MACKENZIE
BRITISH COLUMBIA

2021 - 2026 Tourism Plan

Prepared by C4 Strategies
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5-Year Tourism Plan

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Section 1: Tourism Plan Introduction

1.1 Background

The community of Mackenzie, British Columbia, is home to around 3,700 people and sits at the northern end of Highway 39, and is surrounded by boreal forests, lakes and mountains. Lying in the Rocky Mountain Trench between the Omineca Mountains to the west and the Rocky Mountains to the east, it is approximately two hours driving distance north of Prince George in the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George. The closest neighboring community is McLeod Lake, roughly 30 minutes to the south, which is home to the McLeod Lake Indian Band.

Mackenzie was built in the 1960's during the construction of the W.A.C. Bennet Dam, which flooded the region and created the Williston Lake Reservoir, adjacent to which the community was built. British Columbia Forest Products built a pulp mill and two sawmills to begin developing the vast forest resources in the area, and the community was developed as an "instant town" with the industrial area separate from the residential area to ensure clean air in town all year. The first families settled in Mackenzie in June of 1966, and today's residents enjoy some of the best municipal water in BC, a very low crime rate, low taxes, low real estate prices and high paying jobs in natural resource industries in the area – meaning Mackenzie has been an extremely affordable place to get a start in life, buy a home, and raise a family.

As of 2021, however, the community is facing economic challenges in part due to the impact of the global Covid-19 Pandemic, but mostly due to the decline in jobs and tax generation due to the permanent closure of one mill and the temporary closure of another. There is genuine concern that residents who are passionate about living in the town will face the realities of having to relocate elsewhere in the province to find work.

The District of Mackenzie is the municipal organization for the community of Mackenzie, and has identified tourism as an opportunity for economic diversification and growth, and is evaluating the potential to make tourism a core focus of its future economic development strategy. A previous Tourism Plan was created in 2008 but was not fully implemented, and it is fair to say that tourism is currently an underdeveloped and underperforming economic sector, despite there being a reasonable range of existing and potential visitor experience opportunities leveraging the region's natural landscapes and outdoor recreation. With this mind, The District of Mackenzie engaged **C4 Strategies** of Sherwood Park, Alberta, in February 2021 to develop a new five-year Tourism Plan that will build on the platform of the previous plan against the context of more than a decade of significant changes to the tourism landscape, industry best practices and provincial objectives for tourism, and provide a practical roadmap to make tourism a viable economic sector in the region.

This new Tourism Plan will function as a work plan for the next five years with goals, timelines, and clearly outlined strategies in alignment with current regional and Provincial destination development objectives. This in turn will grow the tourism industry, increase year-round visitation, help to diversify the local economy, expand the tax base, and increase job opportunities and quality of life for residents. Based on these criteria, this Tourism Plan will:

- Identify opportunities working together with tourism organizations and stakeholders on both a local, regional, and provincial level.
- Analyze outdoor recreation development and marketing opportunities for current tourism operators, new tourism operators that may be attracted.
- Identify leadership, organizational capacity, budget requirements, funding, and communications that support an inclusive vision of tourism.
- Create an actionable plan that will guide the operating team through a series of initiatives designed to meet measurable goals through a phased timeline, with environmental responsibility, financial sustainability, and diversity and inclusion as core values.

1.2 Methodology

Background Research, Trend Analysis, Asset mapping and Gap Analysis (April/May 2021)
The consultant conducted (remotely) a program of research based on the following:

- Community and regional documentation provided by District of Mackenzie economic development team,
- Tourism information available through existing marketing channels,
- Trends and plans published by Destination BC and its regional affiliate, Northern BC Tourism,
- Current requirements for implementation/management of a Municipal Regional District Tax (MRDT), also known as hotel tax.

Through this process, the consultant was able to create a comprehensive list of tourism products, services, and assets to Mackenzie and area, and identify inefficiencies and/or gaps in tourism products and service assets available to support marketing efforts. In addition, the consultant was able to determine a series of statements regarding tourism to be tested through in-person consultation.

Consultation and Engagement (May 2021)
The consultant conducted the following community consultation initiatives:

- Comprehensive tourism survey, completed by 243 individual participants representing more than 8% of community adults,
- 20 hours of in-person meetings and interviews with tourism stakeholders identified by the District of Mackenzie,
- Tours of the region and site visits to potential tourism assets,
- Preliminary presentation to the District of Mackenzie's Council and senior members of administration.

Through this process, the consultant was able to identify tourism strengths and opportunities along with weaknesses and threats, audit the visitor experience, and further identify gaps and in tourism product and service offerings.

Plan Development (June/July 2021)
Based on their findings, and ongoing meetings with District of Mackenzie staff, the consultant developed the following:

- Tourism visual identity (selected and approved by Council on July 12, 2021),
- Draft Tourism Plan for presentation to Council August 9, 2021.

1.3 Acknowledgement

The plan recognizes that as a community built specifically for the extraction of natural resources Mackenzie, cannot simply promote pristine landscapes and environmentally responsible tourism without acknowledging the realities of its industrial past and present. This should, however, also be celebrated and leveraged as part of a greater story of change in the region, and how the community is creating a greener future, in partnership where possible with the resource companies that continue to operate in the region.

The plan also recognizes the significance of the local McLeod Lake Indian Band, part of the Tse'Khene Nation (People of the Rocks), and their belief that the Creator put them in the region as stewards of the land. Future tourism development should work in collaboration with the McLeod Lake Indian Band wherever possible, respectfully helping to raise awareness of Tse'Khene Nation traditions, and cultivating an environment of partnership, respect and recognition.

Section 2: A Vision for Tourism

2.1 Vision Statement – where is tourism in Mackenzie going long-term?

Mackenzie will be renowned as one of northern British Columbia's tourism jewels, offering exhilarating experiences in pristine landscapes while celebrating its successful transformation from a resource-based industrial community to a shining example of environmental sustainability. New tourism business opportunities will help diversify the local economy and improve quality of life for residents through responsible development of vibrant new infrastructure, and creative marketing will drive awareness of and visitation to the community, and economic value for local businesses.

2.2 Mission Statement – how will tourism be delivered mid-term?

Practical, collaborative tourism initiatives will inspire development of new visitor experiences that establish Mackenzie as a viable four-season destination for outdoor recreation. Internal & external partnerships will result in progressive investments in destination development, business capacity and creative promotional efforts which result in measurable economic impacts to local businesses.

2.3 Core Values – what principles will be used to govern tourism in Mackenzie?

Core Value #1:	**PARTNERSHIP, COLLABORATION & INCLUSIVITY**	Tourism in Mackenzie will be founded on meaningful **partnerships** within our community built on trust, inclusivity, respect, integrity and a genuine goal of **mutual gain**.
Core Value #2:	**BUILDING FROM WITHIN**	Tourism in Mackenzie will celebrate **local strengths,** and will build programs that strive to improve the capacity & skills of local businesses and organizations.
Core Value #3:	**ENSURING CULTURAL AUTHENTICITY**	Tourism in Mackenzie will support the development and promotion of **culturally authentic experiences** that reflect our local cultures, history and our pristine natural environment, recognizing the past, and building for the future.
Core Value #4:	**SUSTAINABILITY AT ALL LEVELS**	Tourism in Mackenzie will ensure that **sustainability is** practiced across the triple bottom line of **people, planet and profit** – tourism growth will enhance quality of life for our residents, tourism development will be reflective and respectful of our natural environment, and tourism success will drive profitability to our businesses.

