



FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC TOURISM BUSINESS PLAN

2022 - 2027

3% MUNICIPAL REGIONAL DISTRICT TAX (MRDT) PROGRAM



In Cooperation With



Prepared By



DEBORAH KULCHISKI CONSULTING | debk.ca | 604.530.9979

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ACRONYMS - The following acronyms are used in this document:

DBC	Destination BC
DMO	Destination Marketing/Management Organization
MRDT	Municipal Regional District Tax
NBCTA	Northern BC Tourism Association
UNWTO	World Tourism Organization
VFR	Visiting Friends & Relatives

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Tourism Smithers Five-Year Business Plan for 2022-2027 serves as the embodiment of the overall vision, mission, and organization goals while serving as a road-map for the years ahead. While the plan presents goals and strategies to 2027, greater detail and focus will be outlined in annual tactical plans. The following plan remains flexible and fluid to enable strategies that can adjust to industry trends and demands as well as any unexpected challenges and opportunities. It ensures the organization remains aligned to provincial and regional programs and the Tourism Smithers goals and objectives, yet maintains a balance of cost effectiveness, accountability and professionalism.

Tourism continues to be an economic growth strategy for the Town of Smithers and the Bulkley Valley region. Tourism Smithers has established the organization to be a relevant and valuable entity to the northern BC region and through their marketing and destination development strategies, has contributed significantly to the community growth while increasing revenues to their stakeholders.

In recent years, Tourism Smithers has built on its brand promise with a keen focus on developing “play and stay” packages that feature a variety of visitor options year-round, the meeting and conference market, festivals and events that celebrate the unique qualities of the area as well as delivery on very successful marketing campaigns and cooperative initiatives aimed at the leisure traveler.

Marketing and promotion will continue to be the key elements of measured success, however, product development initiatives, collaborative approaches to marketing and an exceptional visitor experience have been identified as areas of concentration needed to generate increased demand. This will include building strategic partnerships at the local, regional and sector specific levels as working together remains vital in the development of tourism for the region.

Balancing the opportunities with available resources and ensuring consideration continues to be given to the challenges such as current COVID-19 restrictions, seasonality, labor shortages, regional competition and air access will continue to be priorities in the next several years.

With travelers often on route to other destinations or travelling through the region, there remains competition for visitors to Smithers. By understanding the needs, interests and motivators of identified target markets, Tourism Smithers continues to work on differentiating itself from the competition. The natural landscapes and geography, diverse all-season outdoor experiences and community infrastructure and services offers a number of distinctive experiences to build upon.

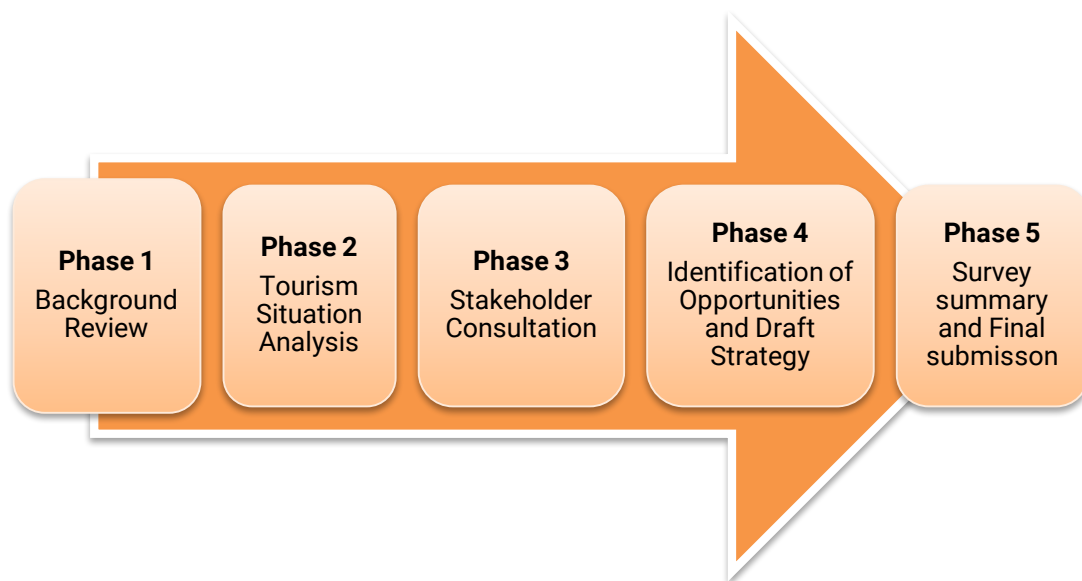
A high-level summary of the Tourism Smithers 2022-2027 Business Plan is to support and maintain the progress that has been made in tourism development including the delivery of current projects and participation in marketing programs while implementing new, sustainable and innovative ways to promote Smithers and the Bulkley Valley; ensuring a distinctive place on a competitive playing field.

While the path forward is characterized by significant uncertainties, the following plan is built on the assumption that COVID-19 will remain under control, border health and travel restrictions will be gradually relaxed and the global economy will rebound.

PLANNING PROCESS

The five-year tourism strategy is built upon an engagement process with the Tourism Smithers Society, local accommodation providers, local government, arts and culture organizations, festival and event representatives, First Nations, local industry operators and businesses to garner additional knowledge while strengthening support and endorsement for the implementation of the plan. The planning process was approached in five strategic phases and was committed to ensuring participation and communication with a diverse combination of opinions and recommendations and highlighted by the following activities:

- One on one interviews both in person and via telephone with community stakeholders throughout the planning process
- Stakeholder survey distributed March 7 – March 15, 2021
- Review and Research of available resources that include;
 - Tourism Smithers 2017-2021 Strategic Plan
 - Tourism Smithers 2020 and 2021 One-Year Tactical Plans
 - Tourism Smithers 2018 Stakeholder satisfaction survey
 - Tourism Smithers Society Constitution and Bylaws
 - Destination BC Visitor Experience Strategy
 - Destination BC In-Market Research, NBCTA
 - Destination BC Regional Review, NBCTA
 - Destination Canada, 2020 and 2021 Global Tourism Watch



VISION

The Town of Smithers, through Tourism Smithers, will be recognized as an exceptional destination offering tourism opportunities in outdoor recreation, arts and culture, festivals and events, First Nations experience, and food and lodging. Tourism will have a prominent and recognized role in our local and regional economy.

MISSION

Tourism Smithers will foster an understanding of the economic and social benefits of a sustainable tourism industry for the Town of Smithers through Tourism Smithers, the Smithers Visitor Centre and the Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC) will work successfully with tourism industry stakeholders locally, regionally and provincially to grow the tourism industry and increase visitation to Smithers by 20% by 2027.

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2017-2021

The previous five years for Tourism Smithers were successful and were demonstrated in the delivery of several key programs, campaigns, achievements and measurables. With the implementation of the previous 5-year Business Plan (2017 – 2021) there has been significant growth in the tourism industry.

