

Gold River Tourism Strategic Plan

2018



Acknowledgements

The Gold River Tourism Strategic Plan was a collaborative effort between multiple Vancouver Island University (VIU) entities, including the World Leisure Center of Excellence in Sustainability and Innovation, the Master of Community Planning Program, and the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region Research Institute. We wish to thank the Village of Gold River for allowing VIU to work alongside them and the community on this project. A special thank you to Larry Plourde, Administrator of the Village of Gold River, and all the Village staff who were extremely helpful in advising and supporting us throughout the entirety of this project. We also wish to thank the many tourism business operators and staff, as well as community members for their support, comments, recommendations, and the time they afforded us through their participation in many community engagement components of the plan. A final thanks to Clayworks Café for allowing us to host our World Café event at their incredible business, and to GetWest Adventure Cruises for donating a prize package for our visitor experience survey. We greatly appreciated the warm reception from the community each time we visited Gold River, and the community's willingness to participate in all aspects of our community engagement program.

Gold River Tourism Strategic Plan

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INTRODUCTION

Between April and October of 2018, researchers from Vancouver Island University's (VIU) World Leisure Centre of Excellence (WLCE), Master of Community Planning Program (MCP), and Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region Research Institute (MABRRI) engaged in a strategic process to provide the Village of Gold River with a new framework to guide decision-making with regards to future tourism growth and development in the community. The project resulted in a two year roadmap with proposed recommendations. The culmination of this process is the 2018 Gold River Tourism Strategic Plan (GRSTP).

Gold River is surrounded by an abundance of natural features such as lakes, rivers, caves, and snow-capped mountains. It is a short drive from the stunning Muchalaht Inlet, which is the Village's access to the equally spectacular and historic Nootka Sound. As a result there are a plethora of outdoor recreation opportunities with the potential to form the basis of a profitable, year-round tourism industry for the Village. This potential has been acknowledged for many years and has been a key strategic focus for the Village, especially since the closing of the pulp mill in 1998, which was a major source of employment and economic activity¹. However, as has been acknowledged previously, this goal has only been partially realized and this is the reason behind the Village's collaboration with Vancouver Island University to create a strategic tourism plan for Gold River.

From the beginning of this process, researchers strived to create a plan that was committed to helping grow and develop a tourism economy that adheres to the four pillars of sustainable tourism: environmental responsibility, social equity, cultural vitality, and economic health. The team was also committed to engaging the community and having this document as representative as possible of the entire region. Unfortunately a shortfall of this plan includes the inability to adequately engage with Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation throughout the process. Although staff from Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation were invited to participate in the consultation process, they were unable to attend our community consultation events, or participate in the guiding of this document. We do wish to thank them for their correspondence, and acknowledge the signed vision statement in March 2016 between the Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation, Tahsis, and Gold River recognizing the importance of having the Nation as a partner in the Gold River region.

TWO YEAR STRATEGIC ROAD MAP

Two Year Strategic Road Map

The recommendations section including the goals and objectives are meant to be undertaken over the next many years.

Often times once documents are produced, there is not always capacity for implementation. This 2-year strategic road map was created to assist the soon to be formed “Destination Gold River” team to highlight important target goals to work towards achieving.

Five categories have been created with targets goals attached to each: governance, branding, marketing, capacity, and product development. The 2-year strategic road map has been split into eight 3-month sections for the Destination Gold River team to complete their target goals within.

The project leaders from VIU involved with this Tourism Strategic Plan would be happy to meet with the newly formed “Destination Gold River” team in the beginning of 2019 upon request, to help review and clarify anything in this document, and help explain or refine the 2-year strategic road map intended for Gold River.

2019 Target Goals

Quarter 1 (January—March)

Governance:

- Assemble “Destination Gold River” Team
- Initial meeting with Vancouver Island University (VIU) GRTSP and Tourism Vancouver Island (TVI)

Quarter 2 (April—June)

Branding:

- Create new branding to be used across all marketing

Capacity:

- Initiate dialogue with MMFN

Quarter 3 (July—September)

Capacity

- Apply to BC Rural Dividends Program for either part, or full-time funding for personnel to implement the new Gold River Tourism Strategic Plan and Economic Development plan

Marketing:

- Determine signature experiences and create digital marketing campaign

Branding:

- Initiate signage campaign

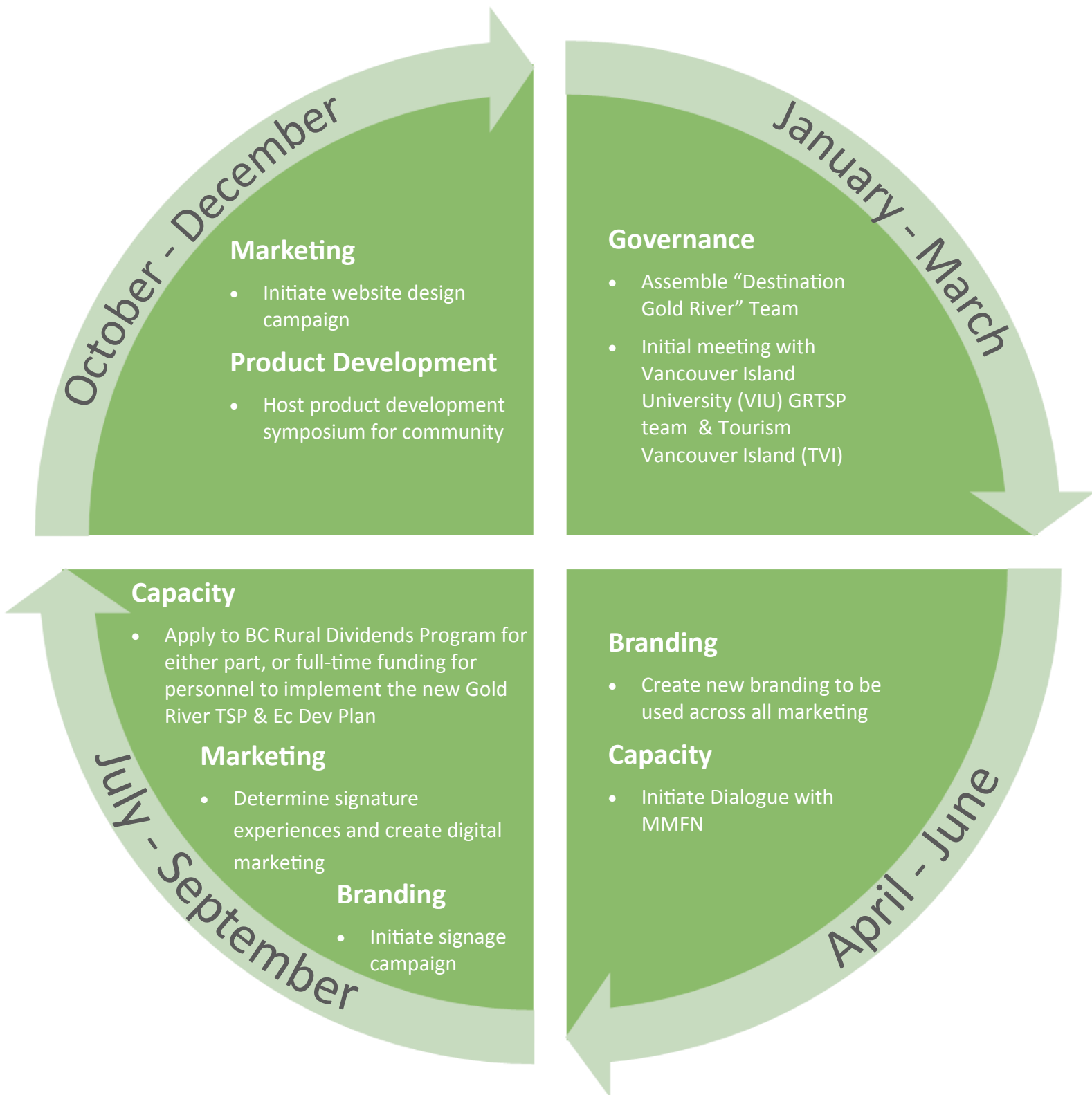
Quarter 4 (October—December)

Marketing:

- Initiate website design campaign

Product Development:

- Host product development symposium for community



TWO YEAR STRATEGIC ROAD MAP

2020 Target Goals

Quarter 1 (January—March)

Governance:

- Review Team Dynamics and progress to date
- Destination Gold River Team to assist community with product development, stemmed from symposium

Quarter 2 (April—June)

Branding:

- Assist businesses updating their website

Capacity:

- Initiate wayfinding campaign

Quarter 3 (July—September)

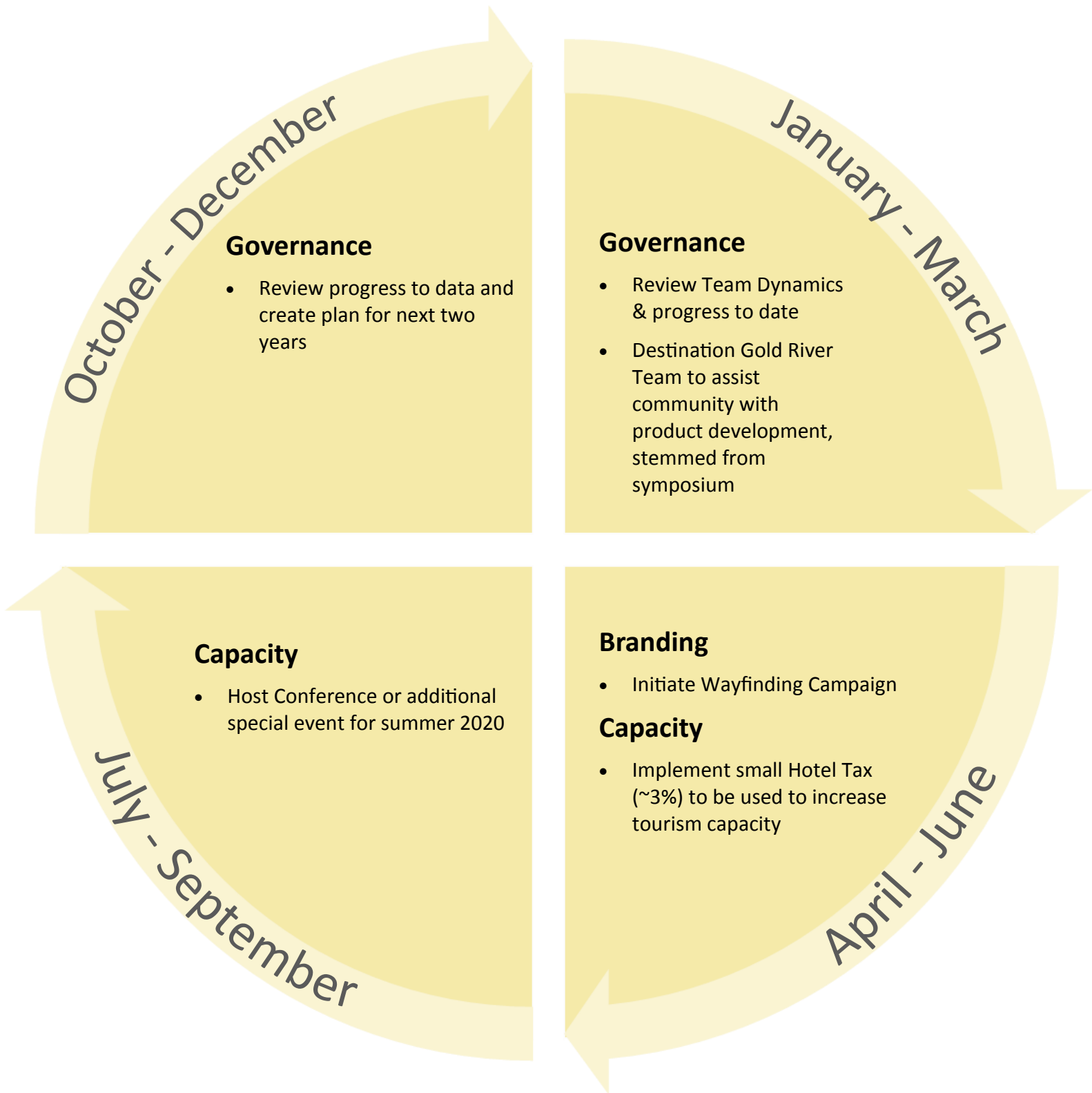
Capacity

- Host conference or additional special event for summer 2020

Quarter 4 (October—December)

Governance:

- Review progress to date and create a new 2-year strategic plan





Section 1

PROJECT OVERVIEW

PROJECT OVERVIEW

In April 2018, the Village of Gold River and Vancouver Island University formed a partnership to create the Gold River Tourism Strategic Plan (GRTSP). Previous documents and community engagement events identified the need and potential for Gold River to develop a tourism economy. The Gold River Tourism Strategic Plan is the second tourism plan to be developed by the Village in response to this identified need. The planning process was informed by research and assessment of local economic and tourism potential, a review of what other communities have done to develop their tourism economies, and a public engagement process that allowed the researchers to explore the needs and desires of the community and tourists alike.

Policy and documentation for Gold River and the surrounding area is comprehensive and provides insight into the uniqueness of the region. The following documents were reviewed, and organized into four key themes:

[Tourism Vancouver Island;](#)

[Indigenous Tourism Association of BC;](#)

[Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada;](#)

[Tourism Industry Association of BC;](#)

[Tourism Industry Association of Canada;](#)

[Corporate Strategy Destination B.C.;](#)

[Gaining the Edge - A Five-year Strategy for Tourism in British Columbia 2012 – 2016;](#)

[Nootka Coastal Land Use Plan;](#)

[Village of Gold River Official Community Plan;](#)

[North Island Destination Development Situation Analysis;](#)

[Summary of Participatory Rural Appraisal of Tourism Development with Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation;](#)

[Vancouver Island North Tourism Plan Summary;](#)

[Economic Development Strategy For Gold River, B.C. 2018; and,](#)

[Strengthening Rural Canada – Community Plan for Gold River, British Columbia 2016.](#)

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Four key themes:

- 1) **Traveler Types** - Studies indicated increased foreign tourism, especially visitors from middle class China, as well as increased global competition. A shift to an older population is taking place, and these travelers are identified as being both healthy, and wealthy, but requiring services and transportation that millennial budget travels do not, though they both desire the same authentic experience. New trends for both markets expect experiences that align with social and personal growth, sensitive environmental experience, and authenticity. Despite wealthier travelers heading on the road, people do not feel that they have the budget for expensive travel, and look for value destinations. Younger travelers, who have little time or money, want maximum value for their limited vacation time; they typically have very limited time to spend on difficult logistics.



- 2) **Marketing and Advertising** - Many technological shifts and advancements are influencing both data collection and advertisement. Advertisement is now smaller, more personalized, and focuses on creating “mini moments” to help aspiring travelers dream before the trip and share afterwards. The business of marketing is changing, in response to new technology, with more emphasis being placed on personal trips, the pre-trip ‘dream’ stage and the post trip ‘share’ stage. Each post is small, and initially unobtrusive, except that these ‘micro moments’ add up. Destination B.C. estimates that a person planning a trip will have 143 ‘micro-moments’ in the 43 days they spend trip planning. These micro moments and targeted data allow B.C. to focus on its two key Explorer Quotient (EQ) travelers, learners and free spirits, both of who expect personalization in their advertisement and experience.



PROJECT OVERVIEW

- 3) **Technology** - The strongest emphasis was on the possibility of new technology. New technology can provide greater reach to small businesses and rural areas, as well as allowing businesses to make better use of machine learning and algorithms for better-targeted data. Networking and creating partnerships would allow this information to be shared, and for the technological innovations to be shared between partners that might be too small to afford or access this alone.



