



To deliver effective and efficient, local government services that benefit our citizens, our businesses, our environment and our future.

CITY OF VERNON

AGENDA

Tourism Commission

Wednesday, April 22, 2026, 9:00 a.m.

CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBER

3400 30 Street, Vernon BC

Pages

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

As Chair of the City of Vernon's Tourism Commission, and in the spirit of this gathering, I recognize the City of Vernon is located in the traditional territory of the Syilx people of the Okanagan Nation.

2. **AGENDA**

THAT the Tourism Commission Meeting Agenda of April 22, 2026 be adopted.

3. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

2

THAT the Tourism Commission Meeting Minutes of March 31, 2026 be adopted.

4. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

5. **NEW BUSINESS**

5.a **Roundtable Discussion: Five-Year Tourism Strategy**

5

THAT the memorandum titled Five Year Plan Roundtable Discussion, dated April 14, 2026, be received.

6. **INFORMATION ITEMS**

7. **NEXT MEETING**

8. **CLOSE OF MEETING**

CITY OF VERNON
MINUTES OF THE TOURISM COMMISSION

March 31, 2026, 9:00 a.m.
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBER
3400 30 Street, Vernon BC

Members Present: C. Snedden, Accommodation
B. Marchand, OKIB Alternate Representative
Mayor Cumming
G. Thorhaug, Restaurant
H. Sirisena, Sports & Events Representative
J. Collard, Accommodation
J. Melanson, Biking Sector Representative
M. Kaur, Accommodation
M. Beaudry, Accommodation
P. Kaz, Downtown Vernon Association
R. Barton, Arts & Culture
R. Day, Golf
S. Patenaude, Arts & Culture
S. Harkness, Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce
V. Sood, Accommodation

Members Absent: C. Zerebeski, Ski
J. Brewer, Okanagan Indian Band

Administration Present: I. Jenkins, Silver Star Mountain Resort
T. Silverthorn, Manager, Vernon Tourism
H. Lucich, Tourism Marketing Coordinator
H. Irvine, Coordinator, Tourism Marketing
G. Patterson, Administrative Assistant
J. Ens-Rempel, Senior Manager, Partnerships and Innovations

Also Present: J. Dowsell, Evergreen Consulting
J. Welter, Sport and Culture Society of the North Okanagan

1. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair C. Snedden called the meeting to order at 9:03 am.

As Vice Chair of the City of Vernon's Tourism Commission, and in the spirit of this gathering, I recognize the City of Vernon is located in the traditional territory of the Syilx people of the Okanagan Nation.

2. AGENDA

Moved by: P. Kaz, Downtown Vernon Association

Seconded by: R. Barton, Arts & Culture

THAT the Tourism Commission Meeting Agenda of March 31, 2026 be adopted.

CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Moved by: S. Patenaude, Arts & Culture

Seconded by: J. Collard, Accommodation

THAT the Tourism Commission Meeting Minutes of November 19, 2025 be adopted.

CARRIED

4. NEW BUSINESS

4.a Commission Orientation

T. Silverthorn provided an annual orientation to the Commission and all members in attendance provided a brief introduction.

4.b Election of the Chair and Vice Chair

Moved by: J. Melanson, Biking Sector Representative

Seconded by: M. Beaudry, Accommodation

THAT the election of chair and vice chair be conducted by secret ballot.

CARRIED

J. Collard was appointed as Chair for 2026 and assumed the Chair.

S. Harkness was appointed as Vice Chair for 2026.

4.c Marketing Update & Winter Recap

H. Lucich and H. Irvine presented the March 2026 Marketing Update and Winter Recap.

4.d Group Sales Update

J. Dowsell from Evergreen Consulting provided a verbal update on group sales.

4.e Five-Year Strategic Plan Update

T. Silverthorn provided an update on the Tourism Vernon Five-Year Strategic Plan.

C. Snedden left the meeting at 10:12 am.

M. Beaudry left the meeting at 10:13 am.

V. Sood left the meeting at 10:16 am.

B. Marchand left the meeting at 10:17 am.

G. Thorhaug left the meeting at 10:20 am.

5. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting for the Tourism Commission is scheduled for April 15, 2026 at 9:00 am.

6. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting of the Tourism Commission adjourned at 10:26 am.

Chair



Memorandum to Tourism Commission

To: Tourism Commission File No: 0540-20
Date: April 22, 2026
From: Torrie Silverthorn, Manager, Tourism Vernon
Subject: Roundtable Discussion: Five-Year Tourism Strategy

Purpose: To facilitate a roundtable discussion to gather input and priorities for the development of the next five-year tourism strategy.

Recommendation:

THAT the memorandum titled Five Year Plan Roundtable Discussion, dated April 14, 2026, be received.

Background:

Questions formulated to guide an initial discussion on the future direction:

- 1. Vision & Direction**
Does our current vision still reflect where we want Vernon to go as a destination over the next five years?
- 2. Growth & Success**
What does “success” look like for Vernon’s tourism industry (e.g., visitor type, seasonality, economic impact, community fit)?
- 3. Strategic Priorities**
Are our current focus areas—Marketing, Groups, Visitor Services, and Destination Development—the right priorities? Are there any gaps?
- 4. Community & Industry Alignment**
How well is tourism aligning with community and industry needs? What should we strengthen or reconsider?
- 5. Opportunities & Risks**
What key opportunities should we pursue, and what challenges should we be more intentional about addressing?

Discussion Guidelines

- **Stay focused on tourism**
Frame comments through a tourism lens—what we can influence, support, or advocate for.
- **Highlight what's working**
Share successes and areas that are effective and should continue.
- **Bring specific observations**
Examples of changes in visitor behaviour, expectations, or trends are especially helpful.

Communication:

N/A

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Five-Year Strategic Business Plan

FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

TOURISM VERNON
27 MAY 2022

STORMY
LAKE
CONSULTING



TOURISM
Vernon

Page 7 of 43

Acknowledgement

Our social and environmental commitment

We respectfully acknowledge that Vernon is located on the traditional and unceded territory of the Syilx Okanagan people.

We believe that promoting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples can support Indigenous communities to realize their potential and optimize their tourism economies, while respecting social, cultural, and environmental values.

We embrace and actively promote The Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact in the areas of human rights, labour, the environment, and anti-corruption. We also support the United Nations World Tourism Organization's 17 Sustainable Development Goals as part of an ambitious global agenda for people, planet, prosperity, and peace through partnerships.

We strongly believe that the management of a destination is more than simply marketing. It is ensuring that those unique cultural artifacts and icons, historic sites, distinct cultural traditions, natural geographic assets and biosphere of Vernon are protected and preserved for generations ahead.



Executive summary

Vernon is a thriving tourism destination that is proud to have prospered through the complex realities of a global pandemic. We are grateful for the support of our industry partners, and of our passionate, proud community members. Together we have created a strong foundation of financial growth, partnerships, shared values, and leadership from which to propel ourselves into the next 5 years of successful and sustainable tourism development. To continue our upward trajectory, we have updated our five-year Strategic Plan that will guide our actions in effectively promoting Vernon as a premier destination in the Okanagan.

The Strategic Plan approach included research and a series of stakeholder and public engagements to ensure our strategic priorities and goals for the next five years reflect the values and desires of local tourism stakeholders and residents. Key learnings from the engagement approach, as well as current travel trends, have helped to shape the development of our Strategic Plan.

