

DRAFT ONLY



# TOURISM Master Plan





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Fernie's Tourism Master Plan (TMP) was spearheaded by Tourism Fernie in partnership with community organizations and the TMP Task Force. Whistler Centre for Sustainability was hired as the project consultant to guide the process, conduct stakeholder engagement and develop the plan. The Tourism Master Plan has been informed by members of the local and regional tourism industry and the community as a whole. We would like to acknowledge and thank everyone that has provided input into the plan, the funders including Columbia Basin Trust, Tourism Fernie, City of Fernie, Fernie Chamber of Commerce and the Regional District of East Kootenay, and all who supported through in-kind donations towards meeting space, advertising, public awareness and lodging needs, such as Best Western Plus Fernie Mountain Lodge, Park Place Lodge, the Fernie Fix and the Fernie Free Press. Many residents and businesses participated in the process through workshops, focus group sessions, public open houses, online surveys and other events in 2018 and 2019. A special thank you to the Task Force for its time, expertise and passion, Mike McPhee for having the vision and Jikke Gyorki for the on-the-ground work in all aspects of the process and plan. Engagement from the Ktunaxa First Nation, Destination BC, Kootenay Rockies Tourism, local non-profit recreation and cultural organizations, consultant Susan Rybar, and the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture also provided invaluable information and insights.



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## PROJECT FUNDERS



<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>PROJECT BACKGROUND</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>SITUATION ANALYSIS &amp; KEY INSIGHTS</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>OUR VISION &amp; GOALS</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS &amp; ACTIONS</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>EVALUATING AND ADAPTING</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>IMPLEMENTATION</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>APPENDIX A –ACTION ITEMS</b>	<b>48</b>



## SUMMARY

### PLAN PURPOSE

Fernie has been actively inviting travellers to enjoy the community ever since 1921 when the Tourism Association of Southern Alberta and Southeast British Columbia was founded by local J.F. Spalding to promote Fernie and the Crow's Nest Pass as a Rocky Mountain destination. Around this time travellers interested in hunting, fishing, camping, mountain climbing and touring flocked to the community. The opening of Snow Valley Ski Development, a locally owned company, in January 1963 helped lay the foundation for tourism as a key economic generator. Building off this success, other winter attractions and an emphasis on Fernie as a year round destination have propelled visitation and brought outside revenues into the community and many diverse opportunities. For example, in 2015 visitor spending was over \$100 million, visitation was over 307,000 and over 60% of the visitation was from outside the province. Today tourism thrives alongside the mining and forestry still taking place throughout the valley. Visitors to Fernie often describe their Fernie experience as authentic, driven by the century-old downtown, rich history and culture, and its friendly, down-to-earth community. These key elements are essential to the community's tourism brand and product.

Fernie tourism is exposed to a variety of global tourism trends and external threats such as increasing competition, changing demographics, mobile technology, climate change, state of neighbouring economies, conflicting land use pressures and more. These trends along with the challenges that recent growth can bring instigated the need to develop a guiding document and action plan for the future of Fernie's tourism economy.

With a genuine desire to understand and address concerns and seek pathways to reap the benefits of tourism, Tourism Fernie with partnership and support from the City of Fernie, Fernie Chamber of Commerce, Regional District of East Kootenay and Columbia Basin Trust, embarked on this Tourism Master Plan process.

### WHO WE HEARD FROM

The Fernie TMP planning process was undertaken in collaboration with stakeholders and significant engagement with community members, tourism organizations, governments and other stakeholders in the Elk Valley. The work was guided by a Task Force with expertise and a passion for tourism in Fernie. More details on page 13.

### VISION FOR TOURISM IN FERNIE

Through the planning process we developed and then refined a Fernie tourism vision, mission and guiding principles informed by our engagement with the community, business and tourism stakeholders. They are as follows:

#### Our Tourism Vision

A vibrant and sustainable tourism destination built on respect, collaboration and authenticity.

#### We Have A Mission To

Work together to manage and grow tourism sustainably for the betterment of our community and our visitors.

#### Guiding Principles

Together We Are Stronger

A Respected Natural Environment

Benefiting the Whole

Businesses Thrive Sustainably

Authenticity Grounds Us

Balance Sustains Us

## FOCUS AREAS AND GOALS

Focus Areas are the big outcomes that will help us to achieve our vision and guide all of the actions in the plan. The Focus Areas and goals reflect what was learned through industry research and engagement with the community, business and tourism stakeholders.

### Focus Area 1

#### DIVERSITY OF VISITORS YEAR ROUND

Goal: Grow visitors into multi-day, year-round economic and community contributors

### Focus Area 2

#### REMARKABLE VISITOR EXPERIENCES

Goal: Develop and enhance Fernie's visitor infrastructure, amenities, brand, tourism products, experiences and people

### Focus Area 3

#### STRONGER TOURISM FOUNDATION

Goal: Ensure collaboration, community support, people and financing for tourism success

### Focus Area 4

#### SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT

Goal: Manage locations where visitation is impacting the sense of community or natural environment and support the resiliency of the industry

## OUR VISITOR

The extent of things to do for both visitors and locals are vast yet fluctuate and change between the seasons. Core winter assets include Fernie Alpine Resort, Island Lake Catskiing and FWA Catskiing and during summer season visitation is driven primarily by those wanting to experience local valley/ mountain trails and parks, the rivers by float or flow, casual town exploration and mountain sightseeing, and big festivals and events.

Fernie's attractiveness is more than just one activity, event, business or story however. A community this rich in history, people and culture compels visitors looking for something more than the mass market resort.

Fernie's overnight visitors are a mix of both short (regional) and long haul (international) markets in winter, with a noticeable shift to short-haul markets in the summer months and shoulder seasons. Visitors from Alberta make a significant contribution to the visitor mix year-round thanks to their close proximity.

More details on page 22.





## SUMMARY

### STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The following strategic directions consider the current trends, opportunities and challenges of today and direct us on how to achieve our goals in each focus area. The directions seek to continue the benefits of tourism such as diversification, employment and increased vibrancy and access to recreation and culture; and address current challenges of limited infrastructure, amenity and natural area capacity at peak times, affordability impacts, and loss of the small town-feel.

#### Focus Area 1

##### DIVERSITY OF VISITORS YEAR ROUND

###### Strategic Directions:

- Increase visitation in non-peak times in summer, winter, fall & spring
- Foster Fernie's Arts, Heritage & Cultural Tourism Product
- Maximize current event / facility capacity for existing events & plan for growth & expansion through events
- Develop strategies to attract and serve high yield / value oriented visitors
- Embrace 2nd homeowners to create Ambassadors for Fernie
- Develop a common community brand to present to Visitors

#### Focus Area 2

##### REMARKABLE VISITOR EXPERIENCES

###### Strategic Directions:

- Support businesses and organizations to foster improved tourism experiences and overall sustainability
- Expand indoor activities
- Foster impeccable customer service
- Protect & enhance Fernie's downtown
- Create focal visitor points for visitor staging & gathering
- Improve visitor focused in-community communications / wayfinding

#### Focus Area 3

##### STRONGER TOURISM FOUNDATION

###### Strategic Directions:

- Ensure there is adequate & qualified staff
- Define organizational rolls and make collaboration a central tenant
- Ensure land use and development policies, maintain & grow access to natural attractions & recreation amenities
- Nurture a working relationship with the Ktunaxa
- Increase community support for tourism and create more ambassadors
- Sustain financial resources for tourism

#### Focus Area 4

##### SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT

###### Strategic Directions:

- Manage capacity impacts (with respect to trails, river, downtown, etc.)
- Reduce industry impact on the natural environment (logging, mining, recreation, highway transportation)
- Adapt to climate change (forest fires, snowpack, river)
- Improve getting to & around Fernie (visitors & locals)
- Foster greater care and appreciation of Fernie - having visitors become contributors and ambassadors

## IMPLEMENTATION

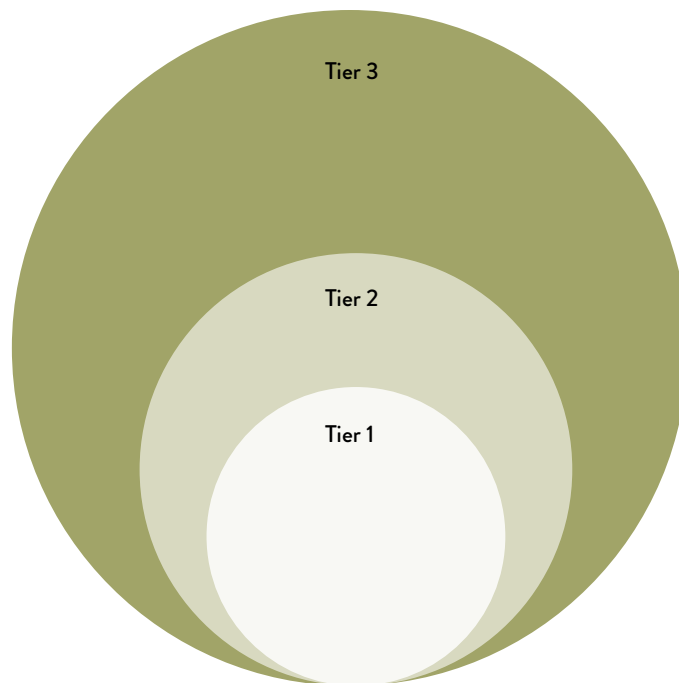
Fernie's current tourism success is a result of hard work, energetic organizations, collaboration and a sense of community pride. Essentially, people, working together. Tourism is unique this way when compared to other industries, perhaps most of all in the cooperation and partnership required to deliver the 'experiences' sought by visitors and the community alike. To facilitate continued success in tourism and the effective roll out of this master plan and associated projects/actions clear roles need to be defined, implementation actions need to be prioritized and funding needs to be in place.

More details on page 40.

## ROLES AND STRUCTURE

A core Tourism Master Plan Task Force will continue and formalize into an ongoing Tourism Master Plan Champion Group that maintains similar representation to the working group and expands where needed. A formal partnership agreement among all the organizations helps to ensure the sustainability of the structure and commitment to tourism and implementing the TMP.

The agreement is structured with varying levels of commitment with lead convening and implementation process responsibilities for organizations such as Tourism Fernie and the City of Fernie that residents and the business community highlighted as core to ensuring tourism development supports community and business goals. Secondary levels of commitment includes organizations participating on the Champions Group and the final level of commitment includes mostly tourism organizations empowered to promote the TMP, take part in industry engagement and considering actions identified through planning.



### Tier 3 Commitments

- Creating awareness of the TMP
- Giving feedback on the TMP & building capacity to support it
- Inviting feedback on projects
- Considering the TMP & their lead actions

### Tier 2 Commitments

- Participating on the Champions Group
- Lead advocate for the TMP
- Organizational plan alignment with the TMP

### Tier 1 Commitments

- Lead conveners, facilitation roles & resources
- Providing meeting space
- Evaluation



## SUMMARY

### ACTION PLAN

Prioritizing the aforementioned Strategic Directions led to a review of community, business and tourism stakeholder input on specific projects and ideas. New ideas were brainstormed and finally prioritized and organized for implementation (see Appendix A on page 48). Action implementation is organized into a table represented by the following priority and action category.

**C**

**Catalyst Actions:** High value | Achieve multiple goals | Start within the first year

**S**

**Short Term Priority:** High value tactics with low complexity & can be achieved within one year

**M**

**Medium Term Priority:** High value somewhat complex | requiring leadtime | other actions to accomplish

**L**

**Long Term Priority:** High value somewhat complex and requiring leadtime and other actions to accomplish

### FUNDING

Implementing the Tourism Master Plan to work toward the vision and goals will require the commitment of many aforementioned organizations and it will also require time and funding for implementing some of the actions. Some of the actions will be a part of the normal course of business for implementing organizations and tourism businesses, but actions to purchase or maintain capital or develop new programming require some funding. The two major foundational funds to help continue this work are the Resort Municipality Initiative (RMI) funding and the Municipal Regional District Tax (MRDT). Grants and other funding programs will also be required. An initial list of potential funders are located on page 46.



## NEXT STEPS

Actions include those directed specifically at the Strategic Directions, Focus Areas and Vision and those implementation actions for ensuring a well-supported process. The next steps should be targeted at the following most critical process implementation actions:

IMPLEMENTATION ACTION	LEAD	PARTNER	6 MONTHS	YEAR 1
TMP received and recognized by Tourism Fernie Board, Fernie Chamber of Commerce, Regional District of the East Kootenays and the City of Fernie Council and Staff	TF	FCC, COF, RDEK	X	
TMP Partnership Agreement Signed	TF, FCC, COF, RDEK, FAR, ILL	Other	X	
Creation and commitment to a Tourism Master Plan Champions Group	TF, FCC, COF, RDEK, FAR, ILL	Other	X	
Champion Group Meeting 1 to set culture and report on initial actions, Appendix A	TF	Champions Group	X	
Commitment postcard or other effort to engage the tourism sector in working toward the vision and goals and industry activities outlined in this plan	TF / FCC	Champions Group	X	
Tourism specific stakeholder / sector working group sessions at least annually	TF	Champions Group		X
Champion Meeting 2	TF	Champions Group		X
Champion Meeting 3	TF	Champions Group		X
Champion Meeting 4	TF	Champions Group		X



## PROJECT BACKGROUND

Tourism is the largest and fastest growing economic sector in the world with 1.8 billion international travel arrivals in 2017. Tourism is a highly competitive industry that requires destinations to build on its competitive advantages to sustain its future. To do this effectively a plan is needed with strong collaboration and partnerships.

Fernie is a small mountain town renowned for its spectacular setting within the Rocky Mountains, its place along the Elk River and for its world class skiing and recreation. A community of over 5,000 residents, Fernie is geographically located on Highway 3 in southeastern British Columbia and near the Alberta and USA border. Fernie sits within the traditional lands of the Ktunaxa First Nation.

Fernie was incorporated as a municipality 115 years ago thanks to its globally significant coal mining industry and forestry production. The community has been actively inviting travellers to enjoy Fernie ever since 1921 when the Tourism Association of Southern Alberta and Southeast British Columbia was founded by local J.F. Spalding to promote Fernie and the Crow's Nest Pass as a Rocky Mountain destination. With the advent of the automobile the area was now more accessible to travellers interested in the desired activities of the time such as hunting, fishing, camping, mountain climbing and touring. It was also in the 1920's that the Fernie Ski Club was established. Fernie's bid for the 1968 Winter Olympics in 1960 and the opening of Snow Valley Ski Development, a locally owned company, in January 1963 helped lay the foundation for tourism as a key economic generator. Today tourism thrives alongside the mining and forestry still taking place throughout the valley.

