

HIGHWAY 1 CORRIDOR

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

HIGHLIGHTS



DESTINATION
BRITISH COLUMBIA



THANK YOU

The Highway 1 Corridor Destination Development Strategy is the outcome of an 18-month, iterative process of gathering, synthesizing, and validating information with tourism partners about the current status and future direction of tourism in the Highway 1 Corridor planning area.

We thank the Ktunaxa, Secwepemc and Sinixt First Nations on whose traditional territories we gathered for our community meetings.

Thank you to our tourism partners who participated in the process by attending community meetings, participating in surveys and interviews, engaging in follow-up conversations, and forwarding relevant documents and insights. Special thanks to the members of the Working Group, as well as the facilitator of the destination development process.

REVELSTOKE
Photos: Andrew Chad

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1 INTRODUCTION

WHY A STRATEGY?

The Highway 1 Corridor Destination Development Strategy was developed to enhance the competitiveness of the Highway 1 Corridor planning area over the next 10 years and beyond. The strategy was developed as part of Destination BC's Destination Development Program to support and guide the long-term growth of tourism in British Columbia. This document presents some of the key highlights of the Highway 1 Corridor strategy.

WHO IS IT FOR?

The Highway 1 Corridor Destination Development Strategy is a guide for tourism partners as they work collaboratively to grow the visitor economy. The strategy will be reviewed and updated to reflect changing tourism objectives, priorities, and market conditions. Results will be tracked and learning outcomes will inform future implementation activities, thereby optimizing their effectiveness in increasing economic, environmental, social and cultural benefits for the entire Highway 1 Corridor planning area.

WHERE IS IT FOR?

The Highway 1 Corridor planning area stretches from the Alberta border in the east, to Kamloops and Savona in the west, and includes Yoho National Park, Glacier National Park, and Mount Revelstoke National Park, as well as numerous provincial parks. This portion of

the Trans-Canada Highway extends some 550 kilometers and includes the Village of Field (unincorporated), the Town of Golden, the City of Revelstoke, the District of Sicamous, the City of Salmon Arm, the Village of Chase, the City of Kamloops, and Sun Peaks Mountain Resort Municipality. Two regional districts have governing authority in the planning area – Areas J, L, O, P of the Thompson Nicola Regional District, and all the electoral Areas (A–F) of the Columbia Shuswap Regional District.

WHERE DOES IT FIT?

The Highway 1 Corridor is one of 20 planning areas across BC for which destination development strategies are being developed. Each planning area represents a logical destination for visitors in and around the province. As planning areas span across multiple jurisdictions, the importance of adopting an integrated approach with a shared vision and coordinated investment is critical. The Highway 1 Corridor Destination Development Strategy is one of four that will be prepared for the Kootenay Rockies tourism region. The other three planning areas include West Kootenays & Revelstoke, the Highway 3 Corridor, and the Columbia Valley. The planning area also lies within the Thompson Okanagan tourism region to the west and is one of six strategies for that region. The other five planning areas in this region are: Interlakes, Okanagan Valley, Shuswap North Okanagan, North Thompson & Nicola Valleys, and the Highway 3 Corridor. In time, informed by the outcomes of all relevant planning area destination

development strategies, regional strategies will be developed. These will, in turn, inform the creation of a provincial strategy thereby ensuring a truly integrated and cohesive combination of bottom-up and top-down destination planning.

A KEY IMPERATIVE

The recommendations contained within the Highway 1 Corridor Destination Development Strategy form the foundation for additional, focused and aligned discussions regarding implementation. It will be important to ensure that the strategy becomes embedded in local, regional, provincial, and federal decision-making processes. It is only by working collaboratively, in an integrated way with a shared agenda, that the full potential of the Highway 1 Corridor planning area will be realized.

AT A GLANCE

In what follows, the distinctiveness of the destination is summarized, and its vision for tourism is introduced. While acknowledging the challenges the sector faces, its potential for growth is set out in terms of key opportunities and experience development potential. A consideration of each development priority and associated actions then follows. While further detail on each of these elements is available in the full strategy, they are brought together “At A Glance” to demonstrate the scope of the integrated nature of the approach being taken.

