



Tourism Golden Association

5-year Strategic Plan 2022 - 2027

Submitted by Joanne Sweeting – Executive Director
September 2021



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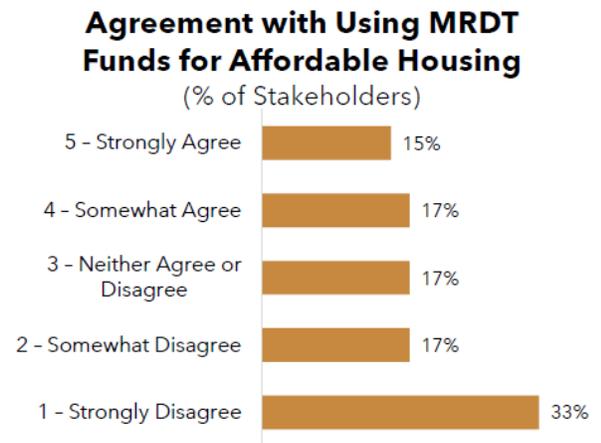
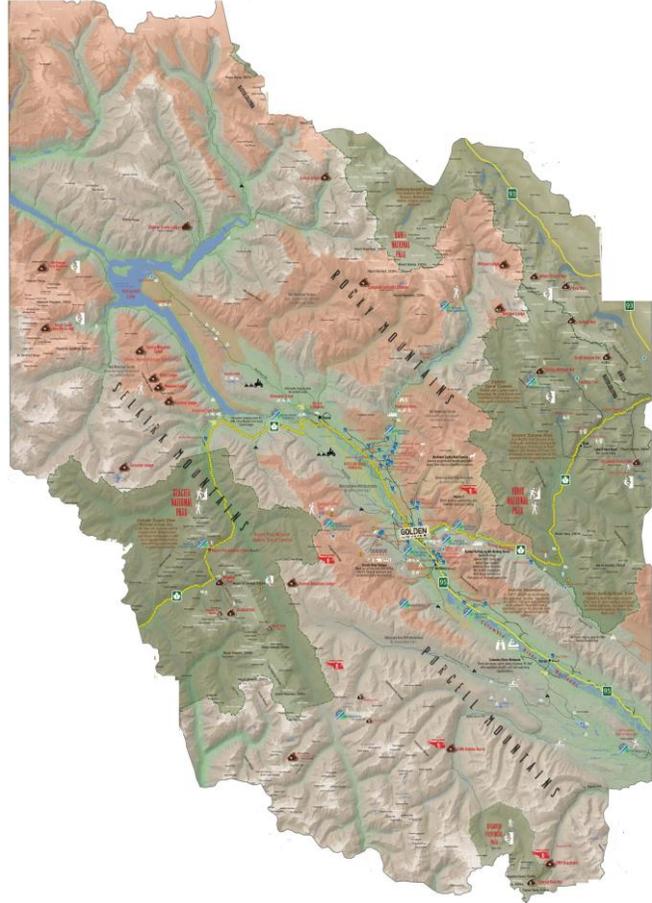
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Background and Context for Planning

The following strategic plan for Tourism Golden was developed with the input of Golden’s tourism stakeholders and with the leadership of Directors of the Board, the Executive Director, and the team at Tourism Golden. Engagement opportunities included Stakeholder Survey conducted in spring 2021, a series of one-on-one interviews, a Board workshop followed a by a Board review of the draft plan and presentation to the membership of Tourism Golden at their Annual General Meeting on August 11, 2021. A virtual workshop was also offered to stakeholders on June 23rd, to allow them to contribute their thoughts and ideas to the planning process.

The Stakeholder Survey undertaken in March and April 2021 served to inform the strategic direction for the next 5-years and confirmed support to apply to increase the MRDT rate to 3%.

Interestingly, although lack of affordable housing was identified as the top long-term barrier to tourism growth, 50% of respondents somewhat or strongly disagreed with using MRDT for affordable housing. For that reason, this plan does not include any strategic direction relating to affordable housing.



Tourism Golden strives to align continuously with the strategy, objectives, and tactical implementation of Destination BC. Background research for this plan included a review of their [Corporate Strategy 2020 - 2023](#) and attendance at their regular Zoom industry and marketing updates as well as participating in the DBC Iconics strategy development workshops in early 2021.



The tourism industry around the world has experienced unprecedented turmoil since the announcement of the global pandemic in March 2020. Here in British Columbia, the Province’s tourism businesses have effectively been closed to other than local business for much of the last 15 months and the impact of travel restrictions have been particularly impactful in towns in the Kootenay Rockies tourism region like Golden, that rely heavily on visitation from Alberta and unrestricted travel between provinces.



The pandemic has brought to the fore the importance of the tourism industry’s social license within a community and the need to work collaboratively with residents to welcome visitors. The crowds of BC residents touring their own Province and recreating in the front, mid and backcountry has amplified the need for destination management strategies and opportunities for diversion of travellers to less frequented areas having capacity in peak times as well as attraction of higher yield, longer stays rather than a focus on mere volume of visits.

