



SUNSHINE COAST

2024 Annual Tactical Plan

Designated Recipient: Sunshine Coast Tourism Society
Designated Accommodation Area: Sunshine Coast
Regional District & qathet Regional District
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Five-Year Strategic Direction

Our Vision

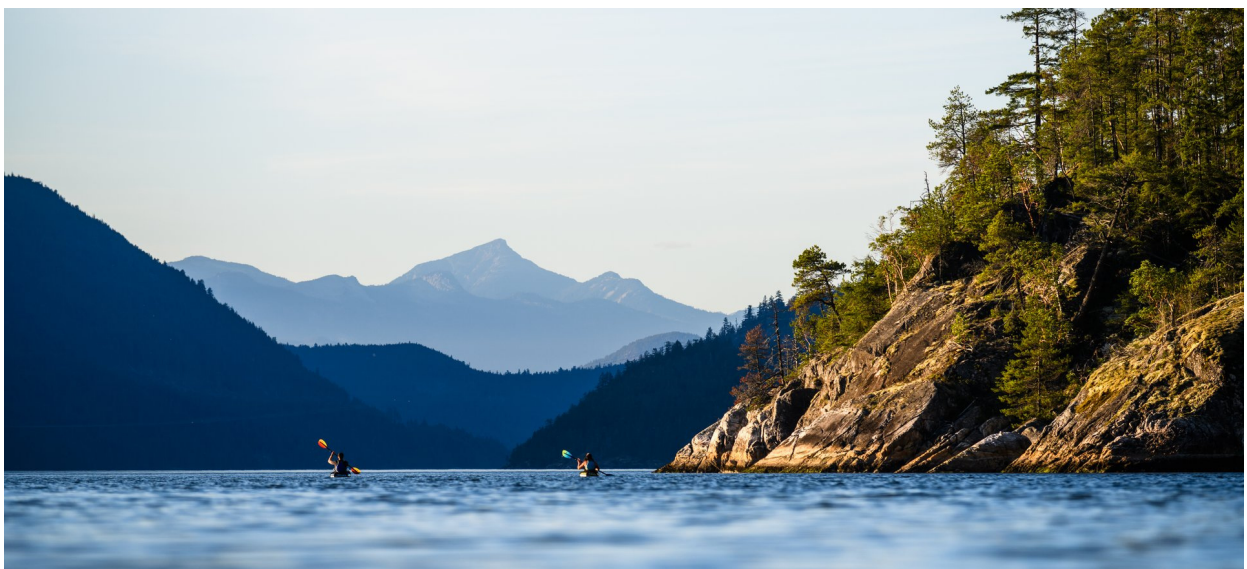
We are a unified Sunshine Coast, working together to increase the social, cultural, and economic benefits from our year-round visitor economy. With vibrant coastal communities amid exceptional outdoor adventures, we attract respectful visitors who like to discover and understand more about our laid-back lifestyle and the wild, natural places that nourish us.

Our Mission

Sunshine Coast Tourism's mission is to build a strong and sustainable tourism economy on the Sunshine Coast consistent with the values of its residents.

Our Strategy

Our team works diligently to create destination brand awareness through inspiring and engaging marketing campaigns that motivate visitors to plan their trip to the Sunshine Coast. We support the traveller experience with our network of visitor centres and also engage all levels of government to advocate and support sustainable destination development and infrastructure projects that enhance both our communities and the overall visitor experience.



Our Goals

Our 5-Year Strategic Business Plan (2021-2026) identified four goals for continued success:

1. Continue building awareness and regional brand equity.
2. Increase our Net Promoter Score to be in the top 5 in BC.
3. Continue to monitor and measure traveller sentiment towards the Sunshine Coast, scoring high for our competitive set (small waterfront communities)
4. Drive room revenues up 25% from pre-Covid-19 levels and maintain a 4% annual growth rate thereafter.

Key Strategic Pillars

1. Strength Through Alignment

- a. Leverage the power of partnerships by aligning efforts with Destination BC and other tourism partners with a similar target focus.
- b. Tie marketing and media relations efforts to at least one of the Sunshine Coast's unique selling propositions for the destination that set us apart from other destinations. The Sunshine Coast's unique selling propositions are:
 - i. The synergy of its rural, appealing, coastal communities;
 - ii. The depth of year-round recreational activities; and
 - iii. The amazing concentration of unique arts, culture, and heritage experiences
- c. Continue addressing the need for geographic dispersion to less busy areas, especially during the summer and seasonal dispersion to the quieter off-peak (October-April) months.

2. A Data-Smart Destination

- a. Leverage opportunities provided through Destination BC's marketing hub.

- b. Leverage continued investments in data-driven marketing and analysis technologies to generate and manage leads and referrals to tourism partners.
- c. Focus on channels and tools that provide the ability to measure performance as close to real-time as possible, which will build a better understanding of our visitors.

3. Sustainable Tourism Growth Management

- a. Manage tourism growth on the Sunshine Coast to ensure positive visitor experiences are balanced with community capacity and protection of natural places and aligned with philosophies of Indigenous stewardship of the land.
- b. Facilitate the development of programming and experiences that result in a more geographically dispersed visitor base during the peak summer period (to less busy areas) and an increase in visitation to the region during the quieter fall through the spring period.
- c. Work with the provincial government and industry partners to influence BC Ferries to increase the frequency and volume of sailings from the Lower Mainland to Langdale.
- d. Align with provincial and local governments for infrastructure projects and access additional grant funding to develop a sense of place for the region,
- e. Use the Visitor Centres as physical and digital hubs that can address the needs of a sustainably managed tourism industry through visitor communications before, during and after their trip.

4. Organizational Excellence

- a. Foster a staff culture of curiosity, learning and responsibility for decision-making.
- b. Empower all staff to engage with visitors and assist them with their travel decisions.
- c. Empower all staff to engage with the industry and make appropriate decisions.
- d. Continue operating as a more inclusive stakeholder-based organization rather than a membership-based organization

2023 Key Learnings & Conclusions

Key Learnings - Summary

The Sunshine Coast offers diverse and captivating travel experiences centred on the concept of ‘nature as the magnet.’

The region’s attractions and hidden gems, combined with a strong visitor base of BC residents and a growing remote work trend, have bolstered tourism revenues in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Key tourism product experiences include Indigenous cultural tourism, outdoor activities, and culinary experiences.

Long-term challenges persist

Locally, significant transportation issues, limited commercial accommodation options, labour constraints, service quality, extreme weather events, and a changing landscape for short-term rentals create challenges for the Sunshine Coast’s tourism industry.

Additionally, global pressures, including the rising cost of goods, inflation, climate change, and the post-pandemic hypercompetitive marketplace for international travel, continue to impact visitation trends in our region.

A continued focus on sustainability

In response to these challenges, Sunshine Coast Tourism has undertaken various internal initiatives to improve its digital presence, secure funding for active transportation planning, support local trail development, foster partnerships, and educate visitors on sustainability, responsible travel behaviours and regenerative travel.

The Sunshine Coast’s commitment to sustainable tourism, partnership development, and data-driven marketing positions it to further mature as a premier destination in British Columbia while maintaining the values of its residents.

Key Learnings - Details

The Sunshine Coast has the proven potential to position itself as a premier destination within British Columbia. While the province is not short on stunning landscapes and recreational offerings, very few places can offer such a breadth of travel-motivating experiences perfectly suited to support the idea of “nature as the magnet.” Iconic attractions such as the Skookumchuck Narrows, Desolation Sound, and Princess Louisa Inlet meet with tucked-away trails, secret coves, mountain peaks, and unique communities that speak to the emotional core of our travellers. The Sunshine Coast is a place where visitors can find their wild within.