A diverse weave of successful marketing programs, growth in annual festivals and events and successful marketing programs such as the *SkiNorthBC*, *Route16NW*, *Steelhead Paradise* and inclusion in the *BC Ale Trail* have ensured a mix of all-season activities for the consumer and a strong summer/fall/winter season economy. The community and Bulkley Valley region remains a popular destination to regional travelers and in recent years, tourism industry businesses have benefitted from an active corporate market that has often led to an expansion to the leisure market.

Also, to note, changes to regional and provincial marketing programs as well as a rapid evolution of the visitor economy and the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020 has resulted in the organization needing to review the current strategic direction and analyze the aspects of change. Tourism Smithers will explore opportunities for new alliances that would encourage collective approaches to marketing and to develop newly defined expectations for the organization and local tourism industry.

5.0 SITUATION ANALYSIS

5.1 Strategic Context

Note: The development of the Tourism Smithers 2022-2027 Five Year Tourism Plan commenced during the world-wide COVID-19 pandemic. Efforts have been made to research and source the most current statistics and information as well as update where applicable prior to submission. At the time of the completion of this plan, there is a common recognition within the tourism industry that the impact of COVID-19 has severely altered the tourism sector and there is no set timeline as to what recovery will look like.

The Smithers Tourism Strategic Plan is structured as follows:

1. Executive Summary and Highlights of 2017-2021
2. Situation Analysis
3. Market Assessment; Trends in tourism and trends relative to Smithers
4. Current initiatives relating to tourism development in Smithers
5. Strengths, Weaknesses and Opportunities for tourism in Smithers
6. Unique Selling Proposition for Smithers and area
7. Key Tourism Goals and Objectives

8. Target Markets
9. Management, Governance and Administration
10. Budget

Implication for Smithers:

The Town of Smithers through Tourism Smithers continues to invest resources aimed at economic diversity and growth. The MRDT Program enables Tourism Smithers to focus on the best, most effective approach for economic stability and growth and will include industry recovery in the immediate future.

5.2 Worldwide

Tourism has been one of the fastest growing and most resilient socioeconomic sectors in the world, accounting for 7% of global trade with international travel between countries that represent the third largest export sector in the global economy. An estimated 9 billion domestic tourist trips (overnight visitors) were recorded around the world in 2018, of which well over 50% in Asia and the Pacific. Worldwide, domestic tourism is over six times larger than international tourism (1.4 billion international arrivals in 2018) measured in number of tourist trips.¹

With travelers considering destinations closer to home in the early stages of travel normalization and with important travel restrictions in place for international travel due to COVID-19, countries with higher shares of domestic tourism are likely to recover earlier and faster.

Prior to the COVID-19 epidemic, the industry was forecast to experience continued growth in the global tourism industry, growing at a much faster rate than the global economy and providing a source of growth for those countries that can attract today's increasingly diverse market of visitors.

The industry's previous growth resulted in increased competition among destinations including a rise of deepening diversification and emerging markets; not just travel destinations, but as sources of tourists as well.

The perception of providing a safe and secure travel destination are considered contributing factors to future restart, recovery, growth potential and forecast.

5.3 Canada

"The domestic market will likely drive the recovery. When the pandemic fades, there will be significant pent-up demand for leisure travel and (given that a severe recession does not follow the pandemic) we may see strong year to year increases. Short-haul travel will likely be the driver of this rebound due to consumers' lingering wariness of booking long-haul trips."

Destination Canada; Covid-19's Impact on Canadian Tourism: Domestic Travel, March 23, 2020

Tourism plays a significant role in the national economy. In 2019, the industry generated an estimated \$104.9 billion in tourism expenditures and supported approximately 1 in 10 jobs in

¹ www.eunwto.org - UNWTO Briefing Note – Tourism & COVID-19, Issue 3.

communities across Canada, contributing an estimated \$43.5 billion in Gross Domestic Product.²

Key highlights from Destination Canada recognized 2019 as the best year for Canadian tourism on record, with arrivals reaching 22.1 million. Overnight arrivals to Canada from countries other than the United States reached an all-time high of 7.15 million. Of note, overseas visitors typically stay in Canada longer, and spend more. The United States experienced a strong year in air arrivals with 5.1 million (4.6 million in 2018) and a strong increase in automobile crossings with 8.5 million (8.2 million in 2018). Improvements in international air access to Canada helped to stimulate travel with non-stop air services adding 2.2% more seats in 2019.³

In terms of things to see and do while on vacation regardless of the destination, Canadian domestic travelers are most interested in natural attractions like mountains or waterfalls (66%). A close second is the chance to sample local food and drink (63%). This is followed by other outdoor activities such as skiing, hiking or walking in nature parks (57%), visiting historical, archaeological sites and viewing wildlife (49%). Older travelers aged 55+ are more interested in natural attractions and historical sites, they are less interested in hiking or walking in nature, food and drink festivals and nature parks. Younger visitors aged 18-34 are the most interested in outdoor activities.⁴

Improved messaging on accessibility and differentiation of authentic Canadian experiences compared to overseas offerings present opportunities for all destinations in Canada. Additionally, there remains a general interest and demand by visitors within Canada in niche activities with large gaps in participation and wide availability of marketable products. These activities fall into two groups, soft and active activities; there is an opportunity to better position these activities as add-ons for different types of Canadian travelers.

Soft Activities:

- Guided airplane or helicopter tours
- Guided train or boat tours
- Guided nature tours
- Culinary tours or cooking classes
- Exploring Aboriginal culture, traditions or history
- Spa or wellness centers

Active Activities:

- Zip lining
- Mountain biking
- Snowshoeing or cross-country skiing
- Kayaking, canoeing or paddle boarding
- Downhill skiing or snowboarding

The 2018 Global Tourism Watch report indicated that Canadian domestic travelers opt for a mid-price hotel (49%) following by 17% that prefer luxury and budget hotels. Owing to the

2 – 5 www.destinationcanada.com Tourism in Canada; Unlocking the Potential of Canada's Visitor Economy, Dec. 2018

prevalence of VFR travel, it is not surprising that 16% domestically stayed with friends and family.⁵

Its distinctive four-season elements make Smithers a great choice for those seeking a weekend getaway, recreation, rest or relaxation, while also positioning Smithers as a desirable and affordable community for meetings, events and sport.

Implication for Smithers:

In terms of activities, experiences and services, Smithers is well positioned to meet the motivators and demands of domestic travelers.

5.4 Tourism in BC

The BC economy is diverse and continues to evolve with the province's tourism sector recognized as a key economic driver. Defined as one of the world's fastest growing industries, the tourism sector in BC has been experiencing continuous and rapid growth (pre-COVID 19) and has been the top contributor to BC's GDP among the primary resource industries that includes forestry, agriculture, mining and fishing.

Despite a competitive business climate, the COVID-19 pandemic and the significant impact of the 2017 and 2018 wildfires, the long-range outlook for the tourism industry in BC remains positive with optimism for stabilization and growth over the longer term.