As travel resumes, many pundits are theorizing on the nature of changes in traveller needs and expectations. A literature review (see Appendix A) conducted for Tourism Golden, identified the following commonly shared views on the future of travel including these anticipated trends:

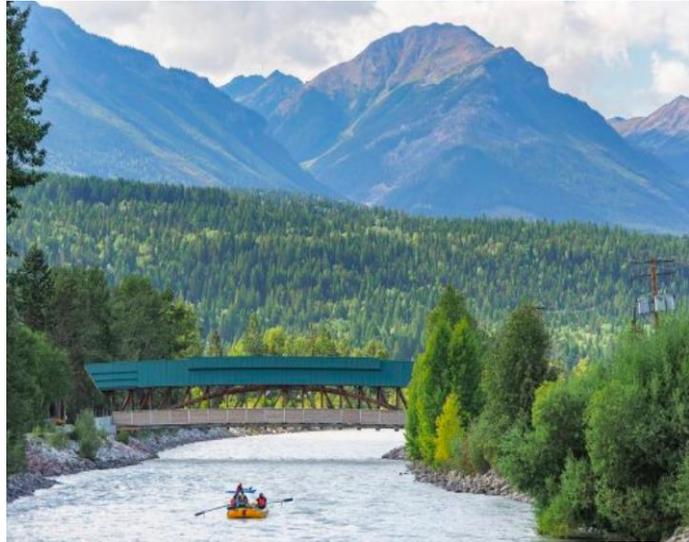
- Growth in wellness tourism in all its forms (traditional spa/hot springs, forest bathing etc.)
- More time in the wilderness as an antidote to urban life
- Desire to leave a positive footprint/give something back to local communities (especially those offering programs that support protected areas, protected species)
- More interest in voluntourism programs – travel with purpose/meaning
- Responsible travel – low impact on the planet

- Desire to learn and make connections – local interaction and smaller, authentic destinations
- Excitement for bucket list trips (a shorter, edited list of desired experiences)
- Longer trips/work-actions
- Optimism about long-haul destinations – but planning short haul travel in the immediate
- Need for safety and flexibility

Many of these trends can be leveraged in Golden's favor.

Golden is well positioned to focus on travel interests in wellness, time in the wilderness as an antidote to urban life and the desire for local interaction and smaller, authentic destinations (the authentic Rockies experience). For international travellers, the Rockies remain a bucket-list experience.

As well, these trends can inform new opportunities for Tourism Golden and its stakeholders and have been considered in the plan that follows.



The role of the Destination Management Organization (DMO) has also continued to evolve over the last five years since Tourism Golden's last strategic planning process. Destination marketing remains an important focus of investment, and this will continue to be a priority as all destinations aggressively compete for the return of travellers post-pandemic. However, the need for destination management also continues to grow. These destination management imperatives include participation by the DMO in initiatives that enhance the visitor experience directly through programs like provision of visitor information services, front-line service training, stakeholder digital literacy, or support for festivals and events. They also include collaboration with a wide range of partners whose investments while perhaps not primarily for visitors, also impact their experience such as those made by Federal Departments (Parks Canada), Provincial Ministries (ENV/Parks, TRAN, FLNRORD for resource roads etc.), local and regional governments etc. Given the growing breadth of responsibilities, DMOs around the Province are considering how to increase resources available to them for investment on behalf of their stakeholders and the local tourism industry with many renewing and increasing their Municipal and Regional District Tax rate to 3%. See Appendix B for a list of MRDT collecting communities and their current rate.

Tourism Golden's performance against its 2017-2022 Strategic Plan prior to the pandemic was industry leading. Details of results achieved are documented in the Tourism Golden 2019 Annual Report.

Tourism Golden also continues to operate the Visitor Information Centre along Highway 1. Previous studies place the incremental visitor spending associated with the information provided by the VC team resulting in incremental visitor spending in 2018 of \$431,375 with potential future spending in Golden in excess of \$5 million being stimulated as a direct result of information obtained at the Golden Visitor Centre.¹

¹ Source: [Golden Visitor Centre Incremental Economic Benefit Study 2018](#)

2019 Annual Report highlights:

The agreement with Destination BC for operation of the Visitor Centre is scheduled to renew in 2022. Given the incremental spending generated for local tourism businesses by capturing highway traffic and sharing with them the many reasons to visit downtown Golden and Kicking Horse Mountain Resort, as well as the essential services provided to travellers (washrooms, wifi), this five-year strategy is premised on successful contract renewal.

Highlights

- ↑ Value of Tourism \$124 million direct revenue
- ↑ 9th year of growth in tourism revenues
- ↑ +18% MRDT & accommodation revenues
- ↑ Net Promoter Score 50.3 (up from 31.8)
- ↑ 84% of visitors stayed overnight (+7%)
- ↑ Average length of stay summer 2.5 nights
- ↑ Average length of stay winter 3.5 nights
- ↑ FWT event marketing value of \$1.5 million+

The Next Five Years - Strategic Direction

The Board of Directors reviewed the vision, mission and guiding principles and reflected on the importance of targeting travellers who are the right 'fit' for Golden based upon values of respect for the environment and respect for community.

Tourism Golden's Vision:

We will inspire travellers who share our community's values to stay longer and experience Golden, creating deep connections and lasting memories.

Tourism Golden's Mission:

Tourism Golden works collaboratively with its stakeholders and leverages its resources effectively to execute research-informed destination management strategies that responsibly grow Golden's year-round visitor economy and contribute to the community's economic sustainability and resident quality of life.