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REALIZING THE POTENTIAL

A DISTINCTIVE DESTINATION

Highway 1 is arguably the premier touring route through British Columbia, offering travellers from around the world an experience that encompasses incredible scenery, diverse ecosystems, and a series of interesting communities, many of which are destinations in their own right.

Stretching some 550 kilometres from the Alberta border in the east, to Kamloops and Savona in the west, this planning area lies within the Traditional Territories of the Ktunaxa Nation, the Secwepemc (Shuswap) peoples, and the Sinixt.

It embraces a wide range of biogeoclimatic zones and their associated ecosystems. It is this diversity which contributes to the quality of the journey, offering visitors a chance to experience high alpine meadows and jagged peaks, grasslands, and an inland rainforest.

In the spring, summer, and fall, visitors are drawn to the area to experience white

water rafting, houseboating, fishing, and trail-based activities as well as championship golf courses. The Columbia Wetlands offer unparalleled bird watching opportunities while national and provincial parks afford excellent camping, hiking, and mountain biking. In the winter, a well-deserved reputation for fantastic powder draws visitors in to experience downhill resorts, backcountry lodges, and heli or cat-skiing opportunities.

The planning area also benefits from many talented artists, interesting heritage attractions, and numerous festivals and events. Easily accessible roadside attractions can also be visited along the way.



BLAEBERRY RIVER
Photo: Ryan Creary

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REALIZING THE POTENTIAL

A SHARED VISION

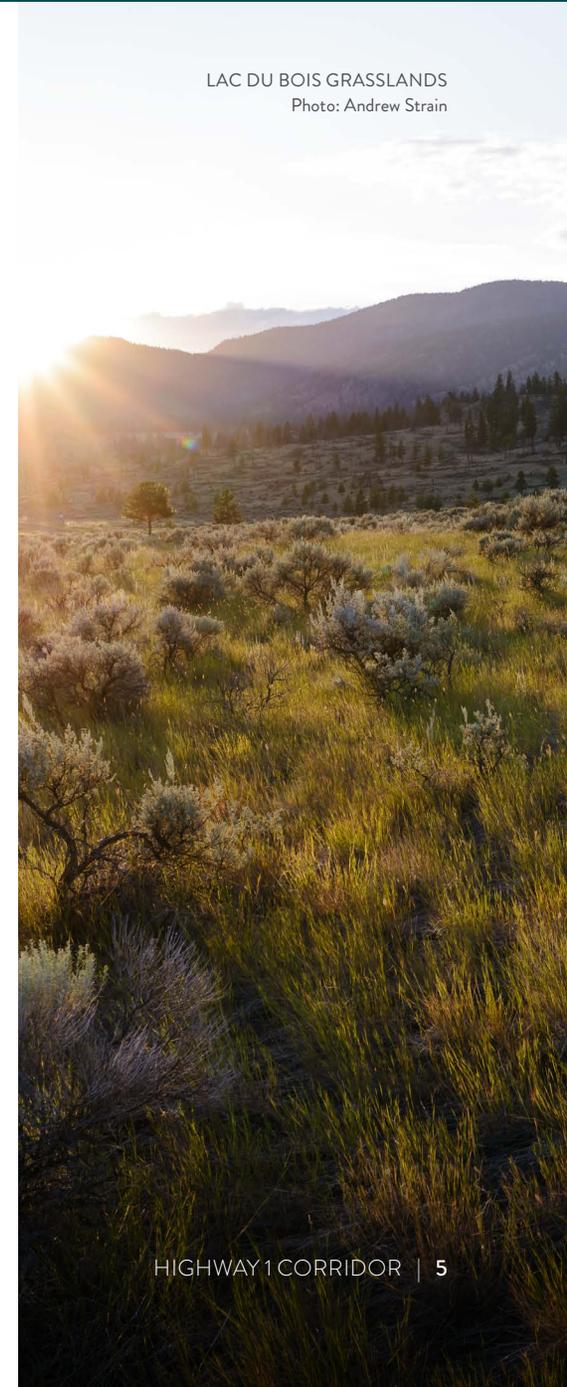
The vision for tourism development in the next 10 years reflects the distinctiveness of the destination and the ambition of its communities:



