, Maps, and Signage) in front, mid, and backcountry; include use of Parks Canada expertise ratings, on and off the water.	2
Explore sustainable funding models (user fees, etc.) to support search and rescue and improve relationships between the tourism industry and search and rescue organizations.	2
Work collaboratively to define core areas where connectivity is essential supplemented by select hotspots and pursue necessary public and private investments to activate.	2
Trails-Based Experiences	
Within the framework of an approved land and water resource management plan, develop trail networks and implement trail legalization in accordance to the recommendations of the Columbia Valley Recreation Access Management planning process.	2
Within the framework of an approved land and water resource management plan, collaborate to develop a wide range of trails-based experiences (possibly including high alpine, family-friendly, dog-friendly, motorized, etc.).	2
Collaborate to achieve sustainable funding to support volunteer efforts around trail building and maintenance (including training), and for greater allocation of funds to support those trails deemed iconic (trail maintenance and associated visitor infrastructure).	2
Agri-tourism and Culinary, Indigenous Cultural Tourism, and Festivals and Events	
Create a platform to connect local growers to local buyers (e.g., restaurants and chefs) and encourage greater use of local products in dining experiences.	2
Consider a Columbia Valley-wide culinary festival or event including a possible Circle Farm Tour; or a Slow Food cycle event for shoulder seasons.	2
Support efforts towards establishing a food business incubator program to support new product development and start-up businesses.	2
Create a coordinated regional plan for festivals and events that allocates resources, attracts partnerships and creates a structure for effective festival and event development.	2
Coordinate various heritage stories being told like chapters in a book and develop a heritage tour throughout the entire Columbia Valley. Use Invermere Museum as the anchor and hub for the Columbia Valley's heritage stories, and coordinate with various digital storytelling applications like 468 communications app.	2

OBJECTIVES — PRIORITY 2	PRIORITY
General Experiences	
Review value perceptions and support mix of experiences at various price points that, when combined, create a strong value proposition for travellers.	2
Review the overall experiential mix relative to visitor skill level and identify gaps along the continuum of entry level to expert; support investments by public and private sector to address these gaps.	2
Support the establishment of a community investment fund cooperative to improve access to capital for small business ventures including those that will enhance the diversity and quality of the dining and retail experience in the Columbia Valley.	2
OBJECTIVES — PRIORITY 3	
Business Climate	
Design and launch secret shopper programs to provide constructive feedback on service quality.	3
Community Sustainability	
Investigate other funding tools for local governments to help pay for visitor-induced strain on infrastructure (Gas Tax, Rural Dividend continuation).	3
Infrastructure, Services, and Amenities	
Review the inventory of sport tourism infrastructure against desired events to identify gaps and conduct feasibility assessment for further investment in facilities.	3
Review the inventory of meetings, conference, exhibition, and banquet space against market potential, and conduct feasibility assessments for further investment in facilities.	3

APPENDIX 4: ALIGNMENT DETAILS — PLANS REVIEWED

The following documents were reviewed as part of the planning process, as well as a significant amount of online information reviewed via websites:

1. Columbia Valley Community Economic Development Strategy — 2017–2019 — Community Economic Development Officer October, 2017

2. Proposed Valley-Wide Destination Marketing Organization, Five-Year Business Plan, 2019–2023, Uncorked Experiences Limited, September 2017

3. 2015 Official Community Plan Update — Invermere

4. Panorama Official Community Plan Consolidation — August 2015

5. Windermere Official Community Plan Consoliday — July 2015

6. Fairmont Official Community Plan Consolidation — August 2015

7. Official Community Plan, Village of Radium Hot Springs, June 2013

8. Invermere Resort Development Strategy, 2015

9. Radium Hot Springs Resort Development Strategy, 2015

10. Trails Vision, Columbia Valley Greenways Trail Alliance, 2017

11. Columbia Valley Environment Science Research Centre & Visitor Discovery Centre, Pre-feasibility Assessment Study, Lions Gate Consulting, October, 2016

12. Columbia Valley Resident Attraction and Retention Strategy, MDB Insight, March 2016

13. Columbia Valley's Vital Signs, Columbia Valley Community Foundation, 2016

14. Columbia Valley Tourism Marketing Plan and Situation Analysis, Destination BC, December 2015

15. Branding & Marketing the Columbia Valley, Brightwell Consulting, January 2015

16. Food Business Incubator Feasibility Study, Brightwell Consulting, April 2014

17. Columbia Valley Visitor Services: Visitor Centre Operations and Future Coordination, April 2014

18. Columbia Valley Cultural Tourism Strategy, Steven Thorne Consulting, January 2014

19. Community Recreation Facilities Study, Village of Radium Hot Springs, January 2014

20. Columbia Valley Community Directed Funds, Community Priority Plan, December 2013

21. Columbia Valley Golf Research, Destination BC, July 2009

22. Albertan Travellers Perceptions of Windermere/ Columbia Valley, Destination BC, October 2007