- 4) **Human Capital** - Reviewed documents revealed a need to build skilled human capital, building long-term relationships with stakeholders and workers alike. Built relationships contribute to the strength of any plan, and no matter how strong the marketing and branding is, if there is not a consistently strong product it will typically fail. In order to create this strength, Gold River would benefit from building shared relationships with its neighbors. To build a reliable workforce, emphasis should be placed on investing in training quality personnel, and paying them appropriately to ensure that they stay and create consistency, advancement opportunities, and increased vacation experiences. Part of investing in human capital is investing in the towns themselves, which must weather seasonal tourism to develop itself while maintaining their small town charm. Greater advocacy from small businesses and workers, as well as increased partnerships with First Nations communities, could allow this new resource to compete with big extraction business that currently dominates the North Island. All of this would require greater cooperation, to ensure that the land is stewarded, that guided tours and rental equipment is available, and to ensure that First Nations experiences are not relegated to simple artifacts, but are woven into the entire experience as a living culture.



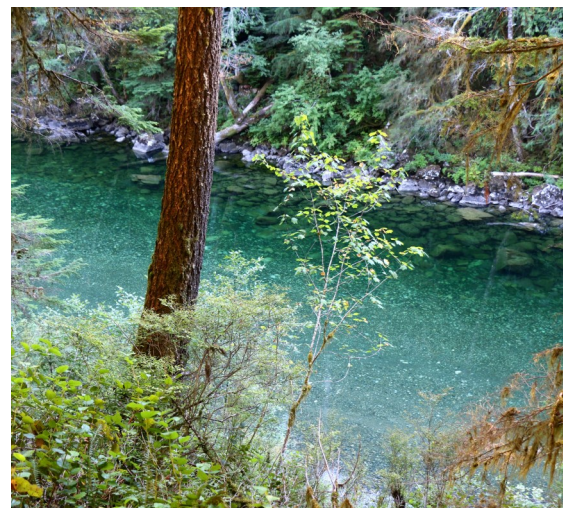
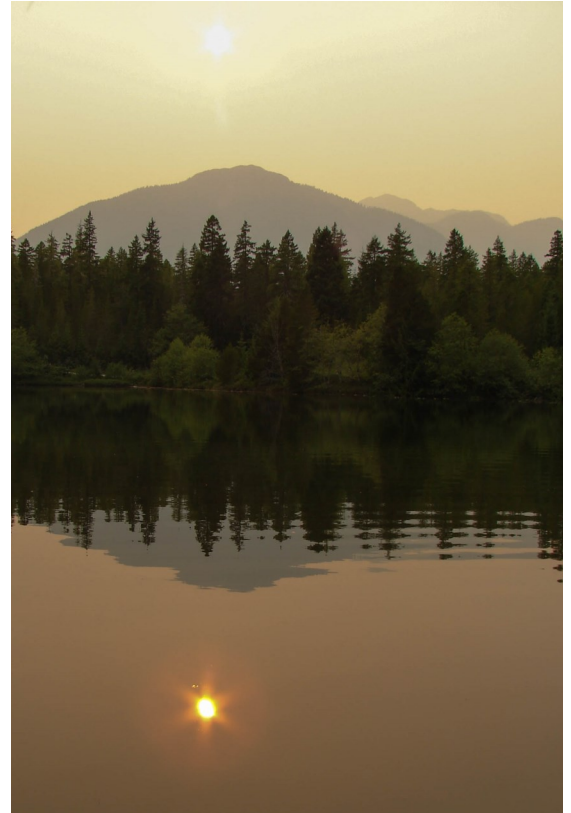
Tourism is an industry that can be developed at the local level by utilizing community-based solutions and small businesses, while harnessing a culture of collaboration². There is untapped tourism potential in Gold River and the surrounding region, which includes its diverse natural amenities and deeply rooted history and culture. This plan provides direction to develop and enhance Gold River's tourism economy.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

1.1 Vision

The Village of Gold River's Tourism Strategic Plan aims to support the community's values, as stated in the [Official Community Plan](#) (OCP), which are as follows:

- 1) A safe, sustainable community within which to live
- 2) A diversified, resilient local economy that will provide stability and security to residents, potential investors, and visitors
- 3) Recognition of the unique position of Gold River and Nootka Sound in the history of the Pacific Northwest
- 4) A healthy and sustainable natural environment
- 5) Simple, effective regulations that enhance community character and allow for individual and entrepreneurial development



PROJECT OVERVIEW

1.2 Guiding Principles

During the community engagement events the consultation team sought to create a list of guiding principles, derived from community input to help guide recommendations and goals. Using a 'dotmocracy' style voting system, community members voted for the statements that they thought best exemplified what the future of Gold

River's tourism industry should include. These visioning boards were advertised to the community at the World Café and Community Barbeque event, and received a total of 161 votes. The top six statements, which received the most votes, were selected as the guiding principles of the GRTSP.

Principle 1	Provides more opportunities for young people allowing them to stay in the community
Principle 2	Attracts more families to live permanently in the community
Principle 3	Makes Gold River a world class tourist destination
Principle 4	Supports economic growth and creates jobs
Principle 5	Brings more arts, culture, and events to the community
Principle 6	Provides a more diverse economy and a greater variety of jobs

PROJECT OVERVIEW

1.3 Project Deliverables

The following key deliverables were established at the onset of project:

- 1) Conduct a public engagement process to understand the needs and desires of residents, as well as current and potential tourists
- 2) Assess the local tourism economy and current tourism potential, evaluate existing policy, and assess other tourism plans and initiatives in comparable communities
- 3) Create a tourism strategic plan outlining objectives for Gold River's tourism and develop goals and actions
- 4) Prepare a 2-year simplified roadmap of the Tourism Strategic Plan



Project Deliverables





Section 2

GOLD RIVER AT A GLANCE

GOLD RIVER AT A GLANCE

2.1 Background

The Village of Gold River B.C, located near the geographic center of Vancouver Island, is a community of approximately 1,200 people³, situated along the banks of the Gold and Heber Rivers surrounded by breathtaking mountains, dense forests, and glacier-fed lakes. Located 89 km west of Campbell River, the Village's central location places it in close proximity to many notable natural features and attractions including Strathcona Provincial Park (the oldest Provincial Park in British Columbia), the Upana limestone caves, numerous mountains including the tallest mountain on the island, the Golden Hinde, and the Muchalat Inlet leading into the Nootka Sound. For these reasons, Gold River is a natural hub for a host of outdoor experiences, including fishing, caving, mountain-climbing and biking, hiking, camping and a variety of water sports such as kayaking and stand-up paddleboarding, along with more leisurely activities, such as golfing and whale-watching. Gold River has been dubbed

the "Gateway to the Historic Nootka Sound".

Gold River is located on the unceded traditional territories of the Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation and is neighboured by the Tsaxana Reserve, 3 km west of the Village. Yuquot, commonly known as Friendly Cove, approximately 45km west of Gold River on Nootka Island, is famous for being the location that first contact was made on Vancouver Island between Indigenous peoples and Europeans in 1778¹.

With such a natural bounty of recreation opportunities and cultural treasures at its doorstep, Gold River has enormous potential to develop a robust, year-round tourism economy. With a focus on enhancing relationships, built upon respect, trust, and transparency, strong partnerships can be formed that will help build upon an already established tourism foundation.

2.2 Environmental Context

BC's Biogeoclimatic Ecosystem Classification (BEC) program classifies the area that Gold River is located in as Coastal Western Hemlock (CWH) zone,

as determined by its specific climactic traits. Due to the mild, yet wet climate, the CWH zone is the most productive forest zone in BC. Big trees, wetlands,

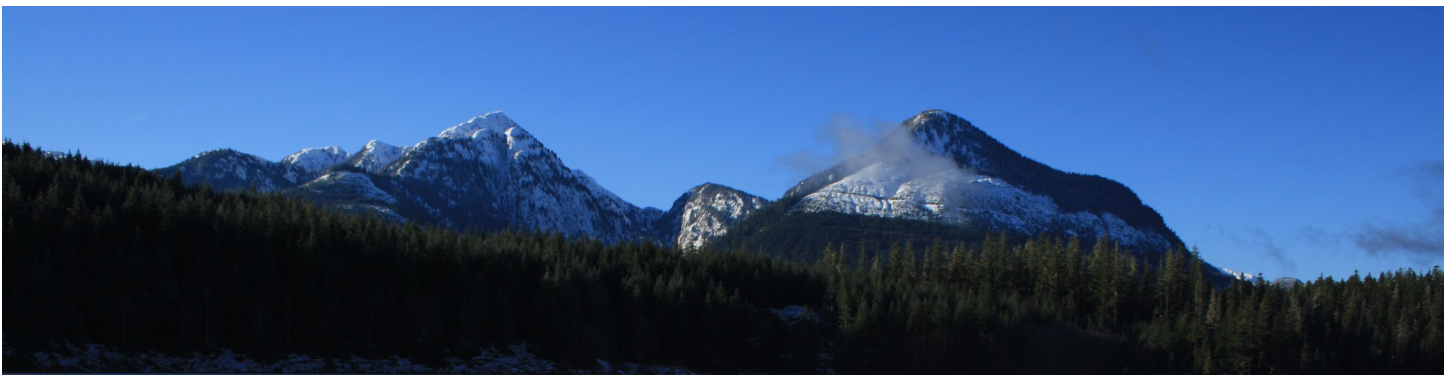
GOLD RIVER AT A GLANCE

and an impressive array of understory vegetation are common in the CWH zone, providing natural habitat for the greatest number of wildlife species of all the BEC zones across BC⁴. With its proximity to the West Coast of Vancouver Island, the wettest single region in Canada, Gold River receives very high levels of precipitation compared to most other Canadian municipalities⁴.

Climate change is expected to exacerbate the amount of rainfall Gold River receives in the coming decades, as well as increase the number of extreme rain and wind events⁵. Gold River could also experience an increase in flood events in coastal areas and along its rivers, along with hotter and drier summers, increasing the likelihood of forest fires and drought, while negatively impacting groundwater recharge.

Flowing through the Village are both the Gold and Heber Rivers, which support a variety of Pacific salmon and other finfish. As most riparian areas do, these rivers attract great numbers of wildlife. Deep pools, ripples, overhanging vegetation, and ox-bows make these rivers ideal habitat for many flora and fauna⁶.

Outside the borders of the Village, picturesque mountains rise up around Gold River. The BEC zones transition with elevation into Mountain Hemlock (MH) and finally Alpine Tundra (AT). The MH zone receives 20-70% of its precipitation as snow, while the higher AT zone receives an annual average of 70-80% as snow. The ability to store this freshwater in the form of snowpack is important for the spring and summer months when water becomes more scarce⁵.



GOLD RIVER AT A GLANCE

2.3 Historical Context

Historical context is often subjective, and can be viewed as either a positive or negative depending on our personal situations. There are no doubt a variety of differing perspectives on the history of Gold River depending on whom we might ask; however, we can likely all agree that the history is rich.

As part of the unceded territories of the Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation, the area of Gold River has been inhabited since time immemorial, as is the case of the entirety of the Nootka Sound and Vancouver Island. Recent evidence shows that the main village site of Yuquot at Friendly Cove, for example, is at least 4,200 years old⁷. The Nuu-chah-nulth used the lands for hunting and fishing, specializing in whaling. They also hold the distinction of being the first Indigenous people in BC to encounter Europeans, first when Spanish explorers approached Nootka Sound in 1774 and, more famously, when Captain James Cook anchored at Yuquot in March of 1778 and initiated prolonged contact and an active maritime fur trade. As a result, Nootka Sound quickly became a major epicenter of European power politics in North America with British, Spanish, American, and Russian forces vying for control of lands, furs, and trade routes. The Spanish even maintained a permanent naval post at Yuquot between 1789 and 1795, the only Spanish settlement ever established north of San Francisco. During this time

these competing Spanish and British claims and conflicts over territories in the Nootka Sound nearly led the two world powers to war, a historically consequential period referred to as the Nootka Crisis. This was resolved in 1795 following the final Nootka Convention and the dismantling of the Spanish fort at Yuquot, leaving the British with full territorial control of the area. Despite the Spanish retreat that followed, their legacy in the Nootka Sound remains to this day as evidenced by the profusion of Spanish place names across Vancouver Island⁸. The Nootka Sound fell out of international attention with the decline of the maritime fur trade in the early 1800s and, while life for the Nuu-chah-nulth had been already altered irrevocably, European settlement of the area for the next century was a slight, gradual process. This settlement accelerated between the 1930s and 1960s with the growth of the logging industry in the area, particularly after the establishment of a Tahsis Company camp at the mouth of the Gold River in 1954 and the completion of the road connecting the camp to Campbell River in 1958. In 1964, the Tahsis Company built a new pulp mill at the Gold River beach camp along with a nearby town to support the mill's operations. Established in its current location in 1965, Gold River was one of BC's first "instant towns," first incorporated as a district municipality and

GOLD RIVER AT A GLANCE

reincorporated as a Village in 1972. As a company town, which needed to attract workers, Gold River was constructed as a model community with high design standards and quality facilities and amenities including underground wiring, making it Canada's first all-electric town. By 1967, the Village had grown to 1,800 residents whose livelihoods were built almost entirely around the pulp mill. Gold River grew again slightly in the mid-1980s

when the pulp mill expanded operations to include paper manufacturing. However, by the early 1990s, economic shifts in the pulp and paper industry caused the mill to scale back operations before closing entirely in 1998⁷.

Since then, the Village's population has declined but it is attempting to reinvent itself as a tourism hub for adventure or nature-based tourism, as well as cultural and historical tourism³.

2.4 Community Profile

The capacity of Gold River's tourism economy relies heavily on the capacity of its resident population. The following demographic analysis has informed our recommendations.

The Village of Gold River had a population of 1,212 in 2016 residing in approximately 573 private dwellings, down from 1,267 in 2011, a change of 4.3 percent³. This trend

has been observed for many years and thus, we can say that the Village is experiencing rural depopulation. This is largely due to economic shifts in the community, as well as macro economic trends and it is possibly evidenced by the fact that the community has older demographics when compared with the rest of the province. The median age of



GOLD RIVER AT A GLANCE

the population, in 2016, was ten years older than the provincial median. Although Gold River may be an attractive, affordable place for seniors, the Village is continually losing their youth due to a lack of future employment opportunities, and is struggling to attract and retain young families. Previous community engagement efforts in Gold River identified this phenomenon as a major concern in the eyes of Gold River residents, especially since the decline in youth and young families is leading to a decline of funding for services and infrastructure⁹.

Furthermore, the unemployment rate, at 8.9 percent in 2016, is higher than the provincial average and residents also worked fewer weeks on average

throughout the year than the provincial average. While Gold River has a diversified employment base, it is still highly reliant on its natural resource economy for employment with traditional industries such as forestry and fisheries employing a large percentage of residents, approximately 22.5%. Recreation on the other hand, along with arts, culture, and entertainment, employed 4.5%, accommodation and food services employed 6.3%, and transportation and warehousing employed 4.5%. Past engagement revealed that developing additional employment opportunities was one of the top priorities for Gold River residents moving forward⁹.

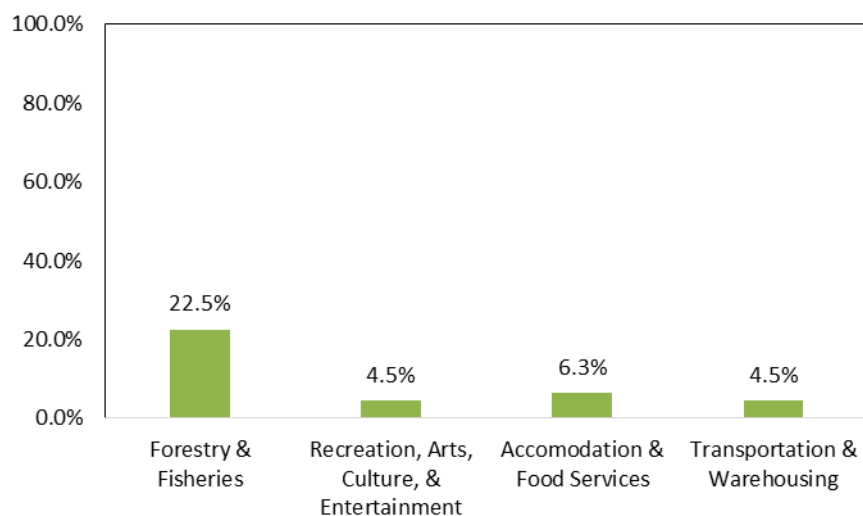


Figure 1. Village of Gold River's primary employment industries (Statistics Canada, 2016).



