

# NORTH THOMPSON AND NICOLA VALLEYS DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



DESTINATION  
BRITISH COLUMBIA™



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FRONT COVER PHOTO: LAC DU BOIS GRASSLANDS, Andrew Strain

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The North Thompson and Nicola Valleys Destination Development Strategy was developed to enhance the competitiveness of the planning area over the next 10 years and beyond. The strategy is part of Destination BC's Destination Development Program.

This Program is a critical part of Destination BC's corporate strategy and facilitates the collaboration of local, regional and provincial agencies, First Nations, destination marketing organizations (DMOs), tourism operators, and other community interests to guide the long-term growth of tourism in the North Thompson and Nicola Valleys.

**In addition to supporting the underlying goals of the provincial Destination Development Program, the purpose of the strategy is to:**

- Provide strategic direction for the planning area and guidance for local and regional planning
- Enhance the North Thompson and Nicola Valleys ability to leverage their resources and programs
- Foster joint action and inter-community dialogue.



The internationally recognized and preferred valley corridor connecting the North, the Rockies, and the Coast, is a vibrant destination that offers a dynamic spectrum of year-round outdoor adventure and the opportunity to experience a fusion of Interior Indigenous culture and frontier-pioneer heritage in its welcoming valley towns.

A tourism industry that understands its significance to local economies and works together to deliver remarkable experiences and develop new opportunities.

The strategy is intended to serve as a guide for tourism partners as they proceed with implementation and should be tracked on a regular basis. While tourism has two primary revenue drivers — supply and demand, destination development focuses on the supply side and what is required to create a compelling visitor experience to attract new visitors and entice repeat visitation.

The strategy is one of three planning area strategies specifically prepared for the Thompson Okanagan region and one of 20 for the province. It was developed based on extensive, collaborative effort during a twenty-three month process that culminated in the creation of a Situation Analysis report and this document.

The North Thompson and Nicola Valleys planning area encompasses a portion of the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George (RDFFG) electoral area H east of McBride, and electoral areas A and B, J (from Porcupine

Meadows Park southwest to Savona, then remainder south of the area), L (just south of Kamloops, along 5A), M, N, O, P (until Sun Peaks in the east, without communities along Highway 1) of the Thompson-Nicola Regional District (TNRD). Municipalities include McBride, Valemount, Clearwater, Barriere, Sun Peaks, Kamloops, Logan Lake, and Merritt.

The geography of the planning area includes the southern portion of the Robson Valley, the North Thompson Valley, and most of the Nicola Valley. The primary cities are Kamloops and Merritt. The bio-geoclimatic characteristics of the planning area are diverse, with the dry, sunny climate and landscapes of the Nicola Valley, transitioning to the desert landscapes of the Kamloops area, and moving north up the North Thompson Valley, from rolling fields to the rising elevations of the Monashee and Cariboo mountains and eventually to the world's only inland temperate rainforest in the north.

## A. THE DIRECTION

The vision for the planning area is based on the 10-year aspirations for the North Thompson and Nicola Valleys expressed by tourism partners during the consultation process.

In identifying development priorities for the North Thompson and Nicola Valleys planning area, consideration was given to building on the Embracing Our Potential strategic framework. Embracing Our Potential is the Thompson Okanagan's ten-year regional tourism strategy.

This vision is closely aligned with the current Thompson Okanagan 10-year regional tourism strategy, existing

community plans, and related planning frameworks. It also highlights underlying elements that differentiate the area. And, these form the basis of the strategy's motivating experiences.

**With this vision in place, the development focus is on four themes:**

- planning and sustaining the natural environment
- transportation, connectivity, and supporting infrastructure
- industry readiness
- the visitor experience

## B. THE OBJECTIVES

In total, 43 objectives have been identified for the North Thompson and Nicola Valleys as a tourism destination corridor for the next 10 years. These are outlined by development theme.

### ACTIONS

#### THEME 1: Planning and sustaining the natural environment

##### IMPROVING APPROACHES TO ENHANCE STRATEGY AND COLLABORATION

1. Organize regional capacity for implementing and monitoring the Destination Development Strategy.
2. Raise the awareness of tourism values and interests in the Crown land management process.
3. Develop a more streamlined Crown tenure process that facilitates investment in more tourism products.
4. Advocate for development of new land and resource management strategies.
5. Develop a regional approach to resource road deactivation and the use of forest service roads used for circle routes.
6. Encourage local government to include tourism policies and management direction in their Official Community Plans and to align bylaws with neighbouring municipalities.
7. Design a tourism disaster and emergency program that helps communities and industry prepare for, educate, measure, mitigate, and adjust to major natural environmental events.

##### STRENGTHENING MECHANISMS THAT WILL FOSTER SUSTAINABILITY

8. Foster sustainability practices that improve the capacity and competitiveness of the tourism industry while leveraging TOTA's Biosphere destination accreditation.
9. Utilize big data in the planning and management of tourism within the planning area and the Thompson Okanagan tourism region as a whole.
10. Encourage BC Parks to undertake a new management strategy for Wells Gray Provincial Park.

##### DEVELOPING AND MANAGING SUSTAINABLE TRAIL SYSTEMS

11. Develop a vision and strategy forum for an integrated trail network in the TOTA region.
12. Develop at least two epic trails in the region.
13. Encourage greater First Nations involvement in trail experiences.
14. Work to improve the consistency and clarity of trail signage.

## ACTIONS

### THEME 2: Transportation, connectivity, and supporting infrastructure

#### IMPROVING GROUND TRANSPORTATION ALONG THE HIGHWAY 5 CORRIDOR

15. Improve visitor services and amenities along Highway 5.
16. Promote inter-regional transportation and transit strategies.
17. Explore opportunities to strengthen a working partnership with VIA Rail.
18. Provide research on the future electrification of transportation modes and the implications for tourism.

#### IMPROVING TECHNOLOGICAL CONNECTIVITY

19. Promote the use of technology and innovation for tourism product and destination development.
20. Continue to work with the telecommunications sector to improve broadband services throughout the planning area.

#### DEVELOPING HOUSING AND ACCOMMODATION SOLUTIONS

21. Support local government housing initiatives that address worker housing and visitor accommodation options.

#### DEVELOPING SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE AND ATTRACTION FACILITIES

22. Develop a planning area policy for sani-stations.
23. Develop visitor infrastructure at Nicola Lake.
24. Work with RSTBC and BC Parks to coordinate and align new campsite investments.
25. Investigate gateway development concepts at Exit 286 on the Coquihalla Highway in Merritt.
26. Assist the District of Barriere in moving forward with the North Thompson Interpretive Centre.
27. Leverage opportunities related to the proposed Valemount Glacier Resort.



## ACTIONS

### THEME 3: Industry readiness

#### IMPROVING AVAILABILITY OF SKILLED LABOUR TO MEET THE PREDICTED HUMAN RESOURCES NEEDS AND THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE VISITOR

- 28. Improve labour market efficiencies and propose solutions to predicted future worker shortages in the tourism industry.
- 29. Improve access to foreign workers by the tourism industry.
- 30. Promote tourism career strategies in Indigenous communities.
- 31. Formulate legacy services to enhance the Remarkable Experiences program.
- 32. Expand volunteer recruitment capacity and programs.

#### PROMOTING THE VALUE OF TOURISM

- 33. Increase awareness and understanding of the value of tourism to communities and its importance to the economy.
- 34. Develop mechanisms for bringing together and disseminating research on best practices.
- 35. Develop a tourism investment attraction strategy for the North Thompson Valley and the Nicola Valley.

### THEME 4: The visitor experience

#### DEVELOPING NICHE SECTORS

- 36. Grow the agritourism industry in the Nicola Valley.
- 37. Utilize the cultural and/or heritage assets to differentiate the visitor experience.
- 38. Work with First Nations to increase the availability and competitiveness of Indigenous experiences.
- 39. Create more circle route activities and tours to take advantage of the highway traffic volumes throughout the Highway 5 corridor.
- 40. Promote trail experience development to complement increased interest in, and exposure to, regional trail networks.
- 41. Increase market-ready shoulder season and winter tourism experience offerings.

#### ENHANCING RURAL TOWNS SENSE OF PLACE

- 42. Raise the profile of tourism and use it to spur revitalization efforts in small communities.

#### DEVELOPING GEOTOURISM

- 43. Develop a maintenance program for the North Thompson Robson Valley Global Geopark initiative.



## II. ACRONYMS

**AEST** Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills & Training

**AGRI** Ministry of Agriculture

**ALC** Agricultural Land Commission

**ALR** Agricultural Land Reserve

**DBC** Destination British Columbia

**DC** Destination Canada

**DMO** Destination Marketing Organization

**EDO** Economic Development Officer

**EMBC** Emergency Management British Columbia

**ENV** Ministry of Environment & Climate Change Strategy

**EQ** Explorer Quotient

**FIN** Ministry of Finance

**FLNR** Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development

**go2HR** The British Columbia Human Resource Organization for Tourism

**INAC** Indigenous Affairs and Northern Development Canada

**IRR** Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

**ITAC** Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada

**ITBC** Indigenous Tourism Association of British Columbia

**JTT** Ministry of Jobs, Trade & Technology

**KVR** Kettle Valley Railway

**LBR** Ministry of Labour

**MRDT** Municipal Regional District Tax (commonly referred to as the Hotel Tax)

**OCP** Official Community Plan

**ORV** Off-Road Vehicle

**RDMO** Regional Destination Management Organization

**RSTBC** Recreation Sites and Trails British Columbia

**TAC** Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture

**TIABC** Tourism Industry Association of British Columbia

**TOTA** Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association

**TRAN** Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

**TRU** Thompson Rivers University

**UBCM** Union of British Columbia Municipalities

**WD** Western Diversification

**WTA** Wilderness Tourism Association

# 1

# FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**FOREWORD** This Destination Development Strategy is the final report resulting from a twenty-three month, iterative process of gathering, synthesizing, and validating information with stakeholders about the status and future direction of tourism in the North Thompson and Nicola Valleys planning area of British Columbia.

As one of 20 destination development strategies that will be produced between 2016 and 2019, the strategy for the North Thompson and Nicola Valleys will contribute to the tapestry of long-term

regional and provincial strategies that will support the development of British Columbia as a world-class tourism destination offering remarkable, authentic experiences.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Destination British Columbia, the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association (TOTA) and the project facilitation team thank the stakeholders who contributed throughout the process by attending the community meetings, participating in surveys, stakeholder interviews and follow-up conversations, and forwarding relevant documents that provided the background information for this destination development strategy.

We give thanks and acknowledge the Syilx people of the Okanagan Nation and the Simpcw First Nation on whose traditional territories we gathered for meetings in Valemount, Barriere, and Merritt.

Thank you again to our tourism partners who participated in the process by attending planning workshops, conducted interviews, hosted site visits, and responded to surveys. The participation of our partners throughout the process was invaluable, but it is important to note that no endorsement of this strategy or any action listed within was obtained.

## **Special thanks are offered to members of the Working Group:**

- Myles Bruns, Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development
- Peter Hilton, Upper Nicola Indian Band
- Sherri Madden, Thompson Nicola Regional District
- Stephanie Molina, Tourism Wells Gray
- Will George, City of Merritt
- Sandy Mackenzie, Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development
- Jude Stirling, BC Parks
- Greg Hopf, Indigenous Tourism Specialist TOTA
- Tom Eustache, Simpcw First Nation

## **Special thanks are offered to the facilitator of the North Thompson and Nicola Valleys destination development process:**

Jennifer Houiellebecq, Tourism Planning Group.



# 2

# INTRODUCING THE STRATEGY

NAPIER LAKE  
Photo: Andrew Strain

## A. PROGRAM VISION AND GOALS

The North Thompson and Nicola Valleys Destination Development Strategy was developed to enhance the competitiveness of the planning area over the next 10 years and beyond. This strategy was developed as part of Destination BC's Destination Development Program.

The Program is a critical part of Destination BC's corporate strategy and facilitates the collaboration of local, regional and provincial agencies, First Nations, destination marketing organizations (DMOs), tourism operators, and other community interests to guide the long-term growth of tourism in the North Thompson and Nicola Valleys.

### The provincial vision for the Destination Development Program is:

BC is a world-class tourism destination that offers remarkable products and experiences that are authentic, driven by visitor demand, exceed expectations, and align with BC's brand.

### The above vision is supported by three provincial goals:

- Make BC the most highly recommended destination in North America.
- Create 10-year strategies for tourism development and improve return-on-investment for government and private sector investments in tourism assets.
- Elevate BC's ability to compete as a premium destination while making the province more attractive for investment.





Destination development brings together strategy, policy, and capacity building efforts to:

- Ensure that a destination is well positioned to make future strategic decisions.
- Address impediments to growth and capitalize on opportunities.
- Outline key assets of a destination including the main product themes and experiences available.
- Outline key priorities for new product, infrastructure, and amenity development.
- Identify impediments to development and tourism growth (e.g., potential policy or capacity issues, available funding, access to funding, etc.).

## B. PURPOSE OF STRATEGY

This strategy provides underlying support for the goals of the provincial Destination Development Program and:

- Provides strategic direction for the region and guidance for local and regional planning.
- Enhances the planning area's ability to leverage their resources and programs.
- Fosters joint action and inter-community dialogue.

This strategy serves as a guide for tourism partners as they proceed with implementation. This document should be reviewed and updated as necessary to reflect changing tourism objectives, priorities, and market conditions. In addition, results should be tracked regularly so that future implementation activities become more effective in increasing economic, social, and cultural benefits to the entire planning area.

FIGURE 1:  
Tourism Revenue  
Drivers



## C. A FOCUS ON THE SUPPLY AND EXPERIENCE

Destination development is the mechanism whereby the natural life cycle of tourism (e.g., development, stagnation, decline, and rejuvenation) is managed to ensure a destination evolves to remain desirable for the changing consumer and competitive in its target markets. Destination development happens when industry and government plan and work together to enhance the quality of the visitor's experience by ensuring tourism products, services, amenities, and practices meet and exceed visitor expectations over the long term.

Tourism has two primary revenue drivers — supply and demand. Creative marketing efforts strive to generate short-term demand for a destination and create immediate urgency for people to want to visit. Destination development focuses on the supply side of tourism by creating a compelling visitor experience to attract new visitors and entice repeat visitation. Sharing of experiences via social networks (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) and third-party platforms allow the traveller to review their experience (e.g., TripAdvisor, Google) in real time.

**There are multiple dimensions to supply that are considered in destination development planning strategies to enhance the visitor experience:**

- the setting in which our experiences take place and how to access them
- policies that establish and maintain opportunities and growth barriers
- the investment enhancement framework
- products and experiences matched to consumer interests, including infrastructure and amenities (which are often public in nature and used by residents as well as visitors)
- visitor servicing programs that meet and exceed guest expectations
- capability, skills, and training our industry needs so that we all can excel at what we do.



## D. METHODOLOGY

The North Thompson and Nicola Valleys Destination Development Strategy was developed based on a collaborative effort during a twenty-three month process that culminated in the creation of a Situation Analysis report and this Destination Development Strategy.

The destination development strategy approach was iterative, allowing for various opportunities for stakeholder input and validation (Figure 3).

The process followed a semi-structured approach, created by Destination BC, that allowed for flexibility to ensure the unique considerations of this planning area were assessed and respected.

The discussions built upon the consultations for the 2012–2022 Thompson Okanagan Regional Tourism Strategy. A volunteer working group contributed their expertise. Their input helped develop the goals and supporting objectives and plans contained in this strategy.