THE HIGHWAY 1 CORRIDOR INVITES TRAVELLERS FROM NEAR AND FAR TO EXPLORE THEIR WORLD AND THEMSELVES – TO EXPERIENCE ADVENTURE HOWEVER THEY CHOOSE TO DEFINE IT. IT IS BOTH A SAFE AND EFFICIENT ROUTE TO ONE OF THE MANY OUTSTANDING DESTINATIONS ALONG THE WAY, WHERE VISITOR EXPERIENCES ARE WOVEN TOGETHER IN A TAPESTRY OF THE UNFOLDING STORIES OF THE LAND AND PEOPLE, BOTH PAST AND PRESENT. TRAVELLERS COME TO

EXPERIENCE ONE OF CANADA'S MOST ICONIC ROAD TRIPS AND ITS DESTINATIONS IN ALL SEASONS, ENJOYING REMARKABLE EXPERIENCES IN A DEPTH AND DENSITY THAT SIMULTANEOUSLY SATES THEIR PASSION, AND LEAVES THEM YEARNING FOR MORE. COMMUNITIES EMBRACE TOURISM AND SUPPORT GROWTH THAT IS IN KEEPING WITH THEIR VALUES; WORKING COLLECTIVELY WITH VISITORS TO PRESERVE THE HEALTH OF THE INCREDIBLE ECOSYSTEMS THAT SURROUND THEM.

LAC DU BOIS GRASSLANDS
Photo: Andrew Strain



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REALIZING THE POTENTIAL

KEY OPPORTUNITIES

The planning area faces a number of challenges, including the lack of infrastructure, services, and amenities to support travel quality; the perceived safety of travel on Highway 1; seasonality; competing demands on the resource base; and staff constraints including skillsets and affordable housing. However, these challenges lead to key opportunities including:

- Nurturing the capacity to build strong, collaborative relationships
- Improving the quality of the Highway 1 Corridor journey
- Improving the perceived safety of travel on Highway 1
- Improving the business climate and policy framework for tourism operators
- Encouraging the launch of additional shoulder-season visitor experiences
- Improving the quality and consistency of service
- Recruiting, retaining, and training staff, including the provision of affordable housing
- Developing in a manner which respects the health of the environment and community values

EXPERIENCE POTENTIAL

The current and future experiences that will motivate travel and differentiate the destination with a compelling, sustainable visitor experience include:

- Lakes, Rivers, and Wetlands based Experiences — the planning area's many lakes and rivers offer a wealth of visitor experiences including angling, white-water rafting, house boating, swimming, paddling, salmon run viewing, or simply enjoying a scenic waterfall. The Columbia Wetlands are an internationally significant wetlands area with outstanding bird watching and wildlife viewing opportunities.
- Snow based Experiences — skiing and snowboarding is offered at the destination resorts of Kicking Horse, Revelstoke, and Sun Peaks, and at the smaller Harper Mountain. Backcountry lodge experiences offer access to remote backcountry terrain as part of all-inclusive multi-day packages. Heli-ski and cat-ski multi-day and day trips are also available. Snowmobiling is found throughout the planning area, from high alpine terrain, to groomed trails. Nordic trail networks are growing in all planning area communities for soft winter adventurers.
- Golf Experiences — the Highway 1 Corridor has a series of championship and regional golf courses that offer outstanding golf and a strong value proposition.
- Mountains, Lodges, and Parks — the planning area has three national parks (Yoho, Glacier, Mount Revelstoke), and numerous provincial parks, offering networks of trails, camping opportunities, interpretive programs, and in some cases lodge accommodations. There are also many backcountry lodge operators offering both summer and winter programs.
- Trails Based Experiences — In addition to the trails offered in the national and provincial parks, there is a growing network of trails throughout Highway 1 Corridor communities for motorized and non-motorized use. These trails support hiking, mountain biking, trail running, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, and Nordic skiing activities. Increasing investments have been made in accessible trail-based experiences for residents and travellers with mobility challenges.
- Arts, Culture, and Heritage including Culinary, Festivals, and Events — each Highway 1 Corridor community offers visitors a range of existing and