Situated three hours south-west of Calgary International Airport, two hours north of Glacier International Airport (Kalispell, MT), and one hour east of Canadian Rockies International Airport (Cranbrook), Fernie has seen significant interest and investment over the past several years from within Canada and internationally from countries such as USA, Australia, Europe and Great Britain. The nearby Fernie Alpine Resort, Island Lake Lodge and FWA are world renowned for their powder skiing and have drawn many visitors and investors to the region. The growth of snowmobiling and Nordic skiing has surpassed expectations. While mountain biking, hiking, river rafting, SUP, golfing and fly fishing continue to experience strong demand. With solid economic progression and a focus on growing the summer season Fernie has experienced increased tourism interest and visitation on a year-round basis. Local culture, arts, festivals and history have flourished and are a critical component of the visitor experience and Fernie's unique selling proposition. With the addition of incredible natural assets in the region such as Waterton National Park and Glacier International Peace Park, Mount Broadwood Nature Conservancy, the Flathead Valley and Provincial Parks such as Elk Lakes, Fernie is well-positioned for continued growth and international investment.

Visitors to Fernie often describe their Fernie experience as authentic, driven by the century-old downtown, rich history and culture, and its friendly, down-to-earth community. These key elements are essential to the community's tourism brand and product. Fernie's historic buildings and downtown have continued to direct a greater spotlight on the community's arts, cultural, festival and culinary scene. Big festivals such as Wapiti Music Festival, Chautauqua & Fall Fair, WAM BAM, Wednesday Night Concerts, Griz Days and Pride Festival have truly brought local authenticity and culture to the front lines for visitors.

## PROJECT BACKGROUND

The growth in tourism, as further detailed within the Situational Analysis on page 15, has brought outside revenues into the community and many diverse opportunities. These along with the challenges that growth can bring instigated the need to develop a guiding document and action plan for the future of Fernie's tourism economy. As part of the engagement process for the Tourism Master Plan Fernie residents and businesses boasted about the amazing experiences in the community and area as well as the benefits of tourism including:

Economic diversification and employment opportunities

Improving access to more recreation, culture, festivals, food styles and goods

Increased vibrancy of the community and the historic downtown

With the benefits and recent growth there have been some challenges and concerns such as:

Infrastructure, amenity and natural area capacity concerns during peak visitation periods

Impact of tourism growth on the authenticity of the community and small-town feel

Limited housing availability and affordability

Increased cost of living for food, services and recreation

Fernie is also exposed to a variety of global tourism trends and external threats such as increasing competition, changing demographics, mobile technology, climate change, state of neighbouring economies, conflicting land use pressures and more.

With a genuine desire to understand and address concerns and seek pathways to reap the benefits of tourism, Tourism Fernie with partnership and support from the City of Fernie, Fernie Chamber of Commerce, Regional District of East Kootenay and Columbia Basin Trust, embarked on this Tourism Master Plan process.

The purpose of a Tourism Master Plan is to ensure the long-term success of tourism in Fernie. To achieve this, the TMP includes long-term development framework for tourism that guides tourism development in a coordinated and forward-looking way. This TMP takes stock of the current state of affairs and provides a vision, goals, and strategies to guide more specific actions. The TMP is a living document that needs to remain flexible and up-to-date in order to adapt to changes (including trends) that may arise within the environment (social, cultural, environmental, and economic). The Fernie TMP planning process was undertaken in collaboration with stakeholders and significant engagement with the community. This TMP will serve as a guide to improving tourism in Fernie as well as the role organizations will play.



## PROJECT BACKGROUND

### TOURISM MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT

A TMP for Fernie was originally conceived in 2016 by Tourism Fernie. At that time support and funding was pursued and then confirmed by late 2017 and early 2018. In May 2018 a local industry collaborative refined the needed outcomes of a TMP and soon after hired the Whistler Centre for Sustainability to work with them to develop the plan. The TMP was informed and developed through a five-phase process that started in September 2018, the diagram below highlights each phase. During the first phase the local industry collaborative transitioned and grew into the official TMP Task Force.

The Process:



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## ENGAGEMENT

The gathering and incorporation of input from the tourism sector and community is critical for the development of an informed plan. Tourism planning participants ensure a lasting and successful plan is developed with the commitment, support and energy for implementation. In order to achieve this outcome an effective and meaningful engagement process was developed to encourage broad and diverse participation using a number of engagement activities. Activities included open houses, a unique project website, surveys, focus groups, interviews, meetings and presentations. Participants were asked to help identify benefits, concerns, visions, priorities and project ideas. Engagement participation included the following:

**Task Force** - made up of members of the tourism community, as well as City staff and other related organizations. The Task Force of thirteen members met over a period of 10 months and: 1) Collaborated on the structure, content and engagement process relating to Fernie's Tourism Master Plan; 2) Worked to ensure that concerns and aspirations of the general public and organizations are consistently understood and considered in the TMP.

**Resident Survey** - attracted 583 total participants, surpassed the goal of 400 and achieved a response rate of over 10% of the local population. Of the 583 respondents, 360 went on to complete the long-form survey. Of the 360, 80 indicated working directly in tourism and 280 indicated not working directly in tourism.

**Business Survey** - initiated by 113 individuals with over 90% indicating they were owner/operators or senior managers with the organization.

**Open House** - events in September and January were attended by between 60-85 local individuals each to learn more, ask questions and provide input.

**NGO Survey**- received 20 responses from local groups who among other things shared future project ideas that may be beneficial to tourism.

**Focus Groups** - with 11 different sectors and 80 people representing: Chamber of Commerce; Accommodation providers; Retail/Food and Beverage; Tourism Activity providers; Festivals & Cultural tourism groups; Parks and Environmental organizations; City of Fernie Senior Staff; Developers and Real Estate; Tourism Fernie Board; Trails and land user groups; and Elk River stakeholders.

**One-on-one interviews with representatives from Teck, Resorts of the Canadian Rockies, the Ktunaxa First Nation, City of Fernie, Parastone Development, College of the Rockies, Island Lake Lodge, and the Regional District of East Kootenay.**

## ACTIVITIES

*Open Houses*

*Website*

*Surveys*

*Focus groups*

*Interviews*

*Meetings*

*Presentations*



## PROJECT BACKGROUND

### STRUCTURING THE TMP

The Tourism Master Plan Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles set the highest level direction. Focus Areas follow, each with a Goal describing outcomes with a 10 year projection. These Focus Areas are aligned to reflect the breadth of a Tourism Master Plan and a destination development and management approach.

Following the focus goals are the Strategic Directions that represent broad priorities to guide specific actions over the next 3-5 years from 2020-2024. Actions or projects are the main element of a Tourism Master Plan and are prioritized, time bound and become the responsibility of an implementing organization and network of supportive organizations.

VISION • MISSION • GUIDING PRINCIPLES

FOCUS AREAS & GOALS  
2020-2030

STRATEGIC  
DIRECTION  
2020-2025

STRATEGIC  
DIRECTION

STRATEGIC  
DIRECTION

STRATEGIC  
DIRECTION

ACTIONS

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### CURRENT TOURISM VALUE

Globally, tourism in 2016 represented 10% of the world's GDP with visitor spending calculated at \$1.2 trillion. Nationally, tourism is 2% of Canada's GDP with visitor spending in 2016 at \$91.6 billion, of which 22% is from international travellers and 78% from Canadians travelling within Canada. Over 115 million visitors travelled to or within Canada.

Provincially, in 2017, tourism contributed more to the GDP than any other primary resource industry. In 2016 over 20.5 million overnight visitors travelled to and within British Columbia. In 2017, tourism directly employed 137,800 people, generated over \$18.4 billion in revenue and contributed \$1.2 billion in tax revenues to BC. In turn, the tourism businesses and visitors invest in local suppliers of goods and services, including technology, agricultural products, hospitality and household items, vehicles, professional services and others. For every \$100 million in tourism revenue, it is estimated that there is a further \$69 million in economic spin-off. The sector makes a significant contribution to the BC economy and job base as the third largest employer in the province.

***“TOURISM IS ESSENTIAL TO THE GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY OF FERNIE. SHARING OUR WONDERFUL VALLEY BRINGS EXTRA MONEY IN TO PROVIDE JOBS, MORE ACTIVITIES AND AMENITIES, BETTER TRAIL NETWORKS, MORE RESTAURANTS TO CHOOSE FROM AND SO MUCH MORE, MAKING FERNIE NOT JUST A WONDERFUL HOLIDAY DESTINATION, BUT AN AWESOME PLACE FOR THOSE OF US LUCKY ENOUGH TO LIVE HERE!”***

***FERNIE BUSINESS VALUE OF TOURISM SURVEY RESPONSE***

Within the Kootenay Rockies region visitor spending in 2014 was \$777 million and represented over 11% of the province's overnight visitors. Over 20% of visitors to the region are international.

In Fernie, visitor spending in 2015 was calculated at over \$100 million with annual visitation at over 307,000 of which the leisure visitors are an estimated 20+% international and 40+% Albertan. Visitors to Fernie have an average spend of \$580 per overnight visitor and an average length of stay of 3.4 nights. Overnight visitors represent 53% of all visitors, but represent 87% of the spending compared to same day visitors who account for 47% of the visitors and only 13% of spending.

Tourism is a significant contributor to the provincial economy and job base and is growing.

Tourism is a significant contributor to Fernie's economy and an important industry to maintain a diverse economy.

Tourism in Fernie is growing.

Overnight visitors contribute significantly more than day visitors.

Getting visitors to stay overnight and for more nights is important for growing tourism and for connecting visitors to Fernie.

Overnight visitation from the corporate travel industry, sport tournaments and those visiting family and friends are a key piece of the room revenue pie



## SITUATION ANALYSIS & KEY INSIGHTS | MACRO TRENDS

Aging population  
freedom to travel outside  
peaks – may need different  
experiences

Millennial – technology  
focus, authentic, unique  
experiences, social- sharable,  
beer/hike, iconic activities

Finding the balance between  
encouraging visitation to  
Fernie's natural assets and  
preserving them will be  
critical

Opportunity to reach  
travelers before, during and  
after the trip and requires  
connectivity and good online  
information sources, and  
networks to other tourism

Shifting suppliers, providing  
assets to visitors in a modular/  
phased manner – low invest-  
ments, policy implications  
and positive/negative impacts  
on community actors

Focusing on developing  
positive and remarkable  
visitor experiences, products  
and services will have a  
greater impact than  
marketing tactics alone.

Ability to connect with  
visitors via new digital  
information and servicing  
opportunities is import-  
ant. Finding and leveraging  
advocate

**Shifting Demographics / Millennials** – population is growing, aging in the traditional markets, millennials (1980s-2000s) very large generation, - not all single!

**Shifting Values/Attitudes** - Health, environmental sustainability, and ethics values are more prevalent. Gen Z asserts itself as travel's next big opportunity.

**Mobile Technology** - The use of mobile and other technology has exploded, with most travellers now having near-constant access to web enabled devices. Tourism's new competitive advantage is 'Protecting' – not just 'Promoting' the destination.

**Sharing Economy** – The use of personal or commercial assets as revenue generators and services to tourists such as homes (Airbnb) cars (Uber), Mobi bikes etc. and the 'localized' and often lower cost experiences it provides travelers.

**Advocacy / Social Media** – Recommendations and stories from other travellers is the most influential source of information for travel destinations.

**Travel Information Sources** - Awareness and inspiration occur mostly through traditional media and word of mouth; trip-planning through on-line web-sites and traveller review sites. Social networks are growing in importance as planning tools. Google takes charge.

## SITUATION ANALYSIS & KEY INSIGHTS | MACRO TRENDS

**Customer Service / Personalization** – Power shift from institutions to the individual consumer through technology and at the same time, consumers are more cost-conscious.

**High Quality, Authentic Experiences** – Trend of authentic opportunities to experience the culture, natural attributes and unique activities of the local destination as well as enrich the traveller's life.

**Value, Staycations and Time Poverty** – Travellers continue to place greater emphasis on achieving greater value for money when decision-making and purchasing. Some demographic segments, it appears that populations are feeling greater pressures on leisure time, leading to more frequent shorter trips.

**Competition** – Competition is increasing nationally and regionally, e.g Alberta, more Resort Municipalities.

**Climate Change and Tourism** – Impacts here include more frequent fluctuations in weather patterns within seasons, milder winters, warmer summers, more frequent wildfires, changes in natural landscapes and flora/fauna.

Customers increasingly expect continuity and best-practice service between customer service channels and from booking to experiences and end of trip from all actors large and small.

Destinations should understand and track components of remarkable experiences in BC, unless the tourism product meets the needs and expectations of visitors, the destination cannot realize its full potential.

BC is not perceived as an inexpensive, or 'value' destination which drives the importance of top quality experiences facilitated by outstanding visitor services.

Canadians traveling at home.

BC tourism businesses will need to be accessible and accommodating to these markets, and our messaging must be relevant.

Reducing our own footprint  
Adaptation – new infrastructure, demand for different activities (water based), new climate insulated activities, longer summer seasons, shorter winter focus.



## SITUATION ANALYSIS & KEY INSIGHTS | MACRO TRENDS

Local tourism businesses and destinations will continue to evolve to attract a sufficient labour force – wages, housing, advancement opportunities, benefits, good work environment.

Considering mature workers or recent immigrants

Ensuring these attributes are properly maintained and protected will support continued interest in BC as a travel destination.

Respecting land use plans.

### INSIGHTS

Fernie's population and housing stock is growing, though housing is less affordable than other areas in the region.

Fernie has a large working population.

The median income for Fernie and adjacent communities is high compared to the region, making it harder to attract staff to some tourism occupations paying lower wages.

The second homeowner economy is a spin off from tourism and generates revenue for the community on its own.

**HR / Labour** – BC, is expected to face considerable workforce shortages now and in the future.

**Land Use** - Increasing competition for land or ownership putting pressure on land-based tourism policies and businesses.