With sustainability embedded at the core, the Plan identifies our overarching goals, mission, and vision:

Our goals:

- Increased year-round visitation
- Increased visitor satisfaction
- Increased stakeholder engagement
- Increased community support for tourism

Our mission:

To refresh the mind, body, and soul of the active explorer in the Okanagan.

Our Vision:

Vernon is the 365-day adventure capital of the Okanagan.

The Plan centres around 3 target markets: 1) Active Explorers, 2) Near Retirement and 3) Specific Sports. To effectively capture these markets and drive sustainable visitation, six key strategy pillars have been identified:

- Lead with the brand
- Focus marketing on key audiences
- Leverage specific sports
- Establish strong partnerships
- Activate local pride
- Incubate products and experiences

We will continue to review and evaluate the effectiveness of this Plan, as well as our organizational effectiveness, to ensure the long-term success of Vernon as a tourism destination.

Table of contents

Executive summary	1
Foundations of success	3
Engagement approach	4
Key learnings	5
Travel trends	7
Mission and Vision	9
Our role	10
Goals	11
Our sustainability foundation	12
Target Markets	13
Strategy at a glance	18
Lead with the brand	19
Focus marketing on key audiences	21
Leverage specific sports	23
Establish strong partnerships	24
Activate local pride	26
Incubate products and experiences	28
Organizational effectiveness	30
Recommended activity plan	31
Measurements	34

Foundations of success

Tourism Vernon is entering the next five years with a sound foundation of accomplishments, partnerships, assets, and growth to celebrate. The future of tourism in Vernon is bright with strong industry and sectoral support, a resilient community, and a diverse range of experiences that attract visitors year-round.

Despite the economic uncertainties of a pandemic, Vernon continues to see a boom in tourism visitation and revenue. Vernon persevered and over-performed through the pandemic with steady visitation and healthy Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) revenues in line with or above the 5-year average, with two record-breaking months. Continued MRDT growth and success is projected for 2022.

Tourism Vernon will continue to fulfill its destination marketing role as it optimizes its scope to include destination management. This is the practice of place stewardship, expanding and enhancing marketing to include leadership, coordination, facilitation, advocacy, education, development, and capacity building. Tourism Vernon will continue to work with its partners to support and leverage our existing partnerships while creating opportunities to build new ones.

Tourism Vernon can utilize this momentum and align tourism development with the City's Climate Action Plan, Transportation Plan, the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association (TOTA) 10 Year Regional Tourism Strategy, and the Destination British Columbia (DBC) Corporate Strategy, all of which have a focus on destination sustainability and stewardship.

As we look to increase visitation to Vernon and grow our tourism economy, it is also our responsibility ensure the long-term environmental and human impacts of our destination development efforts are positive ones. This means raising awareness of key issues, educating visitors and locals, empowering and building member capacity to implement sustainability practices, and aligning efforts to co-designs future-focused sustainability solutions with our partners.

The ability to leverage partnership resources is the key to successful destination management and is a strength of the destination that has led to collaborative tourism development initiatives that set Vernon apart from other Okanagan destinations (the Okanagan Rail Trail and the SilverStar Multi-Use Path are key examples of this success). Vernon and regional partners have invested millions of dollars into infrastructure to enhance awareness, wayfinding, access, community assets, and sustainable quality of life and experiences for residents and visitors alike.

The City of Vernon helped lead the acquisition of the region's newest legacy \$29M Okanagan Rail Trail, assisted in the fundraising of \$7.8M of this, and continue to participate in its development and management. These local and regional trails are a key attribute for visitors, existing and potential residents, and sustainable transportation opportunities. A variety of trails and trail types present a diversity of experiences to an increasing range of visitors.

resource sharing with other City of Vernon departments and services. These integrated partnerships are what will support the continued upward trajectory of sustainable tourism and economic development.

Tourism Vernon actively and proudly participated in the development of the 2021 Vernon Climate Action Plan. This plan will guide the sustainable development of our growing city and identifies the important roles and responsibilities of the tourism sector in supporting the community in reaching its climate resilience goals.

Much of our strong foundation is attributable to our industry operators. Smaller operators and experiences showcase Vernon's distinct sense of place and are well positioned to enhance partnership opportunities with our anchor attractions.

The Greater Vernon Cultural Plan has solidified the commitment to enhance arts and culture in the community. Leadership and partnership coordination, identifying and expanding places and spaces, and developing cultural capacity are pillars of both the plan and the direction of arts and culture in Vernon. Stakeholders want to build upon and expand artistic and cultural opportunities.

Tourism Vernon looks forward to continuing to build relationships with the Okanagan Indian Band (OKIB). Through the Tourism Commission and the Okanagan Indian Band & City of Vernon Working Group, we engage with the OKIB to listen, build partnerships, and to support economic development and recovery.

Engagement approach

Purpose

With the current strategic plan ending in 2022, an engagement and research process was undertaken to inform Tourism Vernon's strategic priorities and goals for the next five years, and ensure they reflect the values and desires of local tourism stakeholders and residents.

Process

In developing this strategy, the following engagement process was used:

Discovery: background documents, secondary research, and comparator strategies were reviewed. An extensive SWOT analysis was conducted.

Survey: two questions were posted on EngageVernon.ca for the public to answer. 70 responses were collected.

Public workshop: one 3-hour virtual workshop was facilitated on January 27, 2022. 48 passionate Vernonites participated, including residents, accommodation providers, tourism operators, local business owners, OKIB Economic Development staff, Regional District of North Okanagan (RDNO) staff, and Tourism Vernon management and staff.

Staff workshop: one 2-hour virtual workshop was facilitated on February 8, 2022. 22 City of Vernon staff members participated, including representation from:

- Recreation Services
- Community Safety, Lands, and Administration
- Tourism
- Economic Development
- Transportation
- Long Rang and Sustainable Planning

Tourism Commission workshop: a half-day workshop was facilitated in Vernon on February 16, 2022. 18 members of the Tourism Commission participated. This included representatives from:

- Mayor and City Council
- Accommodation providers
- Arts and culture
- Attractions sector
- Biking sector
- Golf sector
- Restaurant sector
- Ski sector
- Sports and events
- Business sector (Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Vernon Association)

Key learnings from the engagement process

Visitor experiences today

Our community offers a balanced and wide variety of activities. There is something for everyone. We have an opportunity and interest to create beginning-to-end, seamless and easy-access experiences. Packaging products and enhanced transportation could be key to this approach.

We can leverage this broad range of activities and experiences to increase visitor length of stay by showcasing all Vernon offers. Strengthening relationships between resorts and inner-city businesses can create opportunities for cross-promotion and partnerships that foster and support a holistic visitor experience.

Visitor experiences tomorrow

We want to share our active, healthy lifestyle and convert visitors to the Okanagan way of life by supporting both visitors and residents in finding connectedness to nature, people, and the culture of Vernon. Tourism is an opportunity to foster connections to oneself, the community, and the environment. We can provide transformative travel experiences, offering the chance to escape, slow-down, reconnect, refresh.

What makes Vernon distinct

Our strength is in our small-town charm, laid-back lifestyle, and four-season experiences. Vernon is a less-stressful alternative than our southern neighbour.

Vernon as a destination is well positioned to continue further differentiating ourselves from other destinations in the Okanagan through the distinct sense of place created by welcoming merchants and a burgeoning arts and cultural community.

