

ANNUAL REPORT 2021

A summary report of the activities of the Tourism Golden Association
January 1st to December 31st, 2021

Key Reporting areas include Operations, Marketing, Visitor Services and Financials



PO Box 20181
Golden
BC V0A 1H0
Phone: 250-439-1111
E-Mail: manager@tourismgolden.com

Submitted by: Joanne Sweeting, Executive Director



#GOLDENRULES
#GOLDENBC

tourismgolden.com

Table of Contents

ANNUAL REPORT 2021 1

About Tourism Golden 4

Executive Summary 5

 DMO Business Objective, 7

 Strategic Objectives 2017 - 2021 7

Highlights of Strategic Plan Results 2017 – 2021 7

Destination Performance 2021 9

DMO Performance 12

Financial Summary 13

Marketing Summary 15

..... 21

Research 22



Directors, Officers, Committees & Staff

Board of Directors from August 2021¹

Elected

Representing Town of Golden Accommodators

Suk Dhasi Best Western Mountainview

Atma Sandher Ponderosa Motor Inn

Treena Coney Prestige Inn Golden

Representing General Accommodators (all locations)

Brandy Beliveau Bellstar Hotels & Resort

Representing Area A Accommodators

John Lush Lush Mountain Accommodations

Lucille Hayward Moberly Lodge

Jo Best Mount 7 Lodges

Representing Tourism Operators

Graeme Kreiner Golden Golf Club

Ryan Johannesen Glacier Raft Company

Toby Barrett Kicking Horse Mountain Resort

Appointed

Rep. Kicking Horse Chamber of Commerce

Officers

President Toby Barrett

Vice President John Lush

Treasurer Jo Best

Secretary Lucille Hayward

Committees

Finance Committee

Jo Best (Treasurer), Treena Coney, Toby Barrett

HR Committee

Jo Best, Treena Coney, Toby Barrett

Stakeholder Committee

Atma Sandher, John Lush, Toby Barrett, Treena Coney, Ryan Johannesen, Suk Dhasi

Governance (Constitution and Bylaw) Committee

Atma Sandher, Toby Barrett, Lucille Hayward, Ryan Johannesen

Visitor Services

John Lush, Suk Dhasi, Ryan Johannesen

Co-op Programs Committee

Atma Sandher, Brandy Beliveau, Jo Best, Lucille Hayward

Staff

Executive Director Joanne Sweeting

Marketing & Administration Rachel Wilde & Abigail Dunford

Communications & Social Media Andy Brown

The board establishes the vision, mission, and objectives of the organisation and approves the annual marketing plan and budgets. It ensures fiscal responsibility and fulfilment of the organisation's mission.

¹ The 2021 AGM was postponed from May to August due to pandemic disruption.

About Tourism Golden

- ❑ A non-profit society incorporated in 2006 and mandated as the DMO and eligible entity until July 2022.
- ❑ The DMO area contains the Town of Golden and CSRD Area A, not including Yoho National Park.
- ❑ Representing tourism stakeholders (accommodations, activity operators and attractions).
- ❑ Primarily funded by a 2% tax on accommodation room nights, known as the Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) leveraged with grant and 'pay to play' stakeholder co-op advertising sales.
- ❑ Governed by a board of 11 directors representing accommodations and tourism operators and the Chamber.

Mandate

Tourism Golden Association will lead, direct, and manage destination marketing activities and support tourism development initiatives on behalf of Golden and Kicking Horse Country by maintaining a collaborative and inclusive industry driven organization, and by providing opportunities for stakeholders to increase revenues. We will provide a consistent voice for Golden and Kicking Horse Country in the tourism marketplace.

Tourism Vision

"We will inspire target visitors to explore and experience Golden."

Tourism Mission

"We will market Golden as a destination of choice. By delivering innovative marketing initiatives we will increase economic benefits for all our stakeholders and for the community.

We will provide tools and guidance to assist our stakeholders in delivering remarkable visitor experiences.

We will provide information and education to inform and guide destination development."

Values & Guiding Principles

- ❑ Balance resident values with visitor demand.
- ❑ Maintain a positive, respectful relationship with residents of Golden and Area A.
- ❑ Recognize the community as a blend of diverse unique resources working together to become a healthy, vibrant community in which to live and work.
- ❑ Advocate a social, environmental, and economic balance within the tourism industry and the community at large.
- ❑ Work collectively with the community to develop services to meet the needs of our visitors.
- ❑ Foster open and honest communication with all community stakeholders through a comprehensive communication plan.
- ❑ Be inclusive and transparent to the stakeholders and the community.
- ❑ Partner with existing organizations and stakeholders that contribute to tourism marketing and destination development.
- ❑ Leverage resources and maximize partnership potential.
- ❑ Be fiscally responsible and accountable to stakeholders.
- ❑ Advocate on behalf of the local tourism industry.

Executive Summary

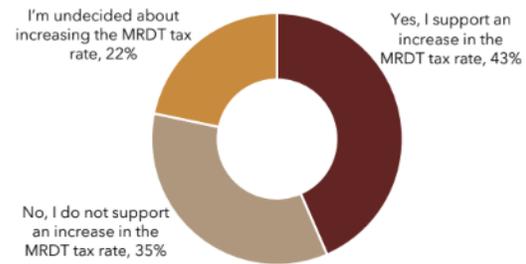
2021 was the last full year of the 5-year strategic plan 2017 to 2021 and whilst the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact, it is a testament to the overall strategic approach and the swift and considered response of the organisation which resulted in an above-average recovery of Golden in 2021 when compared to other similar destinations. We were fortunate to be able to re-build in 2021 based on a strong foundation that saw the best-ever results for Golden in 2019 and which include:

- ❑ A strong brand and growing awareness of Golden.
- ❑ Established marketing campaigns, channels and targeted audiences defined by data.
- ❑ Continued investment in destination data which enabled us to respond swiftly and in an informed manner.
- ❑ A deep library of assets to support inspirational marketing of sought-after destination attributes.
- ❑ A collaborative approach both in-destination with community and tourism stakeholders and with regional marketing consortiums under the DBC Open Pool Marketing Co-op program.