Section 3

GOLD RIVER TOURISM INDUSTRY PROFILE

GOLD RIVER TOURISM INDUSTRY PROFILE

To understand the Village's characteristics, the consultation team undertook a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and constraints (SWOC) analysis upon initial visit, looking at the Village through the eyes of a tourist. The analysis was broken down into six key themes: retail, food and beverage, transportation and location, accommodations, festivals and special events, and attractions. The results have been entered into the six tables below.

Retail - The majority of Gold River's shopping and retail is concentrated within the Village Square. The majority of the square is privately owned and suffers from an empty storefront epidemic and a visible lack of upkeep.

Strengths

- Clear, concentrated Village Square
- An Existing framework for culturally oriented retail
- Shopping and retail operations, such as the Gold River Liquor Express, provides information for tourists

Opportunities

- Further marketing and support for existing artists and artisans
- Unique history of the region provides a strong potential for historical and culturally oriented retail

Weaknesses

- Village Square contains some empty and derelict businesses/storefronts
- Network of artists and artisans is small and/or poorly advertised
- Lack of services

Constraints

- Informal artists could be hard to seek out and develop industry around
- Larger neighbouring communities such as Campbell River, have more established art communities

GOLD RIVER TOURISM INDUSTRY PROFILE

Food and Beverage - Gold River boasts seven food and beverage providers, supplying options for all. Food options are spread across the Village and are affordable and available for residents and tourists year-round.

Strengths

- Locally owned
- High quality of food
- Variety of foods

Opportunities

- Waterfront dining
- More restaurants or additional advertising will increase tourism dollars and promote local activities in Gold River
- Fresh seafood options

Weaknesses

- Lack of waterfront eating
- Limited late-night eating
- No grocery store

Constraints

- Labour supply
- Demand to ensure vitality of additional services

GOLD RIVER TOURISM INDUSTRY PROFILE

Food and Beverage - Highway 28 from Campbell River is the main route in and out of Gold River. The MV Uchuck III and water taxis provide passenger and freight services to Nootka Sound, Esperanza Inlet, and Kyuquot Sound, as well as a water route to the Village of Tahsis. The small harbour provides limited moorage; however, the public boat launch is highly trafficked by recreational fishing vessels and kayaks. Air Nootka offers seaplane tours, charters, and scheduled flights to remote locations along the west coast, as well as major centers on the mainland. Bus services, including Greyhound and public transportation, are not available into Gold River. Rental vehicles may be attained in Campbell River.

Strengths

- Asphalt highway across from Campbell River (a favourite for motorcycle tourism)
- Ferry services with access to beautiful, remote locations
- Air Nootka offers fast and direct access

Opportunities

- Strategic, central location to act as regional hub
- Easy access to Strathcona Park
- Marine tours and cruises
- Marine expansion
- Motorcycle tourism and expansion to Tahsis if Tree to Sea / Head Bay Drive is resurfaced with asphalt
- Sightseeing tours

Weaknesses

- No bus services
- Gravel roads to Tahsis along the Tree to Sea Drive / Head Bay Drive
- 88 km from Campbell River, the nearest center with a grocery store
- No fuel dock at the marina
- Variable weather hinders air traffic access
- Limited signage

Constraints

- Variable weather and road conditions
- Road closures
- Limited affordable transportation options and rising fuel prices
- Single entrance / route for vehicular transportation

GOLD RIVER TOURISM INDUSTRY PROFILE

Accommodations - The twenty-one accommodation businesses consist of hotels, motels, inns, RV sites, camp sites, B&Bs, and lodges. Gold River's accommodations range from rustic cabins and minimalist campsites, to a luxury chalet.

The diverse composition of accommodations serve most types of travelers, from adventure tourists seeking out back-country thrills to historians delving into the area's rich history. Despite this diversity, there is an imbalance between the supply of camping facilities to indoor beds for heads, which will see additional strain with tourism industry growth.

Strengths

- Diversity of accommodation types and costs
- Access to Village amenities, as well as nature based and cultural based activities
- Scenic locations
- Free camping sites

Opportunities

- Room to cluster amenities closer to down town
- Expanded involvement with MMFN
- Waterfront camping and lodging

Weaknesses

- Few indoor beds for heads
- Limited vacancies during peak season, especially during Uchuck sailings
- Few private camping facilities
- Limited access to telecommunications services
- Older buildings
- Distance from ocean and riverfront

Constraints

- Unpredictable weather
- Limited accessible accommodations
- Surrounding campgrounds don't guarantee tourism business
- Low profitability
- Competition with surrounding communities

GOLD RIVER TOURISM INDUSTRY PROFILE

Festivals and Special Events - The EQ profiles that are drawn to Gold River, specifically Free Sprits, enjoy taking part in festivals and events. Tourism research for North Central Vancouver Island indicates that 15% of visitors are attracted to communities for festivals and special events. The Village of Gold River provides a series of special events, including Gold River Days, which includes soapbox racing, a parade, slow pitch tournament, and a chain saw carving competition.

Few festivals and special events take place in Gold River despite the Village's high-caliber facilities and capacity to host them. With 14% of tourists in the North Central region of Vancouver Island interested in taking part in First Nations Events, there is an opportunity for potential collaboration with MMFN.

Strengths

- Well-established facilities and infrastructure, such as the Gerry Morgan Memorial Centre, Anne Fiddick Aquatic Centre, Marling Field, and Gold River Golf and Country Club to serve as venues
- Interesting history and culture to serve as a basis for festivals and

Opportunities

- Engage with local history and cultural traditions to identify opportunities for new events or revitalize older ones
- Immense natural amenities for outdoor adventure-related festivals and events

Weaknesses

- Limited advertising for events
- Number of events has decreased over time

Constraints

- Little advertising for events
- Few events
- Volunteer burnout

GOLD RIVER TOURISM INDUSTRY PROFILE

Attractions - Gold River is rich with natural amenities and cultural heritage. The Village itself is located on the North East edge of Strathcona and is just kilometers from the historical Muchalat Inlet. This specific location positions Gold River as a natural haven for adventure enthusiasts and cultural and historical explorers alike. The region's tourism is largely undeveloped despite its tourism potential.

Strengths

- Highly marketable
- Unique First Nations culture and historical relevance (Chief Maquinna and Captain Cook)
- Clusters of adventure activities for significant eco-tourism development (hiking, fishing, caving, biking, kayaking, climbing, etc.)

Opportunities

- Strong potential for partnerships with the Village of Gold River and Mowachaht Muchalaht First Nation for heritage interpretation
- Cultural tours
- Eco-tourism

Weaknesses

- Few interpretive elements
- Limited interpretive and wayfinding signage
- Little Mowachaht Muchalaht First Nation identified in town
- Lack of cellphone reception
- Visitor information center hours and months of operation

Constraints

- Weather in the shoulder season
- User conflict within the inlet with tug boats and the log sort



Section 4

TOURISM CONTEXT

TOURISM CONTEXT

4.1 Sustainable Tourism

What is Sustainable Tourism?

Tourism planning, policy and capacity building efforts are driven by a growing demand for high quality authentic experiences. As visitation increase, so does the impact on resources. For tourism to continue to be successful in BC, tourism businesses, communities, and sectors need to incorporate sustainable practices into their operations that recognize the importance of environmental, economic, social, and cultural values. Innovative management approaches and strategic planning must consider sustainable tourism, which is not a niche form of tourism, but rather a way of doing business. The most widely recognized definition of sustainable tourism is provided by The United Nations Environmental Program and The World Tourism Organization: “Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host.”¹⁰

What are the benefits of Sustainable Tourism? By adopting sustainable

practices, businesses can have a positive influence in several areas:

- Protecting resources and minimize strain on the environment, ensuring that they are available for generations to come;
- By publicizing sustainable business practices as a point of difference, businesses can develop a strong competitive advantage;
- Attract and retain quality employees by implementing policies that meet with employee values and concerns; and,
- Ensure survival over the long term through the use of sustainable practices that will result in lower costs, as well as stronger supply networks and partnerships.



TOURISM CONTEXT

With a growing movement towards sustainable business practices, numerous incentives can be found both provincially and nationally. BC has a variety of incentives for businesses to "go green" such as [BC Hydro Power Smart](#) and the [Green Key Eco-Rating Program](#). The Green Key Eco-Rating Program is a graduated self-assessment rating system designed to recognize hotels, motels, and resorts that are committed to improving their environmental and fiscal performance¹¹. Toolkits for Tourism Operators, developed by the [Tourism Industry Association of Canada](#) in partnership with the Canadian Tourism Commission and Parks Canada, is a best practice guide that provides tourism operators with practical, user-friendly tips and guidance on greening their businesses.

International resources include, [The International Eco-Tourism Society](#) (TIES). TIES is committed to promoting the principles of ecotourism and responsible travel. [The World Tourism Organization](#) encourages member countries, tourist destinations, and businesses to maximize the positive economic, social, and cultural effects of tourism and fully reap its benefits, while minimizing its negative impacts. Lastly, [Tourism Cares](#) is a non-profit organization that aims to preserve the travel experience for future generations through awarding grants to natural, cultural, and historic sites worldwide and by presenting academic and service-focused scholarships to hospitality and tourism students.





Section 5

BC'S TOURISM SYSTEM

BRITISH COLUMBIA'S TOURISM SYSTEM

The tourism industry in BC is comprised of many different stakeholders including tourism businesses, suppliers, product sectors, communities, associations, destination marketing organizations, and federal, provincial, and municipal governments; each stakeholder plays a role in helping BC and Canada be a stronger competitor in the global marketplace.

The BC tourism system needs to be a model for collaboration that allows everyone in the system to become more specialized and excel in its work. Several government ministries, directly or indirectly, provide services and programs or set policies that affect the experiences of tourists and the operation of tourism businesses. These ministries' efforts directly contribute to British Columbia's tourism reputation.

5.1 Tourism Economic Profile of British Columbia

Tourism in BC has become one of the fastest growing industries in the province, providing employment opportunities and new revenue streams to many small communities. The growth rate of tourism in BC has been remarkable, with tourism revenue generation increasing 39% from

2006 to 2016. Destination BC reported that in 2016 tourism generated 17 billion dollars, a 7.9% increase from 2015. Tourism is also a strong job creator within BC; in 2016, nearly 20,000 tourism related business were in operation employing approximately 133,000 people¹².

5.2 Regional Trends and North Island Tourism Profile

The community of Gold River is situated in the Strathcona Regional District, which includes four other major communities: Campbell River, Sayward, Tahsis, and Zeballo. Tourism planning must always consider destination development to an entire region versus a singular community. Regional cooperation is essential to

harness the diverse tourism assets within the area.

[The Vancouver Island North Tourism Plan](#) identified the target markets, 70% of which were from Vancouver Island and mainland BC. European and Albertan travellers combined to as significant 20% of the visiting population¹³.

BRITISH COLUMBIA'S TOURISM SYSTEM

Most visitors to the North Island travel either in couples, or in small groups seeking adventure. These travellers are often highly educated, over forty years of age, and have an average household income of \$75,000. Similar travellers, identified by Port Hardy's survey, identified travellers as British Columbian's seeking to stay within the province and outdoor enthusiasts looking for unstructured travel, steeped in natural spaces and cultural experience¹³.

Most travellers access North Vancouver Island by personal vehicle, though tourists from the British Columbia mainland take a ferry for part of the journey. Once they have arrived, campers and vacation home renters stay the longest, followed by

personal boat owners. The average stay is five to seven days for campers and renters. Though boaters represent a much smaller demographic, they represent the longest visitors, staying in place for an average of 29 days. The majority of visitors to North Vancouver Island stay in hotel style accommodation or campgrounds¹³.

The reasons for traveling north are multifold. The majority (70%), travel to visit beaches, trails, and natural spaces, but also seek cultural and historical novelty (40-50%) as well as the staple tourism experiences, including shopping and dining (57-65%)¹³.



BRITISH COLUMBIA'S TOURISM SYSTEM

5.3 EQ Background

Destination BC has partnered with Destination Canada to provide a deeper understanding of consumer markets through the Explorer Quotient (EQ) psychographic segmentation model. This research into travel values, together with further analysis of BC's primary domestic and overseas markets, provides a strong basis for product development, as well as marketing and positioning. The EQ Profiles most widely associated with the North Island are 'Free Spirits' and 'Authentic Travelers'¹⁴.



Authentic travelers seek natural environments and more intimate experiences with small towns and remote locations.

Sustainable travel is important to them as is spontaneity and unexpected delight. Shopping is less important to them, and they do not need high-end hotels to be satisfied as they are happiest feeling included in the area's culture and the town. They are best marketed to in a way that feels personal, either through word of mouth or visitor testimony¹⁴.



Free Spirits seek an active experience and are attracted to concerts, festivals, and child friendly experiences that offer a range of activities. These travelers are more likely to indulge in special occasion spending, including hotels and shopping, to get the most out of their experience. Bright and lively marketing captures their imagination and their urge to experience 'must-see' events¹⁴.



Section 6

STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION

STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION

Tourism is a unique industry in the fact that it exports its services by offering products only available from within Canada. To develop the tourism industry so that it provides export revenue requires cooperation and partnership from a diverse array of public, private, and non-profit based organizations. Not only do tourism providers need to offer tourism amenities, such as accommodations, attractions, transportation, cultural experiences, culinary adventures, and retail/rentals opportunities to tourists but those tourists are also affected by public needs, such as roads, water systems, grocery stores, walking paths, and general community cleanliness. Many variables impact the experience a tourist has, because of this, it is important that public, private, and non-profit organizations are able to work seamlessly together. Successful delivery of services offered by these stakeholders result in travelers having positive experiences throughout their trip and a tourism industry that leads to export revenue. The following sections include a list of stakeholders that could be useful partners in the development of Gold River's tourism industry:

6.1 Village Stakeholders

Chamber of Commerce

Organization: Non-profit

Mandate: To create a united business community that works together for the well-being of Gold River.

Outcome: Supporting and promoting members and the business community as a whole, assisting with the visitor information centre to become the focal point for tourism and visitor services, and advancing the general welfare of the community.

Local Businesses

Organizations: Private

Mandate: These stakeholders are a collective of individuals, each with individual mandates and missions.

STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION

Outcome: Tourism businesses are the front line of the tourism industry. They are directly responsible for providing each tourist with their desired experience. Like most tourism providers throughout BC, the businesses that operate in Gold River are small-scale organizations. While individually each business may be small, as a collective, tourism related businesses provide many economic benefits to the broader community.

6.2 Regional Stakeholders

Strathcona Regional District

Organization: Public

Mandate: To provide the citizens with a healthy environment and social well-being that leads to a vibrant quality of life through responsible economic development and effective delivery of services.

Outcome: The Strathcona Regional District is responsible for the management of roadways, parks, water and sewers, and regional community planning throughout the area surrounding Gold River.

Tourism Vancouver Island (TVI)

Organization: Public

Mandate: To increase the economic benefits that flow from tourism to the Vancouver Island Region.

Outcome: Tourism Vancouver Island is one of Destination BC's 6 regions. Tourism Vancouver Island collects data on tourism related consumer and resident preferences, provides information on how to collect market research, and makes marketing efforts on behalf of Vancouver Island. Tourism Vancouver Island's current brand has been created through the "Find your Element" campaign which focuses on promoting adventures for people of all abilities and interests. It entices people to come by offering them a chance to discover the mild to wild lifestyle Vancouver Island offers. TVI also supports partnership opportunities with chambers of commerce, municipalities as well as businesses through collaboration, training, and conferences to connect them with information that will help them fit into Vancouver Island's branding.

STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION

6.3 Provincial Stakeholders

Indigenous Tourism BC (ITBC)

Organization: Non-profit

Mandate: To grow and promote a sustainable, culturally rich Indigenous tourism industry.

Outcome: Tourism is a growing industry and will continue to grow as 1 in 3 visitors coming to BC are seeking out an authentic Indigenous experience. In 2016, there were an estimated 401 Indigenous tourism related businesses operating in BC generating 705 million dollars of indirect gross domestic output and creating 7,400 direct full-time jobs for Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents in BC through their activities. ITBC works closely with tourism, business, education, and government organizations to help Indigenous tourism businesses in BC, to offer quality experiences and actively promotes these experiences to visitors and residents. ITBC offers support to destinations that want to develop cultural tourism by providing grant funding, marketing, sustainability best practices, and assistance in the development of the desired tourism product.

Destination BC

Organization: Public

Mandate: To support and promote the business of tourism throughout the province

Outcome: Destination BC fulfills several key marketing and leadership responsibilities critical to the long-term, sustainable growth of the provincial tourism industry. These include:

- Market British Columbia domestically, nationally, and internationally as a tourist destination;
- Promote the development and growth of the tourism industry in British Columbia to increase revenue and employment, as well as the economic benefits generated by the industry, by conducting the following without limitations:

STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION

- Providing support for regional, sectoral, and community tourism marketing;
- Providing industry leadership in tourism marketing;
- Promoting training and development in relation to tourism marketing;
- Providing support for visitor centres;
- Conducting tourism-related market research;
- Enhance public awareness of tourism and its economic value to British Columbia;
- Provide advice and recommendations on tourism-related matters; and
- Administer and perform agreements assigned to it by the Minister.
(Destination BC, 2018)

Destination BC works collaboratively with tourism stakeholders across the province to coordinate tourism marketing at the international, provincial, regional, and local levels, and to support regions and communities developing or expanding tourism experiences, businesses, and jobs. Destination BC offers access to information and educational materials such as, EQ profiles and WorldHost® Training Services.

[Hello BC](#)

Organization: Public

Mandate: HelloBC.com is Destination British Columbia's consumer website. It promotes the Super Natural British Columbia® brand and makes it possible for consumers to explore, plan, and book their British Columbia vacations online.

Outcome: It consists of eight integrated websites including North America, the United Kingdom, Australia, Japan, India, South Korea, Germany, and a French-language website. Combined, these sites receive over 8 million visitors annually. Businesses that are included in HelloBC's marketing can reach their audiences globally.

STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION

GO2HR

Organization: Non-profit

Purpose: Go2HR provides programs and services that support the tourism industries, organizations, and businesses by providing information, awareness, access to training, and best practices to help guide tourism operators through potential issues.

Outcome: GO2HR coordinated the BC Tourism Labour Market Strategy action plan, which was released in 2003 and updated in 2012. The action plan offers a lens to look at key highlights and challenges of the industry, and the strategies and activities needed to recruit, retain, and train the workforce so that the industry can keep up with the province's projected job growth. GO2HR is an effective way of finding information related to labour demands and opportunity within the tourism industry in a timely manner.

6.4 National Stakeholders

Destination Canada

Organization: Public

Mandate: To grow Canada's tourism export revenues and support their industry partners.

Outcome: Destination Canada is a Crown corporation owned by the Government of Canada. They provide industry knowledge, tools, and insights to their partners, equipping them to optimize their business and maximize their reach. Another function of Destination Canada is to develop marketing strategies to stimulate international demand and tourism export revenue for Canada in 10 countries: Australia, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Mexico, South Korea, the UK, and the USA.

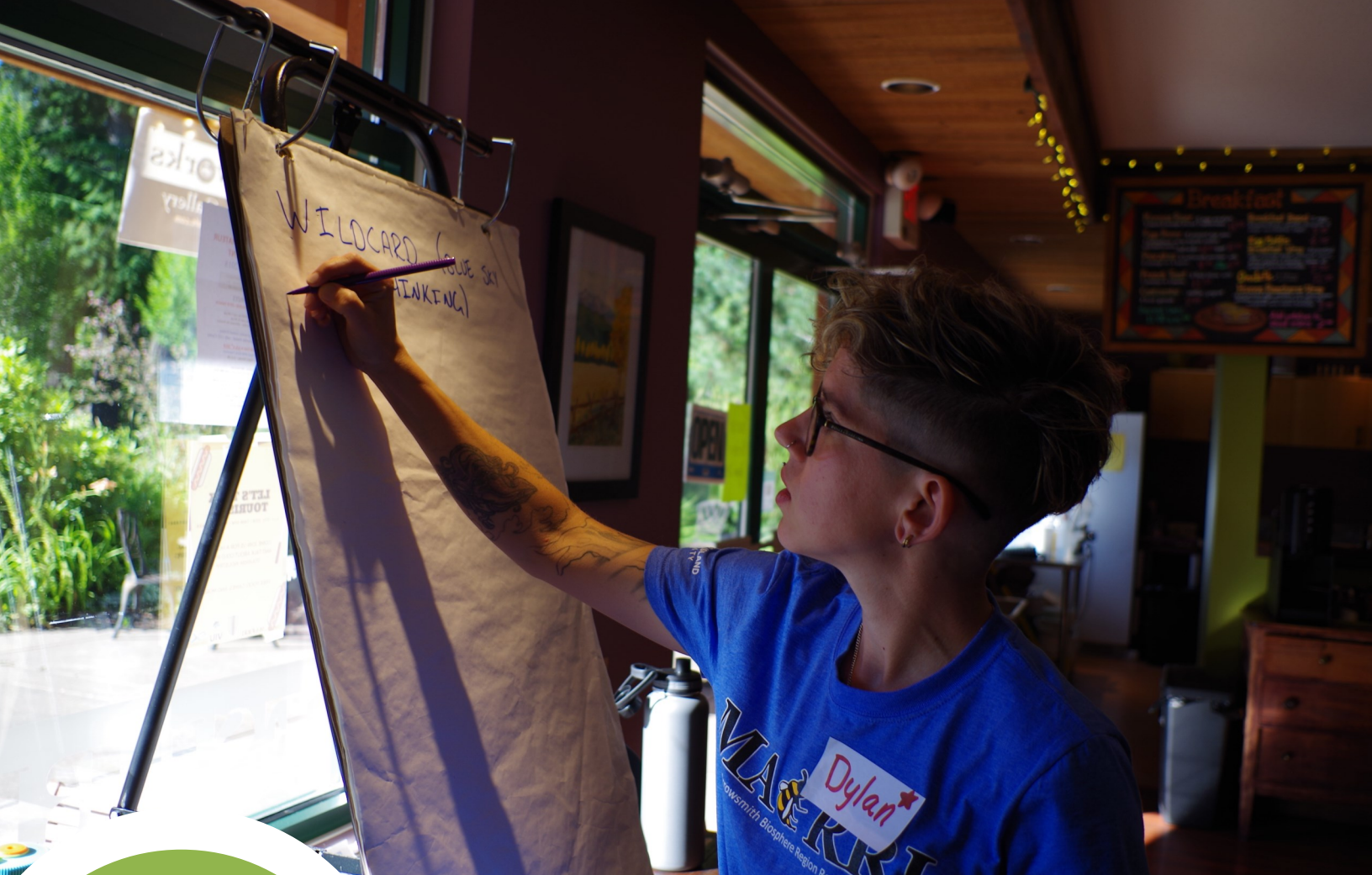
STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION

[Tourism Industry Association of Canada](#)

Organization: Private

Mandate: To be the voice of Canada's tourism industry and improve its global competitiveness as an international destination through leadership and advocacy.

Impact: Work involves promoting and supporting policies, programs, and activities that will benefit the tourism sector's growth and development. TIAC's membership reflects partnerships among all sectors of the industry, including provincial, territorial, and regional tourism associations, enabling the association to address the full range of issues facing Canadian tourism.



Section 7

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT DATA CAPTURING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Between Thursday, July 12th to Saturday, July 14th, 2018, VIU students, staff, and faculty collaborated with the Village of Gold River to host three days of public engagement to collect data for the Gold River Tourism Strategic Plan. Representatives from the Master of Community Planning Program, the World Leisure Centre of Excellence, and the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Regional Research Institute, used their diverse backgrounds to collect various forms of data from tourists, local residents, local business owners, and other stakeholders. The data was collected using four different methods:

- 1) A World Café hosted on Thursday, July 12th with local business owners and stakeholders in attendance
- 2) A community BBQ on Friday, July 13th with an open invitation to all local residents of Gold River to come and share their opinions and gain information on the project
- 3) In person questionnaires, which were administered on Saturday, July 14th at local tourist attractions to better understand the visitor experience
- 4) An online visitor experience survey, with a prize incentive, which was emailed to visitors of Gold River after they submitted their email addresses

This Engagement Blitz was the main form of data collection for the Gold River Tourism Strategic Plan and set out with the goal of gathering input from the locals and tourists to determine who visits Gold River and why, as well as what the Village's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and constraints are. The data collected over the three days was used to identify key themes of interest to Gold River and helped guide recommendations for the Gold River Tourism Strategic Plan.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT DATA CAPTURING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Apart from preliminary discussions with key stakeholders and Village staff, the Engagement Blitz also marked the first formal engagement effort for the Gold River Tourism Strategic Plan. Themes for the questions for each of the engagement methods were derived from a background analysis of Gold River's tourism economy conducted prior to the event.

7.1 World Café

The VIU students and faculty arrived Thursday evening at Clayworks Café, a popular local coffee shop and restaurant in Gold River, to set up for the World Café. The owners of the café graciously allowed the World Café to take place at their establishment and provided refreshments for the attendees. Business owners of Gold River, Municipal staff and council, MMFN, and other tourism stakeholders were personally invited to attend the event either by email,

telephone, or in person invitation, so that they could voice their concerns and suggestions on tourism in Gold River. Four tables were set up, each with a different theme or topic to inspire conversation:

- 1) Marketing and Promotion
- 2) Current Tourism
- 3) Future Tourism
- 4) Wild Card (blue sky thinking)



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT DATA CAPTURING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The event ran from 6:30pm to 8:00pm, and attendees had the opportunity to have three discussions for approximately 20 minutes each. Participants had the choice of rotating to different table topics during each discussion or continue at the table they were at previously. In total, 19 business owners and members of the community attended the event and participated in the discussions. The goal of the World Café was to obtain the perspectives of members of the community who are already intimately involved in Gold River's tourism economy and/or have some stake in its growth and development. In addition to the discussions, visioning boards were installed at the event for participants to read and vote for the statements that they thought should form the GRTSP's guiding principles using a 'dotmocracy' style voting system.

The sampling method used for this event was expert sampling, a type of purposive sampling; specific members of the community were selected to participate based on their knowledge or expertise of the subject at hand, according to the judgment of the researchers. This type of sampling is useful in the early stages of research when there is still some uncertainty on the subject being researched and for its logistical simplicity. However, since expert sampling is a non-probability sampling technique, not every member of the population had an equal chance of being selected to participate, making our research non-generalizable. Therefore, it cannot then be said that the collected data is representative of the opinions of the Gold River community at large.

7.2 Community BBQ

On Friday, July 13th, 2018, VIU students and faculty set up for a half day community BBQ event between 11:00am and 3:00pm in Nimpkish Park, a popular community park and water park in a primarily residential neighbourhood of Gold River. Hot dog

lunches, snacks, and refreshments were provided, along with various games and activities for children. Approximately 50 community members attended the event where poster boards were displayed to inform them about the details of the GRTSP: what it

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT DATA CAPTURING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

it is, why it's being done, who is involved, and what stage in the process the plan was currently at.

Their input was recorded on comment boards, which required them to either

post sticky notes with their written opinions on them or to vote for their preferred statements or points on the poster board using the 'dotmocracy' style voting system.

Five different comment boards were used:

- 1) Visioning boards allowed residents to vote for their preferred guiding principles. The boards presented a list of predetermined statements regarding the types of tourism industry that could be successful in Gold River.
- 2) 'Dotmocracy' boards that involved voting for what community members believed to be Gold River's best tourism attractions from a list of activities
- 3) Posters that asked community members to write on sticky notes what they believed to be Gold River's strengths and weaknesses, as well as any ideas for building on those strengths and how to overcome their weaknesses going forward
- 4) Maps of Gold River and the surrounding area were displayed for community members to place dots where they believed the best places were for recreation, as well as any local hidden gems tourists would not easily find, and places that have potential to be utilized better for tourism
- 5) A general comment board asking for feedback written on sticky notes about what community members would like to see in Gold River in the future, with regards to tourism



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT DATA CAPTURING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

This style of data collection can be described as convenience sampling since input was only collected from community members who were willing to participate, available to attend the event, and came to the consultation

team with their opinions. This type of sampling is considered non-probability, as it cannot be said to be a representative of community opinion in a statistically significant way.

7.3 In-Person Questionnaires

A list of places in Gold River and the surrounding area that receive high tourist traffic was compiled prior to the Engagement Blitz. On July 14th, our team split up into small groups in order to visit all of the determined sites. Once at the site, the team approached tourists to administer an in-person questionnaire. Two variations of the questionnaire were used depending on whether the location was within Gold River or in the wider region surrounding the Village.

For locations in Gold River, the questionnaire design was geared towards gaining a fuller understanding of the visitor experience to Gold River. The tourists were asked about their method of transportation, reasons for visiting, places or activities they didn't know about prior to coming to the Village, type of accommodation, length of stay, other travel destinations on

their trip itinerary, an assessment of their experience in Gold River, and any ideas how the Village could improve the visitor experience. A total of 32 questionnaires of this type were administered. However, most respondents were in groups and answered questions as a group, therefore we estimate that we collected questionnaire data from approximately 108 people in total.



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT DATA CAPTURING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The regional survey similarly asked about their travel destinations and what attracted them to those destinations, but additionally asked questions relating to Gold River including whether they knew about the Village prior to travelling, what they currently know about Gold River, their reasons for not visiting Gold River, and whether they intend to travel there in the future. There were 12 regional

questionnaires administered, representing approximately 40 people.

For this stage in our community Engagement strategy, purposive sampling was again used to gauge the opinions and glean information from a particular group in a cost-effective and simple way, despite being of limited generalizability.

7.4 Online Visitor Experience Survey (VES)

The online Visitor Experience Survey (VES) was open from June to September 2018. Tourists visiting Gold River were asked to share their email addresses via comment boxes, which were strategically placed in businesses dispersed throughout the Village. Eight locations were chosen for comment boxes, including the visitor centre, the float plane, cruise ship terminals, the golf course, two accommodations, and two local businesses; these sites were chosen because they see a lot of tourism traffic. Visitor's email addresses were collected from the comment boxes on July 14th, entered into a spreadsheet, and links to the online survey were sent to each email on July 16th. Successful completion of the

survey resulted in the participant's entry into a grand prize draw, donated by Get West Adventures, for two tickets aboard the MV Uchuck III boat tour to Yuquot (Friendly Cove).

This survey was designed to collect information on the experience, expectations, and profiles of visitors allowing for more informed decision-making and strategic planning in relation to product development, marketing, and tourism development in Gold River. The survey questions obtained information regarding the visitor's demographic, their booking and planning, length of visit, activities participated in, and perceptions of the tourism product(s) they experienced during their visit.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT DATA CAPTURING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

As we do not know the extent of the entire tourist community who travelled to or within Gold River, information collected by the VES is not representative of all tourism experiences. Rather, information collected within this survey is representative of the participants who responded to the VES.

Their responses have been sorted into the themes, which include visitor profiles, booking and planning, accommodations and services, leisure activities, and participant perceptions.

