



## FIVE YEAR BUSINESS STRATEGY 2020-2024

Developed for:  
APPLICATION to INCREASE MRDT to 3%

By:

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## Section 1 – 5 Year Strategic Overview

This Tourism Fernie 5 Year Business Plan has been developed for the purpose of applying for an increase in Fernie's current 2% [Municipal & Regional District Tax](#) (MRDT) to 3%. The MRDT is the tax charged by all commercial accommodations in and around Fernie. It is also known as the Hotel Tax. This tax is jointly administered by the Ministry of Finance, under the [PST law](#), the Ministry of Tourism, Arts & Culture and Destination BC. The revenues collected by the Ministry are then transferred to Tourism Fernie to execute tourism marketing, programs and projects.

Tourism Fernie is an industry-led, membership-based non-profit society and is the Eligible Entity<sup>1</sup> for the local MRDT. Tourism Fernie has formally existed since 2007 and is responsible for the management, administration and governance of the local MRDT funds and the Tourism Fernie overall strategic plan and budget. Tourism Fernie's vision and mission statements, last updated at the 2018 strategic planning session, are as follows:

### TOURISM FERNIE VISION

Fernie is the most sought after tourism destination in the Canadian Rockies

### TOURISM FERNIE MISSION

Increase visitation and revenue for stakeholders through tourism marketing and management

### TOURISM FERNIE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- **Industry Led / Government Supported** – we are led by members of Fernie's tourism industry who solicit government support for tourism as an economic engine for Fernie
- **Customer focused** – we place customer needs first in the belief that what is best for the customer will ultimately be best for our stakeholders
- **Sustainable** – we respect the community's social, economic and environmental values
- **Fair and transparent** – we have fair processes that are open to scrutiny and we explain the rationale for our decisions to interested stakeholders
- **Inclusive** – we welcome input and work together with members, stakeholders, and other organizations
- **Innovative** – we consistently create solutions that are ahead of the marketplace and the competition
- **Accountable** – we are fiscally responsible, measure results, adjust to changing market conditions, and account to stakeholders

The MRDT program is one of a number of supports available to enhance tourism marketing in BC. The MRDT program is intended to help grow BC revenues, visitation and jobs, and amplify BC's tourism marketing efforts in an increasingly competitive marketplace. To promote a coordinated and efficient use of funds, the following MRDT program principles/requirements exist:

- Effective tourism marketing, programs and projects;
- Effective local-level stakeholder support, and inter-community collaboration;
- Marketing efforts that are coordinated and complementary to provincial marketing strategies/tactics;
- Fiscal prudence and accountability;
- Funds should augment current funding and cannot replace existing tourism funding in a community.

The decision to increase to 3% is a result of a motion made by Tourism Fernie's Board of Directors and a key action from within the [Tourism Master Plan](#) currently in its final stages of development. This 5 year business plan has

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<sup>1</sup> Eligible Entity is the legal organization identified by the Ministry of Finance to receive the MRDT collected revenues.

been informed through a combination of a review of the previous five-year business plan which was developed in 2016 for our 2017 MRDT renewal, identification of industry trends and opportunities, and industry stakeholder consultation and engagement sessions. These activities took place between the winter of 2018 and spring of 2019, including;

- Accommodator sector meetings on January 31, 2018, October 30, 2018, February 7, 2019 & May 2, 2019.
- Input from Kootenay Rockies Tourism and Destination BC in early June 2019
- Input via email and face-to-face meetings from broader tourism industry stakeholders
- Consultation with the RDEK in June & July 2019
- Monthly Tourism Fernie Board Meetings and quarterly Committee Meetings
- Presentation to City of Fernie Mayor & Council on May 21, 2019
- Tourism Fernie AGM presentations on March 14, 2019
- Tourism Master Plan stakeholder engagement surveys and sector focus group sessions in October & November 2018.

In total, more than 700 people participated in one or more of the above. This plan, including the goals, objectives, strategies and key actions are based on results from these consultations as well as from the situation analysis and organization's strategic planning meetings and processes.

The primary reasons for the increase in MRDT are:

- Decision based on an outcome of the Tourism Master Plan process
- Majority support among tourism stakeholders to increase to 3%, including accommodators
- Many BC communities have gone to or are going to 3% - currently 40% of communities are either at 3% or on their way to 3% (the ability to go to 3% only became available in Fall 2015 – MRDT program has been around since 1987). A few of the communities already at 3% or in process:
  - Cranbrook
  - Revelstoke
  - Kimberley
  - Whistler
  - Squamish
  - Big White Ski Resort
  - Rossland
  - Tofino
  - Sun Peaks Ski Resort
- Increased funds for marketing will contribute in generating increased year-round overnight visitation, specifically in the shoulder seasons and slower times in mid/high season;
- Increased funds for marketing will allow Tourism Fernie to better compete with other well-funded competing destinations;
- Increased funds will allow Tourism Fernie to better address destination management/development needs;
- The hotel room tax is now accepted among visitors and is not considered detrimental to generating accommodation sales;
- Tourism Fernie needs more revenues to be effective in executing its plan, addressing the needs of the industry and competing against other tourism destinations.

## Strategic Context & Overview

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

Fernie was incorporated as a municipality 115 years ago thanks to its globally significant coal mining industry and forestry production. The community has been inviting travelers to enjoy Fernie ever since 1919 when the Tourism Association of Southern Alberta and Southeast British Columbia was founded to promote Fernie and the Crow's Nest Pass as a Rocky Mountain destination. The opening of Snow Valley Ski Development, a locally owned company, in January 1963 and Fernie's bid for the 1968 Winter Olympics helped lay the foundation for tourism as a key economic generator. Today tourism thrives alongside the mining and forestry still taking place throughout the valley.

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

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

## Tourism Today

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

Provincially, in 2017, tourism contributed more to the GDP than any other primary resource industry. In 2016 over 20.5 million overnight visitors travelled to and within BC.

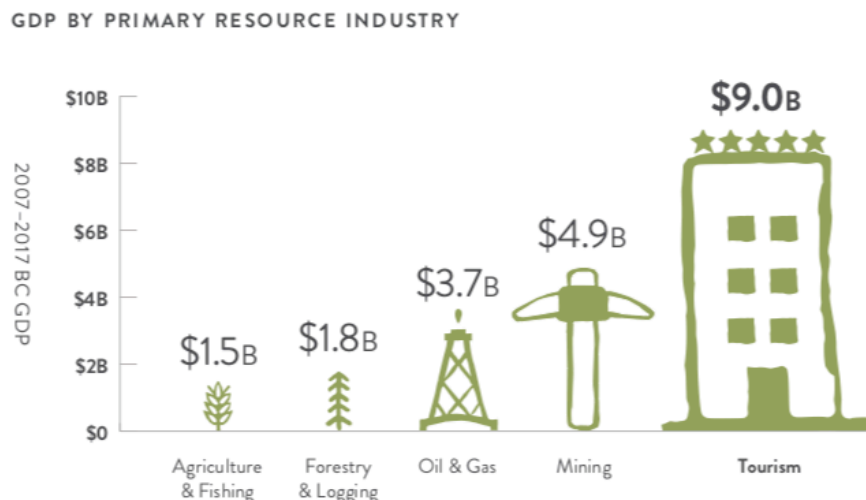


Image 1: British Columbia GDP 2017. Source: 2017 Value of Tourism Destination BC

B.C.'s Strategic Framework for Tourism was released in February 2019 by the Ministry of Tourism, Arts & Culture to guide tourism in the province. Fernie is working to align with this framework through its Tourism Master Plan which is also guiding this Five Year Business Strategy. Elements from the provincial framework include:

**VISION:** Our vision is to build a strong, sustainable tourism sector that benefits all British Columbians. Our new strategic framework is built on a foundation of sustainability which calls for equal consideration of the benefits of the sector along with its economic, sociocultural and environmental impact.

