OKANAGAN VALLEY

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

DESTINATION BRITISH COLUMBIA®

FINTRY
Photo: Andrew Strain

DESTINATION BRITISH COLUMBIA®

DESTINATION BC

Seppe Mommaerts
MANAGER, DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

Jonathan Heerema
SENIOR PROJECT ADVISOR,
DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

destinationdevelopment@destinationbc.ca

THOMPSON OKANAGAN TOURISM ASSOCIATION

Ellen Walker-Matthews
VICE PRESIDENT,
DESTINATION & INDUSTRY
DEVELOPMENT

250 860 5999 ext. 215
industry@totabc.com

MINISTRY OF TOURISM, ARTS, AND CULTURE

Amber Mattock
DIRECTOR,
LEGISLATION AND
DESTINATION BC GOVERNANCE

250 356 1489
amber.mattock@gov.bc.ca

INDIGENOUS TOURISM ASSOCIATION OF BC

Greg Hopf
INDIGENOUS TOURISM SPECIALIST

250 860 5999 EXT. 208
indigenous@totabc.com

TOTA
THOMPSON OKANAGAN TOURISM ASSOCIATION

BRITISH COLUMBIA | Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture

INDIGENOUS TOURISM BC

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 1

II. ACRONYMS 6

1. FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 7

2. INTRODUCING THE STRATEGY 9
- a. Program Vision and Goals
- b. Purpose of Strategy
- c. A Focus on the Supply and Experience
- d. Methodology
- e. Project Outputs

3. ALIGNMENT 14

4. SUCCESS NETWORK 16

5. A DISTINCTIVE DESTINATION 19
- a. Description of the Population Base, Communities included, and First Nations
- b. Description of Economy Base — Historical and Current
- c. Overview of Tourism Performance
- d. Key Visitor Markets
- e. Overview of Tourism Assets, Infrastructure, and Unique Selling Propositions
- f. Summary of Key Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities
- g. Development Context — the Thompson Okanagan Regional Tourism Strategy

6. A DISTINCTIVE DIRECTION 30
- a. Vision
- b. Goals
- c. Guiding Principles for Destination Development
- d. Motivating Experiences
- e. Development Themes
- f. Interaction of Development Themes and Motivating Experiences

7. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 36
- a. Objectives and Actions

8. IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK 58
- a. Catalyst Projects
- b. Provincial and Regional Priorities
- c. Funding Programs

9. MEASURING AND MONITORING SUCCESS 63

APPENDIX 64
- Appendix 1: Planning Considerations
- Appendix 2: Alignment Details — plans reviewed

FRONT COVER PHOTO: KETTLE VALLEY RAILWAY, Kari Medig

(C) 2017 — Destination BC Corp. All rights reserved. No part of this guide may be reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, without permission in writing from Destination BC. This guide is produced to provide information to assist tourism operators in British Columbia. Destination BC does not endorse, recommend or assume any liability for any of the operations or organizations referenced in this document. **Super, Natural; Super, Natural British Columbia; HelloBC** and **Visitor Centre** and all associated logos/ trade-marks are trade-marks or Official Marks belonging to Destination BC Corp.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Okanagan Valley Destination Development Strategy has been developed to enhance the competitiveness of the planning area over the next 10 years and beyond.

This strategy is 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 Okanagan Valley.

In addition to supporting the underlying goals of the provincial program, the purpose of the strategy is to:

- Provide strategic direction for the planning area and guidance for local and regional strategies
- Enhance the Okanagan Valley's ability to leverage their resources and programs
- Foster joint action and inter-community dialogue

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. This document is one of seven strategies prepared for the Thompson Okanagan tourism region and one of 20 for the province. It was developed based on extensive, collaborative effort during an nineteen-month process that culminated in the creation of a situation analysis report and document.

A semi-arid valley and plateau region offering a distinctive diversity of lakes, orchards and vineyards, pine forests, and mountain backcountry — bursting with a cornucopia of flavours and providing a backdrop for year-round active fun and challenge. A destination offering relaxed urban energy fused with the inter-play of traditional and living Okanagan Nation culture, and the heritage and stories of more recent times.

The Okanagan Valley planning area encompasses the Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO), electoral areas A (Osoyoos Rural), C (Oliver Rural), D (Kaleden/OK Falls), E (Naramata), and F (Okanagan Lake West/West Bench) of the Okanagan Similkameen Regional District, and part of electoral area E (West Boundary) of the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary. Municipalities include Lake Country, Kelowna, West Kelowna, Peachland, Summerland, Penticton, Oliver, Keremeos, and Osoyoos. First Nations include Okanagan Indian Band, Westbank First Nations, Penticton Indian Band, and the Osoyoos Indian Band — all part of the Okanagan Nation Alliance.

The Okanagan Valley planning area includes most of the Okanagan Valley, Skaha Lake, and the Okanagan River. The region is known for its sunny climate, dry landscapes, and lakeshore communities and associated lifestyle. Agriculture is a central theme of economic and cultural life — the Okanagan has the highest concentrations of orchards, vineyards, and wineries in BC and Canada.

A. THE DIRECTION

The vision for the planning area is based on the 10-year aspirations for the Okanagan Valley expressed by tourism partners during the consultation process.

In identifying development priorities for the Okanagan Valley 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 also aligned with the existing community plans and related strategy frameworks. It also highlights underlying elements that differentiate the area. These form the basis of the strategy's motivating experiences.

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

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

B. THE OBJECTIVES

In total, 40 objectives have been identified for the Okanagan Valley as a tourism destination for the next 10 years. These are outlined by development theme.

ACTIONS	
THEME 1: Planning and sustaining the natural environment	
IMPROVING APPROACHES TO PLANNING AND COLLABORATION	
1.	Create a mechanism to implement the Destination Development Strategy and monitor its implementation, including following up on any related initiatives.
2.	Provide tourism operators and communities with a more accessible resource that outlines acceptable tourism uses on Crown land and the Agricultural Land Reserve.
3.	Encourage local government to include tourism policies and management direction in their Official Community Plans and to align bylaws with neighbouring municipalities.
4.	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	
5.	Provide guidance for managing and mitigating tourism carrying capacity issues.
6.	Develop a greater sense of place in terms of the Okanagan Valley's special relationship with water.
7.	Provide research and support for the proposed South Okanagan Grassland National Park Reserve.
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 management of tourism within the planning area and the Thompson Okanagan tourism region.

ACTIONS

THEME 1: Planning and sustaining the natural environment

DEVELOPING AND MANAGING SUSTAINABLE TRAIL SYSTEMS

10.	Develop a world class identity for the Okanagan Valley as a trails destination.
11.	Develop a vision and strategy forum for an integrated trails network in the Okanagan Valley.
12.	Support the development of non-motorized designations on the Kettle Valley Railway.
13.	Encourage greater Indigenous involvement in trail experiences.
14.	Promote motorized trail services and guided experiences, building on the Bear Creek Recreation Site infrastructure.
15.	Work with RSTBC and local government to develop a framework for building, operating, and maintaining the trail network in the Okanagan Valley.
16.	Improve the consistency and clarity of trail signage.
17.	Encourage more visitor use of trails that have fewer carrying capacity issues to relieve pressure on high use areas.
18.	Develop better trail use metrics and tracking programs.

THEME 2: Transportation, connectivity, and supporting infrastructure

IMPROVING GROUND TRANSPORTATION WITHIN THE OKANAGAN VALLEY

19.	Promote inter-regional transportation and transit shuttle service between communities and airports.
20.	Promote private sector transportation opportunities in the Okanagan Valley.
21.	Provide research on the future electrification of transportation modes and the implications for tourism.

EXPANDING AIR TRANSPORTATION TO THE OKANAGAN VALLEY

22.	Develop a business case for coordinating more air connections to the Okanagan Valley.

IMPROVING TECHNOLOGICAL CONNECTIVITY

23.	Create a Technology Task Force to promote the use of technology and innovation for tourism product and destination development
24.	Work with the telecommunications sector to improve broadband services throughout the Okanagan Valley.

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

25.	Support local government housing initiatives that address worker housing.
26.	Improve labour market efficiencies and propose solutions to predicted future worker shortages in the tourism industry.

ACTIONS

THEME 3: Industry readiness

27. Improve access to foreign workers by the tourism industry.

28. Support expansion of training programs and tourism career strategies for Indigenous Peoples.

29. Formulate legacy services to enhance the Remarkable Experiences program.

PROMOTING THE VALUE OF TOURISM

30. Develop a model that communities and stakeholders can use to promote the Value of Tourism.

MEASURING PERFORMANCE

31. Develop a performance measurement framework to evaluate the Destination Development Strategy and help communities track progress.

THEME 4: The Visitor Experience

DEVELOPING NICHE SECTORS

32. Grow the agritourism industry in the Okanagan Valley.

33. Expand culinary experiences.

34. Undertake research on diversification of wine tourism.

35. Utilize the cultural and/or heritage assets of the Okanagan Valley to differentiate the visitor experience.

36. Work with First Nations to increase the availability and competitiveness of Indigenous experiences.

37. Encourage Indigenous tourism organizations to increase program delivery in the Okanagan Valley.

38. Work with First Nations to develop map sets to enrich the visitor experience.

ENHANCING RURAL TOWNS SENSE OF PLACE

39. Increase the touring appeal of the rural town experience, focusing on activities that have high appeal for target EQ segments.

USING TECHNOLOGY TO ADD VALUE TO THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

40. Examine the feasibility of a smartphone app to enhance local travel experiences.

II. ACRONYMS

AEST Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills & Training

AGRI Ministry of Agriculture

ALC Agricultural Land Commission

ALR Agricultural Land Reserve

CRTC Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission

DMO Destination Marketing Organization

DBC Destination British Columbia

DC Destination Canada

DDS Destination Development Strategy

EDO Economic Development Officer

ENV Ministry of Environment & Climate Change Strategy

EQ Explorer Quotient

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

GO2HR The British Columbia Human Resource Organization for Tourism

JTT Ministry of Jobs, Trade & Technology

INAC Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada

ITAC Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada

ITBC Indigenous Tourism Association of British Columbia

IRR Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

KVR Kettle Valley Railway

LBR Ministry of Labour

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

NPR National Park Reserve

OCP Official Community Plan

ORV Off-road Vehicle

OVEDS Okanagan Valley Economic Development Society

RDMO Regional Destination Marketing/Management Organization

RSTBC Recreation Sites and Trails British Columbia — within FLNR

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

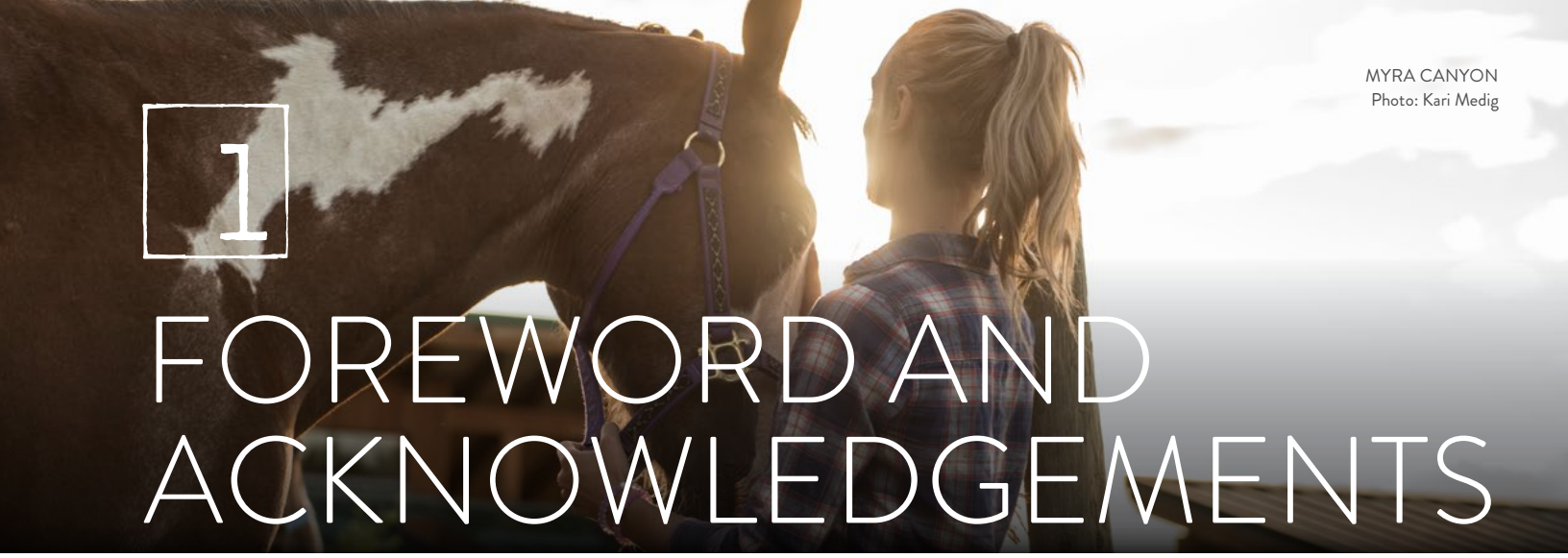
UBCM Union of British Columbia Municipalities

UBCO University of British Columbia Okanagan

WD Western Diversification

WTA Wilderness Tourism Association

YLW Kelowna International Airport



MYRA CANYON
Photo: Kari Medig

1 FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FOREWORD

This Destination Development Strategy is the final report resulting from an nineteen-month, iterative process of gathering, synthesizing, and validating information with stakeholders about the current and future direction of tourism in the Okanagan Valley planning area.

As one of 20 destination development strategies that will be produced between 2016 and 2019, the Okanagan Valley planning area strategy will contribute to the tapestry of long-term regional and provincial strategies that support the development of British Columbia as a world-class tourism destination.

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
- forwarding relevant documents that provided the background information for the situation analysis

We give thanks and acknowledge the Syilx people and the Okanagan Nation on whose traditional territories we gathered for meetings in Kelowna and Summerland.

Special thanks are offered to members of the working group:

- Larry Olsen, Regional Economic Operations, FLNR
- Doreen Olsen, CPAWS, National Park Network
- Kelley Glazer, Destination Osoyoos
- Ian McLellan, Recreation Sites and Trails BC
- Jonathan Rouse, Okanagan College
- Sally Pierce, Inn-Trust Hospitality
- Scott Boswell, Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Project
- Mike Hill, Hoodoo Adventures
- Hannah McKinley, Let's Go Transportation
- Corinne Jackson, Okanagan Water Basin Board
- Erik Lachmuth, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
- Ingrid Jarrett, Watermark Hotel, BC Hotel Association
- Thom Tischik, Travel Penticton
- Lisanne Ballantyne, Tourism Kelowna
- Krystal Lezard, Westbank First Nation
- Daniel Scott, Recreation Sites and Trails BC

Special thanks are offered to the facilitator of the Okanagan Valley destination development process:

- Jennifer Houiellebecq, Tourism Planning Group

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.