Tourism Golden's Guiding Principles:

As we progress towards our vision and fulfill our mission, Tourism Golden will make strategic, research informed decisions, and conduct itself in a manner that is:

- *Respectful of our community, our stakeholders, our partners and the environment*
- *Inclusive and Collaborative*
- *Transparent and Accountable*



Tourism Golden’s Core Objectives:

Tourism Golden’s five-year strategy is designed to deliver measurable results in the pursuit of seven core objectives across four themes:



The methodology for measuring progress against each of these objectives is as follows:

	Objective	Methodology	Measure
1.0	Increase overall value of tourism economy	Value of tourism input/output model baseline established in 2019	Value of tourism economy in 2025 equivalent or better than 2019
2.0	Increase average length of stay at all times of year	Accommodation reporting	Average length of stay increases year over year
3.0	Increase shoulder season occupancy and rate (April/May and October/ November)	Use MRDT collected in these months as a proxy for performance	MRDT collected in shoulder seasons increases year over year
4.0	Connect more visitors to destination experiences through multiple channels	Visitor Intercept Survey Visitor Centre Stats Mobile engagements	Increasing engagements with visitors in destination
5.0	Educate visitors to experience a safe and sustainable vacation	Visitor Intercept Surveys	Visitor awareness and understanding levels
6.0	Deliver enhanced stakeholder programs and supports	Stakeholder survey	Top Box ratings
7.0	Residents of Golden understand the value of tourism and support the local tourism industry	Periodic resident survey	Maintain support for tourism industry
8.0	Balance resident values with visitor demand and business needs	Periodic resident survey	Resident sentiment index

Golden's Unique Selling Proposition/Messaging to Target Markets

Golden's unique competitive advantage remains anchored in its location at the 'heart of the Parks' with access to an incredible range and density of outdoor adventure for all levels of ability (this mix of experiences was recently enhanced with the 'accessible to all' Golden Skybridge experience) along with the opportunity for travellers to experience a small and authentic mountain town and meet the locals who live there. Golden offers visitors the chance to experience the 'real Rockies' and easy access to four National Parks, three mountain ranges, two heritage rivers and some of the best outdoor recreation in the world.

Messaging within this overarching brand presence can be further tailored to the audience by showcasing the range experiences from extreme/elite to the more family-friendly opportunities to explore and connect with nature without the crowds of superficiality of other mountain playgrounds.



Golden's Target Markets:

Tourism Golden's ability to achieve results against its core economic contribution objectives will require focus and understanding of travel markets that will respond to Golden's destination experience and unique selling proposition and will maintain social license within the community.

Given the recent disruption to travel, the five-year duration of this strategic plan is an ideal opportunity to rebuild Golden's mix of target markets and travelers in a way that provides more diversity in the portfolio (for risk management) and also speaks to the desire of stakeholders and residents to manage growth through attraction of longer stays, higher yields, pursuing more volume of visitors only in shoulder season need periods. To protect the 'heart' of the Golden experience, the long-term view on target markets requires careful consideration of segments that share the community's values and their collective desire to respect and steward the natural and social assets and 'sense of place'. Golden's 'Golden Rules' will increasingly embrace visitor education and responsible recreation – travellers that are receptive to these messages will prove to be a better long-term 'fit' for Golden.

Tourism Golden's choice of target markets for the next five years must also reflect upon new travel trends arising out of the pandemic and through the recovery period. Research reviewed from various sources such as Destination Canada, Destination BC and the web-based literature review that was conducted, share the common perspective that for the next 1-2 years the majority of travel will still likely be closer to home and domestic. As a consequence, there is a significant opportunity

to rebuild the loyalty of the Alberta market and also to engage with other Canadian markets and to welcome all markets back to Golden. Having introduced new domestic markets to Golden and area, the focus can then shift to building their loyalty as these travellers begin to consider international travel once more.

International markets are believed to begin recovering with some possible return for winter 2021/22 but more likely a slow re-building from summer 2022 onwards with full recovery to 2019 levels of travel not anticipated until 2025 or 2026.

There is agreement amongst stakeholders that an immediate priority for 2021 marketing initiatives will be some form of 'Welcome Back' campaign for the Alberta market, who at times over the course of the pandemic felt less than welcome in British Columbia. The team at Tourism Golden advises that these campaigns were ready to launch for the Phase III travel restrictions anticipated for July 1, 2021.

To assist in categorizing target markets by nature of motivating activity, growth opportunities are those that have exhibited historical strength and require continued investment to maintain momentum around conversion and intention to travel. Emerging opportunities also require investment, but the nature of program investments weigh more heavily towards building awareness, intrigue and the provision of compelling information that leads to conversion.

Golden's Growth Opportunities (continued investment to maintain momentum with a focus on conversion):

- Ski/snowboarding enthusiasts seeking big mountain experiences (both in a resort setting and, in the backcountry, heli/cat skiing lodges) in a genuine down-to-earth mountain town – all geographic markets with a focus on AB residents, BC residents, ON residents; American markets with direct connections to Calgary; international markets (AU, UK).
- Mountain bike enthusiasts – all geographic markets with a focus on AB residents, BC residents, ON residents.
- Touring the Rockies – all geographic markets considering a tour of the Rockies but concerned about overcrowding and over-commercialization of destinations such as Banff, Lake Louise – use Golden as a base for multi-night exploration of the 'real Rockies'.
- Golf enthusiasts seeking a 3-4 night golf getaway – AB market; BC resident market (Okanagan) – Golden Golf Course is a 'must-play' on a larger tour.
- White water rafting enthusiasts – AB and BC resident markets.

Golden's Emerging Opportunities (increased investment to grow returns from these markets with a focus on building awareness, intrigue leading to conversion):

- Hiking enthusiasts seeking scenic hikes combined with interesting post-hike arts, culture, heritage, and culinary experiences in a genuine and inviting small town setting – Golden as a multi-night base for exploration of hikes within the National Parks.
- Snowmobiling enthusiasts – AB, SK, MN.
- Active seniors who enjoy travelling outside of peak summer and are seeking new and interesting experiences suited to their fitness level along with comfortable accommodation, dining, and retail options – BC residents, AB, Pacific Northwest US.
- Young families with pre-school aged children – active parents who enjoy outdoor recreation and bring their family along on their adventures - BC residents, AB, Pacific Northwest US.