5.5 Current Situation in B.C.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the accompanying travel restrictions have particularly impacted the BC tourism industry, which historically has been successful in attracting a high proportion of US and international visitors through such offerings as adventure tourism, cruise, train travel, world-class resorts/hotels, and cuisine, as well as the hosting of meetings, conventions, and special events – many of which have been suspended or essentially idle since the onset of the crisis. Tourism fundamentally relies on the movement of people. Without that, the industry is not able to contribute in myriad ways to the overall success and well-being of BC's economy.

Before the onset of COVID-19, tourism was one of BC's largest industries. As stated by Destination BC at the beginning of 2020, *"Tourism is already one of the most significant drivers of economic success in BC, growing faster than the provincial economy as it generates a continuous stream of revenue, employment, social, cultural and environmental benefits."*⁶

Destination BC also noted that in 2018 (latest statistics available) the industry included over 19,300 businesses (the clear majority of which were small businesses), generated over \$8 billion in provincial GDP, and created direct employment in tourism-related enterprises for over 160,000 people.

[Destination BC's 2018 Value of Tourism Report](#) shows that the 2018 provincial tourism revenue grew by 4.9% over the previous year and by 53.3% since 2008. Tourism related business counts,

⁵ www.destinationcanada.ca 2018 Global Tourism Watch.

⁶ www.destinationbc.ca - The Power of Tourism

employment numbers and total wages were also shown to increase over these periods in the same report.⁷

A few key initiatives from Destination BC that may influence Smithers include:

- Destination BC has taken a greater role in Destination Development planning and implementation for the region.
- Community alignment to the provincial brand; with “Nature” as the magnet, the refreshed provincial tourism brand strengthens resonance with travelers to BC, depicting through video, images and written content what travelers will see and do and how they will feel.
- Alignment to Destination BC marketing strategies of Captivate, Advocate and Generate.
- Focus on Touring and Exploring markets, including: FIT (Free and Independent Travel), RV Touring, Motorcycle Touring, Outdoor Adventure, and Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR).

5.6 Regional Context

The Town of Smithers is located within the Northern BC tourism region. Representing the largest of 6 tourism regions within the province, Northern BC covers 569,000 km² of the province, and has more than 60 provincial, national and marine parks, and wildlife refuges that offer access to globally unique ecosystems and priceless cultural heritage treasures. The population of Northern British Columbia has remained virtually unchanged from 2014 and continues to be characterized by a younger demographic than the province with 59% aged 44 years or younger compared to the province average of 54%.⁸

Northern BC Visitation – Year over Year (Canada, BC and Alberta residents travelling to Northern BC).

	2018	2019	2020
Number of visitors to Northern BC from Canada year over year	625,200	681,700	482,00
Number of visitors to Northern BC other parts of BC year over year	384,800	401,500	294,700
Number of visitors to Northern BC from Alberta year over year	169,400	183,300	144,200

- In 2019, 88% of Canadian visitors to Northern BC were from BC and Alberta.
- In 2020, 91% of Canadian visitors to Northern BC were from BC and Alberta.⁹

5.7 Collaboration & Sector Alignment

Within BC, there are sector-based organizations that help to promote experiences in the Smithers area. Collaboration with these organizations are considered in the Tourism Smithers

⁷ [Destination BC's 2018 Value of Tourism Report](#)

⁸ https://www.destinationbc.ca/content/uploads/2018/05/Northern-BC-Regional-Tourism-Profile_2017.pdf

⁹ https://www.destinationbc.ca/content/uploads/2021/02/DBC_COVID-Research-Roundup_Week-33_Feb-22.pdf

plan and are considered as industry resources when developing marketing initiatives. The individual marketing campaigns from these organizations are an extremely valuable asset to the efforts of Tourism Smithers, providing a broad reach that could not be achieved by the DMO on its own. Organizations and programs relevant to Smithers include:

1. **Mountain Biking BC** - is an initiative of the Western Canada Mountain Bike Tourism Association (MBTA) and features communities and resorts passionate about mountain biking. The "Ride North Route 16" campaign has made a significant and positive impact to the destination awareness.
2. **Route16 Motorcycle Tour** – A collaborative initiative between community DMO's from Prince George to Prince George, aimed at promoting the Highway 16 corridor riding routes, activities and places to stay.
3. **Travel Northwest BC** – A new initiative for 2021, promoting the corridor from Prince George to Prince Rupert, promoting the region primarily to regional travelers during pandemic restrictions with plans to extend to the rest of the province when travel restrictions are lifted. The third phase will include BC points further away. This allows the ability to create special promotions, packages and itineraries.
4. **SkiNorthBC** – a cooperative featuring ski towns in the northern BC region.
5. **Ski and Stay** – local initiative with Hudson Bay Mountain Resort and local accommodation providers.
6. **Steelhead Paradise** – provides resources on fishing, learning, exploring and events in the Morice, Bulkley, Babine, Kispiox, Skeena rivers (and more) in the northwest region of BC.
7. **BC Ale Trail** – In partnership with DBC and the BC Craft Brewers Guild, the BC Ale Trail emphasizes how a visit to or around BC is enhanced with the craft beer culture. Smithers has two craft breweries in the program, both of which embrace the region's many outdoor activities; skiing, hiking, mountain biking and fishing.
8. **BC Lodging & Campgrounds Association** – is an organization that assists people find information about the kinds of travel or vacation experiences they can encounter in British Columbia. Their website assists tourists, campers and RVers in locating a range of accommodations including lodging, campgrounds and RV parks, with links to maps, circle tours, camping and RVing tips.
9. **Cycling BC** - is the provincial governing body for the sport of cycling in British Columbia. The represent the full range of disciplines including Road, Track, Cyclo-cross, Mountain Biking, BMX and Para-cycling.

5.8 Local Context

Travel Indicators

Smithers Visitor Centre Statistics

The Smithers Visitor Centre, operated by the Smithers Chamber of Commerce works closely with Tourism Smithers to identify visitor trends, behaviors and expectations both before and during travel to the community and region.

	2017	2018	2019	2020*
Number of visitors	7398	7,285	6299	1856
BC residents	673 (9%)	625 (8.6%)	591 (9.4%)	548 (30%)

Alberta residents	102	83	93	61
Residents from Canada	217	220	226	58
Residents from Europe	846 (11%)	802 (11%)	688 (11%)	16 (.7%)
Residents from US/Mexico	321	283	269	5

Observations indicate a consistency to the percentage of travelers from within BC as well as from the strongest international market – Europe.

* There was an overwhelming yet expected decrease in visitation in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic that hit Canada in the first months of the year with the Smithers Visitor Centre experiencing a decrease of 70.5%. The ongoing impact of the pandemic is expected to carry through 2021, with signs of recovery in 2022.

Information Requests from visitors to Smithers

	2017	2018	2019	2020
Adventure Tourism	936 (13%)	1,119 (15%)	918 (15%)	373 (20%)
Attractions & Tours	746	629	608	209
Accommodation	676	648	465	156
Directions/Wayfinding	934	843	588	232

Adventure Tourism is consistently the most requested information from visitors to the Smithers region and was particularly important in 2020, when 30% of visitors where from within BC. This statistic is aligned with the unique selling proposition Smithers and the Bulkley Valley has to offer.