An analysis of some of the key results between 2016 and 2019 indicate we were on-track to reach, or had already met, the strategic objective targets by 2019.

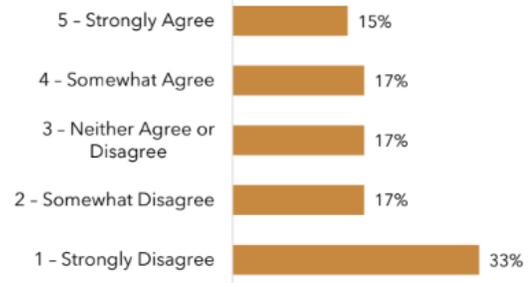
Between spring and fall 2021 much of the E.D. and board's focus was on the renewal of the MRDT program and strategic planning for 2022 to 2027 involving multiple opportunities for stakeholder engagement. For the renewal of the MRDT program we needed to understand accommodator's appetite to renew at 3% as well as where those additional funds should be directed. Whilst some were undecided, and some not in favour, a majority supported increasing the MRDT rate to 3%. As to be expected, there was a corresponding impact on the overall percentage supporting the renewal at the higher rate, but I am pleased that we achieved 63% support.

Support of Tourism Golden MRDT Tax Rate Increase (% of Stakeholders)



The Stakeholder Survey indicated a desire for an increased focus on destination development and sustainability initiatives, however interestingly, whilst 'lack of affordable housing was cited as the top long-term barrier to growth in Golden, the majority disagreed with using MRDT funds for this.

Agreement with Using MRDT Funds for Affordable Housing (% of Stakeholders)



Navigating and responding to the pandemic was an ever-changing landscape in 2021 but in addition we were also managing 4 to 6 week closures of Highway 1 in spring and fall for the Kicking Horse Canyon project and supporting our industry stakeholders through a critical labour shortage. Thanks to a supportive board, passionate, hard-working staff, and supportive local, regional and provincial stakeholders, as well as strong fiscal management we emerged from 2021 in a positive and inspired position; ready to take on new and innovative challenges and initiatives.

We recognize these factors that make our success possible:

1. The *MRDT program* which provides reliable multi-year funding for tourism marketing and projects.
2. The focus of Tourism Golden staff and board on *strategic planning informed by research and data*.
3. Tourism Golden stakeholders who invest and innovate in products and experiences, engage with us in collectively promoting Golden and support our efforts in content creation and media relations.
4. The Town of Golden and CSRD Area A who support our position and efforts as the eligible entity and lead organisation for tourism.
5. Destination BC and Destination Canada who provided consistent leadership, research, and support and who continue to *innovate in tourism marketing and industry programs*, opportunities and partnerships as well as delivering successful provincial marketing campaigns.
6. Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture's *Festival, Fairs and Events Program* which provides funding for events.
7. The *RMI program* which provides funding for the Event Hosting Co-op program under a contribution agreement with the Town of Golden.
8. TIABC and the BCHA whose collaboration and tireless advocacy for the industry as well as efficient communication and meaningful insights were extremely valuable.



DMO Business Objective

“In a manner that is admired by all in the Canadian tourism industry, we will increase the economic impact of tourism in Golden and the surrounding area by growing revenues for businesses that serve tourists by 30% by 2021.”

Strategic Objectives 2017 - 2021

As identified in the 2017-2021 Strategic Business Plan, the Strategic Objectives of the organisation are to:

- Increase target market awareness of Golden as a great destination to visit.
- Establish perceptions of Golden consistent with our brand positioning – brand positioning is known and embraced by target markets and residents.
- Encourage target visitors to make Golden a positive choice of destination in their vacation.
- Encourage day visitors/passing traffic to stay longer and return later as an overnight visitor.
- Increase length of stay.
- Increase number of overnight visitors.
- Encourage repeat visitation.
- Increase shoulder season visitation and revenues.
- Establish a baseline and show annual improvements in Net Promoter Score.
- Increase funding for Tourism Golden.
- Maintain position as lead organization in tourism and continuously learn and improve.
- Build strong stakeholder and local support for Tourism Golden and for the overall importance of the tourism industry.

Highlights of Strategic Plan Results 2017 – 2021

- Target achieved by 2019 with 41% growth when compared to 2016.
- Impact of COVID-19 reduced 5-year growth 2016 to 2021 to 15%.
- Strong recovery of 37% when comparing 2021 to 2020 MRDT reflects the resiliency of the strategic approach.
- Except for October and November, shoulder season months showed exceptional growth prior to the pandemic.²
- The percentage of visitors choosing Golden as their primary destination grew from 27% to 31% between 2017 and 2019.³
- The percentage of overnight visitors grew from 74% to 84% between 2016 and 2019.⁴
- 46% repeat visitors⁵
- Tourism and community stakeholders positively rated our performance in achieving the strategic objectives.

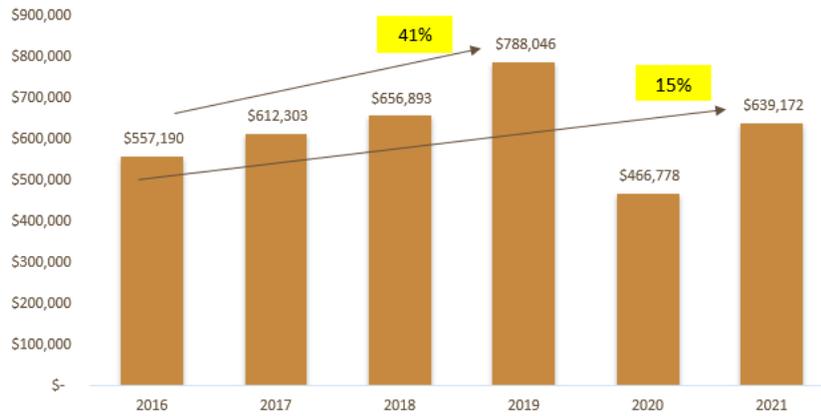
² Source STR Destination Trend Report Golden 2016 and 2019.

