

Section 2: One-Year Tactical Plan with Performance Measures

Major Category: Governance

Activity Title: **Effective Governance of DMO**

Tactics:

- Ensure effective governance, planning and reporting

Implementation Plan

Description: Govern the organization effectively and assist in managing collaborative partnerships with local, regional and provincial stakeholders.

Objectives:

- MRDT revenue increase of 2% annually
- Successful MRDT 3% application (increase from collecting 2% to 3% to be in place for collection by the start of Q3)

Rationale: Squamish has successfully gained awareness within the market and Tourism Squamish needs to maintain and grow the existing marketing partnerships to fully capitalize on this opportunity. Strong, effective governance is key to ensuring organizational sustainability and long-term member engagement and support.

Action Steps:

- Conduct monthly board and committee meetings as needed
- Conduct annual strategic planning review
- Conduct annual Stakeholder Survey
- Apply for Destination BC cooperative funding programs to leverage marketing dollars
- Review and refine communication with members and wider community, particularly regarding marketing metrics/impacts of marketing initiatives
- Establish Board sub-committees that meet on a regular basis to tackle some of the project work

Partnerships: Tourism Squamish members, board, regional and provincial DMO partners

Resources: Tourism Squamish

Funding: Staff time only

Responsibility: Tourism Squamish staff and board

Timeframe:

Monthly board and regular committee meetings

District of Squamish deadlines:

- Annual plan and budget draft – October 31
- Semi-annual plan review and presentation - March council meeting
- Annual report due April 30

BCDMOA meetings:

- Spring
- Fall

Professional development & stakeholder satisfaction survey timeframe:

- Annual stakeholder satisfaction survey - February
- Annual Strategic Plan review – October

Destination BC cooperative program application timeframe:

- Sept-Oct campaign development and partner commitment
- November 30, 2018 applications due
- February 2019 adjudication and approval for FY19/20

Evaluation Mechanism: Successful approval of strategic plan by District of Squamish and eligible MRDT accommodation businesses; successful MRDT application to Ministry of Finance

Performance Measures:

Output Measures

- Number of board and committee meetings held
- Annual strategic planning review
- Professional development activities for DMO staff and board

Outcome Measures

- Stakeholder Survey results
- MRDT revenues
- DBC cooperative funding program approval amount
- MRDT increase to collection of 3% tax

Major Category: Marketing

Activity Title: **Media Relations**

Tactics:

- Remain active with the Travel Media Association of Canada and its membership
- Attend Travel Media Association (TMAC) and Canada Media Marketplace (CMM) conferences
- Target and host relevant media and influencers
- Develop and distribute “must-see, must-do” itineraries and quarterly story starters fresh sheet
- Actively seek to collaborate on opportunities to cohost media with partners

Implementation Plan:

Description: Continue to utilize and aggressively pursue three types of media: earned, owned and paid. Earned encompasses community recognition, social shares, key influencer and travel media. Owned includes our websites, blog, newsletter, fresh sheet, social media and content marketing. Paid involves digital and print marketing, video content, pay per click targeting and guest blogs.

Our focus will be on increasing low cost earned media opportunities through building relationships with established and emerging journalists, bloggers and key influencers and micro influencers.

Objectives:

- Increase in relevant travel writers and travel media coverage by 3 stories per year
- Track distribution and re-distribution of media coverage on Squamish and relevant spikes in traffic to the website and social media engagement

Rationale: Tourism Squamish has had much success with media hosting – 30 Media Placements in 2017, including *WestJet Magazine*, *Chatelaine* and *Today’s Parent*. We have successfully partnered with several tourism businesses in the community such as the Sea to Sky Gondola, Canadian Outback Rafting, Executive Suites Resort, Fergies Café, Sea to Sky Air and the Britannia Mine Museum to attract and host top tier media.