“We know things won’t quite be the same, but we’re committed to giving our Visitor Centre, Chamber members and greater business community the customer experience you know and love while practicing physical distancing and prioritizing our members’, guests’ visitors’ and employees’ health and safety. The wellbeing of our guests, community and team remains our top priority.” – Jill Barrowman, E.D. Smithers Chamber of Commerce, Nov. 2020

Smithers Regional Airport – Passenger Volume

	2017	2018	2019	2020
Deplaned & enplaned	74,083	71,197	73,387	23,375
Change from previous year	-2.2%	-3.9%	3.1%	-68.1%

6.0 MARKET ASSESSMENT

6.1 Tourism Industry Trends

Trends that influence the province and region's tourism industry has the potential to affect visitation to Smithers and area. It is important to understand the current trends as they reflect how people travel, the types of activities that visitors want to participate in and their willingness to pay for them. As with most communities and regions in the province, the tourism industry in Smithers and area is influenced by a variety of factors including trends that are global, and not in the community's control. Awareness of the current trends are also considerations when identifying the opportunities vs. barriers that will guide the directional course.

Environmental Trends

- Increased demand for responsible, eco-tourism
- Increased impacts of climate change (forest fires, floods, etc.)
- Expectations and government regulations in the reduction of carbon emissions

Technology Trends

- Influence and increased use of online booking tools (OTA's, etc.)
- Influence of social media platforms and mobile applications
- Impact of influencers on path to purchase (i.e. bloggers)
- Visitor expectations re: availability of technology resources (i.e. Wi-Fi, fiber optics, etc.)

Economic Trends

- Unstable exchange rates; may determine destination
- Rising fuel costs
- Household debt

Social and Cultural Trends

- Growth in baby boomer market, interested in travel
- More demand for inclusiveness
- Adjusting to new markets (millennials, multi-generational, etc.)
- Emerging global middle-class travelers
- Influence of lifestyle values vs. destination

Tourism Business Trends

- Increased number of vacation rentals (Airbnb, etc.)
- Growing dependence on domestic markets
- Volatility of global and domestic political arenas and agendas
- Changes to roles and responsibilities of Destination Marketing Organizations (RDMO's and DMO's)

Tourism Industry Trends

- Increased expectations to collaborate regionally
- Sub-regional and sector development and marketing
- Investment in product development

Competition Trends

- Increase in number of DMO's since inception of Tourism Smithers
- Increased resources available to DMO's
- Increased competition between tourism destinations
- Increased competition between sectors (i.e. fishing, skiing, mountain biking, etc.)

6.2 Travel Trends Relative to Smithers

The following is an overview of current travel trends that are relative to Smithers and area, and introduce where the opportunities may be in further developing or expanding tourism related offerings in the long-term.

Shorter Trips, Closer to Home	<p>For several years, the rising costs of fuel and lower Canadian dollar has realized people are taking more frequent and shorter trips closer to home. This trend is expected to continue over the five-year period of 2022-2027, especially due to the current travel restrictions imposed on BC residents and Canadian residents. Both DBC and the NBCTA align marketing strategies to this ongoing trend.</p> <p><i>Opportunity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with accommodation providers and businesses to develop packages for “staycation” travelers. • Deliver key messaging to target markets and develop marketing strategies to reach this demographic. • Develop information to distribute and educate residents and travelers on “Know Before You Go” safety and health practices that local businesses are adhering to.
All-Season Destinations	<p>In efforts to remain competitive as well as support accommodators during the shoulder season, many destinations are focusing promotional tactics on “all-season” activities and experiences.</p> <p><i>Opportunity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smithers and the Bulkley Valley region are well-positioned to be an ideal destination to outdoor enthusiasts seeking experiences and activities year-round. • Encourage business expansion that supports outdoor activities. • Support activities and events that focus on spring season. • Ensure Smithers Visitor Services and stakeholders have up to date information
Discovering Untouched and Unique Places	<p>Major hubs and popular regions experience vast visitation numbers however, today’s visitors are showing a desire to explore beyond, into the perceived rural or suburban areas to experience unique places offering authentic experiences that include “living like a local”.</p> <p><i>Opportunity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and promote suggested itineraries that include product offerings unique to Smithers and area. • Work with Smithers accommodation providers and businesses to develop themed packages aimed at target markets.
Immersing in Culture and Heritage	<p>This is a common niche when establishing tourism markets. History, Arts & Culture are a key attraction for visitors and can form an important part of a tourism experience. DBC research has concluded that visitors to BC search for authentic experiences that enable them to understand and become familiar with the people, places and events that make a community or region different.</p> <p><i>Opportunity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Bulkley Valley Arts Council on awareness and growth of product offering.

Indigenous Experiences	<p>Indigenous tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors in Canada. Smithers and the Bulkley Valley region currently have limited indigenous experiences to offer visitors.</p> <p><i>Opportunity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Wet'suwet'en community to educate and encourage indigenous product development • Provide guidance, leadership and partnership opportunities in the indigenous community • Work with NBC and align with ITBC in development and marketing
Leisure and Business	<p>Prior to COVID, there has been a trend for businesses to offer resort locations for incentive or to host internal and external corporate events. Destinations recognize that every business traveler has the potential to be converted into a leisure visitor.</p> <p><i>Opportunity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with accommodation providers to provide tools and information services that will ensure visitors are aware of the amenities available for them to enjoy on leisure time. Golf, waterfront relaxation and soft adventure are ranked among the top three leisure activities associated with business travelers today. • Ensure communication between Tourism Smithers and Smithers visitor services re: Smithers activities and events
Millennial Travelers	<p>The millennial traveler continues to be a high valued target for DMO's because they are also the younger traveler and provide the highest potential for repeat visitation. Smithers, provides a collection of experiences which are in high demand for this demographic. The key to attracting this demographic involves ensuring that our message and that of our stakeholders is on the platforms that millennials frequent as well as to ensure it is a unique message to stand alone on the wealth of social media and peer reviewed travel sites.</p> <p><i>Opportunity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote Smithers experiences and events on sites frequented by millennials (Expedia, Trip Advisor and other OTA's). • Engage in on-line conversations with visitors at pre/during/post travels.
New Canadians	<p>Recent immigration statistics indicate that approximately 22% of Canadians were not born in Canada (approx. 50% in Vancouver). This is a new and growing domestic market with the potential to reach new consumers, convert to return visitors while instilling new family traditions.</p> <p><i>Opportunity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote Smithers and Bulkley Valley festivals, events and attractions to new residents
Technology	<p>This is the single most important issue in marketing, destination positioning and delivery of the visitor experience. Technology</p>