While accommodation room revenues have generally recovered since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the year-to-date figures for 2023 indicate a slight stagnation (-0.1% compared to the same period in 2022). Room revenues continue to exhibit a high degree of seasonality. In 2019, Q2 and Q3 revenues accounted for 70% of the annual total. Presently, that figure has decreased to 65%, indicating a **5% increase in the annual share for the shoulder season (Q1 and Q4)**. Despite this positive shift, there remains a need for concerted efforts to further encourage seasonal dispersion on the Sunshine Coast.

Traditional accommodations provide approximately 950 rooms on the Sunshine Coast. The region also has many short-term rental accommodations, with an estimated 1,400 rooms available during peak season. However, new bylaws from the Town of Gibsons and the District of Sechelt have significantly curtailed short-term rentals, and additional provincial legislation in spring 2024 will likely have a further impact on the reduction of short-term rental accommodation. While some travellers may shift to commercial accommodation offerings such as hotels and motels, it should be noted that those seeking whole-home vacation rentals are not a compatible exchange for a traditional double occupancy hotel room. Consumer preferences to travel with larger groups, like 'ladies' getaways' and multi-generational travel groups (such as grandparents with their adult children and grandchildren all together) demand multi-bedroom suites and facilities that are limited in existing commercial accommodation offerings on the Sunshine Coast. The resulting impact of these regulations must be closely monitored - especially as it relates to spillover impacts to the rest of the tourism industry, including restaurants, tour operators, retail, etc.

Preliminary results (July-August travellers only) of the 2023-24 Sunshine Coast Visitor Study show:

- 92% of visitors are from Canada, 6% from the USA and 2% from International. BC Residents are the largest market, representing 93% of Canadian Visitors and 86% of all peak-season visitors. Of all US visitors, Washington counts for 40%, Oregon for 11%, and California for 7%. Of all overseas visitors, Germany accounts for 37%, New Zealand for 17%, and the Netherlands for 15%.
- 91% of visitors stayed overnight, 9% day trippers
- Average trip length while visiting the Sunshine Coast - 3.84 nights

- 47% of visitors stayed with friends or family, 16% campground/RV park, 14% hotel/motel/resort, 13% vacation rental
- Overnight visitors spent an average of \$711.25 per person during their trip.
- 43% of all respondents had to modify their trip because no reservations were available on the ferry for their preferred sailing
- 24% of travellers were between ages 19-34; 39% between 35-54; 33% between 55-74; and 5% were 75+

Key challenges to the region include:

- Transportation barriers, specifically:
 - Frequent disruptions to BC Ferries service and confusion caused by BC Ferries messaging, decreased sailings, and aging infrastructure resulting in breakdowns, delays, and cancellations;
 - BC Ferries's lack of terminal amenities and poor waiting conditions, including dangerous conditions where drivers have been stuck in their vehicles for upwards of 8 hours without washroom access, drinking water, or shade;
 - Limited availability of rental cars in a primary drive market;
 - Limited, infrequent, or in some parts of the Sunshine Coast, no options for taxis and public transportation. There is currently no public transportation offering between Halfmoon Bay and Earls Cove, leaving a significant gap in service for travellers to Pender Harbour, Egmont, and connections to Saltery Bay/Powell River;
 - Inadequate and poorly maintained Highway 101 with no alternate route in most cases, leading to high congestion and even complete closures at times. Cycling tourism opportunities are also limited with infrequent shoulder sweeping/maintenance and stretches with narrow or non-existent shoulders.
- Lack of meeting and accommodation spaces in the high season and for larger groups or those seeking higher-end or luxury accommodation;
- Limited year-round guided activities;

- Labour constraints, including limited skill sets, housing (staff & resident), and workforce transportation. Many of these labour constraints are being felt throughout the country, and the Sunshine Coast is no exception, though this issue seems to have improved somewhat in 2023.
- Lower quality service levels, a challenge often intertwined with labour constraints, as mentioned above. Many businesses struggle to attract and retain staff; therefore, the quality of service declines with staff turnover, shortages, or lower-skilled hires.
- Extreme weather events, including drought, continue to negatively impact visitor perception of the destination and drive negative resident sentiment towards tourism. Despite the minimal impact on the Sunshine Coast from the 2023 forest fires, longer-haul and international visitors lack awareness of the geographical distinctions and distances between various regions within the province. This creates a misconception that **all** of British Columbia is affected by wildfires, and these travellers decide not to travel or cancel existing trips despite no direct threat.
- While improving, there is still a noticeable gap in awareness and knowledge among local tourism businesses in initiating meaningful steps toward reconciliation and collaborative partnerships with Indigenous communities. Addressing this gap is essential for fostering inclusive and respectful tourism development that aligns with the values of Indigenous Peoples.

Target Markets

In 2024, our strategy aligns with Destination BC's target markets, emphasizing consistent messaging for ease of purchase path. Our primary focus remains on familiar markets:

Geographic Focus

Primary Geographic Target Markets

- **British Columbia:** Continuing investment for growth, targeting accessibility and affordability, particularly during shoulder seasons.
- **Alberta:** Emphasizing brand equity building for increased shoulder season visitation, mindful of travel barriers.
- **Washington:** Maintaining spending, capitalizing on shared interests in nature-based activities and attractions.

Secondary Geographic Target Markets

- Longer-haul markets in partnership with Destination BC; specifically Ontario, California, Germany, the UK, the Netherlands, and New Zealand

Special Interest/Passion-Based Travel

- **Outdoor Adventure:** specifically, hikers, mountain bikers, paddlesports enthusiasts, scuba diving, and saltwater fishing
- **Health/Wellness Retreats:** yoga retreats, spa experiences, meditation sessions
- **Recreational Boaters:** connecting boating routes and destinations throughout the Salish Sea
- **Cultural Immersion/Indigenous Experiences:** museums, historical sites, guided cultural experiences
- **Culinary Exploration:** localized dining experiences such as farm-to-table, microbreweries and craft beverages, food festivals, farm stands and markets
- **Boutique Shopping:** Small businesses offering unique, artisanal, or locally crafted items, markets, artists and specialty shops
- **Arts, Music, and Entertainment:** festivals, concerts, events, art galleries, and film tourism

Demographic Focus

Couples on weekend getaways, active travellers, and wellness/retreat travel are primary audiences for shoulder and off-season, while families on school holidays and summer break and visiting friends and relatives represent the majority of peak season revenue for most Sunshine Coast operators.

Furthermore, digital technologies enable Sunshine Coast Tourism to be very specific in targeting age, gender and location groups on a campaign-by-campaign basis. These hyper-targeted initiatives can be modified in real-time and adapted based on campaign performance on platforms such as Meta and Google. This information can be used to specifically reach responsible travellers identified in the following personas:

EQ Travel Personas

- **Learners** (Authentic Experiencers & Cultural Explorers): Showcasing unique, affordable activities and community-focused experiences that resonate with their travel values.
- **Enthusiastic Indulgers** (Free Spirits): Highlighting diverse outdoor adventures, from hiking trails to unique accommodations, catering to their quest for exploration.
- **Familiarity Seekers** (Gentle Explorers, No Hassle Travellers): Focusing on easily accessible experiences like marine life viewing, coastal exploration, and local dining that offer a 'home away from home' feel.