Indigenous tourism

Indigenous tourism can enhance current product offerings and help provide more distinct, engaging, and memorable experiences. There is a desire to continue building relationships with the OKIB and ITBC to identify opportunities for product development when the OKIB is ready to engage and lead Indigenous tourism development in Vernon.

Repeat visitor base

There is a strong desire to increase the repeat visitor base through sports, events, and making memories:

1. **Sport tourism:** We have a significant sport tourism sector that can be leveraged to create long-term repeat visitors who return for other activities.
2. **Festivals and events:** There is a strong interest to capitalize on events to showcase Vernon and build a repeat visitor base.
3. **Making memories:** We are a destination for making memories and returning to recreate them. We can create active and culturally rich experiences to be built on year after year.

Community and sense of place

We are proud of our people and have a strong sense of community. Being small and welcoming is an asset. Our residents are eager to share their laid-back lifestyle and lived experiences with visitors. They are a strong resource as community ambassadors and tourism experts. Places and opportunities to gather visitors and locals is important.

Key learnings from the engagement

Arts and culture

There is strong community and stakeholder support to continue to enhance and expand the arts and culture scene as reflected in the Greater Vernon Cultural Plan. Cultural attributes can showcase the distinct values and identity of Vernon. The creative economy is a multimillion-dollar economic development opportunity. Provision of funding and investment are key initiatives in the Greater Vernon Cultural Plan. Leadership and coordination, places and spaces, and capacity are existing pillars to build upon, improve quality of community, and differentiate Vernon.

Group travel is trending

We are seeing a significant shift from couple travellers to group travel (friend groups and families). Multiple-bed, shared accommodations are in demand.

Stakeholder alignment for success

Stakeholder alignment is key to success. Vernon as a Destination Management Organization (DMO) will continue to balance marketing and management. Destination Marketing remains a critical function in promoting Vernon to our key markets and driving visitation. Destination Management assumes a stewardship role, where efforts are made to align with

government, industry, and community organizations to more generally support sustainable community and economic development.

Build local industry connections to enhance the experience

Industry businesses and operators are seeking more opportunities to connect and establish partnerships to create diverse experience packages, strengthen industry relations, cross-promote and market, create quality products and services, and grow revenue.

Sustainability

Sustainability is a key priority and part of the vision for both residents and industry as reflected in the Vernon Climate Action Plan. There is opportunity to showcase sustainability initiatives through product and itinerary development. Areas of interest for sustainability include active transportation, environmental awareness, improved public transportation infrastructure, and partnerships for sustainability. Balancing the outdoor activities with the indoor will help to mitigate the impacts of fire season and to offer more diverse experiences.

Perception to overcome

The perception is that we have less to offer than our neighbours in Kelowna.

Visitor trends

The following are major visitor trends identified by global travel trade as occurring in the tourism industry today:

1. Travellers are more independent and self-guided than ever.
2. Trips are shorter and more frequent.
3. Demand for short-term rentals continues to grow.
4. Booking channels are fragmenting.
5. Travel planning is closer to departure.
6. Flexibility is more important than price.
7. Multiple destinations in one trip are more common (e.g., bike safaris).
8. DMOs need to own logistical planning.

Strong leadership

Tourism development in Vernon is equipped with a strong leadership foundation that accounts for our successful vision and strategies today. This includes Mayor and Council, the Tourism Commission, and the integrated economic development and tourism department.

World Travel & Tourism Council: travel trends 2022 - 2024

Demand evolution

Traveller preferences and behaviours have shifted toward the familiar, predictable, and trusted. Domestic and regional vacations and the outdoors will reign in the short-term, with tourism businesses and destinations already adapting.

Health and hygiene

Businesses will have to collaborate even more closely with their extended value chains to ensure readiness and the implementation of likeminded protocols. Trust, extensive communication and the flow of accurate information, between travellers and employees, businesses and suppliers, and visitors and local communities will be a leading engine in the recovery of the sector.

Innovation and digitisation

Digital adoption and consumption are on the rise, with consumers now expecting contactless technologies, such as biometrics, as a basic prerequisite for a safe and seamless travel experience.

Sustainability

Businesses are facing growing scrutiny for their environmental, social, and cultural track record and their support for positive community impacts, including maximizing local economic benefits.

Implications

Working with partners as a cluster, following collectively created protocols, and effectively communicating the values of safety, security, and community to create desirable experiences for local and regional travellers.

Expedia Sustainability Travel Trends 2022

The following are types of sustainable travel information consumers want to see during the trip planning process.

45% of travellers want recommendations for locally-owned businesses and restaurants at or near a destination.

45% of travellers want transportation options that have a lower impact.

43% of travellers want information on how to engage with local cultures and communities at or near a destination.

42% of travellers want lodging or accommodations that have a lower environmental impact.

42% of travellers want recommendations for destinations that support Indigenous culture and heritage.

41% of travellers want walkable or bikeable destination recommendations.

41% of travellers want eco-friendly activity recommendations.

39% of travellers want recommendations for destinations that are not over-visited.

37% of travellers want to know how to pack more sustainably.

34% of travellers want information on volunteering with or supporting local organizations at a destination.

Key takeaways

- **Clarity:** sustainable travel information can be overwhelming and confusing. Make it easy to understand, leverage visual formats, and show clear impact.
- **Authenticity:** consumers want to know (and see) that travel brands are committed to sustainability, not just checking a box. Back up messaging with proof points and data.
- **Value:** consumers are willing to pay more for sustainable travel options. Illustrate the value and positive impact of making more conscientious choices.

Our mission

To refresh the mind, body, and soul of the active explorer in the Okanagan.

Our vision

Vernon is the 365-day adventure capital of the Okanagan.

Our role

To promote, protect and enhance Vernon's position as one of North America's premier holiday and lifestyle destinations through leading the execution of targeted marketing programs, supporting destination development programs and advocating for the sustainable growth of tourism in Vernon. We will be the most innovative and effective Destination Management Organization in the Thompson Okanagan in inspiring our target markets to experience our destination.

Our goals

Increased year-round visitation.

Increased visitor satisfaction.

Increased stakeholder engagement.

Increased community support for tourism.

Our sustainability foundation

Tourism is an industry going through significant disruption and there are many forces at play that are affecting rapid change to the tourism environment for Vernon and the global industry. 'Sustainability' has repeatedly been identified by stakeholders across Vernon as critical for the survival and optimization of tourism businesses, to mitigate negative impacts, enhance the quality of life of residents, and improve visitor experiences. As such, Tourism Vernon will start the evolution from Destination Marketing to Destination Management to ensure we are active stewards in our community, prioritizing long-term sustainability and community wellbeing in our work.

The creation of quality, sustainability-oriented tourism experiences increase the value proposition of Vernon as a desirable destination and creates a compelling competitive advantage without needing to compete primarily on price. It will also cater to the ever-increasing interest in sustainable tourism by travellers. Operators who collaborate and share resources can be differentiated from competitive destinations. It will be the quality, rather than quantity, of experiences in Vernon that will demonstrate our commitments to sustainability and set us apart

as a destination. Equally important is the quality of life of our residents as we develop experiences to create an attractive, sustainable destination.

The City of Vernon's Climate Action Plan integrates sustainability across all initiatives. As a community, our key objectives are to mitigate negative environmental impacts, adapt behaviours to align with community values and climate change, enhance community and business resiliency, and support regenerative opportunities to ensure we make positive environmental contributions to Vernon.