³ Source Tourism Golden Summer Visitor Studies 2016 and 2019.

⁴ Source Tourism Golden Summer Visitor Studies 2016 and 2019.

⁵ Source Tourism Golden Summer Visitor Study 2019.

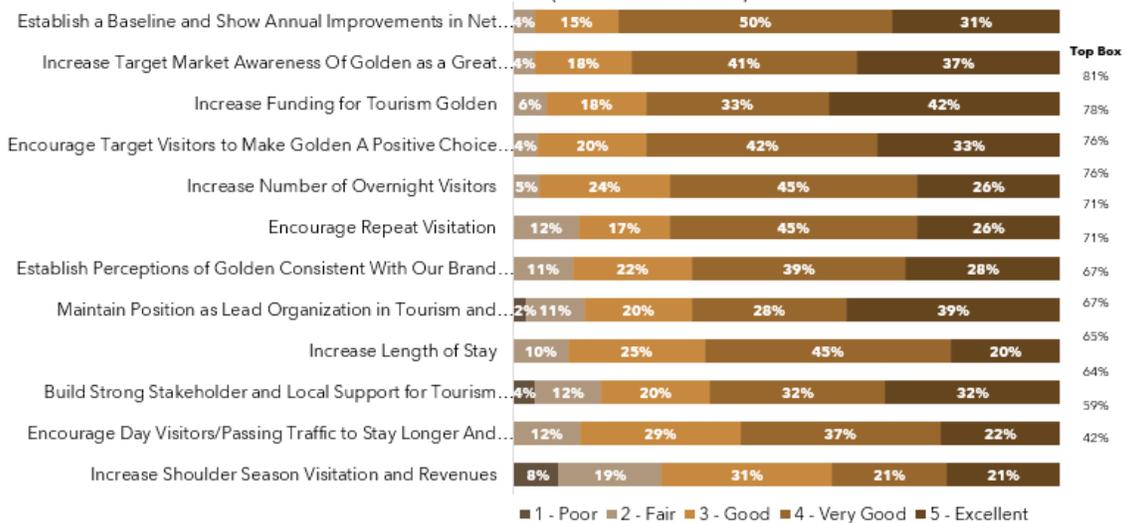
GROSS MRDT 2016 - 2021



Shoulder Season Occupancy Percentage Growth 2016 to 2019



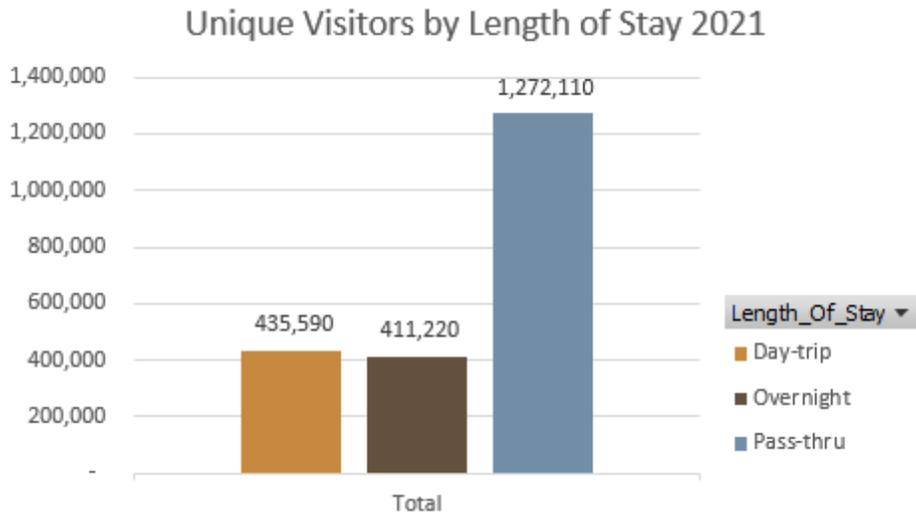
Tourism Golden Strategic Objective Performance (% of Stakeholders)



In Tourism Golden's 2017-2021 strategic plan, there were 12 strategic objectives that have directly impacted the tourism industry. How would you rate Tourism Golden's performance on each of those objectives. n=50.

Destination Performance 2021

- ❑ 2.1 million visitors⁶
 - 411,220 Overnight stays
 - 435,590 Day trips
- ❑ 13 point increase in Tourism Sentiment Score⁷ Most talked: mountain biking, snowmobiling, camping and accommodation.