One-Year Tactical Plan with Performance Measures

Marketing Plan - Explore BC's Sunshine Coast

Project Plan #1 Major Category: Marketing
Activity Title: 2024 Sunshine Coast Marketing Campaign
Tactics: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paid Advertising, including Print, Television, SEM, Paid Social, Display, Native• Social media presence including content publishing and community management• Destination Website and User Experience Enhancement, SEO & Accessibility updates• Digital and Print collateral production and distribution, including brochures, guides, and maps• Content creation including written, photo, and video asset development• Travel Media relations including both proactive outreach and reactive support, media FAMs, fact-checking, and digital asset provision• Consumer Travel Shows• In-destination collateral development including branded signage, map displays, and visitor focused point-of-sale branding• Provide festival, event, and film attraction with marketing assistance• Sponsor Sector/Consortium Co-Op Marketing Programs - BC Ale Trail, Fishing BC, Sea to Sky Mountain Biking, Paddle BC, AHOY BC, BC Farmer's Market Trail
Implementation Plan
Short Description: <p>The Sunshine Coast area stretches from the northwest of Langdale (Port Mellon and McNab Creek) along 180km of land to north of Lund and to Bliss Landing, Desolation Sound, and the waterways running to the northern tip of Toba Inlet and Princess Louisa Inlet. It encompasses the entirety of the Sunshine Coast Regional District and qathet Regional District jurisdictions, including the following islands: Gambier, Keats, Nelson, Hardy, Thormanby, Texada, Lasqueti, and Savary.</p> <p>The purpose of the project is to bring these communities together under the regional brand of the "Sunshine Coast" to increase awareness and consideration of the Sunshine Coast as the premier travel destination in British Columbia while deeply collaborating with Destination BC to support the provincial vision of making BC the most highly</p>

recommended destination in North America. The Sunshine Coast's synergy of its rural, coastal communities is its strength, and the region is prime for touring and exploring.

Through the power of partnerships and working together, the Sunshine Coast can achieve greater market presence, maximize return on investment, reduce duplication of effort, and support local and provincial partners alike. While some marketing activities are ongoing throughout the year, most funds and efforts are put towards promoting shoulder season travel (September to May). Geographic dispersion is also a key part of the marketing plan since capacity varies in Sunshine Coast communities throughout the year.

Quantifiable Objectives:

- Increasing the total contribution of the visitor economy on the Sunshine Coast, creating both seasonal and geographic dispersion—growing the slower shoulder season (October to April) and supporting the lesser travelled areas in our region.
- Increasing private investment in our marketing efforts to help leverage public funds for maximum impact and ROI for tourism businesses on the Sunshine Coast.
- Continuing deep integration and alignment with the provincial brand essence “Wild at Heart” and “Super, Natural British Columbia” to strengthen brand equity. This includes supporting Destination BC's Content Commonwealth and ensuring the Sunshine Coast is ready, willing, and able to support data and content sharing and continues improving digital readiness.
- Increasing awareness, consideration, and advocacy for the Sunshine Coast as a travel destination.
- Increasing the number of business referrals to local tourism stakeholders, primarily through our website.

Rationale:

Sunshine Coast Tourism's mandate is to promote BC's Sunshine Coast as a year-round leisure travel destination. These marketing tactics enforce the following strategic directions:

- Increase revenues to the tourism industry across the Sunshine Coast during periods with capacity (shoulder season) by promoting the Sunshine Coast as a sustainability-focused, four-season, overnight leisure travel destination
- Build brand awareness and equity for the Sunshine Coast by leveraging strength through alignment
- Cultivating a collaborative local industry by increasing engagement and partnership opportunities to elevate and amplify tourism marketing, and building scale by working together. The Sunshine Coast exemplifies the principle of collaboration—we represent a large region with multiple communities that must work together.

Tactic Specific rationale:

- Paid Advertising, including Print, Television, SEM, Paid Social, Display, and Native
 - Paid advertising allows us to build brand awareness within our target markets

and keep the Sunshine Coast top-of-mind with potential visitors, using a variety of paid tactics allows us to be seen 'everywhere' and helps amplify our overall campaign. Paid digital allows us to utilize technology for maximum ROI by optimizing ad creative, placement, and spending.

- Social media presence, including content publishing and community management
 - Social media tactics improve reach and engagement, turning visitors into active advocates. With a strong, growing supply of engaging photo, video, and written content, we can continue to share messaging that promotes seasonal and geographic dispersion, sustainable travel information, and supports consumer advocacy for the destination
- Destination Website and User Experience Enhancement & Accessibility
 - Continued improvements in web traffic performance and especially mobile users means we have to keep content current and fresh, and ensure a seamless user experience, and supporting ongoing improvement in SEO and user accessibility. Implementing new accessibility tools on our website will create a more inclusive experience and eradicate barriers to accessing trip planning information and inspiration.
- Digital and Print collateral, including brochures, guides, and maps
 - Supporting our brand presence through collateral builds on our efforts in the provincial Visitor Centres network and other distribution points and helps inspire and educate visitors, directing them to key amenities and generating leads to stakeholder businesses;
- Content creation including written, photo, and video asset development
 - Generating inspiring, SEO friendly content and on-brand assets that can easily be shared across our owned and partner channels builds brand awareness and supports our strategy to align efforts and leverage partnerships
 - New content must be filtered through a lens of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility through all stages of production, from planning and staging to final execution.
- Travel Media relations, including both proactive outreach and reactive support, media FAMs, fact-checking, and digital asset provision
 - Collaborating with powerful, established, and trusted media voices to tell travel stories about the Sunshine Coast will build brand equity and awareness, generate leads to local businesses, and maximize our ROI as earned coverage is one of the most cost-effective, high credibility methods of marketing
- Consumer Travel Shows
 - Selective exhibition at travel shows in key target markets, such as Vancouver Outdoor Adventure Show allows us to build brand awareness and equity while speaking directly to potential visitors, focus on passion specific activities such as backpacking and mountain biking, and generate leads to local tourism businesses

- In-destination collateral development including branded signage and map displays
 - Ensuring an end-to-end, branded visitor experience through in-destination collateral supports seasonal and geographic dispersion, better understanding of our rural region, and respectfully acknowledges the region's Indigenous Peoples and First Nations.
- Provide festival, event, sport, and film attraction and marketing assistance
 - Sunshine Coast Tourism should continue to play a strong supporting role for these events to leverage partnerships, tie our marketing efforts to our existing motivating experiences, and promote seasonal and geographic dispersion.
 - The development of a shoulder season culinary-focused tourism event has been identified as a key opportunity in multiple strategic planning documents for the Sunshine Coast. Sunshine Coast Tourism can support further planning in 2024 to make this event a reality in 2025.
- Sponsor Sector/Consortium Co-Op Marketing Programs - BC Ale Trail, Fishing BC, Sea to Sky Mountain Biking, Paddle BC, AHOY BC, BC Farmers Market Trail
 - Collaborating and investing with partner sectors that align with our target markets supports our strategic goals of leveraging partnerships and resources. These chosen passion sectors reach particular segments of our target markets with deeper resources, messaging, and outputs than we could achieve individually

Action Steps:

Our core efforts concentrate on the following pillars:

- Creating awareness of the diversity and uniqueness of the Sunshine Coast's travel experiences, and increasing interest in the Sunshine Coast and inspiring a desire to visit.
- Creating awareness of where and how a visitor can experience the true nature of the Sunshine Coast.
- Captivating travellers by showcasing unique experiences in the region using inspirational storytelling and data-driven marketing.
- Amplifying the power of traveller advocacy by engaging with visitors and influencers online and encouraging them to share their experiences and inspire word-of-mouth recommendations through social media and online review platforms.
- Generating leads by attracting visitors to owned channels and referring them to local tourism businesses.
- Cultivating a collaborative local industry by increasing engagement and partnership opportunities to elevate and amplify tourism marketing and building scale by

working together. The Sunshine Coast exemplifies the principle of collaboration—we represent a large region with multiple communities that must work together.