- Families with school aged children – seeking new summer vacation experiences to safely share with their children – BC/AB/ON residents.
- Touring travellers (private vehicles, RV's, motorcycles, road biking) exploring the Kootenay Rockies region.

Tourism Golden's Strategic Pillars

To achieve these seven objectives, Tourism Golden will focus its resources in three principal areas or strategic pillars:



1.0 Destination Marketing

Tourism Golden will invest in bold and innovative marketing campaigns targeting travellers who appreciate Golden's small mountain town authenticity and access to incredible outdoor experiences and whose personal values are consistent with those of Golden's residents regarding respect for the environment and respect for community.

Destination marketing will include the continuation of current, high performing investments as well as constant monitoring of market opportunities and initiation of new campaigns in response to these opportunities. Investments will be identified in each annual marketing plan and are anticipated to include the following (all of which will continue to be informed by an investment in market research):

- Media/influencer relations
- Content acquisition and curation
- Website improvements including consideration of an accommodation booking engine
- Social media engagement
- Print, digital, search and social media advertising
- Print collateral
- Consumer show attendance (select shows only)
- Support for third party produced events

Know the Market

Continue to invest in primary market research

Regularly monitor key performance indicators

Motivate Travel

Invest in on-brand content (stories, images, film)

Continue to actively engage in social media channels

Invest in select print/digital/search and social advertising

Identify, target and host key influencers

Continue the branded and integrated family of collateral

Support existing/ create new signature events in need periods

Close the Sale

Operate the Visitor Centre and encourage longer lengths of stay this trip or next

Continue to invest in Visitor Information Services - mobile, digital, APP opportunities

Investigate opportunity for on-line accommodation booking platform



2.0 Destination Recovery

Tourism Golden will invest in marketing programs designed to support the immediate recovery of businesses collecting MRDT ultimately benefiting all tourism stakeholders.

Using some of the funds generated from the increase in MRDT from 2% to 3%, Tourism Golden will work with MRDT collectors to create a suite of programs designed to support their recovery from the pandemic and its associated travel restrictions. These programs will be identified annually and initially will include:

- Marketing campaigns designed and executed specifically to direct travellers to overnight stays in MRDT collecting properties
- Contributions to cooperative campaigns amongst several businesses that are stakeholder defined and stakeholder led marketing initiatives



3.0 Destination Management

Tourism Golden will provide visitors with the information they need and in the form and location they prefer in order to encourage them to stay longer in Golden and experience more.

Tourism Golden will educate travellers and tourism businesses so that the local tourism economy evolves respectfully and responsibly with the continued support of residents.

Tourism Golden will support tourism businesses to access the training and education they need to consistently deliver remarkable and responsible experiences to visitors (including support for labour attraction when needed).

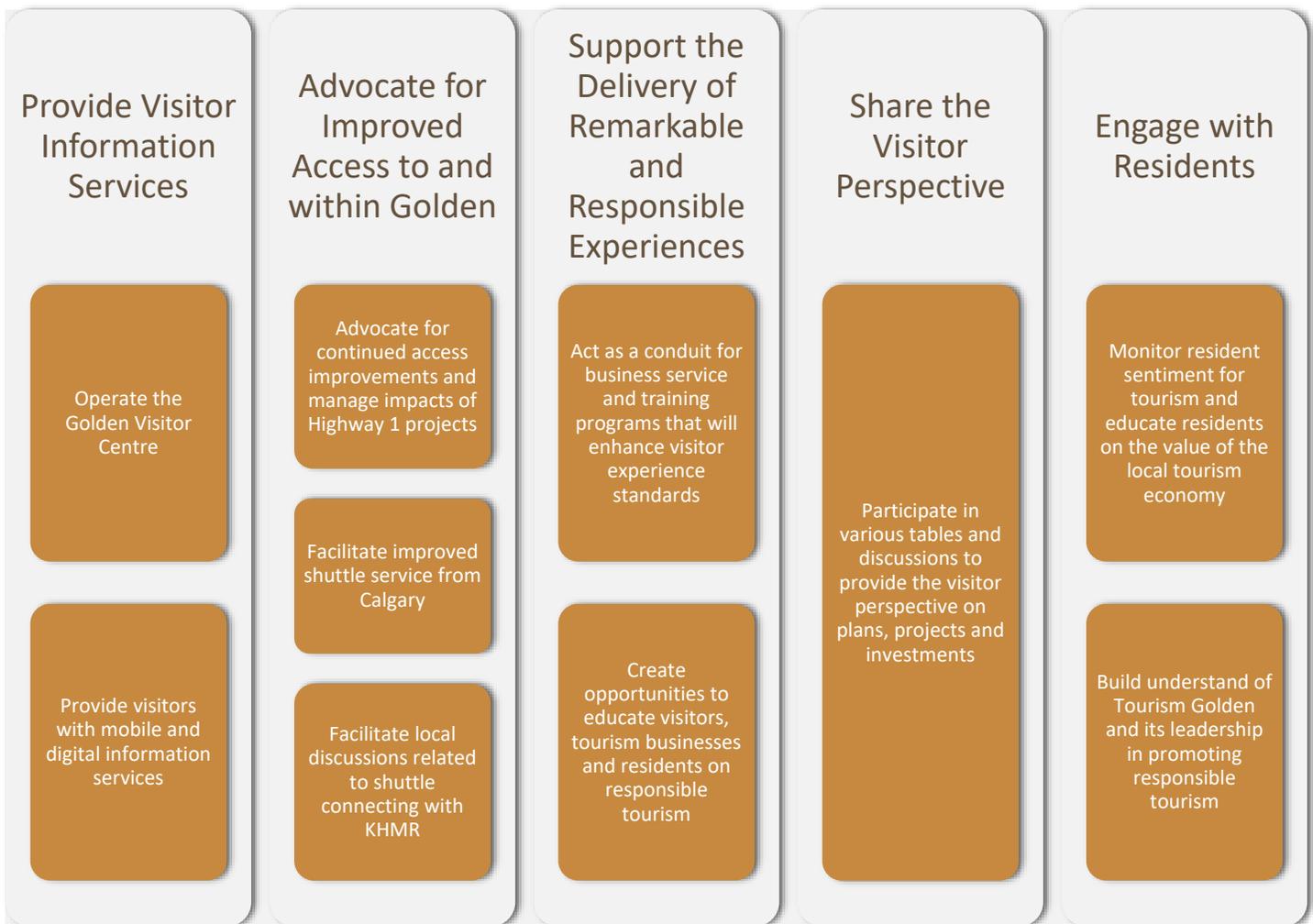
Tourism Golden will contribute tourism knowledge and expertise to ensure the visitor perspective is considered in all significant local projects/ventures and will advocate for the needs of the local tourism industry.