	<p>has dramatically changed the consumer and marketing landscape. Keeping informed and embracing with technology trends will ensure Tourism Smithers marketing initiatives and online outreach is aligned with the methods travelers are utilizing both for booking and for ongoing communications before, during and after a vacation</p> <p><i>Opportunity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a social media marketing campaign aimed at engaging with users • Build ways that enable fans of Tourism Smithers to promote messaging themselves in multiple online social media venues • Create buzz or newsworthy events, video content, tweets or blog entries that attract attention and become viral in nature
Working from Home	<p>More and more workers are working from home and this model has increased substantially due to COVID. It is a work model that is expected to become a common practice, however, there is a need to bring employer/employees together in team-building environments, especially to destinations with appropriate facilities, services and activities of interest.</p> <p><i>Opportunity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote Smithers meeting facilities, accommodations, attractions and services to small and medium-sized businesses
Themed Routes	<p>Exploring via Circle Routes and themed corridors enhance the uniqueness of a community and region while incorporating an experiential product, for example: BC: Gold Rush Trail, BC Ale Trail, Circle Farm Tour, Route 97 Alberta: Cowboy Trail Ontario: Butter tart Trail</p> <p><i>Opportunity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to align Smithers and area with the BC Ale Trail. • Expand and further develop Ride North Route #16 Trail. • Work with neighboring communities and regions to develop new themed routes and corridors delivering new product experiences; historical, indigenous, cultural, agricultural, etc.

6.3 SWOT ANALYSIS (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

Smithers is well-positioned to benefit from tourism in the years to come (long-term, years 2 – 5). Examination of the internal strengths and weaknesses, external opportunities and threats and summarizing the previous five-year period provides the ability to be more strategic and efficient in the development, implementation and evaluation of marketing and destination development programs.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ World class fishing experiences ○ Wealth of natural surroundings ○ Strategically located on Hwy. 16 West corridor ○ Circle routes, biking and ale trails ○ Diverse range of all-season front and back country opportunities ○ Urban facilities, sports venues and recreational amenities ○ Affordable and mix of accommodation options ○ Popular regional events (Bulkley Valley Exhibition, Mid-summer Music Festival) ○ Walkable, revitalized downtown core ○ Established tourism operators ○ Number of supporting services for outdoor adventure (float plane, helicopter operations, guides, equipment rentals, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lack of desire by travelers to travel to the region as a destination ○ Lack of indigenous tourism products ○ Lack of directional/interpretive signage ○ Cost and frequency of transportation options (airfare, rail) ○ Transportation options (limited taxi service, no airporter service) ○ Staffing resources (currently 1 P/T) ○ Pace of adjusting to visitor trends (i.e. technology, digital marketing)
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bike trail network extension. ○ Use of recreation assets as hosting venues ○ Growing current festivals & events, development of new festivals & events during shoulder season ○ Collaboration with accommodation partners ○ Alignment with provincial marketing initiatives (i.e. Mountain Biking BC) ○ Indigenous tourism development ○ Increased activity on social media channels to create ambassadors ○ Increase in domestic travel (in-Canada) ○ Growing product in niche routes & trails (Ale Trail, circle routes, historical/cultural routes) ○ Improved signage ○ Funding and program sources available through NBCTA, DBC, Ministry, NDIT, WED, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lack of return of regular air service ○ Competition of air fares in other hubs of the region (i.e. Terrace, Prince George) ○ Regional competition with stronger resources ○ Recruitment and retention of employees in tourism-related businesses (competition from higher paying industries in region). ○ Global competition ○ Weather, or perceived weather ○ Season uncertainty (global warming) ○ Increased competition for hosting, festivals & events ○ Fuel prices and travel costs ○ Unstable marketing resources ○ Number of guide & outfitting businesses for sale/not currently operating ○ COVID-19 travel and community event hosting restrictions

6.5 External Opportunities

Global Economic Factors

Prior to COVID-19, low oil prices continued to drive down the Canadian dollar – an incentive for Canadians to opt for “staycations”. The current travel restrictions placed on Canadians and

British Columbians will see an increase to the ongoing trend of people traveling closer to home but taking more and shorter trips and expected to continue throughout this five-year plan.

Strategic Alliances

Strategic alliances with other destination marketing/management organizations such as the Northern BC Tourism Association (NBCTA), Tourism Prince George, Tourism Prince Rupert, Kermodei Tourism, the Guide and Outfitters Association, BC Ale Trail, Gofish BC, Mountain Biking BC, stakeholders along travel routes and corridors such as the Highway 16 corridor and local businesses that represent key sectors will enable extended reach to other parts of BC, Alberta, and other parts of Canada as well as to secondary markets that may not otherwise be achievable by marketing independently.

Diverse Product Offerings

Smithers is a community offering a well-balanced blend of urban services and amenities and diverse mix of experiential products. The unique aspects of the community further differentiate Smithers from competing communities:

- Diverse mix of festivals and events throughout the year
- Gateway to all season outdoor soft adventure experiences; fishing, alpine/nordic/cross country skiing, hiking, biking, fishing, canoeing, kayaking, golf
- Diverse mix of accommodation options ranging from campgrounds, family run motels to full service hotels and resorts

Strong Partnerships

Tourism Smithers has worked diligently to follow DMO best practices that position the organization for long-term success. Confidence in the tourism industry and the Tourism Smithers organization has ensured long-term partnerships and investment from several key stakeholders such as the Town of Smithers, Regional District of Bulkley Valley and Regional and Provincial Tourism offices.

In addition to the partnerships, Tourism Smithers has been an active member of the BC Destination Marketing Organization Association (BC DMOA); a provincial organization that works to advance the best practices of DMO's in BC and the Tourism Industry Association of BC (TIABC); the provincial advocacy organization.

Efficiently Managed DMO

The organizational structure of Tourism Smithers has been established to maintain a balance between the required resources to move the organization forward and the infrastructure needed to ensure a sustainable future. Tourism Smithers employs 1 year-round, part-time contractor and contracts additional support for special projects when required. This allows Tourism Smithers to manage expenses while ensuring organizational goals and objectives are met in an efficient manner.

6.6 External Threats

Steep Global Competition for Canada and BC

Prior to COVID-19 and the current travel restrictions, Canada had been losing market share in the global tourism rankings for several years. To become top of mind for travelers and consumers in both short and long-term planning, our iconic Canadian experiences must re-invent themselves and create a sense of urgency in the minds of consumers. There have been new and emerging destinations and as a result, it will become vital to market Canadian

experiences; to stand apart and inspire the consumer in what is a globally competitive marketplace.

Regional Competition for Smithers

Smithers has long been recognized as an all-season destination for those seeking an outdoor or back-country experience. The summer months perform at a strong capacity level as does the fall with their world-class fishing season at its peak. Winter is equally a strong visitor season due to the active nordic, alpine ski season. Destinations province-wide are developing strategies to capitalize on their shoulder seasons, which means there is more competition for Tourism Smithers to draw visitation and extended stays in the community. Tourism Smithers will focus on identifying opportunities that set the community apart by focusing on packaging its tourism experiences and aligning them with the right market at the right time and developing incentive programs to entice longer stays, early bookings and repeat visits.

Implication for Smithers

Cross promotion and alignment with local businesses, neighboring communities, Northern BC Tourism Association, DBC and relevant sectors is critical to amplifying the message of the community, its attributes and it's unique selling proposition.