Action Steps:

- Remain active with the Travel Media Association of Canada and its membership
- Attend the Travel Media Association of Canada (TMAC) and Canada Media Marketplace annual conferences to showcase Squamish and build connections with some of the most influential Canadian travel media
- Create awareness and interest within our key markets by targeting specific journalists and key influencers and micro influencers and inviting them to visit
- Reach out to relevant targeted media and influencers with an invitation for a customized visit to Squamish, establish and build relationship for future visits
- Develop and distribute “must-see, must-do” itineraries and quarterly story starters fresh sheet to media database to encourage and increase exposure for Squamish
- Actively seek to collaborate on opportunities to cohost media with Tourism Vancouver, Tourism Whistler, Tourism Pemberton, Sunshine Coast and Destination BC

- Update and add content (images and video) to the Digital Asset Management System so it is easier for media to pull images and video to accompany their stories

Partnerships: Tourism Squamish members; local and provincial DMO partners

Resources: Tourism Squamish has strong working relationships with local tourism business operators that understand the important role that travel media play in providing valuable exposure about the destination. Tourism Squamish staff also have a proven track record of working with industry partners such as Tourism Whistler, Tourism Pemberton, Tourism Vancouver and Destination BC.

Funding: mix of MRDT / Grant funding

Responsibility: Tourism Squamish staff (coordination)

Timeframe: On-going, with a focus on fall, winter and spring.

Evaluation Mechanism:

- Travel media opportunities
- Shows attended
- Media kit and Digital Asset Management System

Performance Measures:

Output Measures

- Number of media hosted
- Number of media placements

Outcome Measures

- 5% increase in traffic in target markets to ExploreSquamish.com
- 5% increase in digital asset downloads

Major Category: Marketing

Activity Title: **Festivals, Events, Celebrations and Sport Tourism**

Tactics:

- Promote extended stays (often sold out over the weekends) so will focus on promoting pre-and post-event visitation
- Promote the other “things to do” while visiting Squamish
- Online promotions and social media to increase awareness of events
- Collaboration with event partners
- Update content on the Meetinsquamish.com website and better promote through the exploresquamish.com website

Implementation Plan

Description: The primary focus is on Squamish’s “signature” festivals and events to capitalize on their notoriety and the people attending these events to promote and increase overnight stays. Secondary focus on growing the sport tourism events in Squamish as well as promoting the training opportunities that accompany them.

Some of the key festivals and events in Squamish include Squamish Days Loggers Sports, Squamish Triathlon, Squamish Mountain Festival, Squamish 50, Polar Express, Thomas the Train, Brackendale Eagle Festival, Squamish Wind Festival, Squamish Beer Festival, Spawkwus Mountain Bike Race, BC Bike Race and RBC GranFondo.

Objectives:

- Leverage festivals and events to increase overnight stays, length of stay and average spend in Squamish
- Promote accommodation options through ExploreSquamish.com
- Ensure mobile *Street Team* has a presence at signature festivals and events to provide visitor servicing to enhance the visitor experience

Rationale: The festivals and events hosted in Squamish are varied and attract a wide range of visitors from families with young children to outdoor enthusiasts to elite athletes. The schedule of activities provides the opportunity for on-going communication with our existing and potential visitors. Many of the events have long success rates and all offer the opportunity for increased exposure. Even when events have the potential of selling out (e.g. bike races), there are opportunities for spectators to visit during the event and participants to travel to the destination for training.

Action Steps:

- Maintain on-going collaboration with partners to ensure a consistent approach to maximize communication and marketing opportunities for all signature events
- Develop and distribute Festivals and Events sheet and calendar to partners and visitors
- Increase awareness of events through:
 - Blog posts

- Pay per click targeting key search terms
- Social media channels
- Banner ad placement on relevant websites
- Inclusion of event calendar in the Squamish Adventure Guide
- Host outreach events for festival and event partners to collaborate and share marketing efforts in addition to offering support
- On-going collaboration with partners to ensure a consistent approach to maximize communication and marketing opportunities for all signature events
- Develop and distribute Festivals & Events calendar to partners and visitors
- Encourage event organizers to offer “lead up” micro events around the same theme to capture additional room nights. (e.g.: Beer Festival offering 2 days of beer workshops prior to festival)
- Encourage event organizers to capture data about their participants including number of participants, number of people who stayed overnight, total room nights and key visitor demographics
- Host a wedding planner FAM tour to showcase our wedding venues

Partnerships: Tourism Squamish members; festival and event organizers; District of Squamish, Tourism Squamish members

Resources: Tourism Squamish has strong working relationships with local festival and event organizers and understands the role that our DMO can play in both promoting the event and providing value-add to the visitor.