2.4 Milestones – how will the community know that tourism development is on track?

The plan is intended to be both actionable and realistic. All tourism initiatives are divided into 4 phases, each of which is defined by a progress statement that acts as a guiding vision for the phase, and each of which is marked by a series of measurable outcomes (defined in section 5.4) that will be used as an indicator of plan delivery. The phases are defined as follows, based on the District of Mackenzie's fiscal year (January 1 to December 31):
PHASE ONE – remainder of 2021 (plan approval date to December 31, 2021),
PHASE TWO – 2022 (January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022),
PHASE THREE – 2023-2024 (January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2024),
PHASE FOUR – 2025-2026 (January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2026).

Milestone Date	Progress Statement
PHASE ONE (2021)	The organization that will lead tourism will be established, with operating plans, budget, staff, committees and governance structure in place, and policy decisions governing the future direction of tourism approved.
PHASE TWO (2022)	The community begins to recognize tourism efforts, with visual examples of local product development, noticeable regional marketing, and strong two-way engagement and communication between the tourism team and the community.
PHASE THREE (2023-2024)	Tourism shows positive triple-bottom-line impacts, with increased visitation leading to measurable economic growth for businesses, coordinated development resulting in increased amenities for residents, and effective management ensuring that there are no negative environmental impacts.
PHASE FOUR (2025-2026)	Mackenzie is recognized as an attractive destination within northern British Columbia, third-party private sector investment is being attracted to the community in alignment with tourism policies, and tourism is showing sufficient ROI and economic impact that Council endorses funding for a new multi-year tourism plan.

Section 3: Situational Analysis

3.1 Strengths and Opportunities

1) NATURAL LANDSCAPES
Mackenzie offers access to outstanding natural environments, something locals take great pride in and which aligns with Northern BC Tourism. While the wilderness might not be as dramatic as other areas of the province, there is a **marketing opportunity** to focus on the ability to get away from the crowds and find your own space – with a competitive advantage vs. busier destinations.

2) OUTDOOR RECREATION
Outdoor activities are already well-established in the region for locals and visitors who bring their own equipment, however there are limited opportunities for visitors who want to try something new. There are four-season **revenue-generating opportunities**, where existing infrastructure can be leveraged, and new investment can potentially be attracted (eg. mountain biking/fishing/hunting/skiing).

3) REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS
The lack of existing tourism infrastructure, especially revenue-generating activities, can potentially be offset by establishing creative and **mutually beneficial partnerships** with regional products and associations. Powder King ski hill presents the most obvious immediate opportunity, while McLeod Lake Indian Band and local biking/skiing/sledding groups are potential product development partners, and other like-minded communities may become marketing partners.

4) TOURISM DISTRICT
The lack of a natural in-town destination or gathering place for visitors to gravitate towards could be offset by the development of a 'cool' tourism 'district' that becomes a **go-to location** within the community. Designation of an area within the town with incentives to attract anchor tenants such and coffee shops, rentals and a brew pub would create the added benefit of giving residents a vibrant new in-town destination.

5) CONVERSION OPPORTUNTIES
In a post-Covid world where working remotely has changed perceptions of where people need to be based, Mackenzie offers an affordable and unique 'end of the road' living opportunity that few other locations can match. Strategic tourism marketing can be used to not just inspire visitation, but also to create aspirational imagery of living somewhere different and remote, and **ultimately attract new residents**.

6) ENGAGED COMMUNITY
Mackenzie's residents are passionate about their community, recognize the importance of economic diversification (including specifically tourism) as a tool to offset reliance on a single industry, and are engaged in the discussion. This passion, combined with the fact that the vast majority of residents moved from elsewhere means there is an outstanding opportunity to **engage the community as marketing ambassadors** and invite the world.

7) A FRESH START
Tourism in Mackenzie is not dealing with past failures, and there is not an existing base of tourism that is at risk through trying new ideas – it is simply something which has simply never been developed, meaning the community effectively is working from a blank canvas. There is a great minimal-risk opportunity to get creative around development and marketing, starting with leveraging the residents' genuine pride and passion for the community.

3.2 Core Risk Assessment

1) LOCATION & AWARENESS
There must be no illusion about the size of the task required to effectively develop tourism. Mackenzie's end-of-the-road location, not being on a major travel route, and the sheer lack of awareness about the destination all present significant obstacles. In addition, there is no iconic attraction or natural landscape to attract visitors, and the community is competing directly with multiple places that offer the same experience much closer to home.

2) LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURE
There is a lack of developed tourism infrastructure – with no natural 'centre' to the community, minimal established product that directly generates visitor spend, no rentals/guiding services, and very poor access to the wilderness for anyone who does not have specialist equipment.

3) THE "FREE" MINDSET
There is great pride within the community that all of the outdoor recreation activities are FREE – however tourism must be viewed 100% as an economic driver, and if an initiative doesn't have an economic ROI, it is not directly benefiting the economy. Recreation can still be free for the locals, but tourism development must be focussed on how to stimulate spend.

4) LOCALS PERSPECTIVE VS. VISITOR REALITY
Locals know the local roads, have suitable vehicles to travel them, and have the equipment required to enjoy wilderness activities. This risks a presumption that these activities can be marketed to visitors 'as-is' without having to adapt the product. The reality is that most visitors will not arrive with suitable vehicles or equipment, which in turn presents a risk of visitor disappointment as well as significant safety concerns about visitors not being adequately prepared.

5) IMBALANCED INFLUENCE
The limited number of businesses working in Mackenzie's tourism sector means there is a very high risk that one or two players may be able to disrupt/derail the District of Mackenzie's process, or drive agenda independent of DoM strategy & plans.

6) INABILITY TO ATTRACT INVESTMENT
There is a significant requirement for investment in tourism, starting with a level of funding from the municipality to cover core program costs, but also including 3rd-party investment in product external investment in road access to tourism assets.

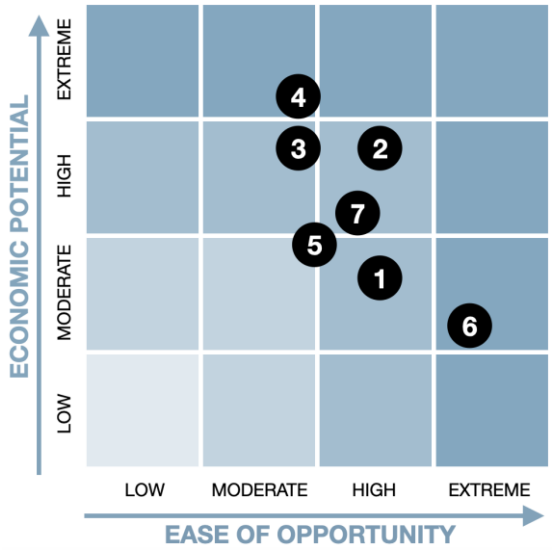
7) NEW COMPETITION
Addition of on-site resort accommodation at regional operators such as Powder King would nullify Mackenzie's value as the regional place to stay.

8) FAILURE TO MEET BRAND PROMISE
Marketing must be managed carefully based on the actual product to ensure that the *"product experience"* matches *"what"* is being promoted, and to ensure experiences that aren't easily accessed are not promoted (e.g. lack of access to Williston Lake). Failure to deliver on brand promise results in distrust of future.

9) LACK OF COMMITMENT AND/OR INERTIA
Tourism will NOT just happen organically – it needs a plan, leadership and financial commitment, and it needs to move forward in a timely manner. The challenges of location, awareness mean that for tourism development to be effective, there MUST be a commitment to invest in tourism for at least 5 years.