DIAMONDBACK, NEAR PENTICTON
Photo: Kari Medig

2 INTRODUCING THE STRATEGY

The Okanagan Valley 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.

A. PROGRAM VISION AND GOALS

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 Okanagan Valley.

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 provincial vision is supported by three goals:

- Make BC the most highly recommended destination in North America.
- Create strategic 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.

NARAMATA COMMUNITY MARKET
Photo: Kari Medig

DESTINATION BRITISH COLUMBIA®

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/ 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 supports the goals of the provincial Destination Development Program but also:

- Provides strategic direction for the region and guidance for local and regional strategies.
- Enhances the Okanagan Valley'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 for the entire Okanagan Valley 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 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 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.
- Capabilities, skills, and training our industry needs so that we all can excel at what we do.

D. METHODOLOGY

This strategy is the final product of an nineteen-month planning process that also included a situation analysis report.

The destination development planning approach was iterative and provided various opportunities for stakeholder input and validation (Figure 3). The process followed a semi-structured strategic approach, created by Destination BC, that ensured the considerations of this planning area are 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
Project staging and document review	December 2016
Community consultation workshop in Enderby	December 2016
Destination audit	Spring 2017
Working Group meeting	May 2017
Draft Situation Analysis	July 2017
Priority setting and review of preliminary findings with the Working Group — workshop	May 2017
Draft Destination Development Strategy — preliminary	August 2017
Revised draft following government review	February 2018
Working Group conference call Finalized Destination Development Strategy	February 2018 July 2018

E. PROJECT OUTPUTS

Three key outputs from this project are:

1. An asset inventory of accommodations, tourism businesses and attractions, tourism organizations, food and beverage establishments, parks and recreation sites, sports and arts facilities, meeting facilities, transportation, and visitor services.

2. A Situation Analysis report that provides foundational research related to the Okanagan Valley, access and infrastructure, key tourism assets, key markets, a destination assessment, and priority planning area considerations used to inform the strategy.

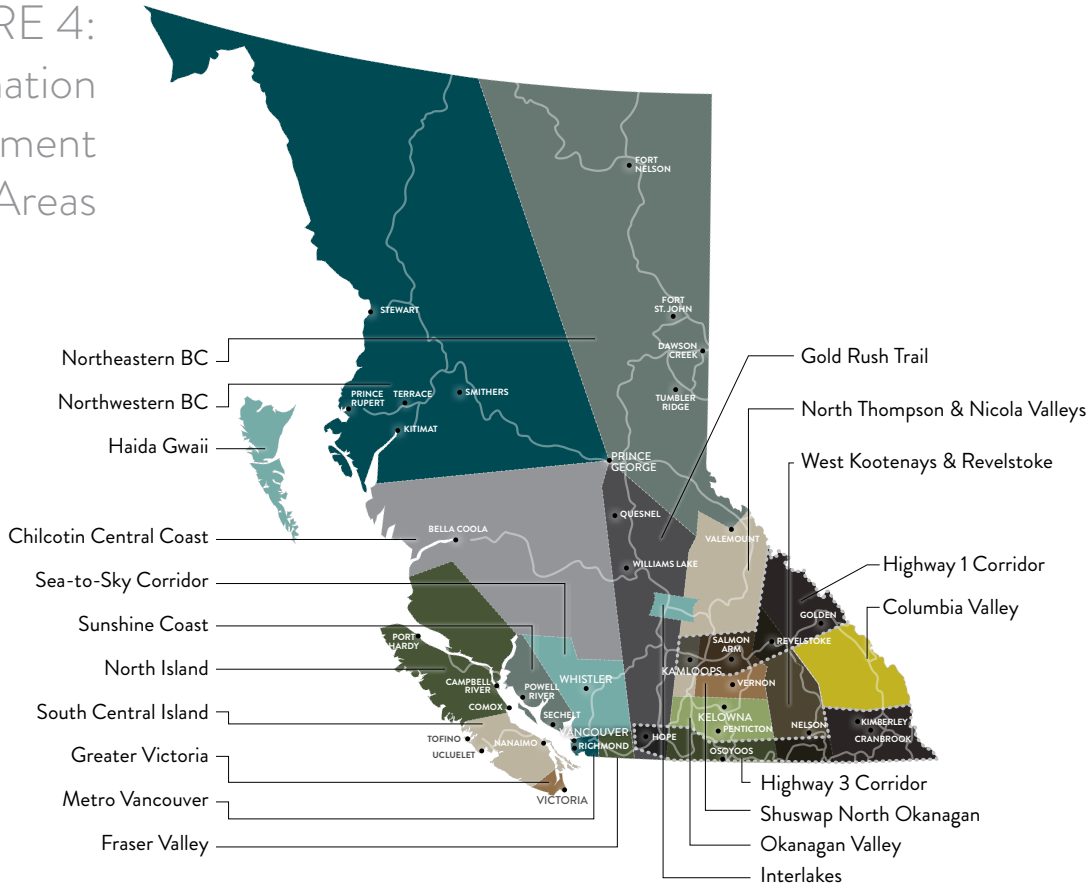
3. This Destination Development Strategy.

MOUNT CONKLE
Photo: Kari Medig

3 ALIGNMENT

The destination development strategy for the Okanagan Valley planning area 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 other planning areas within the Thompson Okanagan region are the Shuswap-North Okanagan and the North Thompson & Nicola Valleys. 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 Planning Program, each of the province's six tourism regions will integrate their planning area strategies into their respective Regional Destination Development Strategies which, in turn, will be used to inform the Provincial Destination Development Strategy. For the Thompson Okanagan tourism 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 4: Levels of Destination Development Planning

BLAKE JORGENSON
Photo: Grant Harder

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 WITHIN THE PLANNING AREA.

Tourism partners have already articulated their desire to work cooperatively on destination development initiatives. It is believed that only by working collaboratively that the true potential of the planning 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 5: Key Organizations Informing, Enabling, and Influencing the Okanagan Valley

FEDERAL

- Destination Canada
- Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada
- Western Economic Diversification
- Parks Canada
- Environment Canada, Canadian Wildlife Service
- Canadian Heritage
- Public Works and Government Services Canada

FIRST NATIONS

- Syilx/Okanagan Nation
- Okanagan Indian Band
- Westbank First Nation
- Penticton Indian Band
- Osoyoos Indian Band

PROVINCIAL

- Destination BC
- Indigenous Tourism BC
- Ministries/ Agencies

-Tourism, Arts and Culture

-Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

-Transportation and Infrastructure

-Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, incl. Recreation Sites and Trails BC

-Environment and Climate Change Strategy, incl. BC Parks

-Agriculture

REGIONAL

- Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association
- Regional districts of Central Okanagan, Okanagan-Similkameen and Kootenay Boundary
- Okanagan Valley Ec. Dev. Society
- Community Futures of Central Okanagan, Okanagan-Similkameen
- Okanagan College
- South Okanagan Trail Alliance
- Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society
- Okanagan Rail Trail Initiatives
- Myra Canyon Trestle Restoration Society

LOCAL

- Municipalities of Lake Country, Kelowna, West Kelowna, Peachland, Summerland, Penticton, Oliver, Keremeos, and Osoyoos
- Chambers of Commerce
- Tourism Kelowna, Tourism Big White, Tourism Summerland, Travel Penticton, Destination Osoyoos
- Central Okanagan Ec. Dev. Commission; municipal ec. dev. departments in Kelowna, Lake Country, West Kelowna, Penticton

MYRA CANYON
Photo: Grant Harder

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 within the planning area. All 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.

GOD'S MOUNTAIN ESTATE
Photo: Andrew Strain

5 A DISTINCTIVE DESTINATION

OVERVIEW OF THE OKANAGAN VALLEY

The Okanagan Valley planning area encompasses the Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO), electoral areas A (Osoyoos Rural), C (Oliver Rural), D (Kaleden/OK Falls), E (Naramata), and F (Okanagan Lake West/West Bench) of the Okanagan Similkameen Regional District, and part of electoral area E (West Boundary) of the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary. Municipalities include Lake Country, Kelowna, West Kelowna, Peachland, Summerland, Penticton, Oliver, Keremeos, and Osoyoos.

The Okanagan Valley planning area includes most of the Okanagan Valley, Skaha Lake, and the Okanagan River. The area is known for its dry and sunny climate, landscapes, and lakeshore communities and associated lifestyle. Agriculture is a central theme of economic and cultural life — the Okanagan has the highest concentrations of orchards, vineyards, and wineries in BC and Canada.

The planning area corresponds with one of the five sub-regions identified in the 2011 planning process for the 10-year Thompson Okanagan regional tourism strategy and reflects elements of geographic commonality relating to the lakes and river systems, the upland terrain and trails, and the agricultural landscape.

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

The population of the planning area was 266,050 in 2016, distributed among eight municipalities and unincorporated areas.

Population growth averaged 5.3% between 2011 and 2016, with most of this occurring in the Central Okanagan. Except for Summerland, the municipalities in the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen showed population loss. There are four First Nations' communities in the planning area, with an estimated 2016 population of 4,531.

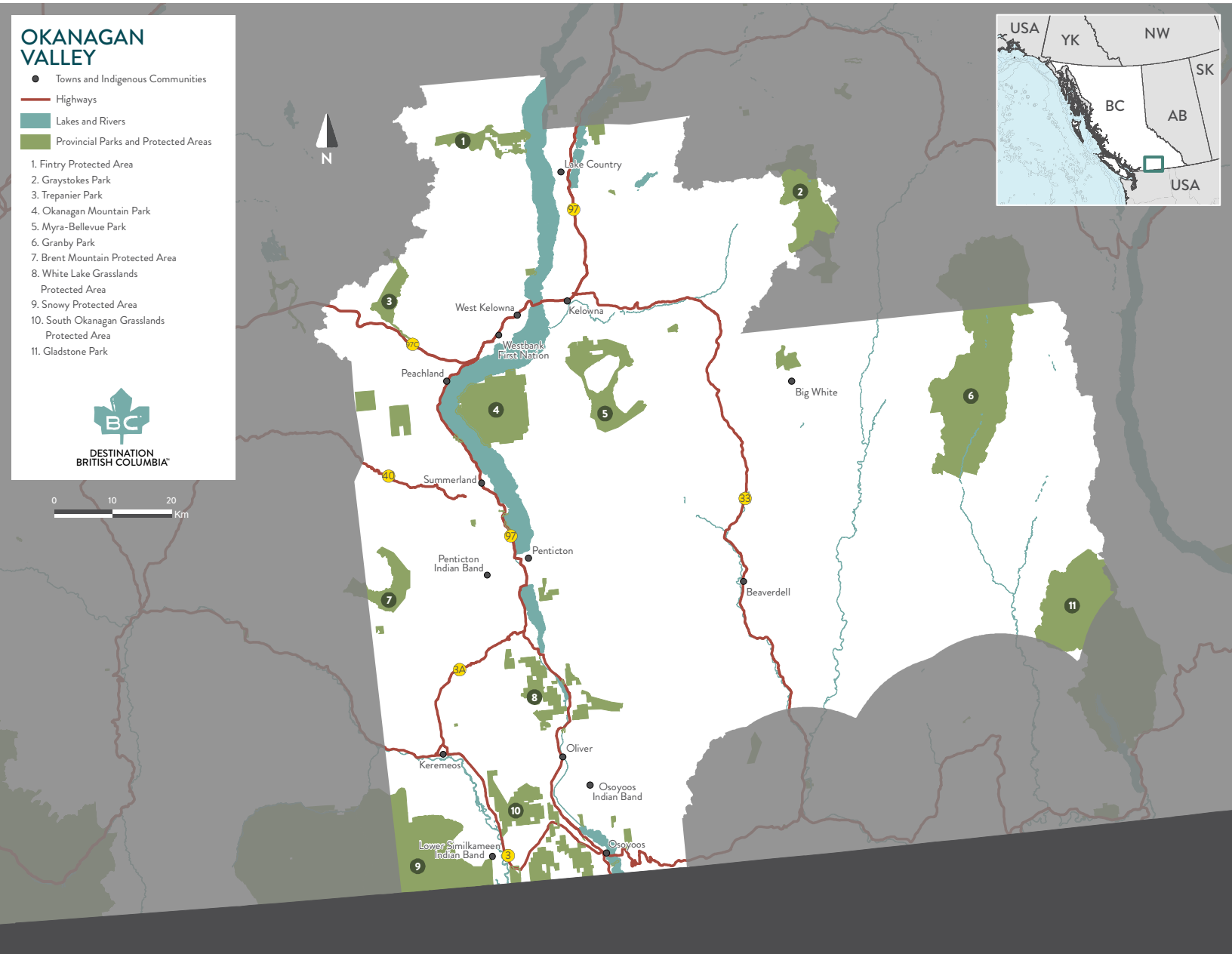


FIGURE 6: Municipal and Regional District Population

NAME	AREA TYPE	2017	% GROWTH 2011–17
REGIONAL DISTRICT CENTRAL OKANAGAN	RD	197,075	7.4
Kelowna	CY	125,737	4.9
Lake Country	DM	14,183	19.3
West Kelowna	DM	34,930	10.3
Peachland	DM	4,959	-4.9
Unincorporated Areas	RDR	17,266	15.7
REGIONAL DISTRICT OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN (OKANAGAN PORTION)	RD	68,975	-0.7
Oliver	T	4,568	-5.4
Osoyoos	T	4,800	-1.2
Penticton	CY	33,016	-1.6
Summerland	DM	11,375	1.3
Unincorporated Areas	RDR	15,216	1.2
TOTAL		266,050	5.3

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

FIGURE 7: First Nations

FIRST NATION	REGISTERED POPULATION	MEMBER OF:
Okanagan	2,027	Okanagan Nation Alliance
Westbank	887	Okanagan Nation Alliance
Penticton	1,074	Okanagan Nation Alliance
Osoyoos	543	Okanagan Nation Alliance
TOTAL	4,531	

Source: Indigenous and North Affairs Canada. 2017. First Nation Profiles.

BETWEEN PENTICTON AND NARAMATA
Photo: Kari Medig

B. DESCRIPTION OF ECONOMY BASE – HISTORICAL AND CURRENT[1]

The Regional District of the Central Okanagan has a diversified economy with healthcare, education, construction, technology, manufacturing, agriculture, and tourism being key economic drivers along with the Kelowna General Hospital and Kelowna International Airport. The warm climate (boasting 2,000 hours of sunlight annually) makes this area one of the more important agricultural centres in the province.

The diversified Okanagan-Similkameen economies of Penticton, Summerland, Okanagan Falls, Oliver, and Osoyoos benefit from their proximity to Penticton Regional Airport, and access to a skilled labour force. Healthcare is the largest employer due to the location of the Penticton Regional Hospital, local hospitals and numerous retirement facilities. The economy boasts robust custom manufacturing, large construction firms as well as numerous wineries, agriculture, and tourism businesses. The construction and manufacturing sectors are the most important and growing private sector segments. The area is a recognized fruit and viticulture centre, with wineries offering excellent facilities and products. Consistent four-season weather provides a home for international sporting events, training facilities, and outdoor adventure options that draw large numbers of tourists, athletes, and their families to the area.