- Supporting People & Communities
  - A strong and diverse tourism workforce
  - Support for communities
  - Reconciliation through tourism
  - Make tourism more inclusive and accessible
- Sustainably Growing the Visitor Economy
  - Build a better and sustainable tourism destination
  - Drive demand to ensure B.C. remains a top travel destination
- Respecting Nature & the Environment
  - Sustaining *SUPER, NATURAL BRITISH COLUMBIA*
  - Support tourism viability in B.C.'s natural spaces

Within the Kootenay Rockies region visitor spending in 2014 was \$777 million and represented over 11% of the province’s overnight visitors. Over 20% of visitors to the region are international. In Fernie visitor spending in 2015 was calculated at over \$100 million with annual visitation at over 307,000 of which the leisure visitors are an estimated 20+% international and 40+% Albertan. Visitors to Fernie have an average spend of \$580 per overnight visitor and an average length of stay of 3.4 nights. The annual average daily room rate is \$191.67.

Fernie’s current and growing international appeal has a lot to do with being an authentic Rocky Mountain town with powder skiing at its core. As a multi-industry community benefiting from mining, tourism and forestry, Fernie is rich with history, diversity and culture. Tourism has been a part of the community’s fabric for 100 years thanks to the work of many local individuals including JF Spalding who in the early 1900’s spearheaded the Tourist Assn of SE BC & Southern AB, and produced the Automobile Road Guide for BC, AB & SK. Back then the focus was on Fernie as ‘A Paradise for Motorists, Anglers, Huntsmen and Health & Vacation Seekers.’

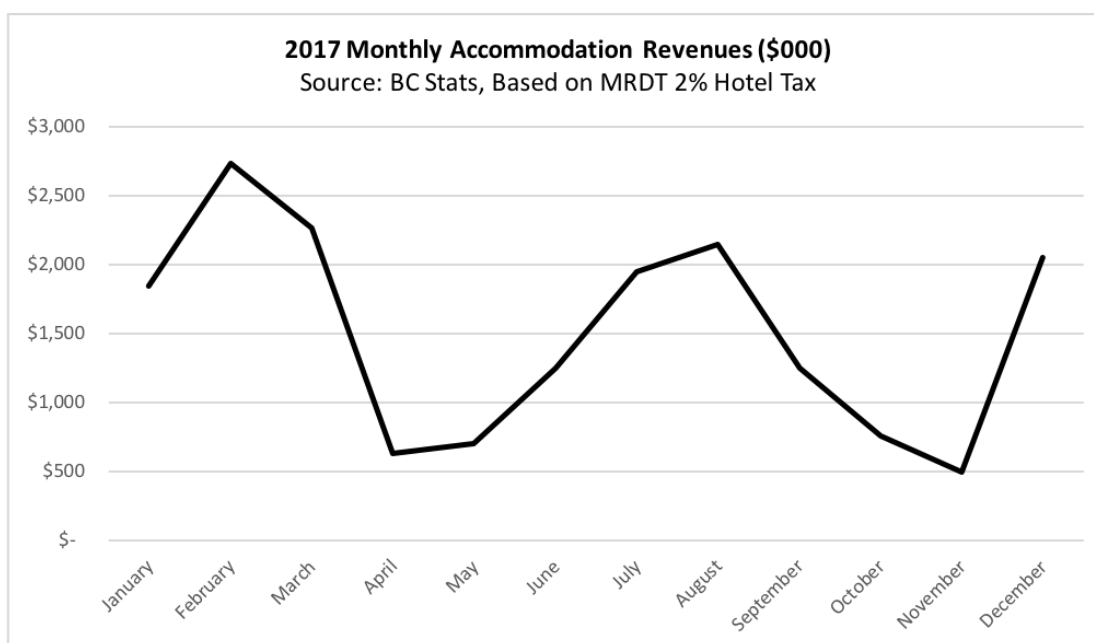
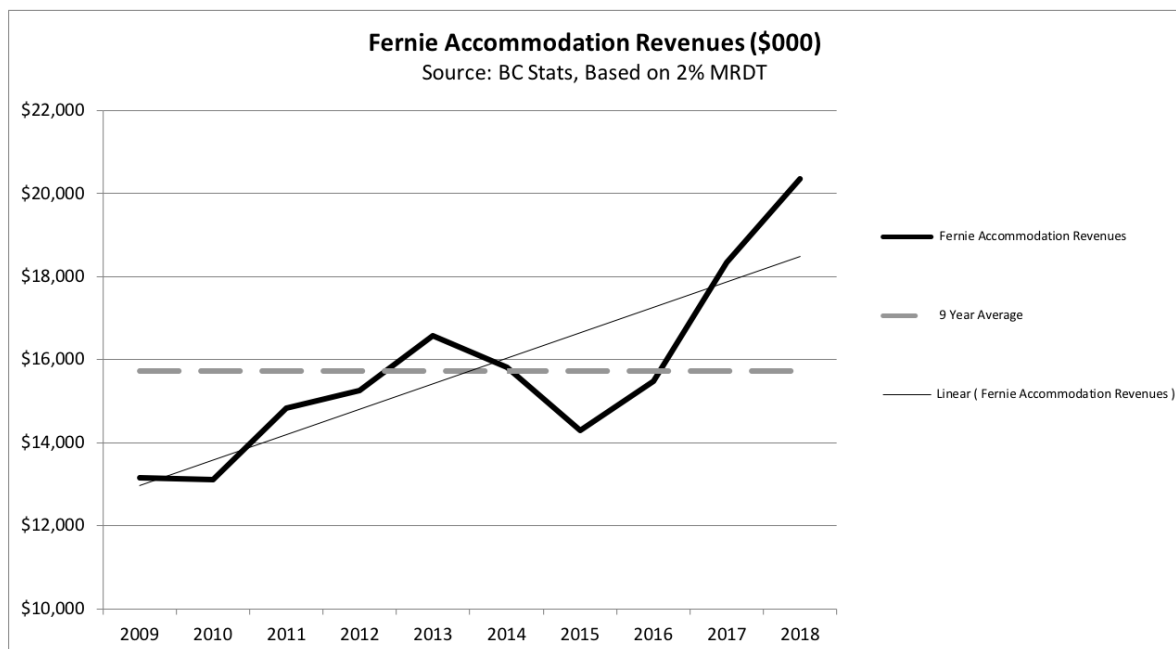
Today Fernie’s [visitor experiences](#) are vast and diverse and while they still rely on the surrounding Rocky Mountain views and environment for its development, success and sustainability, they also rely on the community’s authenticity, people and historic assets.

In 2017, accommodation revenue (based on MRDT data) in Fernie was over \$18,250,000, specific to approximately 840 lodging units. This does not include the STR/AirBnB accommodations or any lodgings of under 4 units (ie B&B’s, Chalets). For 2018, room revenues surpassed \$20 million thanks to a strong tourism year and the addition of STRs in the last quarter that started collecting MRDT in October 2018.

Accommodations in Fernie are diverse, most situated in town or at Fernie Alpine Resort, and the addition of a few unique lodges nearby such as Island Lake Lodge, Birch Meadows Lodge and Brooks Creek Ranch. Leisure, sport and corporate visitors come year-round, however, there are seasonal fluctuations with winter and summer driving the most visitation and tourism revenues.