FIGURE 2: Five Dimensions of Supply — the Visitor Experience



FIGURE 3:  
Key Project  
Timelines

ACTIVITY	DATES
Pre-project staging and document review	August 2017
Two community consultation workshops: Valemount and Merritt	December 2017
Destination audit	December – January 2018
Draft Situation Analysis	April 2018
Priority setting and review of preliminary findings with the Working Group — workshop in Barriere, including stakeholder interviews	January 2018
Draft Destination Development Strategy — preliminary Revised draft following internal government review	June 2018 July 2018
Finalized Destination Development Strategy	July 2019

## E. PROJECT OUTPUTS

Three key outputs from this project are:

1. An asset inventory of accommodations, tourism businesses, attractions, tourism organizations, food and beverage establishments, parks and recreation sites, sports facilities, arts facilities, meeting facilities, transportation, and visitor services.
2. A Situation Analysis report that provides foundational research related to the North Thompson and Nicola Valleys, access and infrastructure, key tourism assets, key markets, a destination assessment, and priority planning area considerations used to inform the strategy.
3. This Destination Development Strategy.



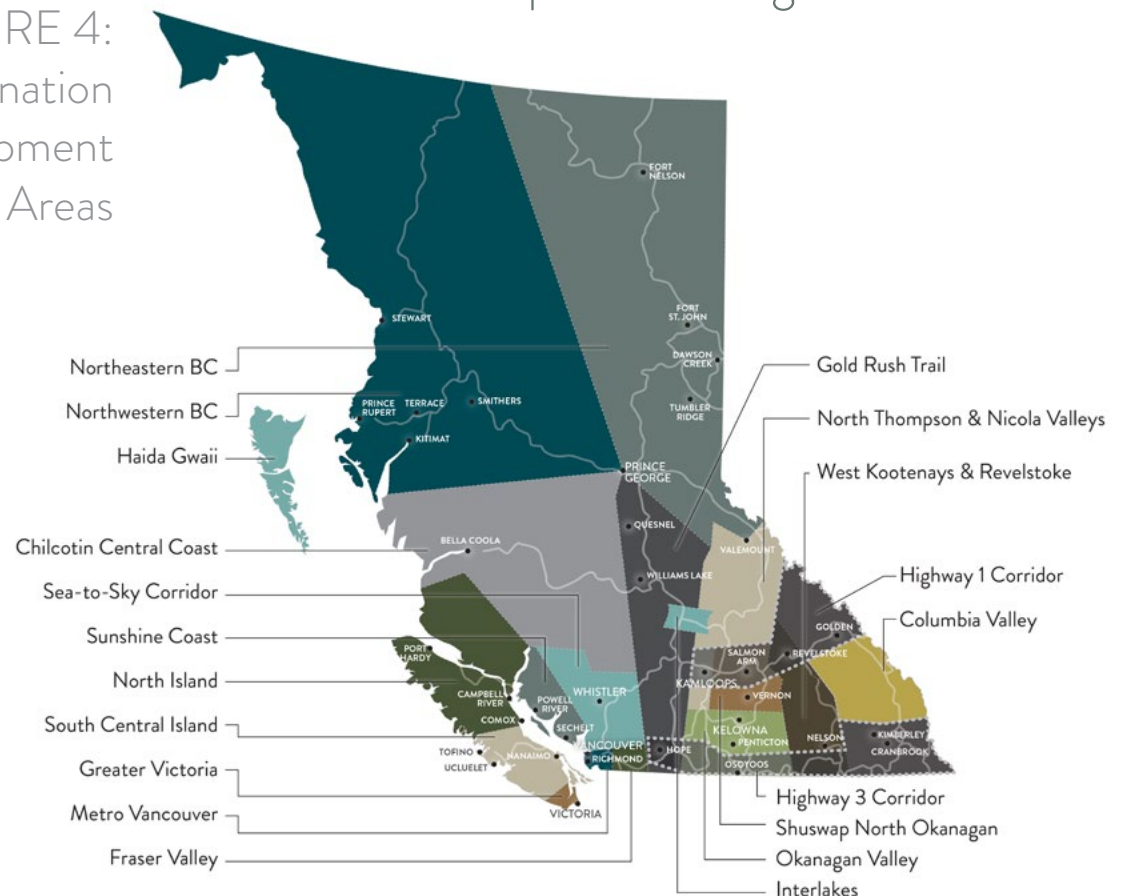
# 3

# ALIGNMENT

BATTLE BLUFF, KAMLOOPS  
Photo: Andrew Strain

The destination development strategy for North Thompson and Nicola Valleys is one of seven that will be prepared for the Thompson Okanagan tourism region and one of 20 for the province (Figure 4).

FIGURE 4:  
Twenty Destination  
Development  
Planning Areas



# The two other planning areas within the Thompson Okanagan tourism region are the Okanagan Valley and the Shuswap-North Okanagan.

In addition, four planning areas span multiple tourism regions and are partially in the Thompson Okanagan tourism region: Highway 1 Corridor, Highway 3 Corridor, Gold Rush Trail, and Interlakes. Over the course of Destination BC's Destination Development Strategy Program, each of the Province's tourism regions will integrate their planning area strategies into one Regional Destination Development Strategy which, in turn, will be used to inform a Provincial Destination Development Strategy, together with all 20 planning areas

strategies (Figure 5). For the Thompson Okanagan region, the process also allows for a refresh of its 2012–22 regional tourism strategy.

It is important to recognize that visitors do not make travel decisions based on artificial boundaries created by governments and organizations. As a result, planning areas span multiple jurisdictions thus reinforcing the importance of an integrated approach with a shared vision and prioritized investments.

FIGURE 5:  
Levels of Destination  
Development Planning



# 4

## SUCCESS NETWORK

Success networks represent the clusters of businesses and organizations (private sector, government, and not-for-profit) who are encouraged to collaborate and work in harmony to bring the opportunity to fruition.

Successful destination development implementation recognizes that we all have a role to play. The recommendations contained within this Destination Development Strategy form the foundation for additional, focused, and aligned discussions regarding implementation locally, regionally, and provincially.

Organizations identified within each tactical success network will be able to review, locally, regionally, and provincially, the potential for growing tourism, by leading, or supporting implementation, and action. It does not imply the organizations have committed or endorsed the tactic. This strategy is intended to inform conversations that may lead to future investments and actions, or that will contribute to growing this planning area's and British Columbia's visitor economy.

It is important to note that the development opportunities are not mutually exclusive.

THE STAKEHOLDERS  
DEMONSTRATED  
A DESIRE TO  
WORK TOGETHER  
THROUGHOUT  
THE COMMUNITY  
CONSULTATIONS.

The complexity of the tourism opportunity is understood along the planning area.

Tourism partners have already articulated their desire to work cooperatively, as a unified planning area, on destination development initiatives. It is believed that only by working collaboratively that the true potential of the area can be realized. The following partners have been identified collectively through the strategy development process as likely playing a role in moving a potential objective or action forward:

FIGURE 6: Figure 6: Key Government and Management Organizations

FEDERAL	FIRST NATIONS	PROVINCIAL	REGIONAL	LOCAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Destination Canada</li> <li>• Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada</li> <li>• Western Economic Diversification</li> <li>• Public Works and Government Services Canada</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shuswap Nation Tribal Council</li> <li>• Simpcw First Nation</li> <li>• Whispering Pines/Clinton Indian Band</li> <li>• Tk'emlúps Indian Band</li> <li>• Skeechestn Indian Band</li> <li>• Nicola Tribal Association</li> <li>• Upper Nicola Indian Band</li> <li>• Lower Nicola Indian Band (affiliated)</li> <li>• Nooaitch Indian Band</li> <li>• Coldwater Indian Band</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Destination BC</li> <li>• Indigenous Tourism BC</li> <li>• Ministries and/or Agencies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Tourism, Arts and Culture</li> <li>-Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation</li> <li>-Transportation and Infrastructure</li> <li>-Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, incl. Rec Sites and Trails and Heritage</li> <li>-Environment and Climate Change Strategy, incl. BC Parks</li> <li>-Agriculture</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Western Mountain Bike Tourism Association</li> <li>• go2HR</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association</li> <li>• Community Futures Thompson Country</li> <li>• Community Futures Nicola Valley</li> <li>• Thompson Rivers University</li> <li>• Okanagan College</li> <li>• Okanagan Rail Trail Initiatives</li> <li>• Southern Interior Development Initiative Trust</li> <li>• Northern Development Initiative Trust</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional districts of Fraser-Fort George, Thompson-Nicola</li> <li>• Municipalities of McBride, Valemount, Clearwater, Barriere, Sun Peaks, Kamloops, Logan Lake, Merritt</li> <li>• Chambers of Commerce</li> <li>• Tourism Valemount, Tourism Wells Gray, Lower North Thompson Tourism Society, Tourism Kamloops, Tourism Sun Peaks, Tourism Merritt</li> <li>• Municipal ec. dev. departments in McBride, Valemount, Clearwater and Merritt and Venture Kamloops</li> <li>• Vision Merritt</li> <li>• Local recreation organizations — see Situation Analysis</li> <li>• Arts Councils</li> </ul>



This strategy is intended to inform actions for the future, which over time may be embedded in the local, regional, and provincial decision making. The result will be an integrated system of priorities that will achieve better development decisions, drive greater tourism revenues, and realize benefits for businesses and communities in the planning area. All of this will contribute to a thriving, vibrant, and growing economy.

Joint strategy ownership among all planning area tourism partners is a critical component of this program's success. The planning process identifies a suggested success network of tourism partners to champion and move actions within each objective forward. However, during implementation, leads and involved parties would need to be verified. In many instances, executing on an initiative may require sharing responsibilities and entities listed will be responsible to lead their own areas.

The regional representatives at the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association have an important role to play as regional destination development champions. As this planning process is not intended to duplicate ongoing efforts or create new organizational or administrative structures, the implementation of this strategy should first be executed through existing organizations, where possible.

# A DISTINCTIVE DESTINATION

McBRIDE  
Photo: Jong Sun Park

## OVERVIEW OF NORTH THOMPSON AND NICOLA VALLEYS

### A. GEOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA

The North Thompson and Nicola Valleys planning area encompasses the portion of the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George (RDFFG), electoral area H east of McBride, and electoral areas A and B, J (from Porcupine Meadows Park southwest to Savona, then remainder south of the area), L (just south of Kamloops, along 5A), M, N, O, P (until Sun Peaks in the east, without communities along Highway 1) of the Thompson-Nicola Regional District (TNRD).

Municipalities include McBride, Valemount, Clearwater, Barriere, Sun Peaks, Kamloops, Logan Lake, and Merritt.

The geography of the planning area includes the southern portion of the Robson Valley, the North Thompson Valley, and most of the Nicola Valley. The primary cities are Kamloops and Merritt. The bio-geoclimatic

characteristics of the planning area are diverse; with a dry, sunny climate and landscapes of the Nicola Valley, transitioning to the desert landscape of Kamloops, and moving up to the North Thompson Valley, from rolling fields to the rising elevations of the Monashee and Cariboo mountains and eventually to the world's only inland temperate rainforest in the north.



# NORTH THOMPSON-NICOLA VALLEYS

● Towns and Indigenous Communities

— Highways

— Lakes and Rivers

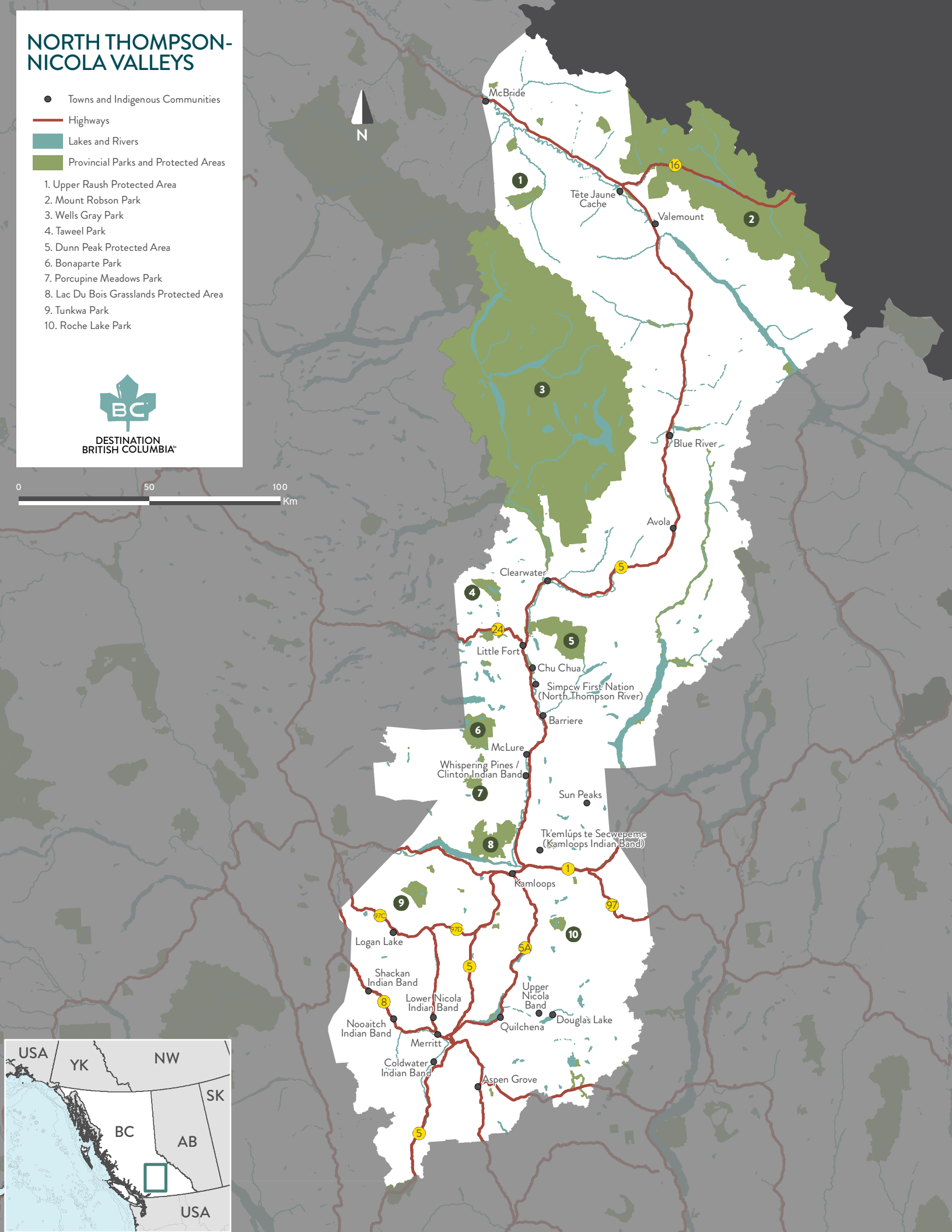
— Provincial Parks and Protected Areas

1. Upper Raush Protected Area
2. Mount Robson Park
3. Wells Gray Park
4. Taweel Park
5. Dunn Peak Protected Area
6. Bonaparte Park
7. Porcupine Meadows Park
8. Lac Du Bois Grasslands Protected Area
9. Tunkwa Park
10. Roche Lake Park



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0 50 100 Km



## B. DESCRIPTION OF THE POPULATION BASE, COMMUNITIES INCLUDED, AND FIRST NATIONS

The population of the planning area is estimated at approximately 130,000 in 2017, distributed amongst eight municipalities and unincorporated areas. Population change has been mixed, with growth in the southern areas, and declines in McBride, Valemount, and Barriere. There are nine First Nations communities in the planning area, with an estimated 2017 population of 4,654.