GOLDEN, BRITISH COLUMBIA
**TOURISM
 SENTIMENT SCORE®**

31



JAN 01 - DEC 31, 2020
 SCORE

18

JAN 01 - DEC 31, 2021

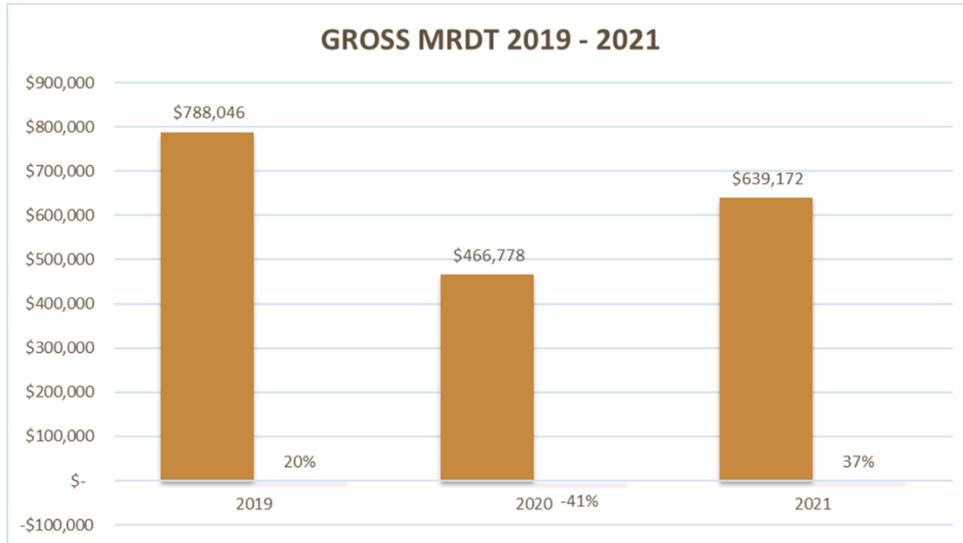
+13 points

OVER
 JAN 01 - DEC 31, 2020

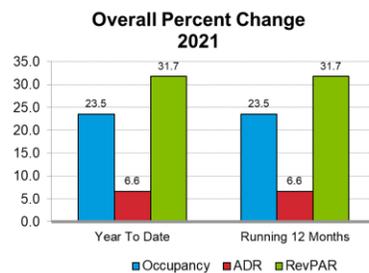
⁶ Source: Telus Insights Golden 2021

⁷ Source Tourism Sentiment Index Golden December 2021

- ❑ 37% increase in gross MRDT revenues in 2021 compared to 2020.
- ❑ 23% increase in occupancy in 2021 and significantly increased against comparable 2020 months without travel advisories.⁸
- ❑ 31% increase in RevPAR.
- ❑ 6.6% increase in ADR.



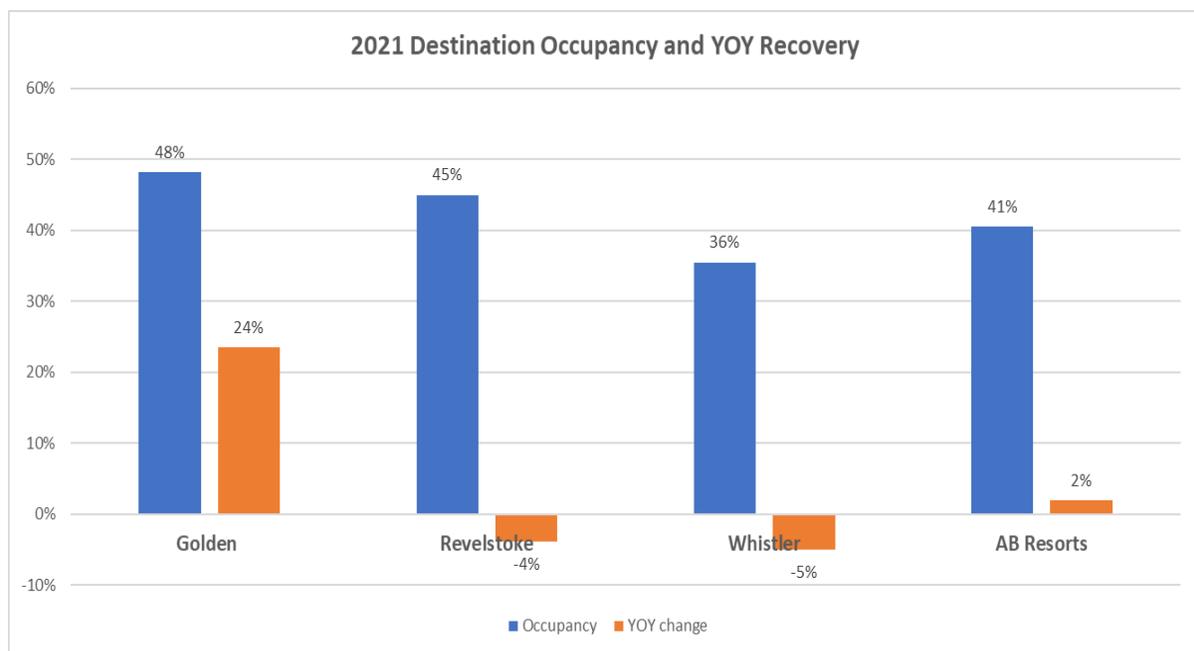
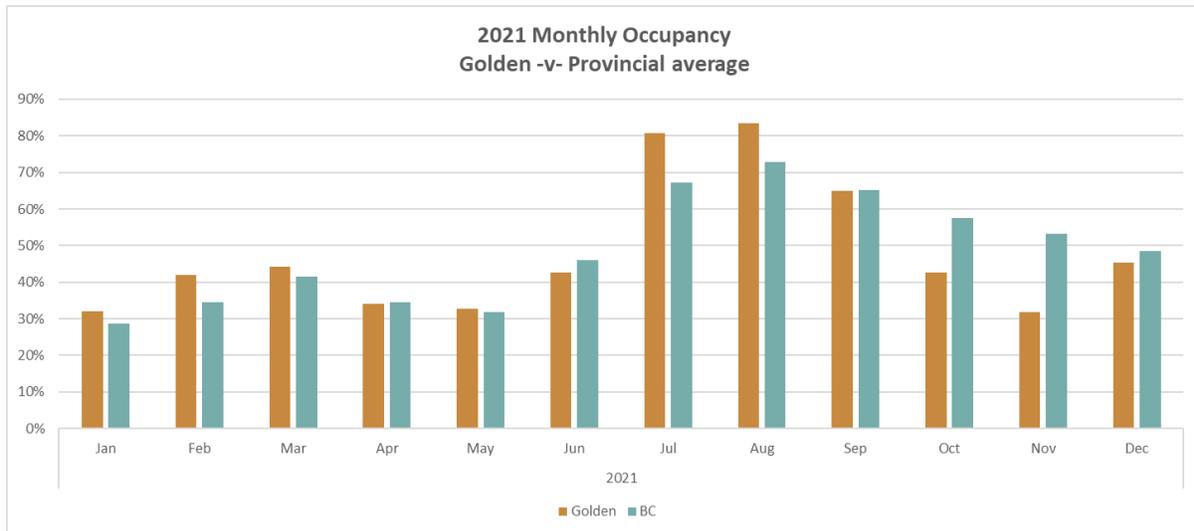
❑ Golden accommodations months when regional and international borders



outperformed provincial occupancy in travel restrictions were lifted and until US opened.