### FERNIE COMMUNITY CONTEXT

The City of Fernie, a community of over 5,000 residents, is geographically located in the Elk Valley of the Kootenay Region in British Columbia. Electoral Area A of the Regional District of East Kootenay surrounds the City of Fernie municipal boundary and many of the recreational amenities and attractions, such as trails, Fernie Alpine Resort, FWA and Island Lake Lodge are located on the lands, private and Crown, in Area A.

#### *FERNIE'S COMMUNITY VISION (FROM 2014 O.C.P.)*

*FERNIE IS AN ECONOMICALLY, ENVIRONMENTALLY AND SOCIALLY SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY WHERE EVERYONE HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO PURSUE AN EXCELLENT QUALITY OF LIFE. FERNIE'S COMPACT NEIGHBOURHOODS PROVIDE A DIVERSITY OF HOUSING OPTIONS, AND ARE ACCESSIBLE AND FRIENDLY. A ROBUST, DIVERSE AND RESILIENT ECONOMY, INCLUDING NATURAL RESOURCES AND TOURISM INDUSTRIES, SUPPORTS A SKILLED WORKFORCE. THE BEAUTY OF THE COMMUNITY, IT'S HEALTHY ECOSYSTEMS AND BOUNTIFUL RECREATION AND LEISURE OPPORTUNITIES ATTRACT RESIDENTS AND VISITORS ALIKE.*

## SITUATION ANALYSIS & KEY INSIGHTS

The population in Fernie is one of the fastest growing communities in BC, having increased approximately 18% from 2011 to 2016. This compares to a provincial average of 5.6% and a regional average of just over 6%. The number of occupied private dwellings increased as well, growing 12% to 2,218.

All age categories in Fernie experienced growth from 2011 to 2016, with the 0-14 age category increasing in distribution more than both the 15-64 and 65+ age groups. The average age is about 39 which is less than the region and BC.

The median total income of households in Fernie was \$90,112, a change of 59% from 2005. This income is significantly higher than the \$69,995 median across BC and the \$76,850 in the region, but less than neighbouring communities of Elkford (\$100,379) and Sparwood (\$103,538).

With respect to education and labour, 69% of residents completed some level of post-secondary education (College, University, and Apprenticeship) compared to 59% in both BC and in the region.

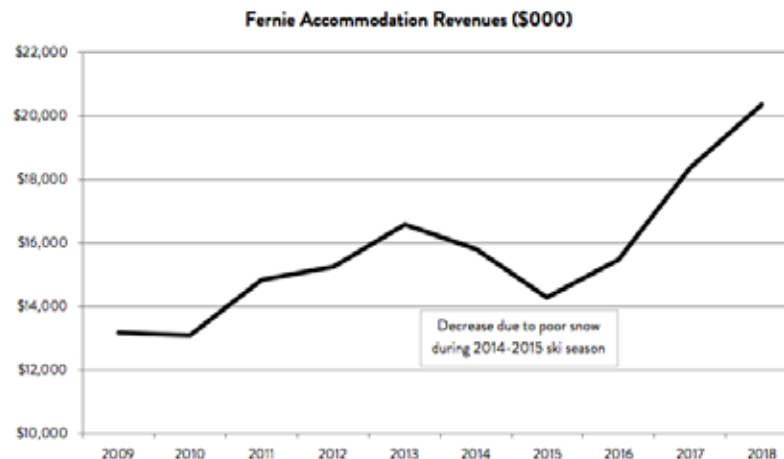
In 2016, there were 2,220 households in Fernie; 72.9% owned their dwelling compared to 68% in BC and Canada. Of all households, 22% spend more than 30% or more of their income on shelter, which compares to 28% in all of BC and 17% in the region. Second homeowners in Fernie, considered residential tourists, represent 30% of all residential properties and are a unique segment of the tourism economy.

For 2019, BC Assessment data indicated that the average property assessments of a single-family residential property in Fernie was \$522,000<sup>1</sup>, greater than any other community in the Kootenays, including Revelstoke and Nelson.

## VISITOR VOLUME, ROOM REVENUES AND SEASONALITY

Total annual visitor volume to Fernie is expected to now exceed 400,000 given the lodging revenue growth since 2014/15. Though Fernie experienced a marked decline in revenues in 2014/15 due to the low snow levels impacting ski visitation that season, significant tourism growth has been evident and continues to trend. The Value of Tourism Study released in 2017 indicated showed that annual visitor spending in Fernie was over \$100 million for 2014/2015, with an average spend of \$580 per overnight visitor.

Figure 1



<sup>1</sup>BC Assessment website, Kootenay\_Columbia\_2019\_Property\_Assessments, [www.bcassessment.ca](http://www.bcassessment.ca)

## INSIGHTS

In 2017 Tourism Fernie released a Value of Tourism Study. Understanding tourism's contribution to a community is central to developing an informed tourism planning approach, strengthening the support of community stakeholders and local government, and encouraging an appreciation of tourism's economic benefits and development potential.

The demand for coal surged and the mines flourished with the outbreak of World War II, but the post war period saw a slack in demand again. While coal still played a role in the local economy, Fernie began to look at other opportunities. Tourism, both summer and winter, was one such opportunity. - Fernie Heritage Strategy

## INSIGHTS

Fernie's visitation and room revenues are growing in all seasons but at different rates

The room revenue mix is shifting from winter to summer due to a higher rate of growth in summer but also the greater growth in nightly summer room rates.

The highest average nightly room rate is during the winter ski season and higher yield visitors

There is still room to maximize summer and winter seasons, and to shift/grow visitation in the spring and fall

## SITUATION ANALYSIS & KEY INSIGHTS

### INSIGHTS

Increasing the awareness and market-readiness of shoulder season experiences will grow tourism

Severe weather can significantly impact room revenues in Fernie and thus visitation and overall tourism revenues

Visitors, residents and local infrastructure are starting to feel some negative impacts of tourism during peak times

Visitor experiences and the availability of services and activities can vary dramatically between the seasons

The fluctuation of business levels due to seasonal tourism create staffing retention and recruitment issues

Short-term rentals (STRs) in Fernie, mostly associated with Airbnb have seen significant growth.

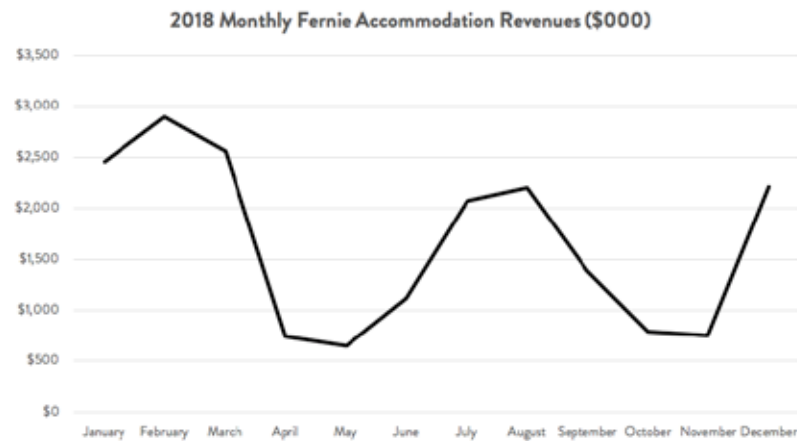
Since October 2018 most STRs started collecting MRDT (2% hotel tax). Data initially indicate they generate \$3.2 million annually in local room revenues.

Accommodators have begun to meet as a larger group more regularly to learn and grow, and to identify solutions to challenges such as labour, yield and pricing.

### VISITOR VOLUME, ROOM REVENUES AND SEASONALITY

Fernie's tourism economy is seasonal with winter and summer generating the most visits and revenues (Figure 2) as a result of the popular activities available during those times and traditional vacation holiday travel times. Lodging revenue (more specific to yield and higher room rates) is greater during the winter months as a result of the strong regional and destination ski market. However, the volume of visitors is greater during the peak summer months.

Figure 2

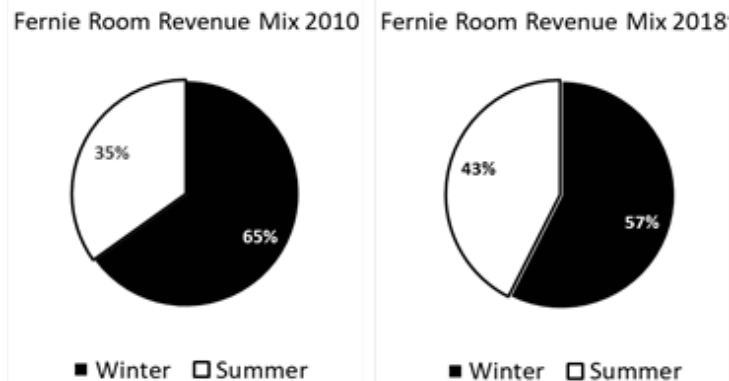


Data from the Value of Tourism Study conducted by Tourism Fernie showed an average daily room rate during the winter season of \$265/night<sup>2</sup> versus \$161 during the summer. Figure 3 below shows the spread of room revenue from 2010 to 2018.

For over 50 years, winter ski tourism has been the largest producer of leisure-based tourism revenues and visitation in Fernie but has more recently seen slower growth compared to summer. Summer tourism has existed for decades, but it wasn't until approximately 2010 when summer visitation experienced more significant year-over-year growth. In fact summer room revenue increased 86% from 2010 to 2018 (June-Sept), while winter room revenues over the same period saw just an 18% increase (Dec-Mar).

Spring and fall season represent significant growth opportunities as the official low or shoulder seasons, most specifically April, May, October and November. Since 2010, room revenues during these months have increased by 48%, but as a less popular time of year for leisure travel yield and room rates are lower.

Figure 3





### FERNIE'S BRAND

Developed by Tourism Fernie in 2010 to guide its tourism marketing efforts, the below brand position helps to articulate what Fernie is known for and where both locals and visitors indicated what is of value and importance. Much of below still holds true today.



**Cool, small-town charm:** Fernie's funky main street with its turn-of-the-century brick buildings framed by post card-perfect mountains provides this rugged and unpolished little town with a unique charm.

**Mountain culture:** From the pick-up trucks and mountain bikes that travel its streets, to the ski bums and guide shops that line them, Fernie's distinct mountain culture is evident at almost every turn.

**Stunning scenery:** Fernie is a magnificent outdoor setting from which to experience the beauty and majesty of the Canadian Rocky Mountains.

**Authentic and real:** Fernie is a casual, comfortable, and laid-back place where a local community still thrives. A community first, destination second, Fernie is not a packaged experience for the mass tourist.

**Adventurous and outdoorsy:** Fernie is a place where adventure seekers, mountain enthusiasts, and outdoor recreationalists of all kinds come to experience the stunning natural surroundings and range of outdoor activities.

**Down-to-earth:** Fernie's people are humble, honest, natural, and welcoming with a resiliency that stems from their hard-working roots.

**Enduring history:** Fernie has a rich history that is alive and thriving to this day.

**Community-minded:** Fernie's people work together for the betterment of their town, its residents and its visitors. They take pride in their community and welcome visitors who share their values.

## INSIGHTS

Fernie offers a breadth of experiences throughout the year.

Fernie Alpine Resort, trails, river access and world-class lodges are core visitor experiences.

The Fernie experience is more than just scenery and activities. It includes the local culture, history and authentic feel.

The origin of winter visitors continues to be diverse and almost 50% is international or long haul.

Visitor Surveys conducted by Tourism Fernie have continually shown that 95-98% of the visitors surveyed 1) visited historic downtown, 2) would recommend Fernie to others and would return if possible, 3) had their expectations met.

Alberta continues to be a critical market for Fernie and especially in the summer when visitation is more regional short haul.

The long haul European market travelling HWY 1 in the spring, summer, and fall may offer a potential opportunity for Fernie.

Lining up with many of Destination BC's target markets affords Fernie the ability for shared marketing.

## SITUATION ANALYSIS & KEY INSIGHTS

### TOURISM EXPERIENCES & THE VISITORS

The extent of things to do for both visitors and locals are vast yet fluctuate and change between the seasons. Fernie Alpine Resort, Island Lake Catskiing and FWA Catskiing are core winter assets drawing in visitors from near and far while recent and significant growth has been seen with snowmobiling and Nordic skiing. During summer season visitation is driven primarily by those wanting to experience local valley/mountain trails and parks on foot or mountain bike, activities on the Elk River such as fly fishing, rafting and SUP, casual town exploration and mountain sightseeing, and big festivals and events. The emergence of new and more tourism-oriented experiences including spa and wellness, arts and culture, culinary and destination weddings are not only increasing during summer and winter but also shoulder seasons. Without all these critical assets, and the lodging, retail and services to accommodate the demand, multi-season visitation could not be achieved.

Fernie's attractiveness is more than just one activity, event, business or story however. A community this rich in history, people and culture compels visitors looking for something more than the mass market resort.

**Explore [TourismFernie.com](https://www.tourismfernie.com) to see the extent of visitor information for trip inspiration and planning.**

### TARGET MARKETS

Fernie's overnight visitors are a mix of both short and long haul markets in winter, with a noticeable shift to short-haul markets in the summer months and shoulder seasons. Visitors from Alberta make a significant contribution to the visitor mix year-round thanks to their close proximity and their growing desire to explore mountain towns less busy than Banff and Canmore.

#### Overnight Visitors - Visitor Origin (Source: TF Visitor Surveys 2013-2015)

	Winter	Summer
AB	36%	57%
UK	20%	1%
Aus/NZ	11%	2%
ON/East	10%	5%
Europe	7%	3%
BC	6%	16%
SK/MB	6%	8%
USA - short haul	2%	5%
USA - long haul	2%	3%

## SITUATION ANALYSIS & KEY INSIGHTS

Tourism Fernie's target markets for future marketing that are expected to provide the best return on investment and in most cases be in line with Destination BC's target markets are as described by the characteristics below:

### Primary Traveler Profiles: TOURISM EQ

**Free Spirit Travelers:** thrill-seeking hedonist, travel satisfies an insatiable need for the exciting and the exotic.

**Authentic Experienter Travelers:** exploring nature, history and culture, all on the path to personal development.

**Rejuvenators/No Hassle Travelers:** worry-free and secure travel. Look for relaxation, simplicity, and a chance to experience the outdoors with family and friends.

