

TOURISM HARRISON RIVER VALLEY ONE-YEAR TACTICAL PLAN

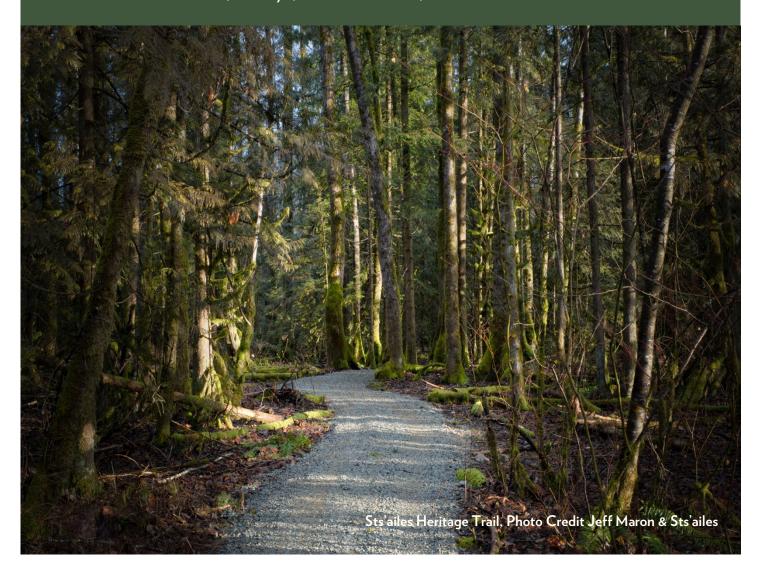
Designated Recipient: Harrison Tourism Society

Designated Accommodation Area: Harrison Hot Springs, District of

Kent and FVRD AREA C.

Date Submitted: November 30, 2023 MRDT Repeal Date: December 31, 2027

Five Year Period: Year 3 of 5, January 1, 2022- December 31, 2027



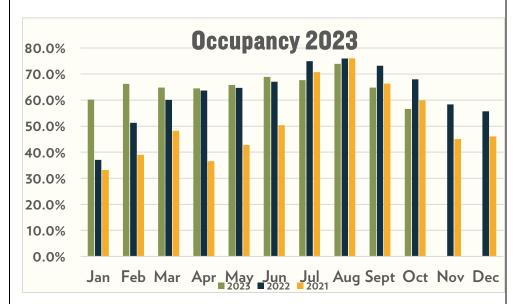
	Update to Five-year Strategic Business Plan Description
Heading	
Strategic Direction	In 2022, Tourism Harrison River Valley underwent a strategic planning process with a diverse group of stakeholders. From those sessions we have defined our vision as a "year-round destination where visitors enjoy diverse arts, culture, ar recreation experiences, are respectful of the environment and bring benefits to our unique communities and cultures". To accomplish this Tourism Harrison has defined its mission as "collaborating with tourism partners to grow tourism offerings and responsibly steward tourism assets for all." To accomplish this vision and mission Tourism Harrison has established a
	strategic framework that includes:
	 Showcasing the Harrison River Valley- Agassiz, Harrison Hot Springs, Harrison Mills and Hemlock Valley (Sasquatch Mountain)-as a 4-season destination, with a focus on growing tourism levels in our winter and shoulder seasons. Communicate the abundance of activities by expanding upon the tourism experiences across our communities, connecting and collaborating with local stakeholders, indigenous communities, and Sasquatch Mountain Resort.
	 Enhancing visitor experience by providing exceptional visitor services, distributing visitor surveys to gain a better understanding of the visitor experience, and leveraging the ongoing trend to digital mobile platforms by focusing on promotion that drives traffic to the Tourism Harrison website. A source where visitors can find everything they need know about the region.
C.	 Targeting visitor profiles that align with community values to maintain a balance between an optimal tourist and resident experience, and ensure sustainability within tourism.
	 Strengthening community and tourism assets by working closely with local businesses to identify and communicate innovative marketing opportunities that focus on online exposure using tools tailored to small businesses like "Google Business" and "social media 101" that have beer developed by Tourism Harrison and available to tourism-related local businesses to leverage their budgets.
	 Targeting high-return geographic markets to maximize awarenes of the Harrison River Valley, focusing our greatest marketing effort on Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley.