⁸ Source STR Destination Report Golden December 2021

- ❑ Golden accommodations occupancy and year-on-year recovery outperformed comparable destinations.
- ❑ Although Golden’s ADR was lower, the ADR recovery outperformed comparable destinations.⁹



⁹ Sources: Destination BC Tourism Industry Dashboard and Travel Alberta Tourism Indicators

DMO Performance

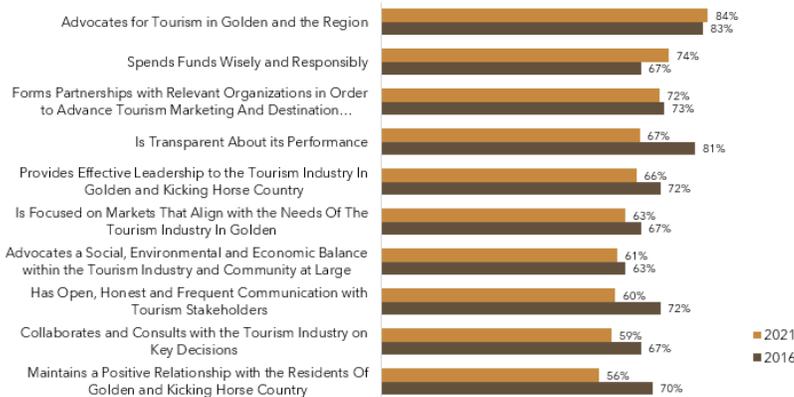
In preparation for the MRDT program renewal and to inform the 5-year strategic planning for 2022 to 2027 Tourism Golden undertook a stakeholder survey in spring 2021. Additionally, there were several stakeholder engagement sessions which comprised of online group sessions and one-to-one phone calls. Aside from gathering stakeholder feedback on our past and future performance as a DMO and identifying barriers to growth and future opportunities, we also wanted to understand the appetite of the eligible accommodators to increase the MRDT rate from 2% to 3% at renewal.

It is noted in the survey report that there were fewer respondents than in the 2016 survey, and that, whilst the organisation still received very positive results, the overall performance rate did reduce by 6% against 2016. One of the respondents noted the implication of timing.

As we progressed through the engagement process, we did begin to immediately address some of the comments and concerns raised, including:

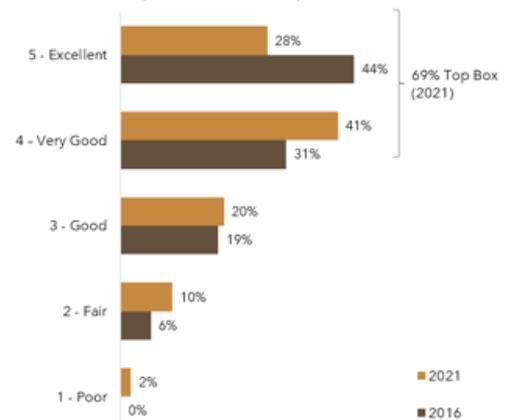
- ❑ Created MRDT member support package including free advertising in TG Travel Planner and website.
- ❑ Accommodation-specific asset development and social advertising campaigns.
- ❑ Liaised with TRAN on improving signage for local businesses during highway 1 extended closures.
- ❑ Launched Check In Canada accommodation booking referral platform.
- ❑ Created 'Responsible Travel' web page and assets.
- ❑ Initiated quarterly stakeholder meetings to improve consultation and communication with stakeholders.
- ❑ Planned for a 2022 event and to improve resident awareness of the tourism industry and TG.
- ❑ Increased monthly stakeholder e-blast to bi-weekly.

Tourism Golden Business Performance
(% of Stakeholders)



Tourism Golden strives to collaborate and be an inclusive, industry-driven organization. How do you rate Tourism Golden's performance on the following ways of conducting business. n=39/51.

Tourism Golden Overall Performance
(% of Stakeholders)



Financial Summary

Since its inception, Tourism Golden has been committed to being available to all our stakeholder businesses and has operated a successful 'pay-to-play' model resulting in the majority of stakeholder businesses participating in co-op advertising activities.

A primary source of revenue for Tourism Golden is the 2% Municipal and Regional District tax (MRDT). This is supported by DMO-led co-op initiatives which include:

- ❑ DMO collateral marketing including website, Travel Planner and Maps.
- ❑ DBC programs and initiatives including the leading the Golden Triangle consortium in the Open Pool Co-Op Marketing program.
- ❑ Resort Development Strategy initiatives managed on behalf of the Town of Golden, including the events hosting and research programs.

In 2021 we also secured grants contributing to:

- ❑ Strategic planning and stakeholder engagement.
- ❑ Technology improvements.
- ❑ Seasonal staff wages.
- ❑ Community-focussed vaccination campaign.

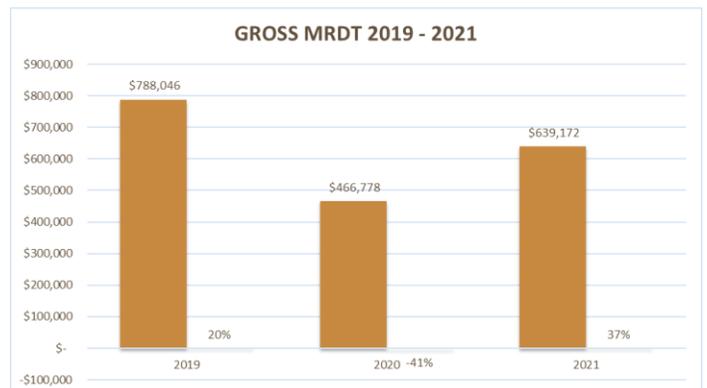
With the uncertainties and limitations of the pandemic, combined with MRDT revenues exceeding budget and unanticipated grants and other funding initiatives, we started the 2021 fiscal with a healthy carry-forward of \$581,752.