Leisure Visitor Origins
(Tourism Fernie Surveys)
<b>Summer Season:</b>
12% BC
40% AB
11% SK/MB
8% ON & Other CAN
22% USA/MEX
7% UK/AUS/EUR
<b>Winter Season:</b>
8% BC
40% AB
9% SK/MB
10% ON & Other
6% USA
22% UK/AUS/NZ
5% EUR

Lodging Revenue
- in order of lowest to highest months
November
May
April
October
June
September
July
August
December
January
March
February



## Fernie SWOT Analysis (from RMI RDS)

Internal	Strengths	Weaknesses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location – scenic appeal, Rocky Mountains</li> <li>• Variety of recreation activities, some are well established (Fernie Alpine Resort, Island Lake Lodge) and others could be leveraged/highlighted more (Fishing, Hiking)</li> <li>• Appealing to those looking for a destination of things to do for each traveler. (recreation-trails, art, spa, dining, heritage, unique retail etc)</li> <li>• Authentic, real and friendly place and people</li> <li>• Summer season is successful and growing</li> <li>• Vibrant and historic downtown core</li> <li>• More revenue coming into local businesses, more year round</li> <li>• Wedding industry growth</li> <li>• Alpine, Nordic, Snowmobiling and Cat skiing operations and facilities creating the winter draw</li> <li>• Rich history and strong capacity to share it and make it a part of the experience</li> <li>• Arts and culture offerings provide a critical mass to leverage further</li> <li>• Industry still has support of a large majority of community members and businesses</li> <li>• Organizations such as Tourism Fernie and funding programs such as MRDT and RMI</li> <li>• Proximity to Calgary and Kalispell</li> <li>• On Hwy 3</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Softer tourism experiences</li> <li>• Limited accommodation – for events, peak season</li> <li>• Staffing is extremely hard especially in the summer</li> <li>• Housing for staff is a challenge, impacts staffing and service hrs and quality</li> <li>• Communication approach to natural disasters needs to be more aligned and accurate</li> <li>• Lack of quality Indoor facilities/activities</li> <li>• Limited conference and meeting space</li> <li>• Midweek traffic is not as strong especially in shoulder seasons and the winter</li> <li>• Customer service improvements across sectors and especially during shoulder seasons.</li> <li>• Business hours are limited for visitors</li> <li>• Capacity challenges, need to find a balance and manage visitor use of amenities, parking, and access</li> <li>• Trail capacity and maintenance</li> <li>• Not fully capitalizing on summer potential of Fernie Alpine Resort</li> <li>• Trails are not protected as many are on private land</li> <li>• Need variety of services for high yield customers (restaurants, cleaning, concierge)</li> <li>• Traffic, highway safety and crossings</li> <li>• Access from airports is further than competitors and doesn't have reliable mass transit services (impacts especially winter)</li> </ul>
External	Opportunity Trends	Threat Trends
	<p><b>Currency exchange rates</b> – exchange rates with the United States make Canada attractive for both US and Canadian visitors, however exchange rates with the UK and Australia are not as favourable as a few years ago.</p>	<p><b>Alberta Economy</b> – while the economy is growing, confidence is lower and political relations between BC and AB are have weakened</p>



<p><b>Shifting Demographics / Millennials</b> – population is growing, aging in the traditional markets, millennials (1980s-2000s) very large generation, - not all single!</p> <p><b>Shifting Values/Attitudes</b> - Health, environmental sustainability, and ethics values are more prevalent</p> <p><b>Mobile Technology</b> - The use of mobile and other technology has exploded, with most travellers now having near-constant access to web enabled devices.</p> <p><b>Sharing Economy</b> – The use of personal or commercial assets as revenue generators and services to tourists such as homes (Airbnb) cars (Uber), Mobi bikes etc. and the ‘localized’ and often lower cost experiences it provides travelers</p> <p><b>Advocacy / Social Media</b> – Recommendations and stories from other travellers is the most influential source of information for travel destinations.</p> <p><b>Travel Information Sources</b> 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.</p> <p><b>Customer Service / Personalization</b> – Power shift from institutions to the individual consumer through technology and at the same time, consumers are more cost-conscious.</p> <p><b>High Quality, Authentic Experiences</b> – 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.</p>	<p><b>Competition</b> – Competition is increasing nationally and regionally, e.g Alberta, more Resort Municipalities</p> <p><b>Climate Change and Tourism</b> – Impacts here include milder winters, warm summers, more frequent wildfires, changes in natural landscapes and flora/fauna</p> <p><b>Emergency Communications</b> – communications from media and other during provincial emergencies is creating some confusion amongst travelers.</p> <p><b>HR/Labour</b> - BC, is expected to face considerable workforce shortages now and in the future.</p> <p><b>Land/Water Use</b> – Increasing use on, and competition for, land or ownership putting pressure on the land, wildlife, and land-based tourism experiences. Increased use the river and resource industry impacts to the river.</p> <p><b>Border requirements</b> - these have mostly improved, but are still confusing for visitors.</p>
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## Tourism Master Plan for Fernie

The development of a Community Tourism Master Plan (TMP) for Fernie is currently in process with completion in 2019. As a small rural community with limited funds and resources yet strong tourism demand the need to develop this document was identified to help in more effective tourism decision making and collaboration. The TMP is helping guide this 5 Year Business Plan and has also guided the City of Fernie's 2020-2022 Resort Municipal Initiative's (RMI) Resort Development Strategy (RDS), a provincial funding program tied to the MRDT dedicated to tourism infrastructure, programs, services and events expenditures. As part of the engagement process for the Tourism Master Plan. Fernie residents and businesses boasted about the amazing experiences in the community and area as well as the benefits of tourism including;

- Economic diversification, employment opportunities and income/funding opportunities
- Access to more recreation, trails, culture, festivals, food styles and goods
- Increased vibrancy of the community and the historic downtown

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

- Infrastructure, amenity and natural area capacity and impact concerns during peak visitation periods
- Impact of tourism growth on the authenticity of the community and small-town feel
- Staffing shortages and limited housing availability and affordability
- Variable/seasonal visitation throughout the year

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, land use pressures and more.

With a genuine desire to understand this current context, address concerns and seek pathways to continue and reap the benefits of this economic driver Tourism Fernie with partnership and support from the City of Fernie, Fernie Chamber of Commerce, Regional District of East Kootenay and additional funds from Columbia Basin Trust, embarked on this Tourism Master Plan process. For further details visit [www.tourismplanfernie.com](http://www.tourismplanfernie.com)

The following draft Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles have been developed from the TMP Task Force as a result of the community and stakeholder engagement. These are guiding the planning process:

### OUR TOURISM VISION STATEMENT

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

### OUR MISSION STATEMENT

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

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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

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

**Authenticity Grounds Us:** Local experiences are grounded in Fernie’s small-town charm, hospitality, mountain culture, arts, scenery, adventure, 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 landscape provide 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.

The planning process has identified four areas of focus to achieve the Vision.

1. Diversity of Visitors Year Round
  - a. Grow visitors into multi-day, year-round economic and community contributors.
2. Remarkable Visitor Experiences
  - a. Develop and enhance Fernie’s visitor infrastructure, amenities, tourism products, experiences and people.
3. Stronger Tourism Foundations
  - a. Ensure collaboration, community support, people and financing for tourism success.
4. Sustainable Management
  - a. Manage peak times, locations and amenities where visitation is impacting the community or natural environment.

## **Affordable Housing**

In 2018 affordable housing initiatives became an allowable expenditure under the MRDT guidelines. Results of the community engagement process as part of the Tourism Master Plan development included concerns of the availability and affordability of housing within Fernie. Availability and affordability in Fernie is not just a tourism issue. Industry and TMP Task Force meetings have acknowledged the need to further collaborate on identifying what research and initiatives need to take place in order to begin to address this concern. As such the only financial MRDT support towards affordable housing within this current 5 Year Business Plan is through Tourism Fernie staff time to help facilitate research, meetings, potential grant writing and collaboration and/or partnership development. This commitment within this Business Plan is part of the Destination Management/Development category as driven by the community’s Tourism Master Plan.