7.0 KEY TOURISM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

A key strategy for Tourism Smithers is to work in partnership whenever possible with a wide range of community stakeholders and tourism businesses to develop packaged experiences and marketing programs that are focused on increasing visitation and overnight stays within the community.

Tourism Smithers will facilitate the development of stakeholder partnerships with the intention of building shoulder periods and expanding the seasonality of the community.

The overall goal for the five-year period is to create a thriving year-round tourism attraction based economy for Smithers and area. To achieve this overall goal, specific objectives and targets have been outlined below for each of the concentration areas.

The strategic framework is built upon four areas of concentration that will be developed to guide the planning and implementation stages. To position tourism for long-term sustainability in Smithers, the goals should remain long-term, with strategies, tactics and measurables to evolve with industry trends and visitor demands while the industry restarts and once again becomes stable and more resilient.

MARKETING	DESTINATION MANAGEMENT AND PRODUCT EXPERIENCE	MEETINGS , CONVENTIONS & EVENTS	VISITOR SERVICES/VISITOR EXPERIENCE
Aligning marketing activities to target markets can strengthen the appeal of Smithers	Enhancing the appeal of Smithers and Bulkley Valley can attract new visitors, extend stays, encourage repeat visitation, generate	Meetings and conventions provide opportunities to showcase and	The success of positioning Smithers as a destination will rely heavily on the quality of the visitor experience.

and Bulkley Valley region.	word-of-mouth referrals and support advocacy.	create awareness of Smithers and to build upon a desire to visit the region	
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7.1 Goals and Key Strategies

Goal 1 | Destination Marketing

TO DEVELOP AND DELIVER EFFECTIVE DESTINATION MARKETING IN TARGET MARKETS TO INCREASE VISITATION, OVERNIGHT STAYS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT TO SMITHERS, WITH A FOCUS ON WEEKEND AND SHOULDER SEASON

Smithers offers a unique blend of adventure and outdoor experiences, annual festivals and events and vibrant arts & culture scene which contribute to the revenues in the community. Tourism Smithers will continue to identify and monitor opportunities that will position the community with a differential advantage while seeking collaborative opportunities that will place the community and region with a competitive advantage.

Key Strategies

1. To meet with the accommodation sector on a bi-annual basis to identify and further develop market strategies and opportunities that will contribute to overnight stays.
2. To promote the positive image of Smithers through engagement and continuing to build a compelling brand in core and niche markets.
3. To work with the Witsuwit'en Nation to further develop indigenous businesses and attractions.
4. Identify partnership opportunities with neighbouring communities, regions and influencers and where possible, leverage tourism funding programs for efficiencies and stronger impact.
5. Evaluate product clusters and identify emerging clusters and strengthen their contribution through targeted program activities (i.e. Highway 16 corridor).
6. Build upon the existing strengths of marketing programs; i.e. BC Ale Trail, Steelhead Paradise, SkiNorthBC, Ride North, etc.
7. Strengthen social media channels by building reach and increasing return on content creation.

MEASUREABLE PERFORMANCE

Key Performance indicators (KPI) will include;

- MRDT revenues
- Amount of secured leveraged marketing funds for cooperative marketing initiatives
- Increased revenues from stakeholder buy-in opportunities
- Number of tourism-related businesses that participate in deliverable programs
- Number of packages and itineraries produced.
- Dashboard metrics and digital platforms
- Annual stakeholder satisfaction survey results

Goal 2 | Destination Management and Product Experience

TO PROVIDE DESIREABLE TOURISM PRODUCTS AND EXPERIENCES THAT ARE AVAILABLE TO VISITORS AND TO FOSTER THE SUPPLY OF TOURISM PRODUCTS AND EXPERIENCES IN COLLABORATION WITH PARTNERS AND COMMUNITY

The overall objective of this goal is to identify and prioritize opportunities and initiatives to improve the understanding and importance of tourism for Smithers and the Bulkley Valley and to better position the tourism sector for growth.

Key Strategies

1. Grow the level of engagement of community ambassadors
2. Identify partnership opportunities with neighboring communities, regions and provincial influencers and where possible, leverage tourism funding programs for efficiencies and impact
3. Facilitate community building and identify opportunities to aid in strengthening tourism product and services
4. Implement additional stakeholder communication tools including the delivery of annual community consultation sessions to further understand and meet the expectations and needs of stakeholders.
5. Ensure attention to Smithers visitor services in support of destination promotion and destination development.

MEASURABLE PERFORMANCE

Key Performance Indicators (KPI) will include;

- Number of tourism industry related businesses
- Quality and quantity of online reviews
- Number of packages and itineraries produced
- Stakeholder participation at destination development sessions

Goal 3 | Meetings, Conventions & Events

HOSTING MEETINGS, CONFERENCES & EVENTS OFFERS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL BENEFITS TO SMITHERS WHILE PROVIDES THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROMOTE AND SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESSES AND SERVICE SECTORS AND PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS AND RELATIONSHIPS.

Key Strategies

1. Promote Smithers as a hosting community, highlighting current events as well as market Smithers as an ideal location for meetings, conferences and other events.
2. To maintain the current networks and build new networks that will grow Smithers' capacity to host.
3. Work with community organizations to promote Smithers as an ideal event host location for small niche or specialized meetings and conferences.
4. Develop and promote Smithers positive reputation for successful and robust hosting of smaller scale meetings, conferences and events.

5. Attend relevant provincial meetings and conventions as part of professional development and advocacy role.

MEASURABLE PERFORMANCE

Key Performance Indicators (KPI) will include;

- The number of meetings, conferences, festivals and events
- Visitation to key activities, festivals and events
- Increase in hotel occupancy
- Tracked success of meetings, conferences & events attended based on interactions and conversations, market, location and type

Goal 4 | Visitor Services

TRAVEL TRENDS AND VISITOR DEMANDS AND EXPECTATIONS ARE DIVERSE AND CHANGE RAPIDLY. THEY RELY ON READILY AVAILABLE INFORMATION, PERSONALIZATION AND INTERACTION PRE, DURING AND POST THEIR TRAVELS. TOURISM SMITHERS WILL STRIVE TO ENSURE A POSITIVE IMPRESSION AND EXPERIENCE WHILE MEETING THE NEEDS OF TRAVELERS.

Key Strategies

1. To research and implement innovative methods of meeting visitor demands and expectations.
2. Increase the Tourism Smithers digital presence by sourcing the most effective social channels to reach target markets and engage with visitors who have made or thinking of making the decision to choose northern BC and the Smithers, Bulkley Valley region as a destination (i.e. Snap Chat, Tik Tok, FB, IG).
3. Promote the *#explorebc*, *#smithersbc*, *#smithersvibe*, *#tourismsmithers* and ensure a consistent tone and message that is aligned with the Smithers brand.
4. To work with the Smithers Visitor Centre and Smithers Chamber of Commerce to identify areas requiring Tourism Smithers support
5. Work with Destination BC and NBCTA in the delivery of research, workshops and webinars to further develop and enhance the visitor experience to and within Smithers
6. Ensure the *HelloBC* and *NBCTA* websites are provided with fresh content on a regular basis
7. Support local stakeholders to be well-informed, proud ambassadors of the community
8. Identify and implement additional distribution points for the Smithers Visitor's Guide and other marketing collateral materials
9. Work with the Smithers Regional Airport and local transportation providers to ensure a positive, welcoming experience for travelers.