Tourism Golden will:

- Lead the local delivery of programs designed to educate visitors, tourism businesses and residents on the nature of responsible tourism including programs for businesses to reduce their carbon footprint, opportunities to collaboratively promote dispersion of visitors to lesser used areas having capacity and to educate on proper backcountry etiquette etc.
- Provide visitor information services in the form/location needed by travellers (Visitor Centre, mobile visitor information, digital visitor information, kiosks etc.) offering content that encourages travellers to stop and stay longer in Golden this trip and in the future.
- Provide a visitor 'lens' on local dialogue regarding investments in access (shuttle services, highway improvements), infrastructure or experiences/services/amenities being

considered by both the private and public sector to encourage informed decisions and alignment of resources for maximum return.

- Continue to work to minimize the negative impacts of Highway 1 construction and closures through effective communication and sharing of alternative routes/experiences for travellers.
- Act as a conduit for the many resources available to support tourism businesses including digital literacy (Destination BC), business planning/mentoring (Community Futures/Columbia Basin Trust), electric vehicle business opportunities (Kootenay Rockies Tourism), accessibility tourism audits/opportunities (KRT/Spinal Cord Injury BC) etc.
- Advocate for the needs of Golden’s tourism businesses (labour, nightly rentals and other issues identified in regular stakeholder surveys)
- Engage with residents and monitor resident sentiment for the tourism industry offering information and engagement opportunities to share and educate residents on the importance of tourism, its contribution to the community and to listen to any concerns that may be expressed by residents.



Operationalizing the Plan

Resources

The ability of Tourism Golden to activate the strategies contained within this five-year plan is dependent upon careful allocation of the human and financial resources available to the organization. Stakeholder engagement confirmed that the historical activities of Tourism Golden have all delivered results and provided value to them. There was nothing identified that should be stopped or eliminated. The organization's resources have already been impacted by pandemic travel restrictions. For Tourism Golden to continue all its past activities, launch recovery programs and more actively engage with stakeholders and residents launching programs related to responsible travel and ensuring a continued social license it will be necessary to increase the pool of resources and renew at the 3% MRDT level.

A scan of the province indicates that the majority of destinations that have recently or are in the process of renewing their MRDT application are all moving to 3%. Tourism Golden has shared the Golden MRDT Renewal Rate Reference Sheet with stakeholders to support this direction.

Next Steps

Following the presentation of the draft strategy at the AGM on August 11th, the Board of Directors approved this five-year strategy. A more detailed tactical plan will be developed each year within this strategic framework. This tactical plan will serve to advance the objectives of the strategy and drive progress towards the vision. It will also identify specific tactics and budgets for review with the Board of Directors.

Management, Governance & Administration

Since 2012 Tourism Golden, supported by the Town of Golden and CSRD, has held the status of Eligible Entity in the MRDT program. This has provided a stable platform from which to efficiently manage funds, and plan and implement all marketing programs and activity, as well as facilitating effective communication with the Ministry of Finance.

The organisation is a registered non-profit society employing three full time employees and one part time employee who plan and implement all activity of the 5-year strategic and annual marketing plans. The executive director reports to a volunteer governance board which is comprised of directors representing our primary tourism and community stakeholders; 7 accommodator directors, 3 activity operator directors and the Chamber of Commerce. Permanent sub-committees for Finance, HR, Stakeholder Communication and Stakeholder Co-op Programs exist and other committees and working groups are created as the need arises.

TG staff members communicate and engage the board and community and tourism stakeholders on a continuous basis as follows:

Board:

- Monthly financial & operational reports
- Monthly board meetings
- Annual Report
- Annual marketing planning meeting
- Approval of annual marketing plan and budget
- 5-year strategic planning meeting & plan approval

Tourism & Community Stakeholders:

- Regular e-blasts co-op marketing and educational opportunities
- Monthly stakeholder newsletter including KPI updates
- Regular opportunities throughout the year for tourism stakeholders to engage informally with the Board and staff, either in-person or virtually, as appropriate
- Presentation of financial and operational reports at AGM
- Presentation of the Annual Report to Town of Golden and CSRD board
- Presentation of key annual marketing strategies at a mid-year stakeholder gathering
- Group and individual meetings to engage and communicate 5-year strategic plan either in-person or virtually as appropriate
- Online Stakeholder Survey

Sources of Funding

MRDT is the primary source of funding for the organisation, typically representing approximately 83% of total annual revenues. From the inception of the organisation and participation in the MRDT program in 2007, MRDT revenues have increased exponentially, culminating pre-pandemic with an overall increase of 180% from 2008 to 2019. The pandemic impacted 2020 MRDT revenues by 40% and 2021 MRDT revenues are expected to be approximately 30% down against 2019.