The general approach of our 2024 marketing campaign will involve several initiatives:

- **Content Creation:** Content creation is the building block of all our other marketing initiatives—the content we create becomes the paid ads, the print travel guide, and the story pitch for travel media. Curated itineraries, blog posts, print collateral, video, and photos help us tell stories that leverage the unique selling propositions of the Sunshine Coast. Content will be created by working with in-house staff, contractors, and stakeholders, including local artists, writers, business owners, photographers, and videographers. Content creation will focus on the “Hero, Help, Hub” format as identified by Destination BC, using multiple formats such as short-form vertical videos, written copy in the form of blog posts, and more.
- **Targeted Paid Marketing:** Our paid marketing plans involve a mix of display, social, search, TV (traditional and OTT), and print ad buys that connect the Sunshine Coast campaign with target markets in British Columbia, Alberta, and Washington. Aside from search (which runs year-round), our paid advertising will run during the shoulder season, promoting products and experiences available during fall, winter, and spring. Our paid advertising looks at a full-funnel sales approach - initially growing awareness of our destination, and then driving traffic to our website, generating referrals for local tourism businesses, and finally creating conversions, measured as ‘Verified Visits’ to the Sunshine Coast through geolocation services.
- **Social Media:** The power of traveller advocacy and peer-to-peer recommendations will be tapped into by encouraging locals, visitors, and influencers to share their experiences through social media and using the #sunshinecoastbc and #explorebc hashtags. Using a robust platform (Sprout) to monitor conversations, respond to them, surface and schedule posts to share, and easily view analytics is a vital component of ensuring this tactic’s success.
- **Travel Media Relations:** Inspiring and connecting with travel media on a reactive and proactive basis to create earned media opportunities throughout the year, plus supporting media with their content creation by providing story ideas, photography, b-roll, and information. Sunshine Coast Tourism will continue to work strategically with Destination BC and Destination Canada’s media teams to support travel media at all levels.
- **Destination Website and Digital Readiness:** The latest version of our website launched in December 2022, and ongoing website support means that we can continuously improve the user experience to maximize stakeholder referrals. For 2024, reviewing and implementing new SEO strategies will ensure our website continues to meet our goals.

Potential Partnerships: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All local governments • Destination BC • Indigenous Tourism BC • Destination Canada • Sector Partners (Mountain Bike BC, BC Craft Brewers Guild, etc) • BC Parks • Rec Sites & Trails BC • DMO Stakeholders • Local First Nations and Indigenous host communities • Chambers of Commerce • Downtown Business Associations 	
Resources: Budget, Sunshine Coast Tourism staff, agency and contractor support, visitor services staff	
Sources of Funding: MRDT, Destination BC Co-Op Marketing Program, partner funding	
Timeframe: January-April - Spring Marketing Campaign is in market September - November: Fall/Winter Marketing Campaign is in market Ongoing: planning, campaign coordination and execution, social media monitoring	
Budget: \$695,000	
Performance Measures:	
Output Measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication reach • Impressions • Digital ad CTR, CPC, CPA • Video views, engagement rates • Website conversion rate, bounce rate, pages/session, time on site • Social followers, engagement, reach, hashtag use • # of collateral produced, printed, distributed • # of new content pieces • Travel show attendance, booth inquiries, collateral distributed • # of media hosted, resulting content 	Outcome Measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verified Visits • Annual Room Revenues • Shoulder Season Room Revenues • Stakeholder Business Referrals • Occupancy • Social engagement and advocacy • Newsletter subscribers • Average length of stay

Destination Management & Experience Development Plan

Project Plan #2 Major Category: Destination & Product Experience Development
Activity Title: Destination Management & Experience Development
Tactics: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implementation of the Sunshine Coast Destination Development Strategic Plan• Completion of the 2023/2024 Sunshine Coast Visitor Study• Industry research (Value of Tourism, Economic Impact Model, Tourist and Resident Sentiment)• GreenStep Sustainability Action Plan implementation• Destination Development Committee
Implementation Plan:
Short Description: <p>Sunshine Coast Tourism will continue to lead and partner on the implementation of the Sunshine Coast Destination Development Strategic Plan and its actions. The strategic plan encapsulates multifaceted themes critical for the continued evolution of the Sunshine Coast, emphasizing the supply side of tourism and enhancing visitor experiences. Furthermore, continuing 2023 research projects including the 2023/2024 Sunshine Coast Visitor Study and Value of Tourism model will support our goals and ensure that Sunshine Coast Tourism and its stakeholders are fulfilling the strategic objective of being a 'data-smart destination', whereby decisions and actions are based on current and destination-specific research.</p>
Quantifiable Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collect key research and information, including MRDT, hotel data, Verified Visitor Mobility Data, Visitor Centre statistics, BC Parks data, digital data (social media, Google Analytics), Net Promotor Score, tourism and resident sentiment, and other data as deemed relevant by the Destination Development Strategy• Destination Development Strategy Action Item implementation• Maintain sustainability certification for Sunshine Coast Tourism's visitor centres• Continue monthly Destination Development Committee meetings

Rationale:

Effective destination management is the prerequisite for further growth of tourism on the Sunshine Coast. Stakeholder and resident feedback shows strong support for sustainable destination management, and is a key pillar of our 5-year strategic plan. Effective management and strategic development will allow us to keep pace with tourism trends, innovate and adapt to consumer patterns, and be more resilient to challenges. Sunshine Coast Tourism plays a vital leadership role in bringing its communities together for collaborative development that considers the visitor experience. The Sunshine Coast Destination Development Committee brings elected officials, local and provincial government staff, economic development, tourism industry and local NGOs together to share projects, discuss programs and opportunities for alignment and collaboration throughout the region that is otherwise divided into many smaller municipal and rural jurisdictions that do not necessarily communicate in this manner. Furthermore, gathering additional research and insights plays a crucial role in regularly monitoring the progress of these strategic initiatives, and informing the decision-making necessary to stay responsive to evolving market trends, visitor preferences, and make informed policy decisions.

Action Steps:

- Continue implementation of GreenStep sustainability action plan for Sunshine Coast Tourism's visitor centres
- Continue a leadership role and participation in the Sunshine Coast Destination Development Committee and its implementation of the Sunshine Coast Destination Development Strategy
- Work with local government, community leaders, and stakeholders to share infrastructure and amenity plans; maximize partnership capacity to develop new products and experiences
- Work with community partners to identify infrastructure and funding opportunities
- Continue Sunshine Coast research implementation including Net Promoter Score, Visitor Study, and Value of Tourism
- Collaborate with industry accommodations to capture occupancy, ADR, RevPar
- Participate as the 'voice of tourism' in local and regional development planning processes (for example, SCRD Regional Water Strategy, qRD Parks and Trails Strategy, District of Sechelt Master Transportation Plan, etc)
- Secure funding where possible to implement the actions of the Destination Development Strategy