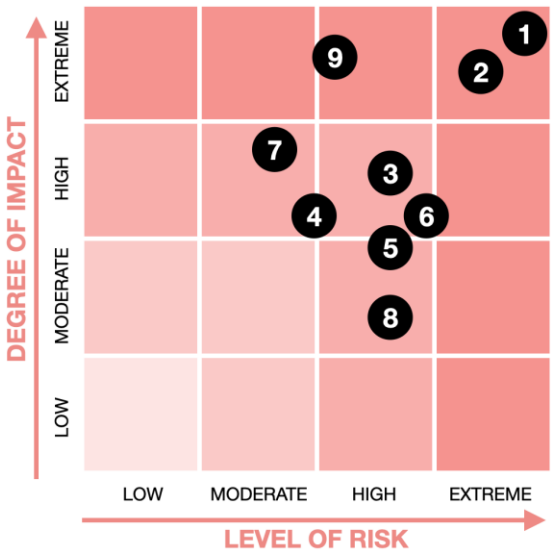
3.3 Situational Analysis Summary

Strengths and Opportunities



1) NATURAL LANDSCAPES
2) OUTDOOR RECREATION
3) REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS
4) TOURISM DISTRICT
5) CONVERSION OPPORTUNITIES
6) ENGAGED COMMUNITY
7) A FRESH START

Core Risks



1) LOCATION & AWARENESS
2) LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURE
3) THE “FREE” MINDSET
4) LOCALS PERSPECTIVE VS. VISITOR REALITY
5) IMBALANCED INFLUENCE
6) INABILITY TO ATTRACT INVESTMENT
7) NEW COMPETITION
8) FAILURE TO MEET BRAND PROMISE
9) LACK OF COMMITMENT AND/OR INERTIA

3.4 Opportunity Assessment and Keys to Success

The question must be asked, that based on geography and existing visitor-friendly infrastructure, whether tourism has sufficient potential for the District of Mackenzie to focus some of its economic development resources. While there is not a definitive answer to the question, and there can be no guarantee of success, there are sufficient strengths in the region's natural geography and the genuine passion of its people to suggest that there is potential to proceed.
Following are the keys to success:

THE CHALLENGE MUST BE UNDERSTOOD AND NOT UNDERESTIMATED
The core risks above must be fully understood by the leadership and management group, reviewed and assessed regularly, and continually mitigated against.

PARTNERSHIP, COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION ARE ESSENTIAL
The District of Mackenzie will need the support of its community, its businesses and its regional partners, and there must be continual two-way communication that speaks to potential impacts and benefits.

THERE MUST BE A LONG-TERM COMMITMENT TO THE PROCESS
Success will not be overnight, and will require a multi-year commitment to destination development and marketing, with sufficient, sustainable funding.

THERE IS NO TIME FOR INERTIA
The process must move continually forward; destination marketing initiatives typically deliver results 18-24 months in the future.

GET CREATIVE
The management team will need to get creative in finding a way for the tourism product and marketing to stand out in a very crowded market. The more that Mackenzie can differentiate itself from the competition, the higher the chance of success.

3.5 Big-Picture Thinking

Per 3.4 above, one of the keys to success will be creativity – the ability to rethink the way things currently are and imagine instead what the future might look like in a way that is visitor-friendly without having a negative impact on local residents. **Following are three discussion areas for consideration:**

TOURISM DISTRICT

CREATE A NEW AND EXCITING TOURISM DISTRICT IN DOWNTOWN MACKENZIE

There is currently no place in town to which both locals and visitors will naturally gravitate – generally seen as essential in any successful tourism community. Somewhere that will be engaging enough so that locals will want to go there, creating a critical mass of traffic and therefore generating vibrancy. Somewhere that will be easy to find, visually attractive, and home to 'cool' businesses including brewpub(s), coffee shop(s), arts and crafts, equipment rentals, and seasonal markets. Somewhere with gathering places and weather-appropriate seating, and somewhere with a purpose-built covered space to house events and activities. To get there, a baseline must be set in place, after which new businesses will **want** to be located there.

ICONIC GATEWAY

CREATE AN 'ICONIC GATEWAY' AT THE HIGHWAY 39/HIGHWAY 97 INTERSECTION

The 'gateway' to Mackenzie must be impossible to miss for Highway 97 traffic. There must be a compelling, consistent, 24/7 reason for people to stop and engage with the junction, and as many opportunities as possible to gather information about Mackenzie. The current info centre in the caboose offers a 'cool' but inconsistent service, with limited opening hours and seasonality. Reallocating these financial resources to deploy 24/7 interactive signage, that uses trackable QR codes to accurately measure engagement and follow-through, and that also leverages the new cell coverage at the junction will be far more effective year-round and inspire future visitation. The creation of a major visual attraction will increase reasons to stop – the (closed) caboose and good signage is a positive start, adding Indigenous components will also help – but perhaps the biggest impact might be relocating the Tree Crusher to create an unmissable attraction.

SHIFT THINKING

SHIFT THE PARADIGM IN THE WAY PEOPLE THINK ABOUT COMMUNITY 'ASSETS'

Residents of Mackenzie are very passionate about the community, and each has their own favourite places and activities that they naturally assume will also be appealing to everyone else – often including the fact they can indulge in their favourite experience at little or no cost. There is an opportunity, and also a necessity, to shift the mindset into thinking about these 'assets' and evaluating them against what the visitor really wants, why the assets will attract the visitor to the community, how the visitor will be able to access them without special vehicles or equipment, how the visitor will be safe, and how the 'assets' can be leveraged for positive economic impact. This rethink will require an openness for change, a willingness to share, and some real clarity about what must be preserved and what can be leveraged. The upside is that new and exciting assets will be created that keep this and future generations in and engaged with the community.

Section 4: Building an Organization

4.1 The Destination Management/Marketing Organization – Operational Models

ASSUMPTIONS:

1) Tourism development will be led by the District of Mackenzie (DoM),
2) Tourism Development will be managed with the function of a Destination Management/Marketing Organization being undertaken by the District of Mackenzie, Economic Development Department,
3) There are 3 primary functions for the Destination Management/Marketing Organization (DMO) to undertake:

    A) Destination Management/administration: measurable progress on initiatives/programs, continued securing of resources (funds – municipal, annual, multi-year & specific program or initiative grants), reporting & communication of value, research & business insights, planning (annual & future).
    B) Destination Development: leading the progressive development of product & visitor experiences; facilitating progress across business capacity, partnerships, product growth/expansion; tourism asset growth, future planning, secure resources,
    C) Business Development/pursuit/sales & marketing, conversion: development and execution of marketing initiatives, including social media, and programs, track conversion (bookings, etc.), undertake business development & sales activities, evaluate opportunities and pursue sports events and local meeting, content development, expand image library.

It is recommended that the DMO operates using a blend of the following two models, with a phased approach defined in 4.2 below:

Fully Internal Model (within DoM Administration)
Internal Tourism Coordinator under Economic Development (EcDev), and treat tourism as a fully executable element as a component of EcDev in the context of economic diversification and sector leadership. In 2021 fiscal look to secure 2022 budget as core tourism funding for EcDev to be able to progress Municipal Regional and District Tax (MRDT), define the tourism function as part of EcDev duties, measurable outcomes for 2021 fiscal and start the planning process for the 2022 destination development and marketing initiatives. This option is more progressive and deliberately managed to collaboratively work with the local tourism sector, administration, expectations, to build capacity while still executing on short-term destination development and marketing initiatives with clear and easy wins by DoM – Economic Development. Essentially this is a proving period locally, regionally and provincially that the District considers tourism as a key element of their local economy and is able to execute on behalf of the sector.

Blended Model with Internally & Externally Contracted Functions (combination of DoM Administration & external contractor):
DoM Administration maintains DMO functions of A and B, then all or a portion of contracting out specific roles & responsibilities for C. For 2021 if budget allows, or if not look to start this in 2022 fiscal – to RFP the marketing function with specific roles, responsibilities and agreed to measurable outcomes which are conversion oriented between the contractor and DoM. This relates to media (earned & purchased), social media, purchase oriented marketing programs in the short term – all with a dual purpose of improving the awareness of Mackenzie as an emerging tourism destination within local markets (Prince George, etc.). Outcomes here would be associated with reach, awareness, building content online and affinity across the regional market and locally.