## **Visitor Survey & Local Tourism Highlights**

- 97% of visitors to Fernie would recommend Fernie to their friends/family.
- Most travel with 1) Spouse 2) Family 3) Friends
- Ages 30-60 are the primary visitors, evenly spread. Followed by 22-30, then 61-70 age group.
- Top 7 reasons visitors currently come to Fernie:
  - Mountains/Scenery
  - Return Visitor
  - Visiting Friends & Family

- Word of Mouth
- Skiing/Snowboarding
- Attending an event
- Biking
- Top 7 Things Visitors Do:
  - Take in local dining and nightlife
  - Visit historic downtown
  - Ski & Snowboard
  - Participate in an event
  - Shopping
  - FAR & ILL summer visits
  - Hiking
  - Biking
- Average annual lodging occupancy is just over 50%, with the highest occupancy months in order being 1) February 2) March 3) January 4) December 5) August 6) July
- Visitors overwhelmingly love Fernie. Various 'areas of improvement' from recent visitor perspectives include, but not limited to:
  - Ski Resort (dining, shopping, nightlife options, atmosphere, older lifts/facilities )
  - Downtown store hours in evenings & Sundays, especially in peak season. People want to shop after eating dinner and on Sundays.
  - Need for more and better signage and maps – all areas – bike trails, hike trails, ski trails, town (washrooms, parking, rv park), hwy
  - More tenting/camping – treed
  - Things to do on bad weather days
  - More/better tourist info display kiosks including downtown
  - Late night food options
- 62% of businesses surveyed in Fernie as part of the Tourism Master Plan indicated that over 50% of their revenues are a result of visitors, 87% say at least 25% of their revenues are a result of visitors
- 85% of businesses agree or strongly agree that the benefits of tourism outweigh the negative impacts
- 69% of residents agree or strongly agree that the benefits of tourism outweigh the negative impacts.
- 10% of residents felt there were too many visitors coming to Fernie.

### **Key Opportunities – for growing visitation**

- Increasing FIT and group overnight visitation/occupancy during the shoulder seasons, slower times in peak season and mid-week. Example target market opportunities include: zoomers, weddings, long-haul, ski, girl's trips, families, spa & wellness travellers, soft activities, cultural tourism, couples, etc
- Increasing ADR and length of stay
- Increasing non-ski season room nights on-mountain
- Implementation of the Tourism Master Plan
- Grow shoulder season visitation through events, sport tourism and corporate tourism
- Common community brand and visitor messaging
- Enhancing visitor experiences, services and amenities

### **Key Challenges – for growing visitation**

- Seasonality of tourism in Fernie

- Managing and addressing capacity challenges with environment, amenities and facilities
- Managing visitor expectations
- Retaining Fernie's authenticity and community feel
- Impacts and negative WOM of private logging - impacts to views, recreation and trails
- Industry staffing (lack of) and access to long-term seasonal and year-round rentals/homes
- Limited metrics & tourism funding
- Access and transportation
- Limited commercial space
- Effective signage
- Adequate infrastructure

#### **External threats to accommodation revenues and local tourism economy:**

- Competitive marketplace
- AB economy
- Oil and coal prices
- Climate Change / snow levels / wildfires & smoke / flooding
- Currency exchange rates
- Local/area mining and forestry industry impacts
- Sharing economy / Online platforms
- Access / transportation
- Labour shortages / housing availability
- Border requirements / challenges

#### **Current Trends & Key Learnings**

- With stronger collaboration our industry will more effectively address challenges and succeed
- Consumer desire for authentic and enriching experiences. Importance of maintaining Fernie's character, community feel.
- Growing digital world and demand for quality content and information for inspiration and trip planning
- Growing tourism responsibly and sustainably through effective decision-making, partnerships and capacity management
- Need for more data – more visitor surveys, more accommodation data
- Opportunities to drive further diversity through cultural & heritage tourism, LGBTQ tourism, Indigenous tourism, Accessible tourism, Sport tourism, volunteer tourism, event tourism, wedding tourism, meetings and conferences.
- Planning and adapting to the impacts of weather variations, climate change
- Increase in demand for nature-based experiences and access to nature
- Aging population and the strength of the zoomer market
- Increasingly competitive marketplace. Many destinations to choose from. Need to be unique.
- Growth and evolution of the sharing economy and online platforms
- Future of ride hailing in BC and the impact on rural BC communities
- Cohesive branding and messaging through all touch points – marketing, destination, visitor services

## Tourism Fernie Brand Positioning

Our brand voice will communicate a variety of messages that will change dependent on the target market we are speaking to. In all instances however, the following key messages should be central to the communication:



**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.

**Euphoric:** Fernie is an escape from the hurried pace of everyday life. It provides euphoric experiences to its visitors and residents through unique moments of anticipation, achievement and the beauty of its natural surroundings

## Target Markets

Tourism Fernie's marketing initiatives will target markets that are expected to provide the best return on investment. Based on industry research, trends and stakeholder input target markets are focused primarily on high-yield markets, defined as higher-income, longer stay and non-peak travellers.

In recent consultation with local accommodators, as part of discussions about increasing MRDT to 3%, the following 13 target audiences were identified as important and/or high value:

1. Long Haul/International, including travel trade (US, Aus, UK) – mostly destination ski focused
2. Alberta / Drive market
3. Long Stay markets
4. Zoomers – 45+ age group (includes Active Baby Boomers)
5. Outdoor Adventure Seekers (all seasons: ski, bike, hike, fish, sled, soft nature)
6. Weddings
7. Families
8. Culture, heritage, arts, culinary travellers
9. Groups & Corporate Events
10. Wellness travellers
11. Couples
12. Women
13. LGBTQ

### **Targets based on Tourism Fernie's Strategic Plan:**

Primary Traveller Profiles (based on [Destination Canada EQ](#)):

- Free Spirit Travellers
- Authentic Experienter Travellers
- Rejuvenators/No Hassle Travellers
- Gentle Explorer Travellers

Primary Geographic Markets:

- Canadian: AB, BC, ON, SK, MB, QU
- USA: WA, MT, CA, IL, TX, NY
- Overseas: UK, AUS, GER

Tourism Fernie supports quality media and travel trade initiatives in above and in other markets in partnership with key members and stakeholders such as RCR/ILL/KRT/DBC/DC.

## Goals, Objectives, Targets & Strategies

The overall goal for the five-year period is to create a thriving year-round tourism economy for Fernie. A strategic priority for Tourism Fernie is to work in partnership whenever possible with a wide range of industry stakeholders and tourism businesses to develop and execute marketing and destination management initiatives.

A one percent increase in the Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) revenue to 3% will provide Tourism Fernie with approximately \$150,000 in additional annual funds. The enhanced funds will enable the ability to increase marketing spend while having funds to support destination management, including leadership and implementation of the Tourism Master Plan action items. To achieve this, specific goals, targets and key actions have been outlined below. Further details on tactics and budgets are provided within the annual plans produced each November.

### 5 Year Targets

Double MRDT revenues for April, May, October & November  
Increase June & September MRDT revenues by 25%  
Increase peak season MRDT revenues by 10%  
Net Promoter Score of over 65%  
Minimum 80% organization satisfaction (very to extremely) rate by stakeholders

### Goal 1

**Responsibly increase Fernie's overnight visitation and room revenues through effective and innovative marketing**

The development and execution of destination and co-op marketing initiatives represent approximately 70% of the 5 Year Business Plan budget. The MRDT tax, overall, is intended to help grow BC revenues, visitation, and jobs, and amplify BC's tourism marketing efforts in an increasingly competitive marketplace<sup>2</sup>. One of the key focus areas from the draft Tourism Master Plan is the 'Diversity of Visitors Year-Round' with the goal of growing visitors into multi-day, year-round economic and community contributors. Current strategic directions that have been identified include:

- Increase visitation in non-peak times
- Attract and serve high yield/value-oriented visitors
- Foster Fernie's arts, heritage and cultural tourism

To accomplish this a mix of marketing methods are required. These methods include:

Advertising & promotional initiatives  
Content & asset development initiatives  
Travel media & travel trade initiatives  
Social media initiatives  
Website initiatives

Collateral initiatives  
Consumer show initiatives  
Events, conventions & sport tourism initiatives  
Branding & packaging

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.destinationbc.ca/what-we-do/funding-sources/mrdt/>