[1]Extracts from Okanagan Valley Economic Development Society, 2015 Okanagan Valley Economic Development Society – Okanagan Valley Economic Profile

C. OVERVIEW OF TOURISM PERFORMANCE

Key tourism performance indicators for the Okanagan Valley planning area are shown below:

FIGURE 8: Highlights key indicators for the planning area

	2016 PERFORMANCE	% Over 2015
Room Revenues[2]		
Kelowna	$56,043,000	7.7
Penticton	$7,630,000	7.6
Osoyoos	$7,158,000	16.8
Hotel Occupancy Rate (Average) BC	68.3%	3.3
Kelowna	64.2%	5.4
Penticton	55.4	4.3
Average Daily Room Rate BC	$153	6.5
Kamloops	$143	2.1
Penticton	$134	5.5
Visitor Centre attendance	186,118	7.8
Provincial parks attendance (overnight and day use)	1,436,373	11.5

Source: Room Revenues by Municipal Jurisdictions, 2010-2017. BC Stats.; BC Visitor Services Statistics Program. Destination BC.; Provincial Tourism Indicators: Year in Review 2015 & 2065. Destination BC; BC Parks 2015/16 Statistics Report. BC Parks.

[2]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). MRDT data for total room revenue for the three communities was $149 million in 2016, an increase of 9% over 2015. Particularly strong performance was seen in Osoyoos, but Kelowna and Penticton also performed well. Big White has been excluded from MRDT estimates due to data suppression.

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

SUMMERLAND
Photo: Grant Harder

Parks represent a major destination attraction for visitors. The provincial park system in the planning area hosted more than 1.4 million overnight and day-users in 2016, an 11.5% increase over 2015. Growth has been particularly robust in parks near the Kelowna area, including Myra-Bellevue and Bear Creek.

D. KEY VISITOR MARKETS

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

- In 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.
- In 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 like BC and Alberta, with leading segments being Authentic Experiencers (18%), Gentle Explorers (12%), Free Spirits (11%) and Cultural Explorers (11%).

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

The research on trip motivation versus participation is noteworthy. Visitors to Thompson Okanagan destinations participated in a far greater range of activities while on their trip than they were originally motivated by while booking their vacations. 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 Okanagan Valley is a landscape of low hills, oblong lakes, and large glacial deposits left by the last ice age. Sediments eroded by water and wind resulted in large alluvial fans and deltas on which the major cities of Kelowna and Penticton stand. The Okanagan Valley watershed drains south through the Okanagan River into the Columbia River.

The dry, sunny climate and fertile landscapes have created a rich agricultural and recreation legacy, vibrant lakeshore communities, and a relaxing and fulfilling lifestyle. With an average of more than 2,100 hours of sunshine per year and very little precipitation, the area is an exceptional setting for nature-based activities and agritourism. Visitors participate in many activities including golf, hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, swimming, parasailing, water sports, winery tours, and more. Next to the Fraser Valley, the Okanagan Valley is the most important agricultural region in British Columbia, with the primary crop being fruit trees. The Okanagan is home to many award-winning wineries. In winter, some of the best downhill skiing in North America can be found at its three major ski resorts. Skiing, snowboarding, Nordic skiing, ice fishing, and other winter activities are popular in the planning area.

Key tourism features and assets include:

- **LAKES AND BEACHES** The major valley lakes of Okanagan, Skaha, and Osoyoos provide the backdrop for the Okanagan's famed summer reputation. Numerous parks and beaches dot Okanagan Lake, making boating and swimming very popular activities, together with an array of water-based recreational activities and commercial camping facilities.
- **POCKET DESERT** and distinctive ecosystems with shrub-steppe antelope-brush are one of the most endangered ecosystems in Canada.
- The **FARMED LANDSCAPE** set within the valleys and against the backdrop of the mountains.
- A range of **BC PARKS** that provide camping and day-use facilities and base areas to engage in a wide range of water and land-based activities.
- Extensive **TRAILS**, including the iconic Kettle Valley Railway, the potential of a long-distance rail trail running from Sicamous to Osoyoos, and numerous, localized trail systems.
- **LAKE FISHING** opportunities.
- **BIG WHITE SKI RESORT**, and additional resorts including Apex Ski Resort and Baldy Mountain Resort — together offer an extensive range of outdoor winter recreational activities, and a growing number of summer activities including the introduction of downhill mountain biking at Big White.
- **RESORT MUNICIPALITIES** Osoyoos is a resort municipality under the Resort Municipality Initiative.
- **GOLF** the Okanagan is a hotbed for golf, with 25 different 18-hole courses, many in picturesque settings suitable for casual and dedicated golfers, and facilities such as Gallagher's Canyon ranking among the top 50 courses in Canada (SCOREGolf).
- **ROUTE 97** North America's longest continuous north-south highway, extending from California to the Yukon, running through the Okanagan Valley.
- **STRONG ARTS AND CULTURE SECTOR** with a range of themed museums, art galleries, the Kelowna Cultural District and an annual Lake Country Art Walk. Heritage-based attractions such as the Kettle Valley Steam Railway, and a strong year-round events sector that includes major

BIG WHITE SKI RESORT
Photo: Andrew Strain

festivals such as the Okanagan Wine Festival, Okanagan Fest-of-Ale, Penticton Elvis Festival, Meadowlark Nature Festival, and the Summerland Festival of Lights.

- Strong and growing **INDIGENOUS SECTOR** that includes the Nk'Mip Desert Culture Centre, Spirit Ridge Resort, Indigenous wineries, and food outlets.
- World-class strengths in food, wine, and other craft drinks. The Okanagan Valley is the second largest wine region in Canada with approximately 4,000 hectares under cultivation and over 150 wineries. A wide range of associated experiences, from wine trails and festivals to the annual Canadian Culinary Championships. The food and drink sector is underpinned by a strong agricultural sector with visitor access to various farm, vineyard, and orchard experiences.
- The planning area features a variety of sports teams, competitions and endurance events year-round, attracting participants and spectators from all over the world.

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 Okanagan Valley planning area benefits from a range of strengths. However, it is also facing destination development challenges, some of which have the potential to impact the future growth and sustainability of the tourism sector. In spring of 2017, a new destination assessment tool was used within the Okanagan Valley to assess the competitiveness of the planning area.

The tool provided an opportunity to assess four broad areas of the Okanagan Valley:

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.

DESTINATION BRITISH COLUMBIA®

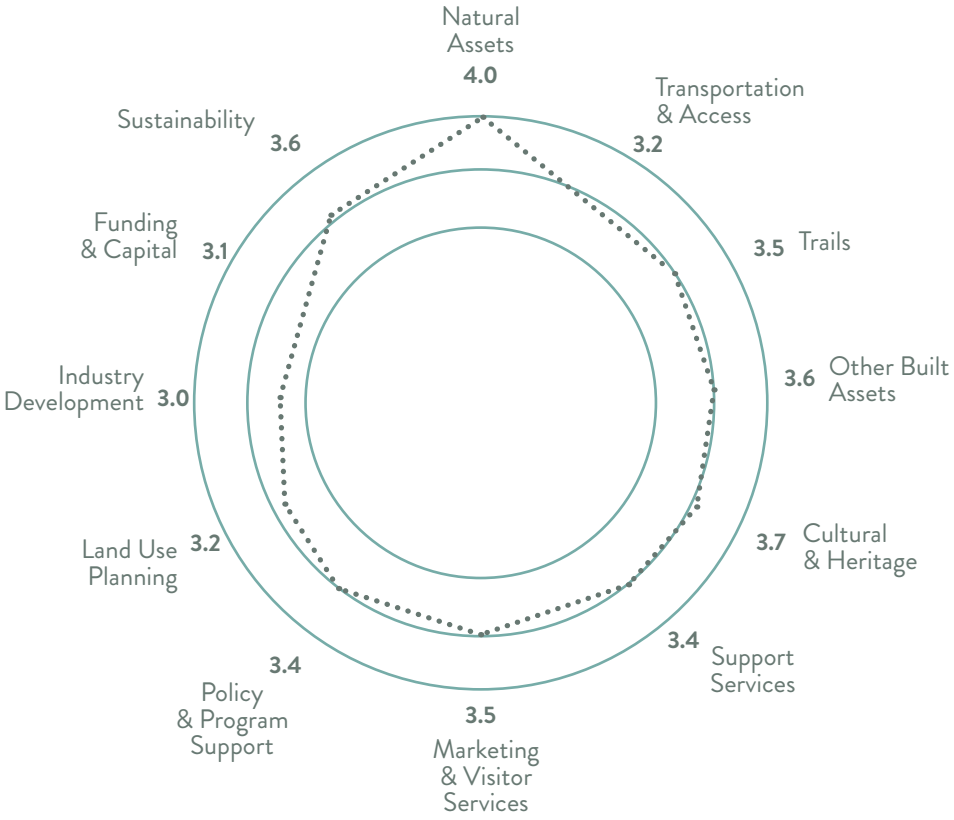
3. **SUPPORT SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE** looked at the infrastructure that supports the industry, such as the accommodation sector.

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

The assessment indicated an overall score of 3.5 out of 5 for the area based on a series of 130 statements. The assessment of the sub-elements is presented in Figure 10. These findings complement the desk research and the workshop discussions on strengths, challenges, and opportunities.

FIGURE 10: Destination Assessment Scores

ASSESSMENT SUMMARY – SUB ELEMENTS



To build on these strengths and address these challenges, the area's tourism stakeholders have identified key opportunities that form the foundation of the Okanagan Valley Destination Development Strategy. These key strengths, challenges, and opportunities are summarized below in Figure 11.

FIGURE 11: Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities

KEY STRENGTHS

- Growing emphasis on expanding trails and developing related experiences and services
- Natural assets/climate
- Ease of access - new air routes, new shuttle service
- Growth of local flavours — investment into the wine and culinary sectors
- Growing involvement of Indigenous communities
- ITBC and go2HR regional staff and trails coordinator at TOTA
- Understanding of and commitment to building experiences
- Growth in storytelling
- Route 97
- Cell connectivity
- Role of Okanagan Water Board
- Strong partnerships
- Commitment to sustainability

KEY CHALLENGES

- Accommodation affordability and availability
- Lack of integrated regional transportation
- Policy enforcement and relevance — trails, insurance, zoning, sharing economy
- Lake access
- Water management
- Signage and wayfinding
- Sustainability of trails
- Agricultural Land Reserve policies relating to growth of agritourism and YLW
- Foreign workers policy/worker retention issues
- Market awareness of experiences especially of off peak options
- Insufficient linkages between tourism and economic development
- RCMP shortages
- Seasonal closures
- Managing natural disasters
- Investment attraction

KEY OPPORTUNITIES

- Regionally coordinated water management plan
- Ongoing development of trails and experiences
- Sustainability policy building on the Biosphere Destination certification
- Regional transit and transportation plan
- Active transportation
- Building on Summerland's affordability study
- Coordination of regional events
- Strengthening of Indigenous tourism and developing protocols for sharing stories and important sites
- Larger event venues in Kelowna
- Building on the semi-arid character of area
- Improved lakefront development policy
- Greater diversity of accommodations

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 within the Thompson Okanagan tourism 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 OKANAGAN VALLEY 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.

OSOYOOS
Photo: Shayd Johnson

6 A DISTINCTIVE DIRECTION

STRATEGY DIRECTION

A. VISION

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

A SEMI-ARID VALLEY AND PLATEAU REGION OFFERING A DISTINCTIVE DIVERSITY OF LAKES, ORCHARDS AND VINEYARDS, PINE FORESTS AND MOUNTAIN BACKCOUNTRY — BURSTING WITH A CORNUCOPIA OF FLAVOURS AND PROVIDING A BACKDROP FOR YEAR-ROUND ACTIVE FUN AND CHALLENGE. A DESTINATION OFFERING RELAXED URBAN ENERGY FUSED WITH THE INTERPLAY OF TRADITIONAL AND LIVING OKANAGAN FIRST NATIONS CULTURE, AND THE HERITAGE AND STORIES OF MORE RECENT TIMES.

EVOLVE CELLARS VINEYARD
Photo: Kari Medig

B. GOALS

Three inter-related destination development goals have been identified to support the vision for the Okanagan Valley.

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 Okanagan Valley planning area.

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

4. Lead Canada in growth of overnight visitor expenditures.

5. Secure the highest Net Promoter Score in North America.

C. GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

As the journey of destination development continues in the Okanagan Valley planning area, choices will have to be made and priorities set. Guiding principles were discussed by stakeholders and it was agreed that the Destination Development 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 Embracing Our Potential, the provincial tourism strategy, and the federal tourism strategy

DESTINATION BRITISH COLUMBIA®

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.

The first stage in identifying the experience potential involves developing an understanding of the key attributes and personality of the Okanagan Valley. Participants in the planning process described the region's key attributes, experiences, and essence using common words and phrases. These are illustrated in Figure 12.

Visitor experiences that encapsulate this personality and focus on leveraging these attributes and the underlying five experience themes will strengthen the distinctiveness of the Okanagan Valley planning area and its overall positioning in the marketplace. A key focus of this strategy is to ensure there is a collective mass of activities for each of these experience themes to motivate year-round travel to the Okanagan Valley.