**Gentle Explorer Travelers:** return to past destinations and enjoy the security of familiar surroundings. Appreciate convenience, relaxation and typically look for all the comforts of home.

### Trip Purpose and Offerings in Fernie

- Touring / Scenery / Sightseeing / Rocky Mountains
- Skiing (alpine, cat, nordic)
- Snowmobiling
- Spa & Wellness
- Weddings, Events & Festivals
- History / Culture / Culinary
- Experiencing 'nature / outdoors'
- Hiking / Nature walks
- Fly Fishing
- Mountain Biking
- River Experiences
- Camping / RV
- Snowshoeing

**Primary Geographic Markets**  
**Canadian: AB, BC, SK, MB, ON**  
**USA: WA, ID, MT, CA**

## INSIGHTS

Summer visitor surveys indicated that the primary reason for coming is the "Mountains, Scenery, Wildlife, Getaway from the City", 2nd reason is "been here before" and 3rd reason is "visiting friends & family". Biking was the #1 activity followed by hiking and camping.

Wedding tourism, aka destination weddings, continue to be a growth opportunity for Fernie. Data from businesswire.com indicates that 25% of marriages are destination weddings.

Heritage tourism visitors stay longer, visit twice as many places and spend 2.5 times more than other visitors.

Fishing tourism generates over \$2.5 million in guided angler expenditures annually. Each guided angler spends \$700/day

The growth and development of Fernie's Historic Downtown has made it into the town's most unique and iconic visitor attraction.

Fernie's local and visitor culture has continued to diversify and flourish

Fernie is seeing more interest and visitation from Canadian and US travelers especially those wanting a more community focused vs mass

## INSIGHTS

Maintaining this strong support will be important for the continued success of tourism and the visitor experience.

Tourism organizations and businesses should take pride in this result and continue to express gratitude to those supporters.

Continuing to broaden these benefits is important for maintaining support for tourism.

There is some indication that these benefits are somewhat diminished recently due to questions about capacity and housing.

A Fernie Heritage Strategy is currently in its final stages of development. The community engagement undertaken for this strategy resulted in the following top 4 areas of importance related to community heritage values:

- Fernie's natural, wild setting and outdoor recreation and access.
- Fernie's history and heritage (including built heritage) and Fernie's built form and public realm.
- Fernie's community and local arts and culture.
- The value of Fernie's tourism, economy and industry.

## SITUATION ANALYSIS & KEY INSIGHTS

### TOURISM MASTER PLAN: SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVES

Highlights of the community and business survey as well as the focus group engagement is captured below. Further details are captured in an engagement summary report.

#### **Most are supportive of tourism, but not quite all**

When asked about whether the benefits of tourism outweigh the negative impacts, a large majority of residents and businesses agreed, with only 14% and 4% respectively disagreeing.

#### **Consistency in the top 3 benefits across the community:**

**Business, employment and income opportunities** within tourism and other areas (Arts, non-tourism businesses) as a result of tourism and as tourism grows.

**Increased access to things that matter** like recreation experiences (trails especially), events, shopping and dining experiences. For all businesses this also means better staff recruitment opportunities due to the community's attractiveness as a place to live.

**Increased vibrancy and energy** in the community (especially downtown) as a result of activities/events and the number and diversity of people attracted to the area.

**“In short, what we learned from the public survey is that heritage in Fernie is about the desire to conserve the continuity of character, be it of the natural environment, the built form, the community's neighbourhoods or Fernie's small town atmosphere.”**

**From the Fernie Heritage Strategy, 2019**



## SITUATION ANALYSIS & KEY INSIGHTS

### Consistency in the challenges and shared across different groups:

**Affordability and availability of housing** were prominent themes across all of the engagement activities and cited by residents, businesses and organizations alike. There were differences on opinion on who's (business, local government, and/or market) issue it is to solve.

**Overcrowding and capacity** experienced at peak times and across multiple areas such as trails, restaurants, facilities, accommodation, roads and parking and events.

**Potential Loss of community /small town feel** was noted often and commonly in a response to capacity challenges, but also due to the behaviour of some visitors.

**Access and some over use of natural areas** such as rivers and trails close to town leading to pressure on local ecosystems and special places such swimming holes and natural features. Much of the recreation infrastructure for summer activities is on private land, and while some land owners such as Island Lake are supportive of tourism, others are not.

**Variable/seasonal visitation** throughout the year presents challenges for organizations serving the visitor with respect to providing full time or year-round employment and ramping services up and down.

### Residents appreciate sharing the whole 'Fernie' experience

Both residents and business were in alignment that the strengths of the Fernie experience includes a range of easy to access outdoor activities, a small town authentic feel, beautiful scenery and a vibrant downtown with unique shops / restaurant experiences.

#### INSIGHT

Alignment between, businesses, organizations, residents and the community branding is essential for providing Fernie's authentic experience and meeting visitor's expectations.



### INSIGHTS

The availability of housing and a positive work/living environment are important for attracting and retaining good quality staff.

As the most expensive community in the Kootenays to buy a single family residential property affordability is a concern for attracting and retaining staff.

There is a correlation between median household income and housing prices.

With tourism growth expected to continue, efforts to manage visitor overflows and spread visitation throughout lower demand periods are required.

Better understanding key transportation pinch points and parking overflow issues while promoting active transportation as much as possible during peak months can help.

The natural places, trails and rivers that attract visitors and residents to Fernie and area are gems that need to be experienced but protected as well.

The private land of Island Lake Lodge, shared access, and trail amenities are critical assets for existing and new tourism experiences.

Supporting visitors to integrate with and respect the local community through targeted marketing and communications could help to improve the interactions between particular visitors and residents.

## INSIGHTS

Consistent customer service and offering additional service hours at shops for visitors is ever more important in an era of 'word of mouth' social media marketing.

Fernie Alpine Resort is Fernie's core attraction in the winter. Given the proximity to many other ski areas the competition for visitors is very high therefore continuing to improve the experience is important.

Attracting a higher yield visitor will need both investments in product / services as well as targeted marketing at this demographic. Much may be learned from existing operators such as Island Lake Lodge Resort

The City is addressing requirements for their facilities and it will be important to understand how these can be leveraged for tourism opportunities.

Business case and feasibility studies for new investments will likely be required prior to pursuing any major public investments

Accommodation values and reinvestment at ski hill properties in are challenged due to underutilization outside of winter

## SITUATION ANALYSIS & KEY INSIGHTS

### The 'Fernie' experience could be even more

**General customer service improvements** across sectors and especially with respect to offerings at the ski hill and in shoulder seasons.

**More accommodation options** at peak times, as well as updated accommodation facilities, restaurants and trip planning services targeting 'boutique' and higher yield guests.

**Traffic and parking management** as well as improved access to Fernie and continued connections between the ski hill and downtown.

**Increased/enhanced indoor amenities** (pools, arts/culture halls) and also new facilities to attract other markets in the non-peak times such as sport tourism (hockey, tennis), events and conferences (Conference Centre)

### The visitor level is comfortable for now, but existing core attractions and services are beyond capacity at times

A large majority of both residents and businesses indicated a general comfort with current levels of visitation. That said, many feel Fernie is on the cusp of becoming 'too busy' at peak times.

**INSIGHT** Stakeholders will have to understand which weekend / seasons and activities / locations are experiencing overcrowding and address these pinch points.

### Support for tourism growth exists in the shoulder seasons, and there is a preference to maintain summer and winter levels.

Most businesses and residents leaned toward supporting growth in visitor levels in the fall and spring. Perspectives on summer and winter visitation levels varied with residents more supportive to maintain current levels than the businesses who were split on whether to maintain levels or grow them during these seasons.

**INSIGHT** With tourism growth expected to continue, efforts to maximize summer and winter and shift visitation into lower demand periods are needed.

The natural places, trails and rivers that attract visitors and residents to Fernie and area are gems that need to be experienced but protected and maintained as well. A variety of management activities are required.

## SITUATION ANALYSIS & KEY INSIGHTS

### **Perceived responsibility for ensuring tourism supports community and business goals is generally spread across four groups**

The City of Fernie and Tourism Fernie are seen to have a major role in how tourism develops in Fernie. Fernie Alpine Resort and tourism businesses/Chamber of Commerce were also noted quite frequently as being responsible for tourism development for community and business goals.



### **Industry is generally collaborating well on tourism, however there could be some improvements**

Strengths include collaboration amongst tourism/business member organizations, communications from these groups to members and connections between businesses who work together as strengths.

Improvements areas include reducing overlapping roles, more consistent branding, coordinated emergency event messaging, and the need to continue to enhance collaboration with Fernie Alpine Resort.

Initiatives underway such as the heritage plan, as well as existing plans such as the trails master plan, signage plan, parking study and highway transportation study along with funding such as the MRDT and RMI could be coordinated to help implement the TMP.

### **INSIGHTS**

With a perception of responsibility placed mainly on the City and Tourism Fernie these two organizations will have a large role to play in guiding and implementing this tourism plan. It will be important to make sure both organizations are resourced to be able to do this.

Common communication and branding efforts should be enhanced to ensure consistency in messaging.

Leading industry practice is for destination marketing organizations to be the primary visitor contact before trips, during trips and post trip

Continuing to keep the visitor experience as a central tenant will help with collaboration among tourism organizations.

New/existing plans and funding programs can be better aligned for success.



## SITUATION ANALYSIS & KEY INSIGHTS

### MOST RECENT VISITOR SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS | SUMMER 2019 VISITOR SURVEY

During the summer of 2019 Tourism Fernie conducted 232 face-to-face visitor surveys in various locations in Fernie. Note this a small sample size. Over 90% of those surveyed were visitors staying under 30 days. The full survey results are available from Tourism Fernie by request. Here are some of the highlights:

#### Summer Visit Duration:

- 17% were day trippers
- 7% stayed 1 night
- 30% stayed 2-3 nights
- 22% stayed 4-6 nights
- 16% stayed 7+ nights

#### Return or New?

- 23% had never been to Fernie before
- 45% had been to Fernie in both summer and winter
- 27% had been to Fernie before but only during summer season
- 6% had been to Fernie before but only during winter season

#### Origin of Visitors Surveyed:

- 54% Calgary & Southern Alberta
- 10% Central & Northern Alberta
- 6% Kootenay Region
- 4% Interior BC
- 3% Coastal BC
- 6% Sask & Manitoba
- 5% ON and Eastern Canada
- 6% USA
- 2% UK
- 2% Europe
- 2% Australia & New Zealand

#### Travelling Companions:

- 63% with family
- 50% with spouse/significant other
- 17% with a friend or group of friends
- 9% solo

#### Primary Reason for Travelling to Fernie:

- 22% mountain biking
- 19% mountains/scenery/escape from city
- 17% visiting friends or family
- 8% attending an event/festival/wedding
- 6% road trip/passing through
- 5% word of mouth
- 5% Lots of things to do
- 3% hiking



## SITUATION ANALYSIS & KEY INSIGHTS

### Top 25 Things Visitors Did While in Fernie:

- 82% eat at local restaurants/cafes
- 62% shop for groceries
- 59% hiked local & area trails
- 54% went to local pubs/bars
- 53% General sightseeing, exploring, short walks
- 50% shopped for clothing, sporting goods, gifts, local specialty food & drink, art & crafts
- 46% mountain biked local and area trails
- 36% were camping
- 37% went to the lake/beach
- 31% did activities at Fernie Alpine Resort
- 29% did activities at Island Lake Lodge
- 29% attended local live music
- 26% attended an event
- 23% went to the dirt jump and pump track park
- 22% visited an arts, cultural or heritage facility/attraction
- 20% visited FBC or Fernie Distillers
- 18% went to Aquatic Centre/Splash Park
- 18% went golfing
- 17% did SUP/float on river/lake
- 16% went fly fishing
- 15% white water rafted and kayaked/canoed
- 15% went to the spa
- 15% visited local parks
- 10% participated in an arts/culture tour/workshop
- 9% played tennis

98% of visitors said their visit had met their expectations, 2% said somewhat

99% of visitors surveyed said they would return again

How likely would you recommend Fernie as a travel destination? Scale of 1 to 10, where 10 highest score.

217 scored 9 or 10 (Promoters)

15 scored 7 or 8 (Passives)

0 scored 0 to 6 (Detractors)

Fernie's Net Promoter Score is 94.

Understanding Net Promoter Score (NPS) – NPS has a range from -100 to +100, a 'positive' NPS score above '0' is considered 'good', +50 is 'excellent', and +70 is considered 'world class'.





## SITUATION ANALYSIS & KEY INSIGHTS

### MOST RECENT VISITOR SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS | WINTER 2016 VISITOR SURVEY

During February and March of 2016 Tourism Fernie conducted 219 face-to-face visitor surveys in various locations in Fernie. Note this a small sample size, 70% of surveys were conducted at Fernie Alpine Resort. Over 80% of those surveyed were visitors staying under 30 days, 18% were visitors staying the full season. The full survey results are available from Tourism Fernie by request. Here are some of the highlights:

#### Winter Visit Duration:

- 1% were day trippers
- 10% stayed 1 night
- 50% stayed 2-3 nights
- 16% stayed 4-6 nights
- 6% stayed 7+ nights
- 19% staying the full season

#### Return or New?

- 47% had never been to Fernie before
- 23% had been to Fernie in both summer and winter
- 1% had been to Fernie before but only during summer season
- 28% had been to Fernie before but only during winter season

#### Origin of Visitors Surveyed:

- 41% Calgary & Southern Alberta
- 7% Central & Northern Alberta
- 5% Kootenay Region
- 3% Other BC
- 16% Sask & Manitoba
- 3% ON and Eastern Canada
- 5% USA
- 11% UK
- 4% Europe
- 7% Australia & New Zealand

#### Travelling Companions:

- 33% with family
- 8% with spouse/significant other
- 47% with a friend or group of friends
- 7% solo
- 6% as part of a tour/club/group

#### The Economic Flow of Tourism



## SITUATION ANALYSIS & KEY INSIGHTS

### Top Things Visitors Did While in Fernie:

- 96% skiing Fernie Alpine Resort
- 74% going to local pubs/bars
- 73% eating at local restaurants/cafes
- 72% visiting historic downtown
- 60% shopping for groceries
- 55% taking in live music/entertainment
- 32% attending an event/festival
- 30% visiting the Aquatic Centre
- 29% visiting the museum
- 28% shopping for clothing / goods / gifts / gear / art specialty foods
- 20% visiting the arts station
- 17% seeing a movie at the theatre
- 15% backcountry ski touring
- 15% snowshoeing
- 15% cross-country skiing
- 15% attending a Ghost Rider hockey game
- 14% playing disc golf
- 13% cat skiing
- 12% curling
- 12% visiting a spa
- 11% fat biking
- 8% snowmobiling

How likely would you recommend Fernie as a travel destination? Scale of 1 to 10, where 10 highest score.