## Strategies:

- Executing a diversity of destination focused marketing initiatives based on best practices, innovation, trends, data and ROI
- Partnering with members and local, regional and provincial stakeholders and organizations on marketing initiatives that allow for effective leveraging of marketing dollars and objectives.
- Development, enhancement and distribution of quality content by Tourism Fernie and via partnerships with members, to inspire, motivate and drive consumers to act. Content areas include imagery, videos, travel guide, experiences and walking tours guides, blogs, e-Newsletters, itineraries and more.
- Continued investment and enhancement of social media marketing initiatives primarily via Instagram, YouTube and Facebook.
- Continued investment and enhancement of TourismFernie.com to ensure quality destination content for consumers using the site for trip planning and inspirational and informational purposes. To continue to drive consumers to act and book through our members.
- Attending and/or supporting high quality, high ROI consumer and travel trade shows in partnership with our members
- Organizing and hosting travel media and trade trade visits in partnership with our members and Destination BC
- Through partnerships, support existing, or partner to support new, non-peak period events that drive, or have the expectation to drive, trackable and incremental overnight visitation. Includes bidding on 3<sup>rd</sup> party events to host in Fernie and applying for Tourism Events Program funding where applicable. Preference to multi-day events. Events could be defined as festivals, sport events, tournaments, conferences etc.
- Development of common community brand and visitor messaging

## Key Performance indicators (KPI) will include:

- MRDT revenues and DBC accommodator metrics program results and tracking
- Visitation to key activities, festivals and events measured by surveys
- Advertising, media, website metrics
- Member & stakeholder satisfaction, through annual survey
- Growth and engagement in Social Media channels
- Evidence of initiatives executed

## Goal 2

### **Sustainable tourism growth through effective collaboration and partnerships in destination management**

Destination management is the coordinated management of all elements that make up a destination, including industry collaboration and sustainability, access and transportation, visitor services and messaging, advocacy, research, product development, capacity management, infrastructure, pricing and amenities. Destination management is only effective through community and industry collaboration and partnerships in its planning and execution.

The development and execution of destination management initiatives within this 5 year plan represent approximately 15% of Tourism Fernie's 5-year budget. The Tourism Master Plan process has clearly resulted in the need to allocate additional time and resources into destination management activities to ensure the

community's tourism industry grows successfully and sustainably in the long term. This can only be achieved through effective collaboration and partnerships. An example of this is the enhanced consultation, collaboration and alignment with the Fernie RMI RDS. The RDS, which has been developed following the results and outcomes of the Tourism Master Plan, supports the tourism supply side through funding tourism infrastructure, programs and services, this includes capital related expenditures. The MRDT funds collected as part of this plan will not be used for capital expenditures, but will support allowable destination management/development initiatives in line with the MRDT guidelines, which include:

- Implementation of the Tourism Master Plan
- Product experience development and enhancements
- Industry relations, communications and training
- Collection and distribution of industry metrics
- Visitor services enhancements
- Support for transportation initiatives

**Strategies:**

- Stronger working relationships with larger member organizations
- Tourism Master Plan leadership and implementation through collaboration.
- Collaborate with local Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Centre to enhance the visitor messaging experience, to make it easier for visitors to stay longer and spend more, and to host business educational sessions to help industry increase knowledge and skills in various areas such as marketing, service, product development etc.
- Working with the local tourism industry to increase awareness, support and understanding of tourism within the community.
- Industry data collection and sharing, visitor surveys
- Through collaboration, including with Fernie's RMI RDS and others such as regional and provincial destination development initiatives, help facilitate research, meetings, potential grant writing and partnership development to identify initiatives that need to take place in order to address the sustainable management priorities from the TMP, such as housing, land use and capacity concerns specific to tourism.
- Partnering with stakeholders on winter ski transportation program and determining abilities for a summer season shuttle. Funds outside of MRDT are used to support this initiative.
- To ensure the success of tourism in Fernie ensure the continued support for local tourism funding and the long-term sustainability of Tourism Fernie
- Development of new market-ready packages and products/experiences
- In collaboration with accommodators, manage a monthly metrics program, increase sector knowledge and effectiveness, and increase ADR & length of stay
- Updated Value of Tourism metrics
- Partnership with the Visitor Centre, Chamber and City of Fernie for effective destination branding, messaging, visitor servicing, visitor surveying, industry development & training initiatives, industry advocacy and support, community support for tourism, and RMI RDS planning & implementation

**Key Performance Indicators (KPI) will include:**

- Outcomes and progress reports from Tourism Master Plan implementation
- Fernie's Net Promoter Score
- Increased rating and performance within the Tourism Sentiment Index reports
- New and/or improved experiences and packages produced
- Participation at industry events and sessions
- List and results of collaborative initiatives
- Increase of industry data and collection
- Evidence of accomplished actions
- Transportation initiative partnerships and reports
- Stakeholder satisfaction survey results

# Sources of Funding

It is the overall goal of Tourism Fernie to be financially well positioned on an annual basis with the ability to be adaptive, responsive, and have the flexibility to shift with market conditions and trends while aligning the business strategy and annual tactical plan with overall goals and objectives.

Below represents the expected and planned sources of funding and areas of expenditures for the first year with a plan to grow revenues each year.

**REVENUES:**

3% MRDT	\$600,000
Collaborative Initiatives	\$100,000
Memberships	\$ 25,000
Other/Reserve	<u>\$ 35,000</u>
	\$760,000

**EXPENSES:**

Marketing Initiatives	72%
Destination Management	15%
Administration	10%
Transportation	3%
Affordable Housing	0% (see pg 10)

## Management, Governance & Administration

Tourism Fernie is an industry-led, membership-based non-profit society and is the Eligible Entity for the local MRDT. Tourism Fernie has formally existed since 2007 and is responsible for the management, administration and governance of the entire MRDT funds and the Tourism Fernie overall strategic plan and budget. Tourism Fernie is a Community Destination Marketing Organization (C-DMO).

Tourism Fernie is governed by a Board of Directors representing industry stakeholders. Each Board Member sits for two-year terms with the ability to be re-elected for up to 4 terms:

- 5 MRDT Accommodators with 4 or more units
- 4 Directors at Large (Members not under above category)
- Municipal and Chamber Liaisons to the Board (Non-Voting)

Tourism Fernie Committees consist of 1-2 Board Members plus additional members and non-members of Tourism Fernie. Committee's primary focus on providing recommendations to Board and staff that help inform strategic decision-making and planning.

- Marketing
- Finance/Audit
- Revenue
- Nominations/AGM

Tourism Fernie participates in the following external committees:

- Tourism Master Plan Task Force
- Municipal RMI RDS Working Advisory Group
- Local Ski Shuttle Task Force
- Fernie Heritage Strategy Steering Committee

### 2019-2020 Board of Directors

Kurt Saari, Chair	Nevados Restaurant	Voting
Andrew Hayden, Vice Chair	Fernie Distillers	Voting
Jeremiah Pauw, Treasurer	Super 8 Fernie	Voting
Jon Ward, Secretary	Red Tree Lodge	Voting
Chantel Vincent	Freyja Fashion	Voting
Caitlin Bates	Island Lake Lodge	Voting
Scott Gilmet	Griz Inn & Cornerstone Lodge	Voting
Mark Ormandy	Fernie Alpine Resort	Voting
Jason Burt	Snow Valley Lodging	Voting

LIAISONS to the Board:

Phil Iddon	City of Fernie, Councillor	Non-Voting
Brad Parsell	Fernie Chamber of Commerce, ED	Non-Voting

## CURRENT STAFF

Tourism Fernie employs positions to ensure the delivery of day to day operations and the implementation of the strategic plan. There are currently four staff, one full-time and three part-time (20-30 hrs/wk). Human resources at Tourism Fernie is tight and based on the annual plan and budgets. As strategies and priorities adjust staffing may also adjust in the future.