Visitor Profile

The statistics presented in this document display the demographic characteristics and motivators of respondents as collected through the VES. Visitor profiles are critical in gaining strategic marketing insights.

In order to find the returning population of respondents, VES participants were asked how often they frequented Gold River. The respondents indicated that 48% were first-time visitors, 39% visit once per year, and 13% return more than twice per year. This indicates that Gold River is attracting many new visitors, but more importantly, tourists are returning for multiple visits on an annual basis.

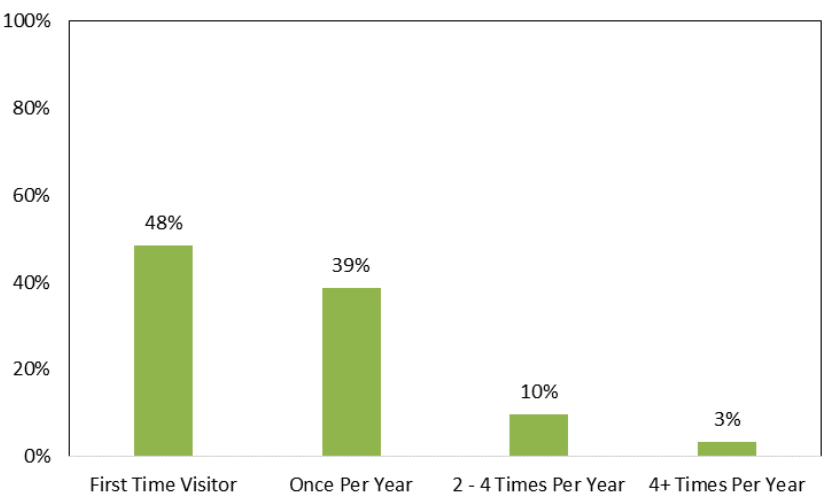


Figure 2. Respondents to the VES indicated the frequency at which they visit Gold River

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT DATA CAPTURING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

When visitors were asked if Gold River was their primary destination, 35% indicated that it was their primary destination, 45% stated that it was one of several planned stops, and 6% had made an unplanned visit. Those respondents who answered in the "Other" category stated that their trip did not have a "primary destination" and that were on a motorcycle trip. Despite heavy summer traffic between Gold River and Tahsis, few travellers make unplanned stops in Gold River. This could be the result of limited signage directing visitors to Village services.

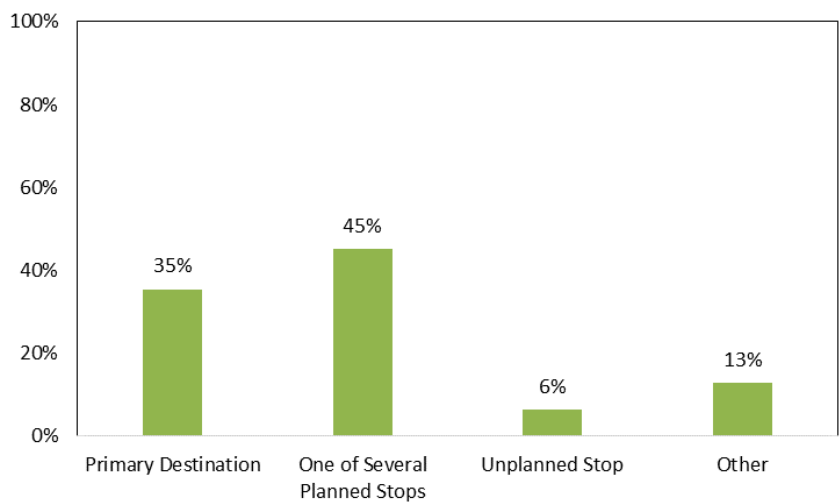


Figure 3. Respondents to the VES indicated if Gold River was their primary destination or a stop along the way, intentionally or otherwise.

The majority of visitors, 68%, travel to Gold River for leisure activities. This data is a critical component in determining tourism sectors for future development or expansion. Though some visitors are in town for work and business, approximately 9%, most are in Gold River to take time away from work. Identifying the motivations of visitors to Gold River, and the region, is a critical component in determining tourism sectors for future development.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT DATA CAPTURING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

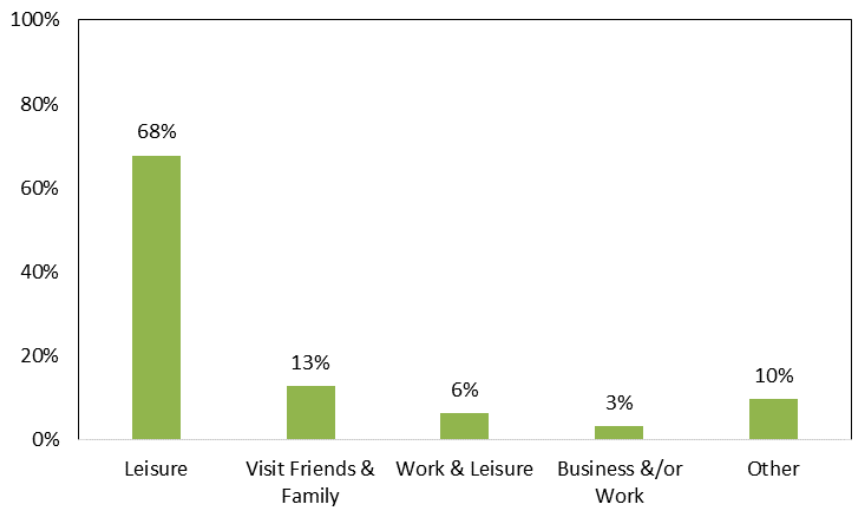


Figure 4. Respondents to the VES indicated the purpose of their travel to Gold River

Gold River draws many local visitors, with 59% originating from Vancouver Island. Visitors from other parts of British Columbia made up 14%, 17% from other provinces and territories,

and 3% from the United States. Current visitor demographics may indicate limited marketing and/or knowledge of Gold River outside of Vancouver Island.

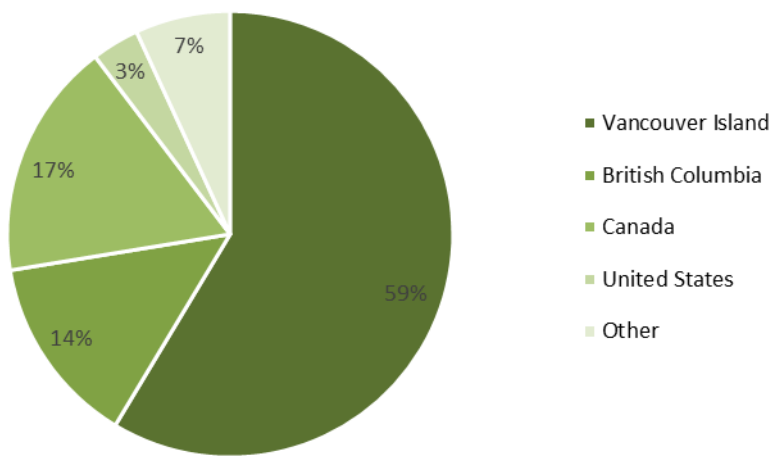


Figure 5. Respondents to the VES indicated where they were visiting from.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT DATA CAPTURING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Booking and Planning

Booking and planning refer to the parts of the traveler experience that occur before their trip takes place. Subjects such as travel motivations, trip planning decisions, and information regarding the destination are included within the theme of booking and planning.

Respondents indicated that they used multiple types of accommodation each stay, which is the reason that the totals in Figure 6 equal greater than 100%. The primary accommodation choice of visitors to Gold River was a hotel or

motel, with 77% of visitors, followed by staying with friends or family members, at 42%. Other visitors stayed in campgrounds, bed and breakfasts, cabins, on a boat, or in a vacation rental. Accommodation types are chosen based on a tourists preferences, needs, and budget. Gold River attracts visitors with EQ profiles of ‘Free Spirits’ and ‘Authentic Travelers’¹. According to Destination Canada, Free Spirits are likely to engage in accommodation-related activities.

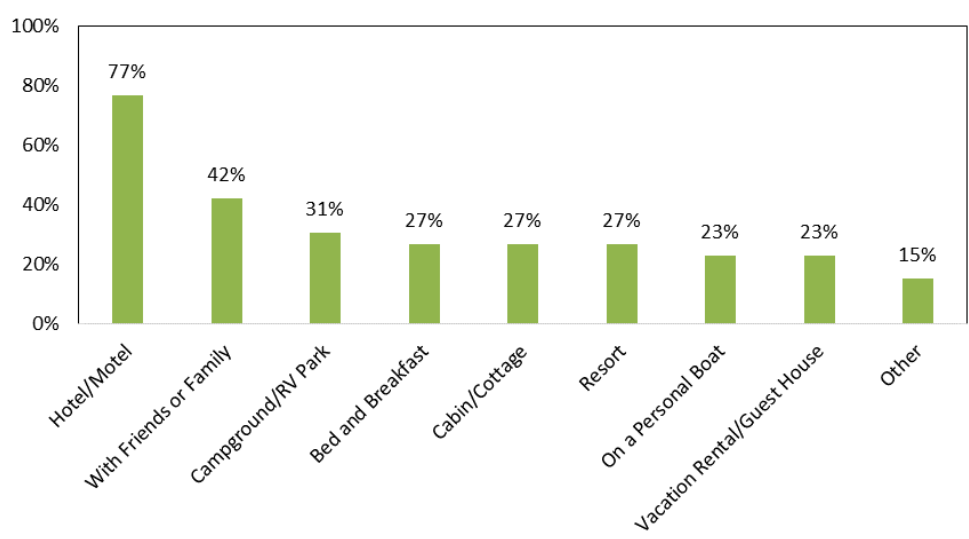


Figure 6. Respondents to the VES indicated the type of accommodation in which they stayed in when visiting Gold River.

¹According to Destination Canada, ‘Authentic Travelers’ seek natural environments and more intimate experiences with small towns and remote locations. Free Spirits seek an active experience, and are attracted to concerts, festivals, and child-friendly experiences that offer a range of activity.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT DATA CAPTURING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

When visitors were asked to rank features that influenced their decision to visit Gold River, the three most important features were:

- 1) Scenic beauty
- 2) Outdoor recreation activities
- 3) Overall atmosphere of the area

This information helps Gold River to understand the reasons why tourists have chosen to travel to the area. Marketing the factors that are most important to tourist decision-making could help tourists build intention during the planning stage to visit Gold River.

The three least important feature that influenced visitor's decision to come to Gold River included:

- 1) Shopping opportunities
- 2) Access to internet
- 3) Quality of accommodation and attractions and events

These answers could be based on the profile of tourist who travel to Gold River but it could also be based on tourist's pre-existing knowledge of the Village and a realistic view of what is there.

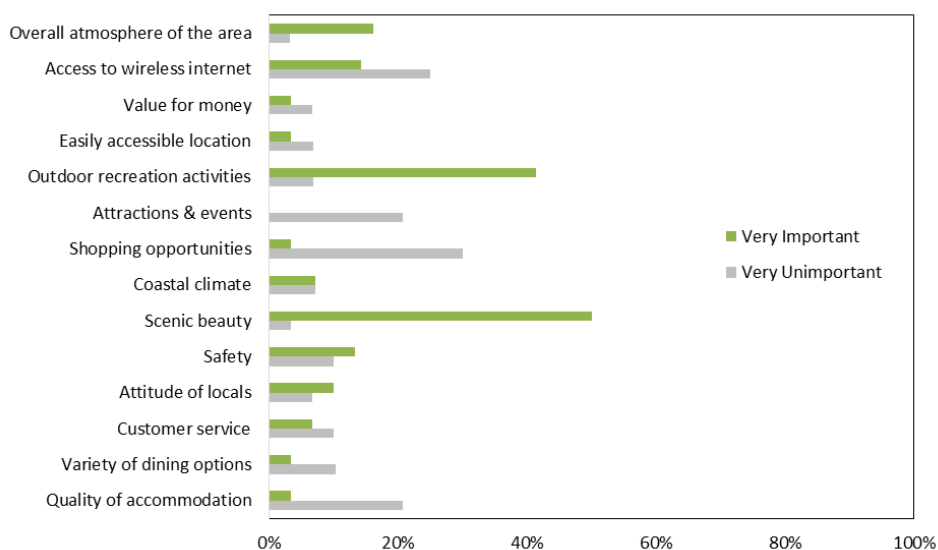


Figure 7. Respondents to the VES chose the Gold River features they enjoyed the most during their trip.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT DATA CAPTURING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

VES participants were asked to identify where they attained information regarding trip planning to Gold River. Most respondents (50%), relied on knowledge from their own experience or knowledge from friends and family (30%) as opposed to many emerging forms of communication such as websites or blogs. The most successful promotion came from travel information websites (20%), and destination websites (16%). In addition, it seemed respondents were not reached through more traditional promotion such as brochures or TV and radio.

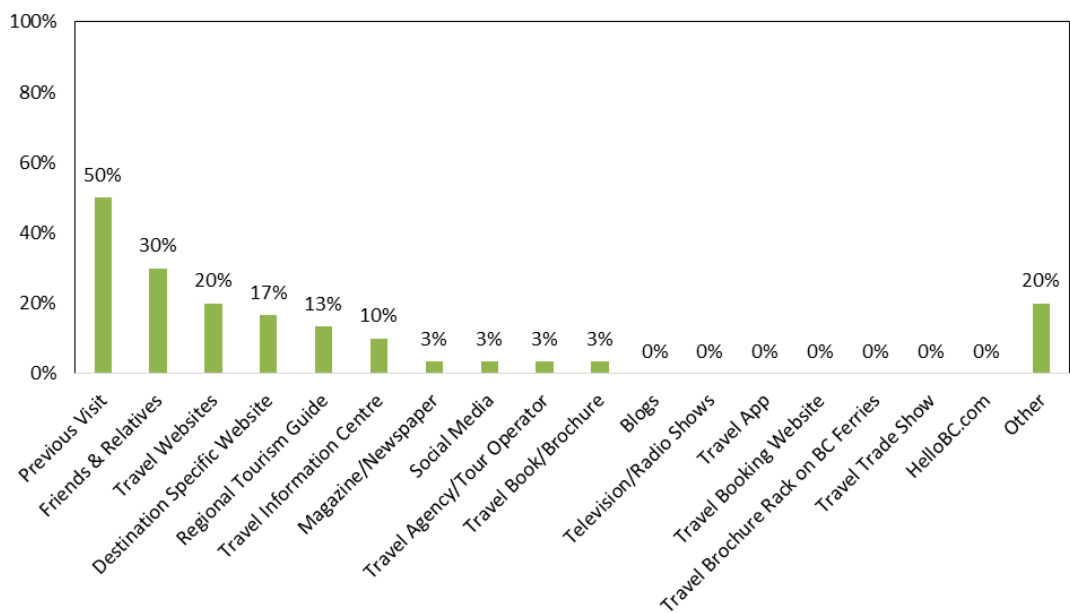


Figure 8. Respondents to the VES describe the methods in which they used to plan their trip to Gold River and the surrounding area.

Leisure Activity

Leisure activity refers to the real activities that tourists participate in while on vacation. They can be a primary motivator, a secondary motivator, or the result of spontaneity. Spontaneity occurs when a tourist learns they can access an activity that is new, or they were unaware that the activity existed in the destination they travelled to. Regardless of what motivated a tourist to travel to the destination, the activities are what that traveler did while on vacation.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT DATA CAPTURING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The VES participants selected the variety of activities that they did and the places that they visited in Gold River. The top three attractions visited when in Gold River were: parks and trails (51.9%), local shops and boutiques (33.3%), and artisan studios and workshops, historical areas, and First Nations facilities (each 18.5%). It is important to note that 55% of

respondents chose the "Other" category but the majority of those responses fell into the provided categories. One respondent visited Gold River on a fishing trip.

Gold River has an abundance of nature and a rich history of culture but when in the town there are only a few boutiques.

