



FERNIE
BRITISH COLUMBIA

TOURISM Master Plan

Photo Credit: Matt Khun

September 2020

GOAL TOWN

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PROJECT FUNDERS



Fernie's Tourism Master Plan Task Force is grateful to acknowledge the many organizations and individuals who participated and supported the development of this plan. The Tourism Master Plan (TMP) is also proud to acknowledge the Ktunaxa and their homelands. The Ktunaxa occupied the area now recognized as Caqahak – Thick Forest (Fernie) for thousands of years before the arrival of settlers.

Fernie's Tourism Master Plan (TMP) was spearheaded by Tourism Fernie in partnership with local tourism stakeholders and community organizations. Through 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 in partnership with Tourism Fernie. This plan has been informed by members of the local and regional tourism industry, the community as a whole, and the Strategic Framework for Tourism in B.C. developed by the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture.

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The TMP Task Force further recognizes all the many residents, business owners, property owners and non-profit recreation, cultural and environmental groups and organizations who participated in the process through workshops, surveys, focus group sessions, public open houses, interviews and meetings starting late 2018 and throughout 2019. A special thank you to the Task Force for its time, expertise and passion, Mike McPhee for having the initial vision and Jikke Gyorki for the on-the-ground work in all aspects of the process alongside Dan Wilson, including the writing, updating and editing of the plan.

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Ktunaxa Creation Story

In ancestral times referred to by the Ktunaxa as the animal world, there were references made many times by the Creator to when there will be ?aq?makni? (people).

At that time, there was some disturbance caused by a huge sea monster known as Yawu?ni?, who killed many of the animals. A council was called by the Chief animal, Na?muq?in. Na?muq?in was huge. He was so tall that he had to crawl on his hands and knees, for if he stood up his head would hit the ceiling of the sky.

It was decided that Yawu?ni? had to be destroyed. A war party was formed. Yawu?ni? plied the Kootenay and Columbia River System including Columbia Lake and Arrow Lakes.

Yawu?ni? was sighted in the Columbia Lake near Yaqa-n Nu?kiy and the chase was on. At that time, the Kootenay River and the Columbia Lake were joined. As the chase proceeded, Na?muq?in gave names to many locations along the Kootenay River, Kootenay Lake, Arrow Lakes and the Columbia River.

Yawu?ni? was pursued down the Kootenay River past the Wasa sloughs, now called Wasa, BC. Skinku? got into trouble here when he fell into the river and had to be rescued by Wasa, (horse-tail).

The chase went by where the St. Mar?y's River empties into the Kootenay River. ?aqam, where the St. Mar?y's Reserve is now located, then on down river to Kan?ak (spring) where Mayuk (weasel) joined the war party. There were animals on both sides of the river as the chase continued, and among the party was a parasite, ?a-kuk?akuwum, who had to be carried on the backs of other animals. His name was ?umtus and he was mean and bossy. The other animals grew tired of his nagging and dumped him into the river at a place now known as Yaqaki? wa?mitqu?i?ki ?umtus.

Leaving the land of the Eagle, ?a-knuq?u?am?amakis and into the land of the woodtick, ?amna ?Amakis, past Wasa?ki (Waldo) then on past the now 49th Parallel and then past Kaxax (Turtle), now underwater, near Rexford, Montana. The chase went on by ?a-ki?yi (jennings) and on by ?aqswaq (libby) then into Skinku? ?Amakis (the land of Coyote), past ?aqanqmi (Bonners Ferry, Idaho) then northerly past the now international boundary into ?a?pu ?amakis, the land of the Wolverine, past Yaqa-n Nu?kiy (Creston, BC) then up the Kootenay Lake past ?aqasqnu?, (Kuskannok, BC). The chase went on by ?Akuq?i (Akokli Creek), past Ksanka Creek. The Yawu?ni? chose to follow the Kootenay River past ?aqyam?up (Nelson, BC). The chase was now in Mi?qaqas ?amakis (the land of Chickadee).

At Kiksi?uk, (Castlegar, BC) Yawu?ni? went north into the Arrow Lakes, past ?akin?a?nuk (Arrow Rock) where arrows were shot into a crevice in the rock. If the arrow was true, the journey continued, if the mark was missed, beware, danger ahead. The arrow was true and the journey continued past ?a?nu?ni? (Nakusp) then up past Ktunwakanmituk Mi?qaqas



(Revelstoke, BC) where the Columbia River flows into the Arrow Lakes, then up and around The Big Bend then down past ?aknuq?uk (Golden, BC) past Yaknusu?ki (Briscoe, BC) then on past Yakyu?ki. The chase carries on through Kwata?nuk (Athlmer) then past Kananuk (Windermere, BC) past ?akisk?nuk (Windermere Lakes), then back into the Columbia Lake, Yaqa-n Nukiy, (Canal Flats, BC). This completed the cycle of the chase.

Yawu?nik would once again escape into the Kootenay River and the chase would go on. The chase would go on and on. Every time the war party thought they had Yawu?nik cornered, Yawu?nik would escape again.

One day sitting on the river bank observing the chase was a wise old one named Kikum. Kikum told Na?muq?in, You are wasting your time and energy chasing the monster. Why not use your size and strength and with one sweep of your arm, block the river from flowing into the lake and the next time the monster enters the lake you will have him trapped. Na?muq?in took the advice of Kikum and did as he was told. The next time Yawu?nik entered the lake, he was trapped.

Having successfully corralled Yawu?nik, a decision had to be made as to whom the honor of killing Yawu?nik would be bestowed upon.

The honor was awarded to Yamakpa? (Red-headed Woodpecker).

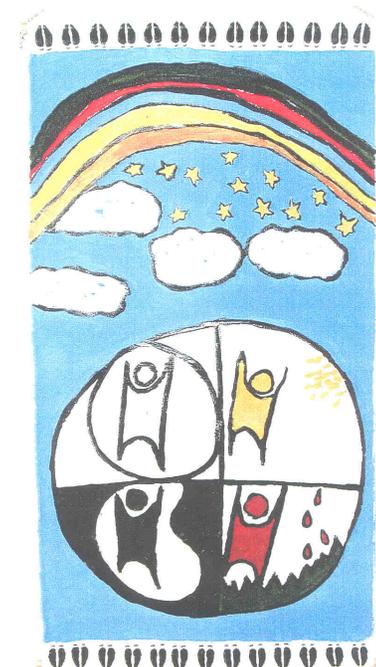
When Yawu?nik was killed, he was taken ashore and butchered and distributed among the animals. There remained only the innards and bones. The ribs were scattered throughout the region and now form the Hoo Doos seen throughout the area.

Na?muq?in then took the white balloon-like organ, known as the swim bladder, and crumbled it into small pieces and scattered it in all directions saying, 'These will be the white race of people'. He then took the black ingredient from the inner side of the backbone, the kidney, and broke it into small pieces and scattered them in all directions declaring, 'These will be the black race'. He then took the orange roe and threw the pieces in all directions saying, 'These will be the yellow race of people'.

Na?muq?in looked at his bloody hands and reached down for some grass to wipe his hands. He then let the blood fall to the ground saying, 'This will be the red people, they will remain here forever'.

Na?muq?in, in all the excitement, rose to his feet and stood upright hitting his head on the ceiling of the sky. He knocked himself dead. His feet went northward and is today know as Ya-?iki, in the Yellowhead Pass vicinity. His head is near Yellowstone Park in the State of Montana. His body forms the Rocky Mountains.

The people were now keepers of the land. The spirit animals ascended above and are the guiding spirits of the people.





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FERNIE & TOURISM

Fernie is a small mountain community renowned for its spectacular setting amongst the Rocky Mountains and along the Elk River, it's world class powder skiing, historic downtown and year-round recreation. A community of over 5,000 full-time residents, Fernie is located along Highway 3 in southeastern British Columbia near the Alberta and USA border. Fernie sits within the Traditional Territory of the Ktunaxa Nation, which stretches over approximately 70,000 kilometres within the Kootenay region and parts of Alberta, Montana, Washington and Idaho. The Ktunaxa people have occupied the lands for more than 10,000 years.

Fernie has been actively inviting travellers since at least 1921 when the Tourism Association of Southern Alberta and Southeast British Columbia was founded to promote Fernie and the Crowsnest Pass as a Rocky Mountain destination by local resident J.F. Spalding. Today tourism is one of Fernie's primary economies, alongside mining and forestry, generating over \$130 million per year in visitor spending (2019). Iconic tourism businesses include Fernie Alpine Resort, Island Lake Lodge & Catskiing, local fly-fishing and rafting operators and Fernie Brewing Co to name a few.

Fernie's appeal is more than just its scenery and activities. The down-to-earth and passionate people, local history, amenities, events and festivals, and in today's environment the wide-open spaces and genuine small-town community are what truly drive the attraction, positive word-of-mouth and return visitation. A community rich in heritage, unique and independent small businesses and mountain culture entices visitors looking for something different than the mass commercialized tourism experience.

Fernie's overnight visitors have been a mix of both short (regional) and long haul (international – for skiing and fishing primarily) markets, with a noticeable shift to more regional drive markets in the summer and shoulder seasons, and European road trippers touring the broader Rocky Mountain area. Visitors from Alberta make a significant contribution to Fernie's year-round tourism economy due to their close proximity, making up as much as 70% of the summer traffic and 60% of the winter traffic. The US market visiting Fernie has been growing over the years, but represent smaller numbers compared to Alberta and the prairie provinces, though they typically spend more.

WHY A TOURISM MASTER PLAN (TMP)

- The purpose of developing a TMP for Fernie is to ensure the long-term success and sustainability of tourism in the community and the support for tourism by the community.
- Success and sustainability requires a strategic plan, expertise, collaboration, consultation, awareness, understanding and action.
- With a genuine desire to understand and address the current and future opportunities and concerns, 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 a Tourism Master Plan process.
- Originally conceived in late 2016 with funding confirmed by early 2018, Tourism Fernie along with a local stakeholder group, hired Whistler Centre for Sustainability to help lead the process, engagement activities and plan development in late 2018 and through 2019.