Executive Officer	Jikke Gyorki
Media & Project Coordinator	Christine Grimble
Admin & Marketing Coordinator	Rebecca Hall
Social Media Coordinator & Staff Photographer	Vince Mo

## Section 2 – One-Year Tactical Plan

The following, as required by the provincial MRDT application procedures, details project plans for each major category of activity to be undertaken in the 1<sup>st</sup> year once the 3% MRDT has been implemented. Each project plan includes a description of the activity area, the tactics to achieve the strategies outlined in Section 1 of this 5 Year Business Plan, details on implementation and key performance indicators. The 8 project plans are:

1. Marketing – Regional, Provincial & National Co-op Initiatives
2. Marketing – Advertising, Branding & Local Co-op Initiatives
3. Marketing – Content, Asset & Collateral Initiatives
4. Marketing – Media & Travel Trade Initiatives
5. Marketing & Destination Management/Development - Meetings, Conventions, Events & Sports
6. Destination Management/Development – Leadership & Implementation of the Tourism Master Plan
7. Destination Management/Development - Industry Research, Development and Training
8. Destination Management/Development - Transportation

### **PROJECT PLAN 1 - Marketing – Regional, Provincial & National Co-op Initiatives**

#### **Description**

For the past few years Destination BC has provided co-op marketing funding to community consortiums and provincial sector groups through an application basis. Tourism Fernie has participated in this [program](#) in a variety of ways and will continue to do so where the opportunities exist for effective leveraging and marketing. Destination Canada offers a co-op ski campaign opportunity that Tourism Fernie will have the ability to participate in for 2020, in partnership with local ski resorts, based on the success of this 3% application.

#### **Tactics**

- Zoomer & Beyond Campaign
  - Led by Tourism Fernie this campaign is now in its 4th year and primarily targets the 45+ age group from drive markets looking to experience the mountain culture, arts, heritage, wellness and soft outdoor activities of the East Kootenays via a road trip format. New for this program would be incorporating Kootenay Arts consortium and winter experiences within MyKootenays.com initiatives and a new partnership for the Cultural Guide
  - Partners include CDMOs such as Cranbrook, Kimberley, Invermere, Radium and private partners such as Fernie Museum, St Eugene Mission, Ktunaxa First Nation, Fairmont Hot Springs.
- Kootenay Nordic/Kootenay Dirt/Kootenay Sled Campaigns
  - Community DMOs within the Kootenay's have been marketing together under the Destination BC program for a few years starting with KootenayDirt.com (mountain biking) and expanding to KootenayXC.com (Nordic Skiing) and SledKootenay.com (Snowmobiling). All three campaigns will be continuing with a focus on driving awareness and visitation into the area.
  - Partners include CDMOs such as Cranbrook, Kimberley, Invermere, Golden, Revelstoke, Rossland, Nelson, Castlegar, Radium
- International Destination Ski Campaign
  - Destination Canada works with the ski sector to develop and execute international ski marketing campaigns primarily focused on the USA market. Tourism Fernie intends to represent the full Fernie destination ski experience under this program, in partnership with the ski resorts.

- Partners include Fernie Alpine Resort as well as other ski destination products such as Catskiing and packaging accommodators at the resorts and in town.
- Participation in Fishing BC, Golf BC and Mountain Biking BC Provincial Marketing Programs
  - A variety of provincial sector organizations focused on marketing specific tourism experiences to a regional and international audience provide opportunities for communities to buy into their campaigns. Fishing, mountain biking and golfing are sectors Tourism Fernie participates in. As a note, the alpine ski sector program partners with the ski resorts directing, vs the DMOs.

## Implementation

Implementation of these four tactics are through a collaborative approach with all the partners involved. The first two are heavily led by Tourism Fernie with the regional DMOs and partners providing various levels of support in terms of staff time. The 3<sup>rd</sup> is managed through Destination Canada and the hired marketing agency with content, direction and oversight handles by Tourism Fernie with support from key members such as Fernie Alpine Resort. The 4<sup>th</sup> tactic is led by the provincial sector groups with input and involvement from the participating partners, such as Tourism Fernie, in various tactics.

### Objectives:

- To leverage partners and marketing dollars in areas that provide more opportunity to inspire target audiences, increase awareness and reach, lead generation, visitation, and overall bookings.
- Targeting visitation of high-value markets during low and mid-peak periods
- Generating awareness and leads

### Sources of Funding:

- MRDT, Destination BC, Destination Canada, Community DMOs and private businesses

### Estimated Budget:

- \$88,000 plus staff time to execute

### Evaluation mechanisms/KPIs:

- Each tactic will involve the completion of a final report detailing all the results, outcomes/outputs, metrics and spend. Tactics will involve digital advertising, content marketing, traditional advertising, asset development, and representation in provincial level tactics under the sector groups which include consumer shows (fishing, biking, golf), asset development and advertising.
- Campaign marketing metrics and lead/booking generation
- Partner/stakeholder feedback
- Outputs & reports



## PROJECT PLAN 2 - Marketing – Advertising, Branding & Local Co-op Initiatives

### Description

Marketing Fernie effectively and innovatively as a travel destination, this project plan focuses on the diversity of Tourism Fernie consumer branded campaigns whether implemented on its own for key experiences and seasons or in partnership with local members and stakeholders. This plan includes continuing and evolving social media marketing, content marketing, story-telling marketing, digital marketing and the development of new packaging and experiences. An updated/refreshed brand has also been identified that includes co-branding collaboration with the municipality and community in terms of outside/visitor messaging and visuals.

### Tactics

- Year-Round Fernie Destination Marketing Campaigns
  - Primarily focused on digital marketing campaigns including Google display, search and video ads, Social Media ads and traditional print advertising. These are not done in collaboration with members but on behalf of the whole destination, with an emphasis on non-peak periods and experiences.
- Member Co-op Marketing Initiatives
  - This campaign includes seasonal play/ski and stay digital campaigns, consumer shows (ski, outdoor adv), social ads, traditional advertising in collaboration with members financially that are in line with Tourism Fernie's goals and strategies
  - Partners include a diversity of our membership from resorts to accommodators and activity operators
- Destination Wedding Campaign 2.0
  - This campaign is now in its 2nd year and is a mix of DMO self-directed and co-op initiatives that targets those who have recently gotten engaged and are planning a destination for their wedding. Tactics include advertising and promotions (print, digital, social), wedding shows, asset development and content marketing
  - Partners include Island Lake Lodge, Fernie Alpine Resort, local wedding planner, accommodator and more.
- Re-Syndication/Promotion of Ascent to Powder/Fernie Ski Films
  - This campaign is a continuation of a past campaign to syndicate/promote the local ski town film Ascent to Powder within the US market primarily but also other long-haul markets where accessible.
- Social Media Marketing Initiatives
  - Through the continued investment in a part-time Social Media Coordinator, Crowdriff, #FernieStoke advocacy, DBC initiatives such as the Stories Pilot Project, content creation and local professional photographer subscription program Tourism Fernie manages and posts daily on its key social media channels including Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Google My Business and more.
- Branding and messaging refresh
  - As identified as part of the Tourism Master Plan a brand and messaging update is needed for the tourism community that will direct and allow for consistency when communicating to the visitor and in tourism marketing.
  - Partners include City of Fernie, Fernie Chamber of Commerce, Fernie Visitor Centre

- Iconic Fernie Experience Initiative
  - The development of a new visitor experience along with associated marketing materials. This new experience will consist of an iconic self-guided tour through the community at places of importance, and to viewpoints and gathering places to be inspired, educated and entertained.
  - Partners include City of Fernie, Historical Society, Arts Council, Visitor Centre, Ktunaxa First Nation, local NGOs and businesses, Resorts and more.

## **Implementation**

Implementation of these initiatives are all led, managed and executed by Tourism Fernie with much collaboration, support and involvement with stakeholders and members.