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue participation in the local BC Ferries Advisory Committees • Continue subscription to AirDNA and consider additional 3rd party data as relevant to measuring key tourism metrics (i.e., visitor volume, visitor spending data, travel patterns and visitor geolocation, etc.) • Share research and data with stakeholder partners and wider community 	
Potential Partnerships: DBC, VCM, ITBC, TIABC, local gov't, economic development, tourism stakeholders - exhaustive list available in the Destination Development Strategic Plan, GreenStep, BC Ferries	
Resources: Budget, Sunshine Coast Tourism staff, data consultant, data software/monitoring tools,	
Sources of Funding: MRDT, partner funding, grants	
Timeframe: Year-round, ongoing	
Budget: \$95,000	
Performance Measures:	
<u>Output Measures:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy consumption audit results and # of sustainable practices implemented • Reports on the implementation of specific strategies outlined in the Destination Development Strategy • #/type of research and data shared, feedback received, and evidence of the information's impact on stakeholder decision-making and community awareness. • Sustainability certifications maintained • # of identified opportunities, successful securing of funding, and the initiation of infrastructure projects as a result of collaboration with community partners. 	<u>Outcome Measures:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved visitor satisfaction (as indicated by Net Promoter Score) • Improved performance indicators for industry accommodations, increased revenue generation, and strengthened local hospitality sector (MRDT revenues, etc) • New or enhanced product offerings • Local Infrastructure improvements • Successful integration of tourism considerations into planning outcomes • Enhanced recognition of tourism's role in sustainable growth • Effective adaptation of strategies based on comprehensive insights

Community Engagement and Advocacy

Project Plan #3 Major Category: Destination & Product Experience Development
Activity Title: Stakeholder & Community Engagement, Industry Advocacy, and Organizational Governance
<u>Tactics:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Industry development and training• Maintain registered stakeholder roster and encourage active participation• Resident Engagement Strategy Support• Tourism Industry Advocacy• Maintain active membership with industry organizations, including Tourism Industry Association of BC (TIABC), the BCDMOA, and Destinations International (DI)• Student Outreach
Implementation Plan:
Short Description: <p>Maintain, enhance, and cultivate new relationships with tourism stakeholders, community members and leaders, organizations, First Nations, and other industry partners to increase engagement, improve the understanding of the DMO role, advocate on behalf of the tourism industry, and effectively govern the organization.</p>
Quantifiable Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase stakeholder engagement and program participation• Relevant committee participation• Increased community/resident engagement and sentiment• Stakeholder satisfaction
Rationale: <p>Maintaining, enhancing, and cultivating relationships with a diverse range of stakeholders is crucial for the sustained success of Sunshine Coast Tourism. Effective engagement with stakeholders, community members, leaders, organizations, First Nations, and other tourism industry partners serves multiple strategic purposes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased Engagement: Building and maintaining relationships with stakeholders fosters a sense of involvement and ownership. Engaged stakeholders are more

likely to actively participate in initiatives, contribute ideas, and support the overall mission of Sunshine Coast Tourism. This engagement can lead to a more vibrant and cooperative tourism ecosystem.

- **Improved Understanding:** By nurturing relationships with various stakeholders, there is an opportunity to enhance their understanding of the role and significance of a destination marketing organization (DMO). Clear communication and collaboration with community members, leaders, and industry partners help demystify the functions of Sunshine Coast Tourism, creating a shared understanding of the organization's purpose and contributions.
- **Advocacy for the Tourism Industry:** Cultivating strong ties with stakeholders positions Sunshine Coast Tourism as a reliable advocate for the tourism industry. A united front, forged through collaborative relationships, strengthens the organization's ability to address challenges, advocate for policies that benefit the industry, and respond effectively to changing circumstances.
- **Effective Governance:** Building relationships with community leaders and organizations is essential for effective governance. Sunshine Coast Tourism ensures understanding and alignment with broader community goals by connecting with key decision-makers and various community segments. Further, it contributes to the organization's credibility and effectiveness in serving the tourism sector's interests.
- **Cultivation of New Opportunities:** Establishing and maintaining relationships opens new opportunities. Whether building partnerships with local businesses, collaborative events with community organizations, or joint initiatives with First Nations, these relationships can lead to innovative projects that benefit Sunshine Coast Tourism and its partners.

In summary, the ongoing cultivation of relationships with diverse stakeholders is foundational for the success of Sunshine Coast Tourism. This approach increases engagement and understanding and positions the organization as a vital advocate for the tourism industry, ensuring effective governance and fostering a collaborative and thriving tourism community on the Sunshine Coast.

Action Steps:

- Maintain membership with industry associations, including TIABC, BCDMOA, and DI
- Attend industry events
- Organize community outreach events to directly connect with residents, gather feedback, and address concerns related to tourism initiatives
- Conduct interactive workshops and forums to engage stakeholders, community members, and tourism partners as a platform for open dialogue, learning, and collaboration. Extend invitation to local students interested in tourism careers.
- Engage First Nation communities on the Sunshine Coast, ensuring Indigenous

<p>tourism experiences and services are showcased and supported</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain regular communication channels to keep stakeholders informed of initiatives, successes, and challenges, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Monthly e-newsletters ○ Annual reports and delegations ○ North & South Sunshine Coast Tourism Advisory Committees ○ “Industry” and “Residents” sections of SCT’s website updates ○ Staff staff one-to-one communication with stakeholders and industry as it relates to individual roles/projects/programs • Establish and/or maintain regular meetings with local First Nations leaders and members to develop a shared understanding for communication and protocols, destination development vision, infrastructure projects, language considerations, and marketing partnerships • Continue the development of the Stakeholder Extranet ‘Partner Portal’ and support enhanced onboarding for newly participating businesses and staff 	
<p>Potential Partnerships: Tourism stakeholders, Economic Development Orgs, Chambers of Commerce, BIAs, Local Government, First Nations, Destination BC, TIABC, BCDMOA,</p>	
<p>Resources: Budget, Sunshine Coast Tourism staff and Board, in-person meeting facilities, technology/software tools (MailChimp, Simpleview, Zoom, etc)</p>	
<p>Sources of Funding: MRDT, partner funding</p>	
<p>Timeframe: Year-round/ongoing</p>	
<p>Budget: \$80,000</p>	
<p>Performance Measures:</p>	
<p>Output Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of Communications/reports produced • Email Newsletter opens, clicks, open rate • #/type of meetings held • #/type of workshops and attendance, evaluation • # of industry events attended 	<p>Outcome Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council approval/support • Increase in partner engagement • New policies that support tourism • Resident Sentiment • Stakeholder Satisfaction

Regional Visitor Services

Project Plan #4 Major Category: Visitor Services
Activity Title: Visitor Information Services Engagement
Tactics: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhance physical branding and signage within the visitor centres of the Sunshine Coast• Provide print marketing materials (maps, brochures, guides) for all visitor centres on the Sunshine Coast• Provide supplemental training and regular communications across visitor centre teams• Provide mobile visitor services in areas of the region currently underserved by the primary physical hubs
Implementation Plan:
Short Description: <p>With 4 distinct visitor information centres, and supplemental services (such as the Ferry Ambassadors), there are a variety of visitor centre touch points across the region, managed by a variety of different organizations and volunteer groups. SCT's ongoing vision is to help bring all of the visitor services teams within the Sunshine Coast region into brand alignment with SCT and to facilitate deeper collaboration amongst the information centres and marketing staff to ensure visitors get a consistent message that facilitates high-value engagement while travelling in the region.</p>
Quantifiable Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support the Sunshine Coast destination brand and provide business and experience referrals, encouraging repeat visits, longer stays, and increased visitor spending• Improve engagement through mobile visitor services delivery at high-traffic locations and events in the summer• Improve coordination of all visitor services teams in the region, measured by the number of new or improved methods of collaboration and integration
Rationale:

Visitor services are drastically changing. Visitors now expect a seamless omnichannel experience but are also increasingly expecting to be able to solve their problems on their own through self-service. Visitors increasingly expect continuity and best-practice service between customer service channels throughout their travel experience from all businesses and destinations. The consumer's increasingly demanding desires and expectations must be kept in mind at every step of their experience, from Googling the Sunshine Coast to walking into the visitor centre. The focus of visitor services and marketing needs to be on engaging with visitors how they want, when they want and where they want. Doing so will support a longer length of stay, increased spending, and more sustainable-minded visitor practices.

