

## Appendix 1.2 Five-Year Strategic Business Plan

A municipality, regional district or eligible not-for-profit business association interested in applying for the Municipal and Regional District Tax or a renewal of the Municipal and Regional District Tax must submit an application as set out in the MRDT Program Requirements. A Five-Year Strategic Business Plan is required **at time of application**. This Five-Year Strategic Business Plan must include a detailed One-Year Tactical Plan for the first year of program implementation. Each year (years two through five of the program), the One-Year Tactical Plan must be updated and resubmitted (by November 30<sup>th</sup>) to reflect current marketing activities for the year as part of the annual reporting obligations. A separate template has been provided to guide the development of these year two through five plans (refer to Appendix 2.3).

The Five-Year Strategic Business Plan must encompass the five-year period covered by the application and it **must** include the following elements:

Section 1: Five-year strategic overview with identified targets and actions for the five-year period

Section 2: One-Year Tactical Plan with performance measures, and

Section 3: Detailed Budget for Year One

Your Five-Year Strategic Business Plan must adhere to the MRDT program principles.

Please ensure there is alignment between provincial tourism strategies and community tourism efforts. The applicant and designated recipients not subject to renewal applications are required to make their Five-year Strategic Business Plan available to tourism industry stakeholders and accommodation providers as part of the industry consultation and accommodation support requirements.

Your Five-Year Strategic Business Plan must identify marketing strategies, key markets and targets that the community will focus on to build its tourism business and the steps it needs to take to achieve desired results.

Your Five-year Strategic Business Plan should answer the following key questions:

- What business objectives related to tourism does your community expect to achieve?
- What type of growth does your community want to achieve (in the short and long term)?
- How will your community achieve these objectives?
- What type of tourism products will you need?
- What type of visitor are you hoping to attract?

Please contact Destination British Columbia at [MRDT@destinationbc.ca](mailto:MRDT@destinationbc.ca) for any questions.

### Quick Reference

#### Guide

#### **(from the MRDT Program Requirements):**

*The intention of the tax is to assist designated recipients to fund tourism marketing, programs and projects. Affordable housing was added as a permissible use of funds in Budget 2018.*

*Funds from the MRDT program are intended to augment current funding and cannot be used to replace existing sources of tourism funding in a community.*

*The MRDT program is intended to contribute to the increase of local tourism revenue, visitation, and economic benefits and should be supported by local government and tourism stakeholders.*

#### **The MRDT program principles are:**

*Effective tourism marketing, programs and projects*

*Effective local-level stakeholder support, and inter-community collaboration*

### Five-Year Strategic Business Plan Template

**Designated Recipient:** City of Nanaimo  
**Community Name:** Nanaimo  
**Date Prepared:** May 17, 2024  
**MRDT Term Expiry Date:** January 1, 2025  
**Five Year Period:** January 1, 2025 – January 1, 2030

A description/instructions pertaining to each section is provided in grey text as a guide only. **The format of your Five-Year Strategic Business Plan may be developed specific to your community needs and resources, but must include all required sections of the Five-Year Strategic Business Plan listed below.** If using this template, please delete the grey text and provide your response accordingly.

Section 1: Five-Year Strategic Overview	
<b>Vision and Mission</b>	<p style="text-align: center;">Vision</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>"Nanaimo: Embrace the Adventure, Celebrate the Unconventional"</b></p> <p>Imagine a city where the charm of the waterfront and the thrill of the unexpected come together to transform every visit into an unforgettable adventure. Nanaimo, the vibrant gateway to Vancouver Island, welcomes you to experience its stunning natural beauty, eclectic cultural offerings, and a community spirit that embraces diversity and inclusivity. Here, adventure ranges from the adrenaline of bungee jumping and bathtub racing to the tranquility of paddling and hiking through landscapes. Our community represents a dynamic blend of urban vibrancy and nature, where the traditional meets the unconventional. Come as you are, or come a little weird, and dive into everything Nanaimo has to offer.</p> <p>Our vision is to foster memorable experiences and sustainable growth for both our visitors and residents. We will know we are on the right path when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Local tourism businesses thrive year-round, expanding their seasons and hours to match our vibrant culture.</li> <li>● The accommodation sector shows sustained growth in occupancy and average daily rates.</li> <li>● The community's positive perception of tourism's value continues to strengthen, supporting and participating actively in our industry.</li> <li>● Visitors consistently praise their Nanaimo experiences, reflecting the city's unique charm and high-quality adventures.</li> <li>● Our environmental initiatives effectively minimize tourism's footprint, underscoring our commitment to sustainability.</li> <li>● Our Destination Marketing Organization is recognized for its effective promotion, inclusivity, and excellence in sustainable destination management.</li> </ul> <p>This vision guides us as we strive to make Nanaimo not only a great place to visit but a place to live, promoting an environment where everyone can thrive and every adventure is within reach.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Mission Statement</p>

**"Cultivating Exceptional Experiences and Sustainable Growth  
Through Collaboration"**

Our mission is to elevate Nanaimo as a destination of choice by developing superior, sustainable tourism experiences through collaborative efforts. We are committed to enhancing the economic, social, and environmental well-being of our community by connecting visitors with Nanaimo's unique offerings and fostering a strong sense of pride among residents. Through strategic partnerships and continuous innovation, we aim to deliver quality experiences that celebrate our heritage and embrace inclusivity, ensuring Nanaimo thrives as a proud and distinctive destination on the world stage.

These statements aim to encapsulate the goals of enhancing visitor experiences and improving the quality of life for residents while addressing the strategic clusters and cross-cutting elements identified in the strategy document.

**Strategic Context**

Nanaimo, situated on the traditional and unceded territory of the [Snuneymuxw Peoples](#), is experiencing significant demographic and economic growth, far outpacing the averages of British Columbia and Canada. With a population exceeding 102,000 and a median age of 45.2, the city has seen a 10.3% increase since 2016. This growth is supported by robust investments in tourism, including new and expanded restaurants, the introduction of the Hullo Ferry, and the establishment of a night market and a new hotel in 2023.

**Reimagined Nanaimo Plan**

In July 2022, the City of Nanaimo launched their official community plan herein called the [Reimagined Nanaimo Plan](#) integrating prior plans and policies to foster a higher quality of life, stronger economy, and greater social inclusion. It emphasizes celebrating diversity, enhancing local cultural resources, and building community pride through public events and festivals.



**Commitment to Truth and Reconciliation**

In Nanaimo, our dedication to Truth and Reconciliation goes beyond words to meaningful action. We are committed to fostering deep and respectful partnerships with Snuneymuxw First Nation *and* other First Nations, fully integrating Indigenous perspectives and heritage into our community and the vibrant tapestry of our tourism activities. This commitment is reflected in our collaborative efforts in place-naming, showcasing Indigenous art, and co-hosting a range of sporting and cultural events that celebrate and honour Indigenous culture.

Aligned with the Reimagined Nanaimo Plan, we pledge to support and enact key points from UNDRIP and the [Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action](#), specifically:

- Business and Reconciliation (Point 92 iii): We strive to enhance and promote Indigenous businesses within our community and through tourism, ensuring they are integral to our economic fabric.
- Language and Culture (Point 14 iv): We are dedicated to preserving and revitalizing Indigenous languages and cultural practices through active engagement and public education.
- Media and Reconciliation (Point 84 iii): We commit to supporting Indigenous voices in the media and ensuring that their stories are heard and respected, contributing to a balanced and enriched media landscape.

Our commitment is to both acknowledge the past and actively build a future where Indigenous cultures are celebrated, respected, and integral to the identity of Nanaimo. We believe that through continuous learning, collaboration, and dedication, we can make a significant impact in achieving true reconciliation and fostering a community where everyone thrives together as outlined in the Reimagined Nanaimo Plan (pp. 100,115,118,135)

#### **Tourism Nanaimo's Evolution**

The evolution and strategic direction of tourism delivery in Nanaimo has had significant advancement since the initiation of the Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) in 2015. By April 2022, Tourism Nanaimo had transitioned into an independent non-profit organization dedicated to destination marketing and management, ready to take on the responsibility of administering the MRDT. Presently, Tourism Nanaimo operates as a multi-stakeholder society with a governance board that includes representatives from all major sectors of Nanaimo's tourism industry. Endorsed by the City of Nanaimo, Destination BC, Destination Canada, and various local stakeholders, Tourism Nanaimo serves as the recognized Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for the community.

Adopting a collaborative "Team Nanaimo" strategy, the organization aligns closely with the City to enhance sport tourism, meetings, conferences and business events, guided by the objectives outlined in the Reimagined Nanaimo Plan. This includes ongoing efforts to host, permit, and support a variety of public events such as festivals and sports tournaments. Additionally, Tourism Nanaimo is committed to helping develop facilities and public spaces that are adaptable and can accommodate community events throughout the year, further enriching the city's cultural and recreational landscape. The ongoing development and enhancement of the Sport Zone/Stadium District are key components of this strategy, ensuring that Nanaimo can host a diverse range of events that contribute to community wellness and meet broader tourism

goals.  
***The City of Nanaimo recognizes Tourism Nanaimo's Destination Development Strategy will guide destination development and marketing initiatives. The plan will be attached as an addendum to this MRDT submission.***

### **Destination Metrics and Market Dynamics**

The tourism sector is rebounding with an expanded accommodation inventory from 1,231 rooms in 2020 to 1,510 in 2023, indicating a positive trajectory post-pandemic. Continued growth is expected with legislative adjustments to the short-term rental market, aiming to sustain high occupancy rates and increase average daily revenue.

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024 – Q1
Accommodation Occupancy Rate	DBC indicators offline	DBC indicators offline	66.5%	67.5%	49.8%
Average Daily Rate (ADR)	DBC indicators offline	DBC indicators offline	\$173.64	\$117.70	\$152
Revenue per Available Room (RevPar)	DBC indicators offline	DBC indicators offline	\$119.53	\$115.53	\$76
Van. Island Conference Centre Delegate Days (non-resident)	3,923	6,571	17,488	24,921	Not yet available
YCD Airport Arrivals	174,272	192,937	340,325	383,380	46,729
BC Ferries arrivals (Vic, Van, Nan)	6,210,216	7,674,330	10,881,898	11,670,379	Not yet available
Est. economic impact*	N/A	N/A	program started July 1, 2022	\$3.351,600	Not yet available

SOURCE: Destination BC Provincial Tourism Indicators; Tourism Nanaimo reporting

Data from AirDNA reveals a substantial increase in short-term vacation rentals available in Nanaimo, from 65 listings in August 2016 to 1,072 listings in August 2023. A more pertinent comparison can be drawn between 2018 and 2023, where entire place listings increased by 70.3%.

The number of hotel comparable listings also increased, adding roughly 272 more rooms to the community room inventory. By December 2023, total available listings for rent in Nanaimo are projected to reach 426, reflecting a 1% increase

### **Resident Perspectives**

During the pandemic, residents of British Columbia, including Nanaimo, were hesitant to welcome visitors from other provinces and the US. Despite broader concerns during the pandemic, a 2022 survey revealed that a significant majority (88%) of Nanaimo residents view tourism positively and see it as beneficial for the community.

**Impact of Tourism on Local Quality of Life:**

- A large proportion of Nanaimo residents (86%) believe that tourism positively enhances the city's image.
- About 85% of the respondents feel that tourism leads to increased services in the community, thereby improving the quality of life.

**Support for Tourism Development:**

- Residents recognize the importance of further developing the tourism sector to enhance service delivery, suggesting strong local support for future tourism and destination initiatives.

**Opportunities Identified:**

- The survey highlighted the potential for initiating a pride of place campaign to further foster local support and pride in Nanaimo's tourism offerings.
- Such initiatives align with the strategic goals of the "Nanaimo Reimagined" planning process, indicating that residents are likely to support future developments that boost tourism and community engagement.
- This overview indicates a positive local sentiment towards tourism in Nanaimo, with opportunities to leverage this goodwill through targeted community engagement and development initiatives.

**Strategic Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT Analysis)**
**Strengths:**

Nanaimo boasts a diverse range of natural and cultural attractions, including its waterfront and outdoor sports facilities, complemented by a strong local food scene and vibrant community culture.

1. Exceptional Access to Nature:
  - One of the longest ocean shorelines in Canada.
  - Abundant outdoor activities including hiking, biking, rock climbing, scuba diving, and more.
2. Dynamic Outdoor Sports and Recreation:
  - Facilities for waterfront activities, marinas, and artificial diving reefs.
  - Opportunities for kayaking and stand-up paddleboarding to surrounding islands.
3. Vibrant Community Culture:
  - Energetic local atmosphere with a focus on community engagement.
4. Strategic Economic Growth:
  - Expansion of services like Hullo Ferries contributing to local economic development.
5. Extensive Transportation Networks:
  - Includes three ferry terminals, seaplanes, Helijet, and YCD airport, enhancing accessibility.
6. Rich Indigenous Heritage and Partnerships:
  - Engagements and experiences such as those offered on Saysutshun Island.
7. Successful Sport Tourism Initiatives:
  - Immediate achievements in sports tourism enhancing the city's recreational profile.

8. Collaborative Business and Event Management:
  - "Team Nanaimo" approach ensures effective coordination for meetings and events.
9. Investment in Infrastructure:
  - Utilization of tourism funding sources like the Destination Development Grant for infrastructure improvements.
10. Forward-Thinking Destination Development Strategy:
  - Implementation of a new strategy starting Summer 2024 to further tourism growth, adoption of the new 2025-2030 Destination Development plan.
11. Leadership and Governance:
  - Strong, industry-led Board of Directors and Committees at Tourism Nanaimo.
12. Regional and National Partnerships:
  - Active alignment with tourism partners across regional, provincial, and national levels, including innovative collaborations like the "Outside the Box" initiative.
13. Engaged and Collaborative Partnerships:
  - Close collaboration with stakeholders such as Snuneymuxw First Nation, the local government, and educational institutions.
14. Central Location as a Transportation Hub:
  - Key geographic positioning that facilitates easy access to and from other parts of Vancouver Island.
15. Culturally Rich Downtown Core:
  - A unique downtown area with strong arts and cultural influences.
16. Diverse Food and Beverage Scene:
  - A well-developed local craft food and beverage industry offering unique gastronomic experiences.

**Weaknesses:**

Challenges include overcoming perceptions of Nanaimo as a transit point, downtown social issues, and the need for enhanced transportation connectivity.

1. Resident Perceptions:
  - Community views on Nanaimo's viability as a tourism destination may be limited or negative.
2. Downtown Social Challenges:
  - Issues such as homelessness affecting the attractiveness and safety of the downtown area.
3. Transportation Limitations:
  - Absence of an airport shuttle service and ride-sharing options hinder easy access and mobility.
4. Understanding of Tourism:
  - General lack of deep understanding of the tourism sector among locals and stakeholders.
5. Transit Destination Image:
  - Nanaimo is often perceived merely as a pass-through point rather than a destination.
6. Lack of Signature Experiences:

- Absence of unique, defining experiences that differentiate Nanaimo from other destinations.
7. Export-Ready Product Shortages:
    - Limited offerings that are ready for international or broader external markets.
  8. Seasonal Product Offerings:
    - Insufficient attractions and activities during off-season and shoulder-season periods.
  9. Inconsistent Product/Experience Availability:
    - Variability in the availability, hours of operation, and capacity of tourism products and experiences.
  10. Operator Preparedness:
    - Overall digital readiness and front line staff preparedness of operators in the tourism sector could be improved.

**Opportunities:**

There are significant opportunities in expanding Indigenous-led tourism, enhancing air and ferry access, and leveraging technology to improve visitor experiences and creating stronger pride of place, therefore activating residents to promote the destination.

1. Enhancing Visitor-Resident Relations:
  - Opportunities to create a stronger bond between visitors and residents, enhancing community support for tourism.
2. Indigenous-Led Tourism Initiatives:
  - Developing unique, authentic experiences led by the Snuneymuxw First Nation to attract culturally interested tourists.
3. Improved Air Access:
  - Potential to increase or expand air carrier services, enhancing accessibility to the region.
4. Enhanced Transportation Connectivity:
  - Opportunities to improve connectivity, facilitating easier, car-free travel within and around Nanaimo.
5. Cultivating Community Pride:
  - Initiatives to build pride among residents for their community, which can enhance the visitor experience.
6. Addressing Seasonality in Tourism:
  - Potential to develop a year-round tourism economy by diversifying offerings throughout all seasons.
7. Expanding Meeting and Convention Facilities and Services:
  - Opportunities to grow the business tourism sector through the development or enhancement of facilities and services beyond the Vancouver Island Conference Centre (VICC).
8. Leveraging Technology and Data:
  - Using technology and data analytics to enhance the tourism experience and improve operational efficiency.
9. Promoting Tourism Benefits:
  - Sharing the economic and social benefits of tourism with residents and stakeholders to foster broader support.
10. Influencer and Advocacy Programs:

- Utilizing influencers and local champions to promote Nanaimo’s attractions, enhancing its image and reach.