TABLE 1:  
Municipal and  
Regional District  
Population

NAME	AREA TYPE	2017	% GROWTH 2011-17
REGIONAL DISTRICT FRASER-FORT GEORGE			
McBride	VL	570	-3.1
Valemount	VL	952	-6.6
REGIONAL DISTRICT THOMPSON NICOLA			
Clearwater	DM	2,366	1.3
Barriere	DM	1,754	-1.0
Sun Peaks	VL	464	21.8
Kamloops	CY	92,317	5.1
Logan Lake	DM	2,072	0.0
Merritt	CY	7,737	7.5
Unincorporated Areas (portions)	RDR	26,062	12.4

Source: BC Stats. 2016. British Columbia Regional District and Municipal Population Estimates.  
Notes: RD = Regional District, RDR = Regional District Unincorporated Area, CY = City, T = Town, DM = District Municipality VL = Village



TABLE 2:  
First Nations

FIRST NATION	REGISTERED POPULATION	MEMBER OF:
Simpco	260	Shuswap Nation Tribal Council
Whispering Pines	60	Shuswap Nation Tribal Council
Tk'emlúps	2,540	Shuswap Nation Tribal Council
Skeechestn	250	Shuswap Nation Tribal Council
Upper Nicola	300	Nicola Tribal Association
Lower Nicola	665	Affiliated with Nicola Tribal Association
Nooaitch	125	Nicola Tribal Association
Coldwater	390	Nicola Tribal Association
Shackan	64	Nicola Tribal Association

Source: Indigenous and North Affairs Canada. 2018. First Nation Profiles.

## C. OVERVIEW OF TOURISM PERFORMANCE

TABLE 3:  
Highlights key  
indicators for the  
planning area

	2016 PERFORMANCE	% Over 2015
Room Revenues <sup>1</sup>		
Kamloops	\$56,043,000	9.8
Thompson/Nicola	\$7,630,000	11.4
Sun Peaks	\$7,158,000	25.2
Valemount	\$8,384,000	10.2
Hotel Occupancy Rate (Average) BC	68.3%	3.3
Kamloops	56.7%	5.0
Average Daily Room Rate BC	\$153	6.5
Kamloops	\$108	1.9
Visitor Centre attendance	349,847	12.7
Provincial parks attendance (overnight and day use)	2,212,624	14.0
Passenger volume to Kamloops Airport	322,429	-7

Source: Room Revenues by Municipal Jurisdictions, 2010–2017. BC Stats.; BC Visitor Services Statistics Program. Destination BC.; Provincial Tourism Indicators: Year in Review 2015 & 2016. Destination BC; BC Parks 2015/16 Statistics Report. BC Parks.

<sup>1</sup>BC Stats provides room revenues only for MRDT communities.

In BC, the measurement of industry performance is largely based on room revenue, with this data being derived from the returns of the Municipal and Regional District Tax. MRDT data for the communities with the tax was \$71 million in 2016, an increase of 11% over 2015. Particularly strong performance was seen in Sun Peaks, but Kamloops and Valemount also performed well<sup>2</sup>.

Visitor Centre attendance has increased in the planning area, which is almost double the Thompson Okanagan attendance growth of 7.8% and is in excess of overall BC attendance change of 0.6%.

Parks represent a major destination attraction for visitors. The provincial park system in the planning area hosted more than 2.2 million overnight and day-users in 2016, a 14.0% increase over 2015.

## D. KEY VISITOR MARKETS

TOTA has identified and profiled EQ segments in line with Destination BC's EQ targets and priorities.

- As of 2017, the BC market is 1,896,321 households and 4,817,160 population. Top EQ types are Free Spirits (20%), Authentic Experiencers (14%), Rejuvenators (14%) and Cultural Explorers (13%). The 25–64 age group, consisting of young families and Baby Boomers, is dominant and growth is expected to be robust for at least the next decade. BC residents will travel multiple times per year providing ample opportunity to entice them to the area.
- As of 2017, the Alberta market is 1,613,309 households and 4,306,039 population, with top EQ types being No Hassle Travellers (22%) Gentle Explorers (18%), Authentic Experiencers (17%), Free Spirits

(15% of households), and Cultural Explorers (10%). Alberta markets have an appreciation of nature and seek out connections to the wild.

- The Washington market consists of 2,865,392 households and the EQ profiles are similar to BC and Alberta, with leading segments being Authentic Experiencers (18%), Gentle Explorers (12%), Free Spirits (11%) and Cultural Explorers (11%).

In 2011–2012, Destination BC produced an in-market study of the Thompson Okanagan region conducted among BC, Alberta, and Washington residents<sup>3</sup>. Half of the respondents who are familiar with the Thompson Okanagan have a very favourable overall impression of the region.

<sup>2</sup>Neither Blue River nor McBride collect the MRDT, although McBride is actively looking at introducing the tax.

<sup>3</sup>2012 In-Market Research Report Thompson Okanagan. 2012. Tourism BC.

The research on trip motivation versus participation is noteworthy. Visitors to destinations within the Thompson Okanagan participated in a greater range of activities while on their trip than was originally intended. Sightseeing, visiting friends and relatives, visiting wineries, and hiking were the most common trip motivators.

Those activities with the largest gap in motivation versus participation offer the greatest opportunities to differentiate from competing destinations.

## E. OVERVIEW OF TOURISM ASSETS, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITIONS

The North Thompson and Nicola Valleys are two areas that together represent a wide spectrum of valley and plateau landscapes, volcanic and glaciated terrain, and ecosystems. Stretching from the Rocky Mountain Trench southwards to Merrit, this planning area is located within the rain shadow of the Coastal Mountain Range — a drop in elevation from 780m above sea level in McBride to 595m in Merritt.

Travellers have long journeyed these two corridors. In early days, Indigenous, nomadic Interior Salish First Nations people would have used these corridors to follow changing food supplies in the different seasons. In more recent centuries pioneers seeking their fortune in gold, fur traders, or those building the railways would have travelled through the planning area. Today, the planning area provides arterial routes connecting Vancouver with Prince George, Jasper, and Edmonton. The planning area provides direct access to a range of outdoor recreation experiences year-round and a series of smaller communities along the route. Kamloops provides a hub and key intersection with Highway 1.

Ecosystems vary considerably and include the world's only ancient inland temperate rainforest near McBride (the Ancient Forest/Chun T'oh Whudujut Park and Protected Area — BC's newest Provincial Park as of this writing), the

flora and fauna of the western slopes of the Rocky Mountains-North Continental Range, the lush alpine meadows of Wells Gray Provincial Park, Montane spruce and Engelmann spruce-Sub alpine fir forests of the Bonaparte Plateau, and the grasslands of the Nicola Valley.

THESE ECOSYSTEMS TOGETHER WITH THE CHANGING VALLEY TOPOGRAPHY, GIVE THE TRAVELLER THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPERIENCE A RICH ARRAY OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPES, INCLUDING A RANGE OF FARMLAND.





**Key tourism features and assets include:**

- Distinctive natural landscapes, nature-based attractions, and outdoor recreation assets:
  - RIVERS AND WATERFALLS** the major watersheds including the North Thompson, Thompson and Nicola Rivers, and the Clearwater River host numerous recreation and tourism activities from fishing and jetboating to whitewater rafting. Destination waterfalls include internationally renowned Helmcken Falls, as well as Dawson, Spahats, Rearguard, and Canim Falls.
  - STOCKED LAKES AND RESORT FISHING OPPORTUNITIES** with the Kamloops area recognized for its trout fishing which Includes guided fishing.
  - A range of **PROVINCIAL PARKS** (BC Parks) that offer unique landscapes and provide camping and day-use facilities and base areas to engage in a wide range of water and land-based activities. These parks include the noteworthy Mount Robson Provincial Park (It comprises a portion of one of the world's largest blocks of protected areas and was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1990), and Wells Gray Provincial Park, in addition to a significant number of smaller parks.
  - The **TRAILS** network includes numerous provincial, regional, and municipal parks as well as Crown lands. There are major trail systems around Lac Le Jeune (Chuwheles-Inks motorized trails), Logan Lake, Kane Valley (Cross Country Skiing), Hefley Lake (Embelton Mountain), Mount Morissey (Sun Peaks Cross Country Skiing), Clearwater (Candle Creek Cross Country Skiing), Valemount (Swift Creek Trails), and McBride (Bell Mountain/Lucille Snowmobile trails). Popular city trails include the Kamloops River Trail. Kamloops and Merritt offer epic cross-country rides and terrain for mountain bikers.





Opportunities to expand include the CPR Spences Bridge-Nicola line that has the original right-of-way and bridges between Merritt and Spences Bridge that is still intact.

**-RECREATION SITES** there are hundreds of recreation sites across the planning area maintained by Recreation Sites and Trails BC. They provide access to recreational areas, especially fishing lakes.

**-WINTER RECREATION** there are multiple opportunities for cross-country skiing, snow-shoeing, and snowmobiling within the planning area. These opportunities are in addition to the activities offered at specific resorts that include Sun Peaks Resort with the second-largest skiable terrain in Canada at 16 square kilometers; Mike Wiegele Helicopter Skiing, one of the premier resorts in the world; and the proposed Valemount Glacier Destination where construction has commenced.

**-EQUESTRIAN AND GUEST RANCHES** and related activities equestrian trails across the planning area.

**-GOLF** there are 18 golf courses in the planning area, mainly clustered around Kamloops. Major courses include Tobiano Golf Course outside of Kamloops and the Sun Peaks Resort Golf Course.

- Arts and cultural facilities and activities:

**-COMMUNITY HERITAGE AND MUSEUM CENTRES** with the majority in Kamloops.

**-ART GALLERIES** a vibrant arts scene throughout the planning area, but particularly in the regional centre of Kamloops.

**-WALK OF STARS MURALS** In Merritt is the Country Music Capital of Canada and one of its chief attractions is the city's Walk of Stars and Murals.

**-EVENTS** a variety of themed events year-round throughout the planning area, attracting participants and spectators from inside and outside the region. These events highlight and celebrate local culture, agriculture, pioneer heritage, music, winter sports, film, and Indigenous themes.

- Indigenous culture:

**-ATTRactions** include the Secwepemc Museum and Heritage Park in Kamloops and events such as the annual Kamloopa Powwow, one of the largest celebrations of First Nations culture and heritage in Western Canada and the Simpcw First Nations First Fish Ceremony.

**-INDIGENOUS FOOD** Kekuli Cafe in Merritt; Painted Pony Cafe in Kamloops.

**-TRAILS DEVELOPMENT** the Simpcw First Nation is partnering with the Western Canada Mountain Bike Tourism Association to undertake the development of trails and mountain bike recreation and tourism in Simpcw territories.

- Local Flavours

**-FARMS** Some of the most popular visitor attractions in the region are its farms with several being opened to visitors for the purchase of goods and other activities — such as Rainer, Labyrinth, Thistle, Nicola Ranch, and 3 Bar.

**-FARMERS MARKETS** Farmers markets in McBride, Valemount, Clearwater, Barriere, Sun Peaks, Kamloops, and Merritt.

**-FALL FAIRS AND RODEOS** Most communities in the planning area have rodeos including those associated with fall fairs.

**-BC WILDLIFE PARK** The park, 43 hectares in size and with more than 40 species, is located just outside of Kamloops. It is an accredited member of the Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums.



-**WINERIES AND BREWERIES** a growing presence of both wineries and breweries in the Kamloops area that offer wine tours and tastings, and brewery tours and tastings; and a cidery at Mamit Lake.

- Sports

-Kamloops is marketed as **CANADA'S TOURNAMENT CAPITAL** with a wide range of sporting facilities and a strong presence in sporting events and tournaments.

-**SPORTS** include baseball, football, lacrosse, hockey, and more. Major teams include the Western Hockey League's Kamloops Blazers, a Junior "A" division team, and the BC Junior League's Merritt Centennials.

Further detail on the tourism features and assets can be found in the Situation Analysis report.

## F. SUMMARY OF KEY STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

From a tourism destination perspective, the North Thompson and Nicola Valleys benefit from a range of strengths.

However, the planning area is also facing destination development challenges, some of which have the potential to impact the future growth and sustainability of the tourism sector. In early 2018 a new destination assessment tool was used to assess the competitiveness of the planning area.

This assessment tool provided an overall assessment of a destination from different supply-oriented perspectives, which meant that it focused primarily on the resources, assets, infrastructure, and policies that make a destination competitive, rather than the marketing of the destination and related roles of destination marketing organizations.

**The tool provided an opportunity to assess four broad areas of each destination:**

**1. DESTINATION READINESS** looked at general attributes of the destination and travel to and within the destination.

**2. TOURISM ASSETS AND EXPERIENCES** looked at the entire range of tourism resources and assets, and the delivery of experiences.

**3. SUPPORT SERVICES INFRASTRUCTURE** looked at the infrastructure that supports the industry, such as the accommodation sector.

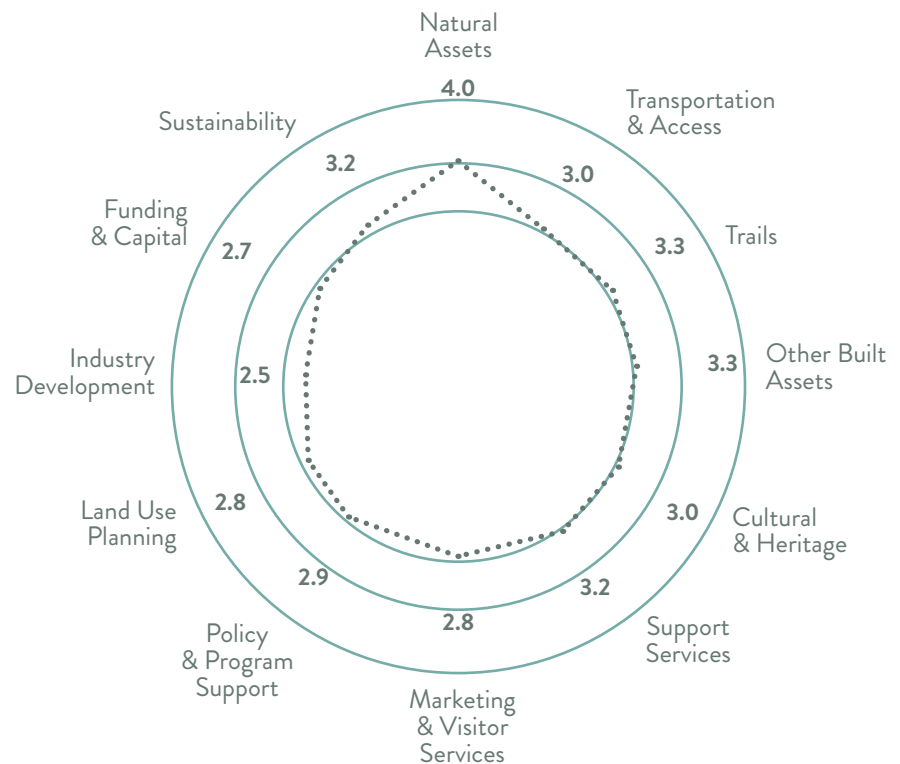
**4. ENABLING CONTEXT** looked at the strategies, policies, and resources that enable the industry to thrive sustainably.

FIGURE 7:  
Destination  
Assessment Scores

The findings indicated an overall score of 3.1 out of 5 for the area based on a series of 130 statements that stakeholders assessed in relation to what the planning area was currently doing or offering.