Our main draw as a destination is our nature, and so we must make efforts to preserve it while educating residents, businesses, and visitors on how to respect and protect our natural assets. Tourism Vernon is committed to using a climate lens as we move forward to provide sustainable recreation options. We will support our industry in adapting to climate change and the transition to a clean energy economy.

Target markets

Active Explorers



Near Retirement



Page 21 of 43

Specific Sports



Target markets

Primary: Active Explorer

The Active Explorer can make others tired. They are looking to get the most out of a destination. Kids in tow, they embrace the outdoors and pack as much into their vacation as they can. They are interested in the more extreme activities, depending on the age of their children.

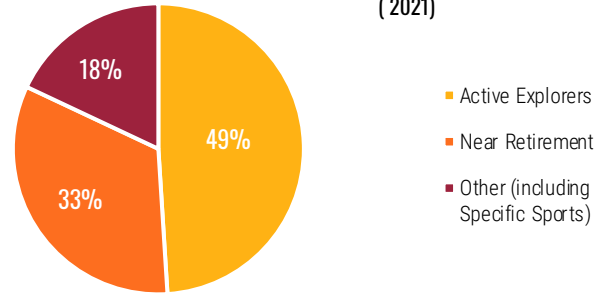
With school-aged children, Active Explorers are more constrained by school holidays. They are also a little more budget conscious than the near-retiree. These constraints make familiarity and reliability important to this segment. On return trips, they'll want to repeat their favourite experiences while sampling parts of Vernon that they haven't yet seen.

Word of mouth is a powerful driver for this group, with organic posts on Instagram and Facebook encouraging other parents to consider Vernon as a destination for their own families.

Demographics

- 35 – 55 years of age.
- Travelling as a family during school breaks.
- Western Canada based.
- They are 2.8 times more likely to visit Vernon than the other segments.

Share of Vernon Visitors¹
(2021)



As shown above, Active Explorers represent almost 50% of our market, and Near Retirement an additional 33%. The concentration of visitors into two segments is a very strong marketing advantage.



¹Based on PRIZM data for 177k visitors to Vernon's downtown core and SilverStar.

Target markets

Secondary: Near Retirement

The travelling near-retiree is a very desirable segment. They have the two most important travel resources: time and money. They travel with more flexibility—often seeking off-season times to minimize crowds. They have money to spend in stores and restaurants.

This audience is still active, but perhaps not in an extreme way. They hike, bike, golf, and spend time at the beach. They are often visiting Vernon as part of a wine tour, but wine touring is limited to just a few days of their agenda. Vernon is appealing for its more relaxed vibe than the southern neighbours. There is also potential for second home ownership in this market.

The near-retiree is influenced by their friends on Facebook and visit websites to gather their own information.

Demographics

- 55+ years of age.
- Travelling as couples and multi-generations.
- Coming mostly from Alberta markets (Lower Mainland visitors will usually come through Peachland).
- They are 1.6 times more likely to visit Vernon than the other segments.



Page 23 of 43

Secondary: Specific Sports

These travellers are skiing in the winter, biking or golfing in the summer, attending sport tournaments, and are attracted by iconic Vernon experiences such as Predator Ridge and SilverStar. This group is generally focused on their specific activities but will dip their toes into the local scene.

Often activity-specific, they will include Vernon as a destination, or as part of a “safari”—visiting other destinations for the same activity in the same trip. You can count on and leverage the dedication of these groups of visitors.

This group is best reached with interest based targeting on Facebook, Instagram, and other social media; advertising on sport-specific websites/publications; and through supporting local events/operators for specific sports.

Demographics

- 16 – 45 years of age, including families with older children.
- Travelling in family unit and small groups.
- Stronger international appeal, but still a majority are Western Canada based.

Geography and segments

PRIZM and TELUS insights

Geographic analysis of visitors to Vernon includes two data sets

- PRIZM: identifying Canadian visitors to Vernon’s downtown core and SilverStar resort who live at least a 2 hour drive away from Vernon.
- TELUS Insights: identifying all visitors to the town of Vernon.

The TELUS insights data is more comprehensive, but more of the visitors identified are lower revenue short-haul visitors (day trips) or visitors who are not tourists (e.g., hospital visits, overnight stay when passing through Vernon).

Short-haul visitors

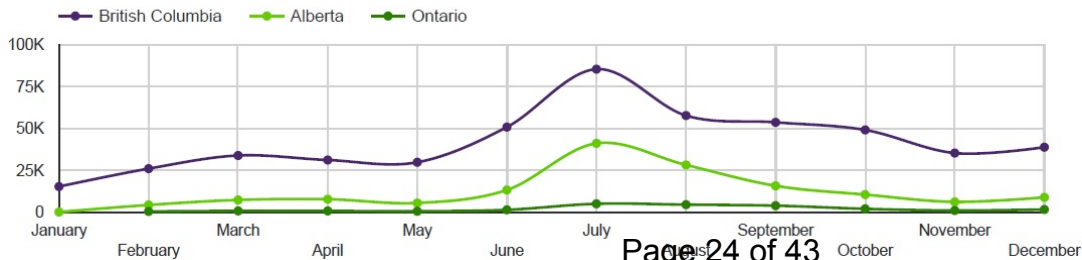
Short haul visitors have a similar age distribution compared to medium- and long-haul visitors, but lower incomes (40%+ have household incomes under \$79K). They are much more likely than medium- and long-haul visitors to be travelling in pairs rather than as a larger family unit (55%+ are a family size of 2). Short-haul visitors make up a large portion of visitors to Vernon, but their short stays and lower incomes produce less revenue than the size of the group might suggest.

American and other international visitors

International visitors are overwhelmingly travelling as couples, many fitting the characteristics of the Near Retirement segment. Peak visitation from the US is in September, October, and November, with other countries bringing too few visitors to Vernon to give reliable estimates of trip timing or group composition.

The Near Retirement segment is a promising group for the travel trade to promote Vernon to. For the travel trade, iconic experiences are key (e.g., same day ski and golf, Sparkling Hill, orchards and wineries). As Tourism Vernon develops marketing assets, images of these iconic experiences will be essential to growing the travel trade business. Travel trade customers often think in stereotypes and may choose a travel package on the basis of a single image.

Monthly total trips by province



Geography and segments

Medium and long haul Canadian visitors

The vast majority of visitors to Vernon are from British Columbia and Alberta. Together, Calgary (21%) and Greater Vancouver (18%) account for almost half of Canadian visitors. Despite its similar size and demographic makeup to Calgary, Edmonton (12%) brings a little more than half of the visitors of Calgary. This is influenced by the longer drive and the more natural route to the coast is along the Yellowhead Highway.

BC and Alberta bring a mix of Active Explorers and Near Retirement to Vernon. Travellers residing near the Okanagan will visit Vernon more frequently, but for shorter durations.