FIGURE 12:
Key Attributes and Experience Themes of the Okanagan Valley

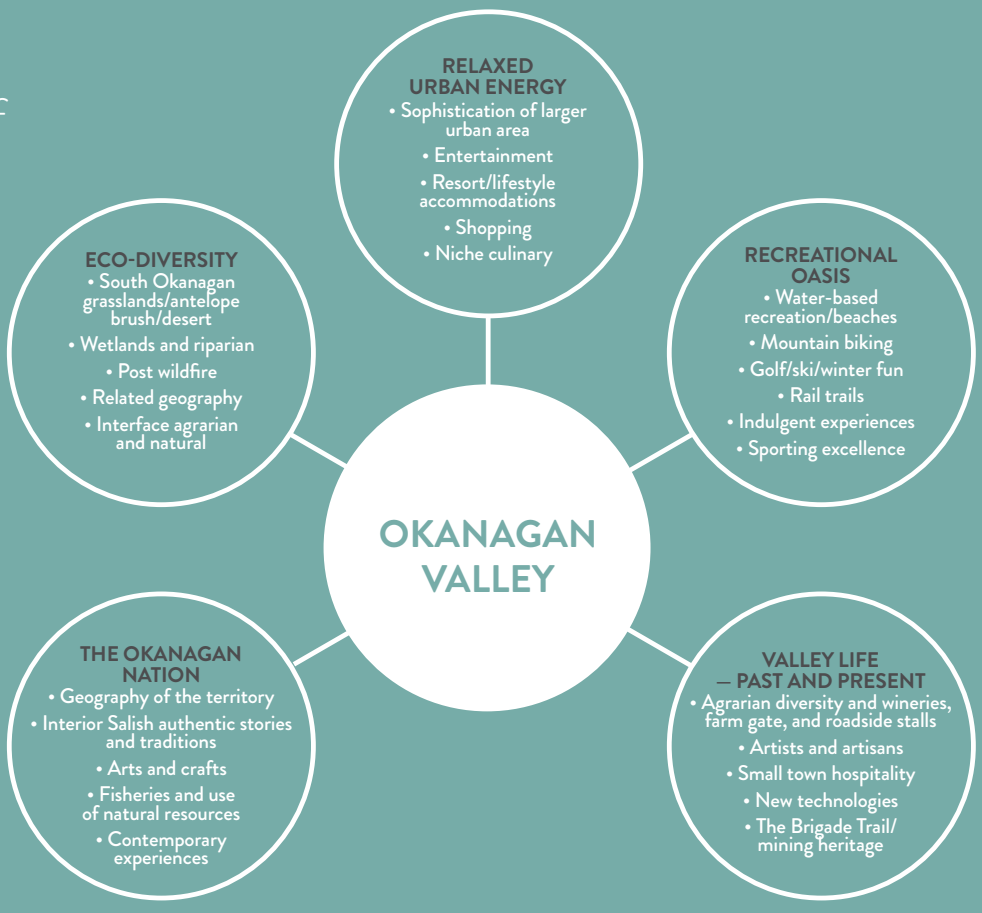
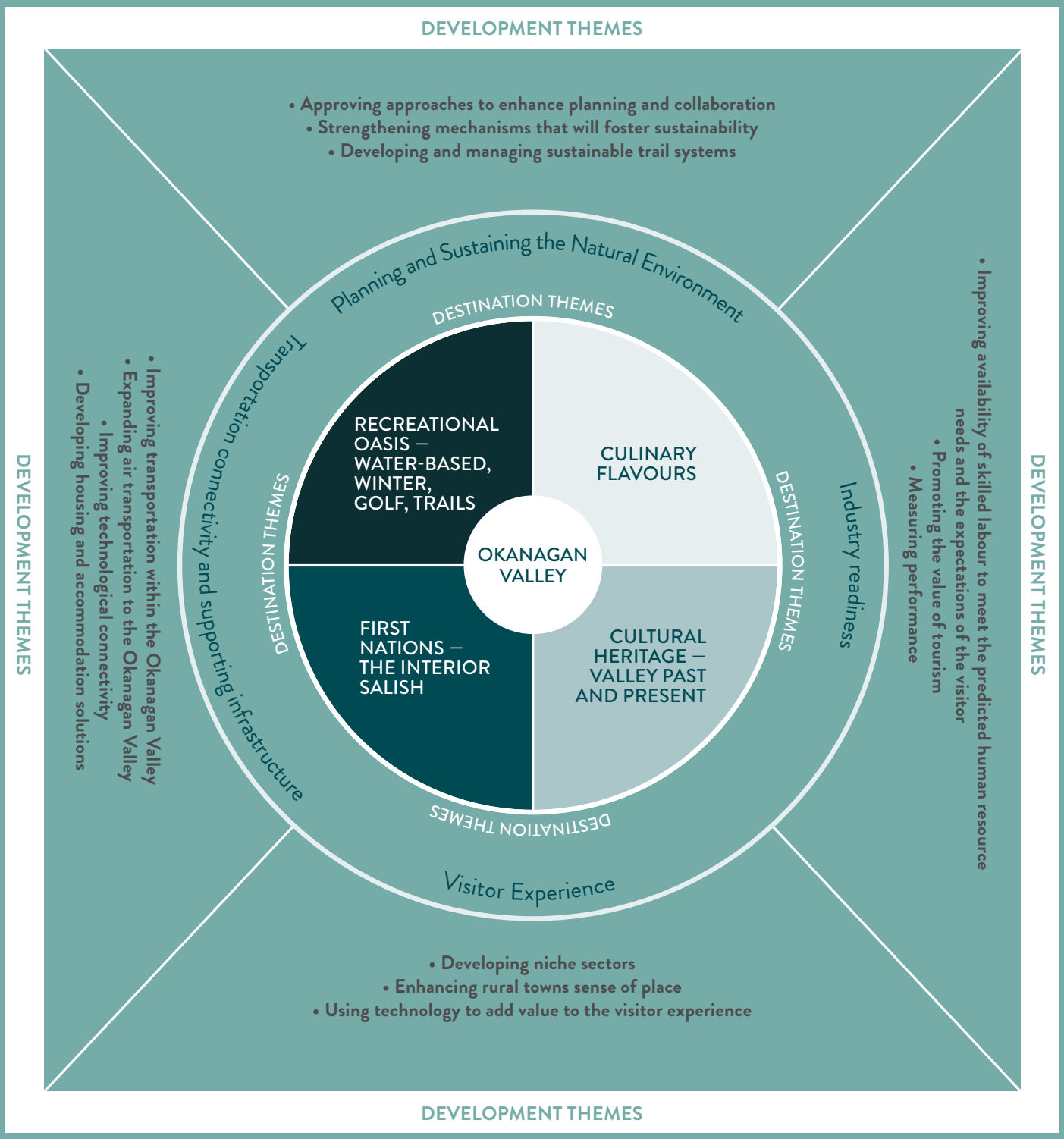


FIGURE 13: Development and Destination Themes



E. DEVELOPMENT THEMES

Destination development strategy themes defined the priorities that 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. These development themes will ensure the ongoing growth of tourism in an appropriate manner. Each theme has objectives and actions identified to support it.

1. **PLANNING AND SUSTAINING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.** A commitment to the concept of sustainability underlies the existing Thompson Okanagan regional tourism strategy. This has been strongly reinforced with its recent accreditation as a Biosphere Destination and the recognition gained through the global Tourism Tomorrow award and other awards. The emphasis moving forward is to build on these successes.

2. **TRANSPORTATION, CONNECTIVITY, AND SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE.** Improving air access to the Okanagan Valley and developing new transportation options that facilitate ease of movement within the planning area will assist in growing existing markets and attracting new markets. Addressing supporting infrastructure needs such as staff housing requirements and the need for consistent technological connectivity across the planning area will support the tourism business community and will improve the context for developing industry readiness, while strengthening the visitor experience.

3. **INDUSTRY READINESS.** The readiness of the industry is dependent on a broad mix of factors that range from ensuring adequate labour resources with the capacity to meet the needs and expectations of today's visitor, to the degree of community and political support that the tourism sector enjoys, which in turn depends on an understanding of the value of the sector to the economy.

4. **THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE.** The delivery of a quality experience is highly dependent on the interplay of the preceding development priorities. While the planning area already offers distinctive experiences, an ongoing focus on the strategic development of new niche experiences and strengthening the sense of place within the smaller rural communities will assist in further differentiating the Okanagan Valley. The use of technology to enhance the visitor experience will add additional value.

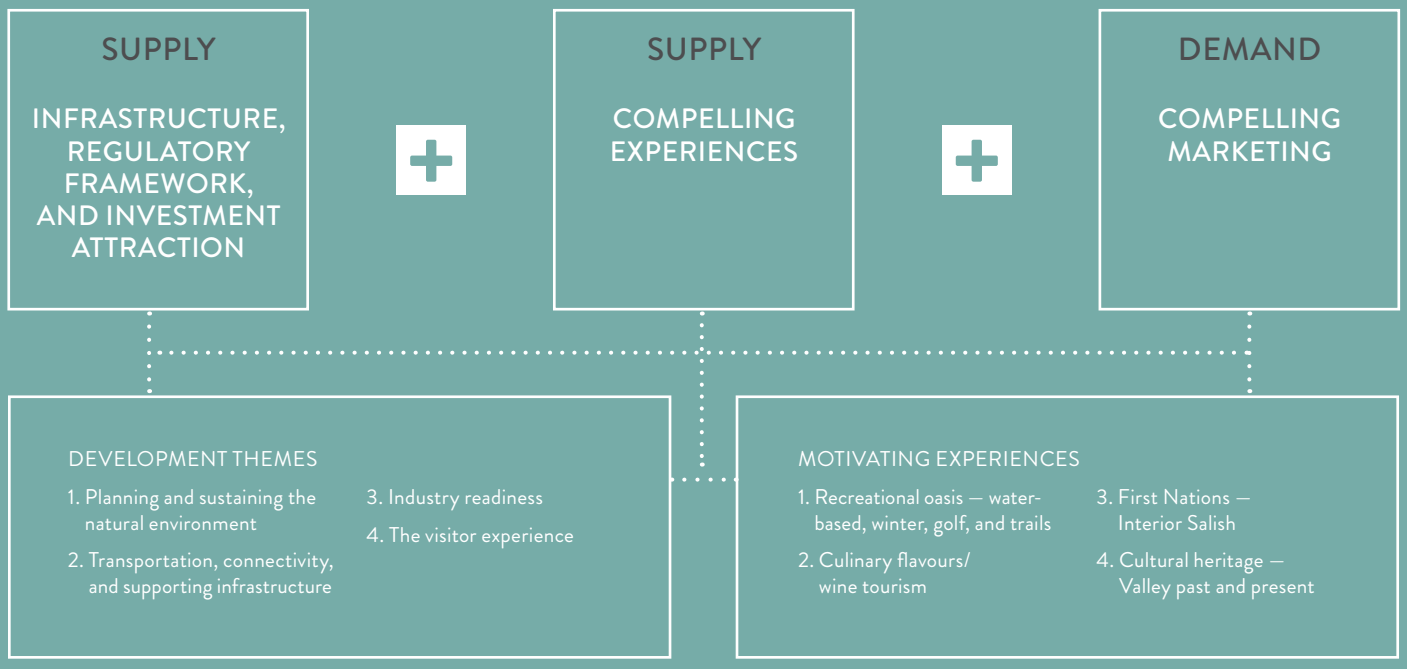
F. INTERACTION OF DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND MOTIVATING EXPERIENCES

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 framework, 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 Okanagan Valley, although they will do so at different levels, based on the actual objectives recommended.

FIGURE 14: Interaction of Development Themes and Experiences Themes



MYRA CANYON ADVENTURE PARK
Photo: Kari Medig

7 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Presenting the destination development objectives within a consistent framework allows the government of BC and the Okanagan Valley planning area to examine the various priorities and to identify those which belong 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 10 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.

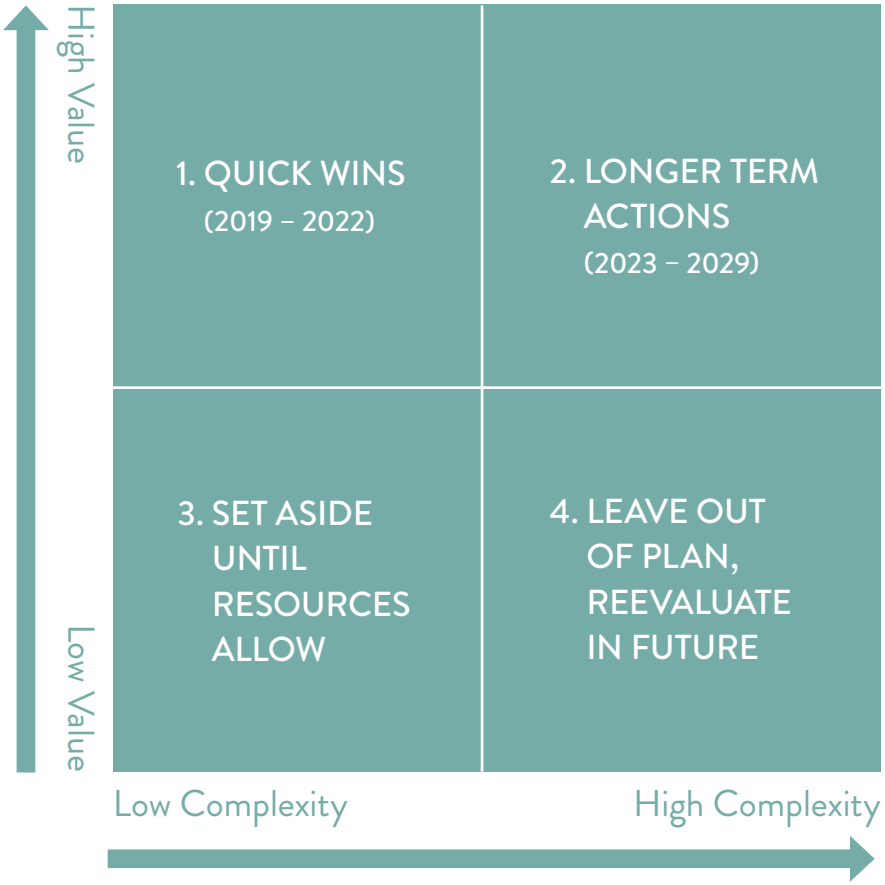
4. **LEAVE OUT OF STRATEGY, RE-EVALUATE IN FUTURE** high complexity and low value, not realistically achieved in the 10-year time frame of this strategy.

*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.

NK'MIP DESERT CULTURAL CENTRE
Photo: Andrew Strain

DESTINATION BRITISH COLUMBIA

FIGURE 15: 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, 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 tourism destination development.

A. OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

In total, 40 objectives have been identified for the Okanagan Valley 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
PLANNING AND SUSTAINING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	
OBJECTIVES • **Improving approaches to enhance planning and collaboration** • **Strengthening mechanisms that will foster sustainability** • **Developing and managing sustainable trail systems**	
IMPROVING APPROACHES TO ENHANCE PLANNING AND COLLABORATION **1. Create a mechanism to implement the Destination Development Strategy and monitor its implementation, including following up on any related initiatives.** **ACTIONS** • Use the Biosphere Interdepartmental Committee established by TOTA to monitor and follow-up on the implementation of this Strategy. This work will be part of the Biosphere Adhesion Program (involves an annual review of Sustainable Action Items as determined by Biosphere and the Responsible Tourism Institute (RTI) and will cover the action items in this strategy (The Adhesion Program monitors 137 action items within the 17 United Nations World Tourism Sustainable Development Goals). • Establish a planning area sub-committee to monitor and assist with follow-up on any areas that are not included in the Biosphere Initiative. This sub-committee should report to the TOTA Board on matters relating to implementation and may reflect the composition of the existing Working Group. - Invite First Nations to become part of this process. • Develop a monitoring and reporting mechanism to measure and assess implementation of strategies and tactics that fall outside of the Biosphere Adhesion Program: - Meet with DMOs and economic development offices to determine how they are currently measuring performance. - Prepare a simple logic model that can be used to organize the metrics, indicators, and sources necessary to benchmark and measure change. **SUCCESS NETWORK** TOTA, First Nations, ITBC, DMOs, local government, economic development offices	1. QUICK WINS PROVINCIAL SCOPE

THEME 1: ACTIONS	PRIORITY
2. Provide tourism operators and communities with a more accessible resource that outlines acceptable tourism uses on Crown land and the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). ACTIONS • Prepare a digital handbook on how to access Crown tenures. The handbook should also include guidelines on the changes in the ALR Use, Subdivision, and Procedure (USP) Regulation that allow land owners to host a gathering for an event provided specific conditions are met. - Prepare the handbook by incorporating content on FLNR's Land Use — Adventure Tourism & Commercial Recreation website. - Incorporate ALC Policies content as needed. - Investigate the need and potential for setting up a regional advocacy group to provide feedback and help facilitate tourism access to Crown lands. - Promote new regulations by AGRI that allows ALR landowners to host specific activities like commercial weddings, concerts, or non-agriculture related festivals without requiring a permit from the ALC through the USP Regulation. • Consider offering one-day workshops or seminars on "How to…." for tourism operators. This would be in the form of the Tourism Essentials program, but not as in-depth as Remarkable Experiences. **SUCCESS NETWORK** TOTA, FLNR, AGRI, First Nations, Agricultural Land Commission, local government	**3. SET ASIDE UNTIL RESOURCES ALLOW** **REGIONAL SCOPE**
3. Encourage local government to include tourism policies and management direction in their Official Community Plans (OCPs) and to align bylaws with neighbouring municipalities. ACTIONS • Encourage local government to explicitly address tourism through the available tools allowed by the Local Government Act — including regional growth strategies, regional context statements, and implementation agreements. • Encourage regular dialogue between the tourism industry and local government on advancing destination development in the municipal planning process. The Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) provides some policy guidance on Economic Development Policy & Initiatives, including Community Based Tourism and linking into the Provincial Trails Strategy. • Work with Osoyoos to monitor the stability of the Resort Municipality Initiative legislation, which may hinder future tourism planning in the community. • Explore opportunities for local government technology capacity to improve tourism services. For example, the RDOS has built substantial trail mapping capacity which could be duplicated in other areas. **SUCCESS NETWORK** TOTA, FLNR, AGRI, First Nations, Agricultural Land Commission, local government	**3. SET ASIDE UNTIL RESOURCES ALLOW** **REGIONAL SCOPE**

THEME 1: ACTIONS	PRIORITY
4. Design a tourism disaster and emergency program that helps communities and industry prepare for, educate, measure, mitigate, and adjust to major natural environmental events.	1. QUICK WINS
	CATALYST
	PROVINCIAL SCOPE

ACTIONS

- Promote distribution and use of:
  - Destination BC's Emergency Resources for BC's Tourism Industry, particularly emergency plans for tourism operators.
  - TIABC's wildfire Public Service Announcement and other emergency preparedness tools.
- Develop a community and/or regional impact tool that can be rolled out quickly to gather information from industry when emergency events occur. Content and guidance can come from:
  - TOTA's existing research on the implications of the 2017 wildfires
  - FLNR wildfire impact studies
  - Local government impact studies, notably those prepared by the Thompson-Nicola Regional District
  - Regional District emergency plans
  - Research from Alberta and the western United States on wildfire recovery assessments and strategies.
- Provide best practice research on industry operator response options for cancellations, refunds, re-bookings, and customer relations policies.

SUCCESS NETWORK TOTA, DBC, TIABC, Emergency Management BC, FLNR, TAC, JTT, IRR, local government, First Nations, ITBC

STRENGTHENING MECHANISMS THAT WILL FOSTER SUSTAINABILITY	3. SET ASIDE UNTIL RESOURCES ALLOW
5. Provide guidance for managing and mitigating tourism carrying capacity issues.	PROVINCIAL SCOPE

ACTIONS

- Define and develop a carrying capacity framework for the Okanagan Valley that can help communities and businesses measure imbalances and adopt appropriate mitigation strategies. As a regional initiative linked to the Biosphere program, it could include issues related to:
  - Biophysical carrying capacity (landscape level)
  - Economic carrying capacity (community level)
  - Social carrying capacity (tourism that results in negative socio-community consequences).
- Identify areas in the Okanagan Valley where carrying capacity may be an existing or emerging issue. These could be high use areas such as Myra Canyon Trestles, urban areas, and neighbourhoods that are closely affected by tourist activities or community infrastructure that is near, or at capacity, because of incremental visitor demand.
- Compile and promote best practices for addressing infrastructure capacity issues in communities.

SUCCESS NETWORK TOTA, FLNR, AGRI, First Nations, Agricultural Land Commission, local government

THEME 1: ACTIONS	PRIORITY
6. Develop a greater sense of place in terms of the Okanagan Valley's special relationship with water. ACTIONS • Work with water stewards, including the Okanagan Basin Water Board and the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council, in representing the tourism perspective in water, river, and lake management planning. • Increase the interpretation of water-related stories and issues into the visitor experience. Water's role in an arid ecosystem and the myth of abundance could be linked to its vital role in the Okanagan's core tourism products such as beach and/or lake and wine country activities. • Develop an education program for the tourism industry that better promotes existing policy and planning initiatives and how they could be incorporated into business operations. • Research and promote best practices in water quality, use, efficiency, and conservation. The United Nations, European Commission, and many NGOs provide best practice compendiums. • Encourage industry to adopt water sustainability accreditation. This objective will be included in the TOTA Biosphere initiative. **SUCCESS NETWORK** Okanagan Basin Water Board, Okanagan Water Stewardship Council, local government, First Nations, TOTA, DBC, wineries, agrifood producers, tourism operators	2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS CATALYST
STRENGTHENING MECHANISMS THAT WILL FOSTER SUSTAINABILITY **7. Provide research and support for the proposed South Okanagan Grassland National Park Reserve (NPR).** ACTIONS • Work with First Nations and all levels of government on moving the park initiative forward by representing a tourism voice for the region. The Syilx/Okanagan Nation and governments of Canada and British Columbia have committed to work together to establish a new national park reserve. • Establish a local working group that can provide input and recommendations for mitigating potential adverse tourism impacts while enhancing potential beneficial tourism impacts of the NPR, in particular: - Boundary selection - Facility and gateway development, including placement of visitor centres - Education and interpretive themes and programs - Park servicing and permitting opportunities - Trail uses and integration - Impacts on existing and planned tourism infrastructure in provincial park areas to be incorporated into the NPR - Impacts of, and accommodation for, rail trail development if the KVR right-of-way beside Vaseux Lake becomes incorporated into the Reserve, in combination with the Vaseux Lake Migratory Bird Sanctuary and Bighorn National Wildlife Area. **SUCCESS NETWORK** ENV, BC Parks, STBC, Parks Canada, Canadian Wildlife Service, First Nations, local government, Syilx Parks Working Group, TOTA	1. QUICK WINS
8. Foster sustainability practices that improve the capacity and competitiveness of the tourism industry while leveraging TOTA's Biosphere destination accreditation. ACTIONS • Promote the adoption of sustainability and environmental standards by tourism operators. • Provide a policy statement and guidance to local government on the adverse and beneficial aspects of the sharing economy (i.e., accommodation, transportation, tours, retail) on the tourism industry and how local authorities can: - Contribute to strengthened competitiveness of the regulated tourism industry - Mitigate adverse effects on regulated industry - Encourage sharing services that resolve systemic gaps in local visitor services, for example, taxi services. - 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. **SUCCESS NETWORK** TOTA, local government, EDOs, tourism operators	2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS CATALYST REGIONAL SCOPE

THEME 1: ACTIONS	PRIORITY
9. Utilize big data in managing tourism within the planning area and the Thompson Okanagan tourism region. ACTIONS • 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 travel dispersion. **SUCCESS NETWORK** TOTA, Telus, credit card companies, Destination Canada, DBC, local DMOs	1. QUICK WINS CATALYST REGIONAL SCOPE
DEVELOPING AND MANAGING SUSTAINABLE TRAIL SYSTEMS **10. Develop a world class identity for the Okanagan Valley as a trails destination.** ACTIONS • Work with TOTA, trail stewards, and groups throughout the Okanagan Valley, including the North Okanagan-Shuswap, to explore a trail destination identity for the entire region. This would support both the BC Trails Strategy's vision for world-class visitor experiences while expanding on the trail vision established in the 2012 Thompson Okanagan Regional Tourism Strategy. The purpose would be to develop a brand not just for marketing but for marshaling support around trails development and maintenance. **SUCCESS NETWORK** FLNR, TOTA, DMOs, local government, trail stewards, First Nations, ITBC	1. QUICK WINS REGIONAL SCOPE
11. Develop a vision and strategy forum for an integrated trail network in the Okanagan Valley. ACTIONS • 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 KVR, the Okanagan Rail Trail (ORT), and other emerging trail initiatives. The forum would focus on creating a coordinated development pathway and compelling visitor experiences. Some potential themes the forum could address include: - Preparing a consolidated trails atlas and inventory, comprising rail trails, mountain biking, road biking, hiking, and equestrian components. - Identifying, prioritizing, and investing in incomplete or lost segments of the rail trail network, such as the south spur between Penticton and Osoyoos. A cost and benefit methodology for prioritizing trail developments and improvements should be devised so there can be more informed and targeted discussions about where resources and efforts can best be allocated. - Prioritizing staging areas and connections that link the rail trail network to communities, mountain biking trails, road biking routes, farm gates, wineries, and resorts. - Developing a product and destination development guidebook that helps communities and tour operators move from exceptional trails to exceptional experiences. -Enhancing engagement, communication, and dispute resolution practices. - Connecting trail planning and use to broader sustainability initiatives (for example, how trails may contribute to water conservation and reduced carbon footprints). -First Nations involvement in trail experiences. **SUCCESS NETWORK** TOTA, local government, trail stewards, Bike Okanagan, RSTBC, Trails BC, First Nations, ITBC, Okanagan Water Board	1. QUICK WINS CATALYST REGIONAL SCOPE

THEME 1: ACTIONS	PRIORITY
12. Support the development of non-motorized designations on the Kettle Valley Railway. ACTIONS • Work with the RDOS, local trail stewards, Trails BC, the Trans Canada Trail Foundation, and RSTBC on following through on the original vision of the KVR as a non-motorized trail. There is considerable motorized use on some sections of the KVR, which negatively affects tourism potential for non-motorized uses: -Work with RSTBC to prioritize, plan for, and enforce non-motorized sections. -Support RDOS with trail planning that expands non-motorized uses on the KVR, including its Transit Future Plan, which targets a non-motorized designation on the KVR between the Summerland boundary and Faulder, and the Regional Trails Master Plan, which identifies the Naramata KVR sections for the same. - As recommended in the RDOS Regional Trails Master Plan, encourage the government of BC and the RDOS to manage the KVR as primarily a non-motorized trail, with designations by the government of BC as non-motorized where parallel routes for motorized use exist. -Support implementation of conflict resolution frameworks on those sections deemed potentially significant for non-motorized tourism use, but where mixed uses persists. • Prepare a case study of the agreement that was struck for the Kettle River Heritage Trail between Christina Lake and Greenwood, which was designated non-motorized and is now being resurfaced and signed. The foundation for this initiative was the Boundary Country Trails Agreement. **SUCCESS NETWORK** TOTA, Telus, credit card companies, Destination Canada, DBC, local DMOs, local governments	1. QUICK WINS REGIONAL SCOPE
13. Encourage greater Indigenous involvement in trail experiences. ACTIONS • As recommended in the Thompson Okanagan Regional Rail Trails Strategy 2016–2022, negotiate an MOU with the Okanagan Nation Alliance for trail development and management. • Identify how First Nations can become more actively involved in rail trails activities, including accommodation, food, beverage, and tours. • In cooperation with ITBC, prepare a development concept for Indigenous-themed huts on long distance trails. Traditional First Nations winter homes, known as Qwitci, could be linked to interpretation of the environment, cultural features, and traditional uses to enhance the trail experiences. • Investigate an Indigenous Youth Mountain Bike Initiative locally, like the provincial initiative, that would encourage more youth involvement in trail activities and trail services. • Identify and promote the interpretation of Indigenous themes on the trail network. • Encourage the Penticton Indian Band to develop a trail experience on the KVR between Penticton and Summerland. The right-of-way still exists, and the Band has re-acquired the trail between Trout Creek Trestle and Highway 97 in Penticton. The Band is looking at development opportunities, including infrastructure (such as informational kiosks), and community business engagement (in guiding, interpretation, etc.). • Develop an Okanagan Indigenous Tourism Strategy that prioritizes trail experiences, in alignment with the existing 2016 Regional Trails Strategy. **SUCCESS NETWORK** TOTA, First Nations — Penticton Indian Band, ITBC, IRR, TAC, local government	2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS REGIONAL SCOPE

THEME 1: ACTIONS	PRIORITY
14. Promote motorized trail services and guided experiences, building on the RSTBC Bear Creek ORV Recreation Site infrastructure. ACTIONS • Engage with off-road vehicle (ORV) groups and BC Parks to see how a marketable visitor experience could be developed. • Identify services and amenities that could be developed over time to create a destination visitor experience. Any commercial guiding within a Recreation Site will require authorization from the District Recreation Officer. • Research other ORV trail-based destinations for best practices that could result in more guided experiences in the Okanagan Valley. • Explore ways to expand dedicated motorized trail use under guidance of the provincial ORV Management Framework. **SUCCESS NETWORK** ORV groups, RSTBC, TOTA, BC Parks	3. SET ASIDE UNTIL RESOURCES ALLOW REGIONAL SCOPE
15. Work with RSTBC and local government to develop a framework for building, operating, and maintaining the trail network in the Okanagan Valley. ACTIONS • Implement major recommendations in the Thompson Okanagan Regional Rail Trails Strategy 2016–2022 as they relate to trail development and maintenance: - Develop a multi-partner capital strategy for medium-term trail and amenity improvements. - Prepare a handbook that local stewardship groups can use to recruit and organize volunteers, identify and prioritize trail projects, engage in and resolve issues around motorized and non-motorized use, form partnerships, and seek out trail funding. - Research on best practices from inter-regional trail alliance models so there is an opportunity to contribute to and participate in a broader, functional rail trail network. - Create and publish an economic and community benefits handbook that quantifies the economic benefits of cycling, hiking, and equestrian uses by visitors, as well as residents. - Create and Publish a funding guide for trail development. - Identify options for developing a practical, reasonable, and sustainable revenue stream from trail visitors. - Promote trail etiquette. • Establish a "friends of" program, building on the success of the Okanagan Rail Trail Initiative. • Work with environmental agencies to promote trail management and use that recognizes the interactions with fragile ecosystems. **SUCCESS NETWORK** RSTBC, FLNR, local government, TOTA, First Nations, trail stewards	1. QUICK WINS CATALYST REGIONAL SCOPE
16. Work to improve the consistency and clarity of trail signage. ACTIONS • Assemble provincial and local government signage manuals and policies. • Align highway and trail signage guidelines so wayfinding and information is consistently delivered across locations. • Implement major recommendations in the Thompson Okanagan Regional Rail Trails Strategy 2016–2022 as they relate to trail signage: - Prepare a signage strategy with the participation of trail organizations, including local government. • Promote adoption of the bcrailtrails.com brand on rail trail signage, to ensure consistent messaging. **SUCCESS NETWORK** RSTBC, FLNR, local government, TOTA, First Nations, trail stewards	2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS REGIONAL SCOPE