For the same reasons we underspent against the budget and exceeded the conservative anticipated revenues in the 2021 fiscal. In particular, MRDT revenues exceeded the anticipated amount by \$170,000. We finished the fiscal year with an increased carry-forward of \$625,119. With signs of a healthy and quick recovery, and achieving renewal at 3% from July 2022, this places us in a great position to begin implementing new destination development, visitor experience and marketing initiatives in 2022 and 2023.

Financial highlights include:

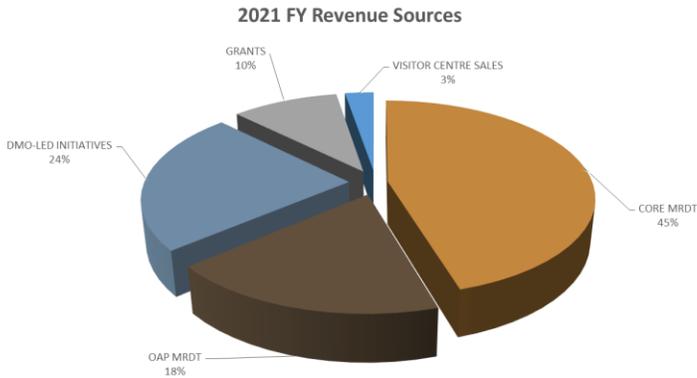
- ❑ Net MRDT revenue increased by 32% against 2020, exceeding the 20% target.
- ❑ Net MRDT revenue represents 82% of 2019 MRDT revenue.
- ❑ Actual revenue exceeded projections by 23%.

Financial statements produced by Cox & Co. and approved by the Tourism Golden Finance Committee and Board of Directors are available on request.



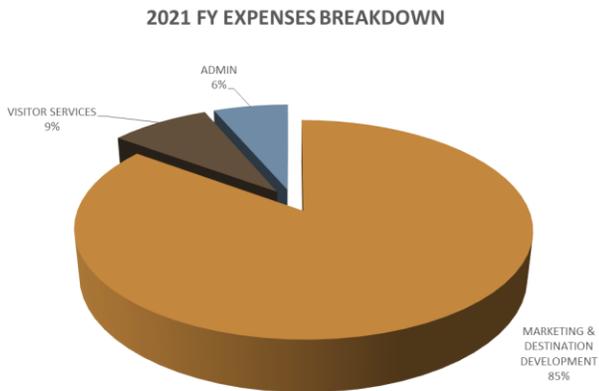
2021 FY REVENUE	%	AMOUNTS
CORE MRDT	45%	\$ 444,108
OAP MRDT	18%	\$ 180,324
DMO-LED INITIATIVES	24%	\$ 231,523
GRANTS	10%	\$ 97,181
VISITOR CENTRE SALES	3%	\$ 26,143
Other	0%	\$ 491

\$979,770



2021 FY EXPENSES	%	AMOUNT
MARKETING & DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT	85%	\$ 799,512
VISITOR SERVICES	9%	\$ 86,588
ADMIN	5%	\$ 50,302

\$936,402



Marketing Summary

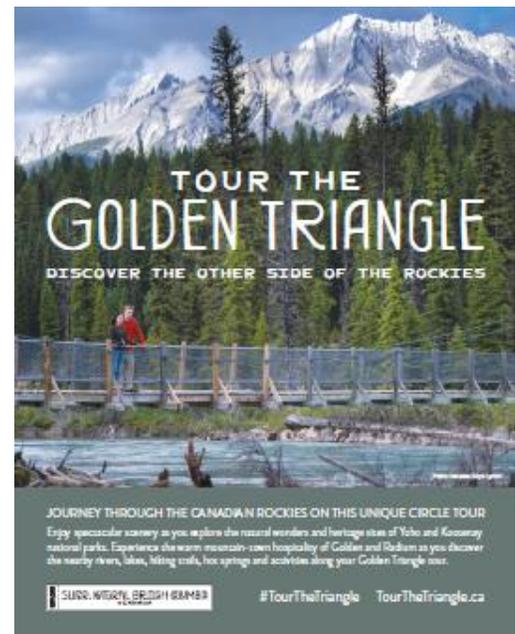
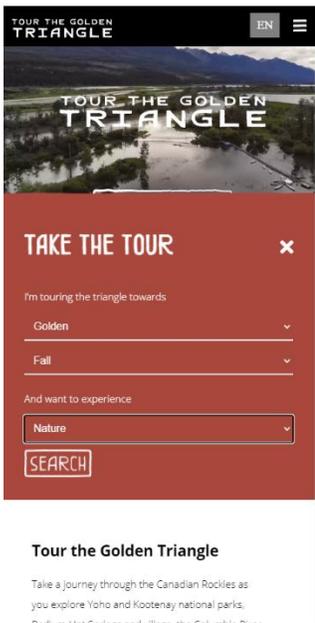
The 2017-2021 Strategic Business Plan and the 2021 Marketing Plan identify the marketing objectives, target markets, marketing strategies and budgeted spend.

The 2021 budget and plan, created in November 2020 was extremely cautious, reflecting the uncertainties of the pandemic and not anticipating the level of recovery that was achieved in the summer of 2021.

With vaccination roll-out not fully begun, regional travel advisories and closed international, our plans through year continued to evolve accordingly. Consumer shows were cancelled and with pandemic travel restrictions and uncertainties, media hosting was diminished. In addition to targeted and responsive advertising, we concentrated on building our library of assets using local photographers and videographers where possible and leveraging earned media or advertorials with paid advertising.