MEASURABLE PERFORMANCE

Key Performance Indicators (KPI) will include;

- The number of followers on FB, IG and other social channels
- The number of responses to digital advertisements
- The number of posts on social media channels
- The number of collateral materials distributed
- Amount of traffic and time spent on Tourism Smithers website

- The number of conversations with visitors and travelers
- The number of visitors to the Smithers Visitor Centre

8.0 BRAND POSITIONING

8.1 Tourism Smithers Brand

The Tourism Smithers brand identity was updated in 2014 and continues to position Smithers as a warm, artistic and active all-season destination with world-class outdoor experiences. The black and orange color palette and font selection form a major part of the brand and the organization has successfully succeeded in creating a visually unique identity that makes the brand relevant to tourism industry stakeholders.

Since being updated in 2014, the destination brand has become the foundation of all marketing activities that are designed to promote Smithers and area. The Tourism Smithers destination brand has become pivotal to what is communicated. The brand is unique and nostalgic with a hand script tag cloud of flexible content. The color palette is aligned with the existing Town of Smithers brand identity and is adaptable to ensure tailoring to suite a variety of messages. The emphasis on first-person voice delivers an experiential and testimonial approach. The brand continues to be visually distinctive, with a black and orange color scheme, often using black and white imagery to strengthen the emotive.

The Tourism Smithers brand has evolved into the customer promise and through repeated exposure and strong association with the regional and provincial brand, has successfully differentiated Smithers from competing communities. Adopting “Unexpected” as it’s tagline, the Smithers consumer brand is positioned as an all-season destination that is a showcase of a vibrant arts scene, diverse accommodation options, and a starting point to outdoor experiences.



Building a personal relationship between visitors and Smithers is a critical element of the tourism brand and is accomplished by staying relevant and engaged through various marketing and promotional platforms. Tourism Smithers will continue to align communications and social media strategies with regional and provincial partners to ensure maximum exposure for the brand.

Tourism Smithers strives to encourage local stakeholders to position and align their products and services within the community tourism brand rather than stand alone in their marketing initiatives. There is an advantage to brand positioning as it is readily identified regionally and provincially, which in return works effectively with Destination BC's provincial brand.

8.2 Digital Presence

Generating a Smithers digital presence consists of resources like the Tourism Smithers [website](#), social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, business directory listings, customer reviews and other online sources. To date, Tourism Smithers has limited resources applied to their digital presence; website, Facebook (2550 followers) Instagram (1,260 followers) and Twitter (1,311 followers).

Implication for Smithers:

The destination brand positions Smithers as an attractive, credible and distinctively diverse community compared to other communities in the region and province by means of a clearly defined brand identity. Due to the strong competition in the region and province for "conversations" with travelers, there are opportunities to grow awareness of Smithers on social media channels.

9.0 TARGET MARKETS

Prior to the COVID pandemic, Smithers continued to experience measurable growth in visitation from both regional and out of province markets. The primary contributor of revenue to the local tourism economy results from spending by visitors.

The following key target markets are identified as having the greatest potential to build upon Smithers strengths. They include the types of visitors that are priorities for Smithers primary and secondary target markets, geographic target markets, as well as demographic and activity-based target groups. These markets are also priority markets for Northern B.C. and therefore, provides additional opportunities to leverage resources and develop collaborative approaches to marketing whenever possible.

Primary Markets

- Northern B.C. (Near-in markets within a 4-hour drive)
- Other BC
- Alberta (with a focus on northern Alberta)

Pacific Northwest states

- Residents of Northern BC including couples, families and special interest groups.
- Other BC markets, including visitors seeking weekend getaways and regional markets that include couples and families.
- Visitors travelling to Smithers for soft adventure experiences, festivals and special events. This group would largely influence the short term, and overnight stays.
- Other BC and Alberta residents seeking activity-based experiences that include outdoor, soft adventure, festivals & events.

- Visitors to Northern BC from the Pacific Northwest, German and Swiss destinations, predominately couples that are traveling for leisure purposes.

Secondary or Niche Markets

- Europe (German, Italian and Swiss)
- Outdoor enthusiasts (fishing, skiing, mountain biking)
- BC and Alberta motorcycle touring

Key Visitor Types for Smithers and Area

- Couples & Families
- Weekend Warriors
- Outdoor adventure enthusiasts
- Visiting Friends & Family
- Leisure travelers (FIT) and small groups
- Touring (Circle tours, routes, corridors)
- Regional destination products (festivals and events, agri-tourism)

From an age demographic perspective, “Boomers” are a large and important market with money to spend, and their interest in nature aligns well with BC’s brand promise. Millennials are an important and growing group with different tastes and expectations, an appetite for travel, but possess only limited disposable income at this life stage. Given the size of each group, targeting each generation may not be feasible. Segmenting by passion-based interests or by psychographics such as Explorer Quotient is more effective than by demographics alone.

- Destination Canada, Explorer Quotient Profiles

9.1 Explorer Quotient

Destination Canada’s Explorer Quotient research framework has been adopted by Destination BC and the Northern BC Tourism Association and provides Tourism Smithers with a foundation for establishing target EQ types, based on the region’s attributes and other factors, such as alignment with Destination BC. EQ research is specific to each of Destination Canada’s target geographic markets. It adds a psychographic element to targeting, but also folds in demographics and experience appeal by EQ Type. With the Tourism Smithers demographic and geographic targets in mind, the following EQ Types were chosen as primary Tourism Smithers targets for the Canadian market: ¹⁰

Cultural Explorer

- These travel types are constant travelers and love to be immersed in local culture, people and settings. This may also include cultural history buffs who travel to further research their hobbies and interests.

Free Spirit

- This is a highly social, open-minded, experimental and adventurous traveler who loves high-end hedonistic experiences. They make up 12% of the Canadian market; 45% Men/55% Female

¹⁰ Destination BC Environmental Scan – August 2016

The secondary EQ Type target for the Canadian market is:

Authentic Explorer

- This travel type is something of an improve artist, and likes to explore. They are seeking authentic, tangible engagement with destinations and are high on historical and cultural travel.

10.0 MANAGEMENT, GOVERNANCE & ADMINISTRATION

10.1 Organizational Structure

The Tourism Smithers Society became a registered not-for-profit organization in 2018. Governed by a local volunteer Board of Directors representing key sectors in the community, the organization works closely and collaboratively with the Town of Smithers, the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako, the Northern BC Association, Destination BC, tourism stakeholders and other key organizations to support the economic, physical, social and cultural well-being of Smithers.