COVID-19

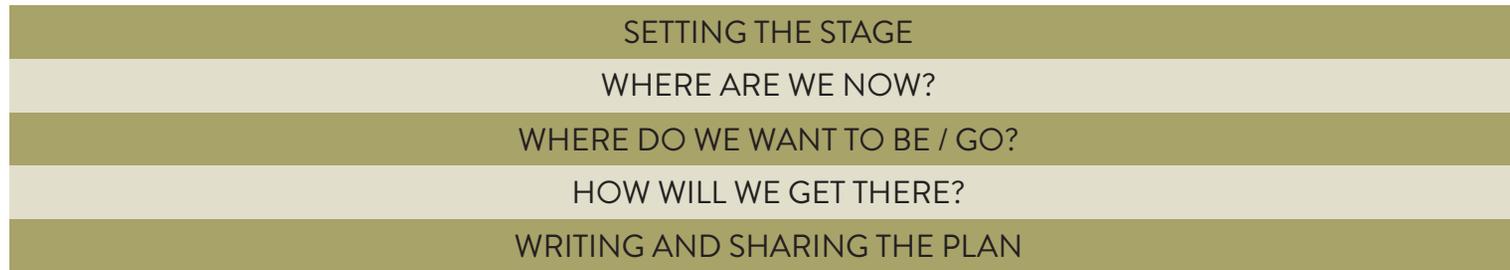
During the final edits of the Tourism Master Plan the COVID-19 pandemic was announced by the WHO. The TMP was scheduled to launch to industry on March 31, 2020 at Tourism Fernie's AGM & Tourism Conference, with a public launch shortly after. In response to the pandemic these events were cancelled and the tourism industry on a global level was faced with one of, if not the most significant threat to its sustainability, at least in the short-term, and a massive shift in travel demand, supply and trends.

The TMP Task Force and the new TMP Champion Group, as detailed further in subsequent pages, underwent a process in spring/summer of 2020 to review the plan at its current state, and in relation to COVID-19's impact on tourism. The pandemic is still in play today and the tourism sector is continuing to adapt, forecast and plan with the information at hand. The review provided further input and updates to the TMP based on what industry knows, estimates and understands currently with an understanding that collaboration is the best strategy to continue to adapt and evaluate.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The Tourism Master Plan was informed and developed through a five-phase process. The first phase began in late 2018 once funding was confirmed, then the Whistler Centre of Sustainability was hired and began by transitioning the local industry collaborative into an official TMP Task Force.

The five-phase process was:



The gathering and incorporation of input from the tourism sector and community was critical for the development of an informed plan that consists of a Vision, Mission, Guiding Principles, Focus Areas, Strategic Directions and Actions List. While the long-term commitment, support and energy of the TMP Champion Group will ensure a lasting, relevant and successful plan is implemented and able to adapt to current and future challenges and opportunities over time. The following document details the five phases, their outcomes and the next steps moving forward.

A NEW VISION FOR TOURISM IN FERNIE

Through the planning process the TMP Task Force developed and then refined a tourism vision, mission and guiding principles informed by the 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

INSIGHTS

Throughout this document a variety of observations, understandings, perspectives, facts and annotations are included. Whether concluded from industry research, local interpretations, TMP survey results or other, these notes provide context that aid in this Plan's evolution and development.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FOCUS AREAS & STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Focus Areas are the big outcomes that will help achieve the 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. The Strategic Directions under each Focus Area consider the current trends, opportunities and challenges of today and direct on how to achieve the goals in each Focus Area.

Prioritizing the Strategic Directions led to a review of community, business and tourism stakeholder input on specific projects and ideas. These were refined and prioritized into Actions and categorized as Catalyst Actions, Short-Term, Medium-Term or Long-Term. The Action list is detailed in the Appendix.

DIVERSITY OF VISITORS YEAR ROUND

Goal: Recover from COVID-19 and grow visitors into multi-day, year-round economic and community contributors

Strategic Directions:

- Increase visitation in non-peak times in summer, winter, fall & spring
- Foster Fernie's arts, heritage & cultural tourism product
- Develop strategies to attract & serve high yield/value oriented visitors
- Embrace 2nd homeowners to create ambassadors for Fernie
- Develop a common community brand to present to visitors

REMARKABLE VISITOR EXPERIENCES

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

Strategic Directions:

- Support businesses & organizations to foster improved tourism experiences & 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

STRONGER TOURISM FOUNDATION

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

Strategic Directions:

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

SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT

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

Strategic Directions:

- Manage tourism related capacity impacts on community, environment & visitor experiences important to tourism
- Mitigate non-tourism industry impacts on the environment & visitor experiences important to tourism
- Improve getting to & around Fernie (visitors & locals)
- Foster greater care & appreciation of Fernie - having visitors become contributors and ambassadors

IMPLEMENTATION

Fernie’s tourism success is due much in part to the investment and collaboration of passionate entrepreneurs, organizations and individuals. 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 have to be defined, additional funding needs to be committed and sourced and implementation of actions need to begin. A key part of this was the transition of the TMP Task Force in early 2020 to a TMP Champion Group with committed organizations and industry stakeholders and the addition of new representation in key areas as detailed further on.

FUNDING & NEXT STEPS

Some of the Actions identified within this plan have already begun or in a few circumstances been achieved, many are a part of the normal course of business for the implementing organizations, while others will require further research, collaboration and funding. A few of the primary funding sources to help continue this work are the Resort Municipality Initiative (RMI) funding, the Municipal Regional District Tax (MRDT – hotel tax) and other funding and granting institutions such as Columbia Basin Trust, Destination BC, Regional District of East Kootenay and Western Economic Diversification. An initial list of funders is located on page 43.

The next steps for the Tourism Master Plan is the rescheduled industry and public launch for fall 2020. Then further initiatives to engage the tourism businesses, sectors and community members in supporting the vision, goals and actions outlined in this plan. The TMP Champion Group will schedule quarterly meetings to check in on progress of actions, ensure continued implementation of the plan’s actions, evaluate the progress and adapt where needed.

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.

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

Short Term Priority: High value tactics with low complexity & can be achieved within 1-2 years

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

COVID 19

The pandemic’s effect and associated government orders and health directives hit Fernie mid-March 2020 causing many businesses to drastically limit services or shut their doors. Ski resorts closed for the season and visitors quickly went back home. Tourism in Fernie, and around the globe, went from near full occupancy to near empty within a few days.

The tourism industry and many local businesses were in a crisis mode, as health directives kept people from travelling and even moving around within their own community in order to ensure the health and safety of the population.

As the world adapted and learned, so did Fernie; and continues to do so. Governments launched a diversity of support programs for citizens and businesses to weather the storm as best as possible. Locally, the community came together to support each other in various ways.

ABOUT FERNIE, BRITISH COLUMBIA

Founded in 1898 and incorporated as a municipality in 1904, Fernie was named after William Fernie, a miner, prospector, gold commissioner and entrepreneur. The land surrounding Fernie has been a source of sustenance, business and trade for thousands of years and continues to this day.

Fernie is part of the Elk Valley within the Kootenay Rockies region of British Columbia which is the Ktunaxa's Qukin ?amak?is (Land of the Raven). For thousands of years the area was known to be a winter hunting area where the Ktunaxa would hunt big horn sheep, mountain goat, moose, elk, deer and other animals. They would also trap, fish and harvest natural vegetation.

Settlers came upon the area in the late 1800's. Peter and William Fernie, brothers, along side Michael Phillips, discovered coal while laying a trail through the Crowsnest Pass. William ended up becoming the original director of the Crow's Nest Pass Coal Co. The community of Fernie was soon recognized for its significant mining and forestry production capacities and saw much growth, yet many tragedies as well over time. The international value and trade of these commodities brought Fernie high economic and political status for such a small community and resulted in the development of significant architecture such as the award-winning Court House, Catholic Church and City Hall, all grand heritage buildings that attract visitors today.

With the development of a railway line through the town and later the advent of the automobile, the area became more accessible to those interested in the desired activities of the time such as hunting, fishing, camping, mountain climbing and touring. In the 1920's, Fernie Ski Club was established to support the local passion of powder skiing. As skiing grew in popularity so did the infrastructure needed to meet demand, including the installation of a handle tow on Mt Proctor and in Liverwurst Bowl one season where Island Lake Lodge Catskiing operates today. In the early sixties skiing moved to its current location and the skiing pioneers of the day submitted a bid to host the 1968 Winter Olympics in Fernie. Though it proved unsuccessful it did help lay the foundation for tourism as a key economic generator and the opening of Snow Valley Ski Development in January 1962, a locally owned company. Further growth in skiing and tourism happened through the vision and hard work of Heiko and Linda Socher. Through the 1970's to the 1990's they built Snow Valley into a destination ski resort along with other pioneers such as Mike Delich. In 1997, Resorts of the Canadian Rockies purchased the resort and renamed it Fernie Alpine Resort while continuing its growth development.

Tourism has grown into a four-season economy with the addition of catskiing, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling and fat-biking in winter and fly fishing, mountain biking, rafting, hiking and golfing in spring, summer and fall. Fernie's unique heritage, culture, hospitality, festivals and Rocky Mountain scenery combined with the abundant year-round recreation have created an industry that continues to thrive alongside mining and forestry.

Add Fernie's proximity to Alberta and Montana and spectacular natural icons such as Banff National Park, Waterton Lakes National Park, Glacier International Peace Park, Mount Broadwood Nature Conservancy, the Flathead Valley and Provincial Parks such as Elk Lakes and Akamina-Kishinena, Fernie continues to see significant interest and investment from within Canada and USA, as well as Australia, Europe and Great Britain. Whether through increased tourist visitation, increased investment in businesses and amenities or the growth of local population and second homeowners, Fernie and tourism in Fernie will continue to grow.

The land in the valley continues to provide for the people in many ways.



TOURISM MASTER PLAN PURPOSE & PROCESS

TMP PURPOSE & PROCESS

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.

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.

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.

The Process:



COVID 19

Through spring 2020 industry organizations such as the Fernie Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Fernie worked hard to engage with and support local businesses.

International, including USA, travel stopped, and only essential travel was permitted in any direction. Any seasonal employees in Fernie had left to return home.

By May 1st more than 2,100 British Columbians tested positive for COVID-19 and more than 100 people died.

The BC Government developed the BC Restart Plan in late spring to provide guidelines for communities and businesses to reopen or increase operations in a safe manner. The importance of economic recovery was evident along with keeping the ‘curve flattened’.



TOURISM MASTER PLAN PURPOSE & PROCESS

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. The majority of this engagement process took place in the fall of 2018, with the TMP Task Force continuing to meet throughout 2019. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic the TMP Task Force further evolved this Plan as it transitioned into the TMP Champion Group, tasked with implementation.

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

Open House - events in September 2018 and January 2019 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.

TOURISM MASTER PLAN PURPOSE & PROCESS

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 area goals are the Strategic Directions that represent broad priorities to guide specific actions over the next 2-5 years from 2020-2025. Actions or projects are the main element of a Tourism Master Plan and are prioritized and become the responsibility of a lead implementing organization and network of supporting organizations.

The final stage of the Tourism Master Plan instigated the transition and evolution of the TMP Task Force to the TMP Champion Group that maintains similar representation and expands where needed to ensure an adequate mix of implementing organizations, decision makers and oversight. In addition to championing the TMP, evaluating progress and adapting the plan, this group would also support the planning and implementation of the City of Fernie RMI Resort Development Strategy. Further details on page 39.

VISION • MISSION • GUIDING PRINCIPLES

FOCUS AREAS & GOALS
2020-2030

STRATEGIC DIRECTION
2020-2025

ACTIONS

IMPLEMENTATION

EVALUATION & ADAPTING

COVID 19

BC went into Phase 2 of the Restart Plan in mid/late May which allowed for restaurants, retailers, attractions, spas and others to reopen under enhanced safety protocols.