11. Focusing on Arts, History, and Culture:

- Leveraging Nanaimo's rich arts scene, historical sites, and cultural heritage as key elements of its tourism strategy.

**Threats:**

The city faces competition from other destinations, economic pressures like inflation, and potential impacts from global travel disruptions and climate-related events.

1. Intense Competition:

- Heightened competition from other regions that are also intensifying their tourism marketing efforts.

2. Negative Perceptions of Tourism Impact:

- Challenges associated with managing the local community's concerns about the adverse effects of tourism.

3. Economic Challenges:

- Sustained negative economic factors such as inflation, recession, and high fuel prices impacting travel affordability.

4. Disruptions from External Events:

- Risks posed by travel restrictions and natural disasters like wildfires and floods, which can deter visitor arrivals.

5. Limited Accommodation Capacity:

- Constraints in accommodation options that could limit the potential for tourism growth.

6. Workforce Limitations:

- Challenges related to labour shortages and the overall capacity of the workforce to meet tourism demands.

7. Environmental Sustainability Concerns:

- The need to ensure the sustainability of natural resources as tourism usage increases.

**Actionable Steps**

To capitalize on its strategic advantages and mitigate risks, Nanaimo must:

1. *Enhance Destination Appeal:* Develop signature experiences and improve off-season attractions to transform Nanaimo into a year-round destination.
2. *Strengthen Community and Visitor Relations:* Increase efforts in community engagement and technology use to share the benefits of tourism and enhance visitor interactions.
3. *Focus on Sustainability and Inclusivity:* Prioritize sustainable tourism practices and inclusive experiences that reflect the diverse heritage and values of both the Snuneymuxw Peoples and broader community demographics.
4. *Expand Infrastructure and Access:* Continue to build on the transportation and accommodation infrastructure to support increased visitor flow and enhance overall visitor experience.

This strategic plan sets a clear direction for Nanaimo to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable tourism destination, aligning with broader economic and community development goals.

	<p><b><i>The City of Nanaimo recognizes Tourism Nanaimo’s Destination Development Strategy will guide destination development and marketing initiatives. The plan will be attached as an addendum to the MRDT submission.</i></b></p> <p><b>Key Learnings</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Value of Collaboration:       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reinforced by the success of the "Team Nanaimo" approach, collaborative efforts in organizing meetings, events, and sport tourism are essential for sustained success.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Importance of Indigenous Cultural Experiences:       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Supporting Snuneymuxw First Nation-led initiatives on Saysutshun and in other locations, is crucial for enhancing Nanaimo’s appeal as a premier travel destination.</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Potential of Business and Sport Tourism:       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Events focused on business, meetings, and sports are effective in increasing overnight stays, especially during off-peak times, highlighting the importance of targeting these segments.</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Necessity of Data-Driven Decisions:       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Utilizing data to inform marketing and development decisions ensures a clear demonstration of return on investment (ROI) for industry partners.</li> </ul> </li> <li>5. Evolving Visitor Services:       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Adapting visitor services to be more mobile and flexible, enhancing online servicing capabilities, and promoting direct bookings are essential in meeting current tourism demands.</li> </ul> </li> <li>6. Focus on Accessibility and Inclusion:       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Committing to accessibility and inclusivity is necessary to maintain Nanaimo’s reputation as an attractive and welcoming destination.</li> </ul> </li> <li>7. Cultivating Local Support and Pride:       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Encouraging residents to appreciate the local attractions and understand the value of the tourism sector can foster community pride and support for tourism initiatives.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
<p><b>Overall Goals, Objectives and Targets</b></p>	<p><b>GOAL #1 : Strategic Pillar #1: Build Out the Real Nanaimo (Experience Development and Enhancement)</b></p> <p><b>Goal: Enhance and diversify Nanaimo's tourism offerings to create a comprehensive, unique visitor experience that captures the essence of the city and its surroundings.</b></p> <p><b>Objective:</b> Develop and launch a series of new, iconic itineraries and experiences through festivals and events, and product development that showcase Nanaimo’s natural beauty, cultural richness, and adventurous spirit by 2030.</p> <p><b>Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Number of New Itineraries Developed:       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Target: Develop at least 10 new itineraries by 2028, focusing on areas such as Indigenous culture, shoreline exploration, food and beverage,</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

- adventure, and the oceanic environment.
- Measurement: Track the number of itineraries from conception to launch annually.
2. Visitor Engagement with New Itineraries:
    - Target: Achieve a visitor engagement rate of 25% with the new itineraries by 2028.
    - Measurement: Use visitor feedback to assess engagement levels. Increase Net Promoter score from 40 in 2024 to 60 by 2030.
  3. Improvement in Tourism-Related Product Experiences:
    - Target: Complete five (5) major experience improvement projects by 2030 that support the accessibility and enjoyment of new and existing itineraries.
    - Measurement: Track project completions, with assessments based on increased visitor capacity and improved experience ratings.
  4. Increase in Overnight Stays Linked to New Experiences:
    - Target: Generate a 20% increase in overnight stays from 2023 directly attributable to new experiences by 2030.
    - Measurement: Analyze accommodation booking trends and correlate increases with marketing campaign data for new experiences.
  5. Economic Impact from New Tourism Initiatives:
    - Target: Deliver a cumulative economic impact of \$10M from new tourism initiatives by 2030.
    - Measurement: Utilize economic impact analysis tools to quantify direct and indirect impacts of new tourism experiences.
  6. Local Resident Involvement and Satisfaction:
    - Target: Achieve a 50% increase in local resident involvement in tourism development and a 75% satisfaction rate with the impact of tourism by 2030.
    - Measurement: Conduct annual surveys to assess local participation and satisfaction levels.
  7. Development of Unique and Boutique Accommodations:
    - Target: Support the development of at least one (1) new unique or boutique accommodations by 2030 that complement the new itineraries, and direction of events within the city.
    - Measurement: Track new developments and assess their integration with the tourism strategy.

By focusing on these KPIs, Nanaimo can strategically enhance its tourism offerings, ensuring they not only attract visitors but also create meaningful connections with the locale, bolster the nighttime economy, and involve the community in sustainable and inclusive growth. This approach will help cement Nanaimo's reputation as a dynamic destination rich in unique and authentic experiences.

**GOAL #2 : Strategic Pillar #1: Build Out the Real Nanaimo  
(Enhance Accessibility and Develop Sport Tourism)**

**Goal: Transform Nanaimo into a leading accessible tourism destination and a premier hub for sports tourism by 2030.**

**Objective for Accessibility**

1. Maximize the accessibility and connectivity of transportation options in and around Nanaimo to facilitate seamless travel experiences for all visitors by 2030.

**Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Accessibility**

- Increase in Car and Bike Sharing Usage (e.g. Motto)\*:
  - *Target:* Achieve a 30% increase in car-sharing program utilization by 2030.
  - *Measurement:* Track usage rates through program subscription and usage data.

*\*currently national rideshare options are not available in Nanaimo, however independent operators are available.*

- Enhancement of Air Travel Capacity:
  - *Target:* Secure commitments for at least two new air routes or increased capacities on existing routes by 2030.
  - *Measurement:* Partnership agreements with airlines and annual passenger throughput statistics from YCD.
- Improved Transport Connectivity:
  - *Target:* Enhance connectivity by 50% between key points such as downtown, transport hubs, and hotels through new or improved transport services by 2030.
  - *Measurement:* Implementation of new services and feedback from users, including leisure, conference and sporting groups regarding connectivity improvements.

**Objective for Sports Tourism**

2. Establish and expand Nanaimo's capacity as a sport tourism destination by strategically developing facilities, hosting more frequent and/or larger sporting events, and increasing the engagement of local sports organizations (LSOs) by 2030.

**Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Sport Tourism**

- Appointment of Sports Tourism Coordinator:
  - *Target:* Appoint a dedicated coordinator by the end of the first year and assess performance annually.
  - *Measurement:* Successful recruitment and retention of the coordinator and performance reviews based on set objectives.
- Sport Tourism Development:
  - *Target:* Create a comprehensive inventory and analysis of current sport infrastructure for ongoing and future bids. Identify where gaps exist for the City's consideration in capital infrastructure improvements.
  - *Measurement:* sport tourism infrastructure added to database (iDSS), including images updated every three years (2026).
- Increase in Sporting Events Bid Submissions:
  - *Target:* Achieve a 15% increase in the total number of sporting events bids with 350+ athletes submitted by Nanaimo by 2030, strategically

aligned with the City’s Sport Hosting Strategy and infrastructure development plans.

- *Measurement*: Number of sporting event bids generated, in addition to local sport organization (LSO), and provincial sport organization (PSO) feedback.
- Increase in Sporting Events Bid Submissions:
  - *Target*: Achieve a 15% increase in the total number of sporting events hosted annually in Nanaimo by 2030, strategically aligned with the City’s Sport Hosting Strategy and infrastructure development plans.
  - *Measurement*: Number of sporting events supported by Tourism Nanaimo hosted in the community, and local sport organization (LSO), and provincial sport organization (PSO) feedback about the event experience.
- Development of Sport Tourism Incentives:
  - *Target*: Implement a comprehensive incentive program for large provincial sport organizations (PSO, e.g. provincial championships or western Canada events) or national sport organization (NSO, e.g. national championships) sanctioned events by year two and increase participation in the program by 50% by 2030.
  - *Target*: Implement a grants program for local sport organization-led events in year one and increase participation in the program by 50% by 2030.
  - *Measurement*: Enrollment and utilization rates of the grants program, ROI on the event itself.
- Collaboration with Indigenous Sports Programs:
  - *Target*: Expand partnership initiatives with the Snuneymuxw First Nation (SFN) to include at least two major SFN-led and hosted sporting events by 2030.
  - *Measurement*: Event success as measured by participant numbers and community impact assessments.

By focusing on these objectives and KPIs, Nanaimo aims to enhance its accessibility features and establish itself as a key player in the sports tourism market, leveraging both its natural advantages and newly developed capabilities to attract a diverse range of visitors and event organizers.

**GOAL #3 : Strategic Pillar #2: Better Together  
(Enhance Industry Alignment and Collaboration)**

**Goal: Strengthen industry collaboration and align tourism development initiatives across all sectors in Nanaimo to enhance the city's competitive edge as a tourism destination by 2030.**

**Objective**

1. Foster a cohesive tourism ecosystem in Nanaimo that maximizes industry synergies, supports sustainable practices, and leverages local community culture and community assets.
2. Continue to build relationships with Snuneymuxw First Nation to steward the destination collaboratively and equitably.

**Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**
**Industry Alignment and Collaboration**

- Increase in Collaborative Projects:
  - *Target:* Initiate at least 15 new collaborative projects with local industry and community groups by 2030.
  - *Measurement:* Track the number of new partnerships and projects initiated each year.
- **Engagement Event Participation:**
  - *Target:* Achieve a 50% increase in participation at industry engagement events like workshops and networking sessions by 2030.
  - *Measurement:* Attendance records and feedback from event participants and event organizers.
- **Growth in Sports Tourism with Snuneymuxw First Nation:**
  - *Target:* Co-host and plan two (2) sport tourism events developed in partnership with the Snuneymuxw First Nation by 2030.
  - *Measurement:* Event count and participant, and partner feedback.
- **Support and Advocacy Unique Gathering Spaces Development:**
  - *Target:* Support the enhancement of three unique community gathering spaces by 2030 in partnership with BIAs, the City of Nanaimo and the local tourism sector.
  - *Measurement:* Completion of projects and utilization rates.
- **Sustainability Initiatives:**
  - *Target:* Implement five major sustainability initiatives within the tourism sector by 2030.
  - *Measurement:* Initiatives launched and their impact assessments.

**Capacity Building**

- Industry Capacity Enhancement:
  - *Target:* Create and roll out an industry accelerator program aimed at elevating local tourism expertise by the end of year two.
  - *Measurement:* Program completion rates and post-program performance of businesses.
- Industry Training Completion:
  - *Target:* Train 500 tourism operators and staff in enhanced guest service, accessibility, and 2SLGBTQAI+ inclusivity by 2030.
  - *Measurement:* Number of participants trained and improvement in service quality ratings.

**Objective for Meetings, Conferences and Business Events**

3. Expand Nanaimo's capacity as a meetings, conferences and business events destination by strategically leveraging facilities, hosting more frequently and/or larger events with 300+ delegates by 2030.

**Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Meetings, Conferences and Business Events**

- Meetings, Conferences and Business Events Destination Sales:
  - *Target:* Continue to foster a “Team Nanaimo” approach to attracting meetings, conferences and business events. Curate a list of meetings, conferences and business events with 300+ delegates that align with Nanaimo’s event infrastructure on which to propose/bid by year two.
  - *Measurement:* list curation, and initial research on bid cycle complete, and identification of bid/RFP timeline
- Increase in Meetings, Conferences and Business Events RFP/Bid Submissions:
  - *Target:* Achieve a 15% increase in the total number of RFPs and/or bids with 300+ delegates. aligned with Nanaimo’s event infrastructure submitted by Nanaimo by 2030.
  - *Measurement:* Number of RFPs and/or bids generated and event planner/host organization feedback.
- Development of Hosting Incentives:
  - *Target:* Update and implement a comprehensive incentive program for events generating 450+ room nights in year one and increase participation in the program by 50% by 2030.
  - *Measurement:* Enrollment and utilization rates of the grants program, ROI on the event itself.

#### **Meetings & Conferences Team Nanaimo Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**

1. Annual Event Count:
  - Method: Track the number of meetings and conferences held in Nanaimo each year, comparing year-on-year growth to establish progress toward the 40% increase.
  - Data Source: Event registration data collected from local conference centers, hotels, and event venues. VICC annual reportings and economic impact calculations.
2. Stakeholder Engagement Level:
  - Method: Measure the engagement and participation of key industry stakeholders in the planning and execution of conferences and meetings.
  - Data Source: Surveys and feedback forms distributed to event organizers, participants, and industry stakeholders.
3. Economic Impact of Meetings, Conferences and Business Events:
  - Method: Assess the economic impact generated by meetings and conferences, focusing on direct spending, accommodation occupancy related to events, and secondary spending in the community.
  - Data Source: Economic impact studies (e.g. Destinations International) and accommodation booking data specifically tagged to conferences and meetings.
4. Satisfaction and Return Rates:
  - Method: Conduct post-event surveys to gauge the satisfaction of attendees and organizers with the event experience in Nanaimo. Monitor the rate of recurring events as a measure of satisfaction and success.
  - Data Source: Post-event survey data and tracking of annual events to

see the return rate of organizers and conferences.

These accumulative objectives and KPIs aim to create a more unified and competitive tourism sector in Nanaimo, enhancing both the quality and sustainability of the tourism offerings while fostering strong community and cultural ties, particularly through meaningful partnerships with the Snuneymuxw First Nation.

**GOAL #4 : Strategic Pillar #3: Elevate The Destination  
(Branding and Marketing)**

**Goal: Elevate the brand visibility and recognition of Nanaimo as a vibrant cultural hub and premier destination for meetings and events by 2030.**

**Objective**

1. Reposition Nanaimo in the tourism market, enhancing its image as a unique, accessible, and culturally rich destination while increasing engagement and investment in local and business tourism.

**Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**

**Storytelling and Public Relations**

- Increase in Local Engagement:
  - *Target:* Achieve a 40% increase in local audience engagement with stories about Nanaimo by 2030.
  - *Measurement:* Engagement metrics from PR campaigns and media content.
- Partnerships with Media Outlets:
  - *Target:* Establish at least five new media partnerships to regularly feature Nanaimo’s cultural and tourism news by the end of year two.
  - *Measurement:* Number of active partnerships and frequency of content publication.

**Arts and Culture Promotion**

- Cultural Events and Exhibitions:
  - *Target:* Host at least 10 major arts and cultural events each year by 2030.
  - *Measurement:* Event count, attendance figures, and participant feedback.

**Meetings and Events Enhancement**

- Development of Flagship Annual Event:
  - *Target:* Launch a flagship annual event that becomes nationally recognized within five years.
  - *Measurement:* Event success as measured by attendance, media coverage, and year-on-year growth.