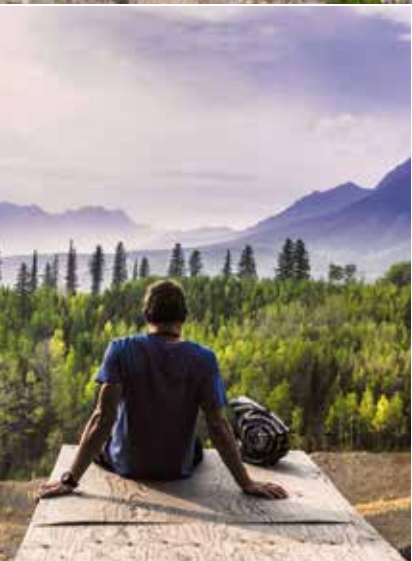
207 scored 9 or 10 (Promoters)

7 scored 7 or 8 (Passives)

1 scored 0 to 6 (Detractors)

Fernie's Net Promoter Score is 96.





## SITUATION ANALYSIS & KEY INSIGHTS

### TOURISM SENTIMENT INDEX – FERNIE 2017

DestinationThink! was contracted by Tourism Fernie to produce three annual reports from 2017 – 2019 called the Tourism Sentiment Index. Each report provides a comprehensive analysis of what people are saying about Fernie online. Insights from this data help guide strategic planning, marketing and destination development to enable our community to shape the way people talk about Fernie in the future.

**More than 500,000 different sources were included in the analysis, including online media sites, forums, reviews and social media networks (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr, YouTube and Trip Advisor).**

The Tourism Sentiment Index is a measure of a destination's ability to generate positive word of mouth about its tourism offering. It is an aggregate score (NPS System) that focuses solely on online conversations that reference or affect a potential traveller's perceptions of a destination's tourism offering. To do this DestinationThink! starts by collecting all the conversations around your destination and then filter to those conversations that are driven by Fernie's tourism experiences or products. To provide further context for the results, five comparative destinations were included in the analysis: Rossland, Whitefish, Golden, Revelstoke and Canmore.

Below are a few highlights from the 2017 report. The full report is available from Tourism Fernie by request. The 2018 report will be available in late 2019.

Fernie's tourism NPS score is 57. Compared to the five other competing destinations Fernie is above average where the highest was 64 and the lowest was 43.

Fernie's overall NPS score is 41. This includes all conversations, not just tourism related. Note the accident at the arena played a roll in this score.

The following tourism assets, in order, are where Fernie excels in generating positive perceptions of the destination's tourism offering:

Skiing & snowboarding | Culinary, Breweries & Pubs  
Snowmobiling | Nature viewing | Biking | Hiking  
Festival & Events | Fishing | Camping | Snowshoeing  
Spa | Weddings



## OUR VISION & GOALS

### VISION, MISSION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following statements and principles are aligned with existing community and tourism organization plans and takes into account the aspirations articulated by the community, businesses and tourism stakeholders during the TMP engagement.

#### OUR TOURISM VISION STATEMENT

A vibrant and sustainable tourism destination built on respect, collaboration and authenticity

#### OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Working together to manage and grow tourism sustainably for the betterment of our community and our visitors

#### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

**Together We Are Stronger:** Dynamic and proactive community, First Nations, government, and industry collaboration is the foundation to Fernie's tourism success.

**Businesses Thrive Sustainably:** Year-round tourism supports business prosperity thereby helping address many industry challenges while building a more sustainable economy for Fernie.

**Authenticity Grounds Us:** Local experiences are grounded in Fernie's small-town charm, hospitality, mountain culture, scenery, adventure, arts, heritage and 100 years of welcoming a diversity of visitors.

**Benefiting the Whole:** Management, delivery and growth of tourism that benefits community and visitors alike.

**A Respected Natural Environment:** Respected and healthy environment and well managed landscape provides the foundation for Fernie's success in tourism.

DRAFT ONLY

#### OUR VISION:

The big outcome we hope to achieve with tourism in Fernie. Having this common vision allows us to be inspired and clarifies what we are collectively trying to achieve, creating a place of agreement and then a platform for our dialogue and decision making.

#### OUR MISSION:

The purpose of the plan and the joint implementation by tourism stakeholders and partners.

#### OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

Reflect what is critical to our success and the lens that we need to look through for planning, decision making and implementation.



## OUR VISION & GOALS

### FOCUS AREAS AND GOALS 2020-2030

The four Focus Areas are the big outcomes that will help us to achieve our vision and guide our strategic direction and actions. These topics and goals reflect what was learned through research or engagement with the community, business and tourism stakeholders. They reflect the assets we have or need to develop based as well as the opportunities to move toward our vision. These goals were reviewed, shared with stakeholders, and finalized by the Task Force.

**FOCUS AREAS:** Articulate high-level statements of the desired future in 10 years.

**GOALS:** The high-level approach to the Focus Area outcomes, our desired future and vision.

#### Focus Area 1

##### DIVERSITY OF VISITORS YEAR ROUND

**Goal:** Grow visitors into multi-day, year-round economic and community contributors

Tourism offers enormous economic and community benefits to residents and businesses though with changing visitor demographics and current growth pressure it is important to ensure those benefits are deepened and further spread throughout the year.

#### Focus Area 2

##### REMARKABLE VISITOR EXPERIENCES

**Goal:** Develop and enhance Fernie's visitor infrastructure, amenities, brand, tourism products, experiences and people

Fernie offers a full suite of outdoor recreation-based experiences coupled with a deep sense of place and authentic welcoming culture. These experiences and new ones need to address service gaps and align with changing demographics. With the advent of 'word of mouth' marketing, experiences must be remarkable in order to be shared.

#### Focus Area 3

##### STRONGER TOURISM FOUNDATION

**Goal:** Ensure collaboration, community support, people and financing for tourism success

Fernie's current tourism success is a result of hard work, energetic organizations, collaboration and a sense of community pride. Essentially, people, working together. Along with deepened industry collaboration, there is a need continually develop advocates for tourism. With human resource challenges facing the industry, barriers to attracting and retaining people such as housing need addressing.

#### Focus Area 4

##### SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT

**Goal:** Manage locations where visitation is impacting the sense of community or natural environment and support the resiliency of the industry.

The very qualities that make Fernie and area such a great place to live and visit are being impacted at times by concentrated tourism visitation growth. Climate change and pressures from other industry are also threatening these same assets. Tourism must understand and help mitigate these impacts working with other industry, land owners, community groups and government.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS & ACTIONS

### STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

With the Vision articulated and a good understanding of the current situation and engagement input, the TMP Task Force embarked through workshops to articulate how to move toward the Vision and Goals. Through these workshops they began to answer the questions of “how?”, “where?”, “when?” and “what first?” through Strategic Directions that guide specific actions over the next 3- 5 years. These directions presented below are informed by considering the current situation analysis and the many ideas gathered during the engagement as well as each Task Force participant’s intimate knowledge.

#### Focus Area 1

##### DIVERSITY OF VISITORS YEAR ROUND

###### Strategic Directions:

- Increase visitation in non-peak times in summer and winter and fall, spring
- Foster Fernie’s Arts, Heritage and Cultural Tourism Product
- Maximize current event/facility capacity for existing events and a plan for growth & expansion through events
- Develop strategies to attract and serve high yield/value-oriented visitors
- Embrace 2nd homeowners to create Ambassadors for Fernie
- Develop a common community brand to present to visitors

#### Focus Area 2

##### REMARKABLE VISITOR EXPERIENCES

###### Strategic Directions:

- Support businesses and organizations to foster improved tourism experiences and overall sustainability
- Expand indoor activities
- Foster impeccable customer service
- Protect & enhance Fernie’s downtown
- Create focal visitor points for visitor staging & gathering
- Improve visitor focused in- community communications / wayfinding

#### Focus Area 3

##### STRONGER TOURISM FOUNDATION

###### Strategic Directions:

- Ensure there is adequate and qualified staff
- Define organizational roles and make collaboration a central tenant
- Ensure land use and development policies, maintain & grow access to natural attractions and recreation amenities
- Nurture a working relationship with the Ktunaxa
- Increase community support for tourism and create more ambassadors
- Sustain financial resources for tourism

#### Focus Area 4

##### SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT

###### Strategic Directions:

- Manage capacity impacts (with respect to trails, river, downtown, etc.)
- Reduce industry impact on the natural environment (logging, mining, recreation, highway transportation)
- Adapt to climate change (forest fires, snowpack, river)
- Improve getting to & around Fernie (visitors & locals)
- Foster greater care and appreciation of Fernie – having visitors become contributors and ambassadors

### STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS:

Represent broad priorities that bridge the situational analysis with the future Vision, Focus Areas and Goals. They guide specific actions over the next 3-5 years.

### ACTIONS:

Actions or projects are a key element of a Tourism Master Plan and are prioritized. They become the responsibility of an implementing organization and network of supportive organizations.

Appendix A on pg 48



## ACTIONS

Prioritizing broad directions led to a review of community, business and tourism stakeholder input on specific projects and ideas. New ideas were brainstormed, prioritized and organized for implementation or future consideration. Actions can evolve over time to reflect current economic, social and environmental conditions. The actions for implementation is organized into a table, see Appendix A for current list of actions, represented by the following priority categories as determined by the TMP Task Force.

### **Catalyst actions:**

- High value
- Achieve multiple goals
- Start within the first year

### **Short Term Priority:**

High value tactics with low complexity and can be achieved within year one-two.

### **Medium Term Priority:**

High value, somewhat complex or requiring lead-time or other actions to accomplish.

### **Long Term Priority:**

High value, somewhat complex and requiring lead-time and other actions to accomplish.

### **Future Consideration:**

Considered either highly complex and requiring further research and consideration, or are moderate to lower value.



## EVALUATING AND ADAPTING

Monitoring and evaluating progress toward (or away from) the TMP goals is essential to provide transparency, inform decision-making and enable continuous improvement.

**Monitoring** is the process of gathering data linked to the Tourism Master Plan goals.

**Evaluation** is the process of reviewing monitored data, gathering insights, assessing progress and refocusing efforts.

Ongoing, consistent and reliable monitoring and evaluation provides the community with a number of essential functions and benefits, including:

- Informing decision-making throughout the community;
- Informing action planning;
- Ensuring transparency and accountability to community stakeholders;
- Engaging businesses, residents and visitors in the journey toward the goals by providing meaningful and timely information in an interactive way.

Monitoring, evaluating and reporting should be done at least on an annual basis, and comprise the steps in the diagram.

The indicators help to monitor both the **goals** and the **steps or process** to achieve those goals.

**Monitoring the actions:** Includes tracking whether the actions are being considered, accepted and implemented as discussed. Every action has a 'progress tracking' column in the detailed action excel sheet. This tool can be used during the semi-annual working group check in meetings.

Table Sample Action:

STRATEGIC DIRECTION	ACTION / PROJECT	LEAD PARTNERS	PROGRESS STATUS	NOTES NEXT STEPS
Manage/mitigate tourism related capacity impacts on the community, environment and visitor experience	Establish a working group and/or sub-groups to identify natural attractions/areas being negatively impacted by visitor and recreational usage and determine next	ERA, Wildsight, FTA, TF, RDEK, COF, ILL, BC Gov and others	In Progress Completed No progress, still being considered Reconsidered	X

### MONITORING:

Is the process of gathering data linked to the Tourism Master Plan goals.

### EVALUATION:

Is the process of reviewing monitored data, gathering insights, assessing progress and refocusing efforts.





## EVALUATING AND ADAPTING

**Monitoring the goals:** These results will help indicate whether we are working on the right actions, or if we need to adapt our approach. The recommended set of goal indicators (below) is based on the relevant data currently available or available with a minor seed investment.

Existing data sources include organizations such as the Statistics Canada, BC Stats, Destination BC, Ministry of Finance, Kootenay Rockies Tourism, Tourism Fernie, Fernie Chamber of Commerce & Fernie Visitor Centre, Fernie Alpine Resort, accommodators and the City of Fernie.

Local data collection instruments include MRDT, accommodator data, event results and outcomes, RMI RDS and MRDT reports, tourism operator sales systems, operator surveys, Tourism Fernie visitor and member surveys, Visitor Centre reports, and the City of Fernie resident surveys. Incorporating some of the key questions from the TMP engagement surveys would allow for some ongoing comparisons.

The following table outlines the indicators identified and recommended for monitoring and evaluating progress toward the TMP focus areas and goals.

### Focus Area 1

#### DIVERSITY OF VISITORS YEAR ROUND

**Goal:** Grow visitors into multi-day, year-round economic and community contributors

**Indicators:**

- Total Annual MRDT (Grow)
- Total MRDT by season (Balance)
- Visitation to core cultural tourism attractions (Grow)
- Total visitor spending (Increase)
- Increasing ADR

### Focus Area 2

#### REMARKABLE VISITOR EXPERIENCES

**Goal:** Develop and enhance Fernie's visitor infrastructure, amenities, brand, tourism products, experiences and people

**Indicators:**

- Community Net Promoter Score (Increase)
- Percentage of tourism and non-tourism businesses participating in the Ambassador Program (Increase)
- Fernie Tourism Sentiment Score (Increase)
- Average length of stay by season (Increase)

## EVALUATING AND ADAPTING

### Focus Area 3

#### STRONGER TOURISM FOUNDATION

Goal: Ensure collaboration, community support, people and financing for tourism success

Indicators:

- Percentage of residents who feel the benefits of tourism outweigh the challenges (Maintain or Increase)
- Percentage of businesses who feel the benefits of tourism outweigh the challenges (increase)
- Ratio of the median residential dwellings (all types – detached, townhouse, apartment) assessment value to the median employment income (decrease, stabilize)
- Total tourism funding (RMI, MRDT, Co-op, other) from the province and DBC (increase)
- Percent of tourism businesses with adequate staffing during peak and non-peak seasons (Increase)
- Self-assessed partnership strength between the main tourism organizations (Grow)
- Efforts undertaken to build awareness and relationships
- Percentage of all TMP actions in progress, completed

### Focus Area 4

#### SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT

Goal: Manage locations where visitation is impacting the sense of community or natural environment and support the resiliency of the industry.