THEME 1: ACTIONS	PRIORITY
17. Encourage more visitor use of trails that have fewer carrying capacity issues to relieve pressure on high use areas. ACTIONS • Work with RSTBC to identify options for encouraging park users to access the KVR in less busy sections. • As recommended in the Thompson Okanagan Regional Rail Trails Strategy 2016–2022, develop a trail app that incorporates a social media component, so visitors and users can have access to real time information on conditions, congestion, and options for avoiding high use areas. **SUCCESS NETWORK** BC Parks, FLNR, RSTBC, TOTA	3. SET ASIDE UNTIL RESOURCES ALLOW REGIONAL SCOPE
18. Develop better trail use metrics and tracking programs. ACTIONS • Work with RSTBC and BC Parks to develop a program for tracking use and activity levels on trails and other high use tourism areas, building on existing research. • Investigate how Telus Insights technology can be employed to build a baseline of trail use in the Okanagan Valley. **SUCCESS NETWORK** TOTA, RSTBC, BC Parks, trail stewards, local government, Trails BC	2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS PROVINCIAL SCOPE

THEME 2: ACTIONS	PRIORITY
TRANSPORTATION, CONNECTIVITY, AND SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE	
OBJECTIVES • Improving ground transportation within the Okanagan Valley • Expanding air transportation to the Okanagan Valley • Improving technological connectivity • Developing housing and accommodation solutions	
IMPROVING GROUND TRANSPORTATION WITHIN THE OKANAGAN VALLEY **19. Promote inter-regional transportation and transit shuttle service between communities and the airports.** ACTIONS • Request that the provincial government resurrect the Okanagan Valley Transportation Symposium with the intention of developing a regional sub-strategy of the provincial transportation strategy. Developments such as rail trails, technology, and the sharing economy have appreciably changed the transportation context in the planning area since the symposium was held in 2011. • Work with local stakeholders to integrate and connect their transportation strategies and infrastructure (for example on trails, hiking, cycling, and other forms of transportation). BC Transit's Transit Future Plan for the RDOS, UBCO's Master Plan Transportation, and RDCO's Sustainable Transportation Partnership of the Central Okanagan all outline priorities and options, but none directly address the movement of visitors and tourism workers across and within the region. • Work with the Sustainable Transportation Partnership of the Central Okanagan to see if it is feasible to expand the partnership to the planning area, given that many of the transportation and transit issues are the same. • Work with TRAN and other partners to provide a tourism perspective on current and future projects within the planning area. **SUCCESS NETWORK** Local government, OVEDS, transportation service providers, BC Transit, TRAN, TOTA, Okanagan College, UBCO, Kelowna Airport	2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS CATALYST REGIONAL SCOPE
20. Promote private sector transportation opportunities in the Okanagan Valley planning area. ACTIONS • Provide market, business case, and policy research for the following: - Expanded airport shuttle service in the South Okanagan - Shuttle services to resorts, wineries, and trailheads - Lake transport services - Car rentals - Car and ride-share programs - Bike share program **SUCCESS NETWORK** Economic development offices, BC Transit, TRAN, TOTA, Community Futures	1. QUICK WINS

THEME 2: ACTIONS	PRIORITY
21. Provide research on the future electrification of transportation modes and the implications for tourism. ACTIONS • Create a research repository on electrification trends and developments in transportation, which until recently has been falling behind carbon reduction programs in other sectors, such as the trades. This could be focused on modes pertinent to the Okanagan Valley planning area and to the implications for supporting infrastructure: - Cars - Buses - Bicycles - Marine vessels • 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. **SUCCESS NETWORK** TOTA, TRAN, BC Hydro, TIABC	**3. SET ASIDE UNTIL RESOURCES ALLOW** **REGIONAL SCOPE**
EXPANDING AIR TRANSPORTATION TO THE OKANAGAN VALLEY **22. Develop a business case for coordinating more air connections to the Okanagan Valley planning area.** ACTIONS • Examine ways that the smaller airports in Penticton, Oliver, and Osoyoos can leverage an increase in inbound visitors through the Kelowna Airport. • Using the JTT's Exploring Airport Development guide, conduct a self-assessment of small airports and opportunities for air tourism. • Work with smaller air service providers to encourage and promote more air travel. • Work with smaller airports on the following: - An ambassador program for visiting itinerant pilots. Face-to-face contact between visiting pilots and airport personnel could encourage longer stays and more spending - Quantifying demand for and feasibility of an airpark. Osoyoos Airport has studied this concept in the past and determined not to pursue it, but demand may have changed since the last study. **SUCCESS NETWORK** TOTA, airports, local government, economic development officers, JTT	**1. QUICK WINS** **REGIONAL SCOPE**

THEME 2: ACTIONS	PRIORITY
IMPROVING TECHNOLOGICAL CONNECTIVITY **23. Create a Technology Task Force that would promote the use of technology and innovation for tourism product and destination development.** ACTIONS • Create terms of reference for the Task Force. • Develop a Technology and Innovation program to be hosted by TOTA, alongside its other major programs. • Alternatively, consider developing a Remarkable Experiences course on how to work with and integrate the latest technologies, such as messaging platforms and virtual reality, to enrich their products and increase their competitiveness. • Compile best practices in technology and innovation and promote to tourism operators. Workshop participants indicated that the uptake of technology by industry is very low, yet it could be at least a partial solution to raising the bar on productivity, relieving labour market shortages, and fostering product development efforts (for example, by providing more timely access to land and resource data pertinent to backcountry recreation). • Inquire with JTT's Integrated Data Division to see how the provincial open data initiatives could support tourism technology innovation. • For example, there is an extensive repository of land base data in the BC Data Warehouse that would be useful in destination development. Currently, this data is difficult to access and could be made more accessible to communities and industry. **SUCCESS NETWORK** TOTA, BC Innovation Council, DBC, Okanagan College, UBCO, Community Futures, Economic development offices, OVEDS, Accelerate Okanagan	3. SET ASIDE UNTIL RESOURCES ALLOW REGIONAL SCOPE
24. Continue to work with the telecommunications sector to improve broadband services throughout the Okanagan Valley planning area. ACTIONS • Develop a regional strategy that targets expected coverage in 10 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. • Use the NetworkBC Connectivity Map to chart out where connectivity weak spots are occurring and how they could be resolved in the future. Dead-spots still exist in the planning area. • Represent the Okanagan Valley tourism industry in senior government broadband initiatives: - The federal government established minimum targets for network availability, speeds, and costs in rural Canada. Funding programs are ongoing. Local tourism and economic development stakeholders should fully subscribe to these programs. • Monitor the Connecting British Columbia program which is delivered jointly by Northern Development Initiative Trust and Network BC. • Work with DMOs to clearly inform visitors of mobile coverage and wi-fi availability, especially in remote locations. **SUCCESS NETWORK** Federal Government (Pathways Project, Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission — CRTC, Connect to Innovate), Network BC, NDIT, local government, Innovation Centre, Accelerate Okanagan, telecommunications companies, First Nations, IRR, TOTA	2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS REGIONAL SCOPE

THEME 2: ACTIONS

PRIORITY

1. QUICK WINS

CATALYST

PROVINCIAL SCOPE

DEVELOPING HOUSING AND ACCOMMODATION SOLUTIONS

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

ACTIONS

- Work with local government on addressing the affordable housing issue. The Lower Mainland's chronic housing imbalance is showing signs of spreading to other regions of the province. Local government in the Thompson Okanagan and the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association should work on implementing solutions, including tourism's role as supply and demand generators.
  - Support local government housing initiatives. For example, RDCO's 2017 Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) Our Home Our Future has proposed a regional housing assessment for 2018 and a regional housing strategy for 2019. The RGS notes that the "strong tourism industry" has had an adverse effect on housing costs and availability. The report also observes that "While housing policy exists in OCPs across the region, there is no initiative that takes a regional perspective to affordable and accessible housing." The District of Summerland is conducting an affordable housing study, while Osoyoos, Oliver, Penticton, West Kelowna, Kelowna, and Lake Country all have ongoing affordable housing initiatives.
  - Review best practices in resort communities and prepare a research brief with lessons learned that may be applied to communities in the planning area. Major resort communities such as Whistler, Tofino, and Sun Peaks have innovative approaches to worker housing, and more non-resort communities may have to implement integrated housing solutions to maintain balanced markets.
  - Encourage local governments to address and adopt short-term rental policies that balance visitor choice with regulatory equity and community quality of life.
  - Encourage municipalities and regional districts to incentivize growing the rental and mixed housing supply.
- Support and represent the tourism voice in the ongoing debate on affordable housing.
- Provide information to governments on barriers to recruiting and retaining staff, particularly in rural areas (e.g., barriers related to transportation, lack of accommodation, high cost of living).
- Promote provincial and local housing resources to local tourism employers in need of affordable housing for workers.
- Work with social service agencies, Interior Health, and BC Housing to explore innovative use of housing stock to accommodate seasonal workers.
  - Interior Health has indicated an interest in reviewing the use of the authority's building in Osoyoos. Discussions between Interior Health and the Town of Osoyoos should be initiated.

SUCCESS NETWORK Local government, Interior Health, BC Housing, go2HR, Habitat for Humanity, local housing societies, FLNR, MAH

THEME 3: ACTIONS	PRIORITY
INDUSTRY READINESS	
OBJECTIVES • Improving availability of skilled labour to meet the predicted human resources needs and the expectations of the visitor • Promoting the value of tourism • Measuring performance	
IMPROVING AVAILABILITY OF SKILLED LABOUR TO MEET THE PREDICTED HUMAN RESOURCES NEEDS AND THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE VISITOR	2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS
26. Improve labour market efficiency and propose solutions to predicted future worker shortages in the tourism industry.	REGIONAL SCOPE
ACTIONS • Work collaboratively and communicate with colleges and private educators to outline industry requirements, the need for better skills development, cross training for seasonal jobs, and other labour supply issues. Integrate the best practices findings of the consultation process conducted by AEST with skills training service providers. • Work in collaboration and across ministries to create a broad awareness of the Employer Training Grant under the Workforce Development Agreement and maximize uptake and use of these grants. • Maximize uptake and use of Labour Market Development Agreements and their associated programs such as the Canada-BC Job grant and FirstHost. • Assist tourism operators' network, and access information on, training programs, opportunities, best practices, advocacy, and other labour supply issues. • 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. • Consider a tourism education and training advisory committee that could provide recommendations and be a sounding board for training issues and requirements in the Okanagan Valley planning area. - Support this committee through the creation of a cross-ministry consultation process that promotes awareness of existing tools and resources and assists with identifying other steps required in addressing current issues.	
SUCCESS NETWORK go2HR, TIABC, industry associations, tourism operators, JTT, TOTA, Tourism HR Canada, Services Canada, AEST, career centres, IRR, LBR	
27. Improve access to foreign workers by the tourism industry.	1. QUICK WINS
ACTIONS • Create more flexible access to temporary foreign workers, for example, by replicating the agricultural workers visa for seasonal tourism employees. • Facilitate local industry access to resources aimed at integrating foreign workers into the tourism workforce, including creating awareness of WelcomeBC and the Provincial Nominee Program. • Consider instituting a welcome program that employers can use to attract and retain foreign workers.	PROVINCIAL SCOPE
SUCCESS NETWORK go2HR, TIABC, industry associations, tourism operators, JTT, TOTA, Tourism HR Canada, Services Canada, career centres, LBR	

THEME 3: OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	PRIORITY
28. Support expansion of training programs and tourism career strategies for Indigenous Peoples. ACTIONS • Access tourism career information that appeals to Indigenous youth. • Promote ITBC's labour market programs and encourage more local uptake and delivery. • Encourage ITBC to identify and assist with tailored solutions for connecting Indigenous workers with local tourism employers. • Build tourism training programs into impact benefit agreements negotiated with major industry. **SUCCESS NETWORK** First Nations, ITBC, ITAC, school districts, Okanagan College, UBCO, go2HR, Community Futures, AEST, IRR, JTT	2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS REGIONAL SCOPE
29. Formulate legacy services to enhance a Remarkable Experiences type of program. ACTIONS • Continue to enhance tourism operator competitiveness through delivery of a Remarkable Experiences type of program. • Work with local DMOs to deliver a Remarkable Experiences type of program in smaller communities to increase outreach and uptake. • Identify sources for a funding pool that can be accessed by local businesses who might not have the resources to participate in the program. • Provide direction on how businesses can build on their Remarkable Experiences type of program attendance by accessing business planning services. **SUCCESS NETWORK** First Nations, ITBC, ITAC, school districts, Okanagan College, UBCO, go2HR, Community Futures, AEST, IRR, JTT	2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS REGIONAL SCOPE
PROMOTING THE VALUE OF TOURISM **30. Develop a model that communities and stakeholders can use to promote the Value of Tourism.** ACTIONS • Extract and summarize the Thompson Okanagan tourism region results from DBC's annual Value of Tourism study. This could be presented in the Research section of the TOTA website. • Develop and promote a community value of tourism assessment tool: - Use DBC's Value of Tourism methodology. - Create an online tool and dashboard that communities can use to determine the local value of tourism. - Provide template research on the links between tourism and community stability, resident attraction and retention, recreation, and lifestyle benefits. - Encourage local DMOs to apply the tool and promote the results to their communities. • 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. **SUCCESS NETWORK** TOTA, DBC, DMOs, chambers of commerce, TIABC, Wilderness Tourism Association, ITBC, Open Data Initiative	2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS CATALYST REGIONAL SCOPE

THEME 3: OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	PRIORITY
MEASURING PERFORMANCE **31. Develop a performance measurement framework that can be used to evaluate the Destination Development Strategy and assist communities track progress on tourism.** ACTIONS • TOTA should consider developing a vital signs report card or dashboard that planning area and communities can use to track key tourism indicators. • Develop a tourism dashboard on the TOTA website for reporting key national, provincial, and local indicators. • Use the Biosphere Destination certification reporting framework. • Expand the use of EQ research for destination and product development. • Meet with DMOs and economic development offices to determine how they are currently measuring performance. • Investigate a pilot project in cooperation with DataBC that would take advantage of the government of BC's Open Data Initiative to utilize government and other public datasets into an online reporting and strategy tool. This could greatly facilitate industry communications and give operators a hands-on tool for investigating new product development. • Use the Performance Measurement Toolkit for Local Economic Development as a guide. It addresses tourism indicators and sources and provides resources for setting up dashboards. **SUCCESS NETWORK** TOTA, DBC, TAC, DMOs, economic development offices, local government, DataBC	**1. QUICK WINS** **REGIONAL SCOPE**