Accommodators, if open, were only still able to accept essential travelers.

Phase 3 was critical for the tourism sector, when some travel would be permitted.

Industry was hoping to retain as much of the summer tourism season as possible and avoid businesses from potential bankruptcy.

Phase 3 started June 24, 2020. This gave hope to Fernie's economy.

SITUATION ANALYSIS & KEY INSIGHTS

COVID 19

The content provided to the right and the following few pages is specific to tourism, PRE-COVID.

Why keep it?

Tourism's significance continues before, during and post-COVID.

Understanding where it was before the pandemic is important in understanding how and where to recover back to.

Tourism is one of the most historic and resilient industries in the world and has always rebounded from crisis, albeit with changes.

Data is still coming in on the effects of the pandemic, including new trends, insights and priorities.

TOURISM SIGNIFICANCE

Globally, tourism in 2018 represented 10% of the world's GDP with visitor spending calculated at \$1.7 trillion. Nationally, tourism is 2% of Canada's GDP with visitor spending in 2019 at \$105 billion, of which 22% is from international travellers and 78% from Canadians travelling within Canada. Over 115 million visitors travelled to or within Canada. Over 1.8 million Canadians are employed in the tourism sector.

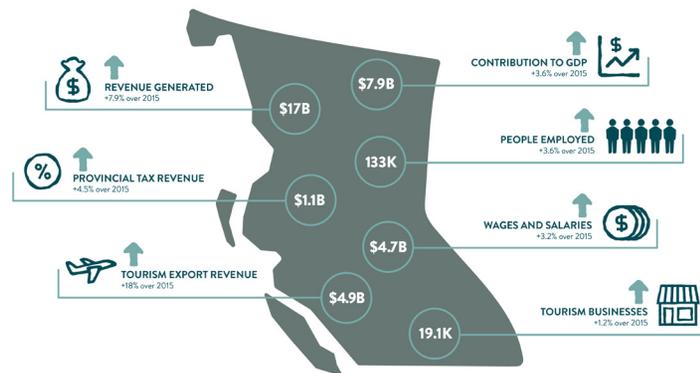
Provincially, in 2018, tourism contributed more to the GDP than any other primary resource industry. In 2018 over 21.6 million overnight visitors travelled to and within British Columbia. In 2018, tourism directly employed 161,500 people, generated over \$20.5 billion in revenue and contributed \$1.7 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.

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. One area to highlight is the snowmobiling tourism sector which brings in over \$69 million in revenues into the region.

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 50+% 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. For the fly-fishing sector of Fernie's tourism economy, each visiting 'guided' angler spends over \$700/day resulting in over \$2.7 million dollars in spending annually in Fernie alone.

By 2018, Fernie's tourism lodging revenues increased by 33%. At the end of 2018 the MRDT Hotel Tax in BC began collection by AirBnB and any accommodations of under 4 units; both were previously exempt from collecting the tax. In 2019, lodging revenues in Fernie surpassed \$25 million. The full impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated travel restrictions are yet to be fully realized, however, most accommodations faced dramatic and unprecedented declines, if not closures, starting the middle of March 2020.

THE VALUE OF TOURISM 2016



Data produced by BC Stats and Destination BC

BC VISITOR ECONOMY



SITUATION ANALYSIS & KEY INSIGHTS

MACRO TRENDS

COVID-19 Pandemic – impacts are global with tourism industry being the hardest hit. Seeing dramatic shifts in types and availability of products and services, and shifts in traveler decision-making, needs and expectations. Travel has changed yet will continue in new ways. Tourism is one of the most resilient industries in the world.

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.

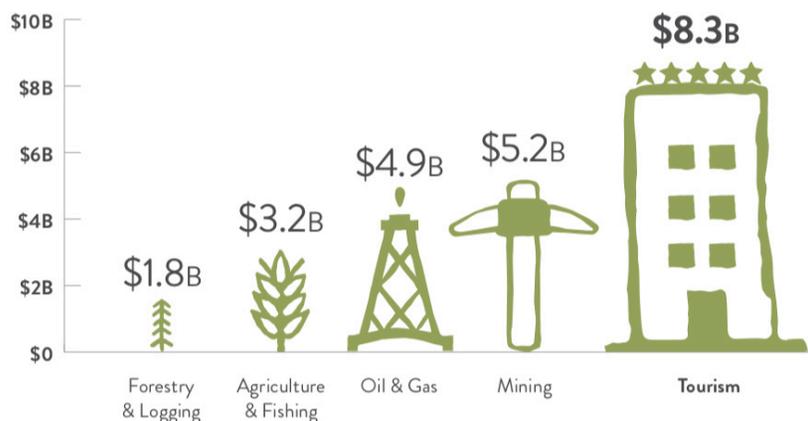
COVID 19

Destination Canada has stated that COVID-19 has caused the loss of up to 450,000 jobs and up to \$62 million in revenue in the tourism sector during the first few months of the pandemic.

While 2019 overall represented the strongest year for tourism in BC, April 2020 data reported:

1. Restaurant Revenues in BC decreased 64%
2. Hotel Occupancy in BC decreased up to 94%
3. BC Ferries Passenger Volume decreased 85%
4. International arrivals to Vancouver International Airport decreased 99%

2018 BC GDP



“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

COVID-19

Emerging Trends:

Safety first

Greater expectations

More questions, more pre-trip planning

Longer stays

Less multi-destination trips

Maximize experience, minimize risk

Staying closer to home, drive vs fly trips

Desire for wide open spaces, outdoors and nature

Small towns vs big cities

Greater need for digital content & information

Need for flexible booking and cancellation policies

SITUATION ANALYSIS & KEY INSIGHTS

MACRO TRENDS

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.

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 and floods, changes in natural landscapes and flora/fauna.

HR / Labour – BC is facing a noticeable workforce shortage issue which will continue due to aging population, changing demographics and immigration policies.

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.

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 \$522,000¹, greater than any other community in the Kootenays, including Revelstoke and Nelson.

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.

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.

¹BC Assessment website, Kootenay_Columbia_2019_Property_Assessments, www.bcassessment.ca

SITUATION ANALYSIS & KEY INSIGHTS

INSIGHTS

Tourism can be impacted by many factors including weather, area economies, coal and oil prices, global recessions, value of the US dollar, competition, land use and access, and in the current case, pandemics.

Summer has seen the steadiest tourism growth in Fernie over the past 6 years as awareness of summer experiences vs winter increases.

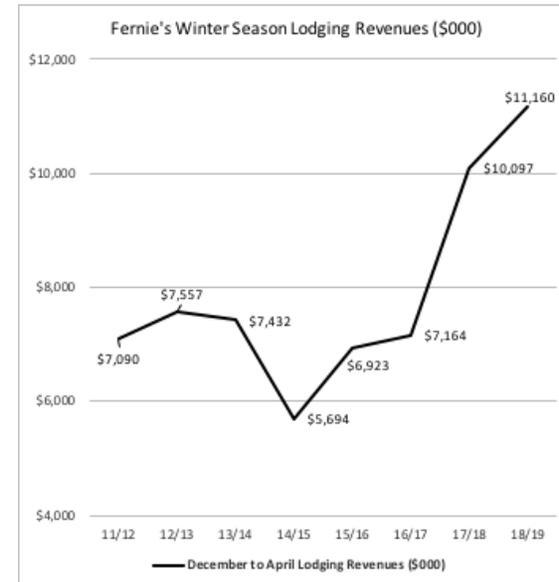
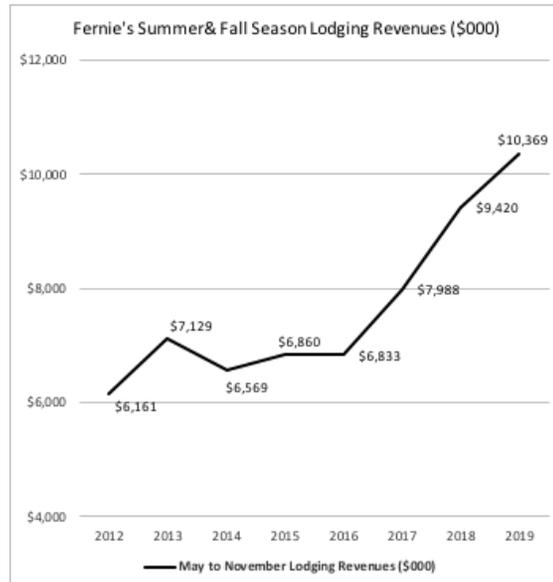
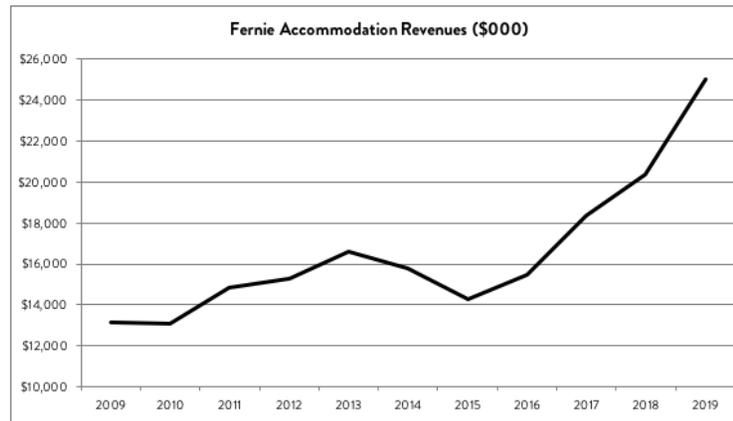
Data suggests that August 2020 tourism during the pandemic was almost as strong as August 2019. It is suggested that the primary reasons were pent up demand for travel and desire for small towns with nature and wide-open spaces.

VISITOR VOLUME, ROOM REVENUES AND SEASONALITY

For 2019, total visitor volume, both overnight and day visitors, to Fernie was estimated to exceed 400,000 and 2019 visitor spending was estimated to exceed \$130 million based on the lodging revenue growth since 2015. Visitor surveys indicate that approximately 84% - 94% of visitation to Fernie is from outside of British Columbia, which implies that over \$110 million of visitor spending is new money coming into the area.

Although Fernie experienced a decrease in revenues in 2014-2015, as a result of the poor snow year that impacted winter visitation, tourism growth has taken place prior to and up until the pandemic. The impacts of COVID-19 began affecting lodging revenues mid-March 2020 and continues to do so. It is estimated that a decrease of 30%-50% in lodging revenues is expected for 2020 compared to 2019. The local tourism industry continues to address and adapt to the pandemic and the resulting changes in travel behaviours and patterns.