Key Learnings and Conclusions



Occupancy had a strong start from January to June, nearly hitting pre-pandemic levels. In the summer months, July and August, occupancy dipped below the previous year. High rates, a competitive tourism market and smoke may have been contributing factors to the lower occupancy. During this same period, web traffic increased 20%. While visitors were not spending the night, they continued to connect with our website. Year to date, web traffic has increased 35% from 2022. Our visitor Centre continues to perform well, with a 3.16% increase in visitors year over year.

• At the time of submission, the average monthly occupancy is 65.3%, an increase of 2.6% from 2022.



- Harrison Hot Springs has always been a destination that is affected by the weather. Our pay parking statistics provide an indication of day-tripper travel levels in our community; with May through July starting very strong, an increase of over 3000 vehicles during that period. As the wildfire season started, the smoke impacted day-tripper traffic in August and September, resulting in a decrease of 1700 cars. Overall, we saw an increase of 1300 registered vehicles.
- In 2023 we continued our program of working with visitors to champion our destination and utilized CrowdRiff to present the most effective visitor visuals on our website and our social media channels. This presents a more authentic reflection of Harrison and leads to the highest engagement from viewers.

Overall Goals and Objectives

In 2023, to align our goals and objectives with the 5-year strategic plan and our new tourism region, we created a marketing committee of stakeholders from across the region. Below is the outcome from our session, the current year's objectives in relation to each goal:

To build a compelling tourism brand by leveraging the 'Harrison Hot Springs' name to increase awareness of the entire region and position the Harrison River Valley as an attractive "just up the road" travel destination with an abundance of surrounding activities. Our target for this goal: • To maintain Facebook and X followers and to grow Instagram followers/likes by 10% per year 2. To build traffic to our website by increasing awareness of Harrison Hot Springs, Agassiz, Harrison Mills and Sasquatch Mountain- the Harrison River Valley- in our key target markets to attract more visitors to stay and spend. Our target for this goal is: To increase the traffic to our website by 10% per year 3. To execute cost-effective strategic marketing initiatives for the economic benefit of tourism-related business within Agassiz, Harrison Mills, the Village of Harrison Hot Springs and Sasquatch Mountain. • Our target is to spend a minimum of 50% of our MRDT funds on direct media advertising and ad production including online, radio, out-of-home, print and trade shows. 4. To work closely with the smaller tourism-based businesses in Harrison Hot Springs to help them improve their marketing efforts and improve our overall combined marketing effectiveness. • Our target is to ensure all tourism-related businesses in the Harrison River Valley region have an effective marketing strategy and social media presence. 5. To provide excellent visitor service that engages visitors and enhances the visitor experience while also providing support to all our local and regional stakeholders. Our target for this goal: • A minimum of 85% visitor satisfaction with our Visitor Centre Services. • 85% partner satisfaction based on an annual survey of stakeholders. Key strategies we plan to implement this year come from the **Strategies** recommendations from the regional strategic plan. Events have always been a key focus for Tourism Harrison River Valley, and we will continue to implement events that align with our event policy and the mission and vision statements of the Harrison River Valley, and which will be the most beneficial for stakeholders and residents alike. We plan to continue focusing on our key shoulder season events, such as Lights by the Lake, and continue to explore opportunities to bring back previously successful events like the Agassiz Farms Cycle Tour and the Harrison Beer Festival.

Our key content themes for 2023 will focus on the "In the Wild" campaign, particularly "Breathe in the Wild" and "together in the wild" which are centred on outdoors, health and wellness, recovery and inclusivity. The emphasis of this campaign is to highlight how these "in the wild' activities are best pursued in the shoulder seasons and midweek when there are fewer visitors in town. Other key themes include the Circle Farm Tour, family activities, agritourism/foodie tours, wellness, and outdoor adventures.