Indicators:

- Ratio of dollars for maintenance to tourism infrastructure to dollars for new infrastructure (Increase)
- Percentage of residents who feel the benefits of tourism outweigh the challenges (Increase)
- Percentage of businesses who feel the benefits of tourism outweigh the challenges (maintain or increase)
- Total MRDT by season (Balance)
- Distribution of trail users on existing networks (Increase, Trail Forks or trail counters for hiking)
- Ha of cleared forest within view of downtown (maintain, decrease)
- Elk River Health Indicator
- Caribou/Elk/Grizzly Indicator
- Collaborative funding dollars achieved to implement this plan
- Advocacy efforts undertaken
- Efforts undertaken to build awareness and relationships

### MONITORING:

Is the process of gathering data linked to the Tourism Master Plan goals.

### EVALUATION:

Is the process of reviewing monitored data, gathering insights, assessing progress and refocusing efforts.



## IMPLEMENTATION



*“The tourism industry incorporates numerous sectors and services that are all interconnected as it address the needs of the visitor / traveler. Accommodations, food establishments, retail shops, activity providers, transportation providers and services, local infrastructure and amenities and much more play a role. As such collaboration and partnerships are critical in evaluating, planning, developing and managing the destination to ensure success and sustainability”*

*Jikke Gyorki*  
*Tourism Fernie Executive Director*

Fernie’s current tourism success is a result of hard work, energetic organizations, collaboration and a sense of community pride. Essentially, people, working together. Tourism is unique this way when compared to other industries, perhaps most of all in the cooperation and partnership required to deliver the ‘experiences’ sought by visitors and the community alike. Public and private sectors jointly provide a large number of visitor amenities including attractions and activities as well as the supporting infrastructure like roads, land use and water systems. The opportunities outlined in this report are a result of a community-wide effort and the implementation of the recommended actions can only be achieved through the cooperation and participation of many individuals and organizations in the community.

- **To facilitate continued success in tourism and the effective roll out of this master plan and associated projects/actions it is imperative that the following steps occur:**
- TMP received and recognized by Tourism Fernie Board, Fernie Chamber of Commerce, Regional District of the East Kootenays and the City of Fernie Council and Staff
- Creation and commitment to a Tourism Master Plan Champions Group that meets at least quarterly and includes:
- Development of Partnership Agreements to clearly articulate roles, responsibilities within organizations and between the organizations to achieve the TMP goals and action implementation
- Alignment of RMI, RDS and MRDT with the TMP as well as other City plans such as the Official Community Plan
- Support for the facilitation of tourism specific stakeholder/sector working group sessions at least annually
- Commitment postcard or other effort to engage the tourism sector in working toward the vision and goals and industry activities outlined in this plan
- Collaboration with regional and provincial tourism partners and agencies including areas of alignment within the Highway 3 Corridor Destination Development and other related tourism plans.



### RECEIVING THE TOURISM MASTER PLAN

The final TMP should be formally adopted by the leadership at Tourism Fernie, the City of Fernie, the Regional District of the East Kootenay and the Fernie Chamber of Commerce. Receiving the document and supporting the implementation steps such as the Champion Group and Partnership Agreements is a critical step to sustaining and building on the momentum developed over the past months. Receipt of the plan should be well documented and shared publicly in order to reflect the importance of the plan.

## TOURISM MASTER PLAN CHAMPION GROUP

A core Tourism Master Plan Task Force should continue and formalize into an ongoing Tourism Master Plan Champion Group that maintains similar representation and expands where needed to ensure all implementing organizations are involved. In addition to championing the TMP, this group should also support and be involved in the implementation of the current City of Fernie Resort Development Strategy 2019-2022 to ensure alignment and efficient use of resources for tourism development work.

### Champion Group Ongoing Purpose

While the focus of the working group is to ensure the implementation and relevance of the Tourism Master Plan other tasks should include:

- Creating awareness of the vision, goals, directions and actions with respective colleagues, community members, organization members and other tourism stakeholders such as the regional district and province
- Advocating for the TMP vision, goals and directions in relation to significant organizational, community, regional or provincial decisions that might impact progress
- Considering, adjusting and reprioritizing actions on an annual basis as needed to ensure thoughtful and timely implementation
- Maintaining an inventory of actions and the status of action implementation
- Maintaining the monitoring functions outlined in the plan and sharing that data for group evaluation
- Reporting progress to respective councils, boards, organization membership, and residents

### Champion Group Partnership Agreement

A formal partnership agreement among all the working group organizations will help to ensure the sustainability of the structure and commitment to tourism and implementing the TMP. The agreement should be structured with varying levels of commitment with top tier parameters/responsibilities for the organizations that residents (Figure 1) and the business community (Figure 2) highlighted as core to ensuring tourism development supports community and business goals. Levels of commitment would detail items such as attending meetings, staff time, leadership, funding, in-kind support, meeting space, travel costs and more.





## IMPLEMENTATION

Figure 1 - residents

Who do you feel is responsible for ensuring that tourism develops in a way that supports community goals? (Please select all responses you feel are appropriate)

Answered: 325 Skipped: 258

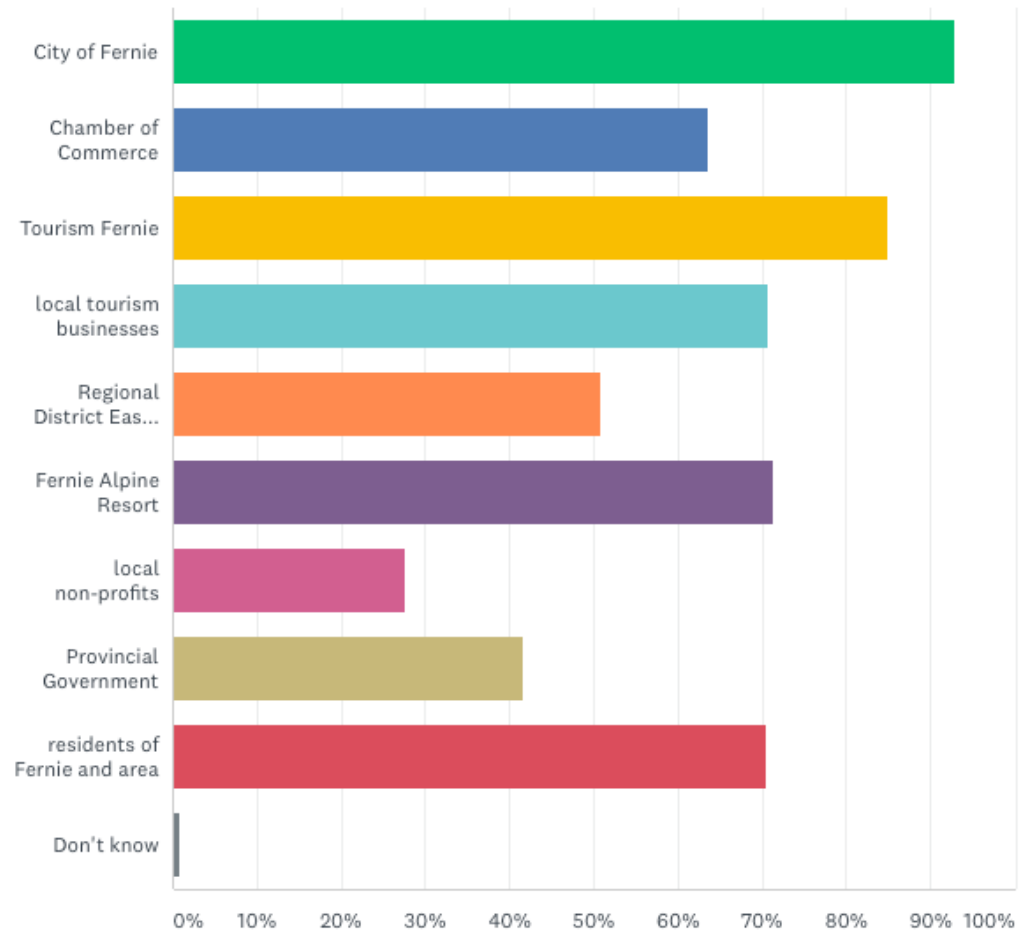
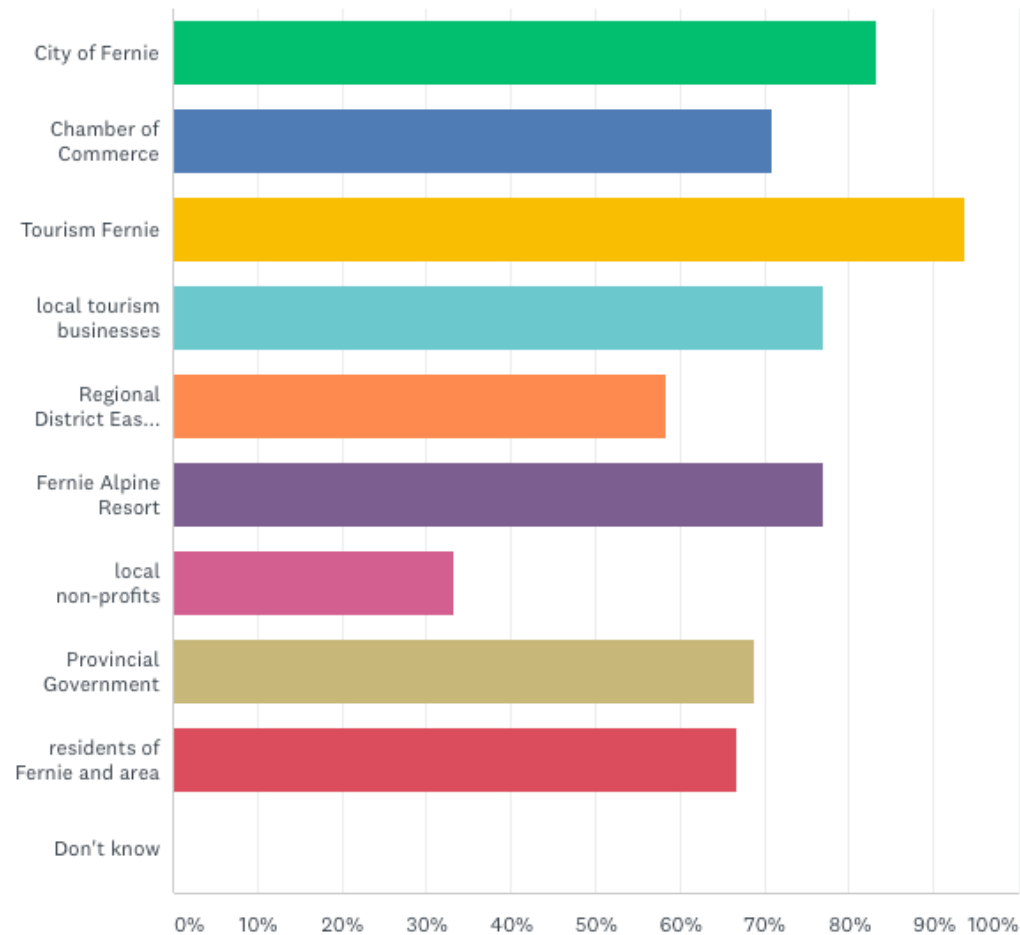


Figure 2 - businesses

Who do you feel is responsible for ensuring that tourism develops in a way that supports businesses goals? (Please select all responses you feel are appropriate)

Answered: 48 Skipped: 65





## IMPLEMENTATION

A second tier agreement should be structured for organizations with a strong connection to tourism and/or major involvement with TMP action implementation. Finally, a third tier might include agreements with organizations that are involved to a lesser degree in implementation of projects yet still very important to the overall success.

### First Year Steps

What happens during the first year of the Tourism Master Plan is crucial to ongoing success.

**STEP 1:** To help ensure a continued commitment to the plan and the implementation structure to support it we recommend that organizations sign an agreement that at a minimum;

- recognizes support for the vision, goals and strategic directions
- commits them to at least consider (by fall 2019) the implementation of the TMP actions associated with their respective organizations
- commits them to consider the plan during organizational strategic planning and work planning
- commits partners to participate in the ongoing working group and the tasks associated with it and to them

Additional items will be added to the various agreement tiers discussed above.

**STEP 2:** It is recommended that the champion group meet formally at least four times a year to discuss plan progress. The first meeting should take place in winter 2020 and we suggest that the Tourism Fernie take on the initial organizing role for the working group though the meeting should ideally be facilitated by an individual outside the working group. The first meeting should include opportunities to:

- Consider and reprioritize actions as needed to ensure thoughtful and effective implementation
- Check in on action acceptance or modifications by lead organizations
- Check in on progress of actions initiated
- Review local tourism trends and upcoming organization plans
- Adjust actions, timing and prioritization as required based on new information

**STEP 3:** It is recommended that the working group at least meet again in Spring of 2020. This second formal meeting should include opportunities to:

- Check in on action acceptance or modifications by lead organizations
- Check in on progress for the actions relabeled as immediate/short-term priorities
- Check in on plans for actions relabeled as medium/long-term priorities
- Evaluate progress by reviewing and discussing the results from the TMP Monitoring Program
- Review local tourism trends and upcoming organization plans
- Adjust action timing and prioritization as required based on new information

### Resourcing The Champions Group

The resources required to facilitate the group will be minimal and will primarily include staff time to coordinate reporting back and meeting organization. Funding for any extra expenses beyond meeting regularly will ideally be shared by all organizations by primarily the Tier 1 organizations. It is recommended that Tourism Fernie play the main facilitation role, however each organization should provide support based on their respective skills and resources.

## TOURISM STAKEHOLDER/SECTOR WORKING GROUPS

It is recommended to build off existing efforts to connect with stakeholder and tourism sector working groups annually or more frequently if TMP actions or inspired actions require joint implementation. There is already support for these activities and they could be led by Tourism Fernie or attended to by Tourism Fernie if the group already exists as long as tourism remains prevalent. E.g. accommodator group, cultural group, river group, trails group, environment group etc.