Action Steps:

- Maintain visitor services centres currently operated by Sunshine Coast Tourism (Gibsons, Sechelt) per their municipal fee-for-service contracts. Both centres are open all year round.
- Provide print and digital marketing materials (guides, brochures, maps, QR codes) to visitor information touchpoints throughout the region
- Evaluate and implement new Sunshine Coast, BC branded touchpoints within the physical visitor centre locations
- Continue outreach and communication to other visitor centre teams, building staff relationships and collaboration opportunities
- Identify additional areas/locations and/or specific events that could benefit from additional mobile visitor services support,

Potential Partnerships: Local government, Chambers of Commerce, BIAs, local attractions (museums, public market, etc), economic development organizations, Visitor Centres

Resources: Budget, Sunshine Coast Tourism/Visitor Centre staff, physical centres and mobile kiosks

Sources of Funding: MRDT, retail revenues

Timeframe: January-December 2024

Budget: \$10,000 (all other visitor service operations are funded via municipal service contracts and other non-MRDT revenues)

Performance Measures:

Output Measures:

Outcome Measures:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● # of visitors at Visitor Centre and Mobile Services ● # of visitors engaged through remote support (digital service/web/social, phone calls, emails, brochure mailouts) ● # of mobile events attended for visitor engagement ● # of collateral distributed (digital and in-person) ● # of staff trained ● # of new branding elements in physical centres ● # of engagements by roaming staff ● # of stakeholder partnerships represented at centres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Visitor Sentiment ● Average Length of Stay ● Net Promoter Score ● Increase average length of stay through occupancy rate in shoulder seasons as measured by participating accommodations ● CTR on website information/business listings ● Online review ratings
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Affordable Workforce Housing

Major Category: Affordable Housing
<p>Sunshine Coast Tourism created an OAP Funding Guidelines agreement with local government to specify how OAP Funds would be distributed from Sunshine Coast Tourism to local government to spend on affordable housing projects. Our area's two regional districts, the qathet Regional District and the Sunshine Coast Regional District, have each submitted their 2024 Affordable Housing Plan - Appendix 1.8 to detail their affordable housing projects. Sunshine Coast Tourism's only role in delivering the two plans is to disseminate OAP funding following the guidelines and ensure annual plans and reporting are completed in accordance with the MRDT Program Guidelines.</p> <p>Please see the two attached Affordable Housing Plans (Appendix 1.8).</p> <p>Budget: \$300,000</p>

Appendix 1.8 Affordable Housing MRDT Plan

The following table **must** be completed if the designated recipient wishes to use MRDT revenues on affordable housing initiatives, regardless of whether revenues are solely from online accommodation platforms or from general MRDT revenues.

Project Name and Address
Project Name: Sunshine Coast Housing Coordinator c/o Sunshine Coast Regional District, 1975 Field Road, Sechelt, BC V7Z 0A8
Project Goals, Rationale and Details
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does this project respond to affordable housing needs in your community? • <i>What is the need, issue, or demand?</i> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Sunshine Coast does not have appropriate housing to meet the current and changing needs of the community. The region is challenged by housing that is not suitable or affordable combined with a low inventory of rentals. This has resulted in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A significant increase in homelessness and people living in unsafe conditions. This includes single working adults and seniors on fixed incomes. ○ Very few assisted living or long-term care options for seniors who want to downsize from their single detached house. ○ A critical shortage of affordable or suitable housing for employees of essential service organizations and local businesses, leading to closures, long waitlists, and service disruptions. - The Sunshine Coast needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Missing middle housing such as accessory dwelling units, secondary suites, multiplexes, townhomes, and low-rise apartment buildings. This includes both long-term rentals as well as attainable ownership options. ○ Affordable (below-market) housing. ○ Transitional housing including supportive housing, treatment and recovery, and second-stage housing. ○ Assisted living housing options for seniors. ○ Permanent supportive housing for people living with disabilities. ○ Reduced housing loss and homelessness through support and prevention programs. - To respond to the housing crisis, the community needs to harness the knowledge, experience, and skills of people in the housing and social service sector to support the development of suitable and affordable housing. This includes acquiring land, developing ownership and partnership structures, identifying housing and support models, supporting local government in streamlining processes, engaging with community, and securing funding.

- *What kind of project are you spending on (such as acquiring or constructing buildings, providing funding to an existing housing project or towards a rental or social housing program, or entering into a partnership agreement)?*
-

- This project will build on the work that began in May 2022 when a full-time Regional Housing Coordinator was retained. This coordinator facilitates and supports the work of a regional Housing Action Table (HAT) that is represented by over 40 organizations including non-profit housing providers, health-care providers, community organizations, elected officials, local government staff, and private-sector developers. Through this collaboration, the coordinator developed and implemented a Regional Housing Action Plan. One of these initiatives involved the development of a Social & Housing Needs Assessment Report.
- Building on this work, the coordinator is facilitating three housing working groups, each assigned to a priority area outlined in the report:
 - Workforce Housing
 - Seniors Housing
 - Pathways out of Homelessness

These working groups are comprised of people with the knowledge and experience required to move housing initiatives forward. They bring expertise in housing development, financing and fund development, government regulations, ownership and partnership structures; as well as an understanding of the unique needs of vulnerable populations (seniors, people at risk of homelessness, and lone-parent families).

Projects underway include:

- Website and webinars on how to build a secondary dwelling or suite:
<https://coverthecoast.org/secondary-suites-and-auxiliary-dwellings/>
- Annual Rental Market Reports that include ownership and rental stats: average rental rates based on unit size, median after-tax household incomes, a breakdown of primary and secondary rentals, and the regional vacancy rate.
- A communications campaign to educate the community on the critical need for diverse housing. This work includes presentations to community associations, business associations, non-profit boards, and the greater community on the findings of the Social & Housing Needs Assessment report.
- Identifying housing models for seniors who require more supports and want to downsize from a single-detached house. These will be presented to the community in March 2024.
- Supporting non-profit and private sector developers in advancing housing models that will be suitable and affordable for people in the workforce.
- Identifying housing models that support people at risk of homelessness, including transitional housing, and working to secure land, partnerships and funding to support these models.
- A campaign that connects landlords to essential service workers through an online registry:
<http://coverthecoast.org/housing-for-essential-workers/>

- An online housing resource hub: <https://coverthecoast.org/>
- A bi-monthly e-newsletter that shares housing initiatives and resources.
- The development of an intergovernmental advisory committee that supports the housing working groups.
- The funding for 2024 will be used to extend the contract for the Regional Housing Coordinator for another year (May 2024 to April 2025). Under this funding, the Regional Housing Coordinator will continue to coordinate and support the Housing Working Groups.
- Subject to SCRD Budget approval, some funds will also be used to support the Regional Land Use evaluation project. This will provide the community with an inventory and assessment of all public, institutional, non profit, faith-based, and community-owned land in the region to identify suitability for non-market housing development.
- *What documentation do you have authorizing the project to proceed (such as a contribution agreement or contract, or permits or schematics)? Submit the documents with your report.*
- Board direction from the Sunshine Coast Regional District will be provided in December or January for work beyond May 2024.
- *How will you measure success on the housing project?*
- Completion of key deliverables and outcomes identified by the Housing Action Table and the Housing Working Groups.