The assessment of the sub-elements is presented in Figure 7. These findings complement the desk research and the workshop discussions on strengths, challenges, and opportunities.

## ASSESSMENT SUMMARY – SUB ELEMENTS



Based on the assessment summaries, the areas that would benefit from further action are:

- industry development
- funding and capital (in terms of availability for tourism development)
- land-use strategy as it relates to tourism
- visitor services
- policy and program support

To further facilitate building strengths and addressing challenges, the planning area's tourism stakeholders identified key opportunities that form the foundation of this strategy. Key strengths, challenges, and opportunities are summarized in Figure 8.

FIGURE 8: Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities

KEY STRENGTHS	KEY CHALLENGES	KEY OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diverse geo-heritage — UNESCO World Heritage Site (Mt. Robson), internationally significant geology, temperate inland rainforest (potential international significance)</li> <li>• Wells Gray Provincial Park, Mt. Robson Provincial Park — established iconic parks</li> <li>• World class ski resorts — Sun Peaks and Blue River</li> <li>• Trail systems</li> <li>• Strong winter season in the North Thompson — 60% of business in winter.</li> <li>• Indigenous culture, plus commitment from First Nations towards tourism</li> <li>• Arts &amp; Culture assets/heritage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public transportation</li> <li>• Concerns over effective use of park use permits for Wells Gray</li> <li>• Declining BC Parks funds for trail maintenance and park operations</li> <li>• Caribou conservation versus backcountry recreation</li> <li>• Crown land access and use issues/zoning issues and a need for improved designation of area for winter use</li> <li>• Impact of forestry operations on the landscape</li> <li>• HR and availability, training, and housing of staff</li> <li>• Need for additional, higher end accommodations</li> <li>• Land and infrastructural constraints on development</li> <li>• Setbacks over the Global Geopark proposal and the Wells Gray WHS nomination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Valemount Glacier Destination resort</li> <li>• Canadian Mountain Holidays plans for expansion near McBride</li> <li>• Increasing the availability of winter permits</li> <li>• More robust approach to land &amp; resource management planning</li> <li>• Implementing a resource road strategy</li> <li>• Greater emphasis on wildlife viewing</li> <li>• Beautification of towns</li> <li>• Increased focus on Indigenous tourism and cultural tourism</li> <li>• Reinvestment of stumpage and water royalties</li> <li>• Transportation services to backcountry locations</li> <li>• Connecting trails systems and Simpcw mountain bike trail network and leveraging the rail trail</li> <li>• Circle routes</li> </ul>



## G. DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT — THE THOMPSON OKANAGAN REGIONAL TOURISM STRATEGY

At the regional level, the Thompson Okanagan ten-year regional tourism strategy (Embracing Our Potential, November 2012) provides the strategic framework for the development of tourism for the Thompson Okanagan region.

The regional strategy identified five experience-based themes that have been shaping priorities and actions since 2012 and are regarded as core to positioning the Thompson Okanagan as a region of iconic and authentic quality experiences — destinations for passion, fulfillment, and adventure.

- **IDENTIFYING THE ICONIC** profiling and developing those truly outstanding experiences and activities associated with iconic landscapes will differentiate the region and set it apart from its competitors.
- **ENRICHING LOCAL FLAVOURS** strengthening the region's growing emphasis on local flavours and building recognition for its culinary attributes.
- **REVEALING THE STORY** highlighting the local and regional stories in a way that will allow visitors to make a strong emotional connection with the destination.
- **EXPANDING PERSONAL HORIZONS** identifying unique learning experiences and opportunities for self-development, recognizing that learners constitute 35% of the global travel market.

- **BUILDING AUTHENTICITY** focusing on creating a strong sense of place and opportunities for travellers to engage in immersive experiences with local communities and enjoy the sense of being where things are real and original.

In addition to the five underlying themes and the value of using them to build a distinctive destination, the regional strategy identified other areas where the industry would benefit from further strategic planning — areas that would address the objectives related to reducing the seasonality, increasing yield, and maximizing the spread of benefits throughout the region. The areas identified include:

- Events
- Indigenous cultural tourism
- Trails
- Access
- Research
- Visitor services/packaging and sales.

In identifying the development priorities for the planning area, consideration has been given to building on this framework, while responding to the current and future issues and opportunities facing the industry and destination. An assessment of progress since the completion of the regional strategy for the Thompson Okanagan in 2012 can be found in Appendix 1.

6

# A DISTINCTIVE DIRECTION

CLEARWATER  
Photo: Kari Medig

## STRATEGY DIRECTION

### A. VISION

The following 10-year vision has been created. It is based on the 10-year aspirations for the North Thompson and Nicola Valleys expressed by the tourism partners during the consultation process, while also seeking to align with existing community plans and related frameworks. The goals, strategies and actions within this strategy have been prioritized to achieve the elements identified within this vision.

The vision has been written as a two-part statement. The initial phrase relates to the visitor experience, and the secondary phrase relates to the aspirations for the tourism industry within the region.



THE INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED AND PREFERRED VALLEY CORRIDOR CONNECTING THE NORTH, THE ROCKIES, AND THE COAST, IS A VIBRANT DESTINATION THAT OFFERS A DYNAMIC SPECTRUM OF YEAR-ROUND OUTDOOR ADVENTURE AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPERIENCE A FUSION OF INTERIOR INDIGENOUS CULTURE AND FRONTIER-PIONEER HERITAGE IN ITS WELCOMING VALLEY TOWNS.

A TOURISM INDUSTRY THAT UNDERSTANDS ITS SIGNIFICANCE TO LOCAL ECONOMIES AND WORKS TOGETHER TO DELIVER REMARKABLE EXPERIENCES AND DEVELOP NEW OPPORTUNITIES.



## B. GOALS

Three inter-related destination development goals have been identified to support the vision:

1. Develop distinctive experiences with a high level of market appeal
2. Work collaboratively to maintain a healthy natural environment
3. Disperse the benefits of tourism throughout the planning area

In addition, the Destination BC Destination Development Program provides two common provincial goals that all 20 planning areas around BC will support:

1. Lead Canada in growth of overnight visitor expenditures
2. Secure the highest Net Promoter Score in North America

## C. GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

As the journey of destination development continues in the planning area, choices will have to be made and priorities set. Guiding principles were discussed by stakeholders and it was agreed this strategy and related decision making will continue to focus on:

- Maintaining the integrity of landscape, environment, and cultural heritage
- Enriching the quality of life
- Integrating and supporting other sectoral interests
- Collaborating in a purposeful and respectful manner
- Aligning with the regional tourism strategy and relevant provincial and federal strategic directions

## D. MOTIVATING EXPERIENCES

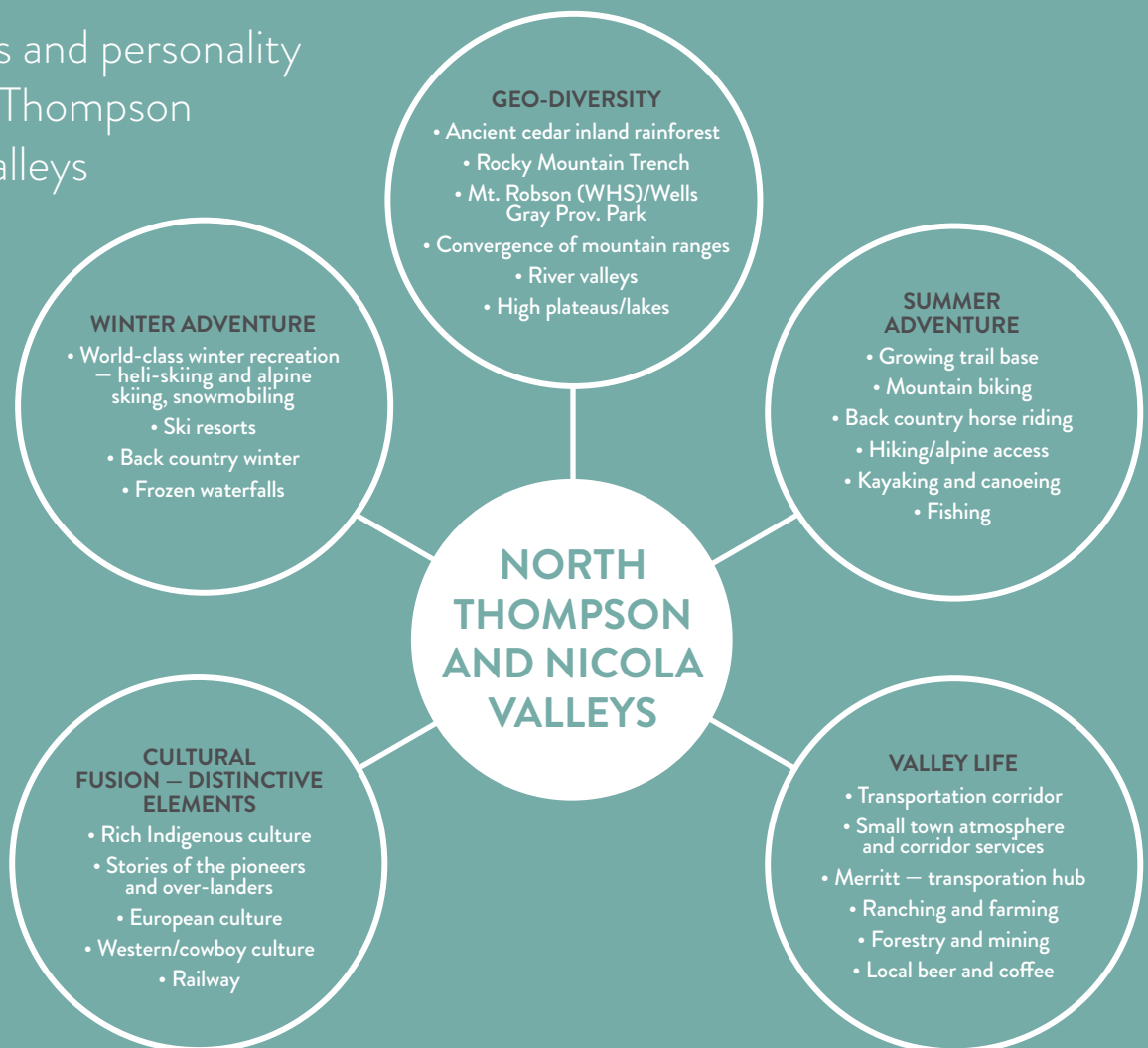
An identification of the key motivating experiences that will set the destination apart as a competitive and sustainable destination, and will entice the visitors we want to visit, is an important step in developing the strategy. Differentiating the planning area and making it truly unique in terms of these experiences will increase the strength of the North Thompson and Nicola Valleys.

The first step in identifying the experience potential for the planning area, involves developing an understanding of the main attributes and personality of the North Thompson and Nicola Valleys. It should be noted that the strategy is focused

on product development and not marketing. As such, it is a vehicle for exploring development themes that can be advanced by various agencies, local governments, and business operators. See Figure 9.

Visitor experiences that focus on leveraging these underlying five experience themes are going to strengthen the distinctiveness of the North Thompson and Nicola Valleys and its overall positioning in the market place. A key focus of this strategy is to work together to ensure there is a collective mass of activities for each of these experience themes to motivate year-round travel to the planning area.

FIGURE 9:  
Key attributes and personality  
of the North Thompson  
and Nicola Valleys





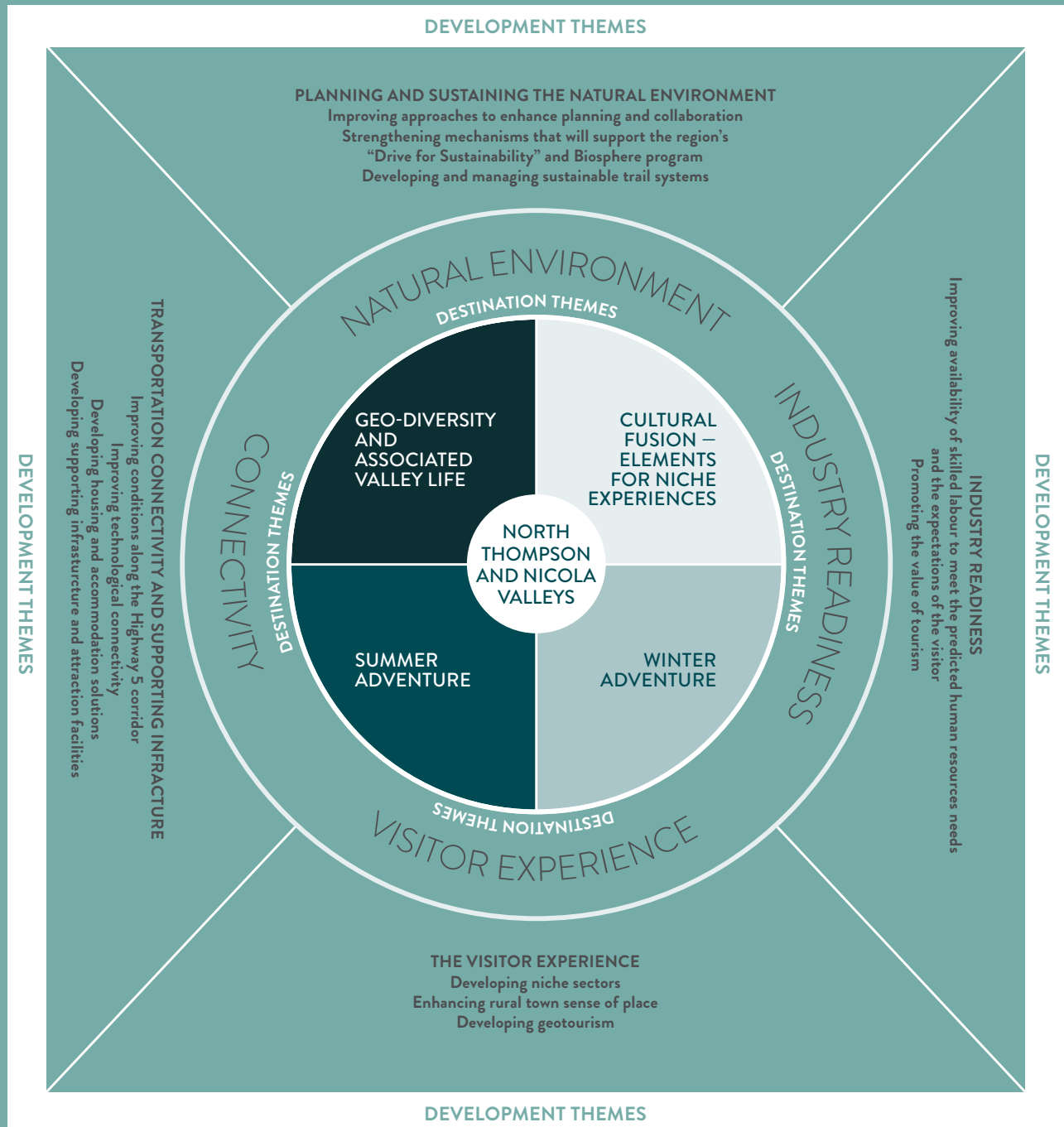
## E. DEVELOPMENT THEMES

Destination development strategy themes define the priorities that have surfaced from tourism partners through the planning process to support the vision and goals, as well as the motivating experiences. Four destination development themes were identified that align with existing priorities and aspirations, and will provide the basis for ensuring the ongoing, responsible growth of tourism. These themes will be used to focus efforts to strengthen the planning area as a destination. Each theme has objectives and actions identified to support it.