developing arts, culture, and heritage experiences, including culinary and agritourism, that, with strategic support, have the potential to anchor shoulder season visitation and create compelling reasons for longer lengths of stay. There are three Indigenous cultural experiences, and growing interest from First Nations communities in the development of more.

- Touring the Corridor — the journey along the Highway 1 Corridor is itself a reason for travel. The combined experiences of the scenic vistas, the opportunities for outdoor adventure, and the interesting and authentic communities en route, makes Highway 1 from Alberta to Kamloops one of BC's most frequented touring routes.
- Sport Tourism — community infrastructure (arenas, fields, etc.) supports the attraction of regional, provincial, and national scale sporting events, and with continued support, offers potential for additional shoulder season stays.
- Meetings and Conferences — each Highway 1 Corridor community offers both private and community facilities to serve meeting and conference business, with the potential to attract groups in the shoulder seasons.

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AT A GLANCE

VISION STATEMENT The Highway 1 Corridor invites travellers from near and far to explore the world and themselves — to experience adventure however they choose to define it. It is both a safe and efficient route to one of the many outstanding destinations along the way, where visitor experiences are woven together in a tapestry of the unfolding stories of the land and people, both past and present. Travellers come to experience one of Canada’s most iconic road trips and its destinations in all seasons, enjoying remarkable experiences in a depth and density that simultaneously sates their passion, and leaves them yearning for more. Communities embrace tourism and support growth that is in keeping with their values; working collectively with visitors to preserve the health of the incredible ecosystems that surround them.

THEME 1

SAFE, SOUND & SECURE: TRAVEL QUALITY AND SAFETY

UP TO SCRATCH

Work with transportation partners to ensure highway conditions facilitate safe, multi-modal travel. Encourage car rental companies to make provisions for visitors intending to travel in winter road conditions. Ensure visitors are equipped with consistent, branded messaging relating to safe travel.

ON TWO WHEELS

Provide safe routes for road cyclists parallel to, but separated from, the highway. Where separation cannot be achieved, ensure minimum shoulder widths are provided. Encourage the development of a network of paved trails around each community for cyclists.

TIME OUT

Develop rest stops, incorporating visitor services and supplemental amenities, along the route. Ensure advance directional signage of upcoming locations is consistently branded, and incorporates, where appropriate, cultural interpretive storytelling.

WITHIN EASY REACH

Support increased capacity, and more reliable, weather-independent, access at regional airports. Encourage regional airports to enhance their services in terms of accommodating luggage, bikes, and skis. Explore shuttle service viability and public transit options between gateway airports, communities, and experiences for both workers and visitors.

IN TOUCH

Develop free and consistent Wi-Fi service at all rest stops along Highway 1 and introduce uninterrupted cellular service en route to adjacent locations.

MORE CHOICE

Develop circle routes and side-trips to encourage travellers to venture off the highway and stay longer in each community. Keep resource roads that lead to exceptional and established recreation areas open and maintained.

THEME 2

READY, WILLING & ABLE: ATTRACTIVE BUSINESS CLIMATE

VALUED & SUPPORTED

Communicate the value of tourism to residents, other industries, and government. Ensure tourism values are reflected in local and regional planning processes. Encourage business owners, front-line staff, and residents to familiarize themselves with the tourism offer and become ambassadors for the visitor economy.

CONSIDERED & RESPONSIVE

Ensure tourism operators and community groups take a considered approach to engaging First Nations in tourism development. Advocate for resources to support capacity for engagement at local community and First Nations level.