As the service provider for the Town of Smithers, Tourism Smithers adheres to the following guidelines:

1. To increase visitation and length of stay of visitors within the Town of Smithers and the Bulkley Valley;
1. To develop, implement and evaluate marketing programs in collaboration with, and on behalf of its stakeholders;
2. To receive and administer funds from sources such as (but not limited to) Destination BC, the Town of Smithers, the Province of British Columbia and stakeholders; and
3. To actively and vigorously represent tourism interests for stakeholders in the Town of Smithers and the Bulkley Valley.

STAKEHOLDER MODEL

Tourism Smithers embraces all tourism industry businesses and services in the community and considers all participants as stakeholders to the local tourism industry. By adhering to a stakeholder model, the organization can accomplish; a). the ability to fully represent all the tourism products, businesses and services available in the Smithers and Bulkley Valley region to the consumer, and b). ensure the opportunity to participate in cooperative partnered programs with Destination BC and NBCTA as well as any eligible sector organizations from within the region.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The Tourism Smithers Society is governed by an appointed twelve-member Board of Directors. The Board of Directors is a well-rounded representation of the community, including 4 representing the Accommodation sector. The Board is given the legal corporate authority and responsibility for the achievement of the organization's mission, for its stability and for provision of systematic linkage with other organizations engaged in the pursuit of similar objectives, and the community at large. The Board is responsible for ensuring that it has adequate information to monitor major areas of corporate performance.

As a not-for-profit Society, Tourism Smithers is strictly guided by the Societies Act and enforced Constitution and By-laws which may not be altered or added to except by special resolution. This is supported by Governance policies that reinforce the purpose of the Board, on behalf of Tourism Smithers. These policies set strategic direction to achieve the Society's mission within legal and ethical boundaries. Terms of Reference, Conflict of Interest Guidelines and Confidentiality Policies, Annual Disclosure Statements, Code of Conduct, Roles and Responsibilities and evaluation tools for the Board, management and staff provide support of the organizations philosophy.

2021 – 2022 Tourism Smithers Board of Directors:

Name	Affiliation	Title	Joined Board
Al McCreary	Prestige Hudson Bay Lodge	President/Chair	Jan. 2018
Angie Eccleston	Prestige Hudson Bay Lodge	Vice President	Jan. 2018
Alex Bussman	Oscar's Fishing Shop	Secretary	Jan. 2018
Wendy Perry	At Large	Director	Jan. 2018
Colin Bateman	Aspen Inn	Director	Jan. 2018
Ben Heemskerk	Rec. Sites & Trails BC	Director	Jan. 2019
Blaine Estby	Smithers Brewing Co.	Director	Jan. 2019
Moe Kafer	Roadhouse	Director	Jan. 2019
Kira Westby	BV Museum	Director	Jan. 2019
Lisa Bowd	Capri Motor Inn	Director	April 2019
Lexi Rei-Jones	Hudson Bay Mtn. Resort	Director	Dec. 2020
Jill Barrowman	Smithers Distr. Ch. of Commerce	Director	Feb. 2021

HR Management

Tourism Smithers supports and employs a staff position and depending on demands, contractors may be hired on a project by project basis. The organization strives to maintain a balance between administrative costs and marketing dollars that are put directly into the marketplace, and as such, maintains a lean operation.

Executive Director

This part-time position is the Senior Executive who, with the Chair, enables the Board to fulfill its governance function. The Executive Director reports to the Board and maintains open communication with the Board by keeping them informed of all significant matters. The Executive Director is also responsible for managing and controlling the operations of the Society in accordance with the plans, policies and parameters that are approved by the Board. The Executive Director possesses a strong background in leadership, governance and destination marketing and collaborates with local, regional and provincial stakeholders to ensure growth and value of the tourism economy in Smithers.

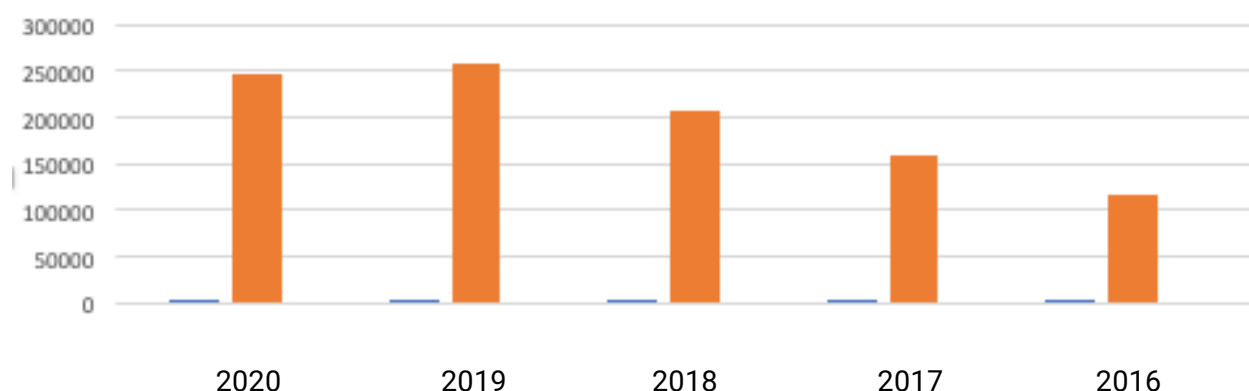
11.0 TOURISM SMITHERS FUNDING and the MRDT PROGRAM

The Tourism Smithers Society is primarily funded by revenues collected through the Municipal Regional District Tax (MRDT) at the 3% tax level. Through a service delivery agreement, MRDT funds flow directly from the municipality to Tourism Smithers. The organization receives an

additional \$10,000 from the Town of Smithers as well as generates revenue from applicable grants and various funding programs.

	2020	2019	2018*	2017	2016
Total MRDT collected	\$246,906	\$258,272	\$206,404	\$158,971	\$117,927

* MRDT funds received at 3% level



Considering the impact COVID has had on visitation to most communities in BC, Smithers experienced a relatively low decrease in MRDT funds in 2020 compared to 2019 (-4.4%).

Designated recipients that were approved between 1987 and 1999 were grand-parented from the requirement to submit renewal applications to extend the MRDT every five years. These designated recipients are Tourism Vancouver, the City of Prince Rupert, the Resort Municipality of Whistler, the District of Oak Bay, the District of Saanich and the Town of Smithers.

Grand-parented designated recipients must submit a five-year Strategic Business Plan every five years. They are also required to make their Strategic Business Plan available to tourism industry stakeholders and accommodation providers.

12.0 SIMPLIFIED BUDGET

	2022	2023	2024 & beyond
Revenue			
Town of Smithers Fee-for-Service			
3% MRDT			
Grant Revenue*			
Partnerships			
Leveraged Funds			
Total Revenue			
Expenses			
Staff Salary			
Contractor (social media, website, admin support)			
Destination Marketing & Awareness Social Media			

Media Relations / FAM Festivals & Events Promotional Campaigns Print Materials			
Destination Development Workshops / Business Development Image Bank / Website Visitor Experiences Advocacy			
Total Expenses			