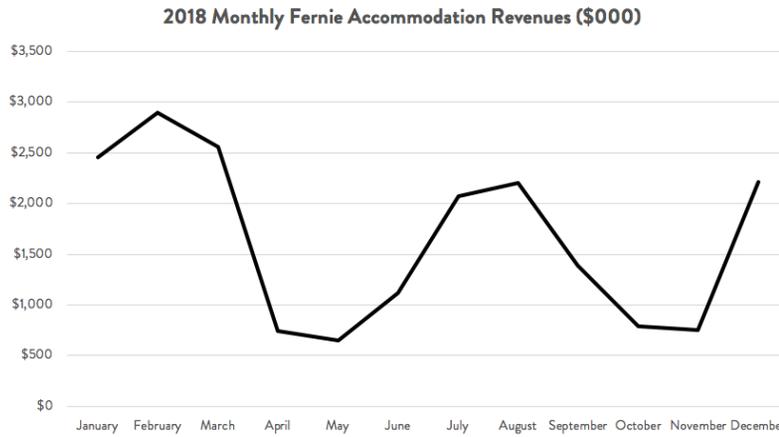
Figure 1



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

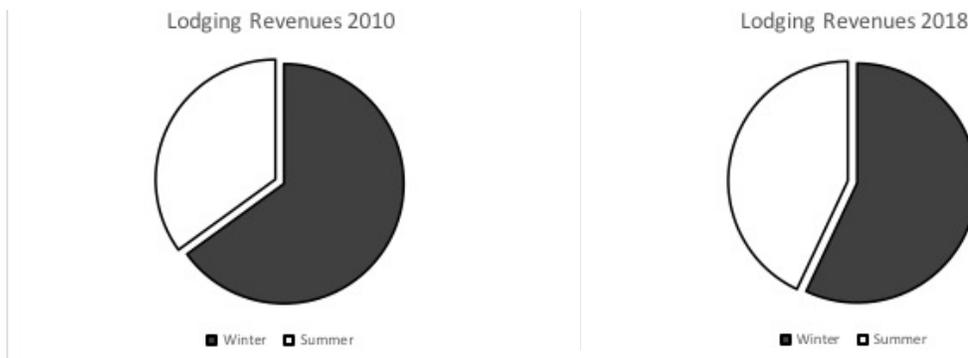


Data from the Value of Tourism Study conducted by Tourism Fernie showed an average daily room rate during the winter season of \$265/night versus \$161 during the summer. Figure 3 below shows the spread of room revenue from 2010 to 2018.

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 room rates are lower.

Figure 3



INSIGHTS

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

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

The highest average nightly room rate and yield is in winter season.

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

The fluctuation of business levels due to seasonal tourism create staff retention and recruitment challenges.

Accommodators have begun to meet as a larger group more regularly to learn, grow and adapt, while sharing knowledge and identifying solutions to issues and opportunities.

SITUATION ANALYSIS & KEY INSIGHTS

THE SHARED ECONOMY – SHORT-TERM RENTALS (STR) IN FERNIE

Short-term rentals are described as furnished, primarily self-contained apartments or private homes, that are rented for short periods of time (less than a month) primarily by local residents who own the units.

AirBnB, and other similar online platforms such as HomeAway, began to populate Fernie accommodation options listed by local residents since approximately 2015. As per AirDNA data, in 2018 & 2019, revenues from this lodging ‘shared economy’ in Fernie totalled over \$9 and \$13 million respectively, in USD.

AirDNA data for April & May 2020 suggests that COVID-19 has had limited impacts on AirBnB rentals in Fernie. In town STR revenues were down 22% where as the number of nights booked was only down 3%, while on-mountain STR revenues were up 72% with both nightly rates and book nights seeing an increase. Local traditional accommodators, many closed due to COVID-19 or only servicing essential travellers due to WorkSafeBC guidelines, saw an estimated decrease in revenues of between 60%-100%.

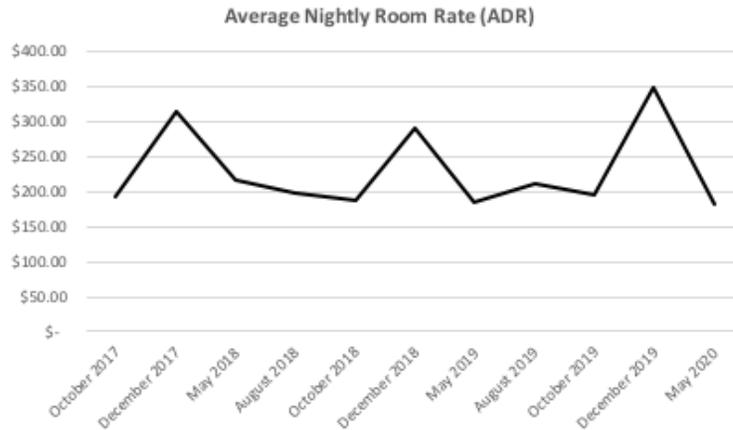
STR'S IN FERNIE:

In 2018 there were 296 units available, in 2019 there were 381. Of these, the number of STR units in town was 197 and on-mountain was 184.

A unit is counted when at least one night has been booked in a month/year. As a comparison, traditional accommodations in Fernie total approximately 850 units.

The growth of STR in Fernie has resulted in the City of Fernie developing regulations in 2017 to help manage and govern these commercial revenue generating entities that are typically located in residential neighbourhoods and were previously illegal.

STRs on-mountain have an average nightly rate of \$280, whereas STRs in town are \$190.



STRs in Fernie	In town 2018	FAR 2018	In town 2019	FAR 2019
Avg Nightly Rate	\$187.64	\$272.17	\$194.62	\$294.80
Available Nights	43,360	51,299	57,484	59,657
Booked Nights	21,444	18,146	31,006	24,902
Est. Revenue USD	\$4,023,752.00	\$4,938,797.00	\$6,034,388.00	\$7,341,110.00

SITUATION ANALYSIS & KEY INSIGHTS

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. This 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.

#ferniestoke



SITUATION ANALYSIS & KEY INSIGHTS

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 that have been travelling to popular locations such as Banff are a growing target audience for Fernie, especially once international travel restrictions ease.

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 sight-seeing, 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.

OUR GEOGRAPHIC 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. It must be noted that COVID-19 has impacted this geographic mix in 2020 due to the travel restrictions.

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

	Winter	Summer
AB	50%	62%
UK	12%	2%
Aus/NZ	8%	1%
ON/East	10%	5%
Europe	4%	2%
BC	6%	13%
SK/MB	6%	9%
USA - short haul	2%	4%
USA - long haul	2%	2%

SITUATION ANALYSIS & KEY INSIGHTS

TARGET MARKETS

Tourism Fernie's target markets for current and foreseeable marketing have experienced shifts due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Below charts represent our areas of focus if COVID-19 did not occur. Due to the current situation geographical markets are currently focused on regional drive with the expectation that long-haul markets will be inaccessible for most of 2020, due to travel limitations and restrictions and will continue to be impacted for the next few years. Travelers, within Canada and once the US border opens, will however see Fernie as an ideal location to visit given it is a beautiful, small Rocky Mountain town with few faces and wide open spaces.

Primary Traveler Profiles: TOURISM EQ

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

Authentic Experiencer 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
- Golfing

Primary Geographic Markets

Canadian: AB, BC, SK, MB, ON
USA: WA, ID, MT, CA, CO, MA, TX, IL
Overseas: UK, AUS, NZ

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 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 has been seeing more interest and visitation from travellers seeking a more community-minded, small-town, nature-based destination versus a mass tourism destination. This is especially true in light of COVID-19.



SITUATION ANALYSIS & KEY INSIGHTS

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

"We came here to see the mountains and to see something different because we usually go to Jasper. The provincial campground is lovely! We love the nearby creek and hiking around Island Lake Lodge. We love that Fernie is small, unlike Banff and Canmore which are way too crowded. Fernie feels more like Jasper in that it sometimes gets busy but it's purposely not built up like Banff so it doesn't feel claustrophobic. We love the feel (of Fernie) around here!"

Feedback from Surveyed Visitor

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'.

"The Happy Cow ice cream was delicious, especially the cone! The staff at the Red Tree Lodge and the ones at the Gear Hub were all amazing!"

Feedback from Surveyed Visitor

"Some locals showed us some trails and then invited us for beers afterwards! It's a very friendly and welcoming community!"

Feedback from Surveyed Visitor



SITUATION ANALYSIS & KEY INSIGHTS

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?

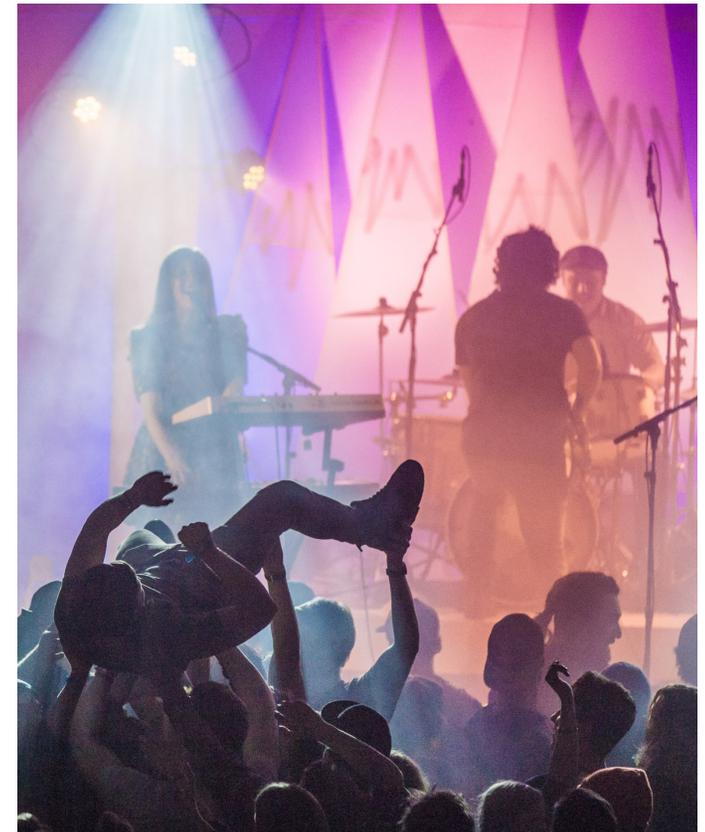
- 47% had never been to Fernie before
- 23% had been to Fernie in both summer and winter
- 1% had been to Fernie before but only during summer season
- 28% had been to Fernie before but only during winter season

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



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 a 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.

The Economic Flow of Tourism



2020 Winter Visitor Survey:

Prior to COVID-19 another winter survey was taking place but was limited to 104 responses. A few notable results consisted of:

- Only 35% had never been to Fernie before and 47% had been to Fernie before in both winter and summer.
- Greater number of international (ie Europe) and long-haul travelers (ie from Ontario)
- 37% travelling with family, 20% travelling with their spouse, 23% travelling with friend(s)
- Length of stay was 23% 4-6 nights, 21% all season, 20% 7+ nights, 18% 2-3 nights, 15% day trippers
- When asked has your visit met your expectations? 99.02% said yes.