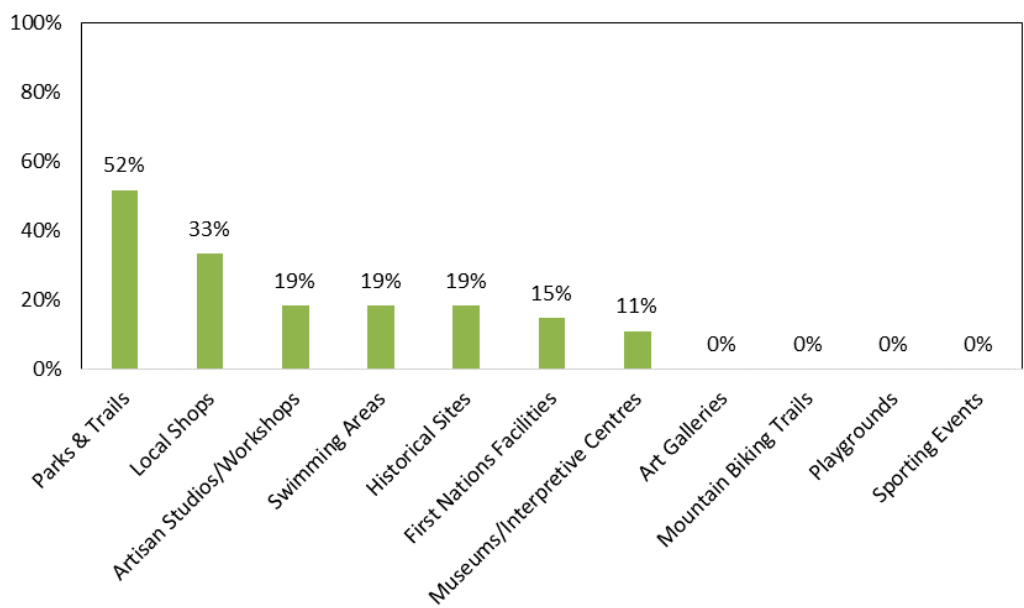


Figure 9. Respondents to the VES chose the locations they visited and activities they took part in while in Gold River.

While in Gold River, most respondents participated in outdoor activities, including self-guided sightseeing (47%), hiking (37%), and freshwater swimming (27%). No respondents selected cycling, mountain

biking, kayaking, scuba diving, stand-up-paddle boarding, surfing, or whale-watching, despite the availability of these activities.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT DATA CAPTURING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

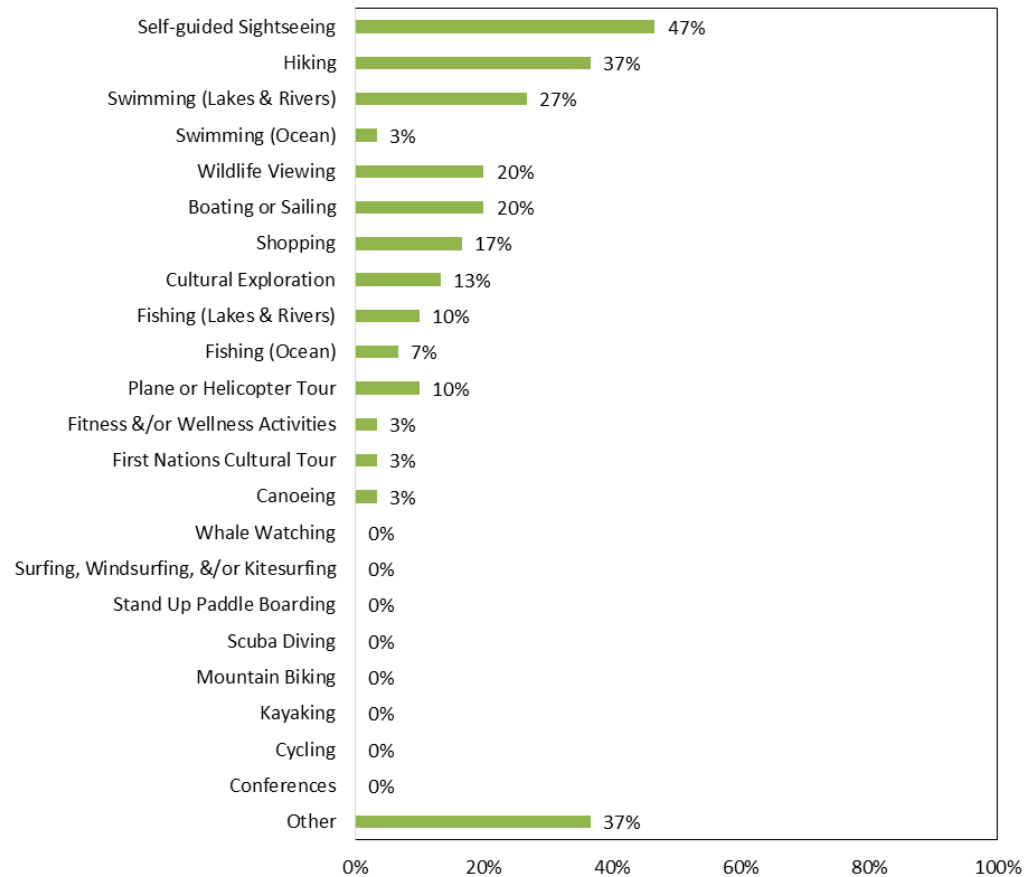


Figure 10. Respondents to the VES selected all of the activities they visit Gold River for and the surrounding area to take part in.

When visitors were asked how far out of Gold River they traveled for recreational activities, 29% travelled 21-40 km, 25% traveled 11-20 km, 16 travelled less than 5km, 6% travelled 6 - 10 km, and 6% did not leave town. There are many opportunities for recreational activities

within the Village, but its geography and proximity to a variety of activities makes it a great hub that visitors are taking advantage of. This data suggests that the majority of people are willing to travel a relatively far distance for activities when staying in Gold River.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT DATA CAPTURING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

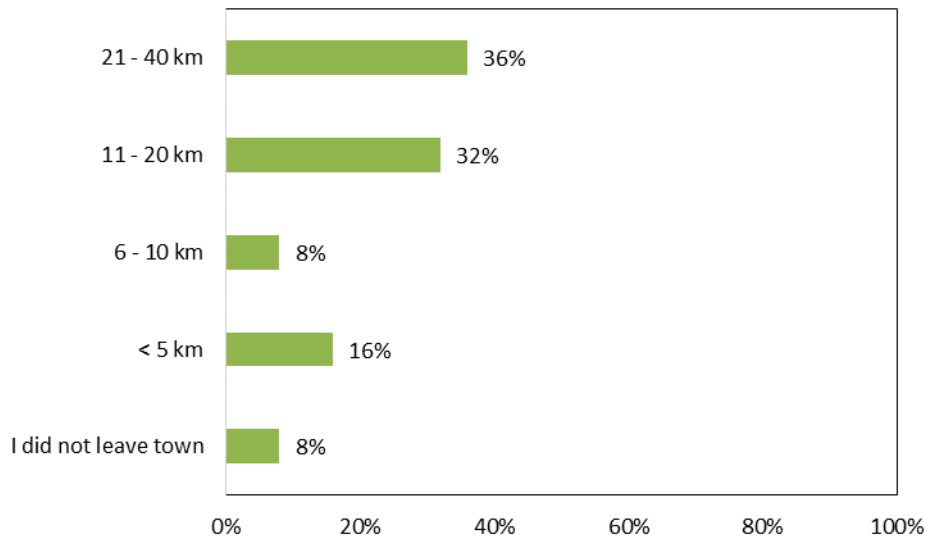


Figure 11. Respondents to the VES answered how far they are travelling to take part in their chosen activities from their accommodation in Gold River.

Perceptions of Experience

Perceptions of experience are based on how travelers felt about the interactions they had with their destination and the community they visited. In many cases, these are the memories that tourists keep after a trip is over. It can also reveal whether the activities a traveler decided to participate in while on vacation matched or exceeded the expectation that they anticipated while booking and planning. A good experience can lead to repeat tourists and positive publicity.

Overall, according to respondents of the VES, Gold River is doing well with experience matching. Many participants stated features that had motivated them to visit, including:

- 1) Scenic beauty
- 2) Outdoor recreation activities
- 3) Overall atmosphere of the area

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT DATA CAPTURING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Further questioning determined tourists were most satisfied with the:

- 1) Scenic beauty
- 2) Coastal Climate
- 3) Overall atmosphere of the area

Alternatively, it was found that visitors were very unsatisfied with:

- 1) Shopping opportunities
- 2) Overall atmosphere
- 3) Variety of dining options

Many respondents noted the need for a grocery store and the expansion of shopping and dining experiences overall.

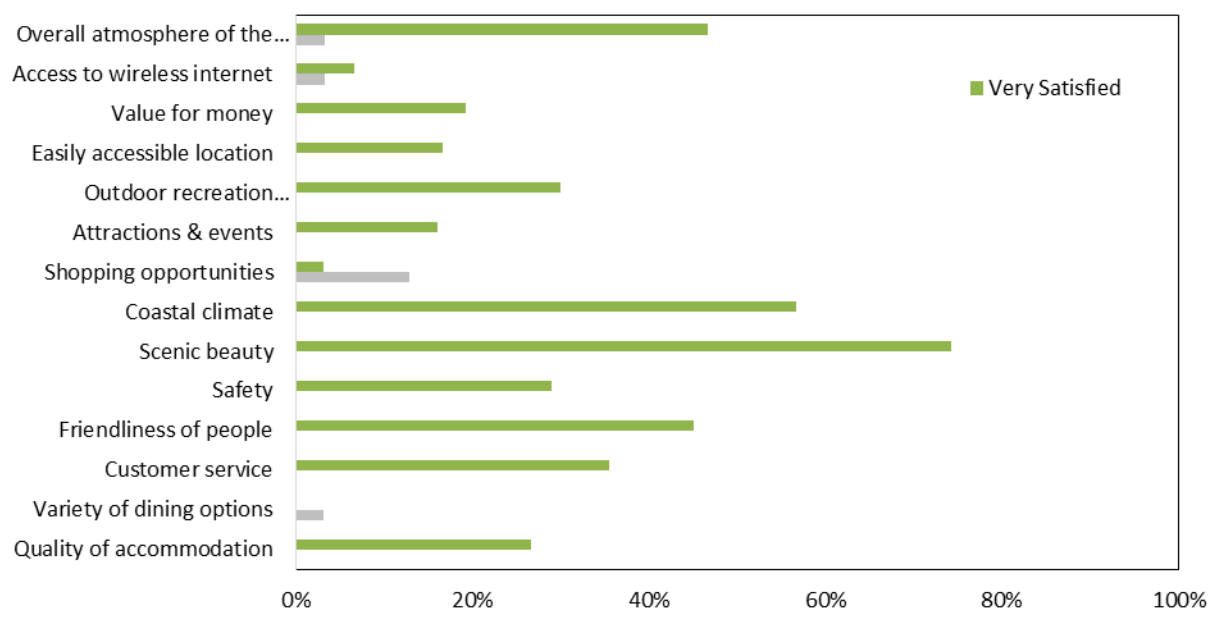


Figure 12. Respondents to the VES selected the Gold River amenities and features that they were most and least satisfied with.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT DATA CAPTURING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Further, visitors were asked how likely they were to recommend Gold River as a place to visit to family and friends. Of the respondents, 96% rated Gold River between 7 and 10 as a place to visit. Those who visit Gold River enjoy their time and are highly likely to make recommendations, which helps to promote tourism in the area. This data can be used further to achieve the creation of a net promoter score for the Village (See Appendix A).

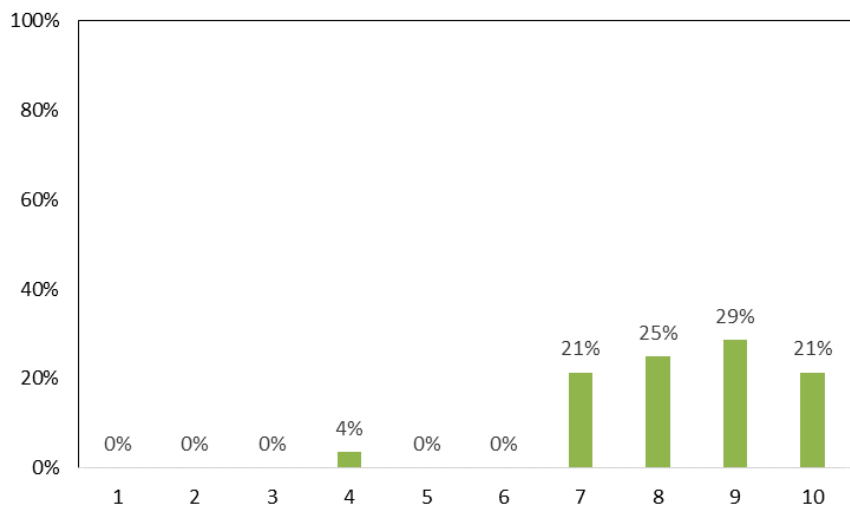


Figure 13. Respondents to VES indicated on a scale of one to ten the likelihood they would recommend visiting Gold River to their family and friends. One indicates “very unlikely” and ten indicates “very likely”.

Accommodation, Food and Beverage, and Retail

Accommodation, food and beverage, and retail make up a large part of the economic benefits of tourism. In comparison to similarly sized communities, Gold River has a small service sector.

Groups were asked how much they spent on a typical day in Gold River. On average, groups spent \$97.00 on accommodations, \$65.00 on meals, \$49.00 on entertainment, attractions, and activities, and \$41.00 on shopping.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT DATA CAPTURING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

When totaling per-day group expenditures, 64.5% of visitors spent more than \$100.00 per day during their visit and 35.5% reported spending less than \$50.00 per day. It should be noted

that those who reported that they did not spend anything on accommodations or food stayed with friends or family or had pre-paid expenses.

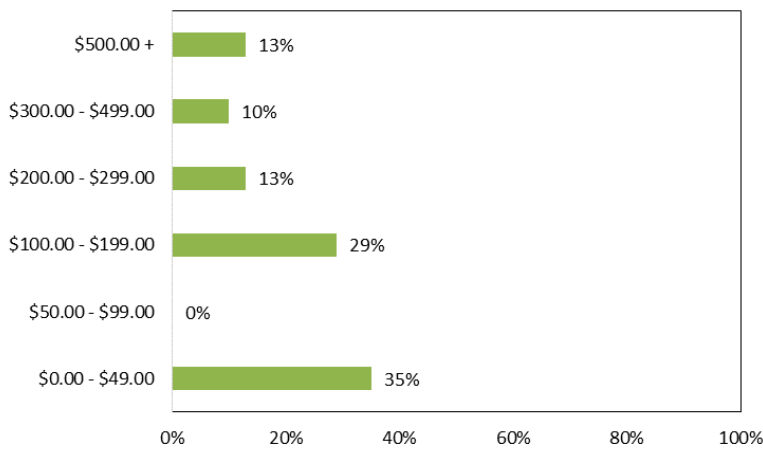


Figure 14. Respondents to the VES selected the how much on average their group was spending per day on their trip to Gold River.

Visitors were asked if there were any services, infrastructure, or amenities that would have enhanced their stay in Gold River. Of the respondents, 38% said that a

grocery store would enhance their stay. The only grocery store in Gold River closed in 2016 and it is a resource that is missed by visitors and residents alike ¹⁵.