Funding: Mix of MRDT and grant funding

Responsibility: Tourism Squamish staff (coordination) and festivals and event organizers (information/event hosting)

Timeframe: Most festivals are in the summer season, but the Polar Express, Refresh Market and Brackendale Eagle Festival provide opportunities to draw attention to the winter season.

Evaluation Mechanism:

- Event / race attendance
- Engagement with event landing pages
- Hotel occupancy during events as well as pre-and post
- Satisfaction of event organizers

Performance Measures:

Output Measures

- Types of marketing activities
- Number of event campaigns and results
- Description of social media activities and outcomes
- Webpage visits

Outcome Measures

- Establish event attendance metrics (start measuring & reporting on number of attendees)
- % click rate on banner ads
- Spike in accommodation occupancy, particularly during events
- Number of events held in Squamish

- Visitor inquiries/calls regarding events
- Number of visitor qualified by the Visitor Centre and Street Teams

Major Category: Marketing

Activity Title: **Leisure Travelers**

Tactics:

- Encourage visitation during non-peak periods and mid-week
- Attend consumer show to increase awareness of Squamish as an adventure destination
- Print, television and transit bus campaigns in Lower Mainland
- Blog posts featuring active and passive adventure itineraries
- Capitalize on the high visitor traffic at the Adventure Centre (Visitor Centre)
- Maintain ongoing strategic email campaign (monthly)
- Execute campaigns to encourage Lower Mainland families to visit
- Targeted social media campaigns, promotions and giveaways
- Publish and distribute *Explore Squamish Adventure Guide*
- Destination BC cooperative program participation

Implementation Plan

Description: Tourism Squamish will market to residents of the Lower Mainland, Western Washington and Oregon (families, couples and individuals) with holiday time-period, overnight and weekend getaway ideas.

The focus will be on sport specific or active adventurer leisure travelers and families who visit destinations specifically to partake in their activity of choice during relevant seasons. Focus on highlighting the destination’s world class sport and adventure experiences including: mountain biking, road cycling, hiking, rock climbing, wind sports, water sports, fishing, rafting, nordic skiing, backcountry skiing and snowmobiling. The primary focus of marketing efforts will be to increase visitation during the off-season (October 1 – April 30) and the mid-week period in high season.

Objectives:

- Increase Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and Instagram engagement
- Increase the number of newsletter subscribers, page views, click-throughs and shares of newsletter content
- Increase the number of blog posts and blog shares
- Increase number of day-trippers to destination (working on way to accurately measure day tripper numbers)
- Increase number of overnight visitor to destination

Rationale: During the branding process that Squamish undertook, more than 1,000 people (residents & visitors or previous residents) weighed in on an online survey. When respondents were asked about

Squamish, five themes came to the forefront and one of them was that Squamish was one of the best multi-sport destinations: world-class rock climbing, mountain biking and paddle-boarding all less than one hour from the city or the resort amenities of Whistler. Focusing on sport-specific or active adventurer leisure travelers needs to be a focus for Squamish, while encouraging the US target market states to take advantage of their strong currency.

Action Steps:

- Attend Vancouver Outdoor Adventure Show and possibly the Outdoor Gear and Adventure Expo in Seattle
- Encourage visitation during non-peak periods by promoting mid-week specials
- Execute summer BC Transit #ExploreSquamish bus wrap campaign in lower mainland
- Execute Global TV #ExploreSquamish campaign including commercial spots and contesting
- Maintain Explore Squamish website
- Post regular blogs that showcase adventure-specific themes
- Increase awareness of Squamish as a world class multi-sport adventure destination through:
 - PPC ads targeting key search terms (Google/FB etc.)
 - Banner ads
- Apply for renewal of the nonprofit Google grant (up to \$10,000/month in search ads)
- Capitalize on the high visitor traffic at the Adventure Centre by encouraging visitors to sign up for consumer e-blasts, contesting and special deals
- Maintain ongoing strategic email campaign (monthly) to increase subscribers and distribute fresh and newsworthy content as well as specials
- Execute “Countdown to Christmas” and “Warm Up to Winter” campaigns to encourage Lower Mainland families to visit Squamish during November - March implement “Embrace Rain” campaign with supporting materials to encourage visitation during January - April
- Targeted social media campaigns, promotions and giveaways
- Publish *Squamish Adventure Guide* for visitors to pick up in destination as well as to distribute Visitor Centre’s across the Province
- Develop mountain biking/hiking map to guide visitors to appropriately maintained trails
- Update current tear-away map
- Research and implement better widget/software for sales for accommodation and activity sales from exploresquamish.com website.
- Engage in Destination BC cooperative program opportunities
- Increase digital asset library of signature images and video clips to keep content fresh
- Develop a YouTube series of first person video clips highlighting different areas and adventures in Squamish