The organisation operates on a 'pay to play' model, allowing our stakeholders to collaborate affordably and flexibly with the organisation, and in accordance with their own business objectives. We find that this creates continuous engagement and communication with our stakeholders.

MRDT funds are leveraged with stakeholder co-op advertising revenues, key partner collaborations (which generate both revenue and in-kind support) and grant funding. We target these leveraged funds to represent 15 – 20% of annual revenue.

Stakeholder engagement revealed a desire by accommodators to have other industry sectors also contribute to the DMO. Whilst this is an appealing option to generate additional funding and ensure that all beneficiaries of destination marketing and industry performance contribute, it is not workable within the current DMO boundary. The Town of Golden has a potential mechanism to legislate a municipal fee, however, the CSRD Area A has no such framework, and it is certain that the businesses and residents of Area A would not support one being created, as a lack of regional legislation and planning are a primary attraction for living and operating in that area. Moving forward with such inconsistency, particularly as the larger activity and experience providers are in CSRD Area A, is not logical or fair.

Accountability

The provincial MRDT program requires that the organisation:

- Renews its mandate every 5 years demonstrating engagement with and support from community and industry stakeholders.
- Garner a minimum support of 51% from eligible accommodator properties and units for the renewal application. Support received for the 2022 application for 3% MRDT represents 65% of properties and 61% of units.
- Submit a 5-year strategic plan to the Ministry of Finance as part of the renewal application.
- Submit an annual tactical marketing plan and budget to the Ministry of Finance.
- Report annually to the Ministry of Finance on marketing activity and outcomes including a financial report.

The Constitution and Bylaws of the Tourism Golden Association require that the organisation:

- Operates in accordance with the Guiding Principles.
- Is governed by a Board of Directors that represents accommodations and activity operators elected annually by its members plus an appointed seat for the Chamber of Commerce.
- Shall hold an Annual General Meeting at which Director seat elections take place.
- Keeps books, accounts, and records for inspection by the Board of Directors and Members.
- Submits an annual report to the Town of Golden and CSRD board showing activities, revenues, and expenditures.

As a non-profit society, Tourism Golden is also governed by the BC Societies Act.

Acknowledgements

Tourism Golden would like to recognise the following for dedicating their time, resources, and expertise to assist in the development of this plan:

The Economic Trust of the Southern Interior ETSI-BC whose funding supported the research and development of this plan.

Suzanne Denbak of Cadence Strategies for managing stakeholder engagement and plan development.

The Board of Directors of Tourism Golden:

Toby Barrett, Kicking Horse Mountain Resort – President

John Lush, Lush Mountain Accommodations – Vice President

Joanne Best, Mount 7 Lodges – Treasurer

Lucille Hayward, Moberly Lodge – Secretary

Atma Sandher, Ponderosa Motor Inn

Brandy Beliveau, Bellstar Hotels and Resort

Treena Coney, Prestige Resort

Suk Dhasi, Best Western Mountain View Inn

Graham Kreiner, Golden Golf Club

Ryan Johannesen, Glacier Raft Company

Tess Davies, Kicking Horse Country Chamber of Commerce

Appendix A – Literature Review

A literature review was conducted to inform the context for planning. Key insights are noted below:

Destination Canada Research:

https://www.destinationcanada.com/sites/default/files/archive/1398-Destination%20Canada%20Visitor%20Economy%20Forecast%20Update%20-%20June%202021/DC%20Forecast%20Update%20_June%202021_EN%20-%20FOR%20PUBLICATION.pdf

Recovery Scenarios

The difference between the ideal and poor travel conditions could affect our recovery by years

Travel Conditions	REV. IN 2021 (\$B)	LOSS IN 2021 VS 2019 (\$B)	LOSS IN 2022 VS 2019 (\$B)	RETURN TO 2019 LEVEL
Ideal	\$55.0	-\$50.1	-\$14.5	2023
Current	\$51.1	-\$54.0	-\$22.5	2025
Poor	\$46.0	-\$59.1	-\$34.8	>2026

Source: DC Research, May 2021 Forecast

Destination Canada’s research forecasts a return to 2019 travel volumes by 2023, 2025 or 2026 depending upon a series of assumptions related to vaccination rates, COVID variants and the associated travel restrictions both within Canada and in key markets. A critical driver of the speed of return is the timing of the reopening of the border with the United States.

Destination Canada continues to note that the single greatest short-term opportunity for the Canadian tourism industry is domestic travel by Canadian residents themselves. Canadians (as well as residents from most developed countries around the world) have stockpiled savings through the pandemic (an average of \$5800 per household in Canada) and there is a pent-up demand for travel. The longer-term opportunity for the industry is to recover traditional longer-haul international markets and retain at least a portion of the domestic travel market that will have experienced Canada and may be convinced to permanently transfer at least a portion of their international travel budget to domestic spending.