4.2a The Destination Management/Marketing Organization – PHASE ONE OPERATION (2021)

PHASE ONE (2021):
Council approval of the DoM Tourism Plan => Budgetary process for Tourism function to be led by Economic Development => Collaborate with community & business / tourism sector => assess willingness to progress with MRDT & initialize MRDT process => tactical planning for short term development & marketing initiatives.

Model: DMO functions would be set up and fully performed initially by DoM for 2021 fiscal (Fully Internal Model).

Phase One Outcomes:

a) Approval of DoM Tourism Plan by Council,
b) Gain acceptance of tourism sector (District accommodations 51% of businesses & 51% of room inventory) to proceed with MRDT,
c) Submit inclusive funding for Economic Development for incremental funding for Tourism core funding (position & core destination development & marketing initiatives),
d) DoM consider hiring a Tourism Coordinator within Economic Development,
e) Proceed with MRDT process locally into MRDT application submission,
f) Define Tourism function within Economic Development responsibilities.

4.2b The Destination Management/Marketing Organization – PHASE TWO OPERATION (2022)

PHASE TWO (2022):
With the DoM Tourism Plan being accepted by Administration and approved by Council the next step is to progress on both resourcing and standing up the function within the DoM. Clearly articulate from an administrative perspective for Council the budgetary impacts related to core funding for Tourism which will need to be incrementally provided to Economic Development by the DoM. This will ideally allow for a dedicated position at a coordinator level that is largely tasked with ensuring to progress tourism internally and externally from a leadership role. This position would be responsible for guiding the process to both assess going forward (or not going forward with) and initializing the MRDT process in the short term locally and the application process for MRDT. If there is an option to hire a part-time coordinator to undertake these activities in the 2022 fiscal, this would be advisable to both define the tourism function in DoM Economic Development and to submit the application for MRDT in the 2022 fiscal. During this period, explore an adhoc tourism advisory group to provide support to DoM administration as the function of tourism is clarified in Economic Development.

Model: DMO functions for the majority of the year would be performed by DoM (Fully Internal Model), then through an RFP process be partially transferred to a 3rd Party, with management oversight maintained by the DoM (Blended Model).

Phase Two Outcomes:

a) Full DoM budgetary approval gained under Economic Development,
b) Undertake the development of annual business planning for business development & marketing programs and initiatives with measurable conversion-oriented outcomes,
c) Develop and gain approval for an adhoc tourism advisory group to aid in the development of the tourism function within Economic Development,

d) Tactically execute directly or with the assistance of a 3rd party contractor for the 2022 fiscal year in a partial or for the full fiscal year,
e) Follow-up from MRDT application materials and ideally start collection of funds from accommodation providers in the District,
f) Ensure to continue local community involvement, collaboratively develop partnerships, determine what destination development initiatives need to be undertaken locally, potentially in partnership with McLeod Lake Indian Band, representative organizations, etc.,
g) Clearly define the "Business Development & Marketing" function of tourism, develop a well thought out service delivery, fulfillment and reporting/measurable delivery RFP to be able to release the necessary function areas while maintaining internal responsibility for management and delivery within the District. Understand the trade-offs between internal responsibilities and management oversight, explore capacity and skills/abilities and progression of the service delivery contract in 2022 and over a defined period to increase management vs delivery of certain elements,
h) Release the Business Development & Marketing – Service Delivery RFP as per current procurement processes for the District of Mackenzie and through an evaluative process, select and enter into contract that is defined, measurement and conversion oriented while having the ability to increase the service delivery options jointly with the District and chosen 3rd party contractor,
i) Develop a set of metrics and reporting standards that demonstrate a relationship between invested resources, progression on activities and measurables to demonstrate both progress for activities and economic impact for tourism initiatives.

4.2c The Destination Management/Marketing Organization – PHASE THREE OPERATION (2023-2024)

PHASE THREE (2023-2024): DoM Council Multi-Year funding for Economic Development to undertake tourism function => Securing MRDT ability to collect funding => DoM Economic Development has defined leadership role as internal DMO => Hired Tourism Coordinator => Develop Terms of Reference for Tourism Advisory Committee => Develop expectations & measurable outcomes for Marketing and RFP Marketing & Conversion function to 3rd party contractor => build out necessary marketing content => execute initial destination development & business development/marketing initiatives => reporting to Tourism Advisory Committee, Council, Community (business & tourism sector) around value & ROI for tourism sector.

Model: Carry out DMO functions A & B, and contract out to 3rd party for 2023-2024 fiscal for Marketing and if viable for function C (Blended Model).

Phase Three Outcomes:
a) Gain acceptance of DoM Economic Development's Tourism roles & responsibilities, gain approval for Tourism Advisory Committee's Terms of Reference & populate Committee,
b) Gain approval for MRDT funds to be collected and remitted to DoM for Tourism,
c) Develop Annual Tourism Plan with combination of DoM core funding and MRDT funds with specific local destination management & development activities and marketing/conversion-oriented initiatives and programs,
d) Undertaken collaborative destination development activities with tourism businesses, regional partners,
e) Hire 3rd party contractor via RFP for marketing, content, awareness, conversion for a defined period (eg. 2 years), if incomplete from prior fiscal,
f) Develop and deliver reporting materials for tourism to Committee, Council, Community,
g) DoM Economic Development & Tourism function and budgets are part of the normal administration and District budgeting reporting and budgeting cycle.

4.2d The Destination Management/Marketing Organization – PHASE FOUR OPERATION (2025-2026)

PHASE FOUR (2025-2026): DoM Economic Development & Tourism funding is part of annual budget cycle => Develop annual Tourism Plan with measurable outcomes to present to Tourism Advisory Committee for input and administration approval => undertake destination management & development initiatives & programs / manage business development/pursuit/sales & marketing, conversion contract with 3rd party contractor => 6 month check-in with tourism industry => annual report out on tourism function by DoM Economic Development & Tourism to Tourism Advisory Committee, Council, Community.

Model: Carry out DMO functions A & B and undertake an assessment of 3rd party contract outcomes for function C to either extend contract (vs RFP every 2 years) with current 3rd party contractor or bring in-house. This is the juncture which should be carried forward until next review of delivery function for tourism and if the DoM should be managing the tourism deliver (DMO) function or delivering the DMO function in-house (Blended Model, with review of service delivery contract with 3rd party).

Phase Four Outcomes:

a) Demonstrate progression for destination management & destination development activities,
b) Demonstrate business development & marketing conversion results and progress,
c) Expand impact by applying for grants related to destination development,
d) Leverage financial impact by applying for Destination BC co-operative funding for marketing initiatives,
e) Develop initial buy-in programs for local tourism businesses related to business development & marketing,
f) Evaluative assessment on outcomes of 3rd party contract for business development & marketing, conversion targets. Determine if:
    a. Function should carry on with 3rd party contractor => extend for additional 2 years with updated functions, outcomes, targets to progress tourism in and for DoM,
        i. Note: there are two (2) components, execution and conversion/revenue generation. Traditionally municipalities/governments are good with execution (marketing, not with business development/sales), not with conversion/revenue generation.
    b. Function should be brought in-house due to progressively developed marketing & communications team for tourism within the DoM administration skills, knowledge and abilities (caution: to bring in-house both execution & responsiveness for conversion/revenue generation has to be considered).
g) Report on outcomes for 2023/24 business plan, value of tourism to Tourism Advisory Committee, Council, Community, other funders as per reporting requirements.

Recognizing the current financial and economic climate, if new staff funding is not available for 2021/2022, Administration would re-evaluate and propose an alternative workplan to Council for Economic Development and Corporate Services that would look to accommodate moving a portion of or the entirety of these phases forward, being mindful of all Council priorities for the department.