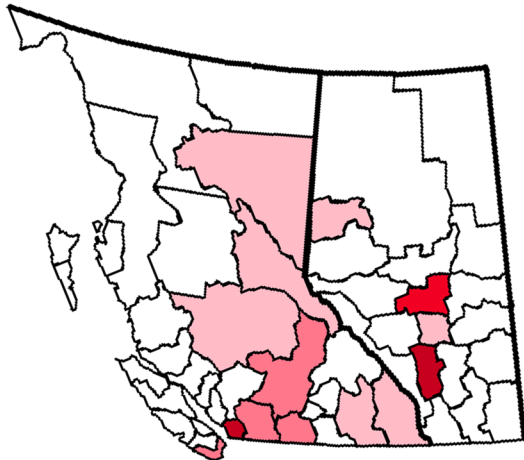
Visitors from Alberta, Vancouver, and Victoria spend longer in Vernon, but are unlikely to take more than one trip in a season. Active Explorers are likely to stay rooted in Vernon while Near Retirement will include Vernon as part of an itinerary that also includes other destinations in the Okanagan.

Top census areas outside BC and Alberta are Toronto, Saskatoon, and York (1.5%, 0.9% and 0.7% of Canadian visitors respectively). These distant Canadian visitors are likely to book their travel independently rather than through the travel trade.

Long haul markets, particularly Ontario, have shown recent strength and will be monitored closely.

Typically, visitors from the Greater Toronto Area account for 3.6% of visitors to Vernon, but are likely to be high-yielding – being wealthy long-haul travellers with heavy representation of the Near Retirement segment. Although Toronto proper brings the largest number of visitors (1.5%), outlying communities bring visitors at much higher rates. The Halton region (0.7%), which includes Oakville, Burlington, and Milton, brings in visitors at nearly double the rate. Further from Toronto, Brantford (0.3%) and Northumberland (0.2%) bring visitors to Vernon at triple the rate of Toronto proper.

Typically, visitation from Canadian medium- and long-haul visitors peaks in July thanks to Active Explorers being freed from their school schedules. Near Retirement likely accounts for Vernon’s strong fall season compared to Vernon’s spring. Long haul markets remain important for the Specific Sports segment.



Share of Medium and Long Haul Canadian visitors (PRIZM)

- 15-20%
- 12%
- 2-5%
- 1-2%
- <1%

Strategy at a glance

Lead with the brand

- Conduct a brand assessment
- Develop key messaging and content strategies
- Develop messaging for major attractions
- Conduct a living the brand workshop
- Create additional brand assets
- Conduct a competitive brand assessment

Incubate products and experiences

- Support an annual tourism product development forum
- Develop a soft experience pilot project
- Develop Lake Country winery partnerships
- Sponsor an annual festival that aligns with the brand
- Enhance in- and out-of-town business connections
- Support bike-friendly product development
- Elevate the presence of Vernon arts and culture
- Support health and wellness product development
- Support for the Okanagan Rail Trail

Activate local pride

- Develop a local concierge training program
- Launch the local concierge training program
- Collect feedback and assess local concierge training program
- Develop a family and friends program for the fall
- Host social media takeovers



Focus marketing on key audiences

- Shift current marketing for target audiences
- Create experience itinerary bundles
- Develop access to experience itineraries via digital and print platforms
- Update the Tourism Vernon website
- Conduct hyper-targeting via social and digital media
- Continue investment in other conventional spaces
- Work with partners to develop responsible travel messaging for visitors

Leverage specific sports

- Prepare the foundation for a sport tourism strategy
- Leverage sector partnerships and programs for targeted sport tourism growth
- Partner with Destination SilverStar and SilverStar Mountain Resort
- Promote Vernon as a golf destination

Establish strong partnerships

- Conduct an audit of available tourism support programs
- Continue to work with the Downtown Vernon Association and the City of Vernon departments to improve visitor access to the downtown core
- Continue building relationships with the Okanagan Indian Band
- Work with TOTA to build business education and presence
- Work with the Chamber of Commerce to support networking and education
- Hotelier collaboration support
- Increase the role of travel trade in sales efforts
- Continue to support Vernon economic development in climate action

Lead with the brand

Unifying a destination requires a strong brand that is reflective of, and resonates with, all stakeholders. It is important to ensure there is an acceptance and understanding of the brand purpose, and that a cohesiveness exists in the brand execution. Importantly, the brand should reflect what is valued today.

Highlighting sustainability in our brand will present us as a distinct destination in contrast to our competitors. The "Activate Life" slogan will be paired with investment in new brand messages and assets to incorporate social, cultural, financial, and environmental elements in experience development and delivery.

To effectively enhance and lead with the brand we will:

Conduct a brand assessment

To understand Vernon's distinct place brand, an assessment will be undertaken primarily through qualitative research and stakeholder engagement. From this research, a brand model will be developed that answers four fundamental brand questions:

1. What is it that you offer – beyond simply functionality, what is your promise?
2. Why do you do it? This is your purpose and your reason for getting out of bed in the morning. Including purpose in a place brand is not common, but a critical component in this age of social license.
3. How do you do it? This is your unique personality, which infuses everything you do and touch.
4. How do you want to be described? Your attributes, which meet the needs of your target audiences and which get them to talk about you in the way you want.

This assessment and brand model will set the foundation for all future creative expressions such as visual identity, tone of voice, asset creation, key messaging, website redesign, and more.

Develop key messaging and content strategies

Key messaging and content strategies will be developed for each target audience segment.

Develop messaging for major attractions

Brand messaging for key experiences will be developed in collaboration with Vernon's major attractions, such as SilverStar Resort, Sparkling Hill Resort, and Predator Ridge. This co-creation will be used to ensure brand alignment while strengthening and leveraging these partnerships.

Conduct a living the brand workshop

A living the brand workshop will be hosted for all Tourism Vernon members. Tools and education will be provided to generate an understanding of how their business and marketing can align with the Vernon brand. Brand messaging developed in collaboration with major attractions will be shared as a case study.

Lead with the brand

Create additional brand assets

Investment will be made in creating new photography and videography assets that represent the best of Vernon, and that align with the brand.

Video and photo asset libraries will be diversified to effectively reflect and capture each audience with a specific focus on increasing content for retirees and their activities. Imagery will be across all seasons.

Conduct a competitive brand assessment

A competitive brand assessment will be conducted to evaluate the impact of the current brand and determine where we sit competitively within the Okanagan and among other BC destinations. The results will determine future campaigning that continues to differentiate Vernon.

Focus marketing on key audiences

DMOs are relied upon to provide travellers with trusted and accurate information. In bringing visitors to the destination, they are responsible for creating focused content for each audience through website and social media to generate excitement and create an emotional response.

Content that is easily accessible, appealing, and has a seasonally distinct positioning is required for each key audience. Capturing key audiences through effective marketing will create the spill-over effect to shoulder seasons and additional visitor segments.

To effectively focus our marketing, we will:

Shift current marketing for target audiences

Current marketing will be refocused for target audiences with a constant 12-month investment in the Near Retirement audience, and the promotion of activities as seasonally appropriate. In addition, two separate campaigns will run from April - June and October - December to target and capture the younger audiences and 'visiting friends and family' for the summer, winter, and spring breaks. Tier 1 targets include Calgary, the BC Lower Mainland, and Edmonton, with the BC

interior as a tier 2 target.

Create experience itinerary bundles

One- or two-day descriptive, integrated experience itineraries will be created that focus on bundling products (i.e., food and wine bundle, golf bundle, ski bundle, arts and culture bundle, bike bundle). Each key audience will have 3 - 4 experience itineraries created. Major attractions will be included in relevant bundles to ensure alignment and partnership is maintained (i.e., Predator Ridge included in the golf bundle).