WHILE THEY WILL BE PRESENTED AS PRIORITIES, THEY ARE INTER-RELATED AND WILL WORK TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE THE ASPIRATIONAL VISION OF THIS DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR 2029.

1. Planning and sustaining the natural environment
2. Transportation, connectivity, and supporting infrastructure
3. Industry readiness
4. The visitor experience

FIGURE 10: Development and Experience Themes



# F. INTERACTION OF DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND MOTIVATING EXPERIENCES

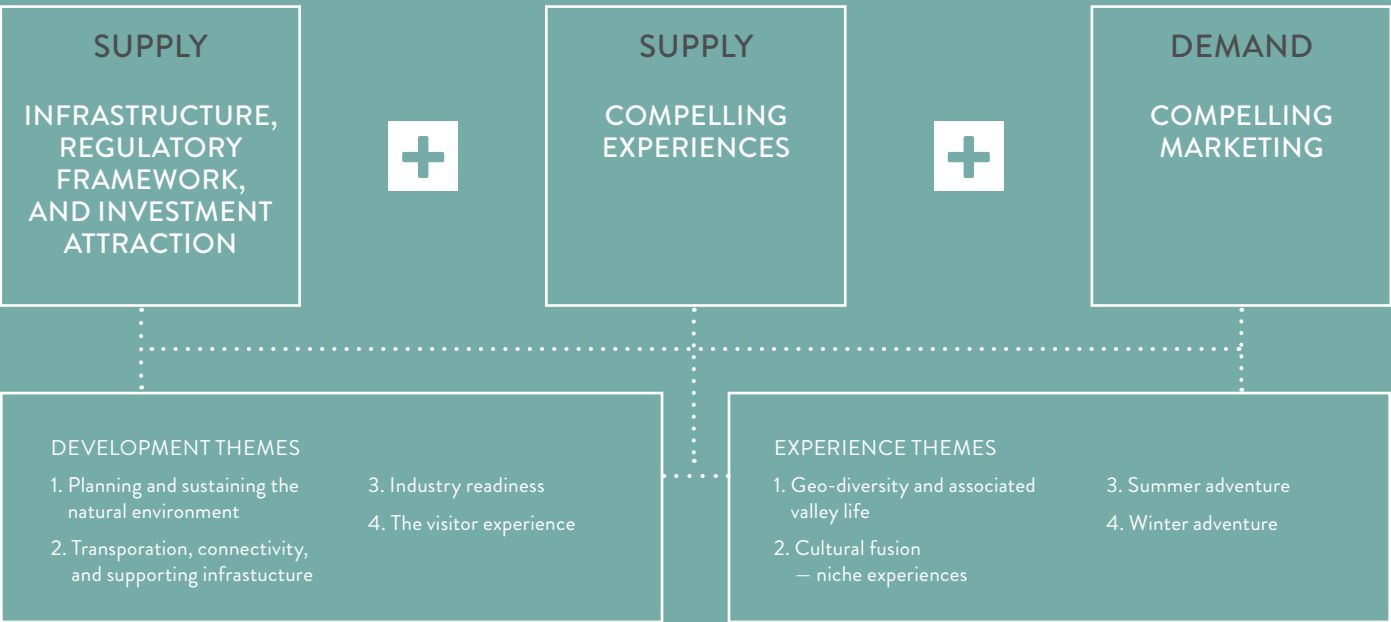
For any destination development strategy to achieve its goals, there must be coordinated interaction with the other components of the tourism development process. As mentioned in Section 1, tourism has two primary revenue drivers — supply and demand. Destination development focuses on the supply side of tourism by providing the setting, access, policy frameworks, investment attraction, experiences, and visitor services to attract new visitors and entice repeat visitation. Demand side marketing efforts strive to create urgency for people to want to visit.

The interaction of supply, demand, development themes, and experience themes is cyclical. The process of developing supply drivers such as transportation, policy frameworks, and

investment attraction supports the development of compelling experiences. These experiences are then able to be marketed to potential visitors to generate demand. The marketing demand drivers lead to purchase decisions which result in visitation. Then, a new cycle of supply-side management and investment is set in motion to encourage competitiveness, sustainability, and tourism-driven benefits over the long term.

Each of the four development themes will contribute to each of the experience themes that have been determined for the planning area.

FIGURE 11: Interaction of Development Themes and Experiences Themes





7

# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

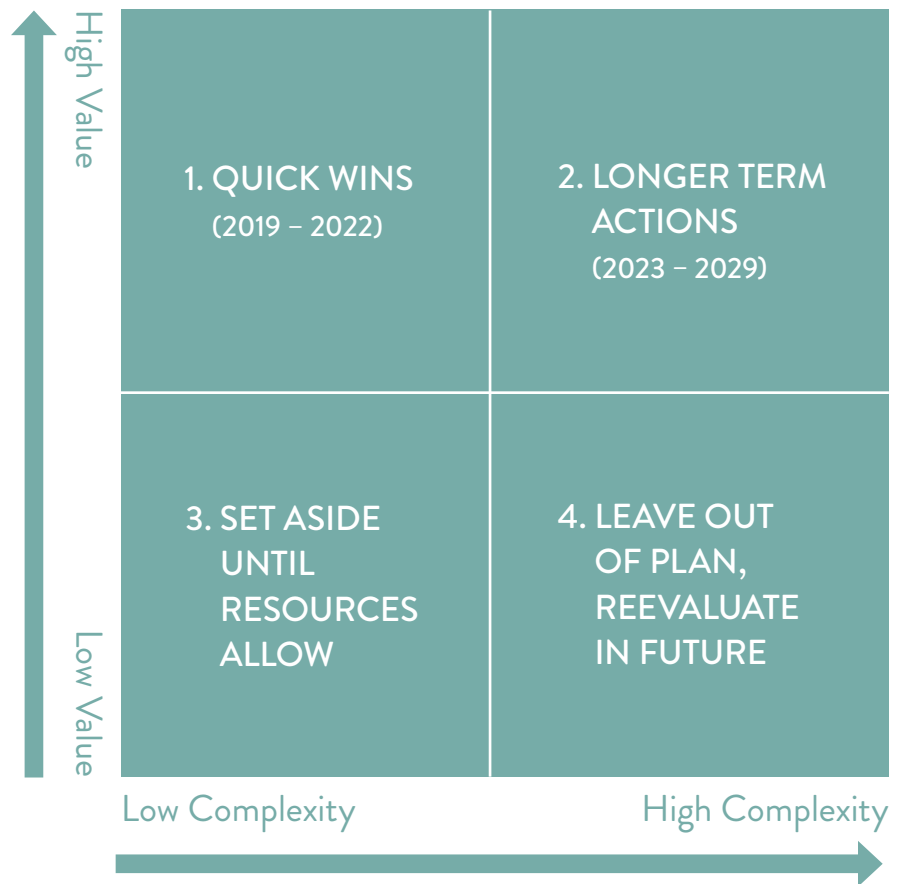
REARGUARD FALLS PROVINCIAL PARK  
Photo: Kelly Funk

Presenting the destination development objectives within a consistent framework will allow the planning area, TOTA, and the province to examine the various priorities across all relevant planning areas to identify what belongs within a regional or provincial strategy. Where the proposed objective has provincial or regional scope beyond this planning area, it is noted.

The Working Group utilized a framework to determine the prioritization of each objective and the relative timing for implementation:

- 1. QUICK WINS** high value tactics with low complexity and can be achieved within three years (2019–2022).
- 2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS** high value, high complexity that require four to ten years to achieve the result (2023–2029) albeit activities can begin immediately to achieve the outcome.
- 3. SET ASIDE UNTIL RESOURCES ALLOW** low complexity and low value, address when time and/or resources exist.
- 4. LEAVE OUT OF STRATEGY, RE-EVALUATE IN FUTURE** high complexity and low value, not realistically achieved in the 10-year time frame of this strategy.

FIGURE 12: Priority Setting Framework



Presenting the destination development objectives with a consistent framework will allow the province and the planning area to examine the various priorities across all planning areas to identify those which belong within a regional or provincial strategy. The success network is identified<sup>4</sup>, and where the proposed

objective has provincial or regional scope beyond this planning area, it is noted. This list does not represent all the opportunities that emerged during the planning process, but those that emerged as a higher priority for destination development.

<sup>4</sup>Organizations and partners listed under the success networks have been identified collectively through the strategy development process as likely playing a role in moving a potential objective or action forward. In no way is this meant to suggest any form of commitment or endorsement of the objective or action.

## A. OBJECTIVES & ACTIONS

In total, 43 objectives have been identified for this planning area for the next 10 years. The following section outlines the objectives by each development theme, the priority, and relative timing for implementation. It also identifies the

priority actions within each objective. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list of all tactical implementation activities, only a highlight of the priorities. As such, objectives or actions may require a more detailed implementation strategy.

THEME 1: ACTIONS	PRIORITY
<b>PLANNING AND SUSTAINING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT</b>	
<b>OBJECTIVES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving approaches to enhance strategy and collaboration</li> <li>Strengthening mechanisms that will support the region's Drive for Sustainability and Biosphere program</li> <li>Developing and managing sustainable trail systems</li> </ul>	
<b>IMPROVING APPROACHES TO ENHANCE PLANNING AND COLLABORATION</b> <p>1. Organize regional capacity for implementing and monitoring the Destination Development Strategy.</p> <b>ACTIONS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a Tourism Advisory Committee to monitor and follow-up on the implementation of this strategy and invite First Nations to become part of this process.</li> <li>Develop a monitoring and reporting mechanism to measure and assess implementation. Meet with DMOs and economic development offices to determine how they are currently measuring performance.</li> <li>Prepare a performance measurement framework to track progress and measure change.</li> </ul> <b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> TOTA, First Nations, ITBC, DMOs, local government	<b>1. QUICK WINS</b>
<p>2. Raise the awareness of tourism interests in the Crown land management process.</p> <b>ACTIONS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research and assemble content on how land and resource management, and other government decision making, impacts tourism development. Illustrate with case examples, quantifying adverse economic and community impacts to demonstrate implications of resource sector-based decisions on the tourism sector (e.g., the implications of logging road closures).</li> <li>Advocate for the inclusion of tourism in the mandate letters of all relevant ministries.</li> </ul> <b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> Local government, FLNR, Crown corporations, TIABC, Adventure Tourism Coalition	<b>2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS</b>
	<b>PROVINCIAL SCOPE</b>



THEME 1: ACTIONS	PRIORITY
<b>3. Develop a streamlined Crown tenure process that facilitates investment in more tourism products.</b>  <b>ACTIONS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare a digital handbook on how to access Crown tenures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare the handbook by incorporating content on FLNR's Land Use — Adventure Tourism &amp; Commercial Recreation website.</li> <li>Investigate the need and potential for setting up a regional advocacy group to provide feedback and help facilitate tourism access to Crown lands.</li> <li>Include supplementary information on ALC Policies, the Act and the ALR Use, Subdivision and Procedure (USP) Regulation that allows land owners to host a gathering for an event provided specified conditions are met.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Consider offering one-day workshops or seminars on "How to do...." for tourism operators. This would be more in the form of the Tourism Essentials program but not as in-depth as Remarkable Experiences.</li> </ul> <b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> TOTA, FLNR, AGRI, TAC, DBC, First Nations, Agriculture Land Commission, local government	1. QUICK WINS  CATALYST  PROVINCIAL SCOPE
<b>4. Advocate for development of new land and resource management plans<sup>5</sup>.</b>  <b>ACTIONS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage government to update the Kamloops Land and Resource Management Plan and the Eight Peaks Sustainable Resource Management Plan (SRMP), and to establish an SRMP for the Nicola Valley. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the need for renewed and/or further analysis of long term effects of the Mountain Pine Beetle epidemic and wildfires and the role tourism could play in optimizing the economic benefits of Crown land use.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Encourage cooperation between local recreation users and commercial operators on the Eight Peaks development.</li> </ul> <b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> FLNR, TCA, IRR, local government, First Nations, TOTA, tourism operators, community groups	1. QUICK WINS
<b>5. Develop a regional approach to resource road deactivation and the use of forest service roads used for circle routes.</b>  <b>ACTIONS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local government to support the UBCM resolutions B58 and B59 (2017) on the designation and maintenance of recreational roads and maintenance of FSRs for circle route travel, respectively. B58 asks the government of BC to identify key resource roads that are no longer required for industrial use and designate these roads as recreational roads. This will require provincial oversight and funding for ongoing maintenance in support of the backcountry recreation tourism industry and other critical agricultural, commercial, educational, and emergency uses. B59 asks that critical FSRs be transitioned from FLNR to TRAN as highways.</li> <li>Encourage the government of BC to follow through on recommendations contained in the 2010 Resource Roads and Communities, as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopt policy that recognizes the evolved role that resource roads play in the economy.</li> <li>Consider establishing a High Public Use resource road class with a new funding model.</li> <li>Assess road deactivations and minimize where there is no strategic advantage to the deactivation such as protection for species at risk.</li> <li>Apply the Corporate Results-Based Model for access management.</li> <li>Establish a one-window platform for information exchange and dialogue.</li> <li>Establish an Industrial Road User Committees in all parts of the province.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> Local government, UBCM, FLNR, TRAN, First Nations	1. QUICK WINS  PROVINCIAL SCOPE

<sup>5</sup>Crown land in the region is subject to two land use plans, the Kamloops Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) and a Merritt Old Growth Management direction. The Kamloops LRMP is 23 years old and does not reflect current potential uses of Crown land. There are also Sustainable Resource Management Plans (SRMPs) in Blue River for the Eight Peaks area and for the Valemout to Blue River Winter Recreation area.