**Marketing and Promotion**

- Enhanced Wayfinding and Navigation Systems:
  - *Target:* Implement comprehensive downtown navigation systems, including digital and physical maps, by year three.
  - *Measurement:* System deployment success rate and user satisfaction.
- Influencer and Digital Campaigns:
  - *Target:* Engage with at least 50 influencers and run continuous digital campaigns to enhance Nanaimo’s online presence and reach by 2030.
  - Create a strong local ambassador program for UGC, promotion and local influencer model that will entice leisure travel and improve local sentiment.
  - *Measurement:* Reach and impact of influencer campaigns, including follower engagement and conversion rates.
- Film and Digital Content Creation:
  - *Target:* Produce and distribute 20 high-quality promotional videos showcasing Nanaimo’s attractions, lifestyle, and investment opportunities by 2030.
  - *Measurement:* Video views, shares, and impact on tourism inquiries.
- Resident Perception Shift:
  - *Target:* Achieve a 25% positive shift in resident perceptions of Nanaimo as a tourism and event destination by 2030.
  - *Measurement:* Pre and post-campaign surveys assessing resident attitudes toward tourism.

These objectives and KPIs are designed to build a strong, distinctive brand for Nanaimo that not only attracts tourists but also encourages local pride and economic development through enhanced visibility and strategic marketing initiatives.

**GOAL #5 : Strategic Pillar #4: Be A Strong Ally  
(Promoting a Culture of Inclusivity, Equality, and Support)**

**Goal: Establish Nanaimo as a model city for inclusivity and support in tourism, fostering strong partnerships and community cohesion by 2030.**

**Objective**

1. Deepen engagement and collaboration across all community and industry sectors to enhance inclusivity, support cultural understanding, and promote equal opportunities within Nanaimo’s tourism sector.

**Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**

**Industry Allyship and Education**

- Implementation of an Indigenous Tourism Strategy: Fully develop and begin implementation of a comprehensive Indigenous tourism strategy in collaboration with the Snuneymuxw First Nation by the end of year two.
  - *Measurement:* Completion of the strategy document and initial implementation steps.
- **Formation of Tourism Team Nanaimo:**
  - *Target:* Establish a multi-disciplinary team comprising members from

various sectors of the tourism industry by the end of year one, that activate and create and or organize sector mixers.

- *Measurement:* Team formation, number of meetings held, and initiatives launched.
- **Membership Programs for Retail and Service Providers:**
  - *Target:* Create and launch a tiered membership program aimed at integrating retail stores and service providers into the tourism network by the end of year one.
  - *Measurement:* Number of participants in the program and engagement level in tourism-related activities.
  -

#### **Accessibility and Inclusivity Initiatives**

- **Indigenous Awareness and Cultural Appropriation Training:**
  - *Target:* Train 80% of tourism operators and associated retail staff in Indigenous awareness and cultural appropriation prevention by 2028.
  - *Measurement:* Training completion rates and post-training evaluation scores.
- **Rainbow Certification for Businesses:**
  - *Target:* Achieve rainbow certification for 50% of tourism-related businesses by 2028 to signal inclusivity, particularly for 2SLGBTQIA+ visitors.
  - *Measurement:* Number of certified businesses and feedback from the community.

#### **Community Engagement and Support**

- **Regular Community Outreach Programs:**
  - *Target:* Conduct at least 20 community outreach sessions per year to engage with residents and stakeholders about tourism’s benefits and developments.
  - *Measurement:* Number of outreach sessions conducted and participant feedback on understanding and support of tourism.
- **Enhanced Communication with Community Leaders and Influencers:**
  - *Target:* Develop a continuous engagement program with local influencers and leaders to advocate for the benefits of tourism and inclusivity initiatives.
  - *Measurement:* Frequency of interactions and the spread of positive messaging about tourism.
- **Economic Impact Awareness:**
  - *Target:* Conduct annual informational campaigns to educate residents on the economic impacts and benefits of tourism by year two.
  - *Measurement:* Resident surveys to measure changes in perception and awareness.

These objectives and KPIs are designed to cultivate a supportive, inclusive, and educated community around tourism in Nanaimo, ensuring that all segments of the community feel valued and can participate in and benefit from the tourism sector. This strategic focus on inclusivity and allyship will not only enhance the social fabric of Nanaimo but also its appeal as a progressive and welcoming destination.

**Strategies - Key  
Actions**
**Strategies for Achieving Goal #1: Enhance and Diversify Nanaimo's Tourism Offerings**
**Strategy 1: Itinerary and Experience Development**
**Year 1-3 Actions:**

1. Identify and map out potential themes for new itineraries and experiences through festivals and events focusing on Indigenous culture, shoreline exploration, food and beverage, adventure, and the oceanic environment.
2. Partner with local communities, cultural groups, and tourism stakeholders to co-develop content for these itineraries and vet new festivals and events alongside the City and industry partners.
3. Begin development of at least three new itineraries each year, incorporating feedback from early engagements to refine offerings.
4. Support festivals and events through a grant and attraction program to incentivize new events being hosted within the city.

**Year 4-5 Actions:**

1. Launch remaining itineraries with comprehensive marketing campaigns.
2. Assess and iterate on the itineraries based on ongoing visitor and community feedback.
3. Build a strong E-news subscribers list to share events and itineraries with ideal market demographics.  
Increase engagement rate and subscribers by 25% over the last two years of the plan.
4. Ensure that new festivals and events are sustainable after grant funding of 2 consecutive years.

**Strategy 2: Community-based Festivals and Events Integration**
**Year 1-3 Actions:**

1. Plan and execute at least one major community-based festival or event each year that aligns with one of the newly developed itineraries.
2. Establish a calendar of events that promotes new and existing itineraries, ensuring they are highlighted during peak tourist seasons and available on all promotional platforms.
3. Integrate strong events that can be added onto meetings, conferences or business events to lengthen stay within the community that showcase the strengths of the destination.

**Year 4-5 Actions:**

1. Scale up successful community-based events to attract a larger audience and include international visitors.
2. Leverage successful events to cross-promote lesser-known itineraries and create an added value to other initiatives like conferences and events.

**Strategy 3: Enhancement of Tourism-Related Services**
**Year 1-3 Actions:**

1. Identify service gaps that hinder the accessibility and enjoyment of the planned itineraries.
2. Support direction for future projects such as improved signage, accessibility enhancements, that the City may undertake with data and intel into what the

resident and visitor experience is and how it can be addressed and improved.

**Year 4-5 Actions:**

Address any changes to identified service enhancements via partners and or the City; continue to make smaller iterative improvements based on visitor and resident feedback to itineraries and awareness of experiences.

**Strategy 4: Accommodation Development**

**Year 1-3 Actions:**

1. Collaborate with investors and hotel developers to propose service development on unique or boutique style accommodations and/or enhanced services, that compliment the thematic itineraries.
2. Support existing accommodations to up-sale their services and align more closely with the tourism themes and or itineraries offered. Aligning product experiences to accommodations.

**Year 4-5 Actions:**

3. Support Economic Development and the Nanaimo Prosperity Corporation in the attraction and development of new accommodations and integrate them into tourism packages that promote longer stays.

**Strategy 5: Community Engagement and Satisfaction**

**Year 1-3 Actions:**

1. Implement a comprehensive community engagement program to involve local residents in the tourism development process on a quarterly and annual basis.
2. Establish feedback mechanisms to measure resident and industry satisfaction and involvement annually, via round table discussions, through specific sectors, and more broadly when initiating annual planning cycles.

**Year 4-5 Actions:**

3. Expand community benefits from tourism by increasing local hiring, sourcing, and procurement for all tourism-related activities.

**Strategy 6: Economic Impact Measurement**

**Year 1-3 Actions:**

1. Set up systems to track the direct and indirect economic impacts of new tourism initiatives.
2. Qualify the value of the sport tourism sector in Nanaimo through an economic impact assessment in year one to be repeated every five (5) years, share the multiplier with industry and stakeholders. This metric can be used to quantify the sector in annual reports going forward.
3. Qualify the value of the meetings, conferences and business events sector in Nanaimo through an economic impact assessment completed in year two, and repeated every five (5) years, share the multiplier with industry and stakeholders. This metric can be used to quantify the sector in annual reports going forward, in alignment with the Vancouver Island Conference Centre.
4. Set up systems to track the direct and indirect economic impacts of the meetings, conferences and business events sector using Destinations International data set. Begin annual reporting on economic impacts to stakeholders and the community, in alignment with the Vancouver Island Conference Centre.

5. Set up systems to track the direct and indirect economic impacts of the sport tourism events as part of the bid process using Sport Tourism Canada’s STEAMPRO tool. Begin annual reporting on economic impacts to stakeholders and the community.
  6. Track the direct and indirect economic impacts of select larger events (e.g. national level, BC 55+ Games) using Sport Tourism Canada’s STEAMPRO tool and onsite event intercepts. Share economic impacts to stakeholders and the community as completed.
- Year 4-5 Actions:**
7. Use data collected to refine strategies and increase the economic benefits of tourism, aiming for the \$10M impact target.
  8. These strategies as it relates to Goal #1 over a five-year period, can significantly enhance its tourism offerings, generating a sustainable economic and community benefit that is tangible.

**Strategies for Achieving Goal #2: Enhance Accessibility and Develop Sports Tourism in Nanaimo**

**Strategy 1: Enhance Transportation Accessibility**

**Year 1-3 Actions:**

1. Conduct a comprehensive assessment of current transportation systems and identify critical gaps.
2. Initiate partnerships with car-sharing services and local transportation providers to increase availability and accessibility.
3. Begin negotiations with airlines to secure new air routes or increase capacities on existing routes.

**Year 4-5 Actions:**

4. Review and expand transportation initiatives based on usage data and user feedback.
5. Implement any additional services required to meet the increased connectivity targets.

**Strategy 2: Develop and Promote Sports Tourism**

**Year 1-3 Actions:**

1. Review past hosted events, current bids, and infrastructure improvements on the horizon, to create a carrying capacity analysis for event opportunities, supporting seasonal dispersion.
2. Work with Snuneymuxw, the City’s Parks, Recreation and Culture department to update Sport Tourism Strategy to align with the 5-year destination development strategy and City’s capital planning process.
3. Connect with local sport organizations (LSOs) to build relationships, understand hosting opportunities and challenges.
4. Map existing sports facilities, creating a gap analysis related to potential sport hosting opportunities and the City’s capital infrastructure plans, in alignment with the sport tourism strategy.
5. Continue hosting annual local sports events to build momentum and test facilities.

**Year 4-5 Actions:**

6. Scale up hosting of national and international sports events based on the

success of initial events and infrastructure readiness.

7. Enhance sports tourism incentives to attract larger events and increase participant numbers.

**Strategy 3: Development for Enhanced Accessibility and Sports Tourism**

**Year 1-3 Actions:**

1. Collaborate with urban planners to enhance infrastructure usage, supporting accessibility across the city, particularly in tourist-heavy areas like downtown and near sports facilities, to ensure visitors are aware and make use of, Motto car share, Evo Bike share, seasonal RDN bus routes etc.
2. Tie into the City's Parks, Recreation and Culture department to create a strong Sport Tourism Guide, demonstrating accessibility, venues, transportation etc.
3. Build an inventory of fully accessible facilities and experiences suitable for all athletes and visitors with diverse abilities, and identify any gaps in para facilities.

**Year 4-5 Actions:**

4. Review the comprehensive inventory list of existing sport facilities from year 1-3, continue to refine and adjust based on usage and feedback from bids, partners and Provincial entities.
5. Pursue sustainable practices in hosting to ensure long-term usability and environmental considerations.

**Strategy 4: Foster Collaborative Relationships with Indigenous Communities for Sports Development**

**Year 1-3 Actions:**

1. Establish formal working cadence with the Snuneymuxw First Nation to co-develop and co-host sporting events.
2. Include Indigenous cultural elements in sports events to promote cultural exchange, education and understanding within the community and for hosted teams.

**Year 4-5 Actions:**

3. Evaluate the impact of these partnerships and expand them to include more events or broader community involvement.
4. Develop programs that encourage ongoing cultural exchange and support for Indigenous athletes and sports initiatives.

**Strategy 5: Community Engagement and Marketing**

**Year 1-3 Actions:**

1. Launch targeted marketing campaigns to promote Nanaimo as an accessible and sports-friendly destination.
2. Engage local communities through workshops, meetings, and public engagement sessions to gather input and foster support for transportation and sports tourism developments.
3. Highlight and celebrate local sport successes, teams, athletes etc. to harness reputation and pride in place.

**Year 4-5 Actions:**

4. Adjust marketing strategies based on feedback and the outcomes of early campaigns.
5. Strengthen community outreach programs to maintain and build local support for ongoing and future tourism initiatives.

This holistic approach ensures the City leverages its natural and cultural resources effectively while promoting sustainable and inclusive growth.

**Strategic Directions for Goal #3: Enhancing Industry Alignment and Collaboration**

To achieve the objective of strengthening industry collaboration and aligning tourism development initiatives across all sectors in Nanaimo by 2030, this comprehensive set of strategies, detailed for the initial three years and broadly for the subsequent two years ensures continuity and flexibility in the approach and execution.

**Strategy 1: Enhance Collaborative Projects and Industry Partnerships**

**Year 1-3 Actions:**

1. Identify and initiate at least five new collaborative projects annually, focusing on diverse sectors including, arts, culture, and eco-tourism.
2. Build on the Team Nanaimo approach and formal framework, to implement in similar collaboration with local industry and community groups.

**Year 4-5 Actions:**

3. Strengthen existing partnerships and evaluate the impact of collaborative initiatives.
4. Expand efforts to include inter-regional projects that leverage broader community assets and products.

**Strategy 2: Maximize Engagement in Industry Events**

**Year 1-3 Actions:**

1. Host bi-annual industry workshops to foster networking and idea exchange based on sector round table discussions.
2. Implement targeted outreach via sector round table events to increase industry stakeholder participation in larger tourism development workshops.
3. Create a communications plan that shares information broadly on the approach and successes each quarter, ensuring data is available to partners.
4. Host monthly Tourism Mixers with partners co-hosting events to ensure visibility, sharing of information and broad networking throughout the city.

**Year 4-5 Actions:**

5. Develop advanced workshops based on industry needs; marketing, inclusion, accessibility, front line preparedness, tc.
6. Enhance virtual engagement options to maintain high participation regardless of geographical constraints, allowing for keynote speakers from anywhere in the world.

**Strategy 3: Deepen Engagement with Snuneymuxw First Nation**

**Year 1-3 Actions:**

1. Establish regular consultation and co-planning sessions with the Snuneymuxw First Nation to develop culturally inclusive tourism products.
2. Co-host sports and cultural tourism events that highlight Indigenous heritage, led by Snuneymuxw Nation.
3. Nurture a relationship with the Cultural Committee to ensure that Tourism Nanaimo is following proper governance and protocol in working with the Nation.

**Year 4-5 Actions:**

4. Review and adjust the collaborative event strategy to optimize cultural

representation and community benefits.

5. Expand the scope of events to include larger, possibly international audiences.

**Strategy 4: Support the Enhancement, Accessibility and Inclusion of Public Spaces**

**Year 1-3 Actions:**

1. Engage with industry and community partners to support the ongoing enhancement of key community gathering spaces to improve accessibility for people with diverse abilities, and to facilitate larger events.
2. Advocate for and participate in the planning of infrastructure projects that align with sustainable tourism goals alongside the City to ensure visitor experience is considered in planning stages.

**Year 4-5 Actions:**

3. Monitor the sentiment of these enhanced spaces and adjust support as needed, through BIA, City and Visitor Experience surveys.

**Strategy 5: Support Sustainability Initiatives Across the Tourism Sector**

**Year 1-3 Actions:**

1. Support sustainability initiatives focused on reducing the environmental impact of tourism activities through education and partnership with DBC, ITBC and 4VI initiatives.
2. Conduct workshops and training sessions for industry partners on sustainable practices and emergency preparedness, via DBC, ITBC, 4VI.

**Year 4-5 Actions:**

3. Evaluate the effectiveness of supported initiatives through industry participation and adoption of efforts across the sector.
4. Discover and share new sustainability technologies and methodologies based on emerging global trends for sector consideration.

**Strategy 6: Build Capacity and Enhance Industry Expertise**

**Year 1-3 Actions:**

1. Roll out an industry accelerator program to fast-track the development of local tourism expertise.
2. Launch training programs focusing on enhanced guest service, accessibility, and inclusivity.

**Year 4-5 Actions:**

3. Assess the impact of training programs on service quality and industry standards through Visitor Experience Survey.
4. Expand training programs to include advanced topics based on industry feedback and evolving market needs.

By following these strategic directions, Nanaimo aims to foster a cohesive tourism ecosystem that enhances the City's competitive edge as a destination and also promotes sustainable practices and deepens community engagement. These strategies are designed to evolve over time, allowing for flexibility to adapt to new challenges and opportunities as they arise.