MRDT Contribution

- *Also indicate if the contribution is from OAP or general MRDT revenues.*
- \$150,000 OAP

Housing Provider/Project Owners/Project Lead

- Sunshine Coast Tourism is the designated recipient.
- Project owner/sponsor will be the Sunshine Coast Regional District, acting through the Regional Planning function.
- The Project Lead will be the Sunshine Coast Affordable Housing Society, with representation from the Housing Action Table.

Funding Partner(s)

- As the project owner, Sunshine Coast Regional District will be responsible for oversight of funds.

Contribution from Funding Partner(s)

- As project host, the Sunshine Coast Regional District will provide project management services of up to 70 hours of staff time, procurement and contract management expertise, and communications support.

Estimated Completion Date
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Based on a start date of May 2024, the project will be complete by April 2025.
Estimated Number of Housing Units Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>The number of housing units (such as rooms available for individual dwelling) acquired, completed, maintained, or renovated.</i> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- This project is focused on coordination, research, public engagement and advocacy and will not be directly involve the development of housing units. Project work will translate (through development of tools, facilitation and completion of funding applications) to the development or improvement of housing units by Sunshine Coast housing agencies.
Evidence of Consultation with Local Governments for Affordable Housing (if applicable)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If the designated recipient is not a municipality, provide evidence of consultation (such as support letters) from the applicable local government(s) in your area in regards to using MRDT revenues for affordable housing. See copy of SCRD Board resolution attached.• If your affordable housing spending has already been approved through the submission of a Five-Year Strategic Plan, this section is not required.



November 15, 2023

Municipal and Regional District Tax Program
c/o Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, and Destination BC

To Whom it May Concern,

Re: Municipal and Regional District Tax Program Requirements Report

Please find enclosed with this letter the Municipal and Regional District Tax Program Requirements Report for the Sunshine Coast Regional District's (SCRD) project: Sunshine Coast Housing Coordinator, prepared by the contracted project lead: Sunshine Coast Affordable Housing Society.

The SCRD Board adopted the following in-part resolutions in support of this project:

December 15, 2022

368/22 **Recommendation No. 1** *Sunshine Coast 2023 Housing Action Plan*

THAT the report titled Sunshine Coast 2023 Housing Action Plan be received for information;

AND THAT this report and the 2023 Sunshine Coast Housing Action Plan be referred to municipal councils and to shíshálh and Skwxwú7mesh Nations;

368/22 **Recommendation No. 2** *Municipal Regional District Tax (MRDT) Online Accommodation Platform Funding – 2023 Approval*

THAT the report titled Municipal Regional District Tax (MRDT) Online Accommodation Platform Funding – 2023 Approval be received for information;

AND THAT SCRD's portion of the Online Accommodation Platform Funding through Destination BC and Sunshine Coast Tourism in the amount of \$76,997 be reserved with the intent to continue with a Regional Housing Coordinator through the Regional Planning Service [500];

AND FURTHER THAT a Budget Proposal for the continuation of the Regional Housing Coordinator be brought forward to the 2023 Budget deliberations.

February 9, 2023

029/23 **Recommendation No. 106** *Regional Planning Services [500] - 2023 R1 Budget Proposal*

AND THAT the following budget proposal be approved and incorporated into the 2023 Round 2 Budget:

- Budget Proposal 1 – Regional Housing Coordinator, \$76,997 funded by a Municipal Regional Destination Tax via Sunshine Coast Tourism.

Sunshine Coast Regional District

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The investment of these funds in this way continues to have an impact on planning, promotion and coordination of development of affordable housing on the Sunshine Coast.

Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns: ian.hall@scrd.ca or 604-885-6812.

Sincerely,

SUNSHINE COAST REGIONAL DISTRICT

Ian Hall
General Manager, Planning and Development

Appendix 1.8 Affordable Housing MRDT Plan

The following table **must** be completed if the designated recipient wishes to use MRDT revenues on affordable housing initiatives, regardless of whether revenues are solely from online accommodation platforms or from general MRDT revenues.

Project Name and Address
<p>NEST WORKER CO-LIVING HOUSING INITIATIVE 2024</p> <p>Powell River Educational Services Society</p> <p>PHYSICAL ADDRESS: 4476A Marine Avenue, Powell River, BC, V8A 2K2</p> <p>MAILING ADDRESS: PO Box 408, Powell River, BC, V8A 5C2</p>
Project Goals, Rationale and Details
<p>1. Describe the need, issue, or demand</p> <p>“The qathet Region is experiencing a housing crisis. In 2019 the vacancy rate was 0.5%. There was a slight improvement in 2020 to a vacancy rate of 1.7%. According to the Powell River Real Estate Board, the average home price increased from \$275,532 in 2016 to \$465,226 in 2020, an increase of 68.6%. This increase in housing price greatly outpaced any increase in wages. Rental rates are no longer affordable for many residents, and as a result, housing insecurity and the number of inadequately housed and unhoused people is on the rise.” – <i>qathet Regional Housing Needs Report 2021</i></p> <p>“Market rents are really high, so people can’t afford them, but the builders are getting tax relief. That is not helping the many Canadians who need housing. I was hoping to see the scope expand to look at things like ...housing for young people and seniors.”</p> <p>–MP Rachel Blaney quoted in <i>Peak Newspaper, November 23, 2023:</i> <i>North Island-Powell River MP: Economic statement ‘disappointing’</i></p> <p>Just like transportation, communication and safe water systems, affordable housing is an essential part of any viable community’s infrastructure. Affordable housing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports diverse jobs and wage levels • Attracts and retains workers • Directly contributes to a community’s long-term economic profile and quality of life¹ • Ensures people can live in the community where they work <p>HOW AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPORTS THE LOCAL ECONOMY</p> <p>A. Leveraging public and private resources</p> <p>Each dollar invested in affordable housing boosts local economies by leveraging public and private resources to add to the community. Creating affordable rental units generates local income, tax</p>

¹ For example, *Amazon*, when recently seeking a second company headquarters, prioritized “a diversity of housing options” and “the presence and support of a diverse population.”

revenue for local governments, and local jobs.

B. Attracting businesses and increasing tax base

Housing affordability is a critical factor in attracting new employers and helping existing businesses grow. This is important not only for creating jobs, but also for building a community's capacity to provide key services like education, public health, ferry services, and parks and recreation and support a local retail and tourism sector.

C. Reducing recruiting and retention costs

It is becoming impossible for many potential local employees to afford to live in the qathet region on the wages they receive. High housing costs cause challenges for recruiting and retaining employees, which increases costs for local businesses, including turnover and absenteeism. Some critical jobs that support the local infrastructure, such as school employees and public health are becoming hard to recruit and retain.

D. Encouraging community commitment

Diverse housing options promote long-term economic and social integration and help to build community.

E. Building stable and successful families

Stable housing contributes immensely to a family's economic success

INCOME AND COST OF LIVING IN QATHET²

- The average salary per person in Powell River is \$45,200 (17% lower than the Canadian average salary of \$54,450), creating an after-tax income of \$3,069.23 per month³
- The average cost of living in Powell River is \$3,377/month for a single person who rents. This average is based on many factors including the cost of housing, transportation, groceries, and clothing. For example:
 - The average monthly cost of rental housing in Powell River is \$1,477.
 - The average monthly cost for a driver in Powell River is \$609.
 - The average person spends \$519 on groceries per month in Powell River.
 - The average monthly cost of utilities in Powell River is \$138.

2. Describe the proposed action plan for 2024

BACKGROUND

Despite the BC government's plan to fund the construction of 114,000 affordable housing units in the province over the next ten years, there is an urgent need for housing solutions NOW. In a small, remote community like Powell River, the pressures are even greater.

Having worked locally in this field for more than 10 years, PRESS believes that the co-living model allows us to re-imagine and re-purpose existing housing stock and create a sustainable and replicable solution to the housing crisis, both locally and throughout the region.