Through the DBC Co-op Marketing program we participated with CDMOs and activity associations on the following:

- Golden Triangle (Hwy 93/95/1 road trip/tour)
- BC Bird Trail (Columbia Valley Bird Trail partnership)
- Kootenay Dirt (mountain biking)
- Kootenay XC (Nordic ski)
- Sled Kootenay (snowmobiling)
- Fishing BC
- Get in BC (Hwy 1 road trip AB border to the Shuswap)
- BC Ale Trail



Advertising

We took an 'always on' approach to marketing whether it be the 'Dream Golden' campaign to stay top-of-mind during periods of essential travel only, or campaigns aimed at the regional drive markets of Alberta and BC, broadened to include Canada as a whole in the summer and then including USA from August 2021.

We were excited to launch the first-ever TV advertising on the 'Spotlight On' segment of Calgary CTV Morning Live show. Summer and fall campaigns featured a variety of 60 second video segments for a period of 4-weeks each played during the morning weekday show and supported by a mobile display campaign.

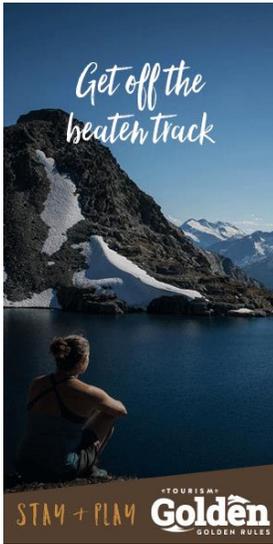
In response to the critical labour issues, we ran 2 paid social campaigns for summer and winter raising awareness of Golden as a place to work, travel and play. The campaign generated 195,300 impressions and 745 clicks to landing page with a WorkBC API featuring tourism jobs in Golden.

Highlights

- ❑ Target audiences focussed only on AB, BC, ON & QC until Q3.
- ❑ Launched US in Aug 2021 ahead of Sept border opening.
- ❑ 45 million digital impressions.
- ❑ Advertising in 20 print titles.
- ❑ 2 Calgary TV campaigns
- ❑ 36 earned media features resulting directly from TG activity.
- ❑ Large format video screens at TIFF Sept 2021



45 million digital impressions

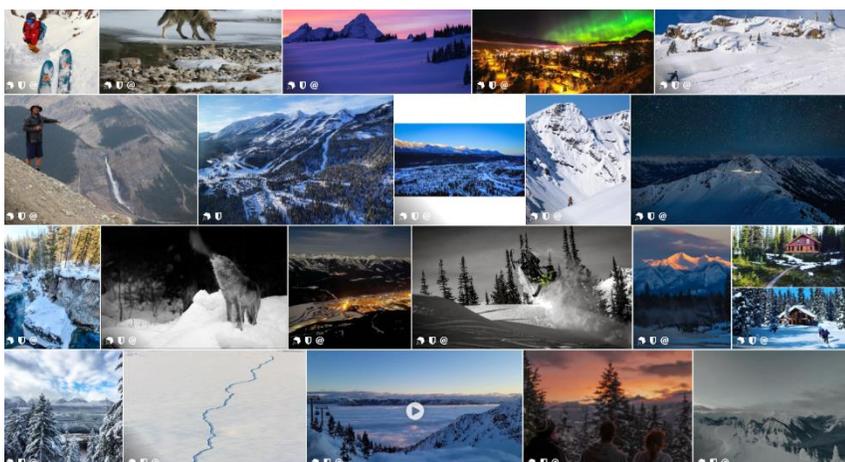
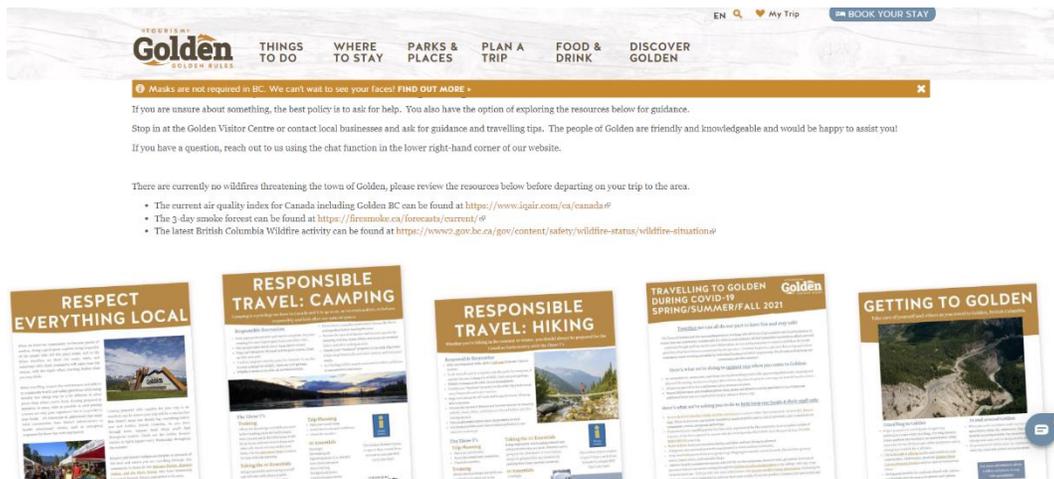


Content & Asset Creation

We completed the following projects:

- Value of the DMO and tourism video
- Accommodations video series
- Destination video edits; hiking, patios, ATV, aerial, social shorts
- 'Our Shot, Golden' vaccination social campaign video
- Kootenay Dirt consortium mountain biking video
- Golden Triangle consortium video & social shorts
- Golden Triangle influencer photo shoot
- Supported Redbull Will Gadd '7 on the 7' video shoot
- Supported BETA Mag '72 hours in Golden' mountain biking video shoot
- Participated in KRT regional asset development initiative
- Created responsible travel blog series & distributable content pieces