THEME 1: ACTIONS	PRIORITY
<p><b>6. Encourage local government to include tourism policies and management direction in their Official Community Plans and to align bylaws with neighbouring municipalities.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage local government to incorporate tourism into OCPs, regional growth strategies, regional context statements, and implementation agreements.</li> <li>• Encourage regular dialogue between the tourism industry and local government on advancing destination development in the municipal planning process. The Union of BC Municipalities provides some policy guidance on Economic Development Policy &amp; Initiatives, including Community Based Tourism and linking into the provincial Trail Strategy.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> TOTA, DMOs, local government, UBCM, First Nations, TIABC</p>	<p>3. SET ASIDE UNTIL RESOURCES ALLOW</p> <p>REGIONAL SCOPE</p>
<p><b>7. Design a tourism disaster and emergency program that helps communities and industry prepare for, educate, measure, mitigate, and adjust to major natural environmental events.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote distribution and use of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Destination BC's Emergency Resources for BC's Tourism Industry, particularly emergency strategy for tourism operators. Consider expanding these resources with small-business resource advisory guides.</li> <li>- TIABC's wildfire Public Service Announcement and other emergency preparedness tools.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Develop a community and/or regional impact tool that can be rolled out quickly to gather information from industry when emergency events occur.</li> <li>• Provide best practice research on industry operator response options for cancellations, refunds, re-bookings, and guest relations policy.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> TOTA, DBC, TIABC, FLNR, EMBC, TAC, JTT, IRR, local government, First Nations, ITBC</p>	<p>1. QUICK WINS</p> <p>PROVINCIAL SCOPE</p>
<p><b>STRENGTHENING MECHANISMS THAT WILL SUPPORT THE REGION'S DRIVE FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND BIOSPHERE PROGRAM</b></p> <p><b>8. Foster sustainability practices that improve the capacity and competitiveness of the tourism industry while leveraging TOTA's Biosphere destination accreditation.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the adoption of sustainability and green standards by tourism operators.</li> <li>• Provide a policy statement and guidance to local government on the adverse, and beneficial, aspects of the sharing economy (accommodation, transportation, tours, retail) on the tourism industry and how local authorities can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contribute to the competitiveness of the regulated tourism industry.</li> <li>- Mitigate adverse effects on regulated industry.</li> <li>- Encourage unregulated sharing services that resolve systemic gaps in local visitor services.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Work with local government and industry to follow-up on TOTA's sustainability charter statement and potential initiatives for product development, energy efficiency, and carbon footprint tracking.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> TOTA, Local government, economic development offices, tourism operators</p>	<p>3. SET ASIDE UNTIL RESOURCES ALLOW</p> <p>REGIONAL SCOPE</p>

THEME 1: ACTIONS		PRIORITY
<p><b>9. Utilize big data in the planning and management of tourism within the planning area and the Thompson Okanagan tourism region as a whole</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to work with partners to determine the most effective approaches to using big data in analyzing tourism traffic patterns and developing appropriate marketing decisions that will influence tourist dispersal.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> TOTA, Telus, credit card companies, Destination Canada, DBC, local DMOs</p>	1. QUICK WINS	
	REGIONAL SCOPE	
<p><b>10. Encourage BC Parks to undertake a new management strategy for Wells Gray Provincial Park.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the District of Clearwater in their request to BC Parks to update the Wells Gray Provincial Park Management Master Plan. The last plan for the full park was developed in 1986, although BC Parks has been conducting public consultations about park management and development in the interim years.</li> <li>Request that there is community input in relation to tourism objectives, management direction, and related policies.</li> <li>Advocate for more investment in park capital, including maintenance of park infrastructure, expanded egress, stakeholder process, roads, and visitor services.</li> <li>Prioritize access to exceptional natural features such as volcanic landforms and geo-sites, and winter access to frozen waterfalls.</li> <li>Encourage greater cooperation between parks operations and local DMOs on visitor services.</li> <li>Encourage greater consideration and investment in non-traditional infrastructure (such as yurts) to increase visitor interest.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> BC Parks, Simpcw First Nation, District of Clearwater, TNRD, TOTA, TAC, DBC, DMOs, Visitor Centres</p>	2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS	
	CATALYST	



THEME 1: ACTIONS	PRIORITY
<b>DEVELOPING AND MANAGING SUSTAINABLE TRAIL SYSTEMS</b>	1. QUICK WINS
<b>11. Develop a vision and strategy forum for an integrated trail network in the TOTA region.</b>	CATALYST
<b>ACTIONS</b>	REGIONAL SCOPE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convene a meeting of trail organizations to determine the interest in creating a vision and forum that would focus on a regional rail trails network that includes the Okanagan, the Shuswap, the North Thompson, and Nicola Valley. Potential themes the forum could address include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Preparing a consolidated trails atlas and inventory, comprising rail trails, mountain biking, road biking, hiking and equestrian components.</li> <li>-Preparing a cost benefit methodology for prioritizing trail developments. Improvements should be devised so there can be more informed and targeted discussions about where resources and efforts can best be allocated.</li> <li>-Prioritizing staging areas and connections that link trail networks to communities, mountain biking trails, road biking routes, farm gates, and resorts.</li> <li>-Continuing to support local organizations such as the Back Country Horsemen of BC North Thompson Chapter in developing supporting infrastructure for equestrian trails such as horse corrals and related camping facilities.</li> <li>-Supporting the implementation of existing trails strategies, such as the District of Clearwater's Trails Master Plan and the City of Kamloops Trails Master Plan.</li> <li>-Developing a product and destination development guidebook that helps communities and tour operators move from exceptional trails to exceptional experiences.</li> <li>-Enhancing engagement, communication, and dispute resolutions practices, and exploring opportunities to develop new partnerships with private landowners.</li> <li>-Connecting trail planning and trail use to broader sustainability initiatives — for example, how trails may contribute to water conservation and reduced carbon footprints.</li> <li>-Exploring new funding options, such as retaining internally generated funds such as stumpage fees and water royalties for trails development and maintenance.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> TOTA, local government, trail stewards and sector groups, RSTBC, Trails BC, First Nations, ITBC	

## THEME 1: ACTIONS

## PRIORITY

### 12. Develop at least two epic trails in the region.

#### 1. QUICK WINS

#### ACTIONS

- Identify and prioritize at least two epic trails that could be the foundation for a regional USP. Possibilities discussed as part of the destination development planning process:
  - KVR rail trail network around Merritt, notably the Merritt to Spence's Bridge section which is intact but passes through several farm properties. Numerous First Nations reside in this area and would need to be involved in planning and development.
  - The KVR section from Brookmere to Merritt is a possibility but some of the old railbed has been lifted for the Coldwater Road.
  - The Goat River Trail, which starts in Goat River (north of McBride) and goes to Quesnel/Barkerville. The Fraser Headwaters Alliance is closely involved in this project.
  - Mountain Bike trails in the Valemount area.
  - The Blue River area where there has been considerable work on improving local trail standards and developing trailheads, parking lots, bridges and visitor information.
  - The Simpcw First Nation North Thompson Valley mountain biking trail initiative which will link the lower North Thompson to McBride. This is being worked on in partnership with the Western Canada Mountain Bike Tourism Association
  - The North Thompson Valley snowmobile trail that would link Barriere and Sun Peaks to Valemount.
- Assemble spatial and/or GIS functionality and creation of a trails atlas.
- Develop a cost benefit methodology for prioritizing trail development and improvements should be devised (see Action 10). Unique or iconic trails may appear the most appropriate on the surface but may not actually represent the best economic return. Issues of regional equity and connectivity should also factor into discussions.
- Explore opportunities to develop a hut-to-hut experience for any epic trail initiative.
  - Re-developing the overgrown Clearwater to Myrtle Lake trail in association with a hut-to-hut experience would create a strong signature trail for the Wells Gray area.
- Increase engagement with the government of BC (as recommended in the Trails Strategy for British Columbia), local government, and trail groups would lead to a better planning environment by bringing additional resources and experiences to the table.
  - Develop a steward toolkit to help local groups plan and manage local trails. This toolkit could also be aligned with management of Crown trails and rec sites and potential stewardship agreements.

**SUCCESS NETWORK** Local government, BC Parks, RSTBC, AGRI, trail societies and stewards, Fraser Headwaters Alliance, First Nations, IRR, Trails BC, Interior Health — (Healthy Communities Initiative)

THEME 1: ACTIONS	PRIORITY
<b>13. Encourage greater First Nations involvement in trail experiences.</b>  <b>ACTIONS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As recommended in the Thompson Okanagan Regional Rail Trails Strategy 2016–2022, negotiate an MOU with First Nations for trail development and management.</li> <li>• Review the work of the Simpcw First Nation and its partnership with the Western Canada Mountain Bike Tourism Association and identify transferable practices and ways in which other First Nations can become more actively involved in rail trails activities, including accommodation, food, beverage, and tours.</li> <li>• Identify and promote the interpretation of Indigenous themes on the trail network.</li> <li>• Develop a TOTA Indigenous Tourism Strategy that prioritizes trail experiences, in alignment with their 2012 Regional Strategy.</li> </ul> <b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> TOTA, First Nations, ITBC, IRR, Trails BC, Western Canada Mountain Bike Tourism Association and other relevant sector associations, local government, Nicola Valley Explorers Society	2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS
	CATALYST
	REGIONAL SCOPE
<b>14. Work to improve the consistency and clarity of trail signage.</b>  <b>ACTIONS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare a signage strategy with the participation of all trail organizations, including local government.</li> <li>• Review and integrate existing strategic objectives (for example, the City of Merritt Wayfinding Signage Strategy).</li> <li>• Align highway and trail signage guidelines so wayfinding and interpretive information is consistently delivered across locations.</li> </ul> <b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> RSTBC, FLNR, local government, TOTA, First Nations, trail stewards	2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS
	REGIONAL SCOPE



THEME 2: ACTIONS	PRIORITY
TRANSPORTATION, CONNECTIVITY, AND SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE	
<b>OBJECTIVES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving ground transportation along the Highway 5 Corridor</li> <li>Improving technological connectivity</li> <li>Developing housing and accommodation solutions</li> <li>Developing supporting infrastructure and attraction facilities</li> </ul>	
<b>IMPROVING GROUND TRANSPORTATION ALONG THE HIGHWAY 5 CORRIDOR</b>  <b>15. Improve visitor services and amenities along Highway 5.</b>  <b>ACTIONS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with TRAN to increase the number of passing lanes on Highway 5 between Kamloops and Valemount. Currently there are no planned infrastructure programs or projects for Highway 5. In contrast the Cariboo Connector between Cache Creek and Prince George is being expanded and will potentially siphon valuable visitor traffic away from the North Thompson.</li> <li>Work with TRAN on having more interpretive signage, rest stops, and visitor services on Highway 5.</li> <li>Identify opportunities for electric charging stations.</li> </ul> <b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> TRAN, local government, DMOs, chambers of commerce	<b>2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS</b>
<b>16. Promote inter-regional transportation and transit strategy.</b>  <b>ACTIONS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review transit service reviews prepared by BC Transit for the communities and regions it serves. Encourage BC Transit to commit to short, medium, and long-term transit strategies outlined in these reviews.</li> <li>Provide market, business case, and policy research for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shuttle services to attractions and high use areas (e.g., Wells Gray Park).</li> <li>Car rentals.</li> <li>Car and ride-share programs.</li> <li>Bike share program.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Encourage EDOs and Community Futures to provide enterprise facilitation to help operators be more competitive and responsive to the market's transportation needs.</li> </ul> <b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> Local government, transportation service providers, BC Transit, TRAN, TOTA	<b>1. QUICK WINS</b>  <b>CATALYST</b>  <b>PROVINCIAL SCOPE</b>
<b>17. Explore opportunities to strengthen a working partnership with VIA Rail.</b>  <b>ACTIONS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with VIA Rail to improve the viability of using rail as a form of public transportation for visitors looking to stop and visit in the North Thompson.</li> </ul> <b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> TOTA, local government, VIA Rail	<b>2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS</b>

THEME 2: ACTIONS	PRIORITY
<p><b>18. Provide research on the future electrification of transportation modes and the implications for tourism.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a research repository on electrification trends and developments in transportation, which until recently have been behind carbon reduction programs in other sectors, such as the building trades. This could be focused on modes pertinent to the Thompson Okanagan region and to the implications for supporting infrastructure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cars</li> <li>- Buses</li> <li>- Bicycles</li> <li>- Marine vessels</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Consider hosting a Tourism and Transportation Forum in partnership with TIABC, BC Hydro, and the government of BC. The forum would aim to align and leverage transportation infrastructure investments amongst the different levels of government, identify the role of the private sector in providing transportation services, and examine best practices in customer service through technology. A cross-border initiative might also be worthwhile as part of TOTA's Highway 97 program.</p> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> Local government, transportation service providers, BC Transit, TRAN, TOTA</p>	<p>3. SET ASIDE UNTIL RESOURCES ALLOW</p> <p>REGIONAL SCOPE</p>
<p><b>IMPROVING TECHNOLOGICAL CONNECTIVITY</b></p> <p><b>19. Promote the use of technology and innovation for tourism product and destination development.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a Remarkable Experiences course on how to work with, and integrate, the latest technologies (e.g. messaging platforms, virtual reality), to enrich their products and sharpen their competitiveness.</li> <li>• Compile best practices in technology and innovation and promote to tourism operators.</li> <li>• Enquire with JTT's Integrated Data Division to see how the provincial open data initiatives could support tourism technology innovations.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> TOTA, BC Innovation Council, TRU, DBC, JTT, Community Futures, development corporations, economic development offices</p>	<p>3. SET ASIDE UNTIL RESOURCES ALLOW</p> <p>REGIONAL SCOPE</p>

THEME 2: ACTIONS	PRIORITY
<p><b>20. Continue to work with the telecommunications sector to improve broadband services throughout the planning area.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a region-wide strategy that targets expected coverage in ten years and propose options for closing the gaps through expansion of major telecommunications coverage. It is expected this would mostly involve establishing and promoting coverage policy and targets, and then lobbying service providers and federal regulators to meet federal service standards.</li> <li>• Use the Network BC Connectivity Map to chart out where connectivity weak spots are occurring and how they could be resolved in the future.</li> <li>• Represent the TOTA region in senior government broadband initiatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The federal government has established minimum targets for network availability, speeds, and costs in rural Canada. There is a universal broadband goal of 50Mbps and unlimited data for all Canadians. Funding programs are ongoing. Local tourism and economic development stakeholders should fully subscribe to these programs.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Monitor the Connecting British Columbia program which is delivered jointly by Northern Development Initiative Trust and Network BC. Ensure visitor services are adequately informing visitors of the level of services available through mobile coverage and wi-fi services especially in remote locations. Such services should be included on maps and apps.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> Federal government (Pathways Project, CRTC, Connect to Innovate), Network BC, NDIT, local government, telecom companies, First Nations, IRR, TOTA</p>	<p><b>2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS</b></p>
<p><b>DEVELOPING HOUSING AND ACCOMMODATION SOLUTIONS</b></p> <p><b>21. Support local government housing initiatives that address worker housing and visitor accommodation options.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with local government on addressing affordable housing issues. Affordable housing studies and initiatives are being undertaken in almost all communities in the region.</li> <li>• Support and represent tourism in the ongoing debate on affordable housing.</li> <li>• Encourage local government to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Address and adopt short-term rental policies that balance visitor choice with regulatory equity and community quality of life.</li> <li>- Incentivize the rental housing supply.</li> <li>- Promotes reasonable levels of subdivision and development on rural lots so younger families and workers can better invest in communities.</li> <li>- Remove barriers to recruiting and retaining staff.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> Local government, Interior Health, BC Housing, go2HR, Habitat for Humanity, local housing societies, MAH, FIN</p>	<p><b>1. QUICK WINS</b></p> <p><b>PROVINCIAL SCOPE</b></p>
<p><b>22. Develop a planning area policy for sani-stations.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the current situation. Identify gaps and work with partners to address gaps through developing new facilities.</li> <li>• Develop information services and/or an app to promote existing facilities and improve usage of these sani-stations.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> Local governments, TNRD, RDFFG, private operators</p>	<p><b>2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS</b></p>



THEME 2: ACTIONS	PRIORITY
<p><b>DEVELOPING SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE AND ATTRACTION FACILITIES</b></p> <p><b>23. Develop visitor infrastructure at Nicola Lake.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an infrastructure strategy so there is greater opportunity for visitors to stop and take advantage of recreational activities at Nicola Lake. Currently Quilchena is the only stop with visitor services and there is one rest stop on the highway.</li> <li>• Create more wildlife viewing and birding sites. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify birding sites.</li> <li>- Create a review team to review and prioritize sites.</li> <li>- Prepare a strategy for securing sites whether on Crown or private lands.</li> <li>- Investigate opportunities for connecting sites into a trail network.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Develop content that explains the uniqueness of Nicola Lake and its appeal to naturalists and visitors. This could be used to secure sites, raise funds and develop interpretive facilities (e.g., within Monck Provincial Park).</li> <li>• Promote greater use of birding activities among tourism operators.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> TNRD, FLNR, TOTA, tourism operators, Nicola Naturalists Society, First Nations</p>	<p><b>3. SET ASIDE UNTIL RESOURCES ALLOW</b></p>
<p><b>24. Work with RSTBC and BC Parks to coordinate and align new campsite investments.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BC Parks and RSTBC both received increased budgets to replace and upgrade public campsite facilities. This initiative would focus on addressing the interests and potential impacts of tourists. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focus initially on replacing or upgrading fire-damaged infrastructure.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> RSTBC, BC Parks, local government, TOTA</p>	<p><b>2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS</b></p> <p><b>REGIONAL SCOPE</b></p>
<p><b>25. Investigate gateway development concepts at Exit 286 on the Coquihalla Highway in Merritt.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate developing a gateway presence at Exit 286, which is the junction of highways 5 and 5A. The visitor centre is now closed and may be repurposed. The government of BC has commissioned a master development strategy for the Exit 286 lands.</li> <li>• Conduct a cleanup of the site to deal with the growing waste problem and improve it as a staging area for local trails.</li> <li>• Prepare a development concept for a precinct that aligns with the master development strategy and captures more highway traffic and directs them into downtown Merritt and surrounding tourism areas.</li> <li>• Provide support to local First Nations regarding potential ownership and use of the former Visitor Centre. First Nations lack the infrastructure to showcase their culture, and artifacts and the building may be an opportunity to display and interpret these, while anchoring the Exit 286 lands as a gateway to Merritt</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> City of Merritt, TNRD, TRAN, FLNR, VSA highway maintenance, First Nations, DBC, TAC</p>	<p><b>1. QUICK WINS</b></p> <p><b>CATALYST</b></p>