### **Objectives:**

- Generating leads to local businesses
- To leverage partners and marketing dollars in areas that provide more opportunity to inspire target audiences, increase awareness and reach, lead generation, visitation, and overall bookings.
- Targeting visitation during low and mid-peak periods
- Targeting high-value markets
- Develop a market-ready new iconic visitor experience

### **Sources of Funding:**

- MRDT, Members, stakeholders, potential project sponsorship/grants

### **Estimated Budget:**

- \$220,000 plus staff time to execute

### **Evaluation mechanisms/KPIs:**

- Marketing results/metrics of individual campaigns and activities
- Funds and partners leveraged
- List and visuals of creative materials, evidence of shows/events, websites, landing pages etc
- Lead/booking generation
- Partner/stakeholder feedback
- Outputs & reports

## **PROJECT PLAN 3 - Marketing – Content, Asset & Collateral Initiatives**

### **Description**

Development and distribution of the content needed to support the advertising and promotional campaigns. This includes acquiring new photography, videography, and written stories/blogs. It also includes the annual updating and printing of the Fernie Travel Planner, and experience specific mini brochures/maps/sales sheets/event posters and PDFs and more. The consumer e-newsletter program and updating, improving and maintaining the consumer website [www.tourismfernie.com](http://www.tourismfernie.com) is also included

### **Tactics**

- Videos & Photography
  - On-going acquisition of new and fresh imagery and video content focusing on current goals and strategies. This includes working with local videographers and photographers in new shoots and purchasing existing content. Also includes new videos and edits.
  - Partners include a diversity of members and stakeholders to assist in telling the stories through visuals
- Blogs, Photo Epics, Itineraries & Helpful Info & Tips
  - Continual creation of new content pieces that help tell the Fernie story, help inspire target audiences, promote visitation and sharing, and help with trip planning and booking.
  - Partners include a diversity of members and stakeholders to assist in telling the stories and providing accurate, relevant and current information and content
- Consumer E-Newsletters
  - Once a month to a database of over 10,000 emails focusing on travel offers, upcoming events/festivals, promotion of new content, highlighting visitor experiences and places to stay etc.
  - Partners include a diversity of members and stakeholders to assist in telling the stories and providing accurate, relevant and current information and content
- Travel Planner, Local Experience Maps/Brochures/Sales Sheets, Event Posters & Bi-Weekly PDFs
  - A diversity of print pieces to promote the destination and its experiences via consumer shows, the Visitor Centres, local businesses/accommodators and direct mail campaigns.
  - Partners include a diversity of members and stakeholders to assist in providing accurate, relevant and current information and content
- Website
  - Tourism Fernie's primary tool to communicate with tourists researching where to go, trip planning or in-destination assistance. With over 2,000 pages it is a wealth of information and inspiring content. The website provides easy booking links, access to local businesses and experiences and maps, etc. With over 31,000 visits monthly on average it requires continual updating and with the changing digital world many opportunities for enhancements.

### **Implementation**

Implementation of these initiatives are all led, managed and executed by Tourism Fernie with support and collaboration from stakeholders and members.

#### Objectives:

- Effective marketing via inspiring content, stories and promotions
- Targeting high-value markets
- Generating leads to local businesses

#### Sources of Funding:

- MRDT, Primarily in-kind from members, stakeholders

#### Estimated Budget:

- \$87,000 plus staff time to execute

#### Evaluation mechanisms/KPIs:

- Website metrics, content metrics, assets developed, marketing metrics
- Campaign metrics and lead/booking generation
- Outputs
- Partner/stakeholder feedback

### **PROJECT PLAN 4 - Marketing – Media & Travel Trade Initiatives**

#### **Description**

Implementation of these initiatives are mostly led, managed and executed by Tourism Fernie with much collaboration, support and involvement with stakeholders and members, including Kootenay Rockies Tourism, Destination BC and key members such as Fernie Alpine Resort and Island Lake Lodge. With a year-round emphasis of increasing awareness of Fernie's exceptional experiences to grow visitation. This includes hosting travel media and travel trade, developing and supporting itineraries, soliciting new media visits, communicating and building relationships with media and travel trade contacts.

#### **Tactics**

- Supporting and partnering on member and stakeholder acquired fams and initiatives
  - A bulk of the budget and staff time are focused on supporting fam visits and initiatives, whether media or trade, led by our key members or stakeholders such as Kootenay Rockies Tourism and Destination BC. Tourism Fernie helps to ensure a diversity of experiences are part of itineraries and the unique elements of Fernie are included as best as possible as these help to differentiate our destination from our competitors. These fams are from various geographic markets – regional to international.
- Cultivating stronger relationships and initiatives with key travel media outlets, companies, platforms and industry contacts
  - Led by Tourism Fernie's Media & Projects Coordinator, increased efforts to communicate with key media outlets in order to increase awareness of Fernie for fams, stories. May include attending key media/trade event.
  - Partners include various members, Kootenay Rockies Tourism and Destination BC

- Cultivating stronger relationships and content initiatives with key travel trade companies and industry contacts
  - Led by Tourism Fernie's Media & Projects Coordinator, increased efforts to communicate with key travel trade contacts in order to increase awareness of Fernie for product inclusion, leads to members and future fams, and to increase the level of quality information and content about Fernie in travel trade marketing and communication pieces.
  - Partners include Fernie Alpine Resort and other members, Kootenay Rockies Tourism and Destination BC

## **Implementation**

Implementation of these initiatives are all led, managed and executed in partnership with stakeholders and members to ensure efficiency, non-duplication and collaboration and leveraging. Media and travel trade initiatives provide a cost-effective avenue to generate awareness, leads and bookings with great reach.

### **Objectives:**

- To increase Fernie's presence within key media outlets with quality content and stories
- To support members and stakeholders in executing quality fam tours
- To increase awareness and visitation in key markets

### **Sources of Funding:**

- MRDT, stakeholder, members

### **Estimated Budget:**

- \$32,000 plus staff time to execute

### **Evaluation mechanisms/KPIs:**

- Tracking fams, partnerships, results of coverage and relationship development and communications
- Evidence of efforts
- Partner/stakeholder feedback
- Outputs & results

## **PROJECT PLAN 5 – Marketing & Destination Management/Development - Meetings, Conventions, Events & Sports**

### **Description**

A key outcome of recent strategic planning, stakeholder sessions and the Tourism Master Plan engagement process was the continued growth opportunity in driving non-peak visitation via events, sport events and corporate related functions. This is still a new area for Tourism Fernie in terms of researching, soliciting new events and partnering with local stakeholders on enhancing existing opportunities.

### **Tactics**

- Supporting and partnering on ISSW 2020
  - In 2017 Tourism Fernie developed and supported ,with local stakeholders, a bid proposal to host the International Snow Science Workshop. In 2018, Fernie was awarded the 2020 event that brings up to 1,000 delegates from around the world. The conference is being held in October 2020. Tourism Fernie is a partner supporting the organizing and execution of the event through marketing, communications, destination experience and more.
  - Partners include ISSW2020 organizing society, ICS Conference organizing company, all members and local stakeholders
- Bidding on new meetings/conventions/events/sport competitions
  - Initiate research and communications to better understand what new events, conferences and sporting competitions could be brought to Fernie during non-peak periods. Best bets to attract will be identified, and with collaboration and stakeholder support help to bid and attract them. Where and when feasible apply for Tourism Events Program funding.
  - Partners include various NGOs, sport groups, members, City, Chamber and more.
- Cultivating relationships with key local sport organizations
  - Working with local sport organizations to identify opportunities to attract related sport competitions with the facilities available in Fernie.
- Cultivating stronger relationships and initiatives with larger community tourism events
  - Building stronger support and working relationships with key events that generate overnight visitation or have the ability to grow significant visitation during non-peak periods. Partnering on co-op marketing initiatives to grow visitation through these key events. Work towards the development of a Community Events & Animation Strategy within 2 years as identifying within the Tourism Master Plan
  - Partners include existing event organizers, City, Chamber

### **Implementation**

Implementation of these initiatives are all led, managed and executed in partnership with stakeholders and members to ensure efficiency, non-duplication and collaboration and leveraging.