We also are leveraging our funds by participating in several co-op marketing groups including:

- BC Bird Trail
- BC Route 7
- Don't Love it to Death
- Fishing BC
- Fraser Valley Group
- Gardens BC
- Paddle BC

Target Markets

We have defined our target markets using a combination of historical data, activity profiles and geographical analysis.

Primary: Greater Vancouver Regional District (focus on overnight)

Fraser Valley Regional District (focus on overnight and Daytripper)

Harrison has a distinct seasonal demographic, and our target marketing takes this into account. Summer season and major school holidays include a high proportion of families and a significant increase in Daytripper traffic. While the shoulder and winter seasons are more couples and seniors. Activity targeting is directed year-round to outdoor enthusiasts, soft adventure, and fishing enthusiasts. Other niche targets include Spa travellers and Heritage enthusiasts.

The expected length of stay for hotel stays is 1-2 nights in the shoulder/winter season and 2-3 in the summer season. This does increase for certain niche targets such as fishing where expected stays are typically 3-5 days.

Secondary: Rest of BC

North-western Washington (including Seattle).

Alberta

Similar targeting as with the Primary geographic area. The expected length of stay skews slightly longer for these visitors given the longer commute time.



Major Category: Marketing-Consumer/Leisure

Activity Title: Social Media Marketing

Tactics:

Increase social media presence and following on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok encouraging users to become product champions.

Implementation Plan:

Build brand awareness and market reach using social media. Social media has evolved to become the premier tool for brand management and connecting with visitors and potential visitors. Using content that is consistent with the Harrison River Valley brand we can support the development of stronger brand awareness. Using the content created by visitors provides more authentic messaging increases the credibility of our messaging with followers and turning our visitors into Brand Ambassadors. In addition, using social media to promote our paid bloggers and influencers leverages their reach and ensures our messaging is targeted to our engaged followers and selected demographics.

Quantifiable objectives:

- Track increase in followers
- Track level of engagement levels on all platforms

Rationale: Social media is a cost-effective way to increase our marketing reach. Visitors provide an unbiased and authentic voice. When visitors champion your product, their voices carry more weight and credibility. Additionally, social media is an excellent tool for delivery of content created by bloggers and influencers.

Action steps:

- Engage Social Media management company, agree on messaging and timelines
- Purchase and maintain CrowdRiff, crowd sourcing application for digital assets
- Join the Destination BC UGC network
- Use social media advertising to build a following using targeted demographics

Potential partnerships:

The Destination BC UGC Partner Network. As a user of CrowdRiff, we can join this network and leverage our UGC with Destination BC and Destination Canada.

Resources:

Connect Media, SlapMedia (our social media partners)

Sources of funding:

MRDT

Responsibilities:

Tourism Harrison

Timeframe:

ongoing

Budget:

\$72,000

Evaluation mechanism:

Facebook followers
Twitter followers
Instagram followers
Level of engagement across all platforms

Major Category: Marketing-Consumer/Leisure

Activity Title: Print Collateral and Distribution

Tactics:

Continue to develop and improve the Harrison Visitor Guide, Hiking Guide, and Tearaway Map. These publications will highlight the activities throughout our region. With our refreshed brand we plan to develop more on brand photo and video inventory for use in these publications.

Implementation Plan:

The Tourism Harrison website is very content rich with heavy use of UG content. For our visitor guide and other collateral, we continue to use our own inventory of images. In 2022, our implementation plan includes updating all Tourism Harrison publications to better highlight the attractions and experiences within the entire Harrison River Valley content using new information and new, high-quality photography.

Quantifiable objectives:

Increase the number of downloads of the digital version of both the Visitor Guide and Hiking Guide.