AFFORDABLY ACCOMMODATED

Informed by best practices in other communities, develop a local/regional affordable housing strategy, and secure resources to implement its initial phase of recommendations. Profile this issue across all relevant discussion forums and encourage a province-wide approach to its solution.

3 AT A GLANCE

THEME 2 CONTINUED	<p>ATTRACT, RECRUIT, & RETAIN</p> <p>Create a cross-season/cross-business job pool to support year-round staff retention within, and between, communities. Build awareness of tourism employment opportunities for Indigenous communities, promote tourism career paths, and work with the education sector to ensure courses offered and industry needs align. Advocate for changes to Employment Insurance legislation and the Foreign Workers Program, to meet seasonal employment needs.</p>	<p>WELL-PREPARED</p> <p>Grow awareness of training grants and wage supports programs, and in building awareness of existing training programs, identify and promote opportunities that are relevant, affordable, and deliverable on the business premises. Encourage visitor centres, front-line staff, and other potential ambassadors along the Highway 1 Corridor to participate in cross-industry education programs.</p>	<p>RELIABLY RESOURCED</p> <p>Continue to promote existing business support programs and available sources of capital. Investigate possible pooled liability insurance programs for land-based and water-based activity operators, transport and shuttle operators, and other tourism experience providers.</p>	
THEME 3 WHAT MATTERS MOST: ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY				
THEME 3	<p>APPROPRIATE, ACCEPTABLE & AGREED</p> <p>Within the context of a recreational land and water management plan, manage strategic growth within the capacity of the land and communities to sustain that growth. Work collaboratively to sustainably fund the planning, enforcement and shared stewardship of the natural resource base.</p>	<p>MEASURE, MONITOR & MITIGATE</p> <p>Identify and agree on measures and collect data on the impacts of tourism on ecosystem health leading to recommendations for mitigation and management.</p>	<p>SPREAD THE WORD</p> <p>Create and communicate a code of respectful conduct for residents and visitors, and a shared story for safeguarding the environmental integrity. Within the context of a balanced approach, work to minimize conflicts between different users.</p>	<p>AIM HIGH</p> <p>Achieve an internationally recognized certification as a sustainable tourism destination, under a program such as Biosphere, certified by the Responsible Tourism Institute.</p>
THEME 4 STAY IN TUNE: COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY				
THEME 4	<p>PLACE MATTERS</p> <p>Ensure that the places which visitors and residents encounter — particularly the downtown cores along the corridor — are vibrant, attractive, and well maintained. Investigate funding for local governments to enable them to accommodate visitor-induced growth and ensure the continuation of Resort Municipality Initiative funding.</p>	<p>VALUES COUNT</p> <p>Embed community values, aspirations, and limits on the extent and nature of tourism in the creation and review of all relevant policy documents. Consciously align target markets with community values to ensure an optimal match between visitor demand and community response.</p>	<p>VOLUNTEERS ARE VITAL</p> <p>Find ways to renew, resource, and reward the role of volunteers in sustaining key aspects of the experience economy. Communicate volunteer opportunities and their associated recognition or incentive programs. Advocate for additional leveraged funding against documented in-kind volunteer contributions.</p>	<p>A SUPPORTED COMMUNITY</p> <p>Work collaboratively with community service providers and local businesses to explore sustainable funding models (e.g., user fees to support Search & Rescue) and secure incremental resources. Ensure visitors, temporary workers, and residents alike are fully aware of health and safety protocols.</p>

3

AT A GLANCE

THEME 5

A COMPELLING OFFER: EXPERIENTIAL MIX/QUALITY

OPEN FOR BUSINESS

Encourage the public and private sectors to invest in new, and leverage existing, experiences to grow shoulder season visitation. Encourage existing businesses to adjust their opening hours in line with visitor demand and provide evening experiences to grow the night-time visitor economy.

BE REMARKABLE

Ensure the supporting infrastructure for the realization of remarkable experiences (e.g., lookouts, water access, boat launches, marinas, shelters, etc.) is developed within the context of an integrated masterplan which addresses the sensitivities of the environment into account.