**Strategies for Achieving Goal #4: Elevate the Destination (Branding and Marketing)**

**Strategy 1: Strengthen Storytelling and Public Relations**

**Year 1-3 Actions:**

1. Launch an integrated PR campaign focusing on sharing diverse and compelling stories about Nanaimo’s cultural vibrancy and unique attractions.
2. Establish at least two new media partnerships per year to increase the regular coverage of Nanaimo’s tourism and cultural news.

**Year 4-5 Actions:**

3. Expand media outreach to national and international outlets to increase brand visibility beyond local and regional markets.
4. Evaluate the effectiveness of PR campaigns and adjust strategies to maximize engagement and reach.

**Strategy 2: Promote Arts and Culture**

**Year 1-3 Actions:**

1. Develop and launch a series itineraries that highlight annual cultural events and exhibitions, targeting different segments of visitors and locals each year.
2. Support local arts organizations and community groups to promote events that showcase Nanaimo’s cultural assets.
3. Liaison with the City’s Recreation, Arts and Culture department to identify funding opportunities and grant dispersions across events within the city.

**Year 4-5 Actions:**

4. Establish these events as major annual attractions in the regional and national cultural calendars, converting potential visitors to itineraries and ways to plan and book their stays for these events.
5. Working with organizers, introduce interactive and digital components to the events to broaden reach and participation.

**Strategy 3: Enhance Meetings and Events Infrastructure**

**Year 1-3 Actions:**

1. Identify potential sites for a flagship annual event that could attract national attention working with partners and supporting applicants that are looking to create a strong annual event.
2. Work closely with local businesses and conference organizers to enhance Nanaimo’s offerings as a premier meetings and events destination.
3. Develop a signature conference event for Nanaimo in the shoulder season with key partners.

**Year 4-5 Actions:**

4. Launch the flagship event and begin promotional activities to establish its reputation.
5. Develop a suite of support services for event organizers, including logistics, marketing, and technology solutions.

**Strategy 4: Implement Advanced Marketing and Promotional Techniques**

**Year 1-3 Actions:**

1. Overhaul downtown wayfinding resources to enhance visitor experience, focusing on integrating digital solutions like mobile apps and interactive kiosks.
2. Launch a local ambassador program that utilizes user-generated content and local influencers to promote leisure travel and improve local sentiment.

**Year 4-5 Actions:**

3. Assess the impact of digital campaigns and wayfinding systems on visitor satisfaction and adjust strategies accordingly.

- Expand the influencer and ambassador programs to include more participants and cover more diverse aspects of Nanaimo’s tourism offerings.

**Strategy 5: Create and Distribute Impactful Digital Content**

**Year 1-3 Actions:**

- Produce and distribute high-quality promotional videos that highlight Nanaimo’s lifestyle, attractions, and investment opportunities for partner adoption and distribution.
- Develop a content calendar that ensures consistent release of fresh, engaging material across various platforms, that speaks to leisure audiences and residents.
- Create seasonal messaging toolkits to ensure industry alignment, support and strong messaging to our ideal visitors.

**Year 4-5 Actions:**

- Leverage analytics to understand viewer engagement and refine content strategy based on what resonates most with the audience.
- Explore partnerships with travel bloggers, filmmakers, and content creators to further amplify Nanaimo’s presence in digital media.

**Strategy 6: Shift Resident Perceptions**

**Year 1-3 Actions:**

- Initiate community engagement programs that involve residents in tourism development and promote the benefits of a thriving tourism sector.
- Conduct annual surveys to gauge resident perceptions of tourism and use the data to inform community-focused marketing efforts.

**Year 4-5 Actions:**

- Expand resident engagement programs to include educational initiatives about the economic, social, and cultural benefits of tourism.
- Develop targeted campaigns to address any persistent negative perceptions and highlight positive changes and success stories.

These strategic directions are designed to cultivate a strong, distinctive brand for Nanaimo that not only attracts tourists but also fosters local pride and supports economic development through enhanced visibility and strategic marketing initiatives.

**Strategies for Achieving Goal #5: Be A Strong Ally (Promoting a Culture of Inclusivity, Equality, and Support)**

**Strategy 1: Develop and Implement an Indigenous Tourism Strategy**

**Year 1-3 Actions:**

- Collaborate with the Snuneymuxw First Nation to develop a comprehensive Indigenous Tourism Strategy that respects and promotes their culture and heritage.
- Begin implementing key components of the strategy, alongside their appointed representatives, focusing on education, cultural events, and partnership opportunities.

**Year 4-5 Actions:**

- Evaluate the initial impacts of the strategy and refine approaches based on feedback from the Snuneymuxw and tourism partners.

4. Expand the strategy to include additional Indigenous groups and cultural elements within the region.

**Strategy 2: Build Upon and Activate ‘Tourism Team Nanaimo’**

**Year 1-3 Actions:**

1. Form a multidisciplinary team within the first year, including representatives from various sectors of the tourism industry.
2. Have the ‘team’ organize sector mixers and regular meetings to facilitate networking and collaboration among industry stakeholders.

**Year 4-5 Actions:**

3. Strengthen the team’s role in strategic decision-making for tourism development, creating a committee that works on engagement and relations within the sector that works alongside Tourism Nanaimo's board.
4. Leverage the team to spearhead new inclusivity initiatives based on emerging trends and community feedback.

**Strategy 3: Launch Membership Programs for Integration**

**Year 1-3 Actions:**

1. Develop and launch a tiered membership program for retail stores and service providers to better integrate them into the tourism network.
2. Promote the benefits of the program through targeted marketing and community outreach, surveys and relationships with local BIA chapters.

**Year 4-5 Actions:**

3. Assess the effectiveness of the membership program and expand it to include additional sectors such as arts and entertainment.

**Strategy 4: Inclusivity Training and Certification**

**Year 1-3 Actions:**

1. Implement comprehensive training programs for tourism operators and retail staff on Indigenous awareness and cultural appropriation.
2. Launch a campaign to encourage and support tourism-related businesses in achieving rainbow certification.
3. Ensure that Inclusivity in messaging, content, imagery, and product experience is part of annual planning.
4. Practice inclusive procurement measures when working with community, 3rd party contractors and consultants.

**Year 4-5 Actions:**

5. Continue education efforts and begin advanced training modules.
6. Monitor and publicly recognize businesses that achieve and uphold high inclusivity standards.
7. Review procurement process and diversity of suppliers.

**Strategy 5: Community Engagement and Support**

**Year 1-3 Actions:**

1. Conduct extensive community outreach programs to engage residents and stakeholders about the benefits of tourism and inclusivity.
2. Develop and maintain a continuous engagement program with local influencers and leaders to promote tourism's positive impacts.  
**Year 4-5 Actions:**
3. Evaluate the outreach programs' effectiveness and adjust strategies to enhance community involvement and support.
4. Increase efforts to communicate the economic impacts of tourism through more personalized community interactions and digital platforms.

**Strategy 6: Economic Impact and Perception Shift****Year 1-3 Actions:**

1. Initiate annual informational campaigns to educate residents about the economic impacts and benefits of tourism.
2. Use media, workshops, and school programs to improve understanding and perceptions of tourism.

**Year 4-5 Actions:**

3. Deepen the focus on measuring changes in resident perceptions through more sophisticated survey methods and data analysis.
4. Adjust communication strategies based on feedback to optimize positive perception shifts.

These actions are designed to promote inclusivity and allyship within Nanaimo's tourism sector, enhancing the social fabric of the community and positioning Nanaimo as a progressive and welcoming destination. Each strategy is aimed at deepening engagement, supporting cultural understanding, and ensuring that all community members can participate in and benefit from the growing tourism sector.

**Section 1: Five-Year Strategic Overview**
**Stakeholder  
Engagement**

The journey to crafting a robust and forward-thinking five-year strategic business plan for Nanaimo's tourism industry has been driven by comprehensive and collaborative stakeholder engagement, led by Tourism Nanaimo. Through a series of meticulously planned workshops, one-on-one interviews, and thorough reviews of existing documentation, we have integrated diverse perspectives and expertise into the foundation of our strategy. This inclusive process ensured that our approach is not only reflective of the community's current needs and aspirations but also adaptable to future opportunities and challenges.

Recognizing the importance of stakeholder input, we actively sought the insights of local business owners, tourism operators, cultural leaders, and residents, facilitating an environment where every voice could contribute to shaping our tourism landscape. Our engagement efforts were designed to gather actionable feedback, allowing us to align our strategic objectives with the practical, on-the-ground realities of our tourism economy and community values.

The outcome is a community and industry-led strategic plan that stands on a bedrock of shared goals and mutual commitments. This plan not only aims to enhance Nanaimo's appeal as a vibrant destination but also to ensure sustainable and inclusive growth that benefits all stakeholders. By making the strategic business plan, and destination development plans available to our tourism industry stakeholders for input into annual tactical plans, we continue to embrace a dynamic process of collaboration and refinement, ensuring that our strategies remain relevant and impactful. This ongoing dialogue is essential for maintaining a responsive and thriving tourism environment in Nanaimo, rooted in the collective vision and efforts of its dedicated community.

In a joint meeting, Tourism presented a detailed outline of our strategy to the boards of the Nanaimo Hospitality Association (NHA), Tourism Nanaimo and City senior leadership. Additionally, three workshops were conducted to engage a total of 62 participants and held 14 one-on-one meetings with community leaders and business owners. The insights gathered from these discussions have been instrumental in forming the foundation of our strategic plan.

**Tourism Nanaimo Led Workshops;**

February 22 (Tourism Nanaimo and Nanaimo Hospitality Association joint board meeting)

March 11 (Virtual: Industry and residents)

March 19 (In person: Industry and residents at large)

March 20 (In person: Industry)

**Brand Positioning**

Tourism Nanaimo has embarked on an ambitious and vibrant rebranding initiative to reposition and elevate the city as a unique and appealing destination on Vancouver Island. With its diverse mix of beaches, parks, cafes, breweries, and distinctive shops and restaurants, Nanaimo stands out as a culture-rich seaside community populated by creatives, families, and entrepreneurs. Despite being often bypassed by travelers catching ferries or overlooked due to outdated perceptions, this rebranding aims to transform Nanaimo's image, generating excitement and positive buzz that attracts more visitors.

The rebranding strategy is designed to position Nanaimo not only as a fantastic place to live but also as a highly desirable tourist destination. This new brand direction will guide the development of tourism products and promotional activities, ensuring they align with the fresh, inclusive identity. It allows for easy adoption by partners and integration into a wide array of services, including Visitor Services, Meetings & Conferences, and Sports tourism.

In collaboration with the City's Economic Development organization, the Prosperity Group, the rebrand emphasizes aligned messaging to maximize impact. This fresh brand approach challenges outdated notions and offers an authentic alternative to the often overly curated presentations seen in typical tourism promotions. By putting the local community at the forefront of its campaigns, the new brand celebrates the diversity and vibrancy of Nanaimo's people, its natural beauty, and the dynamic business environment, highlighting the eclectic character of the community. Ultimately, this rebrand aims to showcase Nanaimo as a welcoming place for everyone, celebrating the pride of its residents and the city's thriving spirit.

**THE CHANGE WE WANT TO EFFECT**

RE-think Nanaimo	Feel an Affinity	Plan a Visit
<b>FROM</b>	----->	<b>TO</b>
A place between Vancouver & Victoria	----->	A place with its own unique character
A bit of an unknown	----->	A place that rejects easy definition
One of a number of cities by nature	----->	Kind of hip, without trying too hard
A bit rough	----->	A raw diamond
A place with issues	----->	A place with a complex story
A place to pass through	----->	A place to explore
Not sure what to do here	----->	So much to fill a weekend

Feel an Affinity ----->		Plan a Visit				
Demonstrate alignment between Nanaimo’s values and aspirations and those of our ideal visitors - the pathfinders, explorers and creators. Build Nanaimo’s “exclusivity” as a hipper, edgier, non-mainstream BC city destination (“not everyone gets it, but you will”).		Stop on the way through Visit for the day Plan an overnight trip Explore your hometown (locals)				
<b>Brand Target Audiences</b>						
Audience Segments	Local Residents	Visitors (Leisure)	Media	Industry & Local Government	Local Businesses (Tourism)	Community & Industry Partners
<b>Audience Details</b>	Broad cross-section ages 18-65  Locals love Nanaimo but are also its worst critics  Opportunity lies in the changing face of Nanaimo (younger, more diverse; new entrepreneurial business owners; those interested in true reconciliation efforts)	<b>Primary:</b> Urban Younger Singles & Couples, ‘Upwardly mobile’ professionals, likely without kids at home, Modest household income of \$109K, Over 1/3 immigrants to Canada, and/or visible minority  <b>Secondary:</b> Older Suburban Empty Nesters, Upscale Urban Families, Geographic Markets:  <b>Primary:</b> Islanders, Vancouver, Lower Mainland  <b>Secondary:</b> Kelowna, Vernon, Penticton, Calgary, Edmonton  <b>Tertiary:</b> Toronto, Seattle, Europe (UK)	<b>Primary:</b> Nanaimo & Island, Regional close to home online/ print, Regional close to home broadcast, Travel Trade  <b>Secondary:</b> National, Regional far from home (Kelowna, Calgary, TO, Seattle, Edmonton, Portland, Oregon)  Looking for fresh content and an interesting story angle that will cut through	<b>Tourism</b> <b>Related:</b> DBC, 4VI, Tourism Industry Association of BC (TIABC), Indigenous Tourism BC  <b>Government:</b> City of Nanaimo Staff, (Including Mayor, CAO, MarCom Team, etc), Nanaimo City Council, RDN key staff  Looking for positive local sentiment; increase in profile & awareness; economic development.  Present an opportunity to open the door for future funding.	Tourism-related businesses that will benefit directly from successful Tourism Nanaimo brand & marketing efforts including: Artisans, Restaurant/ cafe /pub owners, Hotels & Motels, Experience providers (e.g. Port Theatre, Art Gallery, Nanaimo Museum, whale watching tours, etc)  Looking for boost from increased visitation.	Partners in Tourism Nanaimo’s success; higher probability of support relative to other entities, including: Tourism Nanaimo Board, Nanaimo Prosperity Corp. Snuneymuxw First Nation, Hullo/ Airport / BC Ferries / Helijet/ Port/ Harbour Air, Van Isle Conference Ctr., Old City Quarter Board, Downtown Nanaimo Business Association, VIEA, VIU, NHA  Looking for boost from increased visitation.
SOURCE: Tourism Nanaimo Brand Launch and Beyond Communication Strategy						