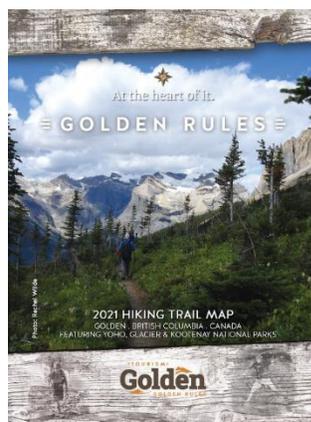
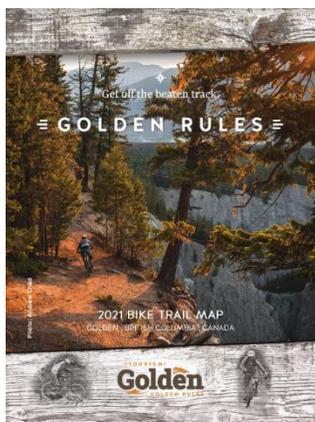
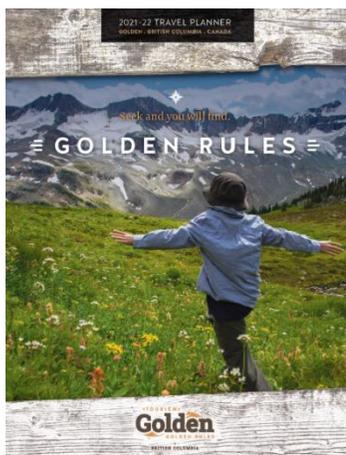
User generated Content (UGC) continues to play a large role in giving access to inspirational content for our social media platforms and quality images for other marketing activity. Using the Crowdriff User Generated Content platform gave us access to **1.5 million social assets** and **1.1 million rights approved assets**: an invaluable addition to our social media and marketing activity.



Marketing Collateral

Feedback from our stakeholders indicated that they wanted to see a return of the annual Golden Travel Planner and were interested in advertising in that and the annual trail maps. We therefore resumed publishing and distributing our stable of print pieces, albeit with reduced print runs:

- ❑ Golden Travel Planner – 50,000 copies
- ❑ Golden Hiking Trail Map – 15,000 copies
- ❑ Golden Biking Trail Map – 12,000 copies
- ❑ Outdoor Discovery Map - 5,000 copies
- ❑ Getting to Golden rack card – remaining from 2020



The Golden Triangle website www.tourthetriangle.ca was enhanced with additional functionality include suggested itineraries and blog content.

Events

Annual events including the Freeride World Tour, Golden24, and Golden Ultra were cancelled however we were pleased that Crankworx were able to operate two events in Golden as part of their for-TV-only summer series in August. This included resurrecting the famous Psychosis downhill race on Mount 7.



The event generated good engagement in our primary markets, raising awareness of Golden as a world-class mountain biking destination in a highly engaged audience.

Visitor Services

The visitor centre opened on May 28th, significantly earlier than in 2020. However, visitor party numbers were disappointingly 6% less than in 2020 and 62% less than 2019. Staff recruitment and retention was an issue, with a turnover in the manager position. We did not have enough staff to operate additional programs or locations other than opening the centre daily until Sept 13th. We were pleased that at least one counsellor was a return employee. COVID protocols remained in place for the season.

Research

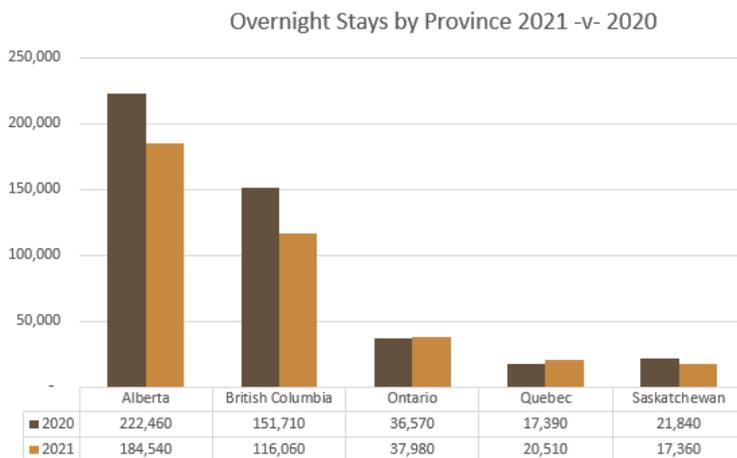
We are committed to informing and measuring our activity with research and proven data by regularly undertaking visitor and other data research.

Telus Insights Visitor Data

2021 was the second year of the Telus Insights project and provided us with valuable visitor demographics and behaviour including length of stay and access route. Building on the 2020 data, we were able to create digital advertising monthly and seasonal audiences on the most valuable geographic origin markets that generated overnight stays in 2020 and 2021 and track year on year comparisons of visitor volumes. Overview reports are also shared with our stakeholders.

Of note 2.1 million total trips in 2021 of which:

- ❑ 411,220 were overnight
- ❑ 435,590 were day trips
- ❑ 1,272,110 were pass-thru
- ❑ AB & BC overnight trips reduced compared to 2020
- ❑ ON and QC overnight trips increased compared to 2020



Accommodation Performance.

Using destination data collected via STR and AirDNA, we were able to track how short-term rentals and traditional hotels and motels performed in occupancy, ADR and RevPAR, as well understanding the volume of STR stock available.

PRIZM Market Segment Project

In late 2021 we were fortunate to begin a project in partnership with DBC using Mobilescapes data to determine primary market segments and identify lookalike audiences. The final report was published in spring 2022 and is being used to educate stakeholders and inform our own tactical marketing.

The [Tourism Sentiment Index](#) by Destination Think! measures the online sentiment of a destination through peer to peer conversations, complementing the quantitative data from other sources. In 2021 we saw an increased in the score by 18 points with upward trends noted in accommodation and camping and most talked about being snowmobiling and biking.