Converting Canadians in 2021 will be critical

Canadians have unused travel resources:

Disposable income: Canadians normally spend more on travel abroad (\$40B) than international travellers spend in Canada (\$23B)

Vacation time: Canadian also spend as many nights travelling abroad as they do travelling in Canada

In 2020, we saw a limited amount of these resources being re-circulated in Canada

- Internal 'fences' within Canada limited travel
- Uncertainty on the economic situation limited confidence to travel

The opportunity:

Converting 10-12% of these Canadian expenditures could net an additional \$4B to \$5B over and above the inter- and intra- provincial spend:

- This number could be higher if Canadians spend as much per trip abroad (generally, Canadians spend 3 times more on trips abroad than at home)

6



<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/article/heres-how-covid-is-changing-travel-according-to-the-experts>

8 travel trends identified:

- Sustainability will become a driving force
- Our journeys will become more inclusive
- Small communities will play a bigger role – slower pace, lesser known, support local
- We'll seek quality over quantity of travel – refine our bucket list
- Road trips will remain popular – understanding that there is no need to travel far to enjoy a new destination
- Travel advisors like travel agents will again become an important part of planning
- We'll appreciate staying closer to home
- Travel planning will become joyful again

<https://www.euronews.com/travel/2021/05/14/what-will-travel-look-like-in-a-post-covid-world>

Trends identified:

- Conscious travel
- Time in nature as an antidote to modern life
- Wellness tourism
- Engaging with locals
- Increased demand for local, smaller accommodations (vs. large hotels)
- Slow travel – walking, cycling
- Work and vacation – longer stays in destination doing both
- Safe locations/flexible cancellation policies

Appendix B – Golden MRDT Renewal Rate Reference Sheet

MRDT Renewal Rate Reference Sheet.

Will charging 3% make Golden uncompetitive against similar destinations?

See attached for the list of entities collecting 3%. Those with highlights are competitive set destinations. Note also that the following also intend to apply for renewal at 3% within the next 2 years:

- Kimberley
- Revelstoke
- Radium
- RDEK Area F (Windermere to Canal Flats) already submitted application with 3%
- Penticton

Also consider the net difference of the tax increase on an average nightly stay:

- The average ADR in Golden in 2020 was \$121 (data source STR destination report for Golden).
- 2% MRDT would be \$2.42.
- 3% MRDT would be \$3.63.
- The difference on the cost of a nightly stay is \$1.21. Would that change a visitor's destination decision?

If supported by eligible accommodators, when would the rate increase be implemented?

The new tax rate would be implemented no earlier than July 1st, 2022 but is more likely to be from September 1st, 2022.

What would it mean to Tourism Golden & its members to increase the rate from 2% to 3%?

- 2020 MRDT revenues dropped by 40% in 2020, a loss of over \$300,000 in revenue.
- 2021 is tracking 30% down against 2019.
- If we remain at 2%, I estimate we will not return to 2019 MRDT revenue until 2027.
- Increasing to 3% MRDT will bring us back to 2019 revenues by 2024.

				2% MRDT					
YEAR	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
YOY estimated increase				15%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%
Nett Estimated MRDT	\$ 761,746	\$455,477	\$ 535,000	\$ 615,250	\$ 646,013	\$ 678,313	\$ 712,229	\$ 747,840	\$ 785,232
				3% MRDT					
YEAR	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
YOY estimated increase				15%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%
Nett Estimated MRDT	\$ 761,746	\$455,477	\$ 535,000	\$ 696,800	\$ 731,640	\$ 768,222	\$ 806,633	\$ 846,965	\$ 889,313

As we (hopefully) have no further travel restrictions we are returning to the 'always on' marketing that we had in 2019. The anticipated extra revenues would keep Tourism Golden's advertising activity competitive with other DMOs who currently or in the future will change to 3% (see attached list). It would also allow Tourism Golden to:

- Increase tactical marketing and advertising budgets, allowing us to reach deeper into existing and possibly new markets, particularly US and international markets, as we recover from COVID.
- Continue to receive Telus Insights data. The data from 2020 has allowed us to determine the postal codes of visitors that stay 1 or more nights. We have begun a retargeting digital campaign that is already generating better click thru rates and engagement on the TG website than other campaigns. It will also show us year on year trends of visitor markets and length of stay as we move out of the pandemic, allowing us to focus on better performing markets that deliver longer stays.
- Add more funds to existing stakeholder programs and add new programs. This could be:

- Free website listings for MRDT collectors – value \$80/year.
- Free Check In Canada listing for MRDT accommodators that are TG members. Value \$300/year
- Larger subsidies per 3rd party advert/publication.
- Larger funding amounts per co-op program and applicant, and more applicants approved.
- More professional development workshops/opportunities

Existing programs include:

- 30 to 50% subsidized advertising in TG and 3rd party print and digital publications.
 - Photo shoot co-op program – TG pays 50% of business pro photo shoot.
 - Member Co-op marketing program - \$500 to \$1500 per member-led eligible campaign.
 - Event Hosting Co-op program \$500 to \$10,000 per event for accommodation and local services.
 - Free workshops including social media, digital marketing, online reputation management etc.
- Subject to stakeholder feedback and support and approval under the MRDT guidelines (see below for **What are the eligible uses of MRDT funds?**), new strategies and product development could be considered, for example:
 - Support for transportation to improve access & increase. ←
 - Offer year-round face to face visitor services (at the VC and/or mobile units)
 - Booking engine to drive business referrals and sales. TG to subsidize discount package promotions.
 - Any other eligible ideas from and supported by stakeholders.

For clarification, 'support' means research, marketing, or other means to facilitate the establishment & promotion of transport services. It is understood that MRDT funds may not be used to fund transport operations.

Have tourism stakeholders had a say in the next 5-year strategy and tactics?

Yes! There were several opportunities that took place in 2021:

- Online survey (April-May 2021).
- 1-2-1 interviews with selected industry and community stakeholders.
- Stakeholder engagement sessions:
 - May 20 & 21 (Accommodation sector)
 - June 24 (All sectors)
- Board strategic planning sessions (representing stakeholders) June 8th, 9th and 23rd.
- Presentation at the AGM August 11th and distribution of recording August 18th.