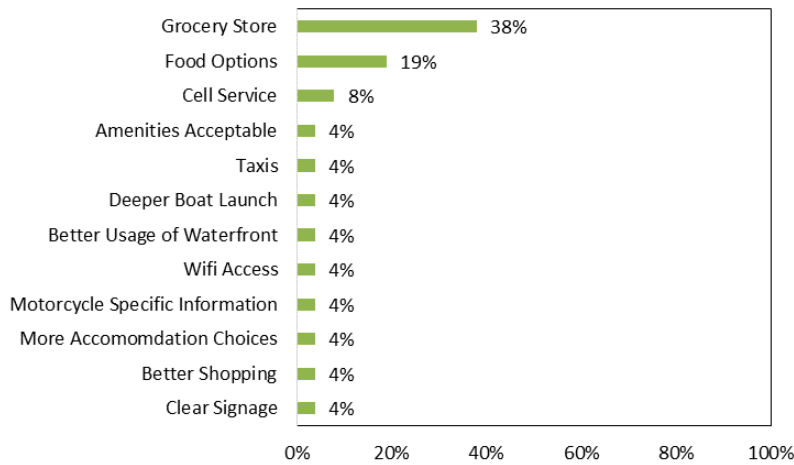


Figure 15. Respondents to the VES identified services, infrastructure, and amenities that were missing from Gold River that would have enhanced their stay.



Section 8 RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

Goal 1:

Create a governance structure supporting the development of tourism capacity in Gold River.

Rationale

A successful tourism industry in Gold River requires active participation from all sectors. A formal means of communication and organizational structure will create and establish opportunities for partnership and collaboration. Establishing steps and working towards creating effective partnerships is a top priority.



Objective 1.1

Build a public-private partnership-based organization to develop and promote the tourism industry in Gold River.

Actions

- Work with a newly structured “Destination Gold River” team to envision tourism beyond product and economic development. Tourism has the enhanced capacity for community development through local engagement, collaboration, civic pride, and partnerships. This team should be responsible for leading the implementation of the Tourism Strategic Plan and should be structured with broad-based representation:
 - Invite MMFN into all discussions and implementation related to the Tourism Strategic Plan;
 - Identify a location for the tourism organization to meet;
 - Establish a marketing committee for Tourism in Gold River; and,
 - Include the Chamber of Commerce.

RECOMMENDATIONS



Objective 1.2

Actively work to develop partnerships and collaboration for planning, constructing, and maintaining tourism opportunities. Potential Partnerships include MMFN, BC Archives, Community stakeholders, Village of Gold River, Campbell River Museum, and local businesses.

Actions

- Bring together existing operators to explore the opportunities and constraints for building community tourism capacity.
- Increase communication with neighbouring jurisdictions, such as Strathcona Provincial Park and the Village of Tahsis to identify cross-jurisdictional packaging to promote tourism in the region.
- Explore the feasibility of developing partnerships between the village, secondary school aged students from School District 84, and Mowachaht Muchalaht First Nation for trail construction:
 - Municipalities across BC have been successful in creating summer work programs for secondary students to develop hiking and biking trails;
 - These trails could be constructed as multi-use trails (e.g, mountain biking, hiking, horseback riding, off road vehicles); and,
 - Funding for trail construction for off-road vehicles and bicycles is available through the Provincial government.



Objective 1.3

Initiate conversations with MMFN to identify interest and opportunities for cultural and heritage themed tourism.

Actions

- Explore a partnership with MMFN as leaders in the development of authentic cultural and heritage tourism products;
- Consider heritage sites and sensitive programming to support outdoor recreation and protection of sites;

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Determine the feasibility of an interpretive programming to support outdoor recreation and protection of sites; and,
- Develop programming related to the Uchuck to highlight the heritage of the area and provide interpretation for the area.

Goal 2:

Create a community brand and marketing materials.

Rationale

Visitor demand for authentic cultural tourism is increasing in British Columbia. MMFN is the appropriate leader and best positioned to develop experiences that feature culturally authentic tourism products designed to exceed visitor expectations, while contributing greater quality of life and vibrancy for local residents.



Objective 2.1

Determine and promote the signature experiences of Gold River.

Actions

- Use the data collected from the visitor information centre to continually assess visitor market segments;
- Work to understand the domestic tourist market segment, as currently domestic visitors constitute the majority of Gold River's visitorship; and,
- Using available software packages, track hashtags and locations on Instagram, Facebook, and snapchat to determine where people are going and what they are doing

RECOMMENDATIONS



Objective 2.2

Increase exposure to potential niche markets.

Actions

- Use EQ profile to identify traveller types to segment and market to tourist groups.
 - Results from public engagement and the VES tourism survey suggest that activities such as rock climbing, motorcycling, and hiking are popular in the area.



Objective 2.3

Use storytelling to enhance the community brand.

Actions

- Create a record of stories and archival documents for the community to draw upon;
- Allow the community archive stories to be accessed either before or during a visit either online or through signage;
- Incorporate the story of Luna and other killer whale stories in outdoor waterfront spaces and packages; and,
- Utilize community art to tell the story of Gold River.



Objective 2.4

Make pre-trip planning an enjoyable and accessible experience.

Actions

- Assist businesses to create functional websites.
 - There is potential to offer seminars or financial rewards to businesses to create effective websites.
- Provide information for tours and self-guided tours should on a new Gold River Tourism website.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Goal 3:

Improve and increase the tourism capacity of Gold River.

Rationale

Tourism is an export industry that relies heavily on the use of community infrastructure and natural resources. Currently, Gold River's waterfront and downtown lacks much of what is required for both the community and tourists. Focused development of those areas in particular would be very helpful to the tourism economy. Community engagement exercises and the 2018 Economic Development Strategy for Gold River highlight the importance of developing the dock and waterfront for the future economic success of Gold River. EQ profiles for the traveler types visiting Gold River indicates visitors seek opportunities to view marine life, observe pristine coastlines, and dine at restaurants offering local ingredients as their top three most appealing activities. Developing the waterfront would provide the experiences that tourists are seeking out as well as the desires of the residents.

- 1) For non-residents, navigating through Gold River and to the surrounding sites can be difficult because of a lack of wayfinding and interpretive signage. Signage is critical to a successful tourism industry because the easier it is for visitors to identify where a place's attractions and amenities are, the more likely they are to spend time and money in the community. However, if a visitor has a difficult time navigating a place, they may miss a destination, give up, and possibly never return. In addition to the economic effect of wayfinding, it is also important to establishing a community's identity or brand. Wherever possible, signage should recognize the intangible and linguistic heritage of MMFN and should provide translations and interpretive signage at points of interest or important locations.
- 2) The Village sign located outside of the Visitor Information Centre serves as the Gateway to Gold River, yet the location is disconnected from the Village itself and does little to guide visitors to the Village Square or Muchalat Inlet. Community gateways generate a sense of

RECOMMENDATIONS

place and foreshadow the quality of the Village beyond. Creating a plan to revitalize the community entrance and continuing that scheme through Gold River Drive and into the Village square will not only create a natural thoroughfare for tourists to spend time and money in the Village, but will help to convey the community's image as a high quality place to visit.

- 3) Multiple motorcycling websites advertise Highway 28 as an excellent ride. From those surveyed, 10% of the visitors coming into Gold River are travelling on motorcycle. One response from a visitor survey with regards to motorcycling tours was: "I would have liked more information on the roads around Gold River, and perhaps more friendly motorcycle specific information."
- 4) The "Tree to Sea Drive" currently extends from Gold River to Tahsis and incorporates signage for key geographic features, such as the road summit and points of interest, including waterfalls, lakes, and viewpoints. Extending this model from Gold River to Campbell River is an opportunity to capitalize on an already successful tourism drive. Of the visitors to Gold River, 96% of respondents drove to their destination. Creating partnerships to strategically brand the drive as part of the tourism destination could have positive benefits for Gold River and the region.
- 5) Cave tourism is a novelty tourism product that can be enjoyed year round as the internal temperature of caves remains constant in the winter. This is a unique tourism product that is unlike any other on Vancouver Island.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Objective 3.1

Improve wayfinding to and within Gold River.



Actions

- Plan for interpretive, informative, and wayfinding signage standards;
- Emphasize the Village entrance with high quality design to guide traffic into Gold River;
- Establish a motorcycle route on Highway 28;
- Work with the Village of Tahsis, Destination BC, Hello BC, the City of Campbell River, Strathcona Provincial Park, and the museum archives to develop an extension of the Tree to Sea highway sign tour that leads to the Gold River dock and begins in Strathcona or Campbell River; and,
- Improve signage to Upana Caves.

Objective 3.2

Increase funding opportunities to improve Gold River's community capacity to support tourism.



Actions

- Consider including a small hotel tax to supplement costs for marketing, branding, supportive infrastructure, and related projects in Gold River's tourism sector.
 - An application to apply for implementation of the Municipal and Regional District Tax can be found on the Destination BC website.
- Explore funding and grant options related to community development products.
 - The BC rural dividend program has multiple tiers of funding. Consider applying for a higher tier to support a part or full-time employee dedicated to the advancement of tourism in Gold River.
- Conduct a feasibility analysis for bi-monthly transit service between Gold River and Campbell River for tourists and residents alike.
- Explore the feasibility of shuttle services between downtown Gold River and local and regional attractions such as the Muchalat Inlet, Upana Caves, Strathcona Provincial Park, etc.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Objective 3.3

Maintain and develop the built environment of the community in a way that will foster the tourism economy.



Actions

- Initiate conversations with waterfront stakeholders regarding the development of a waterfront/estuary master plan including retail, food and beverage, dock expansion, better parking, a fuel dock, and long-term moorage;
- Maintain beautification efforts throughout the town;
- Initiate conversations with downtown stakeholders with regards to the development of a downtown revitalization plan, which could aim to create a more cohesive and attractive focal point in Gold River for tourism-related activities including contracting tourism services, food and beverage, retail, and an outdoor event and festival space; and,
- Continue to work with Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation and the Strathcona Regional District to discuss a strategy for broadband/telecommunications services.

Goal 4:

Improve the visitor experience and provide unique tourism products.

Rationale

The tourist survey and review of North Island tourism indicated that visitors to Gold River and the surrounding region are drawn to nature-based tourism experiences, with the majority of those tourists, 56%, seeking new hiking opportunities. Many communities have been successful with self-guided tour programs that move visitors through town and also encourage them to stay at local accommodations, increasing their length of stay in the Village. Based on the tourism survey, over 50% of tourists visit parks and trails during their time in Gold River. Package tours are particularly successful when they incorporate similar, or complementary products.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Gold River has many amenities related to adventure and eco-tourism. Another strength of Gold River is its community recreation facilities and school gymnasium. These facilities have the potential to accommodate large groups of people. Hosting special events, conferences, and festivals would be a good primary motivator to get tourists to the community so that while there, they can experience the eco-tourism and adventure tourism offered by the region.

Providing accommodations to a segment of tourists will help develop Gold River's capacity to accommodate the niche markets they attract. By having amenities that are branded with Gold River's tourism product will attract more people to stay in those accommodations, which will provide economic benefits to the community.



Objective 4.1

Strengthen the attractions and activities that Gold River offers visitors.

Actions

- Work with businesses to create products that can be adapted through each season to continually attract tourist, creating a year-round adventure and nature-based tourism industry in Gold River.
 - Other communities do this by developing summer, winter, and shoulder season activities (e.g. using trails in the summer for mountain biking activities and then using those same trails to provide skiing opportunities).
- Look into assisting businesses to help improve their capacity to provide guided and self-guided tourism products.
 - It's suggested that products focus on diverse natural amenities that make Gold River a destination for eco- and adventure tourism.
- Look at the carrying capacity of developing additional guided fishing tours.
 - Meet with the existing operators to discuss and develop a plan to further develop this market.
- Look into developing package tours, combining transportation, accommodation, and adventure or nature-based activities:
 - Consider partnerships with the Uckuck, Nootka Air, and tour bus operators, as they would all likely be part of this tourism product; and,
 - Support the development of guide outfitting businesses in the downtown that can lead novice outdoors people to the local sites.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Look to improve, if possible, and maintain the region's trail network.
 - Ensure that recreation trails and facilities follow the BC Government recreation site and trail maintenance and development guidelines.



Objective 4.2

Improve and increase the quantity of tourist accommodations.

Actions

- Support the development of a low cost adventure hostel, possibly one that includes equipment rentals or specific adventure packages.
 - Consider expanding the definition of “Tourist Accommodation” in Zoning Bylaw No. 706 to include “Hostel” or “Adventure Hostel”.
- Look into the development of niche bed and breakfasts, such as container buildings, yurts, or tree houses that would add to the uniqueness of Gold River as a tourist destination.



Objective 4.3

Facilitate and support the creation of events, conferences, and festivals.

Actions

- Make use of existing recreation facilities to host events, conferences, and festivals, and seek to increase the amount of possible event spaces, such as a designated outdoor area;
- Partner with community organizations to explore different possibilities in order to increase number of events, conferences, and festivals; and,
- Seek to create events that are, as much as possible, consistent with Gold River branding.



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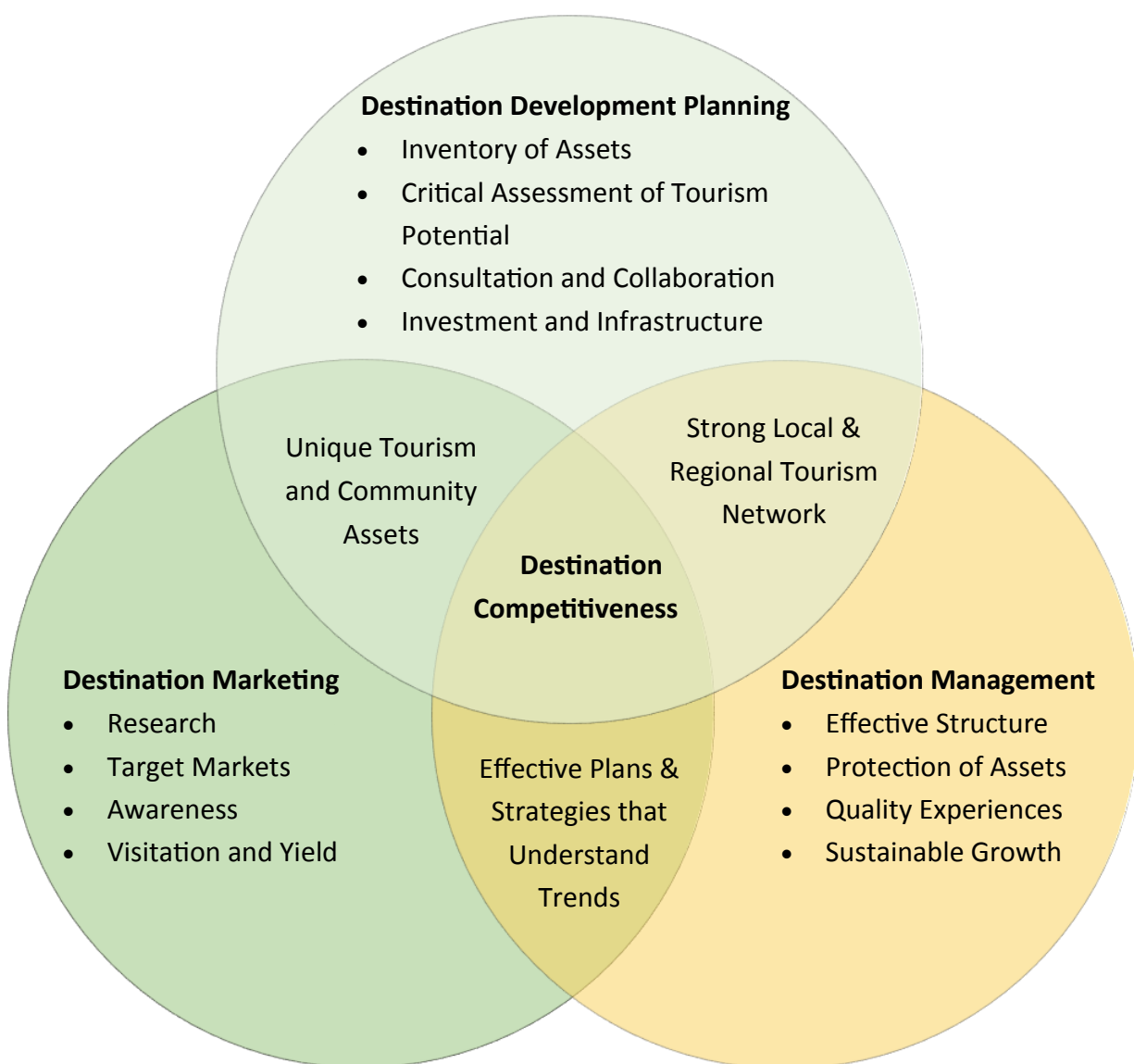


APPENDICES

APPENDIX A—Marketing Considerations

This Gold River Tourism Strategic Plan has provided an in-depth overview of the current tourism trends and existing destination development activities that are directly affecting or influencing tourism in Gold River. This situational analysis has providing the needed context, information, knowledge and probable actions for further planning.