These working groups will be very important to evaluating TMP progress, addressing urgent issues that arise, and in the spirit of empowering industry taking joint initiative/leadership on projects that may be of strategic importance to the working group members. E.g. securing land for trail access.



## COMMITMENT POSTCARD

This is a simple postcard with some key messaging inviting residents and/or businesses to review and commit to taking part in 2 or more of the activities indicated on the postcard. They can take a photo of their commitment and send it to Tourism Fernie in order to enter a draw. The postcard will create a database of people to call on to take part in various TMP actions – e.g. sector groups; ambassador programs; remarkable experiences; store opening hour initiative etc.

## IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

The first year implementing the TMP sets the foundation for successfully delivering on the actions outlined in the plan. The TMP implementation actions for this critical first year are listed below with the associated lead and partner organizations. See side bar.

## IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

TMP received and recognized by Tourism Fernie Board, Fernie Chamber of Commerce, Regional District of the East Kootenays and the City of Fernie Council and Staff

TMP Partnership Agreements Signed

Creation and commitment to a Tourism Master Plan Champions Group

Champion Group Meeting 1 to set culture and report on initial actions

Commitment postcard or other effort to engage the tourism sector in working toward the vision and goals and industry activities outlined in this plan

Tourism specific stakeholder/sector working group sessions at least annually

Champion Meeting 2

Champion Meeting 3

Champion Meeting 4





## IMPLEMENTATION

### RESOURCING

Implementing the Tourism Master Plan to work toward the vision and goals will require the commitment of many aforementioned organizations and it will also require time and funding for implementing some of the actions. Some of the actions will be a part of the normal course of business for implementing organizations and tourism businesses, but actions to purchase or maintain capital or develop new programming require some funding. Two major foundational funds to help continue this work are Fernie's Resort Municipality Initiative (RMI) funding and the Municipal Regional District Tax (MRDT). Additional grant/funding organizations or programs will also be required to advance on various actions.

#### RMI

The RMI program is intended to support small, tourism-based municipalities to build and diversify their tourism infrastructure, deliver exceptional visitor experiences and incorporate sustainable tourism practices and products. The City of Fernie is one of 14 communities receiving this funding from the Province of BC. The most recent 3-year funding arrangement is allocated to projects identified in the Fernie's Resort Development Strategy. The Resort Development Strategy was developed in alignment with this TMP and it will be important to ensure this alignment continues on the implementation of projects. Ensuring successful project/program investments will help to build the case to continue this important program.

#### MRDT

The MRDT Program (Municipal Regional District Tax/Additional Hotel Room Tax) is jointly administered by the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, and Destination BC. It is intended to help grow BC revenues, visitation and jobs, and amplify BC's tourism marketing efforts in an increasingly competitive marketplace. The program has existed since 1987. In 2015, the ability for a community to go to 3% was an option. Since then, 50% of BC communities have gone to 3% and more are in the process.

Tourism Fernie is the official Eligible Entity for Fernie's current 2% MRDT. Tourism Fernie's Strategic Plan for 2019 and an action in this TMP includes applying to become a 3% MRDT community.

Funds from the MRDT should augment current funding and the following MRDT program spending principles exist:

- Effective tourism marketing, programs, and projects
- Effective local-level stakeholder support and inter-community collaboration by contributing resources that can be further leveraged
- Coordinated and complementary marketing efforts to broader provincial marketing strategies and tactics
- Fiscal prudence and accountability

Ensuring a successful application for the 3% is important for maintaining competitiveness and for supporting the collective efforts of the tourism community in marketing and destination development and management.

### OTHER FUNDING

Other sources of funding are also available to implement actions from this TMP. Some of these tourism focused funds are listed below and can be added to over time. There are likely other sources of funding for infrastructure, arts and culture, environmentally focussed initiatives, community building, and skills training.

## OTHER FUNDING CONTINUED...

**Destination BC Destination Development Funding:** The Development Catalyst Fund, designed to support the implementation of key tourism projects identified in planning area 10-year Destination Development Strategies and Action Plans across the province. <https://www.destinationbc.ca/news/destination-bc-to-launch-new-destination-development-catalyst-fund-to-support-tourism-across-british-columbia/>

**Destination BC Event Funding:** The Tourism Events Program (TEP) was created to help events increase the volume of visitors to British Columbia, broaden global recognition of the province, and build our reputation as an internationally renowned destination. <https://www.destinationbc.ca/what-we-do/funding-sources/tourism-events-program/>

**Canadian Experiences Fund:** Announced in Budget 2019, the Canadian Experiences Fund (CEF) is a national program that support communities across Canada as they create, improve or enhance tourism products, facilities and experiences. <https://www.wd-deo.gc.ca/eng/19858.asp>

## OTHERS

**Western Economic Diversification:** Announced in the Federal Budget 2019, the Canadian Experiences Fund (CEF) is a national program that support communities across Canada as they create, improve or enhance tourism products, facilities and experiences. <https://www.wd-deo.gc.ca/eng/19858.asp>

**Columbia Basin Trust:** The Trust is mandated under the Columbia Basin Trust Act to manage our assets for the ongoing economic, environmental and social benefit of the region, without relieving governments of any obligations in the region. To help residents and communities take action on issues that are important to them, they offer a broad array of grants and funding for affordable housing; arts and culture programming and venues; public space improvements; environmental enhancement and protection; heritage work; trails; workforce training support etc. <https://ourtrust.org/our-work/>

### Other grants are available from the following organizations:

- BC Arts Council
- Heritage Canada
- BC Gaming
- Southern Interior Development Initiative Trust
- Hosting BC (viaSport)
- Invest Canada – Community Initiatives
- Cycling Infrastructure Funding BC
- Municipalities for Climate Innovation Program BC
- Green Municipal Fund BC
- Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program

## APPENDIX A - ACTIONS

### FOCUS AREA 1 - DIVERSITY OF VISITORS YEAR-ROUND

#### GOAL - GROW VISITORS INTO MULTI-DAY, YEAR-ROUND ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTORS

##### *Insights Addressed or Enhanced:*

- With tourism growth expected to continue, efforts to manage visitor overflows and spread visitation throughout lower demand periods are required
- There is room to maximize summer and winter seasons, and to shift/grow visitation in the spring and fall. Support for tourism growth exists in the shoulder seasons, and there is a preference to maintain summer and winter levels
- Attracting a higher yield visitor will need both investments in product/services as well as targeted marketing at this demographic. Much may be learned from existing operators such as Island Lake Lodge Resort
- Aging population freedom to travel outside peaks – may need different experiences
- Accommodation values and reinvestment at ski hill properties is challenged due to underutilization outside of winter
- The Fernie experience is more than just scenery and activities. It includes the local culture, history and authentic feel
- Business case and feasibility studies for new investments will likely be required prior to pursuing any major investments in event or indoor infrastructure
- The second homeowner economy is a spin off from tourism and generates revenue for the community on its own. They can also attract new visitor
- Supporting visitors to integrate with and respect the local community through targeted marketing and communications could help to improve the interactions between particular visitors and residents
- Common communication and branding efforts should be enhanced to ensure consistency in messaging
- Continuing to keep the visitor experience as a central tenant will help with collaboration among tourism organizations
- Competition for visitors is increasing and BC tourism businesses will need to be accessible and accommodating to these markets, and our messaging must be relevant

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS	COMMON COMMUNITY BRAND PRESENTED TO VISITORS	INCREASE VISITATION IN NON-PEAK TIMES	FOSTER FERNIE'S ARTS, HERITAGE AND CULTURAL TOURISM EXPERIENCES	EMBRACE 2ND HOMEOWNERS TO CREATE MORE AMBASSADORS FOR FERNIE	MAXIMIZE EVENT AND FACILITY CAPACITY AND PLAN FOR GROWTH THROUGH EVENTS
<b>ACTION ITEMS PRIORITIZED (lead org)</b> Note: all action items are to be implemented in collaboration with stakeholders. The noted 'lead org' has been initially identified as the organization to start/lead the effort for the identified action item.	<b>C</b> In partnership with the City of Fernie, and the Fernie Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Centre, develop a common community brand with signed implementation agreements, short and long terms actions (TF)	<b>C</b> Update Tourism Fernie's Strategic Plan to align and reflect goals, directions and actions from the Tourism Master Plan (TF)	<b>C</b> Create a Cultural Committee/ Task Force to grow and protect cultural tourism opportunities (FDAC & FHS)	<b>M</b> Develop and distribute welcome package for new residents and existing 2nd homeowners to help them feel like a local (FCC)	<b>M</b> Develop a tourism focused events and animation strategy. Develop a conference centre feasibility study (TF & FCC)

## APPENDIX A - ACTIONS

<b>STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS</b>  <b>ACTION ITEMS PRIORITIZED (lead org)</b>  Note: all action items are to be implemented in collaboration with stakeholders. The noted 'lead org' has been initially identified as the organization to start/lead the effort for the identified action item.	COMMON COMMUNITY BRAND PRESENTED TO VISITORS	INCREASE VISITATION IN NON-PEAK TIMES	FOSTER FERNIE'S ARTS, HERITAGE AND CULTURAL TOURISM EXPERIENCES	EMBRACE 2ND HOMEOWNERS TO CREATE MORE AMBASSADORS FOR FERNIE	MAXIMIZE EVENT AND FACILITY CAPACITY AND PLAN FOR GROWTH THROUGH EVENTS
		<b>S</b>  Create more shoulder-season content for effective marketing (TF)	<b>C</b>  Create and implement the Fernie Heritage Strategy that includes Heritage Tourism opportunities (FHS)	<b>M</b>  Identify incentive program to grow advocacy by 2nd homeowners for promoting Fernie as a travel destination (FCC)	<b>S</b>  Research and identify events, tournaments, conferences that could be attracted to Fernie with current capacities that increase overnight visits. Begin to submit bids on hosting (TF)
		<b>S</b>  Identify and articulate the traveller markets/ types that travel in the non-peak times. Identify & ensure availability of service/product and service capacities for target visitor seasons /dates and develop/enhance plan to attract (TF)	<b>M</b>  Research demand for cultural experiences & identify current cultural providers, experiences & opportunities for market-readiness, packaging and product development (FDAS & FHS)		<b>S</b>  Leverage ISSW 2020 convention to increase future large events and understand how to provide an exceptional on-the-ground delegate experience (TF)
		<b>M</b>  Develop Iconic Fernie Experience strategy and seek funding partners (TF)  Facilitate the development of value-added packages, develop/enhance product experiences (TF)	<b>M</b>  Develop targeted marketing campaigns for market-ready cultural experiences (TF)		<b>M</b>  Identify service availability, service gaps with respect to hosting capabilities, and identify all available inventory (indoor/ outdoor) and understand its capacity for alternative uses. Identify a centralized entity who coordinates event calendar for planning purposes (FCC/TF)

**C**

**CATALYST**

**S**

**SHORT TERM PRIORITY**

**M**

**MEDIUM TERM PRIORITY**

**L**

**LONG TERM PRIORITY**



## APPENDIX A - ACTIONS

C

CATALYST

S

SHORT  
TERM  
PRIORITY

M

MEDIUM  
TERM  
PRIORITY

L

LONG  
TERM  
PRIORITY

### FOCUS AREA 2 - REMARKABLE VISITOR EXPERIENCES

**GOAL - DEVELOP AND ENHANCE FERNIE'S VISITOR INFRASTRUCTURE, AMENITIES, TOURISM PRODUCTS, EXPERIENCES AND PEOPLE**

#### *Additional Insights Addressed or Enhanced:*

- BC is not perceived as an inexpensive, or 'value' destination which drives the importance of top-quality experiences facilitated by outstanding visitor services
- Local tourism businesses and destinations will continue to evolve to attract a sufficient labour force – wages, housing, advancement opportunities, benefits, good work environment
- Consistent customer service and offering additional service hours at shops for visitors is ever more important in an era of 'word of mouth' social media marketing
- With tourism growth expected to continue, efforts to manage visitor overflows and spread visitation throughout lower demand periods are required
- Better understanding key transportation pinch points and parking overflow issues while promoting active transportation as much as possible during peak months can help
- Stakeholders will have to understand which weekend/seasons and activities/locations are experiencing overcrowding and address these pinch points
- The natural places, trails and rivers that attract visitors and residents to Fernie and area are gems that need to be experienced but protected and maintained as well. A variety of management activities are required
- Alignment between, businesses, organizations, residents and the community branding is essential for providing Fernie's authentic experience and meeting visitor's expectations

**Other related insights under Focus Area 1.**



DRAFT ONLY

## APPENDIX A - ACTIONS

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS	SUPPORT BUSINESSES AND ORGANIZATIONS TO FOSTER IMPROVED TOURISM EXPERIENCES AND OVERALL SUSTAINABILITY	EXPAND INDOOR ACTIVITIES	FOSTER IMPECCABLE CUSTOMER SERVICE	PROTECT AND ENHANCE FERNIE'S DOWNTOWN	CREATE FOCAL VISITOR POINTS FOR VISITOR STAGING AND GATHERING	IMPROVE VISITOR FOCUSED IN-COMMUNITY COMMUNICATION / WAYFINDING
<b>ACTION ITEMS PRIORITIZED (lead org)</b>  Note: all action items are to be implemented in collaboration with stakeholders. The noted 'lead org' has been initially identified as the organization to start/lead the effort for the identified action item.	<b>C</b> Survey businesses and organizations on what tools, support and workshops are needed (FCC)	<b>C</b> Ensure future public facility requirements are also leveraged for tourism opportunities (COF)	<b>C</b> Develop a Fernie Ambassador 2.0 program with sustainable funding to expand reach and improve service levels (FCC)	<b>S</b> Continue to plan and deliver animation activities downtown - "250 days of animation" (FCC)	<b>S</b> Identify locations and needed amenities/improvements for new and enhanced visitor staging/gathering spaces (TF/FCC)	<b>S</b> Revisit, update as needed and implement the existing comprehensive wayfinding/ signage strategy (COF)
	<b>S</b> Attract the Remarkable Experiences Destination BC program to Fernie for local businesses (TF)	<b>S</b> Research and identify the future building opportunities of the Chamber/VIC building as a premier tourist and tourism hub/attraction (FCC)	<b>C</b> Develop action plan and checklists to ensure community is ready to service visitors for increases and fluctuations in visitation (FCC)	<b>S</b> Create additional and enhance existing self-guided walkable tours (TF)	<b>S</b> Understanding the opportunities and impacts related to tourism experience with new potential recreation complex (COF)	<b>M</b> Implement prioritized wayfinding elements over 3 years (COF)
	<b>S</b> Based on business survey needs, develop a plan and begin to implement recommendations and best skill-development options (FCC)	<b>S</b> Identify strategies to "weatherize" events - plans to move outdoor events indoor, cover outdoor events (COF)	<b>S</b> Enhance visitor information within local businesses to improve service, increased spending and longer stays (FCC)	<b>M</b> Investigate active space zoning for main floor store fronts as opposed to offices (COF)	<b>M</b> Build and ensure the funding is in place to maintain these staging places in the long-term (COF)	<b>M</b> Expand and improve trail signage that includes links into larger wayfinding approach (COF/FTA)
		<b>M</b> Conduct a gap analysis of indoor activities, programs and facilities and capacities currently available (FCC)	<b>M</b> Improve accessibility of public spaces and amenities (COF)	<b>M</b> Explore value and ability of longer business hours with downtown businesses, identify models in other resort communities (FCC)	<b>M</b> Improved or new snowmobile staging area up Coal Creek (FSA)	<b>M</b> Embracing UBER once available in BC as a method of effectively moving visitors around (COF)