4.3 The Destination Management/Marketing Organization – Governance Structure

The District of Mackenzie will provide the leadership, management and resources for Tourism as assigned to the DoM Economic Development & Tourism department. From a governance perspective, the relationship between Municipal Administration and elected Council is then acted upon by the DoM Economic Development & Tourism Department.

Entity	Roles & Responsibilities	Relates to
DoM – Council	make decisions on behalf of the residents of our municipality. OR As per provincial legislation.	Strategic & Annual Plans & Financial Resources. *Authorities (decision/oversight): Council*
DoM – Administration	Implement direction & decisions set by Council in relation to district operations. OR As per provincial legislation.	Development & execution of plans and their measurable outcomes, resourcing activities. *Authorities (decision/delivery): CAO & Department Lead*
Tourism Advisory Committee	Provides input on annual and multi-year plans, programs and initiatives.	To provide input as a representative committee into guiding the direction and programs which will benefit the District at large through the tourism sector. *Authorities: input & guidance*
DoM – Economic Development & Tourism	To lead, manage, execute tourism (DMO) activities annually. Reports on annual outcomes for tourism. Manages delivery contracts for 3rd party contractors.	Development of Strategic Plan and Annual Operations Plans, requests of budgets to deliver on outcomes on an annual basis *Authority: execution, outcomes & reporting.* *Input: Tourism Advisory Committee*
Tourism – 3rd Party Contractors	To perform contracted duties and delivery on specified measurable outcomes annually throughout the duration of the contract.	Working with DoM Economic Development to execute prescribed activities to fulfill.

Local government staff implement the direction and decisions set by municipal councils. Certain duties, such as the administration of local government corporate operations and finances, are required under provincial legislation.

District of Mackenzie – Council: District of Mackenzie Council is comprised of a Mayor and six Councillors, elected for four year terms. Municipal Councils are elected by the people and make decisions on behalf of the residents of our municipality.

4.4 The Destination Management/Marketing Organization – Potential Funding Mechanisms

Throughout the engagement sessions and individual meetings across multiple sectors of the community, what came across very clear was the acceptance that there was a high degree of trust when it came to the District of Mackenzie. In relation to the local economy, the District's Economic Development department is seen as a natural lead to both start, collaboratively define and undertake both planning and execution of tourism for and across the District. In this regard, the District has demonstrated willingness to secure initial grant funding to develop a tourism plan to ensure that the community is heard, and to provide clear direction so that the sector is set on both a strong foundation and direction.

District Council, Administration and the community are aware of the high-level financial commitments required to properly resource the internal function of a DMO. In order to have a new function added to the responsibilities of the District, especially tourism, it needs to be stable, viable and reliability sustainable. To achieve this, the function of tourism has to have diverse forms of funding. Municipal funding demonstrates that tourism is considered both a significant and a major component for the community and its economic health and diversity. The District would provide what is considered core funding and the benefits of shared services as part of the District of Mackenzie. To provide a level of surety and to demonstrate stable support, strive for a 5-year, renewable agreement for the tourism function. The annual core funding request would be rolled into the annual Economic Development (and tourism) as part of current administrative processes. This would provide the means to hire a tourism coordinator, progress with initial start-up activities, provide for resources to undertake destination development and marketing, leverage other forms of funding and initialize the process for Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT). Core funding for tourism under Economic Development demonstrates leadership by both Council and Administration to support the sector and an investment in the local economy and tourism specifically.

A contributing source of financial resources, which should be determined as viable or not possible in short order, is the willingness to be able to apply for the Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT). Otherwise known as an accommodations or hotel tax which would be available to the District via an application process. From assessment of interest from local accommodations businesses, if positive, to then proceed with the initial 5-Year MRDT Strategy and required elements, including the requisite stakeholder and community engagement, plus minimum support required of at least 51% of accommodations representing at least 51% of the total number of rooms in the municipality. It is recommended that the full MRDT of 3% be applied for. Payments to the designated recipient (District) will be 3% less administration fee (set by Ministry of Finance) and the Tourism & Event Program of 2/30 of the net distributable of the 3% MRDT. These funds are connected to collection of the MRDT and are staggered between collections, remittance and payments back to the District. It is recommended that this item be acted upon as soon as possible by the District Administration to secure this funding resource for tourism. This stream of funds would allow the District to invest funds in tourism marketing, programs and projects to increase local tourism revenue, visitation and economic benefits. First year funding as approximated would fall in the range of $30,000 ~ $50,000 for the 2022 fiscal, then in subsequent years would range as the room rate and occupancy fluctuates. For the 2023/2024 to 2025/2026 fiscals, the approximated range of MRDT funds would be $100,000 ~ $140,000.

A third avenue of funds could be gained through application processes, including Northern BC Tourism, McLeod Lake Mackenzie Community Forest (MLMCF), and Destination BC. This would be related to grants for initiatives and programs, traditionally excluding administration. Over and above grants from these tourism or economic diversity related sources of funds, evaluate the potential to apply to the BC Rural Dividend, BC Arts Council, and Northern Development Initiative Trust on a project or initiative basis. In partnership with community non-profit organizations, also by project, the District can explore collaboratively pursuing funds from Bike BC, Community Gaming Grants, indigenous sources at the provincial and federal levels as well as opportunities for business loans from multiple sources for business attraction and expansion related to destination development initiatives. This category of funds should provide program-oriented funding on an annualized basis between $30,000 ~ $100,000. Examples of this could be the full MRDT application process (full engagement into developing the 5-Year Strategy, 1-Year Tactical Plan, etc.) for approximately $25,000 ~ $30,000. Community initiatives for tourism with the Community Forest (MLMCF) for ~$20,000. Ability to potentially leverage regional initiatives via Destination BC's Co-op Marketing – Open Pool funds which the District is involved with for approximately $10,000 ~ $20,000.

As the tourism function and Destination Management/Marketing Organization function strengthens, measurable results materialize and revenues to local businesses result from initiatives and programs. Direct value and income for individual local businesses will encourage the potential to consider developing initiatives and programs which are led by the District that offer specific buy-in opportunities for organizations, local businesses that amplify and drive further revenues. Marketing initiatives and programs should naturally result in this consideration to allow local businesses to progressively increase their business acumen through economic development programs which in turn, will result in improved ability to undertake appropriate marketing in partnership with other similar local businesses in the context of campaigns, initiatives and programs regionally. These should be developed in the context of campaigns to drive bookings to local business experiences, partnerships to develop products, and should not be too far reaching, e.g. international campaigns which will not be booked locally. In the first few years as tourism is started up, this is not a viable investment recovery aspect of tourism's budgets. However, in year 2, look to explore this in planning for year 3 and expect to potentially be very minimal as this is not meant to be a revenue generating avenue, it is recovery oriented. In tourism's 3rd year look for a recovery of approximately $10,000 ~ $15,000 then assess annually in the District's planning cycles to incrementally grow this aspect, traditionally to compliment co-operative marketing initiatives.

When combined across core funding from the District, MRDT funds, grant based funding sources, the following base financial resources result. With respect to stabilizing the function of the DMO, funding expectations, planned initiatives and programs, 2025/26 is when this should occur. Beyond this, other funding requests should be the exception unless a higher threshold of demonstrated results are able to significantly justify additional financial resources related to both destination development and marketing.

Following is a summary of core funding potential for Destination Management and Marketing

Source	Type	2021	2022	2023-2024	2025-26	2026+
Total	**combined**	**$50,000**	**$250,000 ~ $270,000**	**$355,000**	**$375,000**	**$400,000**

Section 5: Strategic Initiatives

5.1 Strategic Pillars

All strategies will be determined based on three Strategic Pillars:



5.2 Ability to Control Outcomes

Each strategic initiative will be evaluated based on the District of Mackenzie's tourism team's ability to control its own outcomes, with easiest actions being prioritized in the short term. Timeframes are aligned with the milestones in section 2.4 above.