COME HAIL OR SHINE

Identify gaps in the provision of weather-independent visitor experiences. Encourage the public and private sectors to invest in the development of additional experiences where needed.

ON THE FAIRWAY

Encourage the introduction of golf experiences that appeal to new entrants to the sport.

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

Identify gaps in the provision of entry-level, age-friendly, accessible, family-friendly, and pet-friendly visitor experiences, and encourage the public and private sectors to invest in their development. Provide training for businesses and visitor experience providers in responding to the needs of new and emerging markets.

ON THE SLOPES

Identify the inventory of, and gaps in, current snow-based experiences (ski, snowboard, heli/cat access, snowmobile, snowshoe, fatbiking, Nordic, backcountry touring, ice-climbing), and promote opportunities to launch additional experiences where needed.

EXCEED EXPECTATIONS

Encourage Highway 1 Corridor tourism experience providers to participate in Destination BC's Remarkable Experiences program. Ensure relevant training opportunities are provided.

ACCESSIBLE MOUNTAINS

Identify gaps in the provision of experiences related to mountain, lodge, parks, and nature appreciation, and promote investment in additional experiences. Continue to expand high season camping capacity in strategic locations.

INTO THE BLUE

Identify gaps in the provision of lakes, rivers, and wetlands experiences. Promote investment opportunities for creating additional water-based experiences — house boating, angling, white water rafting, and paddling, as well as gear rental and guided tours.

TRAILS THAT CONNECT

Work collaboratively to achieve a wide range of strategically interconnected, trail-based experiences across multiple communities within the Highway 1 Corridor. Develop sustainable funding models for trails that support mountain biking, road cycling, hiking, and motorized use where appropriate.

CULTURE THAT RESONATES

Identify gaps in the provision of arts, culture, and heritage experiences. Develop agritourism, culinary, festivals and events, and Indigenous cultural experiences. Support Indigenous communities and entrepreneurs in tourism business development, and secure a regional resource within Kootenay Rockies Tourism (KRT) to work with First Nations' communities.

SPORT FOR ALL

Encourage efforts to secure single or multi-community sport tourism events (tournaments, races, etc.). Conduct feasibility studies related to the provision of additional sport tourism infrastructure.

A PLACE TO MEET

Encourage Highway 1 Corridor community efforts to secure incremental meetings/conference visitation, particularly in shoulder seasons, and participate in feasibility studies related to increasing related infrastructure.

THEME 6

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER: COLLABORATION

AREA-WIDE

Establish a platform for collaboration between Highway 1 Corridor communities. Focus on the activation of the destination strategy themes and work together to communicate, align, leverage, and resource activities in support of destination development.

4 GEARING UP

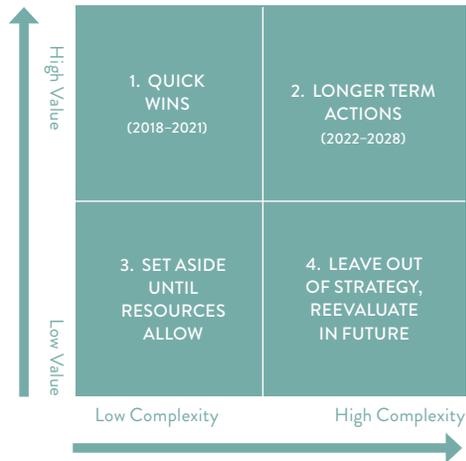
SUCCESS NETWORKS

This strategy is intended to inform actions for the future, which over time may be embedded in local, regional, and provincial decision making. The result will be an integrated system of priorities to achieve better development decisions, drive greater tourism revenues, and realize benefits for businesses and communities in the Highway 1 Corridor planning area. All of this will contribute to a thriving, vibrant, and growing economy.

Joint strategy ownership among all planning area tourism partners is a critical component of this program's success. The strategy identifies a suggested success network of tourism partners to champion and move actions within each objective forward.