THEME 2: ACTIONS	PRIORITY
<p><b>26. Assist the District of Barriere in moving forward with the North Thompson Interpretive Centre.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor the District's Smart Cities Challenge applications and be prepared to support interpretive centre strategies should they be successful.</li> <li>• Undertake best practice research on how interpretive centres can be positioned to revitalize rural shopping cores.</li> <li>• Provide follow-up assistance to the Lower North Thompson Community Forest Society's feasibility and business strategy development.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> Lower North Thompson, Community Forest, TNRD and Area 'O' Simpcw First Nation</p>	<p><b>2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS</b></p>
<p><b>27. Leverage opportunities related to the proposed Valemount Glacier Resort.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare a housing affordability strategy to deal with property price inflation in the Village (Assessments have risen 25% in the last three years).</li> <li>• Support the Simpcw First Nation in their tourism diversification efforts related to the resort. They have recently received 185 hectares of Crown land for this purpose.</li> <li>• Identify and promote more winter destination products and experiences that take advantage of the proposed resorts year-round skiing.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> Village of Valemount, Valemount Ski Society, TOTA, Regional District Fraser Fort George, Simpcw First Nation</p>	<p><b>3. SET ASIDE UNTIL RESOURCES ALLOW</b></p>

THEME 3: ACTIONS	PRIORITY
<b>INDUSTRY READINESS</b>	
<b>OBJECTIVES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving availability of skilled labour to meet the predicted human resources needs and the expectations of the visitor</li> <li>Promoting the value of tourism</li> </ul>	
<b>IMPROVING AVAILABILITY OF SKILLED LABOUR TO MEET THE PREDICTED HUMAN RESOURCES NEEDS AND THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE VISITOR</b> <p>28. Improve labour market efficiencies and propose solutions to future worker shortages in the tourism industry.</p> <b>ACTIONS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work collaboratively and communicate with educational institutions to outline industry requirements, the need for better skills development, cross-training for seasonal jobs, and other labour supply issues. As an example, Valemount College's new mountain adventures program will be partnering with local businesses and the Simpcw First Nation on rural entrepreneurship and leadership.</li> <li>Maximize uptake and use of Labour Market Development Agreements and their associated programs, such as the Canada-BC Job grant and FirstHost.</li> <li>Assist tourism operators network and access information on training programs, opportunities, best practices, advocacy, and other labour supply issues.</li> <li>Work with go2HR to update the Regional Tourism and Hospitality Industry Labour Demand and Supply Projections, and identify local solutions to labour shortages and recruitment of foreign workers.</li> <li>Consider a tourism education and training advisory committee that could provide recommendations for training issues and requirements within the Thompson Okanagan region.</li> </ul> <b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> go2HR, TIABC, industry associations, tourism operators, JTT, LBR, AEST, TOTA, Tourism HR Canada, Services Canada Career Centres	<b>2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS</b> <p>REGIONAL SCOPE</p>
<p>29. Improve access to foreign workers by the tourism industry.</p> <b>ACTIONS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with the federal government to update foreign worker regulations and the Temporary Foreign Worker Program to better meet the labour force needs of the tourism industry.</li> <li>Institute a welcome program that employers can use to attract and retain foreign workers.</li> </ul> <b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> go2HR, TIABC, industry associations, tourism operators, JTT, TOTA, Tourism HR Canada, Services Canada Career Centres, IRR, LBR	<b>1. QUICK WINS</b> <p>PROVINCIAL SCOPE</p>
<p>30. Promote tourism career strategies in Indigenous communities.</p> <b>ACTIONS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access tourism career information that appeals to Indigenous youth.</li> <li>Promote ITBC's labour market programs and encourage more local uptake and delivery.</li> <li>Encourage the ITBC team to identify and assist with tailored solutions for connecting First Nations workers with local tourism employers.</li> <li>Build tourism training programs into impact benefit agreements negotiated with major industry.</li> </ul> <b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> First Nations, ITBC, ITAC, IRR, school districts, Okanagan College, UBCO, TRU, go2HR, Community Futures, AEST	<b>2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS</b> <p>REGIONAL SCOPE</p>



THEME 3: OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	PRIORITY
<p><b>31. Formulate legacy services to enhance the Remarkable Experiences program.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to enhance tourism operator competitiveness through delivery of the Remarkable Experiences program.</li> <li>Work with local DMOs to deliver Remarkable Experiences in smaller communities to increase outreach and uptake.</li> <li>Identify sources for a funding pool that can be accessed by local businesses who might not have the resources to participate in the program.</li> <li>Provide direction on how businesses can build on their Remarkable Experiences attendance by accessing business planning services.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> DBC, TOTA, DMOs, ITBC, Community Futures, economic development offices, chambers of commerce</p>	<p><b>2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS</b></p> <p>REGIONAL SCOPE</p>
<p><b>32. Expand volunteer recruitment capacity and programs.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist communities who wish to implement ambassador programs as a way of enhancing visitor services.</li> <li>Consider the BC Parks Park Enhancement Fund (PEF) to support projects involving volunteers and/or partners in provincial parks. Projects can include conservation, Indigenous relations, community engagement or park improvements (e.g., building and maintaining trails).</li> <li>Increase participation in SuperHost programs.</li> <li>Develop a community volunteer best practices toolkit using resources from major organizations such as Volunteer BC, Volunteer Canada, Imagine Canada, Volinspire, and Charity Village. The toolkit could be a one stop shop for communities to bring their volunteer programs up to date. Awards programs, certifications, training, risk management, recruitment of immigrants, and management software resources are all available.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> Local government, First Nations, TOTA, DMOs, Visitor Centres, chambers of commerce, BIAs, Volunteer BC</p>	<p><b>3. SET ASIDE UNTIL RESOURCES ALLOW</b></p> <p>REGIONAL SCOPE</p>
<p><b>33. Increase awareness and understanding of the value of tourism to communities and the economy.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distribute and promote DBC's annual Value of Tourism study.</li> <li>Create a regional reporting dashboard that communities can use to determine and monitor the regional and local value of tourism.</li> <li>Use big data to improve industry's understanding of visitor numbers, origin, trip behaviour, length of stay, and spending patterns and use this real-time data to strengthen overall awareness of the value of tourism.</li> <li>Develop a vital signs report card or dashboard that sub-regions and communities can use to track key tourism indicators.</li> <li>Develop a tourism dashboard on the TOTA website for reporting key national, provincial, and local indicators. This can involve using the Biosphere Destination certification reporting framework.</li> <li>Work with First Nations and ITBC to develop a similar tool or module as a way of promoting tourism careers and business opportunities in their communities.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> TOTA, DBC, DMOs, chambers of commerce, economic development offices, First Nations, TIABC, ITBC, TAC, Open Data Initiative, corporate stakeholders (e.g., Telus, credit card companies)</p>	<p><b>2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS</b></p> <p>REGIONAL SCOPE</p>

THEME 3: OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	PRIORITY
<p><b>34. Develop mechanisms for bringing together and disseminating research on best practices.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support capacity building through providing opportunities for tourism operators and stakeholders to access information in a range of best practices. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Include a specific focus on practices that relate to the Biosphere Destination Certification program.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Where relevant, consider organizing ways to promote specific understanding of strategic directions, such as in leveraging UNESCO designations.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> TOTA, DBC, DMOs, TIABC, ITBC, Destination Canada, BC Stats, Sector associations</p>	2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS
	REGIONAL SCOPE
<p><b>35. Develop a tourism investment attraction strategy for the North Thompson Valley and the Nicola Valley.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work in partnership to assess investment needs and develop an investment strategy that identifies the opportunities along the corridors.</li> <li>• Use a regional reporting dashboard to support this initiative.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> EDOs, TOTA, local government, First Nations, JTT, TAC</p>	2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS
	CATALYST

THEME 4: ACTIONS	PRIORITY
THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE	
<b>OBJECTIVES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing niche experiences</li> <li>• Enhancing rural towns sense of place</li> <li>• Developing geotourism</li> </ul>	
<b>DEVELOPING NICHE SECTORS</b> <p>36. Grow the agritourism industry in the Nicola Valley.</p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a farm tour program, taking advantage of the critical mass of producers and farms and the rail trail and/or cycling network. The highly successful Circle Farm Tours in Agassiz and Pemberton and the equally popular Economusee British Columbia are examples of best practices.</li> <li>• Examine the feasibility of farm camping and farm study opportunities. Include looking at more glamping opportunities.</li> <li>• Develop products and activities that take advantage of country and western themes for which the region is already known.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> TOTA, farmers and producers, BC Agri-Tourism Farming Association, BC Agri-Tourism Alliance, BC Association of Farmers Markets, Investment Agriculture Foundation, MAGR, TCA, IRR, local government, First Nations</p>	2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS
<p>37. Utilize the cultural and/or heritage assets to differentiate the visitor experience.</p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the museums and historical organizations to determine interest in, and hopefully embark upon, a story project that would document tourism operators stories that could be used to make for more distinctive experiences. Use EQ guidelines in story composition.</li> <li>• Investigate the practices of the Economusee passport program on Vancouver Island, where there are artisan locations in four cities (Victoria, Duncan, Nanaimo, Courtenay).</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> TOTA, historical societies, museums, Heritage Tourism Alliance of BC, Visitor Centres, local government, First Nations, Economusee BC</p>	3. SET ASIDE UNTIL RESOURCES ALLOW
	REGIONAL SCOPE



THEME 4: OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	PRIORITY
<p><b>38. Work with First Nations to increase the availability and competitiveness of Indigenous experiences.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare an inventory of local First Nations tourism businesses that can provide some direction and guidance for prospective entrepreneurs and operators.</li> <li>• Develop clusters of experiences based on current Indigenous experiences with a good example being in the Merritt area.</li> <li>• Promote the concept of developing new experiences to bands and aspiring Indigenous entrepreneurs. Workshop suggestions included Indigenous cultural camps, youth programs, and reconciliation themes.</li> <li>• Consider establishing a local tourism business liaison that could act as an enterprise facilitator, directly working with Indigenous business people. Access to capital, management expertise, and operations skills are identified problem areas. This position could complement rather than overlap the Indigenous Tourism Specialist at TOTA.</li> <li>• Promote destination development among local area First Nations on the scale of Nk'Mip and Quaaout Lodge that will crystallize community involvement and support.</li> <li>• Investigate a pilot project for small scale tours so that communities can get a better idea of organizational and business requirements.</li> <li>• Support the Simpcw First Nations with its strategy to develop visitor activities, including fish viewing and interpretation, traditional ceremonies, and canoe tours at the Raft River site.</li> <li>• Work with ITBC and local First Nations on a local storytelling project. The federal government recently awarded \$2.2 million for storytelling curation. The region could benefit from market-ready product to raise the profile and appeal of Indigenous experiences.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> First Nations, ITBC, IRR, JTT, TOTA, DMOs, EDOs, Community Futures, tourism operators</p>	1. QUICK WINS
	CATALYST
	REGIONAL SCOPE
<p><b>39. Create more circle route activities and tours to take advantage of the highway traffic volumes through the Highway 5 corridor.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify tours and experiences for side routes, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Highways 8 (Merritt-Spence's Bridge)</li> <li>- 5A (Merritt-Quilchena-Kamloops)</li> <li>- 97c (Lower Nicola-Logan Lake)</li> <li>- Highway 5 through the North Thompson Valley</li> <li>- Highway 16 through the Robson Valley.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Assemble an inventory of stops of interest, attractions, and services.</li> <li>• Identify visitor service's needs, including restrooms, water and garbage services, and cell coverage.</li> <li>• Work with local DMOs, First Nations, and interested operators on developing self-guided trip itineraries and a dedicated website on the scale of TOTA's Route 97 initiative. The latter has an Indigenous section with maps that appeals to visitors and would be of value in the planning area.</li> <li>• Expand awareness by linking into the Beadtrail experience</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> TOTA, DBC, DMOs, accommodation providers</p>	3. SET ASIDE UNTIL RESOURCES ALLOW

THEME 4: OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	PRIORITY
<p><b>40. Promote trail experience development to complement increased interest in and exposure to regional trail networks.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage tourism operators to create, package, and deliver trail experiences that blend together interpretation of the natural, historical, cultural, and industrial landscapes.</li> <li>• Develop one or two interpreted trail routes, using EQ standards for content, photography, and storytelling and packaging these through local DMOs. A trail specific itinerary page could be developed on the TOTA website as well.</li> <li>• Consider offering a trail-specific Remarkable Experiences workshop.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> DMOs, TOTA, economic development offices, FLNR, tourism operators, trail associations</p>	<p><b>2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS</b></p> <p>REGIONAL SCOPE</p>
<p><b>41. Increase market-ready shoulder season experience offerings.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with accommodation providers to develop packages around the mountain recreational areas.</li> <li>• Encourage operators to offer more winter activities, including new day tours. Ice walking, sled dog tours, Nordic, downhill and heli-skiing, and winter sports.</li> <li>• Assess camping and accommodation needs and work with campsite operators to explore ways of making camping facilities available in the shoulder and winter seasons.</li> <li>• Support RSTBC in identifying ways of enhancing the snowmobiling experience in the Blue River area.</li> <li>• Identify winter staging area infrastructural needs, particularly where existing parking lots are no longer adequate.</li> <li>• Encourage communities to consider more fall, winter, and spring festivals outside the peak visitor season.</li> <li>• Work with First Nations on developing winter experiences.</li> <li>• Work with BC Parks to issue more winter use permits within provincial parks.</li> <li>• Identify exceptional winter experiences in Wells Gray Provincial Park and how they could be developed on a best practices level. This will include improving access into the park in the winter.</li> <li>• Identify opportunities to further develop eco-tourism activities in the shoulder seasons, such as bird watching and dark sky activities.</li> <li>• Work with existing small resorts (e.g., on the Bonaparte Plateau) to further develop the fishing opportunities within the planning area.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> DMOs, BC Parks, RSTBC, TOTA, economic development offices, Community Futures, tourism operators</p>	<p><b>2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS</b></p>
<p><b>ENHANCING RURAL TOWNS SENSE OF PLACE</b></p> <p><b>42. Raise the profile of tourism appeal and revitalization efforts in small communities.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand on DBC's tourism asset inventory to include more detailed data on architecture, art, commerce, cuisine, customs, geography, history, and people. The inventory can be a useful tool in diversifying and bundling experiences.</li> <li>• Update, renew, and implement downtown revitalization plans.</li> <li>• Promote adoption or greater uptake of tax incentives in downtowns to stimulate revitalization.</li> <li>• Encourage more local area planning that takes advantage of shopping, entertainment, recreation, culinary, and demographic niches.</li> <li>• Promote better connectivity between downtowns, local transportation corridors, greenways, and wider area trail systems to encourage greater mobility and movement through communities.</li> <li>• Encourage recruitment programs that generate a critical mass of downtown niche services.</li> <li>• Consider incentives for surrounding highway and entrance area cleanup and beautification.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> Local government, First Nations, TOTA, DMOs, Visitor Centres, chambers of commerce, BIAs, economic development offices, tourism operators, accommodation providers, TAC, DBC, go2HR</p>	<p><b>1. QUICK WINS</b></p> <p>REGIONAL SCOPE</p>