FACTOR #1 – PHYSICAL PROXIMITY TO MACKENZIE		
EASIEST	LOCAL	Mackenzie town site to the junction of Highway's 39 & 97.
MODERATE	REGIONAL	Anything within approximately 2-5 hours' drive time, encompassing key markets of Prince George, Dawson Creek and Grande Prairie, and key potential partners Burns Lake, Quesnel, McBride, Chetwynd.
CHALLENGING	ASPIRATIONAL	All destinations requiring 6 or more hours of driving.

FACTOR #2 – REQUIRED INVESTMENT IN INITIATIVE		
EASIEST	POLICY ONLY	Actions simply require decision making or policy changes with zero or minimal cash investment.
MODERATE	BUDGET	Action can be funded from District of Mackenzie budgets or allocated DMO monies.
CHALLENGING	EXTERNAL	Action will require 3rd-party funding from either private or public sectors.

FACTOR #3 – REALISTIC TIMEFRAME		
IMMEDIATE	PHASE 1	Remainder of 2021 (plan approval date to December 31, 2021).
EASIEST	PHASE 2	2022 (January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022).
MODERATE	PHASE 3	2023-2024 (January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2024).
CHALLENGING	PHASE 4	2025-2026 (January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2026).

DD01: Create a new exciting Tourism District in downtown Mackenzie

PILLAR: *DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT*

OUTCOME: This will be the area to which both locals and visitors will naturally gravitate. It will be an easy to find, attractive area, with 'cool' businesses including brewpub(s), coffee shop(s), arts and crafts, equipment rentals, seasonal market, plus gathering place with weather-appropriate seating. Recommend no/minimal chain stores.

#	DISTANCE	FUNDING	TIME	INITIATIVE	FISCAL	DoM INVESTMENT	NOTES
DD01.1	LOCAL	POLICY	PHASE 1	Define an area of town as a Tourism District and put in place mechanisms/incentives to attract businesses.	2021	STAFF TIME ONLY	Planning decision by DoM. Requires designating area, provisional concept sketches, mechanism to attract the 'right' businesses (not chain stores, etc.).
DD01.2	LOCAL	BUDGET	PHASE 2	Create and deploy visual identity for this 'district', with signage, wayfinding etc.	2022	STAFF TIME PLUS CAPITAL COSTS Potential to include in wayfinding plans	Important to create a sense of arrival for visitors and residents. This should be part of downtown wayfinding and beautification budgeting.
DD01.3	LOCAL	EXTERNAL	PHASE 2 PHASE 3	Attract anchor tenant(s) such as brew pub, coffee shop(s).	2022 2023	STAFF TIME ONLY Private sector investment required for delivery	Requires staff efforts to attract businesses, plus potential DoM support in terms of tax breaks/signage/improvement, etc.
DD01.4	LOCAL	BUDGET	PHASE 2 PHASE 3	Design, build attractive outdoor gathering space.	2022 2023 2024	STAFF TIME PLUS CAPITAL COSTS ($100k-$1m based on chosen plans)	Combination of green space, landscaped gathering areas, pleasant pedestrianized space, bike racks and lockers, etc.
DD01.5	LOCAL	BUDGET EXTERNAL	PHASE 3	Design, build year-round indoor market/gathering facility.	2024	STAFF TIME PLUS CAPITAL COSTS (~$1m based on chosen plans)	Heated indoor space in the Tourism District that can be used year-round for indoor markets, gatherings, etc.

DD02: Create an 'Iconic Gateway' at highway 39/97 intersection

PILLAR: *DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT*
OUTCOME: The 'gateway' to Mackenzie will be impossible to miss for Highway 97 traffic. There will be a compelling, 24/7 reason for people to stop and engage with at least this district, and it will inspire.

#	DISTANCE	FUNDING	TIME	INITIATIVE	FISCAL	DoM INVESTMENT	NOTES
DD02.1	LOCAL	BUDGET	PHASE 2	Consider moving the Tree Crusher to the Highway junction and redeploying it as an exhibit with a raised walkway around it with a dual goal of increasing exposure to Mackenzie at the junction, and generating a significant media story.	2022	STAFF TIME PLUS TRANSPORTATION AND CAPITAL COSTS	The tree crusher could be an anchor feature of a redesigned junction, and a railed walkway would introduce an exciting educational product.
DD02.2	LOCAL	POLICY	PHASE 2	Stop staffing the caboose – replace everything with static displays and information in an effort to reallocate costs and create a consistent, engaging 24/7 visitor experience.	2022	STAFF TIME PLUS REDEPLOYMENT OF CONTRACT FEES	The caboose could be a static display alongside the tree crusher, with informative stories about Mackenzie. Current management fees could be redirected to core tourism programs.
DD02.3	LOCAL	BUDGET	PHASE 2	Create attractive, informative, engaging signage about Mackenzie.	2022	STAFF TIME PLUS CAPITAL COSTS Potential to include in wayfinding plans	Interesting and interactive signs that educate with reasons to visit. Could be part of wayfinding plan.
DD02.4	LOCAL	BUDGET	PHASE 2 PHASE 3	Explore partnership opportunities with the McLeod Lake Indian Band to create Indigenous content as part of the engaging signage at the intersection.	2022 2023	STAFF TIME PLUS CAPITAL COSTS Potential to include in wayfinding plans	Work with the McLeod Lake Indian Band to create interactive displays. Grant funding likely available.
DD02.5	LOCAL	EXTERNAL	PHASE 4	Explore partnership opportunities with the McLeod Lake Indian Band to develop higher profile and/or more interactive Indigenous experiences for the visitor to the 'gateway district' at the intersection.	2025	STAFF TIME Capital costs through grants or private sector	Work with the McLeod Lake Indian Band to create content that fits their own objectives and generates mutual benefit (e.g. a cultural centre).

DD03: Define a visitor experience that is compelling and easy to access

PILLAR: *DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT*
OUTCOME: People will understand and be excited by what District of Makenzie offers, and when they arrive, the community will deliver on what has been promised, and expectations will be exceeded, not just met.

#	DISTANCE	FUNDING	TIME	INITIATIVE	FISCAL	DoM INVESTMENT	NOTES
DD03.1	LOCAL	POLICY	PHASE 1	Determine four-season core product offerings that leverage DoM strengths – eg. Mountain Biking, Skiing, Wildlife, mini-Bowron Lakes circuit.	2021	STAFF TIME ONLY	Internal decision regarding focus. Recommend choosing existing product in phases one and two.
DD03.2	LOCAL	POLICY	PHASE 1	Determine list of 'locals know' surprises that will not be marketed eg. Morfee Lake, Perimeter Trails.	2021	STAFF TIME ONLY	Internal decision regarding focus. Recommend inviting community to tell their stories of "what's the place I love most in Mackenzie".
DD03.3	LOCAL	POLICY	PHASE 2	Remove Williston Lake from product offering and promotion until there is genuine accessibility.	2022	STAFF TIME ONLY	Internal policy decision until there is easy road and marina access to the lake for visitors.
DD03.4	LOCAL	EXTERNAL	PHASE 3	Develop/attract tourism operations eg. guides, outfitters, rentals, etc.	2023	STAFF TIME ONLY Private sector investment required for delivery	Requires staff efforts to attract businesses, plus potential DoM support in terms of tax breaks/signage/improvement, etc.
DD03.5	LOCAL	EXTERNAL	PHASE 4	Develop accommodations and access on Williston Lake.	2025	STAFF TIME ONLY Private sector investment required for delivery	Requires staff efforts to attract businesses, plus potential DoM support in terms of tax breaks/signage/improvement, etc.
DD03.6	LOCAL	EXTERNAL	PHASE 4	Develop an "icon" tourism attraction or experience.	2025	STAFF TIME ONLY Private sector investment required for delivery	Long-term creative approach required – does Mackenzie want to develop an icon, what is it, and how will it be funded?