<b>Strategies and key messages</b>						
<b>Audience Segments</b>	<b>Local Residents</b>	<b>Visitors (Leisure)</b>	<b>Media</b>	<b>Industry &amp; Local Government</b>	<b>Local Businesses (Tourism)</b>	<b>Community &amp; Industry Partners</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	Turn self-criticism into self-love	Consider Nanaimo; more visits, longer stays	Earn coverage & put Nanaimo on the map for travelers	Win support, achieve one-place brand, open the door for funding	Win support, boost brand voice & reach	Win support, boost brand voice & reach
<b>Strategies</b>	Build local love and pride (campaign reflecting authentic locals character; feature locals in social, UGC content), Encourage advocacy (create shareable social content), Inspire local visitation (new website, new info; digestible ways to explore home city e.g. staycation + friends & family itineraries), Surprise & delight (branded swag)	Increase interest (campaign concept: Nanaimo Normal) - Increase awareness (paid media; drive to website for more information & trip planning)	Inform & excite (press release; curated media list; targeted story ideas; robust media kit incl. brand & campaign assets) - Change perceptions (targeted invites to media & influencers to experience a day in Nanaimo), Highly responsive follow up communication	Inform & excite (information sessions; 1:1 meetings; brand toolkit), Provide more detail for those who want it, (drive to website), Surprise & delight (branded swag)	Inform & excite (information sessions; brand toolkit), Provide more detail for those who want it (drive to website), Surprise & delight (branded swag)	Inform & excite (information sessions; 1:1 meetings; brand toolkit), Provide more detail for those who want it (drive to website), Surprise & delight (branded swag)
<b>Key Messages</b>	Nanaimo has a new brand that reflects our unique character: come as you are, fiercely independent, unapologetically real, resourcefully creative, Lots to be proud of; fall (back) in love with where you live (reasons why), Support local (retail, F&B culture, experiences, etc.), Share Nanaimo with	Nanaimo is not for everyone, but perfect for people who are proudly unique and true to themselves, ready for unusual, unscripted adventures, No judgement: Come as you are, Diverse urban, F&D & cultural (inc. Indigenous	Not the Nanaimo you think you know, Nanaimo is shaking up the tourism brand landscape and cutting through the wallpaper of sameness. Human-centered approach celebrating the city's authentic spirit & attitude.	TN has a new brand, distinct within the category; power of bold authenticity, Impact of strong branding on local pride and awareness more broadly, Value of one-place-brand (local govt), Here's where you can find out more, Help spread the word (here's how)	(Tourism) Nanaimo has an exciting new brand, Strength in a unified voice (tone & behaviour, key messages etc), Here's how it can support your business success, Help spread the word (here's how)	(Tourism) Nanaimo has an exciting new brand, Here's how it can support our collective success, Thank you for contributing to this work (relevant contacts), Help spread the word (here's how)

	others (use your social; use your voice		Campaign to launch it “Nanaimo Normal”- kicks off Summer 2024				
SOURCE: Tourism Nanaimo Brand Launch and Beyond Communication Strategy							
<b>Target Markets</b>	<p><b>Visitor Stats</b></p> <p>According to the findings of the Visitor Experience Survey, 29.37% of travellers were on leisure or holiday trips, while 44.05% were visiting friends and family. Additionally, 6.35% identified themselves as attendees of sports events and tournaments, with the remaining percentage representing various purposes such as attending meetings and conferences, seeking medical treatment, engaging in shopping, and exploring arts and culture, among others. In terms of entry points into the destination, the majority of travellers, 38.46%, arrived via BC Ferries, followed by 32.39% who used Nanaimo Airport, and 18.62% who opted for driving as their mode of transportation.</p> <p><b>Target Markets</b></p> <p><b>Primary: Urban Younger Singles &amp; Couples</b>        “Upwardly mobile” professionals, likely without kids at home. Over 1/3 are immigrants to Canada, and/or visible minority &amp; firm believers in preserving their cultural identities in Canada.</p> <p><i>Average household income:</i>      \$109,000                      <i>Age:</i> &lt;35</p> <p><i>Value:</i> healthy lifestyle; diet and exercise are important for them.</p> <p><i>Urban Younger Singles &amp; Couples Travel Behaviours:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● They travel to gain new social experiences. They’re open to experiencing other cultures and embrace new traditions, cuisines, and social practices.</li> <li>● They enjoy being in large crowds and visiting local attractions such as art galleries/museums, exhibitions/ fairs, specialty movie theatres, and arcades.</li> <li>● Also likely to attend concerts and theatres.</li> <li>● Other than hockey, they are less likely to attend professional sporting events, as their cities do not have pro-teams.</li> </ul> <p><b>Secondary: Urban Older Suburban Empty Nesters</b>        Financially well-established older couples who are in or approaching their retirement years. Likely to be non-immigrants to Canada and may lack openness toward diverse cultures, ethnic communities, and immigrants. They tend to believe newcomers should assimilate to Canadian culture.</p> <p><i>Average household income:</i>      \$109,000                      <i>Age:</i> 65+</p> <p><i>Value:</i> Life in the country (versus the city), being close to nature, and opportunities to explore the outdoors.</p>						

	<p><i>Urban Older Suburban Empty Nesters Travel Behaviours:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● They care about accommodations, cultural and physical activities.</li> <li>● They appreciate detailed information about the different options available for visitors.</li> <li>● They can be found visiting local sporting events, zoos/aquariums, parks, as well as attending concerts at stadiums or casinos.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Primary Geographic Markets (Active involvement)</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Nanaimo</li> <li>● Vancouver Island</li> <li>● Greater Vancouver and the Lower Mainland</li> <li>● Okanagan Region: Kelowna, Penticton, and Vernon</li> <li>● Alberta: Edmonton and Calgary</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Secondary Geographic Markets</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ontario: Toronto</li> <li>● Pacific Northwest: Seattle and Portland</li> </ul>
<p><b>Management, Governance, and Administration</b></p>	<p>The designated recipient of MRDT funds is the City of Nanaimo. Tourism Nanaimo, through a service agreement, will implement the five-year business plan. Stakeholders like the Vancouver Island Conference Centre, Nanaimo Airport Commission accommodation partners and other stakeholders also play a key role in successful implementation.</p> <p>The City of Nanaimo will ensure compliance to the MRDT reporting requirements annually.</p>

<b>Sources of Funding</b>	<p>In addition to the Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT), Tourism Nanaimo receives financial support from other sources including the City of Nanaimo and private sector partners. Specifically, the City of Nanaimo has pledged approximately \$753,000 annually to Tourism Nanaimo over the next five years, with provisions for annual inflation adjustments. Tourism Nanaimo leverages partnerships for successful DBC Co-op applications annually, in partnership with Gabriola Chamber of Commerce, Nanaimo Airport Commission, Nanaimo Port Authority, Saysutshun Island, and the Nanaimo Prosperity Group for approximately \$80,000.00 in these partnerships, to date Co-ops have been successful and within six-figures. Tourism Nanaimo manages and receives Visitor Services Funding; Visitor Services applies for Canada Summer Jobs funding, along with creating a strong retail program that will continue to grow year over year. All of these partnerships and channels of funding, ensure that tourism funding within the community is robust and diversified in order to execute tourism marketing, programs, and projects.</p>
<b>Affordable Housing (if applicable)</b>	<p>Addressing the needs of the City’s unhoused population has been a key priority for the City of Nanaimo for the last 15 years. The City entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with BC Housing in 2008 to deliver three supportive housing projects. This included the City supplying the land and BC Housing bringing capital and operational funds to deliver projects at 437 Wesley Street, 1597 Boundary Crescent and 6025 Uplands Drive. In 2019, the City and BC Housing entered an MOU to temporarily shelter the residents of ‘Tent City’ at 250 Terminal Avenue and 2060 Labieux Road, along with supportive and affordable housing projects at 702 Nicol Street, 355 Nicol Street, 285 Prideaux Street, 250 Terminal Avenue and 1425 Cranberry Avenue.</p> <p>Building on the success of the 2019 MOU, City of Nanaimo Staff have been working with BC Housing toward an addendum to the 2019 MOU with the goal of creating opportunities for more supportive and affordable housing in 2024. Supportive housing development projects creates units for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and provides social support services within the building. Affordable housing projects are subsidized housing developments with below market rental units for low income individuals.</p> <p>The City of Nanaimo Housing Needs Report 2023 states that by 2031 an estimated 5,285 non-market housing units will be needed in the City at price points affordable to households earning less than \$40,000 per year, an average of 525 per year to meet the need. To provide a new supply of non-market housing, partnerships are needed between BC Housing and the City.</p> <p><b>Land Acquisition for Affordable Housing</b></p> <p>The City is working in partnership with BC Housing to select more properties for affordable and supportive housing developments. The City will contribute to the partnership by continuing to identify and purchase appropriate housing to meet the needs of the unhoused. A portion of OAP revenue will be directed to land purchase(s) to support the City’s continued partnership with BC Housing. It is a City <i>Integrated Action Plan</i> priority action (#75) that the City identify sites for acquisition and potential partnerships for affordable and supportive housing projects.</p>

	<p><b>Infrastructure and Land Improvements for BC Housing and City MOU Projects</b> - A portion of OAP revenue will be allocated to support infrastructure land related improvements associated with any supportive or affordable housing development project that is part of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City and BC Housing. The City and BC Housing are working cooperatively on several upcoming developments that may require City financial contributions towards infrastructure improvements (i.e. water/sewer connections, sidewalks). The City's <i>Integrated Action Plan</i> includes an action to continue to use OAP revenue to support affordable housing initiatives.</p> <p><b>Rent Bank and Rent Supplement Program</b> - In addition OAP revenue will continue to support the rent bank and rent supplement programs in Nanaimo. Rent banks provide small one-time loans to tenants that are facing financial hardship and may be having difficulty paying their rent, utilities, damage deposit, etc. Rent supplements are support payments to renters that bridge the gap between what an individual or family can afford to pay and what the actual cost of housing is. Rent bank and rent supplement programs are administered by local non-profit agencies. <i>City Plan</i> policy supports the use of OAP revenue for rent bank and rent supplement programs. The City's <i>Integrated Action Plan</i> includes an action for the City to continue to fund the rent bank and rent supplement programs.</p>
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## Section 2: One-Year Tactical Plan with Performance Measures

Please provide a **Project Plan** for each major activity you will undertake in the year ahead using MRDT funds. Authorized purposes of MRDT funds are tourism marketing, programs and projects and any other prescribed purposes as set out by regulation.

**Project plans should include the following information for each activity. The recipient can organize the plan in a manner that best reflects their individual approach. Please note that Destination BC may share relevant tactical information with applicable Destination BC program areas to facilitate increased collaboration and alignment.**

1. The **major category** of the activity. Examples could include marketing, destination and product experience management, visitor services, etc.

Marketing, which may include:

- Media Advertising and Production (for example: print, radio, television, out-of-home, paper direct mail, email marketing, search engine marketing, paid social media, display, and native advertising)
- Website - Hosting, Development, Maintenance
- Social Media Management Platforms and Tools (i.e. Hootsuite)
- Consumer Shows and Events
- Collateral production and distribution
- Travel Media Relations (for example: story idea creation, media and influencer FAM hosting/support, attendance at media marketplaces, etc.)
- Travel Trade (for example: trade and FAM hosting/support, etc.)
- Consumer-focused asset development (for example: curation or production of written content, photography, videography)
- Other.

Destination and Product Experience Management, which may include:

- Industry Development and Training - Enhancing Education and Knowledge (for example: market readiness, digital readiness, industry conferences, packaging and tourism-related industry workshops, etc.)
- Product Experience Enhancement and Training (for example: Itinerary Development, Content Development and Key Experience Creation)

- Research, Evaluation and Analytics
- Other.

Visitor Services, which may include:

- Visitor Services Activities (for example: staff wage and benefits, visitor services via social media, digital tools, including mobile apps, kiosks, beacons, etc, roving/mobile visitor services, ambassador programs, FAMs)
- Other.

Meetings, Conventions, Events and Sport:

- Examples could include conferences, events, sales, sport, grant programs, etc.

Affordable Housing, which may include:

- Details on affordable housing projects (project description and rationale, authorizing documents, budget and applicable funding partners)
- Please complete and attach Appendix 1.8.

Other:

- Other activities not covered by the above categories, such as capital expenditures if **pre-approved by government** (prior to application), etc.
2. Please list and describe **the tactics** your community will use to achieve the strategies outlined in Section 1 of your Five- Year Strategic Business Plan. There may be several tactics for each activity.
  3. Please provide an **implementation plan** that includes a short description, quantifiable objectives, rationale, action steps, potential partnerships, resources, sources of funding, responsibilities, timeframe, budget, and evaluation mechanism.
  4. Please outline the **performance measures, expected outputs and outcomes**. Note, designated recipients receiving a tax rate of 3% are subject to additional reporting requirements. Please refer to Appendix 2.2 for more info about

<p><b>Overall Goals and Objectives</b></p>	<p><b>Goal 1: Enhance and diversify Nanaimo’s tourism offerings to create a comprehensive, unique visitor experience that captures the essence of the city and its surroundings.</b></p> <p><b>Objective:</b> Foster alignment between Nanaimo storytellers and the brand, while enhancing resident sentiment and deepening understanding among both the travel audience and residents. Ultimately, this will lead to heightened awareness and a more positive public relations outlook.</p> <p><b>Tactics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Continued use of digital campaigns that match and or exceed DBC benchmarks</li> <li>● Continued growth and conversion to industry partners through microsites, enews and marketing efforts</li> <li>● Curate at least three (3) new travel itineraries focusing on Indigenous culture, shoreline exploration, and food and beverage.</li> <li>● +5% increase in enews subscribers annually in both visitor and potential visitor targets</li> <li>● Conduct surveys or assessments to measure an increase in positive sentiment among local residents towards tourism in Nanaimo.</li> <li>● Measure an increase in the travel audience's understanding and appreciation of Nanaimo's unique experiences through surveys or engagement metrics.</li> <li>● Monitor and track media coverage and sentiment to ensure a positive shift in public relations outlook over time.</li> <li>● Execute a set number of joint initiatives (e.g., events, campaigns) with Nanaimo storytellers to amplify the destination's message.</li> <li>● Track growth in social media followers and interactions to gauge the effectiveness of awareness-building efforts.</li> <li>● Conduct regular visitor surveys or feedback mechanisms to measure customer satisfaction levels and gather insights for improvement.</li> <li>● Track improvements in visitor feedback NPS score related to the quality of experiences provided by the tourism industry.</li> </ul> <p><b>Goal 2: Transform Nanaimo into a leading accessible tourism destination and a premier hub for sport tourism by 2030.</b></p> <p><b>Objective #1 - Accessibility:</b> Maximize the accessibility and connectivity of transportation options in and around Nanaimo to facilitate seamless travel experiences for all visitors by 2030.</p> <p><b>Tactics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Continue to define and document the roles and responsibilities of each partner in the destination management framework.</li> <li>● Implement initiatives and programs that foster collaboration and synergies among stakeholders, ensuring a unified approach to destination management.</li> </ul>
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- Continue to work with YCD to support the development of new routes and/or increased air capacity through relationship building with airlines, and gateway cities.
- Implement initiatives that promote inclusivity and diversity within the destination development framework, ensuring that all voices are heard and represented.
- Continue with Tourism Roundtable discussions on a bi-monthly basis to support ongoing dialogue and knowledge sharing.

**Objective #2 - Sport Tourism:** Establish and expand Nanaimo's capacity as a sport tourism destination by strategically developing facilities, hosting more frequent and/or larger sporting events, and increasing engagement of the local sport organizations (LSO) by 2030.

**Tactics:**

- Hire a new sport tourism coordinator by December 2025
- Add all major sport tourism venues to the iDSS database by December 2025
- Increase the overall number of quality sport tourism bids submitted by 10% over 2023, in alignment with the Sport Tourism Strategy
- Critically review the Sport Tourism Strategy to identify gaps, and define alignment with the City of Nanaimo capital infrastructure plans in advance of initiating an updated sport tourism strategy.
- Review results of the past Sports Strategy: identify niche sports and or services that Nanaimo can focus efforts on.
- Host at least two (2) LSO/user group meetings together with the City of Nanaimo in 2025
- Together with Snuneymuxw identify at least five (5) potential Indigenous sport hosting opportunities for the Nation, determine bid timelines, and preliminary costs.
- Develop and or find tools that will support the assessment of the economic impact of sport.
- Build the criteria for sport hosting grants, and implement the program by July 1, 2025, with consideration to the City of Nanaimo grants programs, and LSO needs.
- Increase the number of enews subscribers as a key way to continue targeting the intended audience and measure success.

**Goal 3: Strengthen industry collaboration and align tourism development initiatives across all sectors in Nanaimo to enhance the community's competitive edge as a tourism destination by 2030.**

**Objective #1:** Foster a cohesive tourism ecosystem in Nanaimo that maximizes industry synergies, supports sustainable practices, and leverages local community culture and community assets.

**Objective #2:** Build relationships with Snuneymuxw First Nation to steward the destination collaboratively and equitably.

**Tactics:**

- Create and distribute resource materials that support tourism stakeholders in providing outstanding visitor experiences, including guides, best practices, and toolkits.
- Provide training programs to tourism partners to enhance their customer service skills and ensure they can deliver exceptional visitor experiences that provide inclusive service for Indigenous, 2SLGBTQAI+, accessibility and BIPOC community members to ensure welcoming and consistent service.
- Establish channels for continuous communication and support for tourism stakeholders, addressing their needs and concerns in real-time.
- Engage with the Nanaimo Art Gallery, Nanaimo Museum and other arts and culture organizations regarding enhancing unique community gathering places.
- Implementation of ongoing Rainbow registered certification for Tourism Nanaimo, the Nanaimo Hospitality Association and industry.

**Objective #3:** Expand Nanaimo’s capacity as a meetings, conference and business events destination by strategically leveraging facilities, hosting more frequently and/or larger events with 300+ delegates by 2030.

**Tactics:**

- Development and implement an incentive program to support events generating 450+ room nights.
- Continue to engage the meetings & events committee at least eight (8) times per year for strategic destination sales advice.
- Host regular meetings with “Team Nanaimo” to foster destination sales initiatives
- Implement an annual destination sales strategy including events, sales calls, FAMs, site inspections to attract new 300+ delegate events to Nanaimo.
- Solicit feedback from event planners/organizers via surveys or feedback forms about their experiences in Nanaimo, track this feedback to build more compelling proposal/bid documents. This also serves to gather insights for improved destination management and will be shared with stakeholders.
- Create a quarterly report about the meetings, conferences and business events strategies, successes, and plans for tourism stakeholders, and partners.
- Initiate and implement economic impact tracking for meetings, conferences and business events through Destinations International, and build a quarterly report by December 2025.

**Goal 4: Elevate the brand visibility and recognition of Nanaimo as a vibrant cultural hub and premier destination for meetings and events by 2030.**

**Objective:** Reposition Nanaimo in the tourism market, enhancing its image as a unique, accessible and culturally rich destination while

increasing engagement and investments in local and business tourism.