Rationale:

Both the Visitor guide and Hiking guides are important tools for pre-trip planning and for enhancing the visitor experience while on location. To encourage longer stays Tourism Harrison will continue to focus on adding content on the many things to do and see in the Harrison River Valley region. In addition, new and improved imagery will help promote Harrison as an ideal resort destination.

Action steps:

Review the current Visitor Guide and identify areas for improvement or expansion Review the current Hiking Guide and identify areas for improvement or expansion Review the Tearaway map to ensure it is up to date and all business changes have been noted. Ensure appropriate distribution of both guides and maps.

Potential partnerships:

Production of the Visitor Guide is outsourced to Black Press Advertising in the Hiking Guide can be purchased by tourism-related businesses.

Resources:

Black Press, Tourism Harrison staff

Sources of funding:

MRDT, paid advertising in the guide and tearaway map

Responsibilities:

Tourism Harrison

Timeframe:

ongoing

Budget:

\$21,500

Evaluation mechanism:

Number of Visitor Guides and Hiking Guides distributed.

Performance Measures:

Output Measures

40,000 printed Visitor Guides distributed 20,000 printed Hiking Guides distributed 25,000 printed Tearaway maps

Major Category: Marketing-Consumer/Leisure

Activity Title: Website Management and Enhancement

Tactics:

With 70+% of our web traffic coming from mobile devices, we have optimized the Tourism Harrison website to further enhance our digital presence and included accessibility features to enrich the user experience. We plan to continue to monitor and enhance the development of the website and ensure the website is fully optimized for mobile access and planned with accessibility in mind.

Implementation Plan:

In addition to website upgrades, we will continue to develop content focusing on the different activities in Harrison and at the same time promote revenue-generating attractions. Our implementation plan also includes adding additional content through our monthly blog and utilizing Crowdriff to create localhood stories to highlight things to do.

Quantifiable objectives:

Increase the number of visitors to the website. Increase time spent on the website.

Rationale:

The Tourism Harrison River Valley website is the key planning tool for most visitors coming to our region. The more information it has the better visitors can plan, and hopefully the longer they will stay. By developing topic-specific, tailored landing pages we will be able to better attract visits to the site and to the destination. Utilizing a high-level filtering system, visitors can plan their visit based on either the location they want to stay in or activities they would like to experience. To help visitors get an idea of what the activity is like the website will rely heavily on visual stories, high quality photography, video, and include supporting blogs exploring the different activities.

Action steps:

- Develop and maintain the mobile-first site
- On an ongoing basis update imagery and content as required. A large portion of this budget is allocated to photography and video.
- Create optimized landing pages for key activities and business types
- Ensure the event calendar is complete and up to date
- Analyze Google Analytics on an ongoing basis.

Potential partnerships:

Resources:

Tourism Harrison staff, Connect Media, Infinus Technology

Sources of funding:

MRDT, some paid banner advertising

Responsibilities:

Tourism Harrison

Timeframe:

ongoing

Budget:

\$12,000

Evaluation mechanism:

Number of visits to the website.

Performance Measures:

Output Measures

Ensure all website pages are maintained and up to date Refresh website imagery on selected pages to reflect seasonal changes Ensure Specials and deals pages are updated monthly

Outcome Measures

Increase photography and video database 10% increase in number of visitors to the website 10% increase in the length of time spent on the website. Major Category: Marketing- Consumer/Leisure

Activity Title: Digital Media Advertising and Production

Tactics:

Implement cost-effective paid media advertising focusing on digital but also utilizing traditional advertising when and where appropriate.

Implementation Plan:

Cost-effective, targeted advertising will be used to maintain and increase awareness of Harrison Hot Springs and the Harrison River Valley as the ideal nature vacation just up the road.

Digital Advertising will focus on the targeted use of Google ads to promote events, specials & deals and certain seasonal activities. Facebook paid advertising will be used to promote events, drive traffic to the Tourism Harrison website and increase our fan base on Facebook.