What has been implemented since receiving feedback from the 2021 survey and workshops?

We heard that:

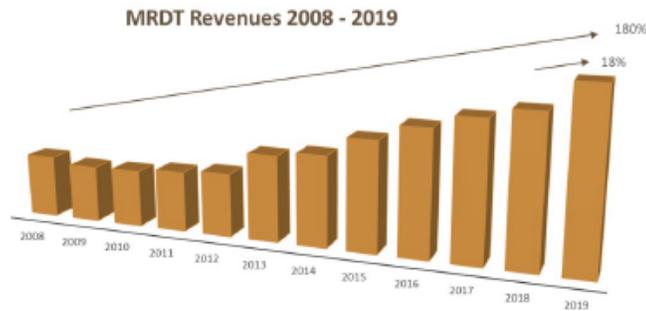
- Accommodators wanted more advertising dedicated to them.
- We should engage residents more to understand their support for tourism and TG and know their concerns.
- We should focus on sustainable and responsible tourism.
- Accommodators want other businesses to contribute to TG via a local destination fee.

We have implemented:

- An accommodation-focused social media campaign 'Welcome back and stay' from July which has already generated 2,400 clicks to the TG website and 1000+ outbound clicks to accommodator websites.
- A resident survey undertaken in July 2021.
- Created responsible travel educational pieces and blogs, distributed on the website & through social media.
- Investigated a destination marketing fee to be imposed by activity operators, F&B etc. and found:
 - A fee would be levied on all, including residents, which would have a negative impact on residents.
 - A fee could be implemented within the Town (with council and resident support) but not in Area A. As the larger activity operators are in Area A they would not contribute, making it unfair.
 - The best option is to lobby for a change to the MRDT legislation to be applied to activity operators and campgrounds, which we will advocate for in the coming years.

What has Tourism Golden done for accommodations since its inception in 2008?

- Accommodation revenues in Golden grew by 180% between 2008 and 2019.
- Average annual growth of accommodation revenues in Golden of 16.39% annually.
- Compare to provincial average annual growth of 6.95% ¹



- Since Jan 1, 2008, accommodations on the TG website have been viewed 2.2 million times.
- Average length of stay increased from 1 night to 2.5 in summer and 3.5 in winter.
- Successfully lobbied for MRDT to be applied to STRs (implemented in 2018) and for legislation to control STRs in the Town of Golden (implemented Dec 2020).
- In July 2021 launched an accommodation advertising campaign which has generated 2,400 accommodation pageviews so far.

What are the eligible uses of MRDT funds?

The Designated Accommodation Area Tax Regulation sets out the authorized purposes for revenue under the MRDT program. Authorized purposes of MRDT revenue for all designated recipients are **tourism marketing, programs, and projects**. Affordable housing was added a permissible use of funds through Budget 2018.

Spending on tourism marketing, programs, or projects under the MRDT should contribute to the increase of local tourism revenue, visitation, and economic benefits. Spending related to affordable housing initiatives should assist communities to address local needs related to affordable housing.

Using revenue from the MRDT to finance capital expenditures (beyond affordable housing) such as new tourism facilities or infrastructure will only be given consideration in special circumstances. Proposals for capital spending must be included in a designated recipient’s five- year Strategic Business Plan and must demonstrate strong local stakeholder support in order to be considered as an authorized use of MRDT program funds. These proposals will be considered and approved on a case-by-case basis by the province.

¹ Source: Destination BC Value of Tourism 2007 – 2017.

TOURISM GOLDEN STRATEGIC PLAN 2022 TO 2026

2%	3%
Alert Bay, Village of	Abbotsford, City of
Burnaby, City of	Big White Ski Resort
Castlegar, City of	Campbell River, City of
Central Kootenay, Regional District of	Cariboo Regional District
Columbia-Shuswap, Regional District of	Central Coast Regional District
Courtenay, City of	Chilliwack, City of
Cowichan Valley Regional District	Cranbrook, City of
the District of Invermere and Panorama Mountain Resort area	East Kootenay, Regional District of – applies in: the City of Fernie and a portion of electoral area A
the Village of Radium Hot Springs and two portions of electoral area G	Fraser-Fort George Regional District
Fraser Valley Regional District	Harrison Hot Springs, Village of
Kaslo, Village of	Kamloops, City of
Kimberley, City of	Kelowna, City of
Kitimat-Stikine Regional District	Kitasoo 1 Indian Reserve
Langford, City of	Mount Washington Resort area
Langley, City of	Nanaimo, City of
Langley, Township of	Osoyoos, Town of
Mount Waddington, Regional District of	Port Hardy, District of
Nanaimo, Regional District of	Prince George, City of
Nelson, City of	Richmond, City of
North Vancouver, City of	Rossland, City of
North Vancouver, District of	Smithers, Town of
Oak Bay, District of	Squamish, District of
Parksville, City of	Squamish-Lillooet Regional District
Penticton, City of	Sun Peaks Mountain Resort Municipality
Port McNeill, Town of	Surrey, City of
Prince Rupert, City of	Thompson-Nicola Regional District (the District of Barriere and electoral areas O and P)
qathet Regional District	Tofino, District of
Qualicum Beach, Town of	Vancouver, City of
Revelstoke, City of	Vernon, City of
Saanich, District of	Victoria, City of
Salmon Arm, City of	Whistler, Resort Municipality of
Salt Spring Island	
Sicamous, District of	
Southern Gulf Islands	
Sunshine Coast Regional District	
Thompson-Nicola Regional District (District of Clearwater and electoral area A)	
Ucluelet, District of	
Valemount	