Key iconic activities will be selected for each bundle as a "must do" to further develop remarkable experiences in Vernon.

There will be a focus on sustainable itineraries to help differentiate Vernon and align with market trends.

Develop access to experience itineraries via digital and print platforms

Digital: These itineraries will be easily accessible and functional via mobile and web for consumers. This can be achieved through making the itineraries available as PDF

downloads via the website and through an app across all devices. Functional features would include interactive maps and directions, and filters to search for itineraries based on preferred level of adventure or activity. The ability to pre-download these itineraries for users who adventure out of Wi-Fi range would be an asset, especially for the independent self-guided traveller of today.

We will leverage the existing Visitor Guide to incorporate access to experience itineraries, such as the addition of a QR code for digital access.

This digital resource can also serve to connect visitors to members of the Concierge program through a resource tab that provides connection to a local Concierge for additional trip recommendations.

Print: print materials will continue to be utilized as Tourism Vernon begins the transition to digital modes of visitor engagement. The visitor guide and/or experience itineraries will be made available as brochures in key locations such as airports, hotel lobbies, and on BC ferries.

Focus marketing on key audiences

Update the Tourism Vernon website

An update of the Tourism Vernon website is already underway with an RFP open for the creation of a new design. The redesign will better reflect the brand of the destination, ensuring that all content is current, and that functionality is elevated for mobile efficiency. The site will provide a more relevant visitor-friendly experience, featuring frequently searched items like trails and hiking information.

We will continue to enhance the online presence of Vernon with online travel agents, media relations and media coverage.

Conduct hyper-targeting via social and digital media

Digital advertising will be leveraged to obtain reliable metrics and reporting to narrow in on hyper target markets. Experience itineraries will be matched with audiences. Social media tools provided by Facebook and Instagram will be used to develop activity targeting strategies for each segment. Content will be built with existing assets for specific segments and demographics and used strategically during the appropriate

months/seasons to target interested demographics.

Capitalizing on the popularity of digital storytelling will continue through the use of CrowdRiff and showcasing stakeholder content.

All types of digital marketing will continue with digital ads on platforms such as Vancouver Daily Hive, CTV.ca and NHL.com.

Continue investments in other conventional spaces

Select advertisers will be identified to promote Vernon via television campaigns and traditional advertising. An annual marketing campaign promoting winter wellness in Vernon with Sparkling Hill has been identified as a relevant partnership opportunity.

Print advertising will continue via high impact publications for key audiences, such as national magazines and newspapers.

Work with partners to develop responsible travel tips messaging for visitors.

This will ensure visitors have access to education that supports the focus on understanding and protecting natural assets within the region. We will work to promote active, ethical, and low-carbon activities, and identify opportunities for tourists and locals to offset their emissions for their travel.

Where possible, work will be done with our partners to promote information in public spaces for tourists (such as awareness of bike storage on public transportation to the Okanagan Rail Trail trailhead).

Leverage specific sports

Tourism Vernon has an opportunity to leverage an existing foundation of an active lifestyle and sports reputation through productive, collaborative partnerships that naturally attract target markets and generate visitation in the shoulder seasons.

To refine and strengthen our sports sectors, we will:

Prepare the foundation for a sport tourism strategy

As a sector, sport tourism includes a wide range of stakeholders and businesses that benefit from the economic and social impacts of sports. Sport tourism also provides the ability to create repeat visitors, and strategically support shoulder seasons by hosting games and tournaments that draw in interested visitors, friends, and family to the area. Vernon has an opportunity to develop a strategy that further focuses on strategically strengthening this sector and harnessing the benefits of sport tourism.

We will connect with sport tourism stakeholders in Vernon to identify and analyze market gaps, existing sporting tournaments and events to

leverage in the short term, as well as continue to assist local sports organizations with hosting bids. Representatives will be included from all major sport tourism sectors (ski, golf, biking, etc.), hoteliers, local sport organizations, the municipality, and residents and volunteers.

Leverage sector partnerships and programs for targeted sport tourism growth

Work will continue with local, regional, and national sport sector associations to leverage their provincial marketing efforts and ensure Vernon is well represented, including providing content they can use (stories, images, videos). Identified associations include:

- Western Mountain Bike Tourism Association
- North Okanagan Cycling Society
- Canada's West Ski Area Association
- Cross Country BC and Sovereign Lake Nordic Club
- Alpine Club of Canada (hiking and climbing)
- Canadian Trail and Mountain Running Association
- Ribbons of Green Trail Society
- BC Golf Marketing Alliance

Partner with Destination SilverStar and SilverStar Mountain Resort

Work will continue with Destination SilverStar and SilverStar Resort to align with, and support, marketing efforts for ski and mountain bike audiences. This ongoing work is important to ensuring collaborative efforts are used in capturing Vernon's key audiences. Local accommodation providers will be engaged to support strategy and partnership development in addressing high overnight visitor demand.

Promote Vernon as a golf destination

Collaboration with the BC Golf Marketing Alliance will work to promote Vernon as a golf destination. The major economic contribution of golf is promising. Vernon is in a position to leverage the active destination brand even further by supporting local golf operators in promoting Vernon's excellent golf experiences and lifestyle. This sector aligns strongly with attracting the Near Retirement and Specific Sport target audiences.

Establish strong partnerships

Partnerships at local, regional, and provincial levels are essential in creating a strong foundation and network from which to build a sustainable, resilient tourism sector. As a growing Destination Management Organization, Tourism Vernon is well positioned to leverage relationships and programs with partner organizations to help identify opportunities, and to build collaborative initiatives that support visitation.

To cultivate and sustain strong partnerships we will:

Conduct an audit of available tourism support programs

An audit of available tourism programs will be conducted at the local, regional, and provincial levels, including the City of Vernon, TOTA, Indigenous Tourism British Columbia (ITBC), and DBC. Programs will be analyzed and selected that provide the tools, resources, and relationships to move this five-year strategic plan forward.

Continue to work with the Downtown Vernon Association and the City of Vernon departments to improve visitor access to the downtown core

Local businesses, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Downtown Vernon Association will be

engaged to increase the accessibility of Vernon's downtown with a focus on sustainable, active transportation. This includes promoting downtown as a walkable destination and supporting active transportation infrastructure planning and development (i.e., walk- and bike-friendly infrastructure).

Continue building relationships with the Okanagan Indian Band

Relationships will continue to be created and fostered with OKIB directly. Work will be done to support OKIB's chosen tourism initiatives and ensure OKIB is the lead in the Indigenous tourism conversation. Tourism Vernon is here to support OKIB's tourism journey and support and promote product development opportunities.

Tourism Vernon will engage with ITBC whenever appropriate to showcase and promote Indigenous products and opportunities in the Greater Vernon area on a provincial level.

Work with TOTA to build business education and presence

TOTA will be leveraged to offer annual education and training opportunities to industry members ahead of peak season times, and to ensure Vernon is maximizing opportunities to be featured at trade shows attended by TOTA as

a region, e.g., Canada's West Marketplace, Rendezvous Canada, National Tour Association (NTA). We will also partner with TOTA to work with travel trade in building destination awareness and increasing overnight stays.

Work with the Chamber of Commerce to support networking and education

Chamber events will be leveraged and sponsored to facilitate networking between conventional and nonconventional tourism businesses to generate greater reach for Vernon. Examples include alternative public parking arrangements, non-traditional tourism packages with discounts and local products, and other local manufacturers and mechanic/repair services (e.g., Kal Tire, Tolko).