Outdoor media such as digital superboards and buses will be used for the summer season to increase awareness of Harrison in the key Vancouver market. We will also use selective outdoor advertising to promote shoulder season opportunities. This will include elevator video and bus stop advertising in key high-profile locations.

Key demographic targets such as Seniors, Soft Adventurers, Fishing enthusiasts, Birders and Heritage enthusiasts will be reached using selected traditional media such as topic-specific publications supported by targeted digital.

The Vancouver Chinese-speaking market will be approached through Chinese-language newspapers and social media. This is a major focal point and in addition to advertising, Tourism Harrison will maintain a Chinese-language website.

Quantifiable objectives:

Increase the number of visitors to the website. Increase in number of social media followers. Increase Occupancy rates and day-tripper visits

Rationale:

The key tool of most travellers is currently the Internet and accordingly, it makes sense to focus our energy on internet-based advertising. However, creating awareness requires that we also use other traditional means of advertising to ensure that the Harrison Hot Springs name is top of mind. To ensure that awareness advertising results in increased website visits Tourism Harrison will always add www.tourismharrison.com to these types of ads.

Action steps:

Develop an annual media plan and budget Encourage participation on co-op marketing opportunities

Potential partnerships:

Destination BC

Regional and local stakeholders

Resources:

Tourism Harrison staff

Sources of funding:

MRDT, local stakeholders

Responsibilities:

Tourism Harrison

Timeframe:

ongoing

Budget:

\$409,750

Evaluation mechanism:

Number of visits to the website. Number of followers on social media Occupancy Rate

Performance Measures:

Output Measures

Number of ads by media

Outcome Measures

10% increase in number of visitors to the website 10% increase in the length of time spent on the website.

Occupancy Percentage stability/growth

Major Category: Marketing - Consumer/Leisure

Activity Title: Consumer/Trade Shows and Events

Tactics:

Attend selected Trade Shows that target our key demographic of soft adventurer.

Implementation Plan:

Select trade shows in the key markets of Vancouver and Alberta that target one or more of our key demographics such as soft adventurer, fishing enthusiast, families, or seniors.

Quantifiable objectives:

Number of trade shows attended Number of consumer interactions

Rationale:

Trade shows, particularly those focused on travel, or an outdoor activity remain an effective means of contacting potential visitors. By attending targeted tradeshows and effectively communicating what Harrison has to offer Tourism Harrison can ensure that to of mind awareness is maintained with these key groups.

Action steps:

Determine the most effective trade shows to attend. Develop a noteworthy trade show display that aligns with our regional Co-ops while reflecting the activities and the nature of the Harrison River Valley.

Potential partnerships:

Regional stakeholders, local angling guides, Fraser Valley Group and BC Route 7

Resources:

Tourism Harrison staff, BC Sportfishing Group, Fraser Valley Group

Sources of funding:

MRDT, local stakeholders

Responsibilities:

Tourism Harrison

Timeframe:

ongoing

Budget:

\$21,500

Evaluation mechanism:

Number of mailing list subscriptions Number of consumer interactions

Performance Measures:

Output Measures

Number of mailing list subscriptions
Number of consumer interactions

Outcome Measures

10% increase in number of visitors to the website during trade show 10% increase in the number of email list subscribers

Major Category: Marketing - Consumer/Leisure

Activity Title: Travel Media

Tactics:

Select and recruit targeted media influencers such as writers and bloggers to cover Harrison Hot Springs in a wide variety of media.

Implementation Plan:

Working with our media partner will identify and target key media personnel for recruitment to visit Harrison Hot Springs and write about it.

Quantifiable objectives:

Generated published stories.

Rationale:

Editorial coverage is not only cost effective but tends to have a higher level of credibility with potential visitors.

Action steps:

Work closely with SLAP Media our PR partner to identify key influencers, writers, and bloggers Issue press releases on key events and happenings to attract media attention Work with other DMO's and Destination BC on joint FAM's, stories etc.