**Tactics:**

- Curate and share at least 10 new stories about Nanaimo by October 2025.
- Curate a list of at least 25 influencers and Vancouver Island-based ambassadors to help increase Nanaimo’s visibility as a destination by August 31, 2025
- Track engagement of locals as stories are published, and/or posted on social channels, report at least quarterly to stakeholders/board.
- Create at least five (5) high-quality videos showcasing Nanaimo
- Track improvements in resident feedback NPS score assessing resident attitudes towards tourism annually.
- Analyze wayfinding and navigation in the downtown core and Old City Quarter, report back on findings by December 2025, with the intent to implement new systems 2026 - 2028.
- Engage local organizations and partners to identify a flagship event concept, with a concept developed by September 30, 2025.

**Goal 5: Establish Nanaimo as a model city for inclusivity and support in tourism, fostering strong partnerships and community cohesion by 2030.**

**Objectives:** Deepen engagement and collaboration across all community and industry sectors to enhance inclusivity, support cultural understanding, and promote equal opportunities within Nanaimo’s tourism sector.

**Tactics:**

- Begin the foundational connections with Snuneymuxw First Nation on an SFN-led Indigenous tourism strategy, with an agreement in principle to proceed by December 2025.
- Establish “Tourism Team Nanaimo” and host at last two (2) events for industry by December 2025.
- Create a retail and service-provider strategy to engage these sectors into the tourism industry, and with events by December 2025.
- Implement advanced data collection techniques, including surveys, analytics tools, and market research, to gather accurate and relevant information.
- Provide training programs to tourism partners to enhance their customer services skills, and ensure they can deliver exceptional visitor experiences that provide inclusive service for Indigenous, 2SLGTBQAI+, accessibility and BIPOC community members to ensure welcoming and consistent service.
- Promote and support the Rainbow Registered program.
- Develop an external communications and engagement strategy with opportunities for engagement such as townhalls, sector roundtables, 1:1 meetings, presentations to organizations, and/or

calls

- Regularly review and evaluate data collection methods, assessing their effectiveness and making adjustments as necessary to ensure ongoing accuracy and relevance.
- Strengthen collaborations with industry partners, including ITBC, DBC, 4VI, and Destination Canada, to align efforts and share relevant content for broader reach.

## Project Plan Template

A description/instructions pertaining to each section is provided in grey text as a guide only. **The format of your Project Plan may be developed specific to your community needs and resources. If using this template, please delete the grey text and provide your response accordingly.**

<p><b>Major Category: Marketing: Goal #1</b></p>
<p><b>Activity Title:</b> Increase visitation to Nanaimo by amplifying consumer awareness of the destination's distinctive experiences. <i>(Always-on Marketing Initiatives, Co-op Marketing Partnership, Evergreen Micro-sites for Ad conversions, Travel Trade &amp; Media, Content Creators, Content &amp; Asset Development, Guide and Distribution)</i></p>
<p><b>Tactics:</b></p> <p><i>To engage the community and encourage active participation in advocacy, playing a crucial role in reinforcing and cross-promotion of Nanaimo's new brand, ultimately enhancing its reputation and awareness in the market.</i></p> <p><i>*Tactics are organized below according to earned, owned, and paid media categories.</i></p>
<p><b>Implementation Plan</b></p> <p><b>Earned Media</b></p> <p>Encouraging word of mouth among residents and potential visitors through social media with the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Hosting social media influencers, travel writers, and journalists to visit (with inclusion and representation of 2SLGBTQ+ and BIPOC content creators).</li> <li>● PR outreach; Travel Media Relations (story starters, media and influencer fam hosting/support).</li> <li>● Support Destination BC &amp; 4VI: generated media FAM tours and proactively secure earned and owned media coverage (traditional and influencers).</li> <li>● Regional travel media support, including digital asset provision and fact checking.</li> <li>● Social media monitoring and moderation, daily posts on Facebook and Instagram</li> <li>● Content creation on Pinterest, and TikTok.</li> <li>● Instagram Stories and Highlights.</li> <li>● Programmatic, native, and paid social ads.</li> <li>● Limited print ads in key themed publications.</li> <li>● Consumer-focused asset development (imagery, video, and written content).</li> <li>● Growth of the Ambassador Program to create and inspire authentic community content.</li> <li>● Respond to Destination BC-generated requests related to themed seasonal content.</li> <li>● Respond and supply third-party requests for image sourcing for media and trade purposes; provide fact checking for editorial and content.</li> <li>● Engage in and maximize media opportunities. I.e., unique story ideas, itineraries, imagery, generate press releases</li> <li>● Work with DBC on digital media opportunities as part of the Powerful Marketing Network. Regularly share story ideas, itineraries and imagery to include Nanaimo and Region in their media outreach tactics and media events (e.g. GoMedia, Trade &amp; Media Marketplaces).</li> <li>● Work with DBC Co-ops': Ride Island, Ahoy BC, and the Tasting trail</li> <li>● Investigate and identify influential blogs, forums, and key influencers, securing coverage relevant to target markets.</li> </ul> <p><b>Owned Media</b></p>

- Always-on content, including social media, website, blogs and editorials will be executed with local partners to facilitate the following:
- Educating partners to increase marketing savvy and ensure brand alignment.
  - Provide marketing assets that local partners can use in their marketing, including on social media.
  - Hire content creators to develop visitor-focused assets, including imagery, video, and written content.
  - Support InFilm with production attraction
  - Digital and print resources such as campaign display collateral, guides, and maps.
  - Regional partners (Gabriola Island, Satsutshun Island) community landing page and content updates.
  - Consumer e-news signups and distribution of monthly themed e-news updates.
  - Consumer-focused asset development, imagery, video, and written content with increased sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) diversity.
  - Website refresh including a 2SLGBTQ+ travel page and travel blogs featuring SEO-optimized content.
  - Getting here content and messaging including social media, website and paid media buys with local partners, YCD, Hullo Ferries, Harbour Air, HeliJet etc.

**Paid media**

- Programmatic, native and paid social ads.
- Print ads in key themed publications.
- Content for digital display screens in departure and arrival terminals in key markets once identified.
- Programmatic, native and paid social ads for YCD airport to external markets.

**Local Advocacy**

- Educating & aligning partners to this marketing and communications approach.
- Encouraging word of mouth.
- Hosting operator round table discussions.
- Refreshing the brand guidelines annually to reflect updates, and changes to messaging.
- Including operators in content creation to tell their stories in authentic ways.
- Increasing resident sentiment for the tourism industry.

Tourism Nanaimo with the goals of 'Team Nanaimo' in mind will tell the story of the destination through; seasonal messaging and partner highlights, by aligning efforts with Nanaimo businesses and locals to be storytellers to promote positive messaging, showcasing partner experiences and encouraging trip planning through digital itineraries and content creation. This unified marketing approach will be led by Tourism Nanaimo to execute cohesive marketing activities to reinforce the brand and destination identity inclusively and equitably. Guidance will be provided to partners for coordinated marketing efforts, establishing a strong and unified voice. Community integration will be a primary effort to spotlight regional partner communities through DBC Co-op content, featured in print & digital guides, regional publications, and on the website. Regular website enhancements and themed content will be maintained. A 365-Always-On Approach will be the primary driver with local and regional industry partners collectively promoting themes and stories that highlight Nanaimo as a unique destination, ensuring a continuous presence in marketing efforts.

To include and meet DBC marketing goals, the approach aims to drive consumer demand, increase tourism revenues, and maximize marketing impact by strategically investing resources based on capacity.

Collaboration with private and public funds will be leveraged. This overall approach supports the Powerful Marketing Network, by fostering deep collaboration, enhancing national and global competitiveness, and providing necessary capabilities like shared data, content, and industry digital readiness. Overall actions and

strategies will ensure content reflects the diversity of the community, ensuring that Nanaimo's stories are inclusive.

**Quantifiable Objectives:**

- Increased newsletter subscribers, clicks, and conversions to partner pages and sites.
- Increase and maintain year-round hotel occupancy above 70% (Average: 67.5% in 2023).
- Increase shoulder- and low-season occupancy by 10% (Average: 69.4% in 2022).
- Improve and increase Nanaimo's reputation as a tourism destination in target markets and segments as measured by:
  - Increasing the Net Promoter Score from 40 to 44 in 2024
  - Reduce passive traveller sentiment from 39% to 32% in 2024
  - Increasing the total annual volume of users on the Nanaimo website
  - Increase in consumer e-news subscribers

**Rationale:**

The synergy of our visitor economy directly correlates with the amplified influence of Tourism Nanaimo in the market. It is imperative that marketing endeavors, both in collaboration with the Nanaimo Hospitality Association, and the industry at large, are thoughtfully synchronized and purposeful. Tourism Nanaimo stands poised to enhance the visitor economy by coordinating guidance and support in marketing and promotion throughout the sector.

Strategically harnessing and influencing storytelling involves a solid understanding of communication methods, channels, and audiences, to amplify the voices of operators and those that experience their services. Ultimately the industry as a collective delivers memorable experiences and personal connections for people, for authentic storytelling to be crafted, resulting in visitors who become advocates for the destination, which is then used to craft messaging and outputs that will attract similar visitor demographics.

In alignment with DBC's Touring and Exploring approach, Tourism Nanaimo is dedicated to showcasing the expansiveness of Nanaimo, neighboring communities and parks. This entails recognizing that a journey to the region encompasses a plethora of opportunities to explore and engage in diverse activities over an extended period. These experiences are tailored to cater to a wide spectrum of identified audiences, without a singular motivator driving the trip-planning process. 'Touring' campaigns are multifaceted, targeting distinct audiences with tailored messaging, and may span across specific or multiple areas, depending on partnerships.

**Action Steps:**

- Work with partners to expand Nanaimo itineraries.
- Work with Hullo Ferries, Harbour Air, Helijet and YCD to craft educational messaging to increase direct travel behaviour.
- Coordinate quarterly marketing plans (when appropriate) with YCD to increase awareness among connections and carriers.
- Tourism Nanaimo will consult with sector partners around quarterly marketing objectives as it relates to industry alignment.
- Publication of blogs and written content will align with feature itineraries.
- Monitor and respond to social engagement on advertising.
- Manage content updates to align with seasonal offerings for consumer e-news.
- Coordinate changes to the main DMO website to reflect relevant campaign messaging and efforts.
- Campaign reporting, including timely status updates and a final reports when campaigns conclude.
- Creation of campaign assets for paid media spend including display, Facebook, streaming and native ads.
- Support the promotion and usage of the Explore Nanaimo app, a practical guide for both visitors and

locals interested in exploring Nanaimo. It offers information on activities, restaurants, event details, and a locally designed map.

### **Media Campaigns and optimization.**

- 2025 Winter Campaign Reputation / Planning Spring Trips. Nanaimo More [www.visit.tourismnanaimo.com](http://www.visit.tourismnanaimo.com)
- Ongoing in 2025: Nanaimo Brand Reputation / PR Campaign
- Summer Campaign supported by 365 Always On and DBC Co-op Campaign
- Fall Campaign
- Ongoing media buys for SEO Marketing Accommodations/ E-news [hotels.tourismnanaimo.com](http://hotels.tourismnanaimo.com)
- 365-Always On Marketing, Consumer E-news, Meta ads, SEO, Display
- Geofencing Conference Centre for targeted delivery
- Primary local publications for Seasonal placements

### **Content Development & Promotion**

- Imagery and video assets for multi-use throughout the city to create strong alignment will be a primary focus early in the year. Images that showcase the diversity of the community, ethnicities, community groups, and abilities; showcasing the true fabric and people of the community.
- Print; a refreshed and reimagined Nanaimo Guide. Other print opportunities will be reevaluated for 2025 and beyond. Refreshed and compiled print resources for community partners for distribution from their locations.

### **Planning and reporting cadence:**

- Q1 content planning; Subscriber e-news.
- Q1 content scheduling and execution; Q2 content planning.
- Q1 report and analysis; Q2 adjustments; Subscriber e-news.
- Q2 Content scheduling and execution; Q3 content planning.
- Q2 report and analysis; Q3 adjustments; Subscriber e-news.
- Q3 content scheduling and execution; Q4 content planning.
- Q3 report and analysis; Q4 adjustments; Subscriber e-news.
- Q4 content scheduling and execution; content theme planning.

### **Potential Partnerships:**

- Team Nanaimo, Nanaimo Hospitality Association, City of Nanaimo, Vancouver Island Conference Centre
- Snuneymuxw First Nation, Saisutshun Island, and Indigenous-owned businesses.
- Indigenous tour operators; leaders, Elders and knowledge keepers.
- Vancouver Island University
- Nanaimo Prosperity Corporation
- Regional communities and/or Chambers of Commerce.
- Destination BC #explorebc.
- Destination Canada.
- Registered DMO industry partners and area attractions.
- Indigenous Tourism BC.
- Nanaimo Pride Society.
- BC Parks, BC Rec Sites and Trails.
- Non-profit organizations; festival and event coordinators.
- Various local industry partners to help in hosting media familiarization (FAM) trips and Nanaimo itinerary storylines.
- Private partnerships – co-hosting

- Non-traditional partners within the private sector.
- Local media (broadcast, print, digital)
- Sport Tourism Canada

**Resources**

- Tourism Nanaimo marketing staff.
- Agency support
- Visitor Services team.
- Art Gallery and Nanaimo Museum.
- Media and Public Relations at the City of Nanaimo.
- Nanaimo Prosperity Corporation
- Airport Authority YCD management and team.
- Business representation from regional partners.
- Industry partner discounts, comps, and in-kind donations.
- Data sets, VIU Visitor Experience Survey, 2SLGBTQ+ traveller survey.
- Destination BC research department
- Industry participation
- Sport Tourism Canada
- Destinations International

**Sources of Funding:**

The funding formula for Tourism Nanaimo is as follows:

City of Nanaimo: Tourism Nanaimo receives annual funding of approximately \$753,000 from the City of Nanaimo. This funding is provided for a five-year period and includes annual adjustments for inflation.

Co-operative Marketing Partnerships: Tourism Nanaimo partners with neighboring communities, and partners, including Snuneymuxw First Nation, Gabriola Island, YCD Nanaimo Airport, and Nanaimo Prosperity Group, to access additional funding through Destination British Columbia's Cooperative Marketing Partnerships Program. For the year 2025-2026, Tourism Nanaimo will submit for this program funding.

This funding structure provides Tourism Nanaimo with financial support from various sources, enabling the organization to promote and develop tourism in the Nanaimo area while collaborating with neighboring communities and organizations.

- City of Nanaimo funding
- MRDT
- Snuneymuxw First Nation, Petroglyph Development Corporation, Saysutshun Island.
- Gabriola Island.
- YCD Nanaimo Regional Airport
- Regional industry partners
- Destination BC Co-op Marketing Partnerships Program funding

**Timeframe:** These marketing activities will be ongoing year throughout 2025, with the exception of any Co-op marketing initiatives (April 2025 - March 2026)

**Budget:**

- Media advertising and production.
- DBC Sector-led marketing partnerships.
- Marketing staff and agency strategic support.
- Website.

- Social media management (earned and paid).
- CrowdRiff digital asset management platform.
- Print and digital collateral design and distribution.
- Travel media relations and influencers.
- Content and asset acquisition (imagery, video, written content)

**TOTAL BUDGET: \$830,710.00**

**Performance Measures:**

**Outputs**

- Two (2) seasonal campaigns, 365 Always-on media buys, Meetings & Events marketing.
- Maintain & create active social media channels: FB, IG, Pinterest, TikTok, LinkedIn.
- Manage Accommodation and Always-On marketing conversion sites.
- Regular resident & consumer e-news communications.
- An increased number of quality assets, including UGC, images, videos, and written articles.
- Updated Visitor Guide & print resources.
- Participation in select DBC Co-op opportunities

**Outcomes**

- Conversion and support for the accommodation sector.
- Impactful social media audience engagement and advocacy.
- An increase in web analytics: # of visitors, page views, and referral traffic to partners.
- Positive media stories on the City of Nanaimo.
- In paid media: Positive trends in reach, cost per click, engagement, clicks, and video views.
- Successful sector Co-op post-project report metrics.
- Increased newsletter subscribers, opens, clicks, and conversions.
- High festival and event attendance.