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 Catskiing, high-end accommodators and fly-fishing companies.

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.

SITUATION ANALYSIS & KEY INSIGHTS

TOURISM SENTIMENT INDEX

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 reports. The full report is available from Tourism Fernie by request.

- Over 34,000 online conversations actively promoted Fernie experiences each year. Of all the conversations online being driven by Fernie's tourism experiences in 2019, 73% were identified as 'Destination Promoter', 24% were identified as 'Destination Passive' and only 3% as 'Destination Detractor'. Overall this positions Fernie with a Tourism Sentiment Index (TSI) Score of 70, up 13 points since 2017.
- In comparison to our competitor destinations, identified as Whitefish, Revelstoke, Golden, Canmore and Rossland for this report, our TSI Score is the highest.
- **Destination Promoter:** Those who actively recommend and speak positively to others about Fernie.
- **Destination Passive:** Those who speak from an indifferent point of view to others about Fernie.
- **Destination Detractor:** Those who actively discourage or speak negatively to others about Fernie.
- The following tourism assets, in order, are where Fernie excels in generating positive perceptions of the destination's tourism offering:
 - Biking | Hiking | River Activities | Culinary, Breweries & Pubs Skiing & Snowboarding | Snowmobiling | Nature viewing | Festival & Events | Fishing | Camping | Snowshoeing | Spa | Weddings

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY & INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVES

HIGHLIGHTS FROM TMP ENGAGEMENT

Over 10% of the local population, of which 89% were full-time residents, participated in providing input during the engagement process that included online surveys, focus group sessions, one-on-one interviews, open house events, and Task Force meetings. Below summarizes highlights from the community and business surveys as well as the focus group sessions. 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 14% disagreeing and 4% strongly disagreeing.

Consistency in the top 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.

Abundance of unique shopping, dining, events and services for a small community.

Increased amount and access to recreational opportunities and amenities such as trails, skiing, guided adventures and more. 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.”

Residents appreciate sharing the whole 'Fernie' experience

Both residents and businesses 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

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

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.

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

Accommodation values and reinvestment at the ski hill location are challenged due to underutilization in the shoulder seasons of spring and fall.

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

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

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY & INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVES

INSIGHTS

There is some indication that Tourism benefits by some residents were diminished due to questions and concerns about visitor capacity and the availability and affordability of housing in Fernie.

A Fernie Heritage Strategy was recently completed. 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.

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

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 / or capacity issues experienced at peak times or at more sensitive (ie local ecosystems) locations such as natural attractions, trails, river put-ins/take-outs, restaurants, facilities, accommodations, roads, parking lots, events and other.

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 infrastructure needs / challenges when recreating on private land. Old or lacking infrastructure to access/enjoy local rivers, trails, winter activities, natural attractions.

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.

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.



SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY & INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVES

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 given current capacities.

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.

"The need to manage the growth of tourism in a sustainable manner. Fernie will automatically see continued growth in this area and if our community doesn't work together to manage it effectively Fernie will easily become what Canmore is today. Fernie needs to ensure the authenticity isn't ruined, that nature isn't heavily impacted, that our facilities are well-maintained and improved for both residents and visitors, that the community is part of the solution. We need to work on issues such as labour shortages, places to park, proper trail signage for visitors, trail infrastructure, river access, downtown store hours, and local understanding of tourism and how to work together on its sustainability."

Feedback from Survey Responder

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.



SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY & INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVES

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.

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)

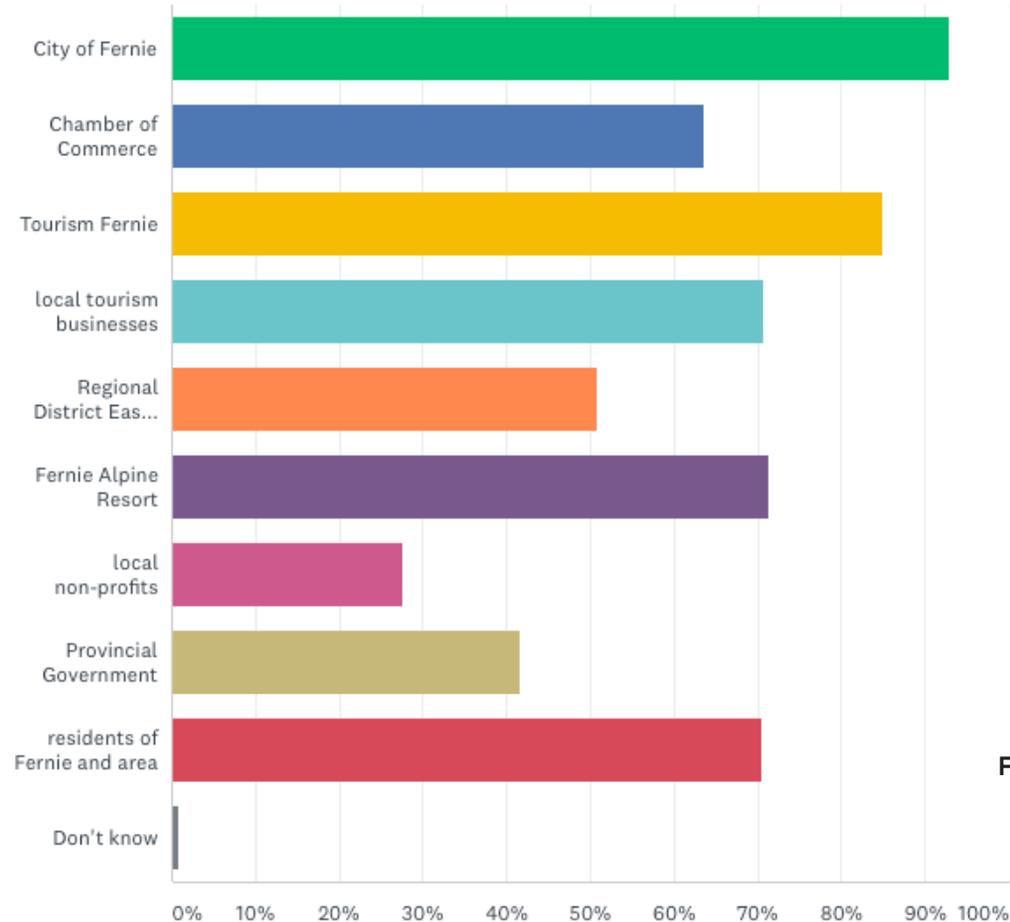


Figure 1 - By Residents

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY & INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVES

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)

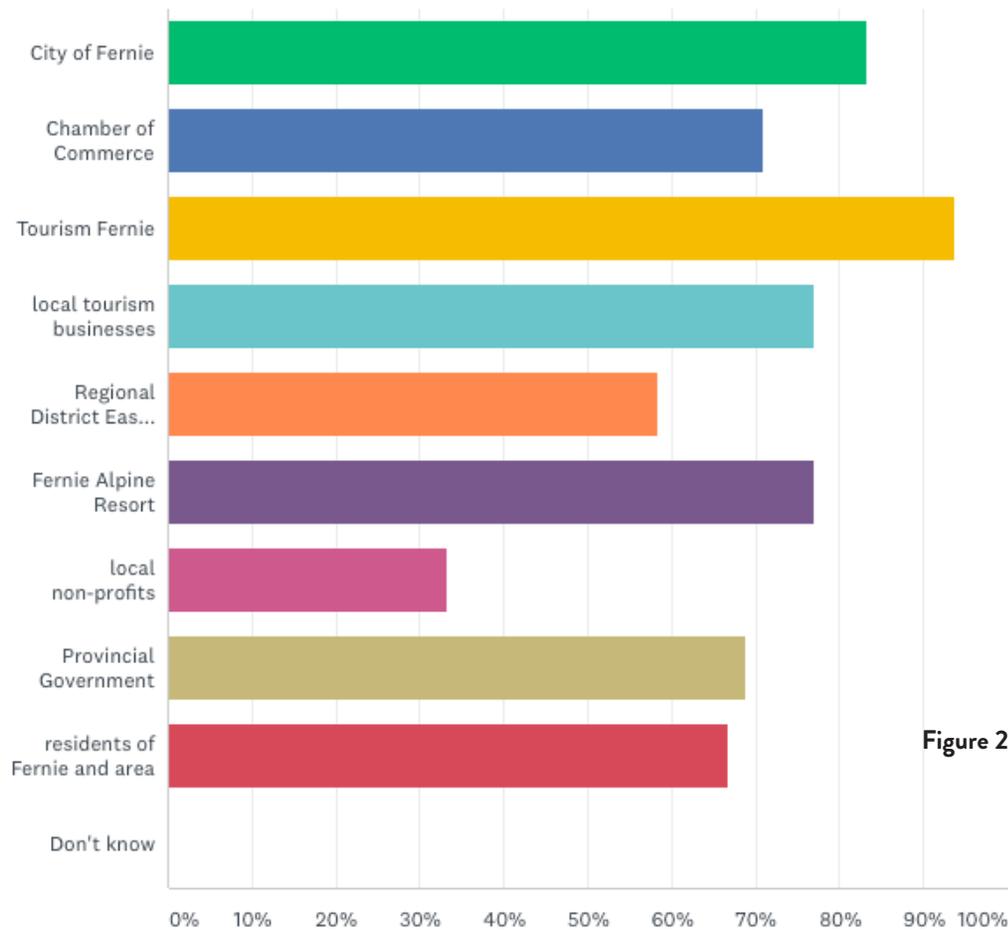
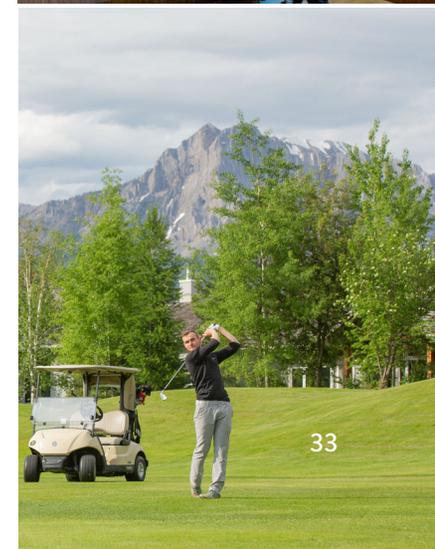


Figure 2 - By Businesses

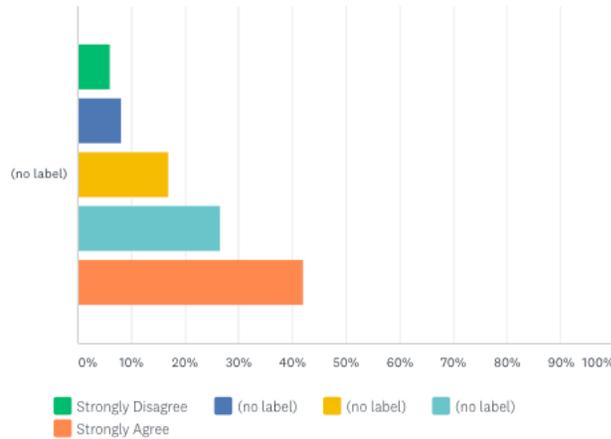




SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY & INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVES

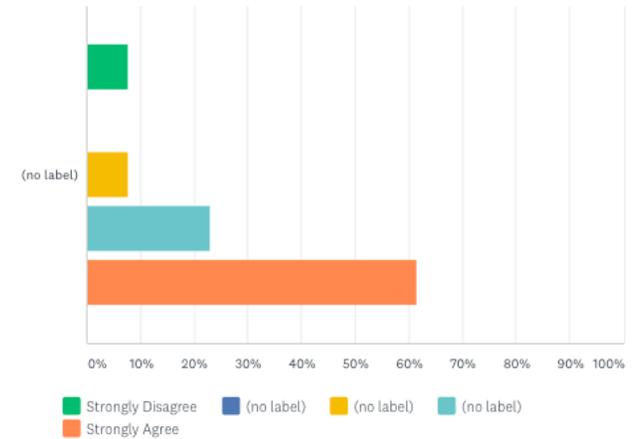
RESIDENTS

The benefits of tourism in and around Fernie outweigh the negative impacts



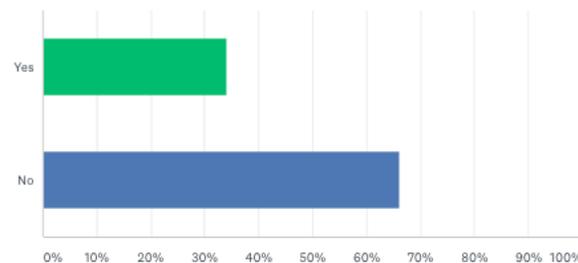
BUSINESSES

The benefits of tourism in and around Fernie outweigh the negative impacts



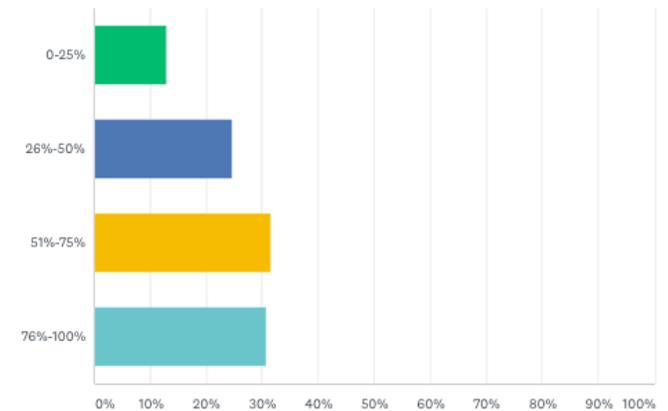
RESIDENTS

Do you derive part of your income from the Fernie tourism industry? (e.g. working part-time in the industry, earning vacation rental income, selling arts to visitors, serving customers who are visiting Fernie, working in the building trades for vacation properties, tourist accommodation etc.)



BUSINESSES

Using your best estimate, what % of your annual business volume would you attribute to tourists/visitors/corporate travel (versus locals)?



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. As industry is now facing the challenges of COVID-19 the review of these statements and guiding principles resulted in full support to keep them unchanged as they still reflect the needs, opportunities and direction towards success.

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:

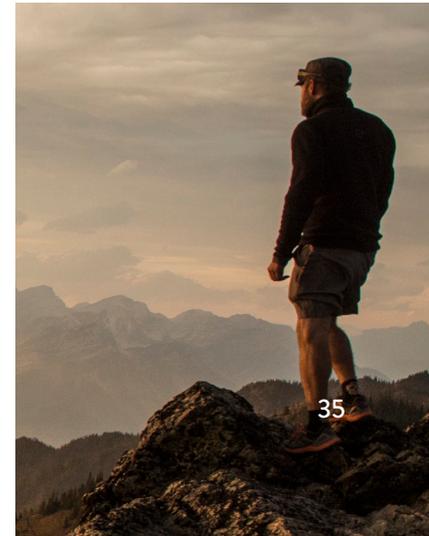
The purpose of the plan and the joint implementation by tourism stakeholders and partners.

OUR 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





OUR VISION & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

To help guide planning, decision making and implementation, a list of core philosophies that encompass the values of the industry and community has been created. Irrespective of changes to focus areas, goals, strategies or actions, these guiding principles will remain to direct and maintain focus towards the vision and mission, and ultimately success.

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.

Balance Sustains Us

We continually evaluate and seek a balance through our actions considering whether it is time to invite or manage, spend or save, communicate or listen, develop or protect/renew, act or reflect, and concentrate or distribute.

OUR FOCUS AREAS & 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 Area 1

DIVERSITY OF VISITORS YEAR ROUND

Goal: Recover from COVID-19 and grow visitors into multi-day, year-round economic and community contributors

Tourism offers enormous economic and community benefits to residents and businesses. As the community and industry adapt and recover from COVID-19 it is important to ensure tourism and its 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 to continually develop advocates for tourism. With human resource challenges facing the industry, barriers to attracting and retaining people such as housing need addressing. With the labour challenges being faced and ensuring positive and sustainable industry growth and management, collaboration is essential.

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.

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.

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.

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, winter, fall and spring
- Foster Fernie’s arts, heritage & cultural tourism product
- Maximize current event/facility capacity for existing events and a plan for growth & expansion through events
- Develop strategies to attract & 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 & organizations to foster improved tourism experiences & 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 roles & make collaboration a central tenant
- Ensure land use & development policies, maintain & grow access to natural attractions & recreation amenities
- Enhance a working relationship with the Ktunaxa / KRBI
- Increase community support for tourism & create more ambassadors
- Sustain financial resources for tourism

Focus Area 4

SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT

Strategic Directions:

- Manage tourism related capacity impacts on community, environment & visitor experiences important to tourism
- Mitigate non-tourism industry impacts on the environment & visitor experiences important to tourism
- Adapt to climate change (forest fires, snowpack, river)
- Improve getting to & around Fernie (visitors & locals)
- Foster greater care & appreciation of Fernie – having visitors become contributors and ambassadors



STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS & ACTIONS

ACTIONS

Actions or projects are the main focus of a Tourism Master Plan and are prioritized, time bound and become the responsibility of an implementing organization and network of supportive organizations. 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 & can be achieved within 1-2 years.

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.

View Current Action List in Appendix on Page 49.





IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

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.



“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*

TOURISM MASTER PLAN CHAMPION GROUP

The Tourism Master Plan Task Force has now transitioned into an ongoing Tourism Master Plan Champion Group, administered and facilitated by Tourism Fernie, that maintains similar representation and expands where needed to integrate key stakeholders. The group is governed by a Terms of Reference and in addition to championing the TMP, this group will also support the planning and implementation of the City of Fernie RMI Resort Development Strategy to ensure alignment and efficient use of resources for tourism development work.

TMP Champion Group Members

Kurt Saari - Nevados Restaurant & Tourism Fernie Chair

Jikke Gyorki - Tourism Fernie

Brad Parsell - Fernie Chamber of Commerce

Michael Boronowski / Ange Qualizza - City of Fernie

Mike Sosnowski - RDEK Area A

Scott Gilmet - IGS Group of Accommodations & Tourism Fernie Board Member

Mike McPhee - Island Lake Resort Group

Andy Cohen - Fernie Alpine Resort / RCR

Derick Berry - Fernie Central Reservations

Janice Alpine - Ktunaxa

Lee-Anne Walker - Elk River Alliance

Randal Macnair - Wildsight / Fernie Museum

Louise Ferguson - Fernie & District Arts Council

Simon Howse - Representative of Private Land Owners Group (Trails & Rec)

Krista Turcasso - Fernie Trails Alliance

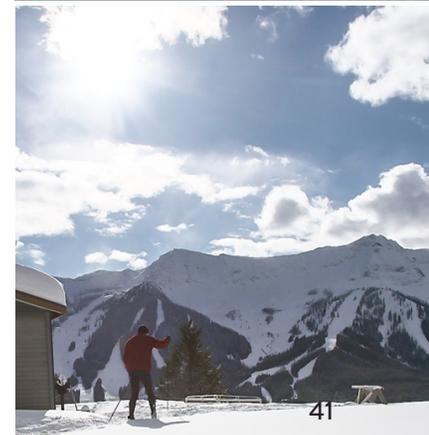
Champion Group Ongoing Purpose

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 on page 30) and the business community (Figure 2 page 31) 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

First Years 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, is recommended that organizations sign an agreement that at a minimum;

- Recognizes support for the vision, goals and strategic directions
- Commits them to at least consider 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 may be added to the various partnership agreements.

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 2020. Tourism Fernie should take on the organizing role for the working group and either facilitated the meetings as well or by an individual outside the working group. The first meetings 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 champion group meet again in late 2020. This 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 Champion 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 primarily by the lead organizations as identified through the engagement: Tourism Fernie, City of Fernie and the Fernie Chamber of Commerce. It is recommended that Tourism Fernie play the main administration and 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 would 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.



MY COMMITMENT

As one of Fernie's important economic industries tourism needs to be supported to be sustainable. My commitment to a sustainable and successful tourism industry is:

- Help share local values with visitors to promote positive behaviour
- Help a visitor in need when able
- Take the Fernie Ambassador Program
- Promote local businesses and experiences, be an Ambassador
- Always minimize or eliminate my impact on the natural environment

Check those above where you can help!
Take a photo with it and email it to win a prize!

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 in the side bar to the right.

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 Champion 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 THE PLAN

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.

Resort Municipality Initiative Program

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 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.

Municipal Regional District Tax (Hotel Tax)

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 3% MRDT (meaning all the MRDT tax revenues go directly to Tourism Fernie for tourism marketing and initiatives). Tourism Fernie's Strategic Plan from 2019 and an action from the TMP process included applying to become a 3% MRDT community which was achieved during the TMP process. As of January 1, 2020 all Fernie accommodations collect the 3% tax.

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 sustainability of the 3% MRDT 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. Here are some, more can be added to over time. There are likely other sources for infrastructure, arts and culture, environmentally focussed initiatives, community building, and skills training.

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>

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 its 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; work-force 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



EVALUATING & ADAPTING

TRACKING PROGRESS & ADJUSTING WHEN NEEDED

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
Foster Fernie's art, heritage and cultural tourism experiences	Create a Cultural Tourism Committee to grow and protect tourism-related art, heritage and cultural tourism opportunities	Tourism Fernie, Fernie & District Arts Council, Fernie & District Historical Society, Ktunaxa	In Progress Completed No progress, still being considered Reconsidered	X



EVALUATING & 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's 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.