### **Objectives:**

- To grow visitation during non-peak periods

#### Sources of Funding:

- MRDT, members, stakeholders

#### Estimated Budget:

- \$ 20,000 plus staff time to execute

#### Evaluation mechanisms/KPIs:

- Tracking progress with stakeholders
- Results of efforts and execution of ISSW2020
- Evidence of bid proposals
- Partner/stakeholder efforts and feedback

### **PROJECT PLAN 6 – Destination Management – Leadership & Implementation of the Tourism Master Plan**

#### **Description**

Fernie's Tourism Master Plan (TMP) is a long-term development framework for tourism that guides tourism development in a coordinated and forward-looking way. This plan going through its final stages of development with completion in summer 2019. The purpose of a TMP is to ensure the long-term success of tourism in Fernie. 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 TMP will serve as a guide to implementing and improving tourism in Fernie as well as the role organizations will play.

The Tourism Master Plan has been led by Tourism Fernie, developed by consultant Dan Wilson from the Whistler Centre for Sustainability with the guidance and input of the Tourism Master Plan Task Force, and informed by members of the local tourism industry and community as a whole. The year 2020 is slated as the first official year for implementation of the TMP. As such Tourism Fernie has a critical role to play in various elements but also in ensuring overall tracking and support of the various stakeholders that are also tasked with implementation. A variety of action items related to the demand side of tourism are already integrated within the marketing project plan areas.

Once completed, a copy of the Tourism Master Plan can be made available by request.

#### **Tactics**

- Various stakeholder meetings to guide and support implementation of action items
- Research and product/service development in support of implementing action items
- Improved visitor experience, communications and messaging
- Industry advocacy and communications efforts in collaboration with stakeholders
- Grant writing to secure funding in support of implementing action items

Sources of Funding:

- MRDT

Estimated Budget: \$20,000 plus staff time to execute

Evaluation mechanisms/KPIs:

- Tracking of meetings and progress
- Action items completed or in progress, and results accomplished
- Stakeholder feedback

## **PROJECT PLAN 7 – Destination Management – Industry Relations, Research, Training, Comms & Development**

### **Description**

Initiatives to support local industry knowledge, success, resiliency, growth and sustainability in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce, Kootenay Rockies Tourism, Destn BC and City of Fernie.

### **Tactics**

- Industry Training Opportunities & Workshops
  - Marketing and destn mgnt/development learning tools and workshops/presentations
- Industry Communications
  - Tourism Week events
  - Learning and networking opportunities (AGM event, industry socials)
  - Monthly tourism updates to industry
- Data & Research
  - Value of Tourism updating
  - Accommodation Metrics Program with DBC
  - Tourism Sentiment Index Reports – Destn Think!
- Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey & Community Collaboration Report
  - As required by the province as a 3% MRDT community

Sources of Funding:

- MRDT, members, stakeholders

Estimated Budget: \$36,000 plus staff time to execute

Evaluation mechanisms/KPIs:

- List of workshops, events, industry sessions held, results of each and attendance
- Copies of data/research/survey documents/reports
- Copies of industry communications



## **PROJECT PLAN 8 – Destination Management – Transportation**

### **Description**

Tourism Fernie annually partners and supports two ski season transportation programs in efforts to meet the demands and needs of the destination ski market and compete more effectively.

### **Tactics**

- Calgary Airport Winter Shuttle
  - Provides a consistent and reliable service for international visitors. In partnership with Fernie Alpine Resort (RCR)
- Local Ski Shuttle
  - Connects the resort with the community. In partnership with Fernie Alpine Resort (RCR), City of Fernie (RMI), Fernie Chamber of Commerce

### **Sources of Funding:**

- Members, stakeholders

Estimated Budget: \$23,000 including staff time

### **Evaluation mechanisms/KPIs:**

- Service contracts
- Ridership
- Final reports

## Section 3 – One-Year Tactical Plan Budget

The following, as required by the provincial MRDT procedures, details the first-year tactical plan budget, specific to Section 2 of this document, and estimated marketing spend by geographic market.

REVENUES		BUDGET \$
MRDT	\$	540,000
MRDT from OAP	\$	60,000
<b>MRDT Subtotal</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>600,000</b>
Memberships	\$	25,000
Collaborative / Co-op Initiatives	\$	100,000
Reserve Funds / Grants / Other	\$	35,000
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>760,000</b>
EXPENSES		BUDGET \$
<b>Marketing</b>		
Project Plan 1	\$	88,000
Project Plan 2	\$	220,000
Project Plan 3	\$	87,000
Project Plan 4	\$	32,000
Project Plan 5 (50% in marketing)	\$	10,000
Marketing staff to execute - wages and benefits	\$	107,000
<b>Marketing Subtotal</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>544,000</b>
<b>Destination Management/Development</b>		
Project Plan 5 (50% in Destn Mgmt/Devel)	\$	10,000
Project Plan 6	\$	20,000
Project Plan 7	\$	36,000
Project Plan 8	\$	23,000
Destn Mgmt/Devel staff to execute - wages and benefits	\$	48,000
<b>Destination Management/Development Subtotal</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>137,000</b>
<b>Administration</b>		
Accounting/Bookkeeping/Audit/Reporting	\$	15,000
Office Lease/IT/Phones/Supplies	\$	17,000
Insurance	\$	5,000
Governance, AGM, Board, Strategic Planning	\$	13,000
Admin staff to execute - wages and benefits	\$	29,000
<b>Administration Subtotal</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>79,000</b>

Geographic Market	Estimated Marketing Budget by Geo	% of Total \$ by Market
BC	\$ 48,960	9%
AB	\$ 187,680	35%
ON	\$ 54,400	10%
Other Canada	\$ 108,800	20%
WA	\$ 27,200	5%
CA	\$ 16,320	3%
Other USA	\$ 81,600	15%
Mexico	\$ -	0%
China	\$ -	0%
UK	\$ 5,440	1%
Germany	\$ 2,720	1%
Australia	\$ 5,440	1%
Japan	\$ -	0%
Other International	\$ 5,440	1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 544,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

# APPENDIX

## Common Industry Acronyms

MRDT	Municipal & Regional District Tax (the 2-3% accommodation tax)
AHRT	Additional Hotel Room Tax (What MRDT used to be called)
RMI	Resort Municipality Initiative (Provincial funding to 'resort municipalities' for tourism infrastructure and programs)
RDS	Resort Development Strategy (the plan document governed by City of Fernie for spending the RMI funds)
DBC	Destination British Columbia (provincial DMO aka PDMO)
KRT	Kootenay Rockies Tourism (regional DMO aka RDMO)
DC	Destination Canada (national DMO)
TIABC	Tourism Industry Association of BC (provincial advocacy group)
BCDMOA	BC Destination Marketing Organization Association (provincial DMO advocacy group specific to community DMOs – not regional or provincial)
DMO	Destination Marketing/Management Organization (what TF is)
STR	Short-term Rentals (ie Air BnBs)
ADR	Average Daily Rate – a data term used by accommodators which is the calculation of total room revenues divided by the number of room nights sold for a given period
BAR	Best Available Rate – term used by accommodators to communicate to tourists what their best nightly rate is (vs other types of rates)
OCC	Occupancy – a % number explaining the number of rooms booked/sold out of the total available for a given time period.
FAM	Familiarization Tour – term used to host a media or travel trade VIP within the community as part of marketing strategy
FIT	Foreign Independent Traveler – basically any visitor that is coming (solo, family, couple, friends, etc) on their own planning and not as part of an organized group or tour. Not limited to 'foreign' travellers but drive markets too.
CVB	Convention and Visitors Bureau - what DMOs are called in the USA typically
M&IT	Meetings and Incentive Travel – a part of the tourism industry that promotes corporate travel specific to meetings, conventions and business incentive group events/travel
VIC/VC	Visitor Information Centre/Visitor Centre