DD04: Create Product Partnerships

PILLAR: *DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT*

OUTCOME: Mackenzie will strategically leverage local products and similar communities that may otherwise be considered as competition to create new collaborative partnerships that amplify messages about certain activities, resulting in Mackenzie becoming part of a 'rotation' of places to visit in Northern British Columbia.

#	DISTANCE	FUNDING	TIME	INITIATIVE	FISCAL	DoM INVESTMENT	NOTES
DD04.1	REGIONAL	BUDGET	PHASE 2	Develop "Seven Locations" partnerships with neighbouring communities based on common activities: e.g. Mountain Biking, Cross Country Skiing and Golf.	2022	STAFF TIME PLUS TRAVEL AND MARKETING COSTS	Intent is to make Mackenzie part of a natural rota of places to visit based on selected activities, alongside Valemont, McBride, Burns Lake, etc.
DD04.2	REGIONAL	BUDGET	PHASE 1 PHASE 2	Develop practical working partnership with Powder King ski hill which positions Mackenzie as the nearest community with ease of access.	2021 2022 2023	STAFF TIME PLUS INFRASTRUCTURE AND MARKETING COSTS	Need to establish practical, functional mechanism to connect Mackenzie with its partners – transportation links are essential.
DD04.3	LOCAL	BUDGET	PHASE 2 PHASE 3	Develop working relationship with McLeod Lake Indian Band that creates and promotes physical and virtual product experiences with mutual benefit.	2022 2023 2024	STAFF TIME PLUS INFRASTRUCTURE AND MARKETING COSTS	Need to establish practical, functional mechanism to connect Mackenzie with its partners – transportation links are essential.
DD04.4	LOCAL	EXTERNAL	PHASE 3 PHASE 4	Leverage regional product development programs operated by Destination BC, the provincial government, Northern BC Tourism's – Responsible Tourism Institute Biosphere Certification for sustainability, Community Forest, and other relevant programs to create new product experiences.	2023 2024 2025	STAFF TIME ONLY Leverage grants and private investment for delivery	Staff need to monitor development opportunities and grant availability.

DD05: Develop Traditional Tourism Industry Product Opportunities

PILLAR: *DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT*
OUTCOME: Mackenzie will strategically leverage common high-potential, high-volume product opportunities traditionally developed by and promoted through the tourism industry.

#	DISTANCE	FUNDING	TIME	INITIATIVE	FISCAL	DoM INVESTMENT	NOTES
DD05.1	LOCAL	BUDGET	PHASE 2	Develop an Events Strategy built on creating 'umbrella' festivals within common themes.	2022	RFP ~ $15,000 Northern BC Tourism grant funding	Combine into a single $40,000 events and sports tourism strategy RFP.
DD05.2	LOCAL	BUDGET	PHASE 2	Develop a year-round Sports Tourism Strategy.	2022	RFP ~ $25,000 Northern BC Tourism grant funding	Combine into a single $40,000 events and sports tourism strategy RFP.
DD05.3	LOCAL	BUDGET	PHASE 2	Develop Special Interest Group Business.	2022	STAFF TIME PLUS RESEARCH & PROMOTION	Special interest group travel such as scrap-bookers – travel long distances for 2-3 day retreats.
DD05.4	LOCAL	BUDGET	PHASE 3	Develop Travel Trade Group and Free Independent Travelers (FIT) Business.	2023	STAFF TIME PLUS RESEARCH & PROMOTION	Leverage Destination BC to understand potential.

DM06: Develop clear, concise brand story and marketing platform

PILLAR: *DESTINATION MARKETING*
OUTCOME: Mackenzie will be marketed in a consistent manner that is both easy for consumers to understand, and for partners to align behind.

#	DISTANCE	FUNDING	TIME	INITIATIVE	FISCAL	DoM INVESTMENT	NOTES
DM06.1	LOCAL	BUDGET	PHASE 1	Develop clear tourism brand, messages and marketing.	2021	~$3,000 via incremental 3rd party contract	Need to be actioned in 2021 to be deployed in 2022. Recommend 3rd-party (local sourcing ideal).
DM06.2	LOCAL	BUDGET	PHASE 1	Create and maintain a formal brand book for distribution to staff and partners.	2022	~$5,000 via incremental 3rd party contract	Rules for use of logos, text, colours, etc.
DM06.3	LOCAL	POLICY	PHASE 1	Commit to an eco-friendly, digital-only marketing strategy with no print brochures.	2022	STAFF TIME ONLY	Environmental pledge that can be positively leveraged. Discontinue printed visitor guides.
DM06.4	LOCAL	BUDGET	PHASE 1	Redevelop website and build social media strategy.	2022	~$10,000 via incremental 3rd party contract	Essential component – dedicated tourism website fully governed by brand book.
DM06.5	LOCAL	POLICY	PHASE 1	Develop a free toolkit for all local businesses to engage, and amplify messaging, including hashtags, verbiage and marketing ideas.	2022	~$5,000 via incremental 3rd party contract	How to use guide for logos, text, colours, images, etc.
DM06.6	LOCAL	POLICY	PHASE 2	Create statistical baseline measurements for performance metrics.	2022	STAFF TIME ONLY	Set up and operate data collection systems – Hotel stays, traffic counters, Retail sales/sq ft, Dining sales/seat.
DM06.6	LOCAL	BUDGET	PHASE 3 PHASE 4	Conduct annual review of all marketing elements (marketing brand, messaging, brand book, website, social media, toolkit and statistical collection, updating as necessary).	ALL	ANNUAL PROCESS $10-$20,000 Likely grant funding available	Engage 3rd-party on contract to conduct independent assessment.

DM07: Engage the Partners

PILLAR: *DESTINATION MARKETING*
OUTCOME: Mackenzie will be marketed in a strategic, efficient, high ROI manner that drives business to its partners.

#	DISTANCE	FUNDING	TIME	INITIATIVE	FISCAL	DoM INVESTMENT	NOTES
DM07.1	LOCAL	BUDGET	PHASE 2	Create short-term pay-to-play buy-in opportunities for local tourism operators.	2022	STAFF TIME PLUS 3rd-party contractor	3rd party contractor could provide assistance in program ideas and publication materials for partners.
DM07.2	LOCAL	BUDGET	PHASE 2	Introduce Tourism funding mechanism through provincial MRDT.	2022	STAFF TIME PLUS 3rd-party contractor	3rd party contractor could provide assistance in partner acquisition and MRDT application.
DM07.3	LOCAL	BUDGET	PHASE 2	Connect pay to play opportunities and overall marketing to the current Love Mackenzie Shop Local program.	2022	STAFF TIME PLUS 3rd-party contractor	3rd party contractor could provide assistance connecting with partners.
DM07.4	LOCAL	BUDGET	PHASE 2	Develop and execute a VFR (Visit Friends and Relatives) strategy for locals that shares clear, concise messaging and value proposition for locals and visitors alike.	2022	STAFF TIME PLUS 3rd-party contractor	3rd party contractor could provide assistance connecting with community. Recommend inviting community to participate in generating messaging.
DM07.5	ASPIRATION	BUDGET	PHASE 3	Create flexible marketing programming and pay-to-play programming that can expand or shrink based on available budget in any year.	2023	STAFF TIME PLUS 3rd-party contractor	3rd party contractor could provide assistance in building future campaign options.
DM07.6	LOCAL	BUDGET	PHASE 3	Develop marketing program and sales strategy targeting long-distance drive traffic based in BC/Alberta and USA/international traffic through online channels and travel trade.	2023 2024	STAFF TIME PLUS RESEARCH & PROMOTION	Leverage Destination BC to understand potential.