DIVERSITY OF VISITORS YEAR ROUND

Goal: Recover from COVID-19 and grow visitors into multi-day, year-round economic and community contributors

Indicators:

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

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)
- Percentage of TMP actions in progress or completed

"Fernie is very fortunate to have a hard working Tourism Community. Working together to grow Tourism has been an ongoing process. The Tourism Master Plan is a great opportunity to really move our community further forward. By working together and presenting a united, thought out plan, there is no doubt Fernie will continue to develop as one of Canada's outstanding destinations."

Andy Cohen, General Manager, Fernie Alpine Resort

ADAPTING:

Is the process of adjusting to new conditions. A refocusing of efforts may be required as changes occur such as funding availability, consumer behaviour, resident sentiment, modifications in roles or leadership, political directions or accessibility to data. It is important to recognize and document when adaptation is needed and to have the courage and resources to make adjustments.

COVID 19:

Adapting to the current pandemic and the business, community and market changes that have already begun will be an on-going challenge. To-date organizations and businesses have adjusted their protocols and services to better meet the new needs of industry, health authorities and consumers.

The Tourism Master Plan is an evolving plan with a strong focus on collaboration, communications between stakeholders and taking responsibility to support industry and community sustainability.

EVALUATING & ADAPTING



STRONGER TOURISM FOUNDATION

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

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)
- Collaborative funds raised for TMP actions and related conservation efforts
- Advocacy efforts undertaken
- Efforts undertaken to build awareness and relationships
- Health of ecosystems – 1) Health and Population of Westslope Cutthroat Trout, 2) Bear Mortality, 3) Elk Population

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A - ACTIONS

FOCUS AREA 1 - DIVERSITY OF VISITORS YEAR-ROUND

GOAL - RECOVER FROM COVID-19 AND GROW VISITORS INTO MULTI-DAY, YEAR-ROUND ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTORS

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
<p>IMPLEMENTATION & COLLABORATION</p> <p>Note: all action items include an initial list of organizations, identified by their own acronym, responsible for collaborating on its initial implementation, other organizations may be added. The acronyms are explained on the bottom of page 51.</p>	<p>CATALYST</p> <p>Develop a common community brand with signed implementation agreements, short and long-term actions (TF, COF, FCC, FDAC, FDHS, KRBI)</p>	<p>CATALYST</p> <p>Rebuild overnight visitation to Pre-COVID levels (TF, FCC, FAR, ACC)</p>	<p>CATALYST</p> <p>Create a Cultural Tourism Committee that meets quarterly to grow and protect cultural tourism opportunities (TF, FDAC, FDHS, COF, KRBI)</p>	<p>MEDIUM TERM</p> <p>Develop and distribute welcome package for new residents and existing 2nd homeowners to help them feel like a local (FCC, TF, COF)</p>	<p>MEDIUM TERM</p> <p>Develop a tourism focused events and animation strategy. (TF, FCC, COF, FDAC, FDHS, FAR)</p>
		<p>SHORT TERM</p> <p>Update Tourism Fernie's Strategic Plan and City of Fernie's RMI RDS to reflect the Tourism Master Plan goals and actions (TF, COF)</p>	<p>CATALYST</p> <p>Create and implement the Fernie Heritage Strategy that includes Heritage Tourism opportunities (FDHS, COF, TF, KRBI)</p>	<p>MEDIUM TERM</p> <p>Identify incentive program to grow advocacy by 2nd homeowners for promoting Fernie as a sustainable travel destination (FCC, TF)</p>	<p>MEDIUM TERM</p> <p>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, FAR, COF, FCC)</p>
		<p>SHORT TERM</p> <p>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, FCC, FAR, ILL)</p>	<p>MEDIUM TERM</p> <p>Research demand for cultural experiences & identify current cultural providers, experiences & opportunities for market-readiness, packaging and product development (FDAC, FDHS, TF, KRBI)</p>		<p>MEDIUM TERM</p> <p>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, COF, TF, FAR, FDAC)</p>

APPENDIX A - ACTIONS

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
IMPLEMENTATION & COLLABORATION Note: all action items include an initial list of organizations, identified by their own acronym, responsible for collaborating on its initial implementation, other organizations may be added.		MEDIUM TERM Develop Iconic Fernie Experience strategy and seek funding partners (TF, FCC, FAR, ILL, COF, FDAC, FDHS, ERA)	MEDIUM TERM Develop targeted marketing campaigns for market-ready cultural experiences (TF)		MEDIUM TERM Leverage ISSW 2022 convention to increase future large events and understand how to provide an exceptional on-the-ground delegate experience (TF, FCC, COF)
		MEDIUM TERM Understand current ideas, initiatives and opportunities to build on event/sport tourism (TF, FCC, User Groups & Sport & Cultural Orgs)			LONG TERM Develop a conference centre feasibility study (TFF, FCC, COF)

ACRONYMS

ACC - Accommodators

COF - City of Fernie

ERA - Elk River Alliance

FAR - Fernie Alpine Resort

FCC - Fernie Chamber of Commerce

FDAC - Fernie & District Arts Council

FDHS - Fernie & District Historical Society

FNS - Fernie Nordic Society

FSA - Fernie Snowmobile Association

FTA - Fernie Trails Alliance

ILL - Island Lake Resort Group

KRBI - Ktunaxa Regional Branding Initiative/Ktunaxa Nation

KRT- Kootenay Rockies Tourism

RDEK - Regional District of East Kootenay

TIABC - Tourism Industry Assn of BC

APPENDIX A - ACTIONS

FOCUS AREA 2 - REMARKABLE VISITOR EXPERIENCES

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

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
<p>IMPLEMENTATION & COLLABORATION</p> <p>Note: all action items include an initial list of organizations, identified by their own acronym, responsible for collaborating on its initial implementation, other organizations may be added. The acronyms are explained on the bottom of page 51.</p>	<p>CATALYST</p> <p>Survey businesses and organizations on what tools, support and workshops are needed (FCC, TF)</p>	<p>CATALYST</p> <p>Ensure future public facility requirements are also leveraged for tourism opportunities (COF, FCC, TF)</p>	<p>CATALYST</p> <p>Develop a Fernie Ambassador 2.0 program with sustainable funding to expand reach and improve service levels (FCC, TF, COF)</p>	<p>SHORT TERM</p> <p>Continue to plan and deliver animation activities downtown - "250 days of animation" (FCC, FDAC, FDHS, TF, COF)</p>	<p>SHORT TERM</p> <p>Identify locations and needed amenities/ improvements for new and enhanced visitor staging/gathering spaces (TF, FCC, COF, FDAC, FDHS, FTA, FAR, ILL)</p>	<p>SHORT TERM</p> <p>Improve visitor communication about ethical conduct, know-before-you-go, safety, emergencies and notices, trail/river conditions, connectivity and more (FCC, TF, COF, FTA, ERA)</p>
	<p>CATALYST</p> <p>Facilitate quarterly accommodator meetings and annual sector group session to foster industry sustainability and success through collaboration (TF, FCC, KRT)</p>	<p>SHORT TERM</p> <p>Research and identify the future building opportunities of the Chamber/VIC building as a premier tourist and tourism hub/attraction (FCC, COF, TF)</p>	<p>CATALYST</p> <p>Develop action plan and checklists to ensure community is ready to service visitors for increases and fluctuations in visitation (FCC, TF, COF)</p>	<p>SHORT TERM</p> <p>Create additional and enhance existing self-guided walkable tours (TF, FDAC, FDHS, FCC, ERA)</p>	<p>SHORT TERM</p> <p>Work with recreational tourism groups to identify issues, solutions, opportunities and next steps related to staging areas and access points (TF, FCC, FTA, FSA, FNS, ERA, COF, RDEK, River Ops)</p>	<p>SHORT TERM</p> <p>Revisit, update as needed and implement the existing comprehensive wayfinding/ signage strategy (COF, TF, FCC, FTA)</p>
	<p>SHORT TERM</p> <p>Attract the Remarkable Experiences Destination BC program to Fernie for local businesses (FCC, TF)</p>	<p>MEDIUM TERM</p> <p>Identify strategies to "weatherize" events - plans to move outdoor events indoor, cover outdoor events (COF, FCC, FDAC, FDHS, TF, FAR)</p>	<p>SHORT TERM</p> <p>Enhance visitor information within local businesses to improve service, increased spending and longer stays (FCC, TF, FAR)</p>	<p>MEDIUM TERM</p> <p>Investigate active space zoning for main floor store fronts as opposed to offices (COF, FCC)</p>	<p>MEDIUM TERM</p> <p>Build and ensure the funding is in place to maintain these staging places in the long-term (TF, COF, RDEK))</p>	<p>MEDIUM TERM</p> <p>Implement prioritized wayfinding elements over 3 years (COF, TF, FCC, FTA)</p>

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
	<p>SHORT TERM</p> <p>Based on business survey needs, develop a plan and begin to implement recommendations and best skill-development options (FCC)</p>	<p>MEDIUM TERM</p> <p>Conduct a gap analysis of indoor activities, programs and facilities and capacities currently available (FCC, COF, FDAC, TF)</p>	<p>MEDIUM TERM</p> <p>Improve accessibility of public spaces and amenities (COF, FCC)</p>	<p>MEDIUM TERM</p> <p>Explore value and ability of longer business hours with downtown businesses, identify models in other resort communities (FCC, TF, COF)</p>	<p>LONG TERM</p> <p>Facility and lift upgrades at Fernie Alpine Resort (FAR)</p>	<p>MEDIUM TERM</p> <p>Expand and improve trail signage that includes links into larger wayfinding approach and includes trails on private land (FTA, COF, TF, FCC, land owner rep, KRBI)</p>
		<p>MEDIUM TERM</p> <p>Ensure that tourism opportunities (events, tournaments, general use) are considered as part of any new facilities when looked at as part of recreation and leisure planning (FCC, COF, TF)</p>		<p>MEDIUM TERM</p> <p>Further enhance Station Square as an event / festival location including fixing the Arts Station 'FERNIE' roof (COF, FDAC, FCC, FDHS, TF)</p>		<p>MEDIUM TERM</p> <p>Embracing UBER once available in BC as a method of effectively moving visitors around (COF, TF, FCC)</p>
		<p>LONG TERM</p> <p>Feasibility study for a new Arts & Cultural Centre (FDAC, FDHS, COF, TF)</p>		<p>MEDIUM TERM</p> <p>Educate the community, businesses and organizations, and implement, the Fernie Heritage Strategy (FDHS, COF)</p>		
				<p>LONG TERM</p> <p>Explore/redefine the 20yr commercial zoning in downtown to secure and enhance it (COF, FCC)</p>		