FRAMEWORK

The strategy presents the destination development objectives using a consistent framework to determine the prioritization of each objective, and the relative timing for implementation. Objectives with a provincial or regional scope are identified as well and will inform the regional and provincial destination development strategies.



ROGERS PASS
Photo: Bruno Long

4 GEARING UP

CATALYST PROJECTS

The following seventeen actions were identified as catalyst projects for immediately moving the strategy into implementation.

Safe, Sound & Secure: Travel Quality and Safety

- Work collaboratively to achieve improved commercial vehicle driver training and enforcement of training and licensing.
- Work collaboratively with TRAN to review the standards of road maintenance and avalanche control included in operator contracts, and to ensure standards are adhered to throughout the year.
- Advocate for car rental companies to require renter declaration of intended travel, so that travellers intending to drive in winter road conditions are forewarned and given the opportunity to change to a more appropriate vehicle, and/or tires.
- Support car rental companies that offer winter rated tires to vehicle renters at no, or minimal, charge through preferred supplier promotions.
- Support the introduction of a variable speed corridor along the entire length of Highway 1, and lower speed limits for commercial traffic.
- Advocate for improved avalanche risk management infrastructure (e.g., snow sheds) and avalanche prevention scheduling to reduce the number and duration of closures.
- Work collaboratively with DriveBC/TRAN to develop and communicate consistent branded messaging about Highway 1, including enhanced content, and information to improve perceptions of safety.

- Work collaboratively with Drive BC/AB, emergency responders, RCMP, and TRAN to align communications across provincial boundaries and to ensure positive and open for business facts are promoted through DriveBC/AB as well as accurate, factual, and timely information regarding incidents.
- Work collaboratively with Parks Canada to provide a collective vision and a clear definition of the need for traveller services and amenities at Rogers Pass.
- Present information on increasing road cycle usage both on Highway 1 and on paved routes around communities along the Highway 1 Corridor, and the associated tourism potential to TRAN, with the objective of securing separate paved trails wherever possible, and minimum shoulder widths where separation is not feasible.

Ready, Willing & Able: Attractive Business Climate

- Educate tourism operators and community groups (new and potential) on protocols for engaging with First Nations, and on operating in traditional territories.
- Develop a local/regional affordable housing strategy (learning from best practices of other communities), and secure resources to implement the initial phase of recommendations.
- Advocate for a province-wide review of sources of existing and incremental funding to support the implementation of an affordable housing strategy.

What Matters Most: Environmental Sustainability

- Work collaboratively with the provincial and federal government to develop and resource a process for inter-industry mediation, as well as a land and water

- management framework (front, mid, and back), and a shared stewardship/enforcement model (including lakes and rivers) to provide reasonable certainty for tourism development, environmental protection, Indigenous rights and values, motorized and non-motorized use, public and commercial recreation uses, and viewsapes. Incorporate recommendations of the master plan for visitor services, infrastructure, and amenities.
- Work collaboratively to identify sustainable funding for resources dedicated to planning, enforcement, and a shared stewardship model of the land and water management framework.

A Compelling Offer: Experiential Mix/Quality

- Collaborate to create a master planning area map of high use areas and high sensitivity areas (land and water) to be used to inform land management planning processes, and other plans for infrastructure development in these areas (e.g., rest stops, lookouts, washrooms, parking for private vehicles/buses, bike racks, signage, lookouts, water access, boat launches, marinas, shelters, wi-fi/connectivity, accessibility considerations, invasive species cleaning stations etc.).

Moving Forward Together: Collaboration

- Convene a facilitated workshop to discuss the roles and responsibilities and the collaborative model for working together moving forward (e.g., model after the Highway 3 Mayors & Chairs Coalition).

LOOKING FOR MORE INFORMATION?

Read the Highway 1 Corridor Destination Development Strategy or reach us at:

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FRONT COVER PHOTO: YOHO NATIONAL PARK, Albert Normandin



SICAMOUS
Photo: Darren Robinson