Potential partnerships:

Destination BC, Neighbouring DMO's

Resources:

Tourism Harrison staff, SLAP Media

Sources of funding:

MRDT

Responsibilities:

Tourism Harrison

Timeframe:

ongoing

Budget:

\$10,000

Evaluation mechanism:

Number of published stories.

Performance Measures:

Output Measures

A minimum of 5 new published stories

Outcome Measures

10% increase in number of visitors to the website 10% increase in the number of email list subscribers

Major Category: Events

Activity Title: Event Development

Tactics:

In 2024 we plan to continue with our signature events as these events have been proven to attract large numbers of both day-tripper and overnight visitors. Our focus will be on events that are held in the shoulder seasons, have been proven to increase visitation through overnight stays and day-trippers, such as Lights by the Lake. Our regional committee has expressed interest in reviewing opportunities like the Harrison Beer Festival, Agassiz Farms Cycle Tour, or other agri-tourism focused events.

Implementation Plan:

Events provide visitors who are already coming to Harrison something to do and bring new visitors to Harrison Hot Springs. Expanding existing events brings additional visitors while new events, particularly in the off season have the potential to fill empty hotel rooms. Tourism Harrison can take the lead on certain events while providing support or sponsorship for others. To this end Tourism Harrison has entered a pay for service agreement with the Village of Harrison to take on all event management. In 2023, we coordinated Canada Day, Bands on the Beach, the Season of the Wild, Lights by the Lake, and the Magic of Christmas on behalf of the Village of Harrison Hot Springs. In 2024, we look forward to bringing back more of our other signature events. This 3-year agreement, is now in its third year, will see between \$60,000 - \$90,000 of RMI funds transferred to Tourism Harrison to manage and pay for these events as well to provide a grant of \$15,000 to the Harrison Festival of the Arts.

Quantifiable objectives:

Number of events Number of event attendees

Rationale:

Due to COVID-19, we have seen how crucial these events are to the Harrison Hot Springs region, as events have shown themselves to be one of the most cost-effective tools for attracting new visitors to the Harrison River Valley. It also provides an effective way to create awareness of the Harrison River Valley as a place with things happening even for those not attending the event.

Action steps:

Develop a detailed work plan for each event.

Identify sources of funding for events

Work with local stakeholders to identify new event opportunities

Potential partnerships:

Local stakeholders

Resources:

Tourism Harrison staff Local stakeholders

Sources of funding:

RMI grant Event revenue Event Sponsors

Responsibilities:

Tourism Harrison

Timeframe:

ongoing

Budget:

\$112,000

Evaluation mechanism:

Number of events. Number of attendees Event Surveys

Performance Measures:

Output Measures

A minimum of 6 Tourism Harrison events per year

Outcome Measures

10% increase in the number of event attendees 10% increase in number of visitors to event websites Positive response from Event attendees

Major Category: Visitor Services

Activity Title: Visitor Services and Sasquatch Museum

Tactics: Maintain and promote the Sasquatch Museum.

Since 2018, our Visitor Centre and Sasquatch Museum has been gaining awareness and is becoming a leading indoor attraction in the Harrison River Valley. Due to the success of the Sasquatch Museum, we are expanding on the current infrastructure to create an accessible, inclusive, cultural attraction. We plan to continue promoting our Visitor Centre and Sasquatch Museum and will continue to provide Visitor Services from our well-trained staff.

Implementation Plan:

The Visitor Centre shares a common building with the Sasquatch Museum and has become a destination onto itself. Tourism Harrison will continue to acquire Sasquatch-related artifacts and information to build up the museum inventory. Tourism Harrison is undergoing the process of building an expansion to the current Visitor Centre and Sasquatch Museum to enhance the visitor experience. The official opening will launch in the spring of 2024. Tourism Harrison will continue to develop marketing materials to promote the museum.

Quantifiable objectives:

Number of visitor centre visitors and museum visitors.