On November 1, 2023 - using close to \$177,000 in MRDT funding from the qathet RD to leverage almost \$160,000 in additional operational supports from the federal REACHING HOME program - PRESS launched qathet RD's first worker co-living housing facility under its newly branded "NEST COLIVING" initiative. The MRDT funds were used as the down payment on a spacious, centrally located house that was renovated, furnished, and equipped with REACHING HOME support to bring 4 new, high quality, affordable, worker housing spaces into the local rental market. A private bedroom

² Salary and cost of living details are from Career Beacon: <https://www.careerbeacon.com/en/cost-of-living/powell-river-british-columbia/110000-salary>

³ After tax income calculation is from i-calculator.com: <https://www.icalculator.com/canada/tax-calculator/annual/2023.html>

and use of the entire house and yard rents out at \$750/month, all inclusive. These 4 housing spaces were created at a total cost of \$335,870 = a per rental unit cost of \$83,967.50

This 2023 project has established the viability of the co-living model as an approach to rapidly creating new, high quality, affordable worker housing in our community with very modest initial investment. It has also confirmed PRESS' ability to leverage additional funding from federal sources to increase the impact of locally and provincially managed funds and to engage multiple partners in addressing the issue of affordable housing at the local level.

NEST CO-LIVING

Co-living is a specific form of co-housing, in which residents have their own rented rooms within the same building, with kitchen, bathroom, laundry, living room and outdoor spaces being communal. Co-living has become increasingly popular in communities where housing is costly and/or limited, providing a more affordable and amenity-based alternative to individual apartments. NEST CO-LIVING is managed by our non-profit to provide four significant advantages for residents: community, convenience, cost savings, and comfort.

- Co-living facilities around the world report that **community** is the number one benefit they provide their residents: a thoughtful, collective, living experience that supports meaningful relationships. Co-living, properly managed, is a form of *intentional community* (a domestic grouping of people that promotes shared values, interests, and life purpose among its residents. PRESS will continue to use the tenant recruitment and selection model it has developed to curate our residents to match their values and interests, so that strong bonds and affinities are supported: helping to resolve the social isolation often found in entirely independent housing units.
- The **convenience** benefit of co-living comes from flexible lease terms and a resident-centric model. Instead of offering only twelve-month leases, PRESS will offer month to month tenancy to suit the dynamic lifestyles of our tenants. The NEST CO-LIVING model also removes the many frictions of the traditional living experience such as buying and moving furniture, finding appropriate roommates, and paying utility bills. By providing fully furnished rooms, offering roommate matching, and including utilities in a single rent price, PRESS has created a convenient living experience, in which residents need only unpack their suitcases.
- The **cost-saving** aspect of co-living supports workers who are priced out of the local rental market. An increasing number of local employees are looking for affordable living options within our community. NEST CO-LIVING offers high quality affordable housing compared to traditional local rentals. In our first year, we were able to ensure affordable rental costs for residents by leveraging additional operational funding from our federal partners – most importantly a rental subsidy specifically in support of this project. We expect to be able to create additional funding for this project in 2024.
- NEST co-living offers residents an individual space in a **comfortable** shared property. Our first CO-LIVING house is attractive, well laid out, spacious and easily accommodates 4 residents. In 2024, with a smaller sum from OAP (estimated at \$150,000 at the time this plan is being written) available as down payment, we would be searching the local market for a 2-3 bedroom home, with the intent of creating a living space that is equally attractive.

TARGET DEMOGRAPHIC

Co-living models, like co-working spaces, are thought to appeal particularly to millennials. In North America, from 2005 to 2015, there was a 39% increase in millennials living with housemates. Worldwide, residents of co-living spaces typically range between the ages of 19 and 30 years.

However, locally, we have found that older workers are also attracted to and eager to explore the co-living model. In year one, we've focused on recruiting workers who are essential to our community (healthcare, education, nonprofit and community service sectors).

We've also created an application and resident matching process that we think ensures the stability of tenancy and the sociability, adaptability, responsibility, and acceptance that co-living requires.

Because co-living is new to qathet, in our first year we intentionally selected tenants who would help us to promote a positive and highly functional view of co-living within the community: hard-working, reliable, friendly individuals who wanted to engage with and contribute to the neighbourhood in which they live.

We will continue this approach in year 2.

NEST CO-LIVING MODEL FOR CREATING WORKER HOUSING

Today, in the local housing market, there are 22 properties listed at \$499,000 or less.

PRESS is proposing using 2023 OAP revenues (\$150,000) as the down payment on a local 3 bedroom property for use as a PRESS-operated NEST COLIVING Affordable *Worker HOUSING Space*.

PRESS would contribute, as project lead:

- An additional \$30,000 for renovations and furnishings of the co-living space
- Recruitment of worker tenants and facilitated roommate matching (80 hrs @ \$50/hr = \$4,000)
- 10 hours/month of management time (@\$100/hr x 12 months = \$12,000)
- 8 hours/month bookkeeping (@\$40/hr x 12 months = \$3,840)

PRESS will also work to leverage additional funding from REACHING HOME in support of this project. The success of our 2023 co-living initiative, including the low cost of creating this housing, the standard of the housing provided and the relatively rapid deployment/launch of this housing into the rental market are all powerful motivators to this funder to engage with our local success story.

CO-LIVING RENTAL COSTS FOR WORKERS

Rental costs for workers will need to be sufficient to cover the mortgage, insurance, maintenance, and utilities for the property. For instance:

- A down payment of \$150,000 on a 3-bedroom property valued at \$400,000 with a commercial mortgage at 5%, would require monthly mortgage payments of \$1,454
- Split 3 ways this creates a base rent of \$484/month per resident
- Insurance @\$210/month divided by 3 residents = additional \$70/month per resident
- Utilities @\$300/month divided by 5 residents = additional \$100/month per resident
- Maintenance @\$150/month divided by 5 residents = additional \$50/month per resident
- \$484 + \$70 + \$100 + \$50 = **\$704/month per resident** (vs [\\$1,325/month rent for a 1 bedroom](#))

Supporting New Models for Local Affordable Housing

PRESS believes we need to maximize use of existing local housing assets by promoting new lifestyle and living options that address gaps and capitalize on opportunities in the local market, and provide cost-effective, sustainable, affordable worker housing as quickly and efficiently as possible.

MRDT Contribution

1. \$150,000 from OAP revenues will be voted by the qRD to be allocated to PRESS in December 2023 and is pending transfer to our agency. In the 12 months following its receipt by PRESS, this MRDT funding will be used (along with a \$49,840 contribution from PRESS) to finance the WORKER CO-LIVING HOUSING INITIATIVE described above.

Housing Provider/Project Owners/Project Lead

Powell River Educational Services Society

Funding Partner(s)

qathet Regional District (via OAP funds from Sunshine Coast Tourism)
Powell River Educational Services Society
REACHING HOME (not confirmed)

Contribution from Funding Partner(s)

\$45,000

- CASH
- \$27,080 for renovations and furnishings of the co-living space
- IN-KIND
- Recruitment of worker tenants and facilitated roommate matching (80 hrs @ \$50/hr = \$4,000)
- 10 hours/month of management time (@\$100/hr x 12 months = \$12,000)
- 4 hours/month bookkeeping (@\$40/hr x 12 months = \$1,920)

Estimated Completion Date

8-10 months from PRESS receipt of OAP revenues from qathet RD.

Estimated Number of Housing Units Completed

The WORKER CO-LIVING HOUSING INITIATIVE will provide permanent, co-living units for 3 local workers.