This is also an opportunity to engage local tourism businesses in conversations about climate change. Tourism Vernon, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Downtown Vernon Association can collaboratively work to increase climate change knowledge among local businesses and provide tactics on how to reduce and adapt to climate impacts. This process will be facilitated through a series of workshops, information packages, and/or other online learning sessions.

Establish strong partnerships

Hotelier collaboration support

Efforts to increase overnight stays will continue with the Hotelier Engagement Program, focusing on local hoteliers and their engagement with Tourism Vernon's programming. Staff will support ongoing collaboration opportunities between tourism businesses and local hoteliers for packaging and promotion. Small group sessions will continue to be conducted to effectively foster relationships and build strong connection points.

Relationships will be developed to target the meetings and conventions market space. Local hotels and convention spaces will be connected in strategic conversations to access this market and support seasonal visitation in Vernon. Opportunities will be created for networking, partnership development, and cross marketing to promote Vernon as a host for meetings and conventions.

Increase the role of travel trade in sales efforts

As tourism continues to recover and long-haul fully independent travellers (FIT) and group travel return, it is important to revisit the role of travel trade sales at capturing these markets. As tourism products continue to be developed and refined, a travel trade strategy will be developed concurrently to leverage travel trade data and insights, ensuring Vernon has the products and experiences available to attract target markets and support a sustainable influx of day and overnight visitors. The recommendations below extend actions from the previous strategic plan with some additions. We will:

- Continue to communicate regularly with TOTA and DBC to promote travel trade experiences.
- Work with accommodations and key attractions to develop a travel trade sales and marketing strategy.
- Increase staff resources towards travel trade activities with a focus on increasing the amount of Vernon products represented in FIT and group tour packages.
- Determine opportunities to leverage existing tour operators' travel itineraries that travel through Vernon to increase length of stay and paid experiences.

Continue to support Vernon economic development in climate action

Ongoing collaboration will continue with the City of Vernon's Manager, Long Range Planning and Sustainability to support advancements in Vernon's climate action. This includes the facilitation of climate action education opportunities for tourism businesses, and including Tourism Vernon staff and the local tourism sector in future planning of climate action initiatives.

Moreover, The City of Vernon's Manager of Economic Development and Tourism will continue to support advancements in Vernon's clean technology and energy industry across all business sectors. This includes identifying partnership opportunities with Okanagan College to address skill gaps and priorities for a clean growth workforce.

Activate local pride

Tourism destinations are successful when the local community is supportive and there is buy-in. But destinations really thrive when the local community is actively engaged and has a sense of ownership in tourism development.

The local passion and pride among Vernonites is palpable, and Tourism Vernon is in a unique position to leverage local community members as an essential asset in promoting and shaping the Vernon visitor experience.

Equipping locals with the knowledge and tools to connect with visitors and share their experiences in a unique way will provide visitors with the local, laid-back yet active experience Vernon is so proud of and eager to share. This will not only benefit travellers but will reinforce and preserve Vernon's values while building community in the process.

To activate and sustain local pride we will:

Develop a local concierge training program

A free, online training program will be created to equip Vernon residents and tourism employees with knowledge of all that Vernon has to offer as a destination. Program graduates can be utilized

as experts who visitors can connect with for advice and recommendations on how to best experience Vernon like a local.

This program will complement Tourism Vernon's existing Visitor Services program and fall within the role and responsibilities of the new Visitor Services Coordinator in conjunction with the tourism summer student program.

Launch the local concierge training program

Program promotion and recruitment will be performed on all communication platforms to target residents and tourism employees. Online training will be offered through a series of brief modules that equip participants with the destination knowledge they need to be experts (i.e., major attractions, natural assets, experience packages, responsible tourism, etc.).

Once each module is completed and participants are trained to the satisfaction of Tourism Vernon, a digital certificate is awarded to certify participants as a Tourism Vernon Local Concierge. Graduates will have the ability to showcase the certification on social media for display and recognition.

A safe and accessible platform will be used to directly and efficiently connect visitors with a Local Concierge. Example platforms include private WhatsApp or Facebook groups monitored by Tourism Vernon.

To generate excitement and build community, program graduates will be rewarded with a year-end Concierge event.

Collect feedback and assess local concierge training program

The program will be updated and adjusted as needed. Content will be assessed, and feedback collected from program graduates, internal staff, stakeholders, and visitors who have used the program.

Participants will have the opportunity to suggest additional knowledge to be included in the training, which will work to create user-generated content that makes the program unique and locally driven.

Activate local pride

Develop a family and friends program for the fall

Locals will be encouraged to host their family and friends throughout the fall season to further showcase Vernon and increase shoulder season visitation. Our appreciation of the local community will be demonstrated through incentives. Example incentive structures could include:

- Working with local retailers to offer a discounted product, service, activity or experience when a Vernon resident brings a friend or family member.
- Foster partnerships between businesses to offer unique packages at a locals-only rate (e.g., bike rental and a beer/coffee/ice cream).
- 2 for 1 discounts and promo codes.
- Advertise existing local business promotions throughout the fall.

The menu of deals and discounts can be shared through a social media campaign themed for 'Family and Friends Fall.' A special campaign hashtag could be created to encourage residents and their visitors to share their experiences in-destination on social media.

This seasonal campaign is also an opportunity to drive incremental spending of existing visitors, while reminding and encouraging residents to support local by tying in the Chamber of Commerce's "Show Local Some Love" campaign where possible.

Host social media takeovers

Social media takeovers will run using stakeholders, active locals, influencers, local businesses and organizations, and concierge program graduates. Opportunities to cross collaborate will be identified to further expose the brand and capture new audiences.

Incubate products and experiences

Partnerships are a critical component of successful product development. Opportunities will be provided to collaboratively incubate products and experiences that increase visitor numbers, satisfaction, and length of stay by working with accommodations and key attractions to grow the number of quality products offered in Vernon. Key audiences will be targeted, and Vernon experiences fully represented in travel trade.

To support the incubation of innovative products and experiences we will:

Support an annual tourism product development forum

Tourism Vernon will engage with and support our North Okanagan's Community Future's Enterprize Challenge. This would look like Tourism Vernon sponsoring or collaborating on the judging committee.

The effort to become involved in this competition will help to broaden conversations beyond the typical circle of tourism stakeholders and facilitate discussion and innovation around new product development.

Develop a soft experience pilot project

Space will be created for Tourism Vernon to have a larger presence in the "soft experiences" space through a pilot project (i.e., trail interpretation as opposed to building physical trails).

Develop Lake Country winery partnerships

Partnerships with existing local wine tour operators will be leveraged to further develop and promote wine tourism in the area, and to begin to strengthen Vernon's image as a destination for wine tourism experiences. Wine tourism product and

experience offerings will be visibly enhanced across the Tourism Vernon website and social media platforms.

Sponsor an annual festival that aligns with the brand

Select events that align with the Activate Vernon brand and are hosted in the shoulder season will be sponsored. Opportunities will be identified to leverage and support the growing sports and arts and culture tourism sectors.

Enhance in- and out-of-town business connections

Anchor attraction audiences and resources will be leveraged to support hotels and smaller in-town operators. Partnerships will be built and nurtured to encourage cross-promotion of marketing efforts and the development of itineraries.