APPENDIX A - ACTIONS

FOCUS AREA 3 - STRONGER TOURISM FOUNDATIONS

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

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 ADEQUATE AND QUALIFIED STAFF	SUSTAIN FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR TOURISM	ENSURE LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES MAINTAIN AND GROW ACCESS TO NATURAL ATTRACTIONS AND RECREATIONAL AMENITIES	ENHANCE WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE KRBI / KTUNAXA
<p>IMPLEMENTATION & COLLABORATION</p> <p>Note: all action items include an initial list of organizations, identified by their own acronym, responsible for collaborating on its initial implementation, other organizations may be added. The acronyms are explained on the bottom of page 51.</p>	<p>CATALYST</p> <p>Formulate partnership agreements identifying roles & understanding how & when partners can work together (TF/COF/FCC)</p>	<p>CATALYST</p> <p>Provide regular updates to the community and industry on the implementation of the TMP (TF, FCC, COF)</p>	<p>CATALYST</p> <p>Work with local businesses to develop and execute a staff recruitment and retention effort (FCC, TF)</p>	<p>CATALYST</p> <p>Complete the process to increase local MRDT Hotel Tax to 3% (TF)</p>	<p>CATALYST</p> <p>Work with the TIABC and provincial government to ensure logging regulations on private land reflect the value of tourism (TF, COF, FTA, FCC, TIABC)</p>	<p>CATALYST</p> <p>Continue to develop relationships and partnership between KRBI and tourism sector (TF, FCC, COF, KRBI)</p>
	<p>CATALYST</p> <p>Develop MOUs between organizations that need to execute specific action areas of TMP (TF/COF/FCC)</p>	<p>CATALYST</p> <p>Develop regular communication strategy for tourism benefits, building on efforts happening around tourism week (TF, FCC)</p>	<p>CATALYST</p> <p>Explore & develop public/private partnership to build housing inventory (FCC, COF, FAR, Developers, TECK)</p>	<p>CATALYST</p> <p>Work with local businesses on best initiatives to support their sustainability and growth, especially to address the COVID-19 challenges and recovery (FCC, TF, COF)</p>	<p>CATALYST</p> <p>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, COF, RDEK, TF, Landowners)</p>	<p>SHORT TERM</p> <p>Continue to enhance accurate Ktunaxa content, led by the KRBI, in relevant tourism marketing, signage and communication pieces (TF, FCC, COF, KRBI)</p>
	<p>SHORT TERM</p> <p>Increase tourism representation on COF Leisure Services Committee (COF, TF, FCC)</p>	<p>MEDIUM TERM</p> <p>Update the Value of Tourism data every 2 years to help community understand the value of tourism (TF, FCC, ACC)</p>	<p>SHORT TERM</p> <p>Support Fernie housing organizational initiatives to develop low cost/subsidized housing (FCC, COF)</p>	<p>CATALYST</p> <p>Implement an accommodation data program to support sector growth which supports renewal of MRDT every 5 years (TF, FCC, ACC)</p>	<p>SHORT TERM</p> <p>Consider OCP and zoning tools at all times to protect access to nature and recreation (COF, FCC, TF, RDEK)</p>	<p>SHORT TERM</p> <p>Support and partner with KRBI in development of relevant content and experiences that informs, educates and inspires tourism audiences (TF, FCC, COF, KRBI)</p>

APPENDIX A - ACTIONS

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 ADEQUATE AND QUALIFIED STAFF	SUSTAIN FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR TOURISM	ENSURE LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES MAINTAIN AND GROW ACCESS TO NATURAL ATTRACTIONS AND RECREATIONAL AMENITIES	ENHANCE A WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE KTUNAXA / KRBI
	<p>MEDIUM TERM</p> <p>More events for businesses to learn, network, plan, develop and partner to provide better/new visitor experiences (FCC, TF)</p>	<p>MEDIUM TERM</p> <p>Identify and communicate the benefits and opportunities 2nd homeowners provide to the community (FCC, TF, COF)</p>	<p>LONG TERM</p> <p>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)</p>	<p>SHORT TERM</p> <p>Ensure sustained MRDT & RMI funding through effective planning, implementation and advocacy (COF, TF, FCC)</p>	<p>SHORT TERM</p> <p>Convene key stakeholders and land owners to understand tourism issues and opportunities and areas needed for support (TF, COF, FCC, RDEK, Landowners)</p>	
	<p>MEDIUM TERM</p> <p>Collaborate with neighbour communities on discussions around tourism (FCC, COF, TF)</p>			<p>MEDIUM TERM</p> <p>Identify a sustainable funding model for maintaining and improving trails (FTA, TF, RDEK, COF)</p>	<p>SHORT TERM</p> <p>Review and update the Trails Master Plan (COF, FTA, ILL, FAR, ERA, TF, FCC)</p>	
					<p>LONG TERM</p> <p>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, FCC, TF, RDEK, FTA)</p>	
					<p>LONG TERM</p> <p>Improvements to river access, signage, put-ins/ take-outs (ERA, TF, River Ops)</p>	

APPENDIX A - ACTIONS

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

<p>STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS</p>	<p>MANAGE TOURISM-RELATED CAPACITY IMPACTS ON COMMUNITY, ENVIRONMENT AND VISITOR EXP. IMPORTANT TO TOURISM</p>	<p>MITIGATE NON-TOURISM INDUSTRY IMPACTS ON ENVIRONMENT AND VISITOR EXPERIENCE IMPORTANT TO TOURISM</p>	<p>ENSURE THERE IS ADEQUATE AND QUALIFIED STAFF</p>	<p>BUILD A MORE RESILIENT INDUSTRY IN TIMES OF EMERGENCIES AND ADAPTATION</p>	<p>FOSTER GREATER CARE AND APPRECIATION OF FERNIE – HAVING VISITORS BECOME CONTRIBUTORS AND AMBASSADORS</p>
<p>IMPLEMENTATION & COLLABORATION</p>	<p>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, Ktunaxa Ktunaxa Nation Council, relevant BC Gov't Ministries, land owners and user groups etc.) and identify partner groups for implementation.</p>				
<p>Note: all action items include an initial list of organizations, identified by their own acronym, responsible for collaborating on its initial implementation, other organizations may be added. The acronyms are explained on the bottom of page 51.</p>	<p>CATALYST</p> <p>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</p>	<p>CATALYST</p> <p>Conduct research to determine current industry impacts affecting tourism and the current processes that may be addressing these issues. Develop recommendations and next steps</p>	<p>CATALYST</p> <p>Support and develop trail between Fernie and Fernie Alpine Resort (FTA, COF, RDEK, FAR, TF)</p>	<p>CATALYST</p> <p>Track and document the COVID-19 pandemic tourism impacts, learnings and recommendations to assist in recovery and future pandemics (TF, FCC, COF, RDEK, KRT, DBC, TIABC)</p>	<p>CATALYST</p> <p>Create education and messaging for responsible travel & behaviour to share with visitors (TF, FTA, COF, FCC, ERA, RDEK, Wildsight)</p>
	<p>SHORT TERM</p> <p>Work with stakeholders to lobby and partner with government on addressing and mitigating the impact</p>	<p>SHORT TERM</p> <p>Protect the ammonite. Work with government and industry on a stewardship plan</p>	<p>SHORT TERM</p> <p>Improve parking signage to aid visitors and visitor transportation on where to park. Identify solutions for addressing peak times (COF, FCC, TF)</p>	<p>SHORT TERM</p> <p>Improve industry education on emergency preparedness specific to wildfires and flooding (COF, FCC)</p>	<p>SHORT TERM</p> <p>Research opportunity and requirements to make Fernie a 'green' or 'sustainable' tourism destination and motivate industry to buy-in (TF, COF, FCC, FAR, ILL, ERA, Wildsight)</p>

APPENDIX A - ACTIONS

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
	<p>SHORT TERM</p> <p>Reduce / halt promotion of sensitive or ‘non-ready’ natural areas that are currently experiencing over-usage strategy, etc</p>	<p>SHORT TERM</p> <p>Work with stakeholders to lobby and partner with government and industry on mitigating these impacts</p>	<p>SHORT TERM</p> <p>Develop and enhance community trails, connectivity, signage, interpretation and trail maps (COF, TF, FCC, FTA)</p>	<p>SHORT TERM</p> <p>Improved local visitor and tourism industry communications about closures, emergencies (TF, FCC, COF, RDEK)</p>	<p>SHORT TERM</p> <p>Develop a Visitor Ambassador Strategy and action plan (FCC, TF, COF)</p>
	<p>SHORT TERM</p> <p>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)</p>	<p>SHORT TERM</p> <p>Work with stakeholders to improve dialogue with government, private landowners and industry about the value of tourism and collaboration for mitigation</p>	<p>MEDIUM TERM</p> <p>Explore opportunities to expand winter season airport transportation services, as air service returns to pre-COVID levels (FAR, TF, FCC, COF, RDEK, ACC)</p>	<p>MEDIUM TERM</p> <p>Support initiatives addressing climate change and tourism (COF, TF, FCC, Wildsight, ERA, FAR, RDEK)</p>	<p>MEDIUM TERM</p> <p>Develop an approach to embrace and promote visitors who share Fernie values with respect to sustainability and authenticity (TF, FCC, COF, RDEK)</p>
	<p>MEDIUM TERM</p> <p>Review the Southern Rocky Mountain Management Plan with respect to adherence by businesses and people. Increase awareness of related Plan outcomes</p>	<p>MEDIUM TERM</p> <p>Conduct research and identify traffic (local and highway) pinch points that need to be mitigated and determine next steps</p>	<p>MEDIUM TERM</p> <p>Advocate with regional and provincial stakeholders the importance of new and improved regional, provincial and national transportation (FAR, TF, FCC)</p>		

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<p>IMPLEMENTATION & COLABORATION</p> <p>Note: all action items include an initial list of organizations, identified by their own acronym, responsible for collaborating on its initial implementation, other organizations may be added. The acronyms are explained on the bottom of page 51.</p>	<p>MEDIUM TERM</p> <p>Identify indicators that can determine capacity concerns and impacts</p>	<p>LONG TERM</p> <p>Increase conservation offices/officers for the area – more education, more enforcement</p>	<p>MEDIUM TERM</p> <p>Identify and prioritize visitor gathering areas and walking routes for improved year-round maintenance and snow removal (COF, FCC, FTA, TF)</p>		
	<p>LONG TERM</p> <p>Gain resources for more and improved trail maintenance, including winter grooming</p>		<p>MEDIUM TERM</p> <p>Continue to improve a sustainable local shuttle service between town and the resort (TF, FAR, COF, FCC)</p>		
	<p>LONG TERM</p> <p>Identify options and seek resources to distribute users sustainably and effectively to reduce high impact areas</p>		<p>LONG TERM</p> <p>Improve bike access, parking, routes and positive communications to foster and grow Fernie as a bike-friendly community (COF, FTA, TF, FCC)</p>		
	<p>LONG TERM</p> <p>Improve and support connectivity and information and interpretive signage of local trail systems, and town with key attractions. (ie Centennial Trail, Great Northern Trail/ town loop)</p>				



FERNIE
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TOURISM Master Plan