Rationale:

Harrison has a limited number of indoor attractions, particularly in the off season. The Sasquatch Museum provides an interesting cultural experience, particularly on a rainy day. It also provides a point of contact with our trained visitor centre staff.

Action steps:

Work with Sasquatch Investigators and Sts'ailes cultural committee to gather additional artifacts. Develop marketing material such as rack cards and posters to ensure visitors are aware of the Sasquatch Museum.

Potential partnerships:

Sts'ailes Cultural Tourism Hosts
Sasquatch Investigators.

Resources:

Tourism Harrison staff
Visitor Services

Sources of funding:

MRDT

Museum Donation Box

Responsibilities:

Tourism Harrison

Timeframe:

ongoing

Budget:

\$51,214

Evaluation mechanism:

Visitor Survey

Museum Comment book

Performance Measures:

Output Measures

Number of Sasquatch artifacts

Outcome Measures

Number of Visitors – Visitor Centre

Number of Visitors – Museum

Number of positive survey comments

Section 3: Budget

Appendix 2.3	
Section 3: Budget for One-Year Tactical Plan	
Revenues (MRDT and Non-MRDT)	Budget \$
Estimated Carry Forward from Previous Year (All Net Assets Restricted and Unrestricted)	150,614
General MRDT (net of admin fees)	800,000
MRDT from online accommodation platforms (OAP)	50,000
Local government contribution	90,000
Stakeholder contributions (i.e. membership dues)	5,500
Estimated Co-op funding (e.g. CTO; DMO-led projects)	
Grants - Federal	
Grants - Provincial	25,000
Grants/Fee for Service - Municipal	21,000
Retail Sales	40,000
Interest	
Other (please describe): EVENTS	22,000
Total Revenues (Excluding Carry Forward)	1,053,500

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Expenses (MRDT and Non-MRDT)	Budget \$
Marketing	
Marketing staff – wage and benefits	100,000
Media advertising and production	409,750
Website - hosting, development, maintenance	12,000
Social media	93,400
Consumer shows, events	21,500
Collateral production and distribution	21,500
Travel media relations	5,000
Travel trade	
Consumer focused asset development (written content, video, photography)	61,000
Other (please describe)	
Subtotal	724,150
Destination & Product Experience Management	
Destination and product experience management staff – wage and benefits	49,632
Industry development and training	2,500
Product experience enhancement and training	
Research and evaluation	
Other (please describe) Retail Cost of Goods Sold	23,000

Subtotal	75,132
Visitor Services	
Visitor Services Wages and Benefits	51,679
Visitor Services Operating Expenses	35,400
Other (please describe) Sasquatch Museum	2,500
Subtotal	89,579
Meetings, Conventions, Events & Sport	
Staff – wages and benefits	22,963
Meetings, conventions, conferences, events, sport, etc.	123,500
Subtotal	146,463
Administration	
Management and staff unrelated to program implementation - wages and benefits	
Finance staff – wages and benefits	
Human Resources staff – wages and benefits	
Board of Directors costs	1,000
Information technology costs – workstation related costs (i.e. computers, telephone, support, networks)	
Office lease/rent	6,000
General office expenses	39,500
Subtotal	46,500
Affordable Housing (if applicable)	
OAP Revenue	
General MRDT Revenue	
Subtotal	-
Other	
All other wages and benefits not included above (please describe)	
Other activities not included above (please describe)	
Subtotal	-
Total Expenses	1,081,824
Total Revenue Less Total Expenses (Surplus or Deficit)	- 28,324
Estimated Carry Forward (Previous Year Carry Forward plus Surplus or Deficit)	122,290

Projected Spend by Market (broad estimate)

Geographic Market	Total Marketing Budget by Market	% of Total \$ by Market
BC	\$557,596	77.0%
Alberta	\$86,898	12.0%
Ontario	\$10,862	1.5%
Other Canada (please specify)	\$7,966	1.1%
Washington	\$57,932	8.0%
California	\$2,897	0.4%
Total	\$724,150	100%