Incubate products and experiences

Support bike-friendly product development

The Vernon Pedestrian and Bike Master Plan will be supported through additional investments in bike-friendly infrastructure: racks and corrals, and secure bike storage. Local businesses, accommodations, restaurants, and events will be encouraged to become more bike-friendly. The promotion of bike transportation networks, bike safety, and road-user education will be enhanced.

Elevate the presence of Vernon arts and culture

Arts and culture can showcase the distinct values and identity of Vernon, create community pride, and enhance economic development. Provision of funding and investment are key initiatives in the Greater Vernon Cultural Plan. As this plan comes to fruition, Vernon is ready to launch arts and culture as a staple in visitor experiences. The integration of arts and culture into infrastructure and experience development can support initiatives that differentiate Vernon culturally within the Okanagan. The following are supportive actions that Tourism Vernon can focus on to further integrate arts and culture into the tourism offerings in Vernon:

- Align with and support the initiatives of the new arts and culture centre via promotion and advertising to generate awareness, and hosting/sponsoring arts and culture festivals and events.
- Emphasize arts and culture in shoulder seasons through itineraries and the family and friends fall program.
- Include arts and culture in the concierge training program.
- Support the development of an arts trail through Vernon. This could be a specific trail lined with a variety of arts and culture installations/interpretations, or a suggested route through town with intentional touchpoints for visitation.
- Align with the ongoing efforts of the Arts Council of the North Okanagan (ACNO), RDNO, and OKIB to bring art and culture into public spaces.

Support health and wellness product development

We will work to support the availability of year-round health and wellness offerings for visitors. Major resorts and local wellness businesses will be connected to develop and enhance wellness products and packages.

Support for the Okanagan Rail Trail

Marketing and promotion of the Okanagan Rail Trail will continue for target markets, and alliances maintained with the City of Kelowna, District of Lake Country, OKIB, and RDNO to support Friends of Okanagan Rail Trail.

Organizational effectiveness

The following are fundamentals to ensure long-term organizational effectiveness and success. The current structure of Tourism Vernon as a DMO is unique in our position as a municipal department paired with Economic Development. The structure was bolstered with the creation of the Tourism Commission, rendering diversity and strength in Tourism Vernon's voice and strategies.

Follow industry best practices

We will continue to represent the voice of the destination and foster industry relationships through stakeholder engagement, leveraging partnerships, considering resident needs and concerns, and practicing sustainability and stewardship across all initiatives. We strive for sustainable economic growth and ground our work with market research.

Maximize nimbleness and responsiveness

The partnership between tourism and economic development and the close existing relationships with other City departments allows Tourism Vernon to be uniquely agile and effective as a leader. We will continue harnessing the ability to adapt to changing community and economic development

conditions, and develop innovative partnerships that enable us to be proactive in this regard.

Ensure the Tourism Commission is functional and representative

The strength of the functionality of the Tourism Commission will continuously be observed, with a focus on diversity, equity, unity, relationships, action, and accountability.

Strengthen advocacy of the industry within the city

The inextricable link between tourism and economic development requires continued advocacy to elevate industry voices and ensure involvement in decision making. This means fostering stakeholder relationships, demonstrating the positive impacts of tourism, and raising the profile of tourism via local, regional, and national levels of governance to acquire industry resources and investment.

Secure stable long-term funding

Economies and funding can be unpredictable, making destinations vulnerable as a result. It is important we continue to assess short- and long-term funding models, ensuring there is a balanced approach (such as MRDT, co-op

program funding, and pooled funding projects). Stable long-term funding is essential for maintaining support and reducing the risk of revenue erosion.

Leverage partnerships

Strong partnerships are integral for the survival and success of a DMO. This includes partnerships with other DMOs, local operators, Chamber of Commerce, government, City departments, industry, and other organizations. This is a strength of Tourism Vernon that will be maintained to continue increasing visitation and spending, elevating sustainability, and improving the overall tourism experience for both visitors and residents alike.

Develop, measure, and report on ROI of initiatives

Data collection will ensure resources are being used appropriately and align with our strategic goals. This serves to build trust with funders, and with our community through ROI as a source of accountability and transparency in success. Performance standards that go beyond the traditional heads-in-beds will be utilized through digital tools like social media and other analytics. This helps tell the whole story of the destination.

Recommended activity plan

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5
Lead with the brand					
Conduct a brand assessment	X				
Develop key messaging and content strategies	X →				
Develop messaging for major attractions	X →				
Conduct a living the brand workshop		X			
Create additional brand assets		X		X	
Conduct a competitive brand assessment				X	
Focus marketing on key audiences					
Shift current marketing for target audiences	X				
Create experience itinerary bundles		X			
Develop access to experience itineraries via digital and print platforms		X →			
Update the Tourism Vernon website	X				
Conduct hyper-targeting via social and digital media		X →			
Continue investments in other conventional spaces		X →			
Work with partners to develop responsible travel messaging for visitors		X →			

X = implement
→ = sustain

Recommended activity plan

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5
Leverage specific sports					
Prepare the foundation for a sport tourism strategy	X				
Leverage sector partnerships and programs for targeted sport tourism growth		X →			
Partner with Destination SilverStar and SilverStar Mountain Resort		X →			
Promote Vernon as a golf destination		X →			
Establish strong partnerships					
Conduct an audit of available tourism support programs	X				
Continue to work with the Downtown Vernon Association and the City of Vernon departments to improve visitor access to the downtown core		X →			
Continue building relationships with the Okanagan Indian Band	X →				
Work with TOTA to build business education and presence		X →			
Work with the Chamber of Commerce to support networking and education		X →			
Hotelier collaboration support	X →				
Increase the role of travel trade in sales efforts	X →				
Continue to support Vernon economic development in climate action	X →				

X = implement
→ = sustain

Recommended activity plan

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5
Activate local pride					
Develop a local concierge training program	X				
Launch the local concierge training program		X			
Collect feedback and assess local concierge training program			X	→	
Develop a family and friends program for the fall			X	→	
Host social media takeovers		X	→		
Incubate products and experiences					
Support an annual tourism product development forum			X	→	
Develop a soft experience pilot project			X		
Develop Lake Country winery partnerships	X	→			
Sponsor an annual festival that aligns with the brand		X	→		
Enhance in- and out-of-town business connections	X	→			
Support bike-friendly product development		X	→		
Elevate the presence of Vernon arts and culture	X	→			
Support health and wellness product development		X	→		
Support for the Okanagan Rail Trail	X	→			

X = implement
 → = sustain

Measurements

Measurement is a critical component of the strategic plan, but benchmarks need to be set for most objectives.

This table is a representative sample of the types of measures being considered.

Once approved, measures will need to be benchmarked in 2022 and objectives set to 2026.

GOAL	MEASURE	TOOL
Increased year-round visitation	Four-seasons MRDT growth	City of Vernon annual MRDT calculation and comparison
Increased visitor satisfaction	Preferred: Net Promoter Score Alternative: Tourism Sentiment Index	Third-party research
Increased stakeholder engagement	Stakeholder satisfaction	Annual stakeholder survey
Increased community support for tourism	Resident tourism engagement	Resident community sentiment survey and concierge program feedback

FULL SPEED AHEAD

STORMY
LAKE
CONSULTING



TOURISM
✓ vernon

Page 43 of 43