Destination management market planning is organized around a destinations unique tourism assets and marketing needs. It moves beyond traditional marketing and provides a more complete and integrated approach to understanding the tourism potential and the best methods of maximizing that potential. As identified in the UNWTO visual below, market planning can only take place once destination competitiveness has been identified.



APPENDIX A—Marketing Considerations

The global economic situation has made tourism product and destination competition more intense than ever. Partnerships are key to leveraging tourism dollars, particularly in rural, remote communities where advertising and media dollars need to be maximized. It cannot be overstated the importance of regional support in tourism development through the Strathcona Regional District and the other major communities including: Campbell River, Sayward, Tahsis and Zeballos. These communities, including Gold River, are positioned to be recipients of the redirection flow of ‘over-tourism’ influx in regions such as Tofino and Victoria. While these communities have reaped the benefits of economic growth and global awareness, they are also suffering as local amenities and infrastructure are put under enormous strain. That is why it is essential that market planning be undertaken with sustainability embedded. A marketing plan is typically an annual plan identifying marketing and strategies specific to the long-term goals. It has three primary objectives: [1] provide a framework of accountability; [2] document the basic work plan; and, [3] identify the relevant costs, timing and specific initiatives.

Some considerations for Gold River's Marketing Plan (examples only)

Consider Seasonality (shoulder season and winter seasons) and Product

Spring/Summer

- Marine tourism
- Beaches and Rivers
- Sporting events
- Motorsports: boating, motorcycles, ATV
- Activities and Adventures: rock climbing, caving, hiking, wild life watching

Fall/Winter

- Events
- Hockey
- Backcountry camping

Year-Round

- Festivals/events
- Hiking/biking trails
- Marine tourism
- Cultural and Heritage tourism

APPENDIX A—Marketing Considerations

Consider your Branding: Are you going to develop your Digital Media strategy or your Digital Detox Strategy?

Technological readiness is a hot debate in tourism today. If Gold River enhances their Internet access, it provides the opportunity to further advance digital media strategies (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Website, YouTube, photography, video, e-newsletter, user generated content, blog). However, the fastest growing trend, and economical approach is Brand Ambassadors. Connecting with local influencers to leverage their social following. Inviting amateur/emerging professional photographers to promote, explore and experience Gold River in return for a cruise aboard the MV Uchuck or a fishing ex-

cursion is one example. These influencers walk on University campuses, launch start-up businesses and are emerging leaders in brand awareness all over the Island and BC.

Without the advancement of Internet access in Gold River, not all is lost. A fast growing tourism product is Digital Detox, promotions such as “Getting off the Grid”, “Digital Detox Corporate Retreats”, or “Nature Bathing without Technology”. All are branding possibilities that can be supported through regional destination marketing organizations.

Regional Destination Marketing Organizations

There are several Regional Destination Marketing Organizations (RDMOs) within B.C. Each RDMO is registered under the Societies Act and a Regional Board of Directors governs each. The RDMOs are contracted by Destination British Columbia to deliver a range of tourism programs in their region, which ultimately benefit communities and tourism businesses. These resources are available to your community to further support you in your marketing strategies.

[Tourism Vancouver Island](#)

[Cooperative Marketing Partnership Program](#)

[Destination BC](#)

[Hello BC](#)

[BC Tourism Labour Market Strategy](#)

[SuperHost Customer Visitor Training](#)

[Value of Tourism](#)

APPENDIX B—Glossary of Terms

About Tourists

Capacity (individual): The ability of a consumer to participate in tourism.

Consumer: People who have, or will, purchase a travel product or service from a retailer¹.

Desire: is when a potential consumer has knowledge of a destination, experience, or activity that they would like to do.

Dotmocracy: Dot-voting (also known as dotmocracy or voting with dots) is an established facilitation method used to describe voting with dot stickers or marks with a marker pen².

Explorer Quotient (EQ): Explorer Quotient, also known as EQ, was developed by Destination Canada (the Canadian Tourism Association) in partnership with Environics Research Group. EQ is a proprietary market segmentation system based on psychographic science³.

Intention: is when desire to travel is converted into an action that leads to travel, such as a consumer booking a hotel room.

Traveler: A *traveler* is someone who moves between different geographic locations, for any purpose and any duration⁴.

World Café: A *World Café* is a structured conversational process for knowledge sharing in which groups of people discuss a topic at several tables, with individuals switching tables periodically and getting introduced to the previous discussion at their new table by a "table host"⁵.

Types of Tourism

Adventure tourism: Is a form of tourism that contains elements of physical activity, natural environment, and cultural immersion⁶.

Domestic tourism: Is the activities of a traveler who is visiting within the country in which they reside.

Eco-tourism: refers to forms of tourism which the main motivation of the tourist is to observe and appreciate nature, it usually contains an education component and is generally organized through specialized tour operators.⁴

Experiential tourism: is travel motivated by a desire to have a specific experience instead of just participate in an activity.

International tourism: Is the activities of a traveler who is visiting from a foreign country

Sustainable Tourism Sustainable tourism aims to enhance the quality and sustainability of natural and cultural heritage-based experiences by: Minimizing the tourism industry's negative economic, environmental and socio-cultural impacts Generating greater economic benefits for local communities making positive contributions to the preservation of natural and cultural assets.⁶

APPENDIX B—Glossary of Terms

Tourism Product: Is the service or experience a community and the tourism related business with in that community can offer.

Marketing

Audience: A specific consumer group that marketing communications are trying to reach, engage and persuade.¹

Brand: is what gives a location an identity, it is an identifying product, service, or experience for which a location is known.¹

Measurements of Success

KPI (Key Performance Indicator) Is a tangible value given to an business function to assess if that function is meeting or not meeting expectations.¹

The Net Promoter Score (NPS), developed by Frederick Reichheld and Bain & Company in 2002, is a simple metric that helps organizations monitor the engagement of their customers. It reflects the likelihood that customers will recommend a product/company/place to friends, family or colleagues. Visitors who score 9 or 10 on a scale of 1 to 10 are “Promoters” who are likely to return and rave about their travel experience⁷.

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⁷ Destination BC. (2018). Net Promoter Score. Retrieved from <https://www.destinationbc.ca/Resources/Monitoring-and-Evaluation/Net-Promoter-Score.aspx>

APPENDIX C— Gold River Visitor Experience Survey

This tourism plan is being created in partnership with Vancouver Island University's Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region Research Institute (MABRRI), The World Leisure Centre of Excellence (WLCE), and Village of Gold River. The plan is intended to provide direction to the Municipality of Gold River in order to support the local tourism industry in meeting the needs of visitors. As a recent visitor to Gold River, we would appreciate 10 - 15 minutes of your time to complete this survey.

This survey asks for no identifying information and all the data collected will be kept confidential. The information that you provide will be summarized and presented in an anonymous format.

Your participation in this online survey is voluntary. You may choose to answer as many questions as you wish or stop at any time. By answering the questions in this survey, you are agreeing to participate. There will be no negative consequences if you choose not to complete the survey.

By completing this survey, you are eligible to enter for a chance to win two free tickets to experience a 1-day adventure cruise with [GetWest Adventure Cruises](#).

1. I am above the age of 19

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

2. Which of the following statements best describes you?

- a. I was visiting Gold River for the first time
- b. I was returning to Gold River, I visit once a year
- c. I return between two and four times a year
- d. I visit Gold River more than four times a year
- e. I live in Gold River

3. In total, what was the length of your trip?

4. How many nights in total did you stay in Gold River?

5. Would you say that your visit to Gold River was...?

- a. The primary destination of your trip
- b. One of several planned stops on your trip, but on the main destination
- c. An unplanned stop on your way to another destination
- d. Other (please specify)

APPENDIX C— Gold River Visitor Experience Survey

6. What was your primary form of transportation to get to Gold River?

- a. Car
- b. Bus
- c. Boat
- d. Plane
- e. Other (please specify)

7. Once in Gold River area, what forms of transportation did you use to travel to the area's attractions?

(Please select all that apply)

- a. Car/truck
- b. All-terrain vehicle (ATV)/Dirt-bike/Side-by-side
- c. Kayak/canoe
- d. Other (please specify)

8. The purpose of your trip was? (Please choose the best response)

- a. Business and/or work
- b. Leisure
- c. Combination of work and leisure
- d. To visit friends and relatives
- e. Other (please specify)

9. Were you visiting Gold River to attend a specific event?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If yes, what event (Please specify below)

10. Please describe your motivation to visit Gold River? (Please type your answer in the space provided below)

APPENDIX C— Gold River Visitor Experience Survey

11. Please indicate which of the following tourism attractions you visited when in Gold River? (Please select all that apply)

- a. Art galleries
- b. Artisan studios/workshops
- c. Swimming areas
- d. First nations facilities, cultural centres, and/or events
- e. Historical sites
- f. Local shop/boutiques
- g. Mountain biking trails
- h. Museums and /or interpretive centres
- i. Parks and trails
- j. Playgrounds
- k. Sporting event
- l. Other (please specify)

12. Please indicate which of the following activities you or members of your party participated in when in the Gold River (please select all that apply)

- a. Swimming (lakes and rivers)
- b. Swimming (ocean)
- c. Boating or sailing
- d. Canoeing
- e. Conferences
- f. Cycling
- g. Mountain biking
- h. First nations cultural tour and or dance performance
- i. Fishing (fresh water)
- j. Fishing (salt water)
- k. Fitness and/or wellness activities
- l. Aerial tour (flight-seeing) by plane or helicopter
- m. Hiking
- n. Kayaking
- o. Mountain biking
- p. Scuba diving

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- q. Self-guided sightseeing
- r. Cultural exploration
- s. Shopping
- t. Stand up paddle boarding
- u. Surfing, windsurfing and/or kitesurfing
- v. Whale watching
- w. Wildlife viewing
- X. Other (please specify)

13. While staying in Gold River, how far out of town did you travel for recreation activities?

- a. Less than five kilometers
- b. Between six and ten kilometers
- c. Between eleven and twenty kilometers
- d. Between twenty-one and forty kilometers
- e. I did not leave town
- f. Not Applicable as I did not stay in Gold River

14. How did you book the activities and attractions you participated in during this visit to Gold River

- a. Booked ahead of time directly with a tour/activity company
- b. Booked during my stay with the tour/activity company
- c. Booked using a travel agency or tour operator
- d. Booked with a travel booking website
- e. Purchased a coupon using a discount website
- f. Booked through a visitor information centre
- g. Not applicable
- h. Other (please specify)

15. How many nights did you spend in each of the following forms of accommodation when in Gold River (indicate number of nights in each using a numerical format eg. 0,1,2,3 etc.)

a. Bed and breakfast

b. Cabin/cottage

c. Campground/RV park

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- d. Home of a friend or family member
- e. On a personal boat
- f. Vacation rental/ guest house
- g. Other (please specify)

16. How did you book your accommodation for this visit to Gold River

- a. Booked ahead of time directly with an accommodation provider
- b. Discount/coupon website
- c. Property management company
- d. Travel agency
- e. Travel booking website
- f. Vacation rental booking website
- g. Visitor information centre
- h. Not applicable
- i. Other (please specify)

17. Please indicate which type of food and beverage establishments you or members of your party used in Gold River (please select all that apply)

- a. Fast food
- b. Café
- c. Bakery
- d. Pub
- e. Restaurant
- f. Convenience store
- g. Other (please specify)

18. How important were each of the following features in your decision to visit Gold River (please select the option that best describes your response for each)

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------|
| a. Quality of accommodation | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| b. Variety of dining options | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| c. Customer service | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| d. Friendliness of people | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| e. Safety | 1 2 3 4 5 |

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f. Scenic beauty	1 2 3 4 5
g. Coastal climate	1 2 3 4 5
h. Shopping opportunities	1 2 3 4 5
i. Attractions & events	1 2 3 4 5
j. Outdoor recreation activities	1 2 3 4 5
k. Easily accessible location	1 2 3 4 5
l. Value for money	1 2 3 4 5
m. Access to wireless internet	1 2 3 4 5
n. Overall atmosphere of the area	1 2 3 4 5

19. Recalling your actual experience on this trip to Gold River, how would you evaluate each of the following aspects of your trip (please select the option that best describes your response for each)

a. Quality of accommodation	1 2 3 4 5
b. Variety of dining options	1 2 3 4 5
c. Customer service	1 2 3 4 5
d. Friendliness of people	1 2 3 4 5
e. Safety	1 2 3 4 5
f. Scenic beauty	1 2 3 4 5
g. Coastal climate	1 2 3 4 5
h. Shopping opportunities	1 2 3 4 5
i. Attractions & events	1 2 3 4 5
j. Outdoor recreation activities	1 2 3 4 5
k. Easily accessible location	1 2 3 4 5
l. Value for money	1 2 3 4 5
m. Access to wireless internet	1 2 3 4 5
n. Overall atmosphere of the area	1 2 3 4 5

20. Do you have any suggestions to improve your visit? (Please specify in the space below)

21. About how far ahead did you plan your trip (please indicate the best response)

- a. Spur of the moment
- b. Up to one week in advance
- c. Between one week and one month
- d. Between one to six months
- e. More than six months

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22. Which of the following sources of information did you use to plan your trip to Gold River before and/or during your visit? (please check all that apply)
- a. Previous personal experience (previous visit)
 - b. Blogs
 - c. Destination-specific website
 - d. Friends and relatives
 - e. Magazine/newspaper
 - f. Regional tourism guide/pamphlet
 - g. Social media
 - h. Television/radio shows
 - i. Travel agency and or tour operator
 - j. Travel app for smartphone or tablet
 - k. Travel book/brochure (eg. Lonely planet guide or travel agent)
 - l. Brochure
 - m. Travel booking website
 - n. Travel information centre
 - o. Travel rack on BC ferries
 - p. Travel trade show
 - q. Websites providing traveler
 - r. www.helllobc.com
23. Approximately how much money would you say your group spent on a typical day when in Gold River on each of the following categories (Please enter an amount of Canadian dollars amount and do not include a dollar (\$) sign.)
- a. Accommodation
 - b. Transportation
 - c. Meals
 - d. Entertainment, attraction, activities
 - e. Shopping
24. Where is your primary place of residence? (Please do not provide your postal address)
- a. Vancouver Island
 - b. British Columbia
 - c. Canada
 - d. United States
 - e. Other (please specify)

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25. Which of the following describes your group size? (please select all that apply)

- a. Travelling alone
- b. Travelling with a spouse or partner
- c. Travelling with a friend(s)
- d. Traveling with children under age 19
- e. Travelling with parents
- f. Travelling with siblings
- g. Travelling with organized group or tour
- h. Other (please specify)

26. Please state your age

27. If you travelled with a pet(s), please indicate the type of animal(s) and the total number of pets in the space below

- a. Number of pets
- b. Type of pets

28. How likely are you to recommend Gold River to family/friends as a place to visit? Please use a scale of 0-10, where 0 indicates “very unlikely” and 10 indicates “very likely”

a. Likelihood to recommend destination 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

29. Did you feel there were any services, infrastructure or amenities missing that would have enhanced your stay in the area?

30. If you would like to be entered in the grand prize draw please state your email address in the box below.

31. If there is anything else you would like to comment on about your visit, please do so in the space provided below. We welcome your comments.