**Major Category: Destination Development & Management: Goal #2****Activity Title: Stimulate sector development through co-designed strategies***(Industry development & training, Product experience enhancement, research and evaluation, strategic partnerships)***Tactics:** Nurture a co-design approach to destination development through the following;

- Conduct regular industry partner workshops and meetings for input.
- Establish feedback mechanisms for iterative refinement.
- Define clear partner expectations around engagement, partner input and documentation.
- Develop key performance indicators to track over time. Research and analysis.
- Provide regular progress updates for future reference.
- Incorporate sustainable principles.
- Continuously monitor and adapt as needed based on demands and developing opportunities.
- Update the criteria, process and delivery of the Feasibility Grant program

**Implementation Plan:**

Tourism Nanaimo, in collaboration with 'Team Nanaimo,' recognizes the importance of working closely with key partners across the city to adopt a co-designed approach in crafting the forthcoming 5-year destination strategy. This collaborative effort not only addresses immediate opportunities to enhance destination experiences and connectivity throughout Nanaimo but also ensures alignment with ongoing initiatives. By fostering a collective awareness of emerging opportunities and developments, 'Team Nanaimo' can provide unified support and execute strategies cohesively. This approach is in part supported by the Nanaimo Hospitality Association feasibility study grant program. This inclusive approach to sector development and planning, yields immediate benefits and enhances our ability to forecast community needs and support potential bids for capital reinvestment effectively. (ie. Destination Development fund, and or other opportunities).

This will be realized by taking the following actions;

**● Conduct Industry Workshops and Meetings:**

Organizing regular workshops and meetings with key partners, including Snuneymuxw Nation, City of Nanaimo, Nanaimo Prosperity Corporation, Nanaimo Hospitality Association, V.I Conference Centre, Nanaimo Regional Airport YCD, and the Port Authority.

**● Create opportunities for industry training;** Front line staff destination awareness and resources, 2SLGTBQAI+ and accessibility training and inclusion workshops.**● Feedback & Refinement:**

Create mechanisms for gathering feedback from industry at various stages of the co-design process, allowing for iterative refinement and improvement that can be documented and referred to in future.

**● Define Clear Roles and Responsibilities:** Clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of each partner in the co-design process, ensuring that everyone has a clear understanding of their contributions, and their roles in execution and communication going forward.**● Industry Engagement & Consultation:**

○ Involve the broader industry partners through surveys, engagement events and ensure that their perspectives and needs are considered and documented for consideration.

○ Quarterly Surveys

○ Networking Events

○ Quarterly Sector Calls

○ Involvement with Conference Events, ie. booths, hosting an opening event etc.

**● Performance Metrics:**

Develop key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the success and effectiveness of the co-design framework in driving destination development and management alongside partners. Evaluation of market

efforts and destination development work should be included in research and data collection to indicate progress in efforts.

- KPI's could look like; Finalized and approved 5-Year Strategy, Industry satisfaction survey, participation in co-design engagement sessions, number of identified opportunities year over year.
- Research and evaluation of efforts; Resident sentiment surveys, Visitor Experience Survey, 2SLGTBQAI+ travel experience survey, niche SEO research into varied demographics, data sets, STR, Air DNA, Environics.
- **Regular Progress Updates and Reporting:**  
Implementation of a system for regular updates and reporting on the progress of the co-design framework, keeping all partners informed and engaged throughout the process.
- Industry E-news
- Creation of an Industry portal with key insights and information.
- Document the co-design process, decisions, and outcomes to create a knowledge base for future reference and to facilitate seamless handovers to new stakeholders and partners. I.e. The new 5-year MRDT Strategy and subsequent annual plans.

- **Long-Term Sustainability Planning:**

Incorporate sustainability principles and practices into the co-design framework to ensure the long-term viability and resilience of the destination.

- Resident pride in place initiatives and messaging
- 2SLGTBQAI+ & Accessibility development to ensure equitable and inclusive opportunities and representation are included in destination development stages.
- Monitoring of carrying capacity of the destination and regional disbursement.
- Continuation of work with Snuneymuxw First Nations (SFN) through the Feasibility Grant Program to identify and review feasibility and economic viability of new indigenous tourism opportunities.

- **Continuous Monitoring and Adaptation:**

The annual report and annual planning cycle will support ongoing monitoring of efforts, with the flexibility to adapt the co-design framework needed in response to changing circumstances and or new opportunities.

- **Research & Evaluation:**

Using data sets and advanced data collection techniques, including surveys, analytics tools, and market research, to gather accurate and relevant information, to measure success and A/B test efforts.

- Test different approaches on a small scale to gather data on effectiveness before implementing at a larger scale.
- Celebrate data-driven success stories, recognize and highlight instances where data-informed decisions led to positive outcomes, reinforcing the value of a data-driven approach.
- Regularly review and evaluate data Collection methods, assessing the effectiveness of data collection methods and make adjustments as necessary to ensure ongoing accuracy and relevance.
- Methods for the above; STR, AirDNA, Environics, Visitor Experience Survey, 2SLGTBQAI+ and inclusion survey, Niche SEO research.

- **Feasibility Study Grants:**

Update the feasibility grants criteria and process. Continue work with the Snuneymuxw First Nation through the feasibility study grant program to uncover fresh destination development opportunities, reviewing the economic viability of new Indigenous lead tourism opportunities.

**Quantifiable Objectives:**

- Curate active participation in the delivery of the five year business plan from key partners, including Snuneymuxw First Nation, City of Nanaimo, Nanaimo Prosperity Corporation, Nanaimo Hospitality Association, V.I Conference Centre, Nanaimo Regional Airport YCD, and the Port Authority.
- The number of delivered workshops to industry within the calendar year.
- Engagement rate with the Industry E-news and Surveys.
- Increase in overall engagement and sentiment towards the Tourism Sector; Industry Satisfaction Survey.
- Number of co-hosted Tourism Mixer events for industry engagement
- Gather and analyze data that supports initiatives, ensuring that strategies are based on accurate information with trackable impact.
- Continued support to Snuneymuxw First Nation (SFN) to identify opportunities for the development of Indigenous-led tourism experiences.
- Feasibility Study findings that support actionable recommendations, viability of implementation, and informed decisions for all partners involved within the process.

**Rationale:** The implementation plan and objectives outlined for destination development form a comprehensive and strategic approach to destination stewardship and development. This approach is centered around the principle of collective action and collaboration, aimed at ensuring that all partners are well-informed and poised to leverage emerging opportunities. The overarching goal is to position Nanaimo as both a thriving business hub and an irresistible destination. This approach is strengthened by aligning with the cities Reimagine Nanaimo overarching strategies, and the City of Nanaimo's Integrated Action Plan.

One key aspect of this approach is the emphasis on proactive awareness and engagement among destination partners and the city, specifically around community-based festivals and events, incentives for meetings, events and conferences, and infrastructure developments. By keeping all parties informed and attuned to evolving opportunities, the collective co-design partners can operate with a unified vision. This unity serves to strengthen Nanaimo's reputation as a place where business thrives and a destination not to be missed by travellers.

The co-designed strategies to be created within this plan are instrumental in addressing common challenges and gaps experienced by destinations. They provide a framework for collective problem-solving, allowing all partners to take ownership of the issues Nanaimo faces. These challenges include the seasonality effect that often leads to a "feast to famine" cycles, industry readiness, and the need for cohesive alignment in efforts.

Through the implementation of these strategies, connections are forged at an early stage, ensuring that the destination has the necessary capacity and a well-founded rationale for action. In essence, this approach fosters a sense of shared responsibility and a commitment to addressing challenges collectively and a strategic path forward to implement the 5-year Destination Strategy. By doing so, Nanaimo can navigate its unique circumstances and emerge as a destination that consistently thrives, offering a compelling experience to both businesses and travellers.

**Action Steps:**

- Define and document the roles and responsibilities of each partner in the destination management framework for year over year implementation and participation.
- Obtain consensus among industry partners on the key priorities and objectives of the destination development strategy.
- Pre-schedule quarter sector calls for engagement in industry.
- Pre-schedule Industry Event dates to provide partners for co-hosting opportunities well in advance.

- Identify key workshops to deliver to industry in Spring of 2024 before the high season.
- Implement initiatives that promote inclusivity and diversity within the destination management framework, ensuring that all voices are heard and represented.
- Develop and or find tools that will support the assessment of the economic impact of the destination management strategy and evaluate its sustainability in the long term.
- Implement Tourism Roundtable discussions on a bi-monthly bases to support ongoing dialogue and knowledge sharing.
- Review data sets on a monthly and quarterly bases sharing relevant data intel with partners.

**Potential Partnerships:**

- Team Nanaimo, Nanaimo Hospitality Association, City of Nanaimo, V.I Conference Centre
- Snuneymuxw First Nation (SFN), Saysutshun Island, and Indigenous-owned businesses.
- Indigenous tour operators; leaders, Elders and knowledge keepers.
- Nanaimo Airport Authority YCD
- Nanaimo Prosperity Corporation
- Nanaimo Port Authority
- Registered DMO industry partners and area attractions.
- Nanaimo Pride Society.
- Non-profit organizations; festival and event coordinators.

**Resources:**

- City of Nanaimo Integrated Action Plan & Nanaimo Reimagined Plan.
- Tourism Nanaimo staff.
- Snuneymuxw First Nation (SFN) staff, Petroglyph Development Corp and community members.
- Agency/contractors and VIU Research analysis & staff.
- Visitor Services team.
- Art Gallery and Nanaimo Museum.
- Nanaimo Prosperity Corporation
- Nanaimo Airport Authority YCD management and team.
- Business representation from regional partners.
- Data sets, VIU Visitor Experience Survey, 2SLGTBQAI+ traveller survey.
- Destination BC research department.
- Industry participation

**Sources of Funding:**

- City of Nanaimo funding.
- MRDT

**Timeframe:** These initiatives will kick off in January, the 5-year strategy plan will be the primary focus in early 2025, with the remainder of the year focused on ongoing engagement and industry events.

**Budget:**

- DMO Staff Wages.
- Strategic support services.
- Industry and partner engagement activities.
- Product experience enhancement training.
- Research, evaluation, and analytics.
- Feasibility grant program.

**TOTAL BUDGET: \$580,990.00**

**Performance Measures:****Outputs**

- Established Co-designed framework for ongoing strategic input.
- Industry training workshops.
- Industry engagement sessions, monthly, and quarterly.
- Inclusive approach to overall destination experience development and management.
- Continued partnership with Snuneymuxw First Nation (SFN)

**Outcomes**

- Established feedback loops for proactive refinement to plans year over year.
- Established high engagement rate in events and consultation opportunities with Industry.
- Agreed upon performance metrics for the collective to follow and monitor.
- Increase length of stays in destination through aligned efforts.
- Increase shoulder season ADR by 4%.
- Increase low-season occupancy by 5%.
- Increased Indigenous-led tourism initiatives and experience development.

**Major Category:** Visitor Services: Goal #3**Activity Title:** *Visitor Experience & Industry Engagement*

*(Visitor Staffing, Operational delivery, Volunteer Ambassador Program, inclusive workplace)*

**Tactics:**

- Provincial market research
- Visitor Experience Survey
- Customer journey mapping
- Industry partner renewals & participation
- Attendance at key conference events
- Year-round Visitor Services operations

**Implementation Plan:**

Visitor Services are meant to foster and craft positive visitor interactions, thereby promoting and enhancing experiences with key services within the destination. The overarching goal is to not only encourage longer stays and exploration by visitors but also to equip and empower industry partners to provide exceptional and welcoming experiences. This, in turn, enhances overall visitor satisfaction and fosters the likelihood of repeat visits. This approach allows for sector involvement and creates immediate benefits to partner organizations and fosters a collaborative and aligned approach to front line service within the community to ensure that visitor advocacy increases past their stay.

The above will be realized with the following operational plan;

- **Develop Customized Training Programs:**  
Create tailored training sessions to be delivered in the spring, for tourism partners and volunteers, along with key partners; Art Gallery, Museum, Port Authority and participating Hotels; focusing on customer service, and DBC resources, alongside local resources that will support and align with the Visitor Services program.
- **Facilitate Workshops and Seminars:**  
In partnership with the DMO and aligning with the Destination Development objectives, Visitor Services will participate in regular workshops and seminars to provide hands-on training and opportunities for industry partners to enhance their skills in delivering an exceptional visitor experience, specifically around accessibility, and inclusion.

- **Gather and Analyze Visitor Feedback:**

Collect feedback from visitors through the Visitor Services Network intake form, Visitor Experience surveys, comment cards, and or digital platforms to identify areas for improvement and recognize areas of strength.

- **Create Resource Kits for Industry Partners:**

Compile toolkits containing relevant information, maps, cultural insights, and local recommendations to assist industry partners in delivering personalized visitor experiences, that are aligned across the city to ensure consistent messaging and delivery.

- **Foster Collaboration and Networking:**

Work in partnership with local BIA's to facilitate forums, meet-ups, or networking events where businesses can share best practices, exchange insights, and learn from one another.

- **Regularly Update Partners on Industry Trends:**

Keep partners informed through industry e-news updates, about current tourism trends, emerging technologies, and evolving visitor preferences to help them stay informed about what visitors are looking for, and what their general feedback on the community is.

- **Promote Regional Crafts and Goods:**

Establish strong ties with local artisans, retailers, and crafters to curate a diverse retail selection at the Visitor Centre, showcasing the unique skills and talents of the community to visitors.

- **Measure and Report Progress:**

Establish key performance indicators to track the impact of collective efforts through the Visitor Experience Survey to understand the quality of experiences, progress of visitor satisfaction and improvement to the Net Promoter Score. Sharing these updates with partners when available.

- **Adapt Based on Feedback:**

Use feedback from industry partners and visitors to continuously refine and enhance the training programs, quality standards, and resources provided. Adapt to changing visitor expectations and industry trends.

- **Inclusive Hiring Practices:**

Tourism Nanaimo is committed to fostering an inclusive and diverse workplace where everyone, from the 2SLGBTQAI+, BIPOC community and those with accessibility needs, is welcomed, valued, and empowered. We embrace the unique perspectives, talents, and experiences that each team member brings, and we actively seek to create an environment where all individuals can thrive and contribute to our shared success. Our commitment to inclusive hiring is an essential part of our dedication to equality, diversity, and the creation of a more equitable and accessible world. Visitor Services will partner again with the Nanaimo Association for Community Living to bring on seasonal staff and work with community members to provide meaningful opportunities.

### Short Description:

Visitor Services serves as a vital touchpoint for visitors seeking information and guidance to experience the city. The objective is to elevate visitors' experiences and bolster the growth of our local visitor economy by providing prompt and location-sensitive assistance.

The Visitor Centre was relocated to the lower level of the Vancouver Island Conference Centre to better serve the needs of our industry and visitors, and offers an opportunity to forge stronger collaborations with community partners and strategically engage with a higher volume of visitor interactions. This move aligns strategically with the imminent growth in visitor numbers, driven by the new operations of Hullo ferries, the arrival of two (2) cruise ships in the 2024 season, with more in 2025 and beyond, along with growth and expansion of Saisutshun

Island services and experiences.

The Visitor Centre is strategically situated in the bustling downtown area, the significance of meeting visitors on their terms and in their preferred locations is recognized. As such, efforts will continue to be made to be at key events, and locations based on industry intel, ie. ship arrival dates, night markets, activation events, key flights etc. These interactions strengthen the overall visitor experience while giving the visitor services team the opportunity to learn more about visitor demographics, interests, needs, and destination development opportunities. The Visitor Centre will personify the new Nanaimo brand story to visitors in-destination, enhancing their experience and encouraging repeat visits.

**Quantifiable Objectives:**

- Increase the Net Promoter score from 40 to 45 in 2025
- Increase visitor satisfaction as measured by reviews and ratings (Tripadvisor, Google).
- Protect and grow visitor satisfaction in the visitor and 2SLGBTQAI+ experience survey.
- Visitor Numbers to the centre.
- Number of events supported, community and conferences.
- Number of volunteers within the Ambassador program.

**Rationale:**

The inclusion of the Visitor Centre within the overall DMO operational plan is vital; Visitor Services and its dedicated staff serve as the ambassadors of Nanaimo. They represent the community and also help shape a visitor's initial impression of the city. It is imperative that the values and vision of the community are seamlessly woven into this experience. This first point of contact often defines a visitor's initial impression of a city, making it imperative that we infuse the experience with the community's essence and welcome.

To guarantee an exceptional first impression, staff diligently engage in purposeful and strategic activities that contribute to the enhancement of Nanaimo's reputation and brand. The Visitor Centre operates as a catalyst for generating positive word-of-mouth marketing by sharing carefully curated stories of Nanaimo and crafting in partnership with marketing, creative itineraries tailored to travellers' unique passions and interests. Our team identifies and highlights the interconnected tapestry of our community through compelling narratives of people, places, and local offerings.

Beyond the conventional print materials and wayfinding, the Visitor Centre team excels in curating custom experiences and educating travellers about opportunities they might otherwise overlook. A thriving Visitor Centre not only bolsters awareness of the community's myriad experiences but also fosters local pride and drives word-of-mouth recommendations that benefit the community and its services; this approach provides seamless alignment of the community's values and vision with the visitor experience, ultimately contributing to the overall success and reputation of the City of Nanaimo.