THEME 4: OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	PRIORITY
<p><b>43. Develop a maintenance program for the North Thompson Robson Valley Global Geopark initiative.</b></p> <p><b>ACTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with FLNR, TNRD, and Simpcw First Nation to retain all documentation on this initiative, which failed to pass TNRD's alternate approval process in early 2018. A feasibility study, business strategy, and other materials have been prepared and could be repurposed in the future.</li> <li>• Secure all documentation from the Wells Gray World Heritage Site initiative that recently failed to be approved for Canada's tentative list of parks. This material, particularly geological site data and research, could be used to complete an application dossier for the Global Geopark, should it proceed in the future.</li> <li>• Identify a lead agency and source of funds to complete the application process when the timing is appropriate.</li> <li>• Continue to develop community awareness of the benefits to be gained from a Global Geopark designation.</li> <li>• Continue to develop geotourism activities to increase the ability of the proposed area to act as a de facto park if an application was to be developed. This initiative should be pursued regardless of moving forward with intent to achieve UNESCO designation.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUCCESS NETWORK</b> TOTA, Tourism Wells Gray, Wells Gray World Heritage, FLNR, ENV, TNRD, District of Clearwater, District of Barriere, Village of Valemount, District of McBride, BC Parks</p>	<p><b>3. SET ASIDE UNTIL RESOURCES ALLOW</b></p>

# IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

KAMLOOPS  
Photo: Kelly Funk

## A. CATALYST PROJECTS

The following eight actions were identified as catalyst projects for immediately moving this strategy into implementation:

### TOP PRIORITY CATALYST PROJECTS

- Develop a more streamlined Crown tenure process that facilitates investment in more tourism products.
- Encourage BC Parks to undertake a new management strategy for Wells Gray Provincial Park.
- Develop a vision and strategy forum for an integrated trail network in the TOTA region.
- Encourage greater First Nations involvement in trail experiences.
- Promote inter-regional transportation and transit strategies.
- Investigate a gateway development concept at Exit 286 on the Coquihalla Highway in Merritt.
- Develop a tourism investment attraction strategy for the North Thompson Valley and the Nicola Valley.
- Work with First Nations to increase the availability and competitiveness of Indigenous experiences.



## B. PROVINCIAL AND REGIONAL PRIORITIES

A key deliverable of the Destination BC Destination Development Program is the creation of regional and provincial strategies. Objectives and action that are shared commonly across the Thompson Okanagan tourism region may become regional priorities and will inform the update of its Regional Destination Development Strategy.

This strategy, together with the other 19 strategies from around the province, will support creating an overarching provincial strategy.

Objectives identified as provincial in scope may involve multiple provincial organizations, including Destination BC, ITBC, go2HR, TAC, and TIABC.

**It is recommended the following objectives and actions become provincial initiatives within the Provincial Destination Development Strategy:**

OBJECTIVES	PRIORITY
THEME 1: Planning and sustaining the natural environment	
2. Raise the awareness of tourism values and interests in the Crown land management process.	1
3. Develop a more streamlined Crown tenure process that facilitates investment in more tourism products.	3
5. Develop a regional approach to resource road deactivation and the use of forest service roads used for circle routes.	1
7. Design a tourism disaster and emergency strategy program that helps communities and industry prepare for, educate, measure, mitigate, and adjust to major natural environmental events.	1
THEME 2: Transportation, connectivity, and supporting infrastructure	
16. Promote inter-regional transportation and transit strategy.	1
21. Support local government housing initiatives that address worker housing and visitor accommodation options.	1
THEME 3: Industry readiness	
29. Improve access to foreign workers by the tourism industry.	1

It is recommended the following objectives and actions become regional initiatives within the Regional Destination Development Strategy:

OBJECTIVES		PRIORITY
THEME 1: Planning and sustaining the natural environment		
6.	Encourage local government to include tourism policies and management direction in their Official Community Plans and to align bylaws with neighbouring municipalities.	3
8.	Foster sustainability practices that improve the capacity and competitiveness of the tourism industry while leveraging TOTA's Biosphere destination accreditation.	2
9.	Utilize big data in the planning and management of tourism within the planning area and the Thompson Okanagan tourism region.	1
11.	Develop a vision and planning forum for an integrated trail network in the TOTA region.	1
13.	Encourage greater First Nations involvement in trail experiences.	2
THEME 2: Transportation, connectivity, and supporting infrastructure		
18.	Provide research on the future electrification of transportation modes and the implications for tourism.	3
19.	Promote the use of technology and innovation for tourism product and destination development.	3
24.	Work with RSTBC and BC Parks to coordinate and align new campsite investments.	2
THEME 3: Industry readiness		
28.	Improve labour market efficiencies and propose solutions to predicted future worker shortages in the tourism industry.	2
30.	Promote tourism career strategies in Indigenous communities.	2
31.	Formulate legacy services to enhance the Remarkable Experiences program.	2
32.	Expand volunteer recruitment capacity and programs.	3
33.	Increase awareness and understanding of the value of tourism to communities and its importance to the economy.	2
34.	Develop mechanisms for bringing together and disseminating research on best practices.	2
THEME 4: The visitor experience		
38.	Work with First Nations to increase the availability and competitiveness of Indigenous experiences.	1
40.	Promote trail experience development to complement increased interest in, and exposure to, regional trail networks.	2
42.	Raise the profile of tourism appeal and revitalization efforts in small communities.	1

## C. FUNDING PROGRAMS

To assist the planning area in their implementation efforts, Destination BC has compiled a list of funding programs.

### The different funding options highlighted include:

- Municipal and Regional District Tax
- Destination BC Programs
- Western Economic Diversification Canada
- Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure Programs
- Community Gaming Grants
- BC Parks Foundation
- Community Trusts
- Resort Municipality Initiative
- Municipal Funding
- Business Levies

Contact Destination BC for a copy of this information sheet.

The government of BC also has an online tool on their website to find economic development funding and grants.

### Funding options also include:

- Southern Interior Development Initiative Trust
- Northern Development Initiative Trust



# 9

# MEASURING AND MONITORING SUCCESS

Ultimately, the overall objective of this strategy is to help guide the growth of planning area's tourism sector in an economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable manner over the next 10 years. The following recommended measurements can be used to monitor the success of the tourism industry in the planning area, and the implementation of this strategy.

GOAL	RECOMMENDED MEASURES	SOURCE
1. Increase the total contribution of the visitor economy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth in MRDT revenues</li> <li>• Increase in overnight stays</li> <li>• Economic Impact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Finance</li> <li>• Accommodation Tracking</li> <li>• Destination BC's Value of Tourism model<sup>6</sup></li> </ul>
2. Enhance the overall visitor experience of the North Thompson & Nicola Valleys as a preferred travel destination for key markets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Net Promoter Score<sup>7</sup></li> <li>• Ratings of ease of transportation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consumer survey</li> <li>• Consumer survey</li> </ul>
3. Strengthen the business climate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ratings of business climate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism partners survey — tourism businesses</li> </ul>
4. Strengthen a unified planning area tourism industry, working together as a whole.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ratings of improvements in tourism industry</li> <li>• Adoption of sustainability programs and achievement of certification</li> <li>• Support for tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism partners survey — all tourism partners</li> <li>• Internal database</li> <li>• Resident survey</li> </ul>

<sup>6</sup>Destination BC's Value of Tourism model: [www.destinationbc.ca/Resources/Monitoring-and-Evaluation/Value-of-Tourism-Model.aspx](http://www.destinationbc.ca/Resources/Monitoring-and-Evaluation/Value-of-Tourism-Model.aspx)

<sup>7</sup>Net Promoter Score calculation: [www.destinationbc.ca/Resources/Monitoring-and-Evaluation/Net-Promoter-Score.aspx](http://www.destinationbc.ca/Resources/Monitoring-and-Evaluation/Net-Promoter-Score.aspx)



# APPENDIX

## APPENDIX 1: STRATEGY CONSIDERATIONS

### REVIEWING PROGRESS SINCE 2011

The following table identifies the key issues facing the region in 2011 and the workshop assessment of progress since then. There is a strong sense of accomplishment in several key areas and general agreement that this momentum needs to be maintained. Progress of this nature provides a platform for further developing the planning area.

2011 KEY STRATEGY CONSIDERATIONS	DECEMBER 2017 – AN ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pronounced seasonality of demand which was undermining the economic viability of tourism, particularly in smaller communities.</li><li>• Insufficient differentiation of the Thompson Okanagan from its competitive set.</li><li>• The industry's inability to tap into the growing latent demand for authenticity, self-fulfilment, and creativity within the region.</li><li>• A relatively weak sense of place within local communities.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>TRAILS DEVELOPMENT</b> there has been considerable progress on developing and improving trails throughout the planning area. As a result, there has been a parallel growth in backcountry activities such as mountain biking, and the community of McBride, and more recently Valemount, are well recognized as mountain biking destinations. As visitors go further afield into the backcountry, historic trails such as the Goat River Trail are receiving greater levels of use. Other sector users, including snowmobilers and backcountry horsemen, are also working to increase recreational opportunities year-round. The Nicola Valley has seen a similar increase in trails development and a growing focus on motorized recreation.</li><li>• <b>FORMALIZATION OF THE NORTH THOMPSON BRAND</b> this has increased awareness of the Highway 5 corridor route and has strengthened collaboration and marketing between community tourism groups. The new website has been key to creating a stronger market presence and awareness of the North Thompson communities.</li><li>• <b>STORYTELLING</b> ongoing commitment to highlighting the key stories of the region, particularly at the macro level.</li><li>• <b>OUTDOOR YEAR-ROUND ADVENTURE</b> the various sectors continue to gain strength, particularly the mountain biking sector. Snowmobiling is a key activity in the northern parts of the planning area, and the heli-ski and downhill ski sectors continue to anticipate growth and expansion.</li><li>• <b>INCREASE IN EVENTS</b> in the Merritt area there is improved accommodation infrastructure.</li></ul>

The planning process highlighted the following areas for further strategic consideration:

## 1. POLICY AND THE REGULATORY CONTEXT

Discussions on policy and the regulatory context highlighted several issues that constrain the development of a competitive destination.

- Concerns regarding providing experiences in Wells Gray Provincial Park:
  - The limited supply of Wells Gray Provincial Park use permits and the need to ensure that there is no under-utilized capacity.
  - Declining BC Parks operational funds for the operations of the park and the development and maintenance of trails.
  - Crown land/backcountry access.
  - General access to Crown land and access policy; nature of backcountry tenure (tenures covering large areas blocking other commercial recreational uses).
  - The impact of the Eight Peaks project on other land uses.
  - Permit process: users concerned with perceived challenges in using the FrontCounter process (general navigation of related government websites).
  - Addressing unauthorized trails.
  - Issues relating to deactivated forestry roads.
  - Water access: particularly where private land prevents public access (e.g. Douglas Lake).
- Land use strategy:
  - Need for improved zoning for winter recreation.
  - Value of the Valemount SRMP vs. Eight Peaks in which the former is much more specific in its policies and works more effectively.
  - Zoning and land use bylaws, both municipal and regional district, can present barriers to growth (e.g. sub-dividing land).
  - Agricultural Land Reserve regulations and Interior Health regulations are perceived constraints on pursuing tourism opportunities.
  - Municipal policies:
    - Derelict buildings/vacant storefronts.
    - Access to regional parks for business opportunities.

## 2. TRANSPORTATION & SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE

Issues associated with transportation and infrastructure that were raised in the workshops included:

- Lack of public transportation options:
  - No shuttle services connecting to airports.
  - No Greyhound service.
  - Unreliable VIA Rail service (not connected/integrated with the community infrastructure).
  - Limited taxi service.
  - Highway 5 safety concerns regarding passing on certain parts of the single carriageway sections.
  - Very limited or non-existent availability of rental vehicles, both cars and bikes.
  - Need for connectivity with trailheads/restricted access to backcountry in general due to the deactivation of backcountry roads.
  - Insufficient affordable housing for staff: the dramatic rise in assessed values has intensified the issue in addition to the reduction in inventory due to short-term rentals.
  - Insufficient higher-end accommodation and quality brands throughout the planning area (except Sun Peaks) — this is a missed opportunity for communities located directly on the highway corridor. (New hotel facilities in Merritt are a welcome addition).
  - Insufficient restaurants, particularly higher-end, and cafes.
- Development is limited by:
  - Lack of available zoned land for development of new facilities (e.g. in Blue River)
  - Water and sewer constraints
  - Insufficient/lack of sani-dump facilities for RVs
  - Need for ongoing improvements to cell and internet connectivity
  - Problems associated with intermittent power outages and associated loss of business

### 3. VISITOR EXPERIENCE & INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

Delivering quality and remarkable experiences will require a greater focus on continuing to develop niche sectors such as Indigenous tourism and mountain biking, in addition to addressing the overall capacity of the industry. Areas of concern include:

- Shortage of both trained and untrained staff, particularly within the North Thompson
- Insufficient training opportunities
- Need for new community champions: the failure of the Global Geopark project to move forward largely reflected the absence of a strong local advocacy group or community champions
- Emerging niche sectors that have the potential to grow, but are constrained by infrastructural issues
- Consultation challenges arising from overlapping First Nations territories

## APPENDIX 2: ALIGNMENT DETAILS – PLANS REVIEWED

The following reports are included in the review, as well as a significant amount of online information reviewed via websites:

- Embracing Our Potential — the Thompson Okanagan Regional Strategy 2012–2022
- McBride Tourism Plan, 2013
- Valemount Tourism Plan, 2013
- Clearwater & Wells Gray Country Tourism Plan 2008–2013
- Lower North Thompson Tourism Development Plan 2009–2012
- North Thompson Valley Tourism Plan 2013–2014
- Community Tourism Foundations Program Tourism Development Plan Logan Lake, 2008
- Tourism Plan Merritt/Nicola Valley 2013–2014
- Kamloops Parks Master Plan, 2013
- City of Kamloops Regional Context Statement, 2013
- Kamloops OCP, 2017
- Kamloops Trails Master Plan, 2013
- Logan Lake Economic Development Strategy, 2014
- Logan Lake Area Off-Road-Vehicle Trails Plan, 2013
- Clearwater Official Community Plan, 2011
- District of Clearwater Trails Master Plan, 2016
- Clearwater and Area Economic Development Work Plan, 2015
- Blue River Official Community Plan, 2017
- Thompson-Nicola Regional District Regional Growth Strategy, 2013
- Thompson Rivers Natural Resource District Off-Road Vehicle Recreation Strategy — Recommendation Paper, 2015
- Sustainability development action planning for the Sun Peaks Resort Municipality, 2012
- Robson-Canoe Valley Economic Opportunities Plan, 2010