Partnerships: Tourism Squamish staff, contractors and members; contracted visitor guide design and photography assistance; marketing partners

Resources: Tourism Squamish has strong working relationships with local sport and tourism operators / participants that can support and provide content curation.

Funding: Mix of MRDT and grant funding

Responsibility: Tourism Squamish staff (coordination)

Timeframe: on-going website update, blogs; monthly newsletters with seasonal messaging; summer day-tripper campaign, winter Countdown to Christmas and Warm Up to Winter campaigns, spring and fall Embrace the Rain campaign.

Evaluation Mechanism:

- Social media engagement
- Content creation

Performance Measures:

Output Measures

- Number of blog posts
- Number of e-blasts sent
- Number of social media posts
- Number of campaign webpage visits
- Number of Youtube videos created
- Number of event campaigns executed

Outcome Measures

- Increase Twitter followers by 7% over 2017
- Increase Facebook followers by 15% over 2017
- Increase Instagram followers by 15% over 2017
- Increase the number of page views, click-throughs and shares of newsletter content by an average of 8% over 2017
- 10% consistent increase in social media engagement
- 20% visitor centre volume increase over 2017

Major Category: Visitor Servicing

Activity Title: **Visitor Servicing**

Tactics:

- #ExploreSquamish hashtag
- Street Team mobile visitor servicing program
- Adventure Centre and Visitor Centre staff
- Mobile app (maintenance and promotion)
- Participation in Destination BC Social Media Visitor Servicing Program to respond to Twitter and Trip Advisor comments on Squamish

Implementation Plan

Description:

Be a visitor friendly community by providing exceptional customer service to all the guests we welcome through the Visitor Centre and our mobile Street Team. Utilize street level marketing tactics to educate and entice day-trippers to explore and discover Squamish.

Objectives:

- Provide quality information and exceptional customer service
- Increase visitors serviced at Visitor Centre (Adventure Centre) by 25% and the by the Street Team by 35%
- Increase and expand level of visitor servicing within the destination

Rationale: Squamish’s primary audience (for day visitors) is within a one-hour drive, whereas the overnight market is more likely to be people who must drive at least two hours. One-hour from Squamish is the edge of a very large market (lower mainland), which Squamish can tap into to entice either day-trippers bound for Squamish or those passing through on an overnight to communities north of Squamish.

Action Steps:

- Engage our visitors and encourage social conversation using the #ExploreSquamish hashtag
- Increase Street Team mobile visitor servicing program to two teams
- Continue and expand use of “hub” to allow for wifi at our mobile Street Team locations to allow visitors to download our app as well as enable our street team counselors to sell adventures, accommodations, maps from wherever they are located
- Utilize the Visitor Centre staff to capture visitor data and encourage guests to experience more during their visit or stay longer (increase sales)
- Research and install new software solution for activity / accommodation sales from the Visitor Centre
- Maintain mobile app to further enhance the Squamish visitor experience through easily accessible information and itineraries

- Maintain participation in Destination BC Social Media Visitor Servicing Program
- Work with District of Squamish and Squamish Sustainability Corporation on their plan to revitalize the Adventure Centre building to offer a better visitor experience

Partnerships: Tourism Squamish members

Resources: Tourism Squamish and Visitor Centre staff time

Funding: - Mix of MRDT and grant funding

Responsibility: Tourism Squamish staff (coordination) and Visitor Centre staff

Timeframe: March release of the Squamish Adventure Guide, mobile street team start in May; social media activities (content curation, etc.) is ongoing. New software solution to be installed and ready for use by May

Evaluation Mechanism:

- Social media engagement
- Accommodation and activity bookings at VC and through street team
- Successful continuation and expansion of street team program

Performance Measures:

Output Measures

- Social media activities
- Visitor Centre staff
- Street Team mobile VC

Outcome Measures

- 10% increase in number of accommodation / activity bookings at VC
- 20% increase in the number of qualified visitors at Adventure Centre
- 35% increase in number of qualified visitors recorded by Street team

Major Category: Research

Activity Title: **Determine baseline of tourism economic impact in Squamish and conduct research to more accurately measure stakeholder support as well as results of marketing initiatives.**

Tactics:

- Assess current data sources
- Develop 2-5-year research plan
- Conduct Stakeholder Survey – annual

Implementation Plan

Description: Assess current data inventory, identify gaps and develop research plan. Begin gathering and sharing research to assist stakeholders to understand the impact of the tourism industry on the community of Squamish.

Objectives:

- Initiate research projects and encourage stakeholder engagement/participation

Rationale: Support for the tourism industry is key to its success – as stakeholders better appreciate the results of Tourism Squamish activities, the impacts on their visitation numbers and the economic impact the industry has on the community, the more support tourism should have in general.

Action Steps:

- Work with Destination BC or independent business analyst to develop 2-5-year research plan – should include Net Promoter Score and value of tourism model
- Develop and maintain automated system to accurately collect data focusing on 5 areas:
 - Occupancy/ADR; attractions/activities visitation numbers; Net Promoter Score; visitor feedback/perceptions; industry value (local employment, number of businesses, economic impact)
- Encourage stakeholder support for information sharing
- Conduct Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey

Partnerships: Destination BC, Tourism Squamish staff, board, members, local stakeholders

Resources: Tourism Squamish

Funding: Mix of MRDT and grant funding

Responsibility: Tourism Squamish staff and board

Evaluation Mechanism: Visitor Centre statistics, Stakeholder Survey

Performance Measures:

Output Measures

- Research plan initiated
- Stakeholder Survey completed

Outcome Measures

- Visitor Volume
- MRDT revenues
- Establishment of our Net Promoter Score
- Stakeholder Survey score

Major Category: Destination Development

Activity Title: **Advocate and work on behalf of our visitors, our stakeholders and our community to enhance the visitor experience, encourage repeat visitation and addresses challenges hindering industry growth.**

Tactics:

- Tourism policy recommendations (Eg: Airbnb)
- Visitor resources and tools
- Film-Induced tourism
- Branding, Development & Marketing Action Plan

Implementation Plan

Description: Advocate and work on behalf of our visitors, our stakeholders and our community to enhance the visitor experience and encourage repeat visitation.

Maintain momentum with Economic Development Steering Committee to implement Branding, Development & Marketing Action Plan, while assisting in the identification, growth and enhancement of new product experiences.

Objectives:

- Implement Branding, Development & Marketing Action Plan
- Assist in the identification, growth or enhancement of new product experiences
- Identification of key industry challenges – Airbnb, low-income housing, etc.

Rationale: Squamish has seen a steady increase in visitation year over year. The community is extremely busy with visitors and residents and to ensure that the visitor experience remains exceptional we need to encourage new product development, assist in policy development regarding “over tourism” and develop resources and tools to direct visitor volume accordingly.

Action Steps:

- Maintain participation on Economic Development Committee to implement Branding, Development & Marketing Action Plan
- Advocate for an Airbnb policy with District of Squamish
- Maintain membership with TIABC
- Attend industry events
- Raise awareness of importance of customer service training with the tourism industry in Squamish and support customer service training program (Rural Dividend funded project)
- Film-Induced tourism - gather film activity metrics from stakeholders; add Film tab to consumer website

Partnerships: Tourism Squamish staff, board, members, local stakeholders

Resources: Tourism Squamish

Funding: Mix of MRDT and grant funding

Responsibility: Tourism Squamish staff and board

Timeframe:

Monthly Economic Development Committee meetings

Industry Conferences:

- February (BC Tourism Industry Conference)
- Fall (TIABC AGM & Summit)

Evaluation Mechanism: Visitor Centre statistics, Net Promoter Score and Stakeholder Survey

Performance Measures:

Output Measures

- Branding, Development & Marketing Action Plan initiatives addressed
- Number of industry events attended
- Types/number of tourism business development support activities

Outcome Measures

- Visitor Volume
- MRDT revenues
- Net Promoter Score
- New or enhanced Product Offerings
- New policies that support tourism