**Action Steps:**

- Operates a brick-and-mortar downtown Visitor Centre throughout the year.
- Distributing visitors guides, visitor maps and tool kit resources to Industry partners.
- Industry engagement and product knowledge sessions and promotion.
- Facilitate annual FAM's to educate staff, and learn directly from operators and updates to services.
- Remain an active and engaged member of the downtown and cultural districts.
- Support partners' events by providing on-site visitor services.
- Quarterly priorities;
  - Q1: Reporting and analyzing prior year activities.
  - Q1: Updating and publishing Nanaimo visitor resources and guide publication.
  - Q1: Apply for Destination BC Visitor Services Network Grant.
  - Q1: Apply for Canada Summer Jobs Grant.

- Q2: Research and ordering merchandise for retail.
- Q2: Partner engagement and learning sessions.
- Q2: Ambassador Program initiation and training of volunteers.
- Q2: Event support planning with City departments and industry
- Q3: Map out staffing for participation in local events and activations
- Q3: Execute pop-up visitor services activations during the summer at high-traffic locations.

**Potential Partnerships:**

- Team Nanaimo, Nanaimo Hospitality Association, City of Nanaimo, V.I Conference Centre
- Snuneymuxw First Nation, Saysutshun Island, and Indigenous-owned businesses.
- Indigenous tour operators; leaders, Elders and knowledge keepers.
- Nanaimo Airport Authority YCD
- Nanaimo Port Authority
- Registered DMO industry partners and area attractions.
- Nanaimo Pride Society.
- Nanaimo Association for Community Living.
- Non-profit organizations; festival and event coordinators.
- Local BIA's in the downtown and Old Quarter.
- Nanaimo Museum.
- Nanaimo Art Gallery

**Resources:**

- Full-time Visitor Information Centre Staff and seasonal staff, including dedicated volunteer ambassador program participants.
- Tourism Nanaimo staff.
- Destination BC Visitor Centre Network.
- BC Parks
- BC Recreation and Parks Association
- Local activity clubs, hiking, biking, boating etc.
- Nanaimo Port Authority (wayfinding mapping)

**Sources of Funding:**

- City of Nanaimo funding.

**Timeframe:** The Visitor Centre is a year-round program; 7 days a week; winter hours are 4-5 days a week, plus events as required.

**TOTAL BUDGET: \$180,000.0**

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**Major Category:** Meeting, Conventions, Events & Sport: Goal #4

**Activity Title:** *Increase off-peak visitation - Increase event travel*

*(Staff wages, Meetings, Conventions, Conferences, Sports, Festival & Special Events Grant Program)*

**Tactics:**

- Collaborate with local businesses and 'Team Nanaimo'
- Continuation of conference incentive program
- Track and report economic impact of events, festivals and conferences
- Attend industry conferences and events to develop strong relationships with local (LSO) provincial (PSO), national (NSO) and international sport organizations (IF)
- Hosting familiarization tours/meetings with sport organizations and events rights holder provides an opportunity to showcase Nanaimo's sport venues and accommodations
- Develop strong relationships with City of Nanaimo, private venues in Nanaimo, and local sport, and events organizations

**Implementation Plan:**

The Meetings, Conference and Business Events Program together with the Sport Tourism Program delivers significant economic benefits throughout the City of Nanaimo. Demand for overnight accommodation continues to grow through the development and expansion of these programs. With the Provincial recovery fund aimed at revitalizing business travel and conferences, 'Team Nanaimo' has gained valuable momentum. Meetings, conventions, business events, sporting events and festivals collectively contribute substantially to Nanaimo's tourism industry. While most of the region's festivals and events traditionally take place in June and July, there are a few exceptions during the shoulder season; an exception that 'Team Nanaimo' is looking to change. Festivals and events, spanning various domains such as sports, arts, culture and recreation, have been proven effective in attracting both new and returning visitors year around, creating a robust visitor economy that 'Team Nanaimo' would like to see grow.

The goals associated with this program will come to fruition by implementing the following;

- **Event Grant Funding:** update the criteria and process for the Meetings Incentive, and Sport Tourism grant programs. Providing financial support to events based on their contributions to job creation, GDP impact, and other objectives, such as # of rooms booked, social cohesion, reconciliation, and equality.
  - Prioritize sporting event RFPs scheduled in shoulder seasons.
  - Identify specific interest groups (ie. sports enthusiasts, festival attendees) and ensure event promoters are tailor marketing efforts to appeal to their preferences and interests, attracting the ideal visitor to Nanaimo.
  - Bidding on new festivals and events; leading efforts to attract new events to Nanaimo through competitive bids and focused outreach.
  - Ensuring that events foster inclusive and accessible experiences.
- **Promote Conference and Hosting Venues:** Promote the city's conference, event and other hosting facilities, with a special focus on attracting corporate events and meetings during traditionally quieter months. Implement customized marketing initiatives to entice groups to select these months, featuring enticing offers and value-added packages, while highlighting the region's wide range of amenities and services. Strategically position our venues as the preferred choice for corporate clients year-round, ensuring a steady flow of bookings and minimizing the effect of slower periods on our facilities' occupancy rates.
- **Collaborate with Local Businesses:** Work with our local BIA's to communicate with local shops, restaurants, and service providers to offer special packages or incentives for visitors. In partnership, develop and promote one-of-a-kind experiences or tours that showcase the area's distinct attractions to support stronger bid applications for conferences.

- **Promote Business and Conference Facilities:** Promote the city's conference and business facilities, with a special focus on attracting corporate events and meetings during traditionally quieter months.
  - Prioritize event RFPs scheduled in shoulder seasons.
  - Implement customized marketing initiatives to entice groups to select these months, featuring enticing offers and value-added packages, while highlighting the region's wide range of amenities and services.
  - Strategically position our venues as the preferred choice for corporate clients year-round, with customized options for itineraries and welcome events, to attract bookings to minimize the effect of slower periods on our facilities' occupancy rates.
- **Leverage Digital Marketing and Social Media:** Utilize online platforms to target potential conference planners and attendees with tailored advertising and engaging content with targeted ads.
  - Create supportive content for bid applications showcasing the unique offerings of the destination to planners.
  - Work with the marketing department for the creation of a Hero Destination video for promotional efforts.
  - Circulate a monthly e-news to primary contacts to showcase events, offerings, and programs.
  - Activate SEO marketing initiatives to garner interest when conference planners are considering Vancouver Island.
- **Update Incentive Program:** Encourage bookings with incentives rewarding conferences and events with an incentive for booking.
  - Continuation of Outside the Box BC initiative, (OTBBC) a collective of three Destination Marketing Organizations in BC; Tourism Kamloops (Meet in Kamloops), Tourism Nanaimo, and Travel Penticton (Meet Penticton). The Outside the Box BC objective of the campaign is to get meeting and conference planners, and corporate groups to think outside the main cities as locations to hold their events and to rotate through these 3 destinations.
- **Conduct Market Research and Analysis:** Stay updated on market trends, competitor offerings, and visitor preferences to make informed decisions and customize programs and offerings to remain competitive.
  - Engage and book regular check-ins with similar size destinations to ensure program offerings are competitive.
  - Execute SEO marketing strategies to populate leads and market personification as it relates to conference attendees and conference coordinators.
- **Track and Report Economic Impact:** Measure and communicate the economic benefits generated by off-peak visitation by meetings, conferences, business events and sport tourism initiatives to the community in partnership with 'Team Nanaimo' to share impact and the importance of the collective business community supporting these endeavours.

**Short Description:**

The efforts of the Meetings, Conventions, Sports, and Festivals program are expected to yield a substantial economic impact in Nanaimo. For 2023 it is estimated that the impact from Meetings and Conventions was approximately \$3,351,600.00, this is expected to grow in 2025 and beyond. This economic influence manifests through various channels, including heightened tourism, increased hotel bookings, greater patronage of local restaurants, expanded utilization of transportation services, and enhanced engagement with local businesses.

Recognizing that the ongoing commitment to host a diverse array of conferences and events will not only fortify the local economy but also provide invaluable opportunities for knowledge exchange, networking, and cultural enrichment. Nanaimo is poised to garner recognition as a favored destination for events of provincial, national, and international significance. This, in turn, can lead to heightened interest in the city for future conferences and tourism endeavors.

The Festivals and Events Program aims to provide financial support to individuals, organizations, and communities groups involved in creating events in the arts and culture space. In addition the Sport Tourism

grant intends to foster widespread participation, attracting overnight stays, talent development, and infrastructure enhancement, these grants seek to empower athletes, coaches, and sports-related initiatives and bolster arts & culture throughout the city. The funding is allocated to promote inclusivity, facilitate access to venues, training and competition resources, and ultimately contribute to the overall growth and excellence of sports at various levels, aligning with the Nanaimo Sport Tourism Strategy and the prescribed actions within the cities Integrated Action Plan as it relates to Sport and Arts & Culture within the city.

The primary objective of these programs is to sustain and build upon the successes of the sales initiatives, events, port, and festivals, to attract events year over year, creating a more stable economy for the sector. It places emphasis on nurturing lasting relationships, exploring opportunities, and booking repeat business. Nanaimo has seen strong momentum and recovery within this segment of destination development.

**Quantifiable Objectives:**

- Generate 10 leads for new events in sport for the 2026 - 2030 period
- Secure one new national competition/sporting event with more than 450+ room nights
- Develop bids and proposals to secure conference events with 450+ room nights
- Increase conferences in October, and November by 5%
- Fund two (2) new festival/events applications that generate hotel nights in Sept, Oct, or Nov

**Rationale:**

The program priorities are centred on advancing the objectives of 'Team Nanaimo,' which encompasses destination sales, bid development, and hosting opportunities. These priorities also entail robust support for shoulder season marketing initiatives and collaborative efforts with the Experience BC Team to position British Columbia as a premier events destination. A key focus is on extending visitor stays and appealing to higher-yield travellers, enriching the experience within the City of Nanaimo.

Additionally, the Meetings & Events Advisory Committee plays a pivotal role, convening monthly to delve into pertinent discussions pertaining to conferences, meetings, and sports events in our region. This forum addresses a broad spectrum of industry-related matters, including upcoming events, challenges, business prospects, and strategies for growth. With a diverse team of professionals, each contributing their unique insights and expertise, this committee offers a comprehensive and well-rounded perspective on the events sector within our region.

**Action Steps:**

- Facilitate the expansion and creation of new events, festivals, and sports opportunities to encourage extended stays.
- Increase awareness of funding opportunities in Nanaimo among event organizers and local, provincial, and national sport organizations (LSO, PSO, NSO).
- Sustain the 'Team Nanaimo' approach to secure funding and ensure effective program implementation.
- Collaborate with the City of Nanaimo to maintain the sport venue inventory.
- Provide funding support for updates to the Sport venue webpage.
- Populate and promote a comprehensive Events calendar.
- Collaborate with Snuneymuxw and Vancouver Island University in bidding for major championship events.
- Continue the Outside the Box BC initiative.
- Hire a new sport tourism coordinator by December 2025
- Add all major sport tourism venues to the iDSS database by December 2025
- Increase the overall number of quality sport tourism bids submitted by 10% over 2023, in alignment with the Sport Tourism Strategy
- Critically review the Sport Tourism Strategy to identify gaps, and define alignment with the City of Nanaimo capital infrastructure plans in advance of initiating an updated sport tourism strategy.

- Review results of the past Sports Strategy: identify niche sports and or services that Nanaimo can focus efforts on.
- Host at least two (2) LSO/user group meetings together with the City of Nanaimo in 2025
- Together with Snuneymuxw identify at least five (5) potential Indigenous sport hosting opportunities for the Nation, determine bid timelines, and preliminary costs.
- Develop and or find tools that will support the assessment of the economic impact of sport.
- Build the criteria for sport hosting grants, and implement the program by July 1, 2025, with consideration to the City of Nanaimo grants programs, and LSO needs.
- Increase the number of enews subscribers as a key way to continue targeting the intended audience and measure success.

**Potential Partnerships:**

- Tourism Nanaimo
- City of Nanaimo
- Vancouver Island University
- Vancouver Island Conference Centre
- Local arts and culture community
- Regional District of Nanaimo
- National, Provincial and Local Sport Organizations
- Pacific Institute for Sport Education (PISE)
- Canadian Sport Institute - Pacific
- Pacific Sport Vancouver Island
- Indigenous Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation Council
- Sport BC Group
- Sport Tourism Canada
- Event Rights holders

**Resources:**

- Nanaimo Hospitality Association
- Tourism Nanaimo staff.
- Destination British Columbia when appropriate.
- 4VI for promotional support.
- Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport
- City of Nanaimo staff.
- Team Nanaimo in collaboration with the City of Nanaimo staff

**Sources of Funding:**

- City of Nanaimo
- MRDT
- Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport for designated sport host funding

**Timeframe:** Year round implementation.

**Budget:** \$698,000.00

**Section 3: MRDT Budget for Year One**

Designated recipients **must** complete the budget table as provided below.

<b>Revenues (MRDT and Non-MRDT)</b>		<b>Budget \$</b>
Ending Carry Forward from Previous Year (All Net Assets Restricted and Unrestricted)		180,000.00
MRDT (net of admin fees)		1,200,000.00
MRDT from online accommodation platforms (OAP)		350,000.00
Local government contribution		753,000.00
Stakeholder contributions (i.e. membership dues)		80,000.00
Estimated Co-op funding (e.g. CTO, CMO-led projects)		180,000.00
Grants – Federal		5,000.00
Grants – Provincial		35,500.00
Grants/Fee for Service - Municipal		0.00
Retail Sales		15,000.00
Interest		0.00
Other (please describe)		
	<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$2,798,500.00</b>
<b>Expenses (MRDT and Non-MRDT)</b>		<b>Budget \$</b>
<b>Marketing</b>		
Marketing staff – wage and benefits		197,000.00
Media advertising and production		250,000.00
Website - hosting, development, maintenance		15,000.00
Social media		170,000.00
Consumer shows and events		0.00
Collateral production and distribution		70,000.00
Travel media relations		10,000.00
Travel trade		4,500.00
Consumer-focused asset development (imagery, video, written content)		85,000.00
Other (please describe)		
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$801,500.00</b>
<b>Destination &amp; Product Experience Management</b>		
Destination & Product Experience Management Staff – wage and benefits		147,000.00
Industry development and training		50,000.00
Product experience enhancement and training		50,000.00
Research and evaluation		60,000.00
Other (please describe) Strategic Partnerships, TIAC, BCDMOA, Check-In Canada, BCHA, Festival and Events Grant		140,000.00
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$447,000.00</b>
<b>Visitor Services</b>		
Visitor Services Wages and Benefits		120,000.00
Visitor services Operating Expenses		50,000.00
Other (please describe) Volunteer Ambassador Program		10,000.00
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$180,000.00</b>
<b>Meetings, Conventions, Events and Sport</b>		
Staff – wages and benefits (if stand-alone)		198,000.00
Meetings, conferences, conventions, sales, events, sport, etc.		500,000.00
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$698,000.00</b>

<b>Administration</b>	
Management and staff unrelated to program implementation – wages and benefits	72,000.00
Finance staff – wages and benefits	22,500.00
Human Resources staff – wages and benefits	10,000.00
Board of Directors costs	10,500.00
Information technology costs – workstation-related costs (i.e. computers, telephone, support, networks)	11,000.00
Office lease/rent	35,000.00
General office expenses	11,500.00
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$172,500.00</b>
<b>Affordable Housing</b>	
OAP Revenue	350,000.00
General MRDT Revenue	0.00
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>350,000.00</b>
<b>Other</b>	
All other wages and benefits not included (please describe)	0.00
Other activities not included above (please describe) Travel, Conferences, Professional Development	40,000.00
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$40,000.00</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$2,689,000.00</b>
<b>Estimated Carry Forward – all Net Assets Restricted and Unrestricted</b>	<b>\$109,500.00</b>
<b>Balance</b>	

### Section 3: Projected Spend by Market (*broad estimate*) for LEISURE activities only & projected percentage of spend focused on each season (*broad estimate*)

Add more rows as needed.

Geographic Market	Total Marketing Budget by Market	% of Total \$ by Market
BC	400,750.00	50%
Alberta	200,375.00	25%
Ontario	96,180.00	12%
Other Canada ( <i>please specify</i> ) Ottawa	24,045.00	3%
Washington State	80,150.00	10%
California		
Other USA ( <i>please specify</i> )		
Mexico		
China		
UK		
Germany		
Australia		
Japan		
Other International ( <i>Please specify</i> )		
<b>Total</b>	<b>801,500.00</b>	<b>100%</b>