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## APPENDIX A - ACTIONS

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STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS	SUPPORT BUSINESSES AND ORGANIZATIONS TO FOSTER IMPROVED TOURISM EXPERIENCES AND OVERALL SUSTAINABILITY	EXPAND INDOOR ACTIVITIES	FOSTER IMPECCABLE CUSTOMER SERVICE	PROTECT AND ENHANCE FERNIE'S DOWNTOWN	CREATE FOCAL VISITOR POINTS FOR VISITOR STAGING AND GATHERING	IMPROVE VISITOR FOCUSED IN-COMMUNITY COMMUNICATION / WAYFINDING
<b>ACTION ITEMS PRIORITIZED (lead org)</b>  Note: all action items are to be implemented in collaboration with stakeholders.  The noted 'lead org' has been initially identified as the organization to start/lead the effort for the identified action item.		<b>M</b>  Identify ways to leverage the new potential recreation complex for tourism, conventions & cultural/entertainment needs (FCC)		<b>M</b>  Further enhance Station Square as an event / festival location including fixing the Arts Station 'FERNIE' roof (FDAC)	<b>L</b>  Facility and lift upgrades at Fernie Alpine Resort (RCR)	
		<b>M</b>  Ensure that tourism opportunities (events, tournaments, general use) are considered as part of any new sports facilities when looked at as part of recreation and leisure planning (COF)		<b>M</b>  Educate the community, businesses and organizations, and implement, the Fernie Heritage Strategy (FHS)		
		<b>L</b>  Feasibility study for a new Arts & Cultural Centre (FDAS)		<b>L</b>  Explore/redefine the 20yr commercial zoning in downtown to secure and enhance it (COF)		

## FOCUS AREA 3 - STRONGER TOURISM FOUNDATIONS

### GOAL - ENSURE COLLABORATION, COMMUNITY SUPPORT, PEOPLE AND FINANCING FOR TOURISM SUCCESS

#### Additional Insights Addressed or Enhanced:

- The availability of housing and a positive work/living environment are important for attracting and retaining good quality staff
- Local industry is generally collaborating well on tourism, however there could be some improvements
- With a perception of responsibility placed mainly on the City and Tourism Fernie these two organizations will have a large role to play in guiding and implementing this tourism plan. It will be important to make sure both organizations are resourced to be able to do this
- New/existing plans and funding programs can be better aligned for success
- Land Use – Increasing competition for land or ownership putting pressure on land-based tourism policies and businesses
- The private land of Island Lake Lodge, shared access, and trail amenities are critical assets for existing and new tourism experiences
- Tourism organizations and businesses should take pride in support for tourism and continue to express gratitude to those supporters
- Maintaining the current strong local support for tourism will be important for the continued success of tourism and the visitor experience

#### Other related insights under Focus Area 1 & 2.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS	DEFINE ORGANIZATIONAL ROLES AND MAKE COLLABORATION A CENTRAL TENANT YEAR-ROUND	INCREASE COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR TOURISM AND CREATE MORE AMBASSADORS	ENSURE THERE IS AN ADEQUATE NUMBER OF QUALITY STAFF	SUSTAIN FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR TOURISM	ENSURE LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES MAINTAIN AND GROW ACCESS TO NATURAL ATTRACTIONS AND RECREATIONAL AMENITIES	NURTURE A WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE KTUNAXA
<b>ACTION ITEMS PRIORITIZED (lead org)</b>  Note: all action items are to be implemented in collaboration with stakeholders. The noted 'lead org' has been initially identified as the organization to start/lead the effort for the identified action item.	<b>C</b>  Formulate partnership agreements identifying roles & understanding how & when partners can work together (TF/COF/FCC)	<b>C</b>  Develop regular communication strategy for tourism benefits, building on efforts happening around tourism week (TF)	<b>C</b>  Work with local businesses to develop and execute a staff recruitment and retention effort (FCC)	<b>C</b>  Complete the process to increase local MRDT Hotel Tax to 3% (TF)	<b>C</b>  Work with the TIABC and provincial government to ensure logging regulations on private land reflect the value of tourism (TF)	<b>C</b>  Continue to build relationships of trust, respect and understanding between Ktunaxa and tourism partners (TF)
	<b>C</b>  Develop MOUs between organizations that need to execute specific action areas of TMP (TF/COF/FCC)	<b>M</b>  Update the Value of Tourism data every 2 years to help community understand the value of tourism (TF)	<b>C</b>  Explore & develop public/private partnership to build housing inventory (FCC)	<b>C</b>  Implement an accommodation data program to support sector growth which supports renewal of MRDT every 5 years (TF)	<b>S</b>  Consider OCP and zoning tools at all times to protect access to nature and recreation (COF)	<b>S</b>  Ensure opportunities for Ktunaxa to lead their content in the appropriate marketing pieces (TF)

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## APPENDIX A - ACTIONS

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STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS	DEFINE ORGANIZATIONAL ROLES AND MAKE COLLABORATION A CENTRAL TENANT YEAR-ROUND	INCREASE COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR TOURISM AND CREATE MORE AMBASSADORS	ENSURE THERE IS AN ADEQUATE NUMBER OF QUALITY STAFF	SUSTAIN FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR TOURISM	ENSURE LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES MAINTAIN AND GROW ACCESS TO NATURAL ATTRACTIONS AND RECREATIONAL AMENITIES	NURTURE A WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE KTUNAXA
<b>ACTION ITEMS PRIORITIZED (lead org)</b>  Note: all action items are to be implemented in collaboration with stakeholders. The noted 'lead org' has been initially identified as the organization to start/lead the effort for the identified action item.	<b>M</b>  More events for businesses to learn, network, plan, develop and partner to provide better/new visitor experiences (FCC)		<b>L</b>  Explore the feasibility of a partnership to better understand the shuttle service opportunities to bedroom communities such as Sparwood/ Hosmer/Elko for workers specifically (FCC & COF)	<b>M</b>  Identify and implement the best initiatives to improve support for businesses to invest & become more sustainable (existing and new) through collaborative efforts, incentives, regulatory and taxation	<b>L</b>  Proactive and collaborative plan for future land use surrounding Fernie, in the context of tourism and future OCP updates - ie old transfer station, town trails and parks, etc (COF)	
	<b>M</b>  Increase tourism representation on COF Leisure Services Committee (TF & FCC)			<b>M</b>  Identify a sustainable funding model for maintaining and improving trails (FTA)	<b>L</b>  Increase public or local ownership of trail lands to help ensure long-term access to these tourism amenities. Develop trails on land that allows for long-term support and protection. (FTA)	
					<b>L</b>  Improvements to river access, signage, put-ins/ take-outs (ERA/TF/River Ops)	

## FOCUS AREA 4 - SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT

**GOAL - MANAGE LOCATIONS WHERE VISITATION IS IMPACTING THE SENSE OF COMMUNITY OR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND SUPPORT THE RESILIENCY OF THE INDUSTRY**

### Additional Insights Addressed or Enhanced:

- Reducing our own tourism carbon footprint
- Adaptation – new infrastructure, demand for different activities (water based), new climate insulated activities, longer summer seasons, shorter winter focus
- Supporting visitors to integrate with and respect the local community through targeted marketing and communications could help to improve the interactions between particular visitors and residents

Other related insights under Focus Area 1, 2 & 3.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS	MANAGE TOURISM-RELATED CAPACITY IMPACTS ON COMMUNITY, ENVIRONMENT AND VISITOR EXP. IMPORTANT TO TOURISM	MITIGATE NON-TOURISM INDUSTRY IMPACTS ON ENVIRONMENT AND VISITOR EXPERIENCE IMPORTANT TO TOURISM	IMPROVE GETTING TO & AROUND FERNIE (VISITORS & LOCALS)	BUILD A MORE RESILIENT INDUSTRY IN TIMES OF EMERGENCIES AND ADAPTATION	FOSTER GREATER CARE AND APPRECIATION OF FERNIE – HAVING VISITORS BECOME CONTRIBUTORS AND AMBASSADORS
	Due to the significant collaboration required for these areas, Tourism Fernie will initially help facilitate the below actions with multiple stakeholders (ie RDEK, COF, ERA, FTA, Operators, TECK etc.) and identify partner groups for implementation.				
<b>ACTION ITEMS PRIORITIZED (lead org)</b> Note: all action items are to be implemented in collaboration with stakeholders. The noted 'lead org' has been initially identified as the organization to start/lead the effort for the identified action item	<b>C</b> Establish a working group and/or sub-groups to identify natural areas that are being negatively impacted (flora/ fauna/ user-experience) by visitor and recreational usage and determine next steps and recommendations	<b>C</b> Conduct research to determine current industry impacts affecting tourism and the current processes that may be addressing these issues. Develop recommendations and next steps	<b>C</b> Continue work on the trail between Fernie and Fernie Alpine Resort (COF & FTA)	<b>S</b> Education on emergency preparedness (COF)	<b>C</b> Create education and messaging for responsible travel to share with visitors (TF)
	<b>S</b> Work with stakeholders to lobby and partner with government on addressing and mitigating the impact	<b>S</b> Work with stakeholders to lobby and partner with government and industry on mitigating these impacts	<b>S</b> Improve on parking signage to improve enhance visitor awareness of where to park and launch a strategy for addressing peak times (COF)	<b>S</b> Improved local visitor and tourism industry communications about closures, emergencies (TF & FCC)	<b>S</b> Develop a Visitor Ambassador Strategy and action plan (FCC)

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<b>ACTION ITEMS PRIORITIZED (lead org)</b>  Note: all action items are to be implemented in collaboration with stakeholders. The noted 'lead org' has been initially identified as the organization to start/lead the effort for the identified action item	<b>S</b>  Reduce / halt promotion of sensitive or 'non-ready' natural areas that are currently experiencing over-usage strategy, etc)	<b>M</b>  Conduct research and identify traffic (local and highway) pinch points that need to be mitigated and determine next steps	<b>M</b>  Explore opportunities to increase shuttle service and funding from YXC and YYC (RCR & TF)		<b>M</b>  Research opportunity and requirements to make Fernie a 'green' or 'sustainable' tourism certified destination (TF)
	<b>S</b>  Identify, and seek resources for, infrastructure, maintenance and amenity needs in and along key areas. (Community staging and gathering areas, River access, trails, Heiko's trail, Silver Springs, Fairy Creek Falls, appropriate signage and enforcement strategy, etc)	<b>S</b>  Work with stakeholders to improve dialogue with government, private landowners and industry about the value of tourism and collaboration for mitigation	<b>S</b>  Advocate with regional and provincial stakeholders the importance of new and improved regional, provincial and national transportation (TF)		<b>M</b>  Develop an approach to embrace and promote visitors who share Fernie values with respect to sustainability and authenticity (FCC)
	<b>M</b>  Review the Southern Rocky Mountain Management Plan with respect to adherence by businesses and people. Increase awareness of related Plan outcomes	<b>L</b>  Increase conservation offices/officers for the area – more education, more enforcement	<b>M</b>  Identify and prioritize visitor gathering areas and walking routes for improved year-round maintenance and snow removal (COF)		

## APPENDIX A - ACTIONS

<b>STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS</b>  <b>ACTION ITEMS PRIORITIZED (lead org)</b>  Note: all action items are to be implemented in collaboration with stakeholders. The noted 'lead org' has been initially identified as the organization to start/lead the effort for the identified action item	<b>MANAGE TOURISM-RELATED CAPACITY IMPACTS ON COMMUNITY, ENVIRONMENT AND VISITOR EXP. IMPORTANT TO TOURISM</b>	<b>MITIGATE NON-TOURISM INDUSTRY IMPACTS ON ENVIRONMENT AND VISITOR EXPERIENCE IMPORTANT TO TOURISM</b>	<b>IMPROVE GETTING TO &amp; AROUND FERNIE (VISITORS &amp; LOCALS)</b>	<b>BUILD A MORE RESILIENT INDUSTRY IN TIMES OF EMERGENCIES AND ADAPTATION</b>	<b>FOSTER GREATER CARE AND APPRECIATION OF FERNIE – HAVING VISITORS BECOME CONTRIBUTORS AND AMBASSADORS</b>
	<b>M</b> Identify indicators that can determine capacity concerns and impacts	<b>M</b> Protect the ammonite. Work with government and industry on a stewardship plan	<b>M</b> Continue to improve a sustainable local shuttle service between town and the resort (FAR & TF)		
	<b>L</b> Gain resources for more and improved trail maintenance, including winter grooming		<b>M</b> Build new and enhance existing walking trails within town for improved connectivity, experiences (COF)		
	<b>L</b> Identify options and seek resources to distribute users sustainably and effectively to reduce high impact areas		<b>L</b> Improve bike access, parking, routes and positive communications to foster and grow Fernie as a bike-friendly community (COF)		
	<b>L</b> Improve and support connectivity and information and interpretive signage of local trail systems, and town with key attractions. (ie Pathway 2020, Great Northern Trail/town loop)				

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# TOURISM

## Master Plan