DM08: Engage the Region

PILLAR: *DESTINATION MARKETING*
OUTCOME: Residents of the region will be successfully targeted with engaging messaging about the community of Mackenzie, and will be inspired to make the decision to visit for the day, for the night, or for the weekend.

#	DISTANCE	FUNDING	TIME	INITIATIVE	FISCAL	DoM INVESTMENT	NOTES
DM08.1	LOCAL	BUDGET	PHASE 2	Generate media coverage of moving the tree crusher.	2022	STAFF TIME PLUS LOCAL MEDIA BUDGET ~$5,000	Recommend 3rd party media contractor to use what would be a big news story (possible national exposure) to develop media relationships.
DM08.2	REGIONAL	BUDGET	PHASE 2	'Anticipation' billboard program – 200 km approach to Mackenzie that builds anticipation about a place called Mackenzie that is upcoming.	2022	STAFF TIME CAPITAL COSTS ($ TBD)	Both directions on Highway 97.
DM08.3	REGIONAL	BUDGET	PHASE 2	You could be here in 2 hours 'Inspirational' billboard program that engages regional residents and inspires decision to visit Mackenzie as a weekend or overnight stay.	2022	STAFF TIME PLUS ANNUAL BILLBOARDS AT ~$50,000	Recommend 3rd party contractor to maximize exposure.
DM08.4	ASPIRATION	BUDGET	PHASE 3	Deploy long-term, long-distance marketing that targets all of British Columbia and Alberta.	2023 2024	STAFF TIME PLUS ANNUAL SPEND AT ~$50,000	Recommend 3rd party contractor to maximize exposure.
DM08.5	ASPIRATION	BUDGET	PHASE 4	Deploy long term, long-distance travel trade sales and marketing plan targeting USA and International markets.	2025	STAFF TIME PLUS POMOTIONAL BUDGET	Leverage Destination BC to maximize potential.

CC09: Engage the Community

PILLAR: *COMMUNICATIONS*
OUTCOME: There will be an effective and engaging two-way conversation between the DMMO and the community that keeps tourism front of mind, educates as to what benefits will be/are being seen, and creates buy-in at all levels, and inspires participation from residents and businesses alike.

#	DISTANCE	FUNDING	TIME	INITIATIVE	FISCAL	DoM INVESTMENT	NOTES
CC09.1	LOCAL	POLICY	PHASE 1	Create a community outreach committee.	2021	STAFF TIME ONLY	Internal decision regarding governance. Recommend committee is advisory only and does not impact governance.
CC09.2	LOCAL	POLICY	PHASE 1	Create tourism business advisory committee.	2021	STAFF TIME ONLY	Internal decision regarding governance. Recommend committee is advisory only and does not impact governance.
CC09.3	LOCAL	BUDGET	PHASE 2	Develop a community outreach program including online forums for Q&A and two-way education opportunity.	2022	STAFF TIME PLUS LOCAL CONSULTANT ~$5,000/year	Recommend 3rd party media contractor to help engagement process.
CC09.4	LOCAL	BUDGET	PHASE 2	Develop partnership with local media to amplify message about tourism plans.	2022	STAFF TIME PLUS LOCAL SPEND ~$5,000/year	Recommend 3rd party media contractor to manage process.
CC09.5	LOCAL	BUDGET	PHASE 2	Develop partnership with local product groups to amplify message about tourism plans.	2022	STAFF TIME PLUS LOCAL SPEND ~$3,000/year	Recommend 3rd party media contractor to manage process.

5.4 Milestones/Measurements of Success

STRATEGY	MEASUREMENT	PHASE TWO (2022)	PHASE THREE (2023- 2024)	PHASE FOUR (2025-2026)
DD01: Downtown Mackenzie Tourism District	Status of new visitor district. Business Performance Index (BPI).	New district defined by DoM. Landscape designed approved and published. Signage designed and in production.	Anchor tenants in place. First phase of landscaping complete. Business Performance index in place for anchor tenants using 2023 as baseline.	Annual 25% growth in Business Performance Index (BPI) for anchor tenants.
DD02: Iconic Gateway at highway 39/97 intersection	Physical implementation of gateway district features. Growth in measurable interactions with district.	24/7 signage in place, and designs published for physical space. QR codes on all signage. Measure QR code traffic in 2022 to create baseline.	Physical space completed including some indigenous content. 2023 engagement through QR codes increased 100%, with 50% increase in 2024.	Annual 25% increase in QR code traffic. Decisions in place about future partnership product at junction with McLeod Lake Indian Band (MLIB).
DD03: Define a visitor experience	Product Index defining quality/quantity of visitor experience should be in place annually 2022-2026.	Product Index in place, 2022 Metrics attained.	Phase Three Product Index metrics attained.	Phase Four Product Index metrics attained.
DD04: Create Product Partnerships	Annual review of established partnerships.	Joint marketing agreement in place with at least 3 other regional communities. 3-year plan in place with Powder King.	Joint marketing agreement in place with at least 6 other regional communities. Transportation link created with Powder King. 3-year plan in place with MLIB.	New 3-year plans developed with Powder King, McLeod Lake Indian Band (MLIB) and regional community partners.
DD05: High-Volume Opportunities	Measured increase in room nights generated through Festivals, Sports Tourism and Group traffic.	RFPs written, awarded and completed for Events and Sports Tourism strategies. Baseline metric in place for room nights generated across each sector (anticipating close to zero in 2022).	Events and Sports Tourism Strategies in Place and operational. 50% growth in room nights generated in 2023. 100% growth in room nights generated in 2024.	Annual 25% growth in room nights generated.

DM06: Brand story and Marketing Platform	Annual review of all marketing elements. Usability survey for tourism website.	Brand, messaging, website, social media and partner toolkit all in place. Business Performance index created using 2022 as baseline featuring RevPAR (Revenue per Available Room) for hotels, sales per seat for Food & Beverage (F&B) outlets, and sales per square foot for retail.	100% of hotels and 50% of other businesses voluntarily participating in Business Performance Index (BPI). Marketing elements annually updated. Usability survey for tourism website delivers >80% positivity.	100% of hotels and 50% of other businesses voluntarily participating in Business Performance Index (BPI). Marketing elements annually updated. Usability survey for tourism website delivers >80% positivity.
DM07: Engage Partners	Measurement of engagement: # of businesses participating in voluntary buy-in initiatives; # of residents participating in Visiting Friends & Relatives (VFR) programs.	Engagement metrics in place using 2022 as baseline.10 partner businesses engaging in buy-in opportunities. 5% of residents demonstrating engagement in VFR programs.	30 partner businesses engaging in buy-in opportunities. 8% of residents demonstrating engagement in VFR programs.	50 partner businesses engaging in buy-in opportunities. 10% of residents demonstrating engagement in Visiting Friends & Relatives (VFR) programs.
DM08: Engage Region	BC/AB-originating Web traffic. Business Performance Index.	Regional marketing campaign in place. Baseline established for web traffic and Business Performance Index (BPI).	2023: 200% increase in web traffic. 50% increase in BPI 2024: 100% increase in web traffic. 100% increase in BPI Business Performance Index (BPI)	2025: 50% increase in web traffic. 50% increase in BPI 2026: 50% increase in web traffic. 25% increase in BPI Business Performance Index (BPI)
CC09: Engage Community	Engagement in Committees. Engagement in Community Outreach. Media Impressions.	Committees established with minimum 4 meetings/year with 80% attendance. Create & deploy annual tourism engagement & satisfaction survey. Create baseline metric for media impressions.	Committees minimum 4 meetings/year with 80% attendance. 5% community participation in survey, with 80% positive response. 100% increase in media impressions per year.	Committees minimum 4 meetings/year with 80% attendance. 5% community participation in survey, with 80% positive response. 50% increase in media impressions per year.