THEME 4: ACTIONS	PRIORITY
THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE	
OBJECTIVES • Developing niche sectors • Enhancing rural towns sense of place • Using technology to add value to the visitor experience	
DEVELOPING NICHE SECTORS **32. Grow the agritourism industry in the Okanagan Valley.** ACTIONS • Identify new experiences that appeal to visitors already attracted by the existing agritourism products. • Develop a farm tour program, taking advantage of the critical mass of producers and farms and the rail trail and/or cycling network. The Circle Farm Tours in Agassiz and Pemberton and the Economusee British Columbia are best practices. • Promote the following: - Market ready criteria for agritourism operators. - Changes in the ALR USP Regulation that allows land owners to host a gathering for an event provided specified conditions are met. - Supportive planning controls in local government OCPs. • Examine the feasibility of farm camping opportunities. • Examine the feasibility of farm study experiences. • Continue to advance the winery tourism product in the planning area through the development and packaging of themed tours, events, and linkages to outdoor recreation, cultural and/or heritage, and culinary activities. • Forge more relationships between the Okanagan's research and development sector and agritourism programs. For example, Agriculture Canada's Pacific Agri-Food Research Centre in Summerland is a destination itself but also conducts a wide variety of research that has implications for food production in the planning area. • Promote BC tools for succession planning, for example the Ministry of Agriculture's Business Succession guide and resources available through the BC Small Business Accord. **SUCCESS NETWORK** go2HR, TIABC, industry associations, tourism operators, JTT, TOTA, Tourism HR Canada, Services Canada, AEST, career centres, IRR, LBR	1. QUICK WINS REGIONAL SCOPE
33. Expand culinary experiences. ACTIONS • Further build and connect existing culinary trails. • Provide support for packaging agritourism with outdoor recreation activities. • Support efforts to develop a more integrated local food supply chain: - Encourage the farm to table concept connecting local producers with visitors through the culinary industry, farmers markets, and farm gate initiatives. - Create more accessible and user-friendly "Buy Local Buy Fresh" maps. - Assist with the development of agricultural producer cooperatives to make it easier for restaurants to purchase from local producers. • Expansion of restaurants serving local food. **SUCCESS NETWORK** TOTA, farmers, producers, wineries, BC AgriTourism Farming Association, BC Association of Farmers Markets, Culinary Tourism Society of BC, Investment Agriculture Foundation, AGRI, TAC, IRR	2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS REGIONAL SCOPE

THEME 4: OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	PRIORITY
34. Undertake research on diversification of wine tourism. ACTIONS • Work with the BC Wine Institute to research product development opportunities targeted at winery visitors for the planning area and the region. The Institute's current research indicates visitors are coming to the Okanagan for reasons other than wine, although winery visitors and tours are still a popular activity. The Institute is exploring ways to build and market more general tourism experiences such as outdoor recreation, food, culinary, culture, and/or heritage. • Prepare a profile of winery visitors from BC, Alberta, Washington State, and Ontario which would be cross-referenced with EQ segments to provide further insights into product development opportunities. • Survey winery visitors to understand their travel motivations, behaviours, activities, and satisfaction levels. Primary research has not been conducted on this market for at least 10 years. A research consortium of participating venues could easily achieve the outreach and response for representative research. **SUCCESS NETWORK** BC Wine Institute, TOTA, wineries, DMOs, Okanagan College, UBC Okanagan	**3. SET ASIDE UNTIL RESOURCES ALLOW** **REGIONAL SCOPE**
35. Utilize the cultural and heritage assets of the Okanagan Valley planning area to differentiate the visitor experience. ACTIONS • Work with the museums and historical organizations to determine interest in and embark on a story project that would document and make available stories that could be used to make for more distinctive experiences. Use EQ guidelines in story composition. • Investigate the practices of the Économusée passport program on Vancouver Island, where there are artisan locations in four cities (Victoria, Duncan, Nanaimo, and Courtenay). Explore opportunities to build the Okanagan Lavender Farm in Kelowna as one of the nine certified experiential tourism destinations. **SUCCESS NETWORK** TOTA, historical societies, museums, visitor centres, local government, First Nations, Économusée BC	**3. SET ASIDE UNTIL RESOURCES ALLOW**

THEME 4: OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	PRIORITY
36. Work with First Nations to increase the availability and competitiveness of Indigenous experiences.	1. QUICK WINS
	CATALYST
	REGIONAL SCOPE

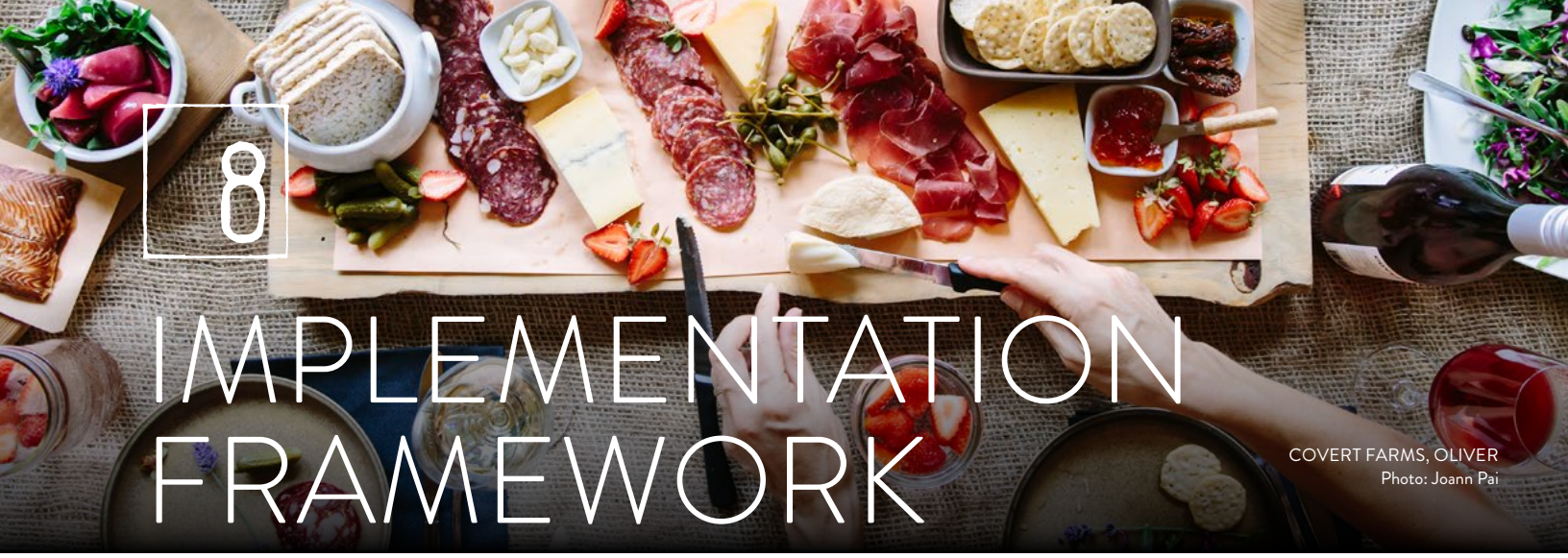
ACTIONS

- Prepare an inventory of local Indigenous tourism businesses that can provide some direction and guidance for prospective entrepreneurs and operators. Suggestions includes:
  - Restaurants such as Kekuli Café in West Kelowna.
  - Wineries like Nk'Mip Cellars and Indigenous World Winery.
  - Okanagan Select Salmon products.
  - Spirit Ridge and Desert Cultural Centre.
  - Tour operators such as Connoisseur Wine Tours and Swiws Spirit Tours.
- Provide support to Indigenous operators in packaging an Indigenous experience and/or itinerary in a way that will result in a richer consumer experience.
- Promote the development of new experiences to Bands and aspiring Indigenous entrepreneurs. There is a wide variety of product that could complement and enhance visitor choice: glamping and/or camping, nature experiences, heritage tours, First Nations ranching traditions, storytelling, closer partnerships with industry, DMOs and visitor centres, food culture tours, and winter recreation.
- Raise the interpretation level of light traditions and associated stories and legends such as Ogopogo and Sasquatch.
- Provide support in building more cooperative experiences, including:
  - Indigenous Artists Cooperative and potential storefront
  - Quilting Trail
  - Indigenous Artists Trail (guided and self-guided), which could include performing artists
- Consider establishing a local tourism business liaison who could act as an enterprise facilitator, directly working with Indigenous businesses. Access to capital, management expertise, and operations skills are identified problem areas.
- In partnership with local First Nations and ITBC, develop a strategy framework that sets out guidelines for better, more productive relationships with the tourism industry. Issues identified at the strategy workshops that could be addressed include:
  - Cross-cultural training and education for industry.
  - How to use language and traditional place names as product differentiators.
  - Differentiating interior peoples from coastal First Nations, which Canadian and international travellers see as representing BC.
  - Guidelines for using cultural and/or traditional knowledge for tourism purposes.
- Accreditation scheme, especially for artists and those with intellectual property.

SUCCESS NETWORK First Nations, ITBC, TOTA, DMOs, economic development offices, Community Futures, development corporations, tourism operators

THEME 4: OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	PRIORITY
37. Encourage Indigenous tourism organizations to increase program delivery in the Okanagan Valley. ACTIONS • Engage First Nations on how to build a stronger success network and increase participation in tourism planning across all levels. This initiative should be for the entire region. • Work with ITBC to identify local contributions to the Pulling Together plan that maps out a strategy for drawing an increasing number of visitors to BC to experience and understand Indigenous heritage and culture. • Work with ITBC to identify short term initiatives for creating market-ready experiences for First Nations in the planning area. • Promote ITAC, including ITAC's Indigenous Cultural Experiences — National Guidelines. They were created through national consultation with ITAC partners, industry, and support from the federal government through Indigenous Affairs and Northern Development Canada. • Host an ITBC Indigenous Tourism Regional Forum. • Consider working with ITAC to host an International Indigenous Tourism Conference in the future. This would be an excellent way to generate enthusiasm and buy-in for more First Nations-industry partnerships. **SUCCESS NETWORK** First Nations, ITBC, ITAC, INAC, TOTA	3. SET ASIDE UNTIL RESOURCES ALLOW REGIONAL SCOPE
38. Work with First Nations to develop map sets that could be used to enrich the visitor experience. ACTIONS • Request that First Nations provide a framework for discussing and investigating how traditional maps could be used for engaging visitors and providing links to cultural experiences. TOTA is working on a preliminary map and this could help with further discussion. Such as: -Traditional territory maps -Traditional districts and watersheds -Traditional place names **SUCCESS NETWORK** First Nations, ITBC,IRR, TOTA	2. LONGER TERM ACTIONS REGIONAL SCOPE
ENHANCING RURAL TOWNS SENSE OF PLACE **39. Increase the touring appeal of rural town experiences, focusing on activities that have high appeal for target EQ segments.** ACTIONS • Expand on TOTA's tourism asset inventory to include more detailed data on architecture, art, commerce, cuisine, customs, geography, history, and people assets. The inventory can be a useful tool in diversifying and bundling experiences. • Encourage communities to: - Undertake community tourism strategy best practices as outlined in Transforming Communities Through Tourism: Resource Handbook. - Identify and build strategic tourism infrastructure, undertake downtown revitalization projects, and expand their cultural and recreational amenities that serve visitors as well as residents. • Develop a workshop series for communities that demonstrate how to bundle different attraction types to attract visitors. Although winery and/or viticulture themes and tours are prevalent throughout the Okanagan Valley, and there are emerging linkages to outdoor recreation, the connections to high profile EQ experiences, specifically learning activities, could be improved. • Assist communities who wish to implement ambassador programs as a way of enhancing visitor services. • Increase participation in SuperHost programs. **SUCCESS NETWORK** Local government, First Nations, TOTA, DMOs, TAC, visitor centres, local government, economic development offices, tourism operators, accommodation providers, TCA, go2HR	1. QUICK WINS REGIONAL SCOPE

THEME 4: OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS	PRIORITY
USING TECHNOLOGY TO ADD VALUE TO THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE **40. Examine the feasibility of a smartphone app that will enhance local travel experiences.** ACTIONS • Investigate other apps (e.g., Vancouver's Offline Map, Destination Canada's visitor guides) that could provide some direction for scope and content. • Identify local map and information sources that could be incorporated into the app, for example, RDOS's Click, Hike and Bike feature. • Enquire with OpenDataBC to see if they might be willing to support enhanced app development. • Contact the government of BC's Open Data Initiative and propose pilot app development that makes better use of government data sets. The provincial government has prioritized enabling engagement with residents and visitors through the use of new technologies. **SUCCESS NETWORK** TOTA, DMOs, FLNR, JTT, OpenDataBC, DataBC, BC Parks, local government	**3. SET ASIDE UNTIL RESOURCES ALLOW** **REGIONAL SCOPE**



8 IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

COVERT FARMS, OLIVER
Photo: Joann Pai

A. CATALYST PROJECTS

The following 10 actions were identified as catalyst projects for immediately moving the Okanagan Valley Destination Development Strategy into implementation:

PRIORITY CATALYST PROJECTS

- Design a tourism disaster and emergency program that helps communities and industry prepare for, educate, measure, mitigate, and adjust to major natural environmental events.
- Develop a greater sense of place in terms of the Okanagan Valley's special relationship with water.
- Foster sustainability practices that improve the capacity and competitiveness of the tourism industry while leveraging TOTA's Biosphere destination accreditation.
- Utilize big data in the planning and management of tourism within the planning area and the Thompson Okanagan tourism region.
- Develop a vision and planning forum for an integrated trail network in the Okanagan.
- Work with RSTBC and local government to develop a framework for building, operating, and maintaining the trail network in the Okanagan Valley.
- Promote inter-regional transportation and transit shuttle service between communities and the airports.
- Support local government housing initiatives that address worker housing and visitor accommodation options.
- Develop a model that communities and stakeholders can use to promote the value of tourism.
- Work with First Nations to increase the availability and competitiveness of Indigenous tourism 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 actions that are shared commonly across the Thompson Okanagan tourism region may become regional priorities but at the very least will inform the update of the Regional Destination Development Strategy.

This Okanagan Valley Destination Development Strategy, along with 19 strategies from around the province, will then inform the Provincial Destination Development 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		
1.	Create a mechanism to implement the strategy and monitor its implementation, including following up on any related initiatives.	1
4.	Design a tourism disaster and emergency program that helps communities and industry prepare for, educate, measure, mitigate, and adjust to major natural environmental events.	1
5.	Provide guidance for managing and mitigating tourism carrying capacity issues.	3
18.	Develop better trail use metrics and tracking programs.	2
THEME 2: Transportation, connectivity, and supporting infrastructure		
25.	Support local government housing initiatives that address worker housing and visitor accommodation options.	1
THEME 3: Industry Readiness		
27.	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		
2.	Provide tourism operators and communities with a more accessible resource that outlines acceptable tourism uses on Crown land and the Agricultural Land Reserve.	3
3.	Encourage local governments 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
10.	Develop a world class identity for the Okanagan Valley as a trails destination.	1
11.	Develop a vision and strategy forum for an integrated trail network in the Okanagan Valley.	1
12.	Support the development of non-motorized designations on the Kettle Valley Railway.	1
13.	Encourage greater Indigenous involvement in trail experiences.	2
14.	Promote motorized trail services and guided experiences, building on the Bear Creek Recreation Site infrastructure.	3
15.	Work with RSTBC and local government to develop a framework for building, operating, and maintaining the trail network in the Okanagan Valley.	1
16.	Work to improve the consistency and clarity of trail signage.	2
17.	Encourage more visitor use of trails that have fewer carrying capacity issues to relieve pressure on high use areas.	3

OBJECTIVES		PRIORITY
THEME 2: Transportation, connectivity, and supporting infrastructure		
19.	Promote inter-regional transportation and transit shuttle service between communities and the airports.	3
21.	Provide research on the future electrification of transportation modes and the implications for tourism.	3
22.	Develop a business case for coordinating more air connections to the Okanagan Valley.	2
23.	Create a Technology Task Force that would promote the use of technology and innovation for tourism product and destination development.	1
24.	Continue to work with the telecommunications sector to improve broadband services throughout the Okanagan Valley.	1
THEME 3: Industry readiness		
26.	Improve labour market efficiencies and propose solutions to predicted future worker shortages in the tourism industry.	2
28.	Support expansion of training programs and tourism career planning for Indigenous Peoples.	2
29.	Formulate legacy services to enhance the Remarkable Experiences program.	2
30.	Develop a model that communities and stakeholders can use to promote the value of tourism.	2
31.	Develop a performance measurement framework that can be used to evaluate the strategy and assist communities track progress on tourism.	1
THEME 3: The visitor experience		
32.	Grow the agritourism industry in the Okanagan Valley.	1
33.	Expand culinary experiences.	2
34.	Undertake research on diversification of wine tourism.	3
36.	Work with First Nations to increase the availability and competitiveness of Indigenous tourism experiences.	1
38.	Work with First Nations to develop map sets that could be used to enrich the visitor experience.	2
39.	Increase the touring appeal of rural town experiences, focusing on activities that have high appeal for target EQ segments.	1
40.	Examine the feasibility of a smartphone app that will enhance local travel experiences.	3

B&B NEAR KELOWNA
Photo: Kari Medig

DESTINATION BRITISH COLUMBIA®

C. FUNDING PROGRAMS

To assist planning areas such as the Okanagan Valley in their implementation efforts, Destination BC has compiled a list of funding programs as part of its Provincial Situation Analysis.

The different funding options highlighted include:

- Municipal and Regional District Tax
- Destination BC Programs
- Western Economic Diversification Canada
- Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure Programs
- FLNR Rural Dividend Fund grants
- 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

VANILLA POD RESTAURANT, PENTICTON
Photo: Kari Medig

9 MEASURING AND MONITORING SUCCESS

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

OBJECTIVE	RECOMMENDED MEASURES	SOURCE
1. Increase the total contribution of the visitor economy.	• Growth in MRDT revenues • Increase in overnight stays • Economic Impact	• Ministry of Finance • Accommodation Tracking • Destination BC's Value of Tourism model[5]
1. Enhance the overall visitor experience in the Okanagan Valley as a preferred travel destination for key markets.	• Net Promoter Score[6] • Ratings of ease of transportation	• Consumer survey • Consumer survey
3. Strengthen the business climate.	• Ratings of business climate	• Tourism partners survey — tourism businesses
4. Strengthen a unified planning area tourism industry, working together as a whole.	• Ratings of improvements in tourism industry • Adoption of sustainability programs and achievement of certification • Support for tourism	• Tourism partners survey — all tourism partners • Internal database • Resident survey

[5]Destination BC's Value of Tourism model: www.destinationbc.ca/Resources/Monitoring-and-Evaluation/Value-of-Tourism-Model.aspx
[6]Net Promoter Score calculation: www.destinationbc.ca/Resources/Monitoring-and-Evaluation/Net-Promoter-Score.asp

APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1: PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

This section summarizes the strategy context and provides the key directions the Okanagan Valley Destination Development Strategy should address.

On the basis of the desk research, the destination audit, and the consultation process, the following strategy considerations were identified for the Okanagan Valley:

COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY

The Thompson Okanagan tourism region is the first in the Americas to receive the Biosphere Destination certification which involved meeting 137 benchmarks in sustainability measurements relating to a range of standards such as affordable, clean energy and water use; human rights and social justice; gender equality; cultural diversity and equality; labour standards; health and poverty standards; and sustainable communities. This major accomplishment is a direct outcome from the commitment to sustainability made in the 2012 regional tourism strategy, and demonstrates the importance of a clear strategic direction.

The destination audit score of 3.6 highlights the fact that the industry and related partners overall recognize the underlying commitment to sustainability. Moving forward, it will be important to continue building on this accomplishment at all levels — to achieve sustainable and healthy communities, ecosystems, businesses, and residents.

Overall, strong response scores were given to the audit statements relating to measuring the sustainability indicator: the tourism industry is being developed in a sustainable manner with due consideration being given to the local environmental, economic, and social needs of the community, and the expectations of the visitor. Tourism is viewed in a positive manner as an economic sector that is contributing to the well-being of the Okanagan Valley planning area.

Similarly, the statements relating to the natural tourism assets are high and demonstrate the importance of these assets to the visitor experience. Clearly,

it will be important to continue to protect and manage these assets and the destination development strategy needs to identify priorities for the next 10 years and beyond. Areas of concern and/or strategic action related to:

- A regionally coordinated strategy for water management to avoid negative impacts to visitors and residents.
- Ensuring adequate access to pump-outs for boats and marinas to maintain water quality
- More enforcement designed to mitigate environmental damage from boating activity, including shoreline damage and promoting ongoing awareness of the invasive mussel program.
- Supporting environmental flow needs and the activities of the Okanagan Water Board working with First Nations on stream water management, primarily targeting fisheries.
- Policy regarding lakefront development, including access.
- Ways of preserving and leveraging the semi-arid, rugged open-landscapes for new experiences, as well as the Valley floor landscape.

TRAILS

Significant resources have been directed toward developing iconic trail experiences within the planning area. Through new trails development (Okanagan Rail Trail), improving connectivity between trail systems, enhancing technology-based services and related support services — developing new experiences and market awareness of offerings and these actions raise the overall profile and significance of trails as an asset. Priorities to consider include:

- Developing sustainable management and maintenance models.
- Developing a consolidated development and management strategy for the entire proposed Sicamous to Osoyoos Trail in collaboration with all partners.
- Improving designation and enforcement policies regarding usage. This will involve looking specifically at motorized trail policy and determining appropriate development and management strategies.
- Continuing to build new trail-related experiences that are integrated with other sectors.
- Continuing to support TOTA's discussions with First Nations on developing partnerships and working on connectivity opportunities through reserve lands.
- Continuing to monitor using new technology (e.g., working with Telus), and working with partners and businesses to increase their understanding of trail users, markets, trail usage, etc.
- Increasing access to trailheads for visitors without personal transportation options.
- Improving access opportunities for visitors with disabilities (e.g., beacon technology for the visually impaired).

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE AND INTRA-REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY

Connectivity within the region continues to be an area of concern. The overall audit score of 3.6 measures a slightly wider range of statements relating to whether visitors can easily travel within the destination and access its services, amenities, and attractions. Although scores were generally strong in a number of areas, there are issues that need to be addressed within the destination development strategy.

These include:

- Expensive taxi services. Kelowna's harmonized rate for taxis is among the highest in the country.
- No regular intra-regional transit service (other than weekly health service buses). The issue has been intensified by the elimination of Greyhound service in the country. Visitors are unable to use transit to move within the Valley, and public transit as a component of tourism is not acknowledged.
- Private sector transportation services are available but can be expensive.
- Insufficient car rental supply.
- Lack of safe bike routes to traverse the Valley.
- Highway capacity issues.

In light of concerns, there is a need to consider the following:

- Developing an intra-regional transportation strategy that also looks at transportation needs. A transportation strategy that takes tourism into consideration will need to assess the nature of demand and overall feasibility, including demand from employees. Areas identified:
  - -Hop on/hop off service
  - -Role of the sharing economy in meeting transportation needs (e.g. bike share program, electric cars, etc.)
  - -A lake transportation system
  - -Policy aimed at increasing supply of transportation options
- Identifying remaining areas with limited cell coverage or internet connectivity and exploring options for greater access to wi-fi (connectivity is poor within the Okanagan Valley Connector, Kettle Valley Railway, higher plateaus between Osoyoos and Penticton).

INDUSTRY READINESS

The readiness of the tourism industry to compete globally and to deliver quality and memorable experiences is a key element to be considered in developing the destination over the coming 10 years and beyond. It involves a number of factors including availability of skilled labour, support infrastructure for employees including: affordable housing, access to professional development opportunities, and access to investment capital.

The responses to the HR statements in the audit are favourable with the exception of the industry's ability to recruit and retain staff successfully. Areas to consider:

- Overall labour recruitment and retention challenges are intensified by the seasonality of the industry and the difficulties in providing year-round employment; and by the changes to the regulations regarding foreign workers. A shortage in affordable housing for staff further aggravates the situation.
- Review the outcomes of local studies on affordable housing (Summerland and Kelowna) and assess the extent to which other communities can benefit from the findings (Note: the housing situation is further exacerbated by Agricultural Land Reserve policies).
- Consider establishing a housing committee or task force with provincial and regional representatives.
- The industry's ability to gain support from banks and lending institutions on loan applications received an audit score of 3.1, which continues to be an area that needs to be supported.

SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE

The following factors were highlighted for review:

- The opportunity to develop larger conference and/or convention space in Kelowna, and the need to consider additional, supporting accommodations.
- The opportunity to further diversify accommodation options (e.g., Indigenous glamping facilities).
- Policies for attracting investment.

POLICY AND THE REGULATORY CONTEXT

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

- The Agricultural Land Reserve policies have implications in different contexts and all require consideration:
  - -Currently limits YLW's ability to develop and expand.
  - -Uncertainties and issues with developing agritourism.
- Water management: policy gaps with water management effects at YLW (e.g., regarding the management of creeks flooding, run-off, dredging, culverts) and there needs to be greater clarity on how to mitigate the associated impacts on the airport.
- Disaster mitigation and ways of strengthening the industry's capacity to offset losses (e.g., through a review of cancellation policies for the accommodation sector).
- Enforcement of existing policies needs to be strengthened. Areas highlighted include:
  - -Regulations on tourism operators and new start-ups without adequate adherence to existing regulations with insurance as one such example.
  - -Regulation of the sharing economy and leveraging where possible and controlling where required.
  - -Ensuring that zoning policies are up-to-date and reflective of the needs of the industry.
  - -Exploring opportunities with the government of BC to review the MRDT. It is currently regarded as very onerous in terms of reporting and administrative tasks, and difficult for small DMOs to manage, particularly the five-year re-application.
  - -Need for stronger regional advocacy on tourism related issues.

THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

The preceding factors all influence the capacity to deliver quality experiences that are memorable and will generate longer stays, greater levels of spending, repeat and new visitors. This section looks at specific issues that need to be addressed to increase the market appeal of particular areas of tourism.

Overall, the audit showed strong scores for statements relating to the delivery of visitor experiences, with an average score of 3.6. There has been significant progress since the completion of the 10-year Thompson Okanagan regional tourism strategy in 2012, and the implementation programs and work of partners have all had a positive effect on the industry. Looking toward the next 10 years and beyond, areas and opportunities to assess and work on, include:

- INDIGENOUS TOURISM — this has strong potential for expansion and clear interest from First Nations participants in the strategy process to play a lead role (the strategy process included one workshop that focused solely on Indigenous tourism which was attended by representatives of various First Nations).
  - -Highlight the unique elements of the Interior Indigenous Peoples experience to help the visitor appreciate the region from an Indigenous perspective.
  - -Develop new experiences that are nature-based (horseback riding, rafting, canoeing, ATV tours), heritage tours, First Nations ranching, food and culture tours, and other experiences.
  - -Build greater understanding with the wider tourism industry on cultural protocols, sensitivities, etc.
  - -Improve First Nations access to funding capital for product development.
  - -Enhanced planning for tourism within First Nations communities and within official community plans.
  - -Improve First Nations partnerships with key stakeholders (e.g. YLW).
  - -Accreditation program and/or tourism business liaison.

- Build on the current **CULINARY** strengths — work to combine culinary elements with other types of experiences.
  - -Develop experiences where wine is a strong component but recognizing that wine is not a primary driver (recent Wine Institute research).
- **RAIL TRAIL EXPERIENCES** which were discussed earlier in this strategy.
- **WATER-BASED** experiences:
  - -Review and consider implications of findings from the Okanagan Water Board studies of boat users.
  - -Improving lake access.
  - -Potential to further zone for non-motorized activities.
  - -Creating new integrated experiences involving activities on the lakes.
- Develop **NEW AND ALTERNATIVE EXPERIENCES**, such as backcountry winter camping. In addition to product and experience development, the following needs to be considered:
  - -Enhancing support services (e.g., developing new hiking and biking maps; developing a coordinated events calendar; Visitor Centre instant-messaging).
  - -Quality and an increased emphasis on accreditation.
  - -Industry awareness: continue to work toward improving industry's understanding of the diversity of experiences, particularly experiences outside the peak season.
  - -Sense of place: continue to strengthen local identities in which communities understand their own identity within the wider region, and work toward enhancing it.

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:

Thompson Okanagan ten-year regional tourism strategy (Embracing Our Potential, November 2012)

Tourism Plan Regional District Okanagan Similkameen 2016/2017

Tourism Planning Workshop Report Peachland, 2012

Tourism Planning Workshop Report Naramata, 2012

Tourism Planning Workshop Report Summerland, 2011

Tourism Planning Workshop Report Westside, 2010

Central Okanagan Trails Alliance Master Trails Plan, 2015

Central Okanagan — Regional Active Transportation Master Plan, 2012

Regional District Okanagan Similkameen Regional Trails Master Plan, 2012

Kelowna International Airport Masterplan 2045

Tourism Kelowna Strategic Plan 2015–2019

Penticton Destination Marketing Strategy 2017–2021

Osoyoos, 2011, 2013 Tourism Market Development Plans

Summerland Chamber 2011 Business Plan

Tourism Westside Strategic Plan 2010

District of West Kelowna Economic Development Strategy, 2010

Connecting Summerland to the World: Economic Development Action Plan, June 2010

Penticton, 2006, 2010 Community Sport Tourism Development Program

Discover Naramata 2009 Strategic Plan Working Committee

Oliver, 2008 Tourism Plan

Osoyoos, 2007 Resort Development Strategy

Central Okanagan Crown Land Tourism and Commercial Recreation Opportunity Study, 2003

Okanagan — Shuswap Land and Resource Management Plan, 2001

DESTINATION